

THE
WORKS

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *SAMUEL BLAIR*,

Late Minister of the Gospel at *Fogs-Mannor*, in
Chester County, in *Pennsylvania*.

CONTAINING

A Collection of SERMONS

On various SUBJECTS:

Some of which are Reimpressions from Copies printed in the
AUTHOR'S Life-time; and others done from Manuscripts
found among his Papers after his Decease.

TOGETHER WITH

Several TREATISES,

VIZ.

A VINDICATION of the BRETHREN, &c.
The DOCTRINE of PREDESTINATION truly
and fairly stated; with an APPENDIX, relating
more particularly to the Doctrine of *Reprobation*.

A short and faithful NARRATIVE of the late remark-
able *Revival of Religion*, &c.

The *Author's* LAST ADVICE to a Number of his
Congregation, &c.

To which is added,

A SERMON preached at Mr. *Blair's* FUNERAL by
the Rev. Mr. *Finley*; and an ELEGY wrote by the
Rev. Mr. *Davis* on the Occasion.

T H E
P R E F A C E to the R E A D E R.

Courteous R E A D E R,

IT is truly affecting to think how many eminently useful as well as faithful Watchmen have been called off the Walls of our *Zion*, within these few Years past! and the most of them in the Bloom of Life, their natural and acquired Abilities in their full Vigor; and their gracious Qualifications much improved! just when they were growing mature, and our Expectations were much raised, they have been removed from this to a better World!

Among these the *Reverend Author* of the ensuing Discourses may very justly be numbered. But it is not my Intention to enter upon an Account of his Character. It would not consist with the Brevity of a Preface, to do that, at a greater Length than has been already done (by Hands less liable to Suspicion of Partiality, than so near a Relative) in the Sermon preached at his Funeral, and the elegiac Verses added thereto, which are annexed to this Volume.

It will be of more Use, to make some Reflections on so alarming Dispensations of divine Providence

as the Removal of so many eminent Gospel-Ministers (according to the ordinary Course of Nature) in the Midst of their Days.

Now, the aforesaid Dispensations seem to be Indications of God's Wrath against his Church and professing People. When it pleases the blessed God to favour his Church with a Number of Ministers who are exemplary for Piety, each excelling in some particular Gift or other; one abounding in Zeal, another excelling in Prudence and Government, another in Knowledge and solid Judgment: some are apt to idolize and attribute too much to them; while others despise them, and disregard their Messages. The Lord beholds, and it displeases him: Therefore he calls Home his Servants, in a Way of fatherly Chastisement to his People, that he may cut off their undue Esteem: and in a Way of Judgment to others, removing from them the Means of Grace, and Instruments which they have made so light Account of. The great God will assert his own Glory; He will let the World see that He can carry on his own Designs without such and such Instruments: nor will He always spend the Labours of his Servants upon those who obstinately scorn them, and reject their Ambassies. The Death of faithful Ministers is one Ingredient in that Stroke threatened *Rev. ii. 5. I——will remove thy Candlestick out of its Place. —*

People should be awakened to a most solemn and faithful Improvement of a Gospel-Ministry while they enjoy it; seeing it is very uncertain how long they may be so privileged. *Our Fathers,*
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where are they! and the Prophets, do they live for ever? The Preaching of the Gospei is the ordinary Means the blessed God uses for the Conversion of guilty Sinners to Himself. If they hear not *Moses* and the Prophets, if they hear not Gospel-Ministers, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead. If Sinners remain secure and unaffected under the solemn Warnings and Importunities of faithful Ministers, they have little Reason to expect that God should reach them by other Means. It will be a very high Aggravation of the Guilt and Misery of poor Christies Souls that the Strength and Zeal of the Lord's Servants have been spent upon them in vain: Oh, dreadful will their Accounts be in the great Day! And consider, poor Sinners, ye know not how soon ye may be deprived of the Labours of those Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, whose Ministry has a direct Tendency to reach your Hearts, and which God frequently blesses for that Purpose, with regard to many. The Lips which one Sabbath warn you to fly from the Wrath to come, may, before another Opportunity, be sealed in Death. If Ministers be removed by Reason of your Provocations, will you not have Cause to look upon it as a Threatening from God to give up with you? While People sit under the Ministry of a faithful Ambassador of Christ, they enjoy a special Season for seeking Salvation. But how sad their Case, when their Harvest is past, and their Summer is ended, and they are not saved! Nor are Sinners to imagine they have done with Ministers, when they are laid in

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the silent Grave. They must meet them again at the dread Bar of the great God: and if they die unconverted, the faithful Servants of Christ, whose Ministry they long misimproved, will then be swift Witnesses against them.

Let me beseech the Professors of this Generation, who enjoy a faithful Ministry, to prize it as a most valuable Mercy, and labour to improve it for your Salvation, while your Day lasts. And to that Purpose, pray, examine yourselves impartially, as in the Presence of God, by the Characters of Saints and Sinners, laid down in the Preaching of the Word. Labour to apply to yourselves your proper Portion, as, upon Examination, you find your Case; deeply ponder it, and try to get your Hearts affected with it. Pray, earnestly pray to God for the sanctifying Influences of his Spirit, and his efficacious Blessing to accompany his Word, that it may become the Power of God to your Salvation.

While many of our Fellow-Servants are called off the Stage of Action, surely we, of the sacred Order, should be hence excited to fulfil our Ministry with Vigor and ardent Zeal. We have a very solemn Trust committed to our Hands: There are many precious Souls under our Charge, Numbers of which are in Danger of perishing for ever. We have many important Truths to open up. And our Time is short: it is but a little While we have an Opportunity of attempting any thing for God in this World; or to seek the Salvation of Souls. We must soon appear before our divine Master, to give
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an Account of our Stewardship. Oh, that we could always discharge our Ministry under due Impressions of these Things. It might be worth considering too, by those whom God has blessed with good Capacities, whether it be not their Duty to endeavour to leave behind them, at least in Manuscript, what might, through the divine Blessing, be useful to the World after they are gone.

The Neglect of this was, perhaps, one of our Author's greatest Deficiencies. Which was much owing to this, that he had his Thoughts so much under his Command, and his Memory was so retentive, that he had little need of Writing to assist him in his Studies: and, through his Modesty, he never inclined to appear in public, unless when he apprehended some particular Call of Providence led him forth. There was nothing found amongst his Papers any way complete, or fit for the Press, but the *Sermon on the Being and Attributes of God*; and that *on the moral Obligations of Religion*; delivered before the Reverend Presbytery of *Newcastle*, in his Turn, in Pursuance of a Plan of systematical Preaching, agreed upon by the Members to be prosecuted at their Presbyterial Meetings; together with the *Discourse on Reprobation*, which he began with a View to deliver it in a Sermon before the Presbytery: but not having finished it, what he had wrote was reduced to the Form of an *Appendix* to be now annexed to his *Essay on the Doctrine of Predestination*. These are now added to the Discourses which were published in his Life-time, which are here collected

collected into one Volume. The Subjects here presented to thee, *Christian Reader*, are handled with much Caution and Judgment, solid Argument, and great Clearness: they afford a Specimen, or Memorial, of their Author's useful Abilities, and the Spirit of Piety that was diffused through his Ministry. The Matters here treated are very weighty and momentous, and call for thy serious Consideration and solemn Improvement. And that the great God may bless them to the saving Conversion of Sinners, and the Edification of his People, is the hearty Prayer of, *Courteous Reader*,

Thy Soul's sincere Wellwisher,

Middle-Spring,
March 26, 1754.

J O H N B L A I R.





S E R M O N I.

JOHN chap. iii. ver. 18.

He that believeth not, is condemned already.

TH E S E Words are a Part of that famous Discourse which our Lord *Christ* entertained *Nicodemus* with, a noted Ruler of the *Jews*, who came privately to *Jesus* by Night, not craftily, like the rest of the *Pharisees*, but with a pious Design of having some instructive Conversation with Him. In which, to ver. 13. the Lord opens the Nature, and declares the Necessity of the new Birth; in order to Salvation. From the 13th to the 19th Verse he preaches to him the great fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel, the last and clearest Revelation of God's Will to Mankind; concerning their Salvation: Teaching him that Himself was the only begotten Son of God, the true *Messiah*, that was anciently promised, and now come to save Sinners by his Death; which he expresses, ver. 14, by being lifted up, *i. e.* upon the Cross: Which was typified, *Numb. xxi. 9.* by *Moses* his lifting up the Serpent in the Wilderness upon a Pole, for the Healing of the stung *Israelites*. And as the *Israelites* were not healed only by *Moses's* lifting up the Serpent, but by their looking upon it; so *Christ* informs *Nicodemus*, that, in order to partake of the Virtue and Benefit of his Death, Sinners must have an Eye of Faith fixed upon Him for it. This Necessity of Faith in Him, in

order to Justification and Salvation by Him, the Lord clearly insinuates through the whole Context. And in this 18th Verse He expressly urges it from two Considerations, *viz.* The Advantage that attends it, the great Benefit that accrues to the Believer by it; and, upon the other Hand, the Disadvantage of the Want of it. The first Consideration he expresses in these Words, *He that believeth on him,* (i. e. on the Son of God, spoken of ver. 17. who was himself that was then speaking) *is not condemned,* i. e. he is delivered from Condemnation, which before he was under; brought out of a State of Condemnation into a State of Justification. And in the Words of our Text the Lord *Jesus* declares the woful Condition that, according to the Gospel, all Unbelievers are in. Wherein observe,

First, The Subject spoken of, *He that believeth not,* *viz.* on the Son of God, as before. The Indefinite, *He,* is equivalent to a Universal; and signifies, whosoever, of all the fallen Race of Mankind, believes not on the Son of God.

Secondly, Observe that which is predicated or spoken of the Unbeliever, *He is condemned;* that is, He is retained and held under the Guilt of his Sins, and Condemnation of the Law. Consider,

Thirdly, The Time in which the Unbeliever is in this Condemnation, signified by the Verb *Is,* and the Adverb *Already.* Christ says not, *he will be condemned,* or *he is like to be condemned;* but, *he is condemned already.* By Sin he has laid himself under Condemnation, and by Unbelief resists the last and only Remedy for his Recovery; and so is still in his condemned Estate, every Moment, until he comes to *Christ* by Faith. This, Oh! this is the *present* Condition of every unconverted Person, of every Soul, until he closes with *Christ* by Faith, for Relief.

The Sense and Meaning of our Lord in this Verse is to this Purpose: As if he had said to *Nicodemus,* You have acknowledged me to be a Teacher come from GOD; I am indeed the SON of GOD, and promised *Messiah,* and so
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the greatest Prophet: I open, and clearly reveal the *Gospel*, the Way in which God will have Sinners to be saved. Now, this is the Language of the *Gospel*, *He that believeth in me*, as his only and all-sufficient Saviour, unfeignedly and heartily receiving me as such, shall be delivered from the Guilt of all his Sins, and brought into a State of Justification and Peace with God; but he that does not so believe in me, complies not with the *Gospel*, and refuses his only Remedy; and so shall not enjoy the Benefit of God's *Gospel-Law* of Grace, but is still in his State of Condemnation. And thus the Lord teaches us, that the only Method for a Sinner's Recovery, for his Justification and Peace with God, is through Faith in Him. But the only Proposition of Truth that I shall speak to, from this Text, (which is clearly contained in the Words, and best suits my present Purpose) is this Doctrine,

That all such as are not united to CHRIST by Faith, are in a guilty and condemned State.

This is the present Condition of all Unbelievers. They are under the Wrath of the great God, and so continue, until they savingly believe in *Christ*. John iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* And so, though all are not in this State, yet all have been in it; even those that are in a justified State, were in a condemned State, until they fled to *Christ* by Faith.

In speaking upon this Proposition, I shall *first* show you, What we are to understand by a guilty and condemned State.

Secondly, How Unbelievers come to be in this State. And, *Thirdly*, Deduce some Practical Inferences from the Whole.

As to the *first* then, A guilty and condemned State is such, wherein a Person is sentenced and bound over to Punishment by a *Law*, for a Crime, for a Breach of the

Law. All *Laws* have their Penalties to enforce them, to engage the Subject to Obedience, and maintain Justice, by prosecuting Transgressions with condign Punishment: And so, the Transgressor is condemned by the *Law*, so soon as ever he has broken it, that is, the *Law* immediately sentences him to the bearing of that Punishment which its Penalty has allotted to such a Transgression as he has committed, before he is formally condemned by the *Judge*, after a *Law-process*; for the *Judge's* condemning him is nothing else but his pronouncing upon him the damnatory Sentence which the *Law* itself passed upon him, and whereby it condemned him to the same Punishment before, even so soon as he had broken it, only with the Addition of a positive Order for the certain Execution of the *Law* upon him. Now, to apply this to the present Case before us, A condemned State before *GOD* is such, wherein a Person is sentenced and bound over to the Punishment of *Hell*, by his holy *Law* and wise Constitution of Things: So that it is not barely a Liableness to Punishment, but such a State wherein the Person will certainly and infallibly be punished, unless he is brought out of it, and the condemnatory Sentence taken off. To be in a condemned State, is to be in such a State as *GOD* adjudges to *Hell* and Wrath: So that it is not uncertain whether the Unbeliever will be damned or not, if he should now die in his present Condition; he need not wait till after Death, or to the Judgment of the great Day, for the Decision of the Case; for *he is condemned already*; and the condemning Sentence which will then be pronounced against him, if he leaves the World in his present Condition, will be no other than that which he was always under, only then it will be formally and solemnly passed upon him, with an irrevocable Order, like the *Persian Laws*, for the speedy Execution of it. Thus, every Person in this World, is, at present, either in a State of Condemnation or Justification; either fully under, or fully delivered from the dreadful and damning Guilt of all his Sins; either in such a State, wherein if he dies, he

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shall as surely be damned as he lives; or in such a State wherein he is secured against Damnation, and entitled to eternal Blessedness. For there is no Medium: The State of every Man and Woman is positively decided and determined in God's Word, in one or other of these two Sayings, *Who-soever believeth on the Son of God, is not condemned; but who-soever believeth not on the Son of God, is condemned already.*

Now, though (as I hinted before) there is a Similitude between a Person's being in a State of Condemnation before God in this Life, and a Person's being condemned by a human Law, before his Trial, or Judicial Sentence from the Judge; yet there is this great Dissimilitude, a Person, in the latter Case, may, from the Secrecy of his Transgression, or upon many other Accounts, hope that he shall never be brought to a Trial, or that the Crime cannot be proved against him, and so, having to do with finite Creatures like himself, that he shall escape the Execution of the Law; but none of these relieving Apprehensions can have any Place here. We have to do with an infinitely just God, who will see to the Execution of his *Law*, upon those that are held under Condemnation by it. A God of eternal Truth, who will do all that he has spoken; an omniscient and all-knowing *Jehovah*, who sees the most concealed Actions and Bosom-thoughts, and registers all the Sinner's Iniquities in the *Book* of his infallible Remembrance. So that he may truly say with *Job*, chap. xiv. 16. *Thou numberest my Steps, dost thou not watch over my Sins? My Transgression is sealed up in a Bag, and thou sewest up mine Iniquity.*

Now, the Sum of what I have spoken upon this Head, is, that a State of Condemnation, which all Unbelievers are in, is such, as God, by that Method which he has constituted and established to prosecute Sin in, adjudges to the Punishment of *Hell* for ever, which Punishment the condemned Person, continuing in that State, can by no means escape, as the Guilty sometimes may before a human Bar.

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But, that I may more clearly open up this Matter to your Understanding, consider these few Particulars,

1. That God has given Man a *Law* to obey, as a Rule to walk by. This is so evident a Truth, that I think none have so far put off Humanity as to deny, who acknowledge the Being of a God. It is undeniably plain, from the Consideration of the glorious adorable Perfections of God, and the Nature of Man, as a rational Creature, and his Relation to God, as his Creator, that he must be under a *Law* to **GOD**.

2. That when **GOD** gave this *Law* to *Man*, he delivered it with a Penalty annexed to it, whereby, upon his Sinning against *God* by the Transgression of his *Law*, he was bound over to suffer that Punishment which his Sin deserved, either in his own Person, or by a Surety in his room. This was the Method which *God* determined and established as an invariable *Law* to himself, to prosecute Sin in, that the Creature's Transgression should not be pardoned without Satisfaction answerable to the Demerit of his Sin, *Gen. ii. 17. In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, said *God*. It is clearly evident, that Sin deserves a Punishment, and a dreadful one too, considering the adorable Perfections of *God*, and the infinite necessary Bonds that are upon the Creature to Obedience: So that there is nothing at least to hinder why *God* may not annex this Penalty to his *Law*; and without it the Divine Law had been destitute of the wise Establishment that appears even in Human Laws; which are enforced with the Sanction of Penalties, as a Defence against Violation. And having established his Law with this Penalty, he is engaged by the Perfections of his Immutability, Truth, and Justice, to act agreeable thereto, in the Prosecution of it *.

* I expect the candid Reader will easily pardon me for so far coinciding here to the Design of the next Head, and what I shall farther have Occasion to observe in the following Discourse; seeing it tends to the Illustration of the present Subject.

And then, 3. consider, that all Mankind have broken God's Law, and so actually laid themselves under the condemning Sentence of its penal Sanction, *Rom. iii. 19, 23.*

Now, from these Things it appears, that all Unbelievers, having no actual Interest in the Satisfaction made by Christ, for the Redemption of fallen guilty Sinners, are still in their State of Condemnation, and that that State is such wherein they are bound over to the Punishment of Hell, every Moment they continue such. And is not this an awful Case, Brethren! Hence you may see the stupid Blindness of many unconverted Persons; they cannot think that they are in a fully justified State, that they have a general full Pardon of all their Sins, are actually entitled to eternal Blessedness, and the Objects of God's special and complacential Love: No, they know that their Hearts and Lives do not evidence such a happy State; and yet they are not aware, that, being unjustified, the dreadful Guilt of all their Sins is bound upon them, and themselves in such a State wherein they are positively condemned to eternal Pains; but would fain conceive themselves in some middle State, between *condemned* and *completely justified*: A very foolish Dream; for the Sentence of Condemnation cannot be taken off a Person, but he must thereby be entitled to the Glory of God, and made an Heir of God with Christ; seeing there is no middle State after Death. His Obligation to the Punishment of Hell cannot be taken away, but he must therewith have a sure Claim to the Happiness of Heaven: And therefore, you who think that you are not condemned, though you be not justified, bewray a lamentable stupid Ignorance; for it is plain, that by *not condemned* our Lord understands *completely justified*; and so divides the whole World into these two Ranks, *He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.*

Secondly, I come now to speak to the other general Head proposed, which was to shew, How Unbelievers come to be in this condemned State. And,

1. They are condemned by the Imputation of the Guilt of *Adam's* Transgressions. The whole human Nature, the whole Race of Mankind, became guilty and condemned before God, upon the Rebellion of our first Parents. True Believers, indeed, are delivered from this Guilt, through the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness; which, the Apostle observes, is more efficacious to the Justification of those to whom it is applied, than *Adam's* Sin is to their Condemnation, *Rom. v. 15, 16, 17.* But Unbelievers, having no Interest in the Righteousness of Christ, are still under Condemnation by it. This Doctrine of the Imputation of the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin, is a Truth very clearly maintained in the holy Scriptures, how much soever it is disrelished by many in our Days, who are unwilling to submit to such an humbling Consideration. Through a great Part of the fifth Chapter to the *Romans*, the inspired Apostle very evidently maintains it. Ver. 12. he tells us, *That by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men; for that all have sinned.* The Meaning of which Passage, I think, is plainly this, That by the Transgression of our Progenitor *Adam*, Sin was imputed to the whole World of his Posterity; by which Imputation of Sin and Guilt, as they became subject to all other Miseries, so particularly to Death. And hence it is that all Men die, because they are looked upon as Sinners, by Virtue of that Transgression. The Reason which the Apostle assigns why Persons die, is because they have sinned: But Experience abundantly witnesses, that many die before they come to a Capacity of Sinning actually, and therefore he must mean Sinners by Imputation, and not by actual Imitation. To the same Purpose he tells us, *2 Cor. xv. 22. That in Adam all die.* And in the 18th Verse he expresses it very fully, *By the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation.* And again, ver. 19. he makes a plain Comparison between the *Disobedience* of *Adam* and the *Obedience* of *Christ*, in their contrary Effects, *As by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one,*
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shall many be made righteous. Whence it is evident, that as we are made righteous in Christ, by the Imputation of his Righteousness and Obedience to us, so we were made Sinners in *Adam*, by the Imputation of his Disobedience and Transgression. And from this Similitude between *Adam* and *Christ*, it is, that the Apostle, ver. 14. calls *Adam* the Figure or Type of him that was to come, that is, of *Christ Jesus*. Very full to this Purpose also is that Saying of the Apostle, *Ephes. ii. 3. We were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others.* In this Verse the Apostle relates the deplorable Condition that all the Godly themselves were in before their Conversion, which he observes to be in the Condition of all the unconverted World. And first he takes Notice of their Disposition towards *God*, qualitatively, that they were averse to *God* and his *Laws*, following very contrary Lusts; and then he takes Notice of their State towards *God*, relatively. In this last Clause, he does not say, *Children of Disobedience*, signifying their inherent natural Propensity to Evil, that he had spoken of in the first Part of the Verse; but, *Children of Wrath*, signifying their State of Condemnation before *God*, and such, he says, they were by Nature, *i. e.* they came into this condemned State, and were subject to the Wrath of *God*, so soon as they received the human Nature.

Thus you see, this Doctrine of Original Guilt is no human Invention, but is learned from the Oracles of *God*.

2. I would further add, That the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin to his Posterity is evident from the Effects of it upon them; of which these two are obvious to every one, *viz.* Natural Death, and the moral Corruption of human Nature. *By Sin Death entered into the World*, says the Apostle. The World had been a Stranger to Death, had it not been for Sin; and therefore we find it entailed upon Man after the Fall, *Gen. iii. 19. Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return.* The Reason why Death passes upon all, is, *because all have sinned*, *Rom. v. 12.* and we see Death, with a numerous Train of painful Diseases, passes upon Multitudes

that have never sinned actually, or, (as the Apostle phrases it, ver. 15.) *after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression*; and therefore it must be because of their Concern in his Transgression.

No less certainly is our original Depravity a judicial Effect of the Sin of our first Parent. That Mankind universally are averse to Holiness, and prone to Sin, by Nature, is evident to every Eye that is not stone-blind. So soon as they set out upon the Stage of Action, so soon they begin to go away from God. They have not a Knowledge of divine spiritual Things, sufficient to determine their Wills to moral Goodness, and light them in the Way of God. And if in any Instance it is otherwise, it is owing to the supernatural renewing Grace of God, who can infuse the Principles of Sanctification and the new Nature as soon as he pleases. In short, it is obvious that Mankind come into the World altogether unfurnished and unfit to attain the great End of their Being, *viz.* the active Glorifying of GOD, and are bent the backward Way. To this Purpose *David* says, *Pf. li. 5. I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.* And *Christ* says, *John iii. 6. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh.* That is, sinful and corrupt, opposed to Spiritual, in the next Clause. But, certainly, Man was not at first created thus sinful and depraved, *Gen. i. 27. GOD created Man in his own Image*; which Image, the Apostle informs us, consists in *Knowledge, Col. iii. 10. and Righteousness, and true Holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Eccl. vii. 29. GOD made Man upright.* The Wisdom and Goodness of God appears through the whole Creation, in fitting every Thing for the attaining of its End. And indeed every wise Agent does so with his Work. It is evident from the natural Endowments of Man, that he was made for the active Glorifying of GOD, for yielding a rational Service to his Maker, and enjoying a rational Happiness in Him the Fountain of all Felicity. How comes it then that he now appears altogether so unfit for the Pursuit of this noble End? Shall we impeach the divine Wisdom and Goodness in this Case?

Of this no other satisfactory Reason can be given, but the Interest which all Mankind have in the first Transgression; upon this Account, *G O D*, in a judicial Way, *creates* them destitute of the Principles and Powers of true Holiness.

What Degrees of Punishment Mankind are condemned to, barely upon the Account of the Transgression of our first Parents, I neither do nor can determine: But this is certain, that thereby we lost all Claim and Title to the happy Enjoyment of *G O D*, were condemned to eternal Exile from his comfortable and glorious Presence, and are, naturally, divested and destitute of his beautiful moral Image, having a darkened Understanding and perverse Will; averse to Holiness, and Proneness to Evil, inclining and leading to all Manner of Sin against the very Dictates of Reason and Conscience; by which actual Transgression the Soul is exposed to an aggravated and inconceivably dreadful Damnation. Thus, by the Fall we are plunged in a Deluge of Misery and Wo, fallen into a Course of actual Rebellion against *G O D*, and thereby exposed to the just and *awful* Revenge of his offended Majesty for ever; so that we stood in the most absolute Need of a Redeemer.

Let none here be so brutishly ignorant as to say, *How can we be the worse for Adam's Transgression, at this Distance of Time? A transient Act that was committed almost Six Thousand Years ago?* Consider, that one Day is with the Lord as a Thousand Years, and a Thousand Years as one Day, *2 Pet. iii. 8.* See *Pf. xc. 4.* If God at first, in his unsearchable Wisdom determined this Method to proceed with Mankind in, to find them Guilty upon the Transgression of their first Parent, what mean Conceptions must such have of the Divine Majesty, who think that this Establishment must fall through Length of Time, without taking any farther Notice of it?

Neither let the Difficulty of conceiving how the Sin of our first Parents could, in a rational Way, be imputed to their Posterity, prejudice any against the Reality and Truth of it: For seeing it is expressly revealed by God, it surely

becomes us to believe it upon his Authority, and rather charge ourselves with Ignorance, than his Word with *Falshood*. But yet this Case will admit of reasonable Satisfaction, by considering that all *Adam's* Posterity were equally involved and concerned with himself in that Covenant which GOD at first made with him, and himself constituted their Head and Representative therein; so that according to his Behaviour it was to fare with them. The Substance of this Covenant is briefly related, *Gen. ii. 17.* and the Tenor of it was a Promise of an immortal Life of Happiness, in the blessed Favour and Enjoyment of GOD, to him and all his Offspring, upon Condition of his Obedience, and a Threatning of the contrary Miseries, upon Condition of his Disobedience. Now, according to the Terms of this Covenant, upon *Adam's* Transgression, Guilt and Condemnation plainly and necessarily followed upon all the human Race. This Covenant-Relation of *Adam* to his Posterity, is also plainly insinuated *Rom. v.* where the Apostle compares *Adam* and *Christ* together, particularly ver. 14, 19. so that as *Christ*, when he was in the World, acted and suffered, not in a private Capacity, but as a public Person, representing others, in the Covenant of Grace; so it was with *Adam* in the Covenant of Works, and therefore, ver. 14. he is called the *Figure of Christ*, who was to come.

But here the greatest Question of all is, *How it can comport with the Justice and Goodness of GOD to involve all Mankind in such a Covenant, made with their first Parents, that has issued so much to their Disadvantage, and that without their personal Consent?*

For *Answer* to this, let it be considered, 1. That the Covenant was not adapted and composed to their Disadvantage, though it has eventually proved so, but to their great Benefit; for, upon the Obedience of *Adam*, they had all been eternally happy, secured against the Danger of sinning and perishing, confirmed in an immutable State of Holiness, like the Angels that are in Heaven: And is it not accounted Wisdom in human Affairs, for Persons to run some Hazard of

of a considerable Loss, upon an apparent Prospect of a great Gain. Upon this Plan it is, that the Mariner crosses the Ocean, and the Soldier fights in the Battle. And then, 2. consider with this, that *Adam* was fully furnished and completely impowered for the Fulfilment of the Covenant-Condition, and as highly engaged to it, as any could be: He had every way as full Ability to perform the required Obedience, as any of them could have had separately for themselves, and as great Motives to excite him to Watchfulness and Diligence, having his own Interest as much concerned in it as theirs; so that our eternal Concern was every whit as safe in his Hand as our own. These two Considerations, compared and well weighed together I think, may yield abundant Satisfaction in this Case. and sufficiently make appear that in this Method of Procedure with Mankind, which GOD in the Depth of his infinite Wisdom was pleased to fall upon, there was not the least Injury done them, but much to the contrary. And surely the Sovereign GOD may do that which is right and so highly beneficial in its Tendency, without waiting the Consent of the Creature; nay, whether it will consent or not. But it is highly to be presumed, that had our Representative, *Adam*, persevered in his Obedience, and we now enjoyed the happy Consequences of it, we had been ready enough to applaud the divine Wisdom and Goodness, appearing in such a Method. So that there is no room for those tragical Outcries in the World of Injustice, in the Case of Original Guilt. And whereas the LORD declares, *That the Child shall not suffer for the Father's Sin*, it is spoken with Reference to the Sin of our near Parents, who, though they bear a natural, yet stand in no such Covenant-Relation to us, as our first Parents did.

But possibly some of my Hearers may apprehend, *That though the whole human Race did become guilty and condemned upon their first Parents Transgression, yet all that Guilt is taken away and removed from all Mankind through the Death of*
 { ST, *so that none come into this World and partake*
 of

of the human Nature in a State of Condemnation. Such would do well to consider, when it was that this Guilt was done away; whether before or immediately after the Death of *Christ*. If it be said, that it was taken away from the Beginning, so soon as the Covenant of Grace was published to *Adam*, after the Fall, *Gen. iii. 15.* or at any other Time before the Death of *Christ*; how then could the Apostle say in his Day, *Eph. ii. 3. WE ALL were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as OTHERS?* It could not be taken away only after the Death of *Christ*, for his Death was of the same Virtue and Efficacy since the Fall of Man to this Day. It was through his Mediation and Death that the Godly in all Ages were saved, even before in Reality he died: And hence he is said to be slain from the Foundation of the World, *Rev. xiii. 8.* In short, if Original Guilt was wholly taken away then, upon the Death of *Christ*, the Gospel must have been turned altogether into a new Model, from what it ever was before, agreeable to this new Article; whereas it has always been substantially the same, only under different Modes of Administrations, and in different Degrees of Light and Clearness. *Gal. iii. 8.* the Apostle says, *God preached the Gospel before unto Abraham, (Gen. xii. 3.) saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* And I may say, that he preached before the Gospel unto *Adam*, *Gen. iii. 15.* saying, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head.*

Moreover, we see that very deplorable Effects of the first Transgression do yet remain upon Mankind, as I have already observed. And how these Effects, judicially inflicted upon Man, on the Account of the first Transgression, such as will certainly, without extraordinary supernatural preventing Grace, lead him to a very dreadful Damnation, (as natural Blindness, Stupidity, and a depraved Will, do many) how, I say, such Effects can remain, and yet all the Guilt be taken away, is hard to imagine.

That Passage, *1 Cor. xv. 22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,* is nothing to this Purpose; for the Apostle is there speaking only of the Resurrection

resurrection of the Dead at the last Day, as appears throughout the whole Chapter. The being *made alive*, which he here speaks of, is such whereof *Christ* himself is a Partaker; for immediately follows in the next Verse, *But every Man in his own Order; Christ the First-fruits, afterwards, says he, they that are Christ's, (and the Time when they are to be made alive, is) at his Coming, and that is at the End of the World; Then cometh the End, says he, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom, &c.* and so the Meaning of the Words is plainly to this Purpose, that as by *Adam* all his Posterity were subject to natural Death, in a Way of Judgment, so by *Christ* all his Seed, *i. e.* they that are *Christ's*, as ver. 23. shall be quickened and raised from the Dead, in a Way of Mercy and Love, to the full Consummation of their Happiness. This Verse is only another Way of phrasing the same Thing that he had said ver. 21. *Since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead.*

Another Place of Scripture also is made use of in this Case, *Rom. v. 18. 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 the right Understanding of this Scripture, you must observe, that the Apostle compares the Offence or Disobedience of *Adam*, and the Righteousness or Obedience of *Christ* together, in the *first* Place, in that neither of them were merely personal, but both of public Influence: Herein, he observes, they exactly agree; and therefore he says, *As by the Offence of One, even so by the Righteousness of One.* And then, *secondly*, he compares them, not as to the Extent of their Influence, that is, as to the Number of Persons to whom they extend in their Effects, but as to the Efficacy and Power of it. And in this Part of the Comparison, he observes, that the Righteousness of *Christ* has much the Advantage, that it is much more powerful in its Effects than the Disobedience of *Adam*; for, though the Disobedience of *Adam* was of sufficient Efficacy to condemn, yet the Righteousness of *Christ* exceeds in Power, in that it is of sufficient

Efficacy

Efficacy to justify after this Condemnation, and that to everlasting Life; as he that rescues a Captive from an Enemy, must be stronger than he. This is very evidently the Design of the Apostle, through this whole Context. To this Purpose he says, ver. 17. *For if by one Man's Offence Death reigned by one, much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one, Jesus Christ.* And then the Meaning of this 18th Verse is, as if the Apostle had said, seeing it is so that the Righteousness of *Christ* is of much more Efficacy and Virtue than the Disobedience of *Adam*; therefore it is plain, that as all those upon whom the Offence of *Adam* came, were condemned by it, so, all those upon whom the free Gift, by the Righteousness of *Christ* comes, are justified thereby, and delivered from this Condemnation; with such a complete Justification as is followed with everlasting Life. Or, to vary a little from the very Words, As all those to whom the Sin of *Adam* is imputed, are thereby condemned, so all those to whom the Righteousness of *Christ* is imputed, must thereby be delivered from that Condemnation, justified and glorified. So that the Apostle's Design is not to signify, that as many as were condemned by *Adam* are justified by *Christ*, but that *Christ's* Righteousness is much more efficacious than *Adam's* Disobedience; so that those to whom it is applied, must thereby be justified from their Condemnation in *Adam*, and restored to that Life which they had lost in him*.

It remains then an unshaken Truth, that all Mankind come into this World in a State of Condemnation, by their Apostacy and Rebellion in their first Parent, out of which

* As if a Man, intending to set forth the great Power of Heat beyond Cold, should say, The Cold indeed seizes all Things with such Power as to harden them; but the Sun comes upon all Things with such Power as to soften them again, even when under the Power of the Cold. Who would imagine here, that the Heat and Cold were compared as to the Latitude and Extent of their Influence, but as to their Efficacy upon the Things which they are applied to.

none are delivered, through the Redemption that is in *Jesus Christ*, until they are renewed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, even such as it pleases the Lord to remove out of this World, and save in their Infancy, must have the supernatural Principles of Faith, and all other Graces, infused into their Souls, *i. e.* must be fitted and disposed for the exercising of them, otherwise than they are by Nature; without which they cannot be *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; for that which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, altogether unfit for the Enjoyment of God. And such as are advanced to a riper Age, to the Exercise of Reason, must actually believe in *Christ*, before they can be freed from their original Condemnation, or any other Guilt; for an Interest in *Christ's* justifying Righteousness, and partaking of the Benefits of his Mediation, is in the Gospel suspended upon believing in Him. But supposing it were so, that Mankind were not by Nature the Children of Wrath, and came not guilty and condemned into the World, yet this would not much help the Case of Unbelievers. For,

II. They are condemned by their actual and personal Sins. By these they are laid under the Condemnation of *God's Law*, sentenced and bound over to Hell and Wrath. The Delivering of Mankind barely from Original Guilt had been of small Service (indeed of none at all) to such as live to any Years, unless the inherent Depravity of their Nature were removed with it; and God's moral Image, in which they were at first created, again restored upon them, and so Provision made against their Sinning actually in their own Persons. But, alas! we plainly see it is not so; for *all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD*, Rom. iii. 23. and *if we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us*; 1 John i. 8. yea, ver. 10. *if we say, that we have not sinned, we make GOD a Liar; and his Word is not in us*. And the Law of God sentences the Person to Punishment, that has broken it, and condemns him to a heavier Damnation than he was condemned to by his Original Guilt. This condemning Sentence of the Law is

that which is called the *Curse of the Law*, which it issues out upon the Subject, so soon as ever he has, in the least, failed of perfect and exact Obedience to it: *Gal. iii. 10. As many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* Here you see the *Law* curses and condemns the Sinner, and that if he should but break it in one Particular, *if he do not all Things which are written in the Book of the Law; yea, if he continues not* in this perfect Obedience, whensoever he swerves from the *Law* in one Point, he is condemned by it. The *Law* will justify upon no other Terms, but an exactly perfect Obedience, without the least Flaw. If there is one Failure in it, the Person is rejected and laid under the Curse: *James ii. 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all, i. e. he is as really condemned by the Law, and laid under the Curse, as if he had particularly broken every Precept: For it is a Striking at the Foundation of the whole Law, a Contemning of that Authority upon which the Whole is established.* And if this be so, then, Oh! what an awful aggravated Punishment must such be exposed to, who are yet in their condemned State, and have Thousands of Transgressions to answer for! Who spend their whole Lives in Sin, as all unconverted Persons do. The Furnace is daily waxing hotter for you, as you heap up the Measure of your Sins. Sin is not such a light and trivial Thing, as blind and stupid People imagine: It is soon committed, and soon forgotten, and they do not commit it, as they think, out of any mischievous Design, but only for some personal Satisfaction and Pleasure: And Multitudes of Things wherein they come not up to the Strictness of the Divine *Law*, are only the Infirmities of human Nature, common to Man, which the Divine Majesty will easily overlook. With these, or such like Thoughts, if not with a more irrational and brutish Banter, they plaister over the Filthiness, the detestable and criminal Nature of Sin, that that may not be discovered by them: But, Oh! Sirs, there

is an infinite Evil in Sin ; which the Damned see and feel : It is the Rebellion of a Creature, endowed with rational Powers for a very contrary End, against the Author of its Being ; against infinite Majesty and eternal Sovereignty. And those who can sin so lightly against GOD, and be so stupidly unconcerned about it, discover the Enmity and Hatred that is in their Hearts against Him. They hate his Holiness, and so his very Nature. In all Sin there is an inexpressible Demerit ; so that it deserves an inexpressible Punishment, and accordingly GOD's holy *Law* dooms the Sinner to it. Those, indeed, who have received Christ by a true Faith, whereby they are sanctified and made sincerely holy, (blessed be the gracious God!) are brought out of this Condemnation, through his answering the *Law* for them : So that *there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. but Unbelievers have no Interest in the *Gospel-Righteousness*, viz. that which is by the *Faith of Christ*, as the Apostle calls it, *Phil.* viii. 9. and so still stand condemned by the *Law*, under the damning Guilt of all their Sins : *For as many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse.*

Thus I have shewn you how Unbelievers have come into this condemned State, which they are in : But yet this does not fully reach the Design of this Head, which is also to shew how they come to be at present in this State of Condemnation, and that, when others are in a justified Estate, who have been actual Transgressors, and by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as they. And therefore,

III. They are kept in their condemned State, by their Unbelief.

Now Unbelief has a twofold Influence upon a Sinner's Condemnation, viz. Privative and Positive. 1. It has a private Influence upon it, as it keeps them under their former Guilt, in their antecedent Condemnation, which they were brought into by the Imputation of the first Transgression, and their own personal Sin ; and so deprives them of being justified ; And that without the Consideration of its making

any Addition to their Guilt. The only Relief of guilty Sinners, from their Condemnation, is through the Righteousness and Mediation of Christ. But, according to God's wise Constitution in the Gospel, they can have no Interest in the Righteousness of Christ, without the Grace of Faith; so that Unbelievers are altogether destitute of the Benefit of the Redeemer's Mediation; and so still held in their condemned State, by their Unbelief: *John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of GOD abideth on him.* The Wrath of GOD abideth on him. He does not say, it then comes on him, but it *abides* on him; signifying, that it was upon him before on other Accounts, and still continues so by Reason of Unbelief, whereby he comes short of the only Remedy. To the same Purpose our Lord tells us in our Text, *He that believeth not, is condemned already;* and the Reason of his being in this condemned State, follows, *Because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* And then, 2. Unbelief has a positive Influence upon the Sinner's Condemnation, *i. e.* it not only keeps him under his former Condemnation, but it adds to it, as a Crime, by aggravating and heightening of his Guilt. How much heavier must it make the Sinner's Condemnation, when he will not humbly acknowledge his condemned deplorable Condition by Sin, and heartily receive the Lord JESUS, wholly depending upon Him for his Relief, as He is offered to him by the LORD of his infinite Compassion, for that End; at least not using all possible Endeavours to do so, but proudly flights redeeming Mercy, and refuses his only Remedy.

And now you see, Brethren, that Unbelievers, such as are not united to CHRIST by Faith, are condemned both by the *Law* and by the *Gospel*: The *Laws* says, *He that performs not all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, shall be damned,* Gal. viii. 10. This is the Curse which it pronounces against him: But the Unbeliever has not done this. It's true, there is an Appeal from the

Law to the *Gospel*; wherein Life and Saivation through *Christ* is offered to guilty and condemned Sinners that receive Him by Faith: But the *Gospel* says, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 18. and he has not complied with the *Gospel*; and so is condemned by it. And there is no other Court of Grace to appeal to; and, Oh! how dreadful is it when a Sinner's last Remedy flashes the Fire of Heli in his Face.

Thirdly, I proceed now to improve this Subject I have been insisting upon, by some Practical Inferences drawn from it. And,

I. If it be so that all Unbelievers, without Exception, are in a *condemned* State; then it informs us, that *Justification* cannot be obtained by our own Righteousness. No Person, by their strictest Obedience to the Law of God, can be delivered from that Condemnation which they are laid under by it. The Lord does not say, the *profane* Unbeliever, or the *careless* Unbeliever, that makes no Practice of the Duties of Religion, is condemned; but, *He that believeth not*, indefinitely, without any Limitation, be he who he will, or do he what he will, until he believes in *Christ*, he is condemned, and the Wrath of God abideth on him. And, indeed, *Justification* by our own Righteousness and *personal Obedience*, is inconsistent with the very Nature of Faith; wherein the Believer rejects all Dependance upon his own Goodness and Obedience, and leans entirely on the Righteousness of the Redeemer. Moreover, You have heard, that whosoever would be justified that Way, by a *Law of Righteousness*, must produce a complete one, without the least Imperfection; upon no other Terms can any Person be justified by his own Righteousness. The Law will have a complete exact Righteousness, in every Point and Degree, or none at all: If there is a Defection in it, the Law is so far from justifying, that it positively condemns. And the Law of God in this Form, is no other than his wise Establishment, which he has engaged himself to stand by. And therefore, *as many as are under the Works of the Law, are under the Curse*, because
they

they have not done all Things which the Law required; for it says, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* Unbelievers are so far from perfectly fulfilling the Law, that, the Truth is, no Person can yield any Obedience that is any way pleasing to God, till he is first justified: *Justification* and *Renovation* always go together, and the one is never without the other; and so an unjustified Person, being an unconverted Person, cannot obey God in any Thing, with a Gospel Sincerity; all his Obedience flowing from an un-sanctified Heart: *Rom. viii. 8. They that are in the Flesh, cannot please God.* And how then can all their Obedience remove their Condemnation, and recommend them to God's Love? When his holy Eye sees no Beauty, but much Uncleaness in it.

2. What has been spoken, clearly informs us of the great Blindness and stupid Ignorance of such as think they are in no great Danger, because they are small Sinners. From hence they derive the Peace and secure Quiet of their Consciences, that they are not guilty of such gross Immoralities as many others; they have taken Care to abstain from such Things as are offensive to God, and have committed but little Sin against the Divine Majesty: And therefore they think they can be in no great Danger of perishing, but if any are in a safe State, sure they must. Ah, poor unhappy Creatures! None under Heaven are in greater Danger than you, Witness the moral *Pharisee*, *Luke xviii. 11, 12.* In the first Place, it is a plain Evidence of the gross Darkness of your Minds, that you think you have been guilty of so little Sin; when, perhaps, in the mean Time, you go on in the continued Neglect of God's positive Commands, as if that were no Sin. But however this be, it is plain you do not see the secret Wickedness of your Heart, which are a very Mystery of Iniquity: For you have an inward Dislike at real Holiness, and Walking with GOD; and so entertain a secret Enmity in your Hearts against God, and hate his moral Image. You have no Gust nor Relish of spiritual and divine Things,

Things, of experimental Piety, in your earthly Souls. You have not the Love of God in you, that sensibly affects and captivates the Heart, you are Strangers to the lively Actings of Faith in the Lord *JESUS*, and know not what humble *Self-abasement* before *GOD*, Heart-contrition, and godly Sorrow means. You have no true Zeal for *GOD*, and make not his Honour and Glory the principal Mark of your Pursuits in the World, having it for your Aim and End above all Things to glorify and please him; but are seeking yourselves, idolatrously setting yourselves up in the room of *GOD*, making yourselves your last End in all you do; and so living without God in the World, as if you were not Creatures made to serve him. And is all this no Sin? Are not here Iniquities of the vilest Nature? Now, this being the general Temper and Disposition of your Minds, your Lives can be nothing else but one continued Scene of Sin: *Prov. xxx. 12. There is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet is not washed from their Filthiness.* The Apostle *Paul* had the same Opinion of himself before his Conversion, before his Eyes were opened to see himself: *Rom. vii. 9. I was alive without the Law once,* says he, That is, I was alive in my own Apprehension; I thought myself in a happy and safe Estate, guilty of very little Sin; being, as to the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless, to my own and others View. This Apprehension I had of myself before I had a right Discovery of God's Law: *But,* says he, *when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died.* As if he had said, When the Law of *GOD* was set home to my Conscience, in a clear and just Light, and I saw the spiritual Nature and Extent of it, then I lost all my former Opinion of myself, and saw what a blind mistaken Creature I had been. Then I discovered a Body of Sin in me, as if it had just then started into Life; and then he cries out, *ver. 24. O wretched Man that I am!* &c. See *Rev. iii. 17.* But then supposing you were guilty of as little Sin as yourselves imagine, yet your Conclusion from hence of the Safety of your Condition, is very foolish and pernicious: You have

committed Sin enough to sink you into everlasting Destruction; for I suppose you will readily acknowledge that you have been guilty of one Sin, at least, in all your Life: And then you see you are laid under the Curse and Condemnation of the Law; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things, &c.* And, *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* Were you guilty but of one Transgression, it must either be washed away by the Blood of *Christ*, or you are undone for ever: For you are by it condemned to deserved Punishment: *He that believeth not on the Son, is condemned,* whether he be a great or small Sinner; there is no Exception.

II. This Doctrine speaks Terror and Matter of the deepest Humiliation to all Unbelievers. But that this Use may the better answer its Design, I shall, in the first Place, offer some Marks and Characters of such as are Unbelievers; whereby I entreat you to examine yourselves, and try what State you are in: And then I shall a little consider what Terror this great Truth speaks to such. And,

1. Such as never have been so thoroughly convinced of their condemned, wretched, undone, and helpless Condition; as humbly and affectionally to receive *Jesus Christ* for their only Saviour, rejecting all other Dependance, and deriving the only Peace of their Consciences, and Comfort of their Souls, from the Consideration of his Mediation and Righteousness; these, I say, are Unbelievers, and yet in their Sins. Herein consists the very Substance and Life of justifying Faith: It is the Soul's lying under a Sense of Guilt and impending Wrath, that forces it to come to *Christ*, as his only Relief; so that *Christ*, as *Mediator*, is the alone Foundation of the Believer's Hope, inward Peace and Confidence towards GOD: *Phil. iii. 3. We rejoice in Christ JESUS, and have no Confidence in the Flesh; Eph. iii. 12. In whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence, by the Faith of him.* So that those who have never been heartily and feelingly sensible of their Misery and Undoneness in them-

themselves, have never come to *Christ* by Faith; for the Whole will not apply to the Physician, but the Sick. And such as make any Thing else but the Redeemer's Merit the Foundation of their Peace, thinking well of their Condition, either because they are guilty of little Sin, or because they perform the external Duties of Religion, are sorry for their Sins, or the like, are utter Strangers to a saving Faith. Neither is it enough to profess, and superficially believe, that you are miserable and undone without *Christ*, and that no other Way you can possibly be saved but through his Mediation; Persons may maintain all this, and profess it as their Judgment, and yet never, in Reality, come to *Christ*, but rest on something else: Unless the Dispositions and Actings of your Hearts be agreeable to these Truths, unless you so believe them as to be answerably affected by them, what signifies your orthodox Belief? It is but a dead Faith, that will not profit you. And yet, alas! this is all the Faith that many Professors content themselves with. They think well of themselves because they profess these great Truths of the Gospel as the Articles of their Faith, and pity such as do not know so much, or maintain a contrary Opinion. But a true Faith in *Christ* is a sensible and lively Operation of the Soul, wherein the Person is affected suitably to what he believes; and does, in an active Manner, lean, with deep Poverty of Spirit, upon *Christ*, and Him alone, for his Deliverance from Condemnation and Wrath, for Reconciliation and Peace with God. And hence it is held forth in the Scripture by such Expressions, as *Receiving of Christ*, John i. 12. *Coming to Christ*, Matth. xi. 28. *Leaning upon Him*, Cant. 8. 5. and the like. And therefore you that have never felt this in your Hearts, have never closed with *Christ* by Faith, but are yet in a State of Condemnation.

2. Those that have not a transcendent Love to GOD in their Hearts, such as necessarily and yet freely engages them to a Life of Holiness and Obedience, are Unbelievers: For *Faith worketh by Love*, Gal. v. 6. and *Love by a cheerful*

Obedience: John xiv. 23. *If a Man love me, he will keep my Words, i. e. he will obey my Commands.* You that have not an abiding and prevailing Love to the glorious GOD in your Hearts, so that your Wills and Affections are sweetly determined to God and Holiness, whereby you are filled with pure and vehement Desire after Likeness to Him, and the Enjoyment of Him, have never believed in JESUS CHRIST. None are united to Him by Faith, that are not united to Him in Love. Faith, by Love, sanctifies the Heart, and turns it from all the vain Things of this World to GOD alone, the Fountain of all Excellency: *John v. 4. Whatsoever is born of GOD overcometh the World, and this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even your Faith.*

3. These are Unbelievers, who have not a very dear Value and high Esteem for JESUS CHRIST: *1 Pet. ii. 7. Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious.* The Spouse speaks the Language of all true Believers concerning Christ, *Cant. ii. 3. As the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons: I sat down under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my Taste.* Oh! Sirs, Believers behold a commanding Excellency and Glory in Jesus Christ, the very Glory of GOD shining in his Face, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* So that their Hearts, their whole Hearts are captivated after Him, and He is dearer to them than their own Lives, *Luke xiv. 26.* How is it with you in this, Hearers? Is Christ so precious to you or not?

4. Such are Unbelievers as have never felt the inexpressible Consolations of Faith. You may see the joyful Fruit of Faith, *1 Pet. i. 8. In whom (though now ye see him not, yet) believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* Oh! what unknown Sweetness does it introduce into the Heart, when the Soul hears Christ's Voice, saying, *Son, or Daughter, be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee!* It fills the Mind with that *Peace of God that passeth all Understanding*: Faith is of a discovering and prospective Nature,

Nature, and brings the most distant Things into near View; *Heb. xi. 1. It is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen.* When Faith is in a lively Exercise, it opens the Dawning of Heaven in this lower World, and shoots forth celestial Rays upon the Soul. It ascends with *Moses* to the Top of *Pisgab*, and takes a beautiful Landskip of the heavenly *Canaan*, and descries the distant Glories of *Immanuel's Land*. Now, those that have no intellectual Views and Discoveries of this Nature, in such Measure, at least, as yields them a pure Delight and sweeter Satisfaction than all this World can afford, and draws forth their Hearts in sensible affectionate Longings after GOD, are utter Strangers to a saving Faith. Those that are in Christ by Faith, have the blessed Fruits and quickening Influences of his Holy Spirit in their Hearts: *Rom. viii. 9. If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and Gal. v: 22. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, &c.* But you must observe here, that Persons are liable very grossly to deceive themselves by their extraordinary Frames and Elevations of Spirit. And for your Direction in this Case, take this general Rule, *viz.* That whatsoever extraordinary Impressions and Emotions of Heart Persons may have, while in the general Disposition of their Hearts, and Tenor of their Lives, they continue still the same Persons, carnal and earthly; they are not the Fruits of true Faith, nor of the same Kind with those of true Believers, which are of a Soul-sanctifying Nature: Unless the habitual Bent and Bias of your Hearts are spiritual and holy, unless there is a new and heavenly Nature in you, all your transient Fits, either of Love or Sorrow, are of no Value; your most rapturous Frames of Spirit are not to be regarded: And if you do take Peace from them, you will wofully deceive your Souls, though they were as high as *Saul's*, *1 Sam. ix. 23, 24.* who continued the old Man still.

And now, Hearer, have you closed with CHRIST by Faith, or not? How stands the Case with you, according to these Marks of Trial? Are there none in this Assembly that see themselves thereby to be in a faithless, Christless Condition? I am sure, many of you cannot but clearly see, if you use any Consideration, that, according to these Evidences, you have never yet received CHRIST, nor believed in Him. Your own Consciences must needs testify it to your Faces: And I intreat you, not to put away the Thoughts of it, but deeply lay it to Heart, if you have any Value for your Souls. And, indeed, if you did but see the Wretchedness and Misery of your Condition, you could not lightly forget it: Oh! it would make the stoutest of your Hearts to ake within you, and bow to the Earth before a jealous GOD: For you are this Moment in a condemned State, bound over to the never-ending Torments of Hell the Vengeance of eternal Fire; so that if you come not to the LORD JESUS, and get not an Interest in his Righteousness, by Faith, perish you must, without Remedy. You were *by Nature Children of Wrath*, and came condemned into Being; and how unspeakably have you increased your Guilt, and made your Condemnation many thousand times heavier by a continued Series of Sins against GOD! which are all registered and written in Heaven against you: And yet, for all this, you have proudly carried it off with a stupid Insensibility, and have not humbled yourselves, as it becomes Creatures in such deplorable Circumstances, to the Feet of CHRIST, and fled to Him for Relief; and so you are condemned from Heaven, both by the *Law* and *Gospel*, and the Wrath of GOD abides upon you; where-ever you go, you walk up and down upon the Earth condemned Caitifs before the great GOD, with the Sentence of eternal Death upon you, which in a little Time will infallibly be executed upon you, to the utmost, unless you come to JESUS CHRIST. And,
Oh

Oh Sirs! you will find that *it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. Is your Case so dismal, and are your Hearts unmoved? Have you no Concern about it! Oh lamentable Stupidity! Are you not afraid to enter the Lists with the Almighty GOD? *Can your Hand be strong, or can your Heart endure in the Day that he shall deal with you?* Ezek. xxii. 14. Sure, you have Reason enough to be filled with the deepest Distress and saddest Sorrows: Is it not a dreadful Case to have all your Sins unpardoned, standing upon Record against you, in the Book of God's Remembrance? Is it not a dreadful Case to be under the Wrath of GOD, having it hanging over you as a gloomy Cloud of Horror, stored with the Instruments of Death, charged with Thunderbolts, ready to be discharged upon your guilty Heads, to strike you down to *Tophet's* Burnings? Is it not a dreadful Case to be in such a State, wherein, if you should die, you would as surely be damned as you are now alive? and you know not how soon Life's feeble Thread may break, your last Breath depart, and your wretched Souls with it to the Habitation of the Damned, to take up their Lodgings there. This is the present Case of every one of you that have not by Faith come to the Lord JESUS, *Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 3.*

III. I shall now conclude, with a Use of *Exhortation* to these unhappy Persons, who, having never received CHRIST by Faith, are in a condemned deplorable Estate. And sure, it might be rationally expected, that the Thoughts of the woful undone Condition you are in, would make you very desirous and attentive to hear any Thing that may be offered for your Good and Happiness.

And, first, then, let me intreat you, with the tenderest Regard to your precious perishing Souls, to acknowledge your miserable and condemned State, and take it solemnly to Heart. Be sensible, that this is surely your Condition, if there is any Truth in God's Word. And,
Oh!

Oh! let your Thoughts dwell much upon it; be not so stupidly insensible as to cast it out of your Minds, and lightly disregard it. How lamentable is it, that rational Creatures, when they hear of the unspeakably miserable Condition which their precious and immortal Souls are in, will either not apply it to themselves, nor so much as consider whether it be their Case, or if they do, will presently divert their Thoughts to other Subjects, betake themselves to their vain irreligious Companions, and please themselves with the little Amusements of this Life, while, in the mean Time, they are hastning every Moment nearer to the Regions of the Damned; and yet this is the brutish Course that many take. I beseech you, to whom belong the fore-mentioned Characters of Unbelievers, to consider, and be sensible, that you are in this condemned State, I have been speaking of; and flatter not yourselves with unreasonable Apprehensions to the contrary, saying to yourselves, *Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace.* And is not this a reasonable Request? For I now desire you to believe the Truth; and is it not reasonable to believe that which is true, when there is such abundant Evidence of the Truth of it? And what Advantage will it be to you to believe a Falshood, by thinking you are not in such a State? Alas! you cannot flatter yourselves out of your condemned State, though you may flatter yourselves out of the Apprehension of it. You cannot flatter *Truth* out of its Being, nor, by a groundless Apprehension, alter the Being of Things as they are. Is it not highly reasonable then, to acknowledge your wretched perishing Condition? It will do you no Good to deny it, but unspeakable Hurt: for, so long as you flatter yourselves with a groundless Conceit of your Safety, you will not effectually bestir yourselves to get into a safe Condition, but lie still in your blind Security, until you perish: And, Ah! it is too late to be convinced by feeling those Miseries you would not fear. It's true, unholy and unbelieving Sinners, through their
natural

natural Blindness and Pride of Heart, are very averſe to believe any Evil of themſelves: And therefore wicked *Ahab* hated the LORD's Prophet, *1 Kings* xxii. 8. But, Oh! ſhould you not act like rational Creatures, and yield to ſufficient Matter of Conviction? laying aſide all biaſſed Prejudices, believe the Thing as it is, whether it be as you would have it, or not; eſpecially when it is the moſt likely Way for your eternal Happineſs? as it is in the preſent Caſe. Oh! beware, leſt, while you are ſaying, *Peace and Safety, then ſuddens Deſtruction cometh upon you, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and you ſhall not eſcape, 1 Theſſ. v. 3.* And conſider the Fearfulneſs of a condemned State: Let nothing yield Eaſe or Peace to your Minds, until you have good Evidences of Reconciliation and Peace with GOD, through the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Think with yourſelves, what blind, thoughtleſs, deceived Creatures you have been. Some of you, perhaps, have thought it was nothing to have a Sin forgiven; that was an eaſy Thing; if you did but check yourſelves, and were ſorry for it afterwards: But here you may clearly ſee, if you are not reſolved that you will not ſee, that your Sin has brought you into a fearful Condemnation, under the Wrath and Curſe of the eternal GOD, out of which your Souls can never riſe, but by the Righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, *Chriſt*, accepted for you, which, alas! you have no Share nor Interelt in, having never ſavingly believed in Him. And, Oh! think, what is all the World to you, when you are out of *Chriſt*, and the Love of GOD, under the damning Guilt of all your crimſon Sins.

2. I exhort and intreat you, in Chriſt's Name, earneſtly to ſeek for Deliverance from this Condemnation, for Peace and Reconciliation with the great GOD, through the dear Saviour. You ſhould be ſaying with *Peter's* convinced Hearers, *Acts* ii. 37. *What ſhall we do?* And with the trembling Goaler, *Acts* xvi. 30. *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Oh! conſider, there is no reſting in your pre-

sent Condition; if you stay there, you are undone for ever: Humble then your hard Hearts before *Jehovah*, and cast yourselves down at the Feet of *Christ*, as guilty Rebels, condemned and undone Creatures. Implore the LORD GOD of Hosts, that, of his mere and infinite Mercy, he would look down upon helpless Creatures, in the most abject Misery, and give you an Interest in his dear Son, the Redeemer; that he would teach you how to come to *Christ*, and give you Faith to embrace Him. But beware you do not take your Encouragement for Acceptance from any Goodness you conceit to be in yourselves, or Worthiness in what you do; the LORD will surely reject such proud and haughty Suppliants: *He fills the Hungry with good Things, but the Rich he sends empty away.* There is nothing in you can induce Him to help you, but your absolute Poverty and Necessity: There is infinite Mercy in the Heart of GOD, whereby He is wont to pity the Needy and Distressed. I call upon you this Day from the great GOD, that you go no longer on in a Course of Sin, and stupid Thoughtlessness about your precious Souls, which are in a State of Death. Is it not highly reasonable and necessary, that, in such miserable Circumstances, you should bow your haughty Hearts before the LORD, and, in the deepest Distress, perseveringly seek Him, until He have Mercy upon you? This you must do, unless you are willing to perish for ever: *Hos. x. 12. Break up your fallow Ground, i. e. break and humble your hard stubborn Hearts: For it is Time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain Righteousness upon you.*



S E R M O N II.

R O M. chap. x. ver. 3, 4.

For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God; for Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth.

MAN, by Sin, having fallen under an awful Condemnation, and the dread Displeasure of the great **G**OD, his Maker, it highly concerns us, who are Parts of his fallen Species, to enquire whether there be any possible Way of Recovery, any possible Method of escaping the Wrath to come, to which we are condemned by God's broken Law: And if there be, what Way that is, lest we be deceived in our Apprehensions of it, and the Mistake prove fatal and deadly. The glorious God, in the unsearchable Depths of his Wisdom, has laid out and established a complete and most astonishing Method for the Deliverance of condemned Sinners out of their condemned State, and bringing them to a State of Life and Happiness, in the Favour and Enjoyment of Himself. He also, of his infinite and distinguishing Goodness, has given us the invaluable Blessing of his holy Word, wherein he has clearly revealed that Way in which alone condemned Creatures can be justified, and delivered out of their Condemnation, and requires our hearty and thankful Compliance with it; so that most undone Creatures shall we be, after all, if, through our own Wickedness, we misapprehend it, and set up a Way of our own, in Opposition to his; which was the fatal Case of the

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unhappy Persons spoken of in our Text. The Persons here spoken of were the greater Part of the *Jewish* Nation, who rejected the Lord JESUS, and would not believe in Him as their Saviour. In the first Verse the Apostle expresses a very tender Regard and compassionate Concern for them, viz. *My Heart's Desire and Prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved*. And ver. 2. he offers one Thing which excited and much moved his Concern for them: *For* (says he) *I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*. That is, they have a Zeal in Things respecting God, in the Things which they look upon to be the Laws and Ordinances of God, but it is a Zeal attended with very great Ignorance and Blindness, so that they come short of the true Motives that should excite their Zeal, and miss the principal Mark to which their Zeal should bend. And though the Apostle had a universal and unlimited Compassion for the perishing Souls of Men, yet this Consideration concerning those of his own Nation, very intimately touched his own Heart, that they had such a Zeal for God, and yet altogether out of the Way of God. This he also observes of them, to introduce him to what he was further about to say concerning them in our Text; wherein he tells us a very great and weighty Thing, which they were ignorant of, with the miserable Tendency and Issue of their Ignorance in this Point, *They were ignorant of God's Righteousness*. It will give Light to this whole Text, rightly to understand what the Apostle means here by *God's Righteousness*. — It is not to be understood of the moral Perfection of his Being, whereby he is a Holy and Righteous GOD; this the *Jews* were not so ignorant of; they knew that God was a holy and just God: But it is to be understood of that Righteousness which God has appointed for the Justification of a condemned Sinner; which he distinguishes from the Righteousness of the *Law*, ver. 5. and calls it *the Righteousness which is of (or by) Faith*, ver. 6. Here observe, That whatsoever is available for the Pardon of Sin, and initiating the Sinner again into the Love and Favour of God, so that

he is again entitled to that eternal Blessedness which he had forfeited by Sin, as fully as if he had never sinned; that, I say, is fitly called a Righteousness, and that upon two Accounts: *First*, Because Righteousness consisting in a perfect Obedience to God's Law, was the only Condition upon which God's Favour and our eternal Happiness was at first promised; hence, therefore, whatsoever answers in the Place of that personal perfect Righteousness, is fitly called by the same Name, in as much as it supplies the Place of it, and answers to the same End. And, *secondly*, Whatsoever is sufficient to obtain the foresaid End, is called *Righteousness*, because it is such in its own Nature; for nothing can be available to the Justification of a condemned Sinner but a perfect Conformity unto, and Fulfilment of the Law, both in its Precept and Penalty, so answering the Demands and Charges which the Law lays in against the Sinner: Thus the Merit of *Jesus Christ* is called *Righteousness* in both these Respects, as it obtains that End for us, when received by Faith, which a personal Righteousness of our own would have done; and as it is properly Righteousness in itself, being an Obedience yielded to the Law of God, as you shall further hear by and by.

Now, it is about this Righteousness, whereby a Sinner can be justified, who has broken God's Law, and is thereby condemned to Hell, and rendered utterly incapable of ever obtaining Happiness upon the Terms of the first Covenant, that the Apostle is here speaking. And it is that Righteousness which God has provided and established for this End, which he calls the Righteousness of God; because it is of God's appointing, and that Righteousness which he only will accept of for the Sinner.

And then by their own Righteousness he means their personal Obedience to the Law of God, which they set up as that Righteousness by which they would, and expected to be justified; which is the Meaning of their *going about to establish their own Righteousness*: It is their setting it up as a Righteousness to recommend them to God's Favour, and be

justified by, and their Diligence in obeying the Law of God with that View and for that End, *viz.* That they might work out a Righteousness sufficient to deliver them from their Condemnation, and instate them in the divine Favour. But mark the deplorable Consequence and Effect of this Practice of a Legal and Self-dependance: It kept them out of the Way that GOD has appointed for a Sinner's Justification, beside which there is no other; for, *going about to establish their own Righteousness*, proposing that to obtain Reconciliation and Peace with God by, *they did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of GOD*: They did not comply with that Method which he had appointed, did not submit to that Righteousness which he had established for that End. Whence it is plain, that the Righteousness which God has appointed for a Sinner's Justification, is some other than our own personal Obedience: For the *Jews* were ignorant of it, and did not submit to it, while they were establishing their own Righteousness. The Expression of, *not submitting themselves*, shews, that their Pride and high Conceit of themselves, as well as their Ignorance, was a great Cause of their following such a Device for their justification, and keeping out of God's Way. Here observe, that their Ignorance of God's Righteousness was a great Cause of their high Conceit of, and Dependance upon their own: And both together was the Cause of their not submitting to GOD's Righteousness.

And then, ver. 4. the Apostle declares what this Righteousness of GOD is, which he has set forth for the Justification of a Sinner. And that in the Way of Argument, is as it proves what he had charged upon the unbelieving *Jews*: *For Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness* (says he) *to every one that believeth*. As it he had said, It is plain, that the Body of the *Jews* have not submitted to God's Righteousness, for they have not submitted to *Christ*, nor believed in Him, and it is He alone that is the End of the Law for Righteousness, by God's Appointment and Acceptance; according to *Rom. iii. 25. Thus GOD hath set forth*

forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins.

In this Verse two Things are to be taken Notice of,

I. A great Benefit by *Christ*, expressed in these Words, *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness.* And,

II. The Persons to whom it belongs, *Every one that believeth.*

I. Here then we must enquire what is meant by *Christ's* being the End of the Law for Righteousness. And, first, Negatively, the Meaning is not that he has disannulled, abrogated, and taken away the Law, so as Believers are rendered lawless, and no more bound to Obedience: For, (says the same Apostle, chap. iii. 31.) *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, We establish the Law.* It's true, *Christ*, in this Sense, was the End of the Ceremonial Law, consisting of Sacrifices, Offerings, &c. But the Apostle here speaks of the Law in general, especially of the Moral Law, comprised in the Ten Commandments, and understands the *End of the Law* in another Sense, when he says, *He is the End of the Law for Righteousness*; That is, He is to the End of it as to furnish the Sinner with a Righteousness sufficient to answer the Demands of it for his Justification. This Way He is the End of it; which is quite another Thing than the Abolishing of it. This is further evident from the Apostle's Limitation, *To them that believe*: For neither Believers nor Unbelievers, since *Christ*, are under any Obligation to the Ceremonial Law. Again, It is plain, that the Law which the Apostle here speaks of, is that Law by the Obeying of which the unbelieving *Jews*, in the former Verse, looked to be justified, which was the Moral as well as Ceremonial Law. I am not saying, that the Ceremonial Law is not here at all intended, but that it is not only intended; and that by the *End of it* is not meant its Abrogation, otherwise than by a necessary Consequence. And therefore, in the next Place, Positively, *Christ* is said to be the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, in respect of the Ceremonial Law, as it was instituted

tuted and designed for that End, to typify and prefigure Him in his Mediatorial Office : As his Mediatorial Righteousness was the End which the Washings, Sacrifices, and Incense of the Ceremonial Law pointed at and held forth. This was the miserable Blindness of the unbelieving *Jews*, that they leaned upon their Ceremonial Observances as proper Atonements for their Sins in themselves, and that their Guilt was thereby taken away. And the Apostle here informs them, that the Righteousness of *Christ* is that alone by which a Sinner can be justified, which all the Ceremonial Blood and Incense, with many other Things of that Law, only signified and pointed at. They were never designed for the Justification of Sinners by any proper Virtue of their own, but to shadow forth the great atoning Sacrifice of *Jesus Christ* : For it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins, Heb. x. 4. In *Christ* only is that Righteousness which can deliver the Soul from the Guilt and Condemnation of Sin, and whereby all that truly believe in Him are justified ; it was not in all the Ceremonial Services of the Law ; they only pointed at and referred to it in Him : And thus He is the End of the Ceremonial Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth.

And then, as to the Law in general, *Christ* may be said to be the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, in two respects,

1. By answering the End for which the Law was given, by fulfilling it, and so working out a Righteousness for the Justification of those who had broken it. The Law was given for that End that it should be obeyed, and that Man by obeying it, should have everlasting Life : Now *Christ* submitted himself to the Law, and perfectly obeyed it in what it required of the Sinner, both as to its Precept and Penalty ; and by that Obedience has wrought a sufficient Righteousness for Believers, to obtain everlasting Life by. And so when *Christ* is said to be the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, in this Sense the Meaning is, that by his Obedience which he has yielded to it, he has obtained for Sinners that End for which the Law was given, and which they should

should have attained by it, had Man never sinned, but perfectly fulfilled it, *viz.* everlasting Life and Happiness. This is the Language and Tenor of the Law, *The Man which doth these Things shall live by them*, Rom. x. 5. So that the End which the Law proposed to the Subjects to obtain by it, was eternal Life and Happiness: And the Righteousness which it required, for the obtaining of this End, was a perfect Obedience to it; upon the least Defect it lays the Person under Condemnation, *Gal. iii. 10.* But all Mankind have wofully broken the Law of GOD; either, Representatively, in their first Parent, or both representatively in him, and personally themselves; and therefore can never obtain Happiness by the Law, that is, upon the Law's Terms of an absolutely perfect and personal Obedience. Now, the Lord JESUS has perfectly obeyed the Law, in the utmost of its Demands upon the Sinner, which Obedience is, by God's Appointment, for a justifying Righteousness to those who by Faith receive Him, so that thereby they obtain that Life and Happiness which was at first proposed upon the Terms of the Law, but is now utterly unattainable that Way. And thus He is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth, see *Rom. viii. 3, 4.* But then,

2. Consider, in the Law there are two Parts, *viz.* its Precept, whereby it requires Obedience; and its Penalty, whereby it requires Punishment for Disobedience. Now, though *Christ* is not the End of the Precept of the Law, so as to take away the Believer's Obligation to Obedience; yet, He is the End of the Penalty, Malediction, and Curse of the Law, so as to take away their Obligation to Punishment. He takes away the Law's Process against them; so that it no longer requires Punishment or Satisfaction of them, He having satisfied and undergone the Penalty of the Law in their room, and thereby furnished them with a sufficient Righteousness to answer all the Charges and Demands which the Law has to lay in against them, as Bars in their Way to Happiness and Glory. The Law's Penalty has no
more

more to require of them; according to Gal. iii. 13. *Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* And though the Law, as to its Precept, remains an unalterable Rule of Righteousness, and so requires Obedience from Believers; yet, it is not required as the Term or Condition of their Justification before GOD. Their Justification is put altogether upon another Foot, than it was in the Law, or Covenant of Works; the spotless Obedience which the Lord JESUS paid to the Precept of the Law, being accepted in the room and place of the Obedience required by that Covenant in the Case of Justification.

And thus is He the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth. And here it is to be observed, that in all these Senses the general Scope and Design of the Words is the same, *viz.* That the Righteousness whereby a Sinner can only be justified, and delivered from the Condemnation of the Law, is in *JESUS CHRIST*. To Him alone the Sinner must come for it, or be for ever undone.

II. The second Thing to be taken Notice of in this Verse, is, the Persons who are justified by the Redeemer's Righteousness, *Every one that believeth.* This Clause, as it extends Justification by CHRIST to all Believers, so it limits it to them only, and shews the Necessity of Faith in *Christ*, in order to an Interest in his *Righteousness*.

Having thus explained the Text, and put it in a just Light, it affords us the following Propositions of Truth, for our Instruction,

Proposition I.

That Ignorance of the Method which GOD has appointed in the Gospel for a Sinner's Justification, is a ruinous and Soul-destroying Ignorance.

This Truth is sufficiently contained in the Text: For, when they were ignorant of God's Righteousness, the Apostle tells us, *they went about to establish their own;* and so went quite

quite out of the Way of God, out of the Method of the Gospel, *not submitting themselves to the Righteousness of GOD*: And surely, Methods of our own devising, in Opposition to God's, will not do. If GOD, in the infinite Riches of his Grace, has established a Way for the Recovery of undone Sinners out of Condemnation and Wo, surely it becomes and concerns us impartially to seek after the right Knowledge of it, and with all our Hearts thankfully to comply with it; which, if we do not, but trust to the blind Devices of our own Heart, and with wicked *Abab*, 2 Kings xvi. *set up an Altar of our own, beside the Lord's Altar*, the certain Consequence of this wicked Negligence and Ignorance, what is this but a proud Contempt of God's Love and Mercy; and a depriving Him of the just Glory and Honour of the new Covenant Way of Salvation?

For the more full Confirmation of this Truth, consider and compare together these two or three Conclusions, First, That there is but One Way of Sinners Justification appointed by GOD in the Gospel: For this see *Rom. ch. iii. ver. 20 to 25. Therefore by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight; for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin: But now the Righteousness of GOD without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law 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; for all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God; being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST.* Here the Apostle plainly shews, that there is but One Way appointed by GOD for the Justification of a Sinner, with a particular Specification of that Way; telling us, that it is through the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, that Righteousness which the Soul apprehends in Him by Faith; and proves, that there is no Difference in God's Method of Justifying, because there is no real Difference in those that are to be justified. They are all in the same sinful and guilty Case; *for all have sinned, and come short of the Glory*

of GOD: And therefore, all they that are justified, are only justified in this Way, freely, by his Grace, through *the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST*. Secondly, God requires that Sinners comply with that Way which Himself has appointed, believe in it, and depend upon it; otherwise they cannot be justified by it. The whole New Testament plainly declares the Necessity of Faith, in order to Justification, as *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved: But he that believeth not, shall be damned, John. iii. 36.* And, thirdly, Consider, that without a Knowledge of it there can be no Faith in it: *Rom. x. 14. How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* There can be no saving Faith without Knowledge, nor can they believe in that Way of Salvation which they are ignorant of; and so their Ignorance infallibly bars up the Way of Salvation against them, according to God's wise Constitution in the Gospel.

Now this Ignorance is so destructive and pernicious upon two Accounts,

1. As it is a Crime that deserves Damnation. But here you must observe, that this is peculiar to those who live under the Gospel, enjoying the Means of Knowledge. As for the poor *Pagans*, though it is their great Unhappiness not to know the Way of Salvation through the Redeemer, yet it is not their Sin, because they have not the Means of Knowledge: But, Oh! what a God-provoking Iniquity must it be in such as live under the Hearing of the Gospel, and have the Exercise of Reason! For it is a stupid willful Ignorance, in a Matter of the greatest Concern, always joined with Insolence and Contempt. It is a brutish Thoughtlessness about your eternal State, and haughty Disregarding of the greatest Kindness and Mercy of the great God. There is a twofold Ignorance of the Gospel-Way of Justification, that justly comes under this Censure, *viz.* A bare simple Ignorance of it, that is, when Persons have not so much as the Idea or Conception of it in their Minds; and an Ignorance of its being such, though the Thing itself, which the Scriptures teach.

teach as such, be understood, and thought of; that is, when Persons know what is maintained by the Orthodox Church to be the Righteousness which God has appointed for the Justification of a condemned Sinner, but are ignorant that it really is that Righteousness, and do not acknowledge it for such, but positively deny it, substituting a Righteousness of their own for that End, in the place of it. And this seems to be the Ignorance principally charged upon the unbelieving Jews in my Text: For many of them well knew what was the Apostle's Doctrine upon this great Article of Justification, teaching, that the crucified Lord Jesus was the only Saviour of Sinners, through the Merit of whose Death and Sufferings only Remission of Sins could be obtained; but they would not acknowledge this to be the Righteousness of God's Appointment for the Justification of Sinners. This they were ignorant of, through their own Wickedness. And this is the woful Ignorance of many precious Souls that are perishing by it at this Day, whereby they subvert the very Foundation of the Gospel, and overturn the whole Frame of it; against whom the Apostle pronounces that dreadful Anathema, *Gal. i. 9. If any Man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* And then,

2. This Ignorance is so destructive, privatively; in as much as the condemned undone Sinner is thereby rendered utterly incapable of applying to his only Remedy; so that he is thereby held in his condemned State, under the Guilt of all his Sins. So that, laying aside the heinous, criminal and provoking Nature of this Ignorance, yet it is to be dreaded as Hell itself; because while it continues it infallibly keeps the Soul from Deliverance out of his undone Condition, and exposes him to a certain Damnation for all his other Sins. Oh! what Cause have we then to glorify and bless the high GOD for the Means of saving Knowledge, the glorious Light of the Gospel of *Christ!* From what has been spoken, you may also see, that Ignorance in this great and weighty Point, which slothful careless Souls often make their Refuge, will be no Plea for you at the Bar of GOD:

but, alas! is very likely to carry you to eternal Destruction: *John iii. 19. This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light.* 2 Cor. iv. 3. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*

Propos. II.

A second Proposition which this Text affords us, is, *That Sinners Dependance upon their own Righteousness for Justification, keeps them out of the Way which GOD has appointed for that End.*

This Proposition has a very clear Foundation in the Text: *Going about to establish their own Righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of GOD.* And chap. vii. 31. says the Apostle, *Israel, which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness.* They were seeking after a Righteousness whereby they could be absolved from the Guilt of their Sins, and instated in the Love and Favour of God, but they did not attain to it. And ver. 32. the Apostle puts the Question, *Wherefore? Why was it that they did not attain to it? Because (says he) they sought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the Works of the Law.* They were seeking it by their Works of Obedience to God's Law, and did not come to Christ for it by Faith, rejecting all Dependance upon any Thing else; and therefore they fell short of it. Now, from hence it is evident, that, although Persons be never so circumspect, diligent and careful in obeying the Laws and Commands of God, yet, if they depend upon that to recommend them to God's living Favour, and so make a Saviour of their own Righteousness, putting it in the place of Christ, they are out of the Way of the Gospel, and shall finally be rejected of God. Oh! how many Souls will be wofully disappointed here! What Multitudes derive all the Peace of their Minds, and Quiet of their Consciences, from their moral Living and good Doings: They have never come truly humble and poor in Spirit to Christ. Such unhappy Crea-
tures

tures the great God will reject, with Abhorrence, for rejecting *JESUS CHRIST*, the dear Saviour, and thinking to appear before his holy and pure Majesty with their filthy Rags, as the Prophet calls them, *Iſa. lxiv. 6.* Believe it, Sirs, if your Conscience should accuse you as little of any sinful Commission or Neglect through the whole Course of your Lives, as the Apostle *Paul's* did him, before his Conversion, when he was, *touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless, Phil. iii. 6.* You must either come humbly to Christ, by Faith, leaning upon Him alone for your Acceptance with GOD, and with the same Apostle, ver. 8, 9. *count all Things but Dung, that you may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having your own Righteousness which is of the Law,* or perish for ever, after all. Ah! how many precious Souls are perishing through their stupid Ignorance, and Want of a right Knowledge of the Gospel.

Propoſ. III.

Another Doctrinal Truth arising from this Passage of holy Scripture, is, *That there is such Pride and Self-conceit in Sinners Hearts, that they are very unwilling to stoop to GOD's Way for their Justification.*

So much is clearly implied in that Expression, *They did not submit themselves unto the Righteousness of GOD.* They were too high for such a Stoop. Oh Sirs! It is this baneful Pride of Heart that keeps Souls from the Lord *JESUS*: They cannot bear to humble themselves so low as to acknowledge their condemned State, their wretched helpless Condition as it is, and come to Christ alone for their Relief, *poor in Spirit, labouring and heavy laden under a Sense of their Guilt and Misery.* No; they think their Condition is not so bad as that comes to, yet; that is, they have not such Need of Christ; He may go to them that are in a worse Case; as for their Parts, they thank Him for his kind Offer, but their Case is not so bad, and they can help themselves, they are heart-whole and easy, through a vain Con-

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erit of some commending Worth and Excellency in themselves. This was the rueful Case of the *Laodicean Church*. *Rev. iii. 17.*

This Proposition will admit of a little Variation, with equal Evidence from the Text: And so you may observe,

That the Way which GOD has established for Sinners Justification, is a Soul-humbling, self-abasing Way, very contrary to the Pride of their Nature.

The LORD requires that Sinners humble themselves very low at the Feet of *Christ*, sensible of their absolute Necessity of Him for their Saviour, and their Undoneness without Him; so that they entertain no Hope from any Thing else but his Mediation: But how much is this against proud Nature, to lie stripped of all Self-righteousness at the Redeemer's Feet! And God's Method of Grace is nevertheless beautiful and glorious, because it is so humbling to the Sinner; for, surely, the deepest Self-abasement well becomes such polluted guilty Creatures.

Propos. IV.

A fourth Proposition is fully contained in the 4th Verse, but receives a clearer Light from the whole Text together, viz. *That the only Method which GOD has established in the Gospel for the Justification of a Sinner, and his Deliverance from the Condemnation of the Law, is through the Righteousness of his Son JESUS CHRIST. For Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness, to every one that believeth.*

Propos. V.

Faith in CHRIST is necessary, in order to justification by Him.

I shall say no more to any of these Propositions, but the two last. The first of which shall be the Subject of our present

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sent Discourse. And in treating upon it, I shall observe the following Order,

First, I shall a little open to you the Nature of Justification.

Secondly, I shall shew you what is that Righteousness of CHRIST, through which alone a Sinner can be justified. And,

Thirdly, Shall prove and confirm the Proposition:

I would here intreat your closest and most careful Attention to what may be spoken upon these Heads, because this great Doctrine of a Sinner's Justification, is something difficult to understand, and yet very necessary to be understood, as I have already shewn you. It is difficult to such earthly thoughtless Souls as have never made Religion much of their Study; and yet these Persons, as if they had diligently looked into all the Doctrines of the Gospel with an Angel's Eye, presently disregard any thing they do not understand at the first Hearing. You ought to consider, that the Mysteries of *Christianity* are not so mean as that a thorough Knowledge of them should be so easily obtained, and therefore it concerns you to apply yourselves to them with the utmost Care and Diligence. I shall endeavour to speak to these Heads proposed, as clearly and plainly as I can, that, by the Blessing of the Almighty, the Ignorant may be instructed, and the Erroneous convinced. And,

First, I am to open and shew you the Nature of a Sinner's Justification, that great Benefit which the Scriptures so much speak of. In the last Sermon which I delivered here, I shewed you that condemned State which Mankind have brought themselves into by Sin, with a particular Application to Unbelievers, as their present State, which they still continue in, while such. I shewed you how they came into it; by which it is clearly evident, that all Mankind were equally under the same Condemnation, having broken God's righteous Law, which, without respect of Persons, condemns the Breakers of it. And my Design now, from this Passage
of

of holy Scripture, is to shew you the Way whereby Sinners can only be delivered out of this deplorable Estate; the Method which GOD has provided and established for that End. Now, as the inherent Depravity and Wickedness of the Soul, the corrupt Quality and Disposition of the Sinner is remedied by Sanctification, so his condemned State is remedied by Justification: It is the Delivering of the Sinner from his Condemnation to Hell, and entitling him, upon the contrary, to the Happiness of Heaven. I shall endeavour to give you a just View of it under this Definition, viz.

Justification is a Judicial Act of GOD, wherein he acquits the Sinner of his Guilt, and gives him a Title to eternal Happiness.

In this Definition you may especially observe two Things concerning Justification.

1. The Parts of it, which are Two; or, there are two Things done for the Person in Justification: He is freed from Guilt; and entitled to Glory.

By *Guilt* understand the Sinner's Obligation to the Punishment of Hell, which comes by the condemning Sentence of the Law, which he is fallen under. Now, in *Justification* this *condemning Sentence* is taken off, and so his Liableness and Obligation to Punishment; according to *Rom. viii. 1. There is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* So that when a Sinner is said to be acquitted of his Guilt, absolved or delivered from it, the Meaning is, that the condemning Sentence of the Law, which he was under, is taken off, and he is secured against the Danger of Hell's Punishment, which before he was bound over to. The Gospel supercedes the Law, and over-rules it, as it were, so as it pronounces the Person free, who by the Law was sentenced to Death: Thus says the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 2. The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.* And yet the Law and Gospel do not oppose each other: For none are acquitted by the Gospel, until the Law's Demands upon them are answered;

as you shall farther hear; *viz.* by JESUS CHRIST for them.

The other Part of Justification, is the giving to the Sinner a Title and Claim to eternal Happiness. This is done for him in his Justification: For eternal Happiness, in the glorious Enjoyment of GOD, was at first promised to Man upon the Terms of the Law, the Terms of perfect personal Obedience, *Rom. x. 5.* And therefore, a Title to Life being once granted in the first Covenant, it must be again restored to the Sinner in the very Act of Justification; because it is a pronouncing him *free* from all the Charges and Accusations of the Law, which it has to lay in against him, as Bars to the Enjoyment of that happy and eternal Life which it first promised. Had the Condition of the Law, or first Covenant, been fulfilled, eternal Life had thereby been obtained; and therefore, nothing can hinder any Man from the Enjoyment of it, but the Law's objecting against him, as not having fulfilled the Condition upon which it was promised; and so, when all the Objections of the Law are answered, and the Sinner is freed from them, as fully as if he had performed the Condition of the Law, a Title to Life must necessarily be again restored.

In those two Things consists what is done for the Sinner in his Justification. And hence you may easily understand what is meant by these Passages of Scripture which speak of the Forgiveness and Remission of Sins, the blotting out of Iniquity, the covering of Sin, and the like: All which belong to the Head of Justification. The Meaning is, that the Lord will look over the Sinner's Sin, in his Way of dealing with him, as to his eternal State, as if it had never been; as if he had perfectly fulfilled the Law, delivering him from that Punishment which his Sin exposed him to, and giving him that Title to Life and Happiness which his Sin had forfeited. From what has been said, you may also observe, that Justification does not consist in any Thing that is wrought in the Sinner, as to his Disposition and Quality, that belongs to Sanctification; but in what is done for him,

respecting his State, which is what is chiefly intended when it is called an Act, rather than a Work of GOD. It is necessary that you consider this, and understand wherein Justification consists, and so carry a right Notion of it along with you, through the Whole of this Discourse; otherwise it will be no Wonder if you do not understand what may be spoken of it.

2. In the Definition you have the general Nature of Justification; when it is called a *Judicial Act of GOD*: Whereby is signified, that God proceeds in it as a Judge, passing this absolving Sentence upon Trial, when the Person is first acquitted by the Law. In justifying a Sinner, the LORD has Regard to his own Law; he will see that all the Demands which the Law has upon him, are answered, before he will or can justify him, justly, consistently with his own Law; according to that, *Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom GOD hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sin, — to declare, I say, at this Time, his Righteousness, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in JESUS.* In these Words the Apostle observes the Necessity of Christ's Death for a Sinner's Justification, to maintain and manifest God's Righteousness and Justice, as well as his other Perfections, therein; so clearly intimating, that he could not be just in justifying a Sinner, unless the Law had been thus satisfied. God at first conditionally annexed a Penalty to his Law, that in Case Sin should be committed, it should infallibly be punished; that the Sinner should not be relieved, unless the Penalty were fully sustained: This was the Method which God determined, and engaged himself to prosecute Sin in; and therefore he cannot justify a Sinner justly, without acting contrary to his own Appointment and established Law, unless the Penalty be undergone in his Behalf, by an Undertaker for him. Thus it was necessary that Christ should so answer the Law for the Sinner, for the vindicating of God's Righteousness in his Justification; that he might be just when he justifies him that believeth in
 JESUS.

JESUS. So that you see, all the Claims of the Law must be answered to the Extent, before a Sinner can be justified. Hence that, *Matth. v. 18. Till Heaven and Earth pass, one Jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* The Law will not abate one Jot of its Demands, but all must be fulfilled. And here, by the Way, it may be remarked, that this one Consideration were sufficient to evince that a Sinner's Justification can only be obtained through the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST; because nothing else is sufficient to answer the Demands of the Law. And, indeed, all the Errors in this Point that are in the World, whereby Persons look to any Thing else for their Justification before GOD, proceed from a gross Ignorance of the true Nature of Justification.

Secondly, Having set before you a brief and just View of the Nature of Justification, I come now to shew you what that Righteousness of Christ is, through which alone this great Benefit can be obtained, as the material and meritorious Cause of it. And,

1. Negatively, It is not the essential Righteousness of his Nature, whereby he is eternally Righteous and Holy. Neither, secondly, His Righteousness in the Administration of his Essential or Mediatorial Government, which he daily exercises in the World. Nor yet, thirdly, Is it the inherent Righteousness or Sanctification of Believers, which he works in them by his *holy Spirit*. This Righteousness, indeed, is in all those that are justified, so as none are justified, but they are also sanctified and holy: But yet their Holiness and inherent Goodness is not that Righteousness by which they are justified. It is rather the Fruit than the Cause of their Justification. None are truly sanctified before they are justified: Justification and the new Nature always go together, and its discovering itself in its proper Acts immediately follows the Person's Justification. Hence, *Rom. iv. 5.* in justifying, God is said to justify the Ungodly. A Believer's inherent Righteousness can never answer the Demands of the Law for him, and therefore cannot be his justifying Righteousness,

eousness. It is necessary to take away the Power and Dominion of Sin in the Heart ; but can never take away the Guilt of Sin. I am as much for Holiness of Heart and Life, as any can be, and say, that without it no Man shall see the Lord, being altogether loathsome in his Sight, and unfit for the Enjoyment of Him : So that *except a Man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD* ; and therefore it concerns you, with the utmost Earnestness and Diligence, to seek after holy and sanctified Hearts, that you may be enabled to glorify God, and fitted for the glorious Enjoyment of Him. But, though you must seek the Graces of God's Holy Spirit for your Sanctification, you must look to something else for your Justification ; for your Deliverance from Guilt and Condemnation, and entitling you to the Glory of God ; for Reconciliation and Peace with Him. There are some that will speak very plausibly of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ only, but when they fully explain themselves, they mean nothing else but the inherent Righteousness of the Godly, which Christ works in them, upon which Account they call it his Righteousness ; which betrays a very great Ignorance of the Nature of Justification.

2. But, in the next Place, Positively, The Righteousness of *Christ*, which only is available for a Sinner's Justification, consists in what he has done and suffered when he was in the World, in the room and behalf of Sinners. And so it is generally divided into his *active* and *passive* Obedience. By his *active* Obedience is understood his obeying the Precept of the Law, by a universal perfect Holiness. This Obedience of his was absolutely perfect, without the least Defect ; so that the Father testified of Him, *that in him he was well pleased* ; and Himself says, *John viii. 29. I do always those Things that please him.* By his *passive* Obedience is meant that Obedience which He yielded to the Penalty of the Law, in bearing that Punishment which it required of the Sinner : Which was not only his dying upon the Cross, and sustaining many other grievous Sufferings inflicted upon him
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by his malicious Enemies, but his bearing the awful Weight of God's Wrath itself in his Soul. God the Father laid his own Hand upon Him: It pleased the LORD to bruise Him, he put Him to Grief, and made his very Soul an Offering for Sin, *Isa. liii. 10.* This infinite Pressure and Load upon his Spirit, was that which made him say, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death,* *Matth. xxvi. 38.* This was that inexpressible Agony of his Soul, *Luke xxii. 44.* which pressed such a Sweat of Blood from his sacred Body, as He lay in the Night upon the cold Earth; for He fell upon his Knees and upon his Face, *Matth. xxvi. 37.* He was forsaken of his Father, as to the sensible Comforts and Supports of his Love, in the midst of his greatest Miseries; which occasioned that bitter Outcry upon the Cross, *Matth. xxvii. 46. Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?* So great and weighty was the Load of Sufferings which our dearest Saviour bore, both in his Body and his Soul, that it would have over-pressed and crushed a World of Creatures under it; but He being GOD as well as Man, his divine Nature supported the human under it, so as it did not fail before it. Now, both this *active* and *passive* Obedience of Christ make up that one complete Righteousness, whereby Believers are justified. And both are necessary in order to Justification: His passive Obedience, to deliver Sinners from the Punishment of Hell, and all Obligation to it. The Law of God binds over the Sinner to a dreadful Punishment, which must be sustained, either in his own Person, or by a Surety in his room: So that it is the Sufferings of Christ alone that can deliver Sinners from the Condemnation of the Law; according to *Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* Hence says the Apostle, *1 Pet. ii. 24. His own self bare our Sins, in his own Body, on the Tree, i. e. He bore the Punishment due to our Sins, which otherwise we must have suffered for ever: 1 John i. 7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all Sins. 1 Pet. iii. 18. For CHRIST also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust.* The Law of GOD condemned them to Punish-

Punishment, Christ suffered it for them: And hence it is that they are delivered. And then, as the passive Obedience of Jesus Christ is necessary to answer the Penalty of the Law for the Sinner, and so deliver him from Punishment; so also the active Obedience of Christ is necessary to answer the Condition of the Law for him, and so entitle him to eternal Glory. For the Condition upon which eternal Life was at first promised, was no other than perfect Obedience; which Condition must be fulfilled before the promised Life can be obtained. But, alas! Mankind have universally failed in the Performance of this Condition: *For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD*, Rom. iii. 23. And the Law still objects against the Sinner, and holds him destitute of any Claim to Happiness, or Interest in it, nay, lays an insalvageable Bar in the Way, while its Condition is not fulfilled. Our blessed Lord Jesus has perfectly fulfilled it, in the Discharge of his Mediatorial Undertaking: And hence it is the Believers are entitled to Glory, through his performing the Condition of the Law, his Obedience being accepted for them. *Therefore, says the Apostle, Rom. v. 19, as by One Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of One shall many be made righteous.* As by Adam's Disobedience all his Posterity were looked upon as Sinners, and so deprived of all Title to the promised Life; so by Christ's Obedience all Believers are looked upon as righteous, as if they had fulfilled the Condition of the Law; and so are entitled to eternal Life. Christ has answered the Condition of the Law for them; were it not so, we should all be most undone Creatures; we should never see the Face of God in Peace. Thus I have shewn you that Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, whereby he is the End of the Law to every one that believeth. I have set it before you in both its Parts, answering to the two Parts of a Sinner's Justification; and pointed out to you, particularly, how the one answers the other.

And now I am advanced to the *Third* General Head proposed, which was to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine, and
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prove, That the only Righteousness which GOD has established for the Justification of a condemned Sinner, is this Righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ.

The Truth of this sufficiently appears from what has been already said under the foregoing Head; but for the fuller Confirmation of it, I shall take the Proof of it under a particular Consideration by itself.

And to this Purpose you may observe, That the whole Current of the Scripture runs this Way. The whole New Testament, wherein God has clearly revealed the Gospel-Method of Salvation, very evidently flows in this Channel, attributing a Sinner's Deliverance from Condemnation and Wrath, and his Title to Glory and Happiness, to the Obedience and Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, as the sole Cause thereof. It cannot be more fully and plainly expressed, than it is *Rom. iii. 24, 25. Being justified 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, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins.* See also *Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* It is Christ that hath delivered the Godly from the Curse of the Law; and that by being made a Curse for them, by bearing that Punishment for them, which they were condemned to. To the same Purpose is that, *2 Cor. v. 21. Who hath made him to be Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* *Rom. v. 8, 9. But God commendeth his 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; for if, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by his Son, &c.* Mark, he says, *Justified by his Blood, and reconciled to God by his Death.* And ver. 19. he tells us, *That by the Obedience of Christ shall many be made righteous.* But were I particularly to mention all the Passages of Scripture that speak to this Purpose, I should recite a great Part of the New Testament,

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with much of the Old: Through the whole fifty-third Chapter of *Isaiab* is this Truth clearly revealed, of a *Sinner's Justification through the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah*. Hence *Jer. xxiii. 6.* he is called, *The LORD our Righteousness*.

Again, I shall further confirm this Truth by the following Induction, *viz.* A Sinner must be justified, either without any Consideration at all, to answer the Law as a Satisfaction to Justice, or by *his own Righteousness*, his Works of Obedience to the Law; or by *his own Righteousness* in Conjunction with the *Righteousness of Christ*; or by the *Righteousness of Christ alone*: But by neither of the former; therefore by the latter. As for the *Popish* Dream of being helped by the *Merits of Supererogatory Works of Others*, I hope, it is generally exploded in these Parts of the World.

I. A Sinner cannot be justified without any Justification made to the Law. For, 1. That would be contrary to God's own Establishment, as you have heard. To speak with due Reverence of the Divine Majesty, he has not reserved to himself that Power. Whether the LORD might have so ordered it, consistently with the Justice of his Nature, as *that Sin could have been pardoned without any Justification*, I shall not dispute; but, it is plain, that for holy and wise Ends, he has ordered it otherwise. He is very express in the Law, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. And, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them*. The Sovereign GOD has so constituted Things that proud Sinners must come to Christ by Faith, and bow to Him, or perish. 2. If Sinners can be justified this Way, then Christ has died in vain; than which nothing can be more absurd. Had it not been altogether vain and needless for Christ to have laid down his Life, and bore such a Load of Sufferings, if the great End of it could have as well been obtained without it? And this Consequence the Apostle looks upon as most absurd and unreasonable; and so proves, that Persons cannot be justified by their own Righteousness, be-
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cause this Consequence would also then follow, Gal. ii. 21. *If Righteousness came by the Law, then CHRIST is dead in vain.*

II. We can never be justified by our own Righteousness, by our exactest Obedience to the divine Law. This fully appears by the very Nature of Justification, as it is a *Judicial Act* of GOD, wherein all the Claims of the Law must be answered, which *our best Righteousness* can never do: Nothing is more plainly and expressly declaimed against in the holy Scriptures than *Justification* by any *Goodness* or *Righteousness* in us, of which our Text is a sufficient Instance. See also 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.* And ver. 21. *If Righteousness came by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.* And chap. iii. ver. 10 to 14. *As many as are of the Works of the Law are under the Curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* But that no Man is justified by the Law in the Sight of GOD, it is evident: *For the Just shall live by Faith: And the Law is not of Faith; but the Man that doth them, shall live in them; Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* How fully does the Apostle disclaim all Dependence upon his own Righteousness, Phil. iii. 8, 9. when he counts all Things but Dung, that he might win Christ, not having his own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is by the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith. That is, the Righteousness of Christ, which is received and depended upon by Faith.

There are many Objections and Cavils brought in here by such as are going about to establish their own Righteousness, and will not submit themselves to the Righteousness of GOD: They will say, doubtless, *If our Obedience to God's*

Law will not justify us, if it will not avail to deliver us out of Condemnation, and reconcile us to GOD; why then should we obey, or take any Care to serve the LORD? It seems it will do us no Good. For Answer to this, Consider,

1. The Will of God requiring us to honour and serve Him, in such and such Things, is Reason sufficient why we should do so! GOD is our great Proprietor and sovereign King, whose Will we ought to obey: He has an incontestible, necessary Right to us and our Service, from the exalted Perfection of his Nature, and our Relation to Him as his Creatures. From Him we received our Being, and all our Endowments: And hence we are under the strongest Bonds to live to Him, to glorify and serve Him. Certainly, nothing can give a surer Propriety and stronger Right than Creation; but such a Right has GOD to us his Creatures: Which, together with the essential Glories and peerless Perfections of his Nature, were Reason enough, without any more, to engage us to the purest Obedience to his holy Law; and would effectually do so, if Sin had left any Ingenuity in us.

2. Although our Obedience to God is not the procuring Cause of our Justification, yet it is the Way which God has appointed to seek for an Interest in Christ's justifying Righteousness in. It is the only Way in which God has given any Encouragement to Sinners to obtain Justification, through the Righteousness of *Christ*, so as that while they continue in a Course of Disobedience, and do not humbly and heartily seek for an Interest in Christ, in the Way of his Commands, they may surely expect to come short of it; and so perish in their Sins. It is morally impossible, that a Sinner should be united to Christ, (without which he cannot be justified by Him) while he goes on in a Course of Opposition to Him. A Sinner's humble, hearty and perfect Application to GOD, with a due Sense of his present undone Condition, for the divine Mercy through the Redeemer, is the Way to come to Christ, and get an Interest in his Righteousness for his Justification: So that it is a false Consequence from the
 Doctrine

Doctrine I am confirming, *That our earnest Endeavours to seek GOD, and serve Him, are needless and to no Purpose.*

But further, Consider, 3. That all those that are united to Christ by Faith, and so justified by his Righteousness, have a new Nature implanted in them, whereby they make Holiness their Choice; their Hearts are freely and sweetly determined for it, and set upon it; they have a very dear Love for the Lord JESUS, on whom their Eyes are fixed for their Salvation; so that they want above all Things to please and serve Him. Thus, the Principle and Spring of their Obedience is not a blind Expectation of procuring their Justification by it; though they do not allowedly put any Trust in it for that End, yet they yield to God a more full and free Obedience, from the purer Principle of a sincere Love, which is the only true Obedience that is pleasing to God: And, indeed, no Person is ever truly holy until he rejects all Dependance upon his own Righteousness, and leans on Christ alone: His Obedience is never sincere till then; but flows from base and selfish Principles altogether. It is plain, that such as make use of the Objections I am speaking to, and think they would be at no Pains to serve God, if thereby they could not, at least in Part, be justified, it is plain, (I say) that they are only obeying for their own Ends, from a Principle of Self-love, and not from any affectionate Regard or pure Love to God; and so their Righteousness, which they are so highly conceited of, is altogether unsound, loathsome, and unclean in the Eyes of GOD.

Thus you see, that the Doctrine of a *Sinner's Justification through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, and the Impossibility of it by his own Righteousness*, is no Enemy to the Practice of Holiness; but is that which only advances it.

Again, it may be objected, that *David expresses great Confidence in his own Righteousness, and attributes much to it, Ps. vii. 8. Judge me, O Lord, according to my Righteousness, and according to mine Integrity that is in me.* And

Pf. xviii. 20. The Lord rewarded me according to my Righteousness, according to the Cleanness of my Hands hath he recompensed me. But *David* in these Places is not speaking of the Justification of his Person before God, as if that were the Effect of his Righteousness; but of God's Kindnesses to him in the Course of his Providence; especially, in delivering him from his unjust Enemies, and exalting him above them. This is what he means by *being rewarded according to his Righteousness.* And by *his Righteousness* he particularly means his Righteousness in the Cause between him and his Enemies, that he had given them no just Provocation, and in a meek becoming Manner he had bore all their unjust and cruel Treatment. And so, in the viith *Psalms* (which was composed on the Account of the wicked Words of *Cush* the *Benjaminite* against him, as you may see in the Title prefixed to the *Psalms*) he prays that God would, judicially, in a Way of Justice, interpose between him and his Enemies, and deliver him from them, as he was altogether innocent in the Case between them; and then he praises the LORD that he had done so, in the xviiith *Psalms*, which was a *Psalms of Thanksgiving*, when the Lord had delivered him from the Hand of *Saul* and all his Enemies. These Expressions of *David* are to be understood in the same Sense with those of *Solomon*, 2 Chron. vi. 22, 23.

It is farther objected, *that God has made sincere Obedience the Condition of our obtaining eternal Happeness, and has made many glorious Promises to it.* It's true, there are many precious Promises made to the Godly, and to them only; but they are made to them through *Jesus Christ*, and upon the Account of his Mediation. And they are made to the Godly, and none else, because all those that are justified through the Redemption that is in *Jesus Christ*, and none else, are Godly: And hence, though the Promise of eternal Life is not given to any but only upon the Account of *Christ's Righteousness*, yet it is made to the Qualification of sincere Piety, because only they who are sincerely pious have an Interest in his Righteousness, and are justified by it; and

and their Sanctification and Holiness is the sure and only Evidence of their Justification, whereby they can discover their Title to Happiness, and Interest in God's Promises. It is further true, that God will make his People the more glorious in Heaven, the more holy they have been upon Earth; the more Pains they have been at to glorify Him here, and the more they have suffered on that Account, the greater shall their Glory be hereafter, 2 Cor. iv. 17. which may be a very moving Encouragement to them: But it was not any Goodness in them, which at first gave them a Title to the heavenly Glory; That they obtained only through the Redeemer's Righteousness; though for their higher Degrees of Holiness and Serviceableness afterwards, they shall receive the gracious and undue Reward of a higher Glory in the other Life: But what is all this to the Delivering of the Soul first out of his condemned State, the Freeing him from his Guilt and Obligation to the Punishment of Hell, and making him an Heir of God? What is all this to the answering the Demands of the Law for him, both in its Condition and Penalty; all which is done for him in his Justification. Sure I am, the Scriptures never attribute this to any Righteousness in us; no, not to the Goodness of the holiest Man on Earth, but only to the Righteousness and spotless Obedience of our dear Lord and Saviour.

Once more: Many, to establish their own Righteousness, are ready to say, *that we must be justified by our own Righteousness, because at the last Day we shall be judged and rewarded according to our Works.* Rom. ii. 6. *God will render to every Man according to his Deeds.*

The holy Scriptures, indeed, abundantly witness, that at that Day we shall be dealt with according as our Works have been; but this no way infers that Justification is of Works: For, although good Works will be the Rule according to which God will dispense the Reward of eternal Life; yet it will not be given for them, but only for the Merits of the Lord *Jesus*. Though it shall be given only to the Righteous, yet it is not for their Righteousness that they shall obtain it,

but for the Righteousness of the Redeemer; because they were justified through Him. And, notwithstanding such as have been more eminent in Holiness shall receive a more glorious Reward; yet it is a Reward, not of Debt, but of Grace: And (as I have but now shewed you) is no Argument of their being justified by their own Righteousness.

Thus I have considered some of the most material and common Arguments that are made use of to maintain Justification by a personal inherent Righteousness, and proved, that it cannot be obtained that Way.

But, III. May some say, *Although our own Righteousness itself will not fully justify us, yet, may it not go some of the Way for our Justification? It will justify us in part, and is necessary, together with the Righteousness of Christ, for that End. Both together are sufficient, but neither alone.*

To which I answer, That no Righteousness of our's has any Hand or Interest at all in our Justification. It will not go all the Way, it will not go one Hair's Breadth. A perfect and complete personal Righteousness (such as none of the ordinary Posterity of fallen *Adam* can pretend to) will completely justify; but if it is not absolutely perfect, it will not contribute the least Mite. The Law will have an exactly perfect Righteousness, without the least Defect, or none at all; saying, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL THINGS that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* And Christ will admit of no Co-partners with Him in the Case of a Sinner's Justification; He will be a whole Saviour, or no Saviour: And therefore says the Apostle to the *Galatians*, chap. v. ver. 4. *Christ is become of none Effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace.* That is, Whosoever of you are seeking in any Measure to be justified by the Law's Terms, by your own Obedience to it, Christ will be of no Benefit to you; if you will look to the Law for any Part of your Justification, you must look to the Law for it altogether:
Christ's

Christ's Righteousness must not be joined with your own in the Case: You, that are doing so, are fallen from the Gospel's Method of Justification, through free Grace, thinking, in Part at least, to procure it by your Works; *and that which is of Works, is not of Grace, Rom. xi. 6.*

I have now shewed you that a Sinner cannot be justified without a Righteousness to answer the Law for him, and that he cannot be justified by his own Righteousness, neither in Whole nor in Part; it remains then, that there is no other Way for his Justification but through the Merits and Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST alone, according to *Acts iv. 12, There is no Salvation in any other: For there is none other Name under Heaven given, among Men, whereby we must be saved.* And *1 Cor. iii. 11. Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST.* The Doctrine of a Sinner's entire Justification through the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ is the very Foundation Article of the Gospel; and such as are proposing to obtain it any other Way, dash and blur the whole Beauty of the new Covenant, disrobe the adorable Contrivance of Salvation of all it's Glory, and overthrow the very Frame of the Gospel: Yea, they deprive the Lord Jesus of the just Honours of Redemption, and detract from the Glory of his Mediatorial Office; and unless they are convinced in Time, will find in the End that by it they have ruined and undone their Souls for ever: For it proceeds from a stupid and God-provoking Insensibleness of your condemned State and wretched Condition by Sin; from a haughty proud Conceit of some Self-worthiness, whereby you think to be, at least, Partners with Christ in procuring your Happiness, by your poor wretched Doings: It infallibly keeps the Soul from receiving and leaning upon the Lord Jesus by a true Faith, without which it is impossible to be saved; *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* Oh Sirs! it is not such a light Matter as you may imagine, what you are looking to for your Salvation; the Unbelievers shall have their

their Portion in the Lake that burns with unquenchable Fire, *Rev. xxi. 8. Luke xii. 46.*

And now, (to make some *Application* of the foregoing Doctrine) you see how and where the Relief of undone Sinners, from their condemned State, can only be had; and let me intreat you, solemnly and impartially to consider these Things, and yield your Assent to these great Truths. Labour to be suitably influenced and affected by them, so as to bring them to Practice. Consider what a condemned State Sin has brought you into, out of which you must be delivered, or perish for ever. Consider, that your own Righteousness will not bring you out of it; if you trust to that for your Justification, you will find yourselves eternally deceived; you will never be able to stand it in the Day of Trial, when you appear before the great Judge. Unless you are found clothed with the Redeemer's Righteousness, and *have your Robes washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb*, *Rev. vii. 14.* you will never be able to stand. And, Oh then, acknowledge your guilty and condemned State by Sin! Reject all Dependance upon yourselves, and fly to the Lord Jesus alone for your Relief. Receive Him for your only Saviour, giving up yourselves, with true Hearts, to Him, to be for Him, and none else, to serve Him while you live.

To excite you to this, and further to recommend the Doctrine of *Free Justification through Christ alone*, I would propose to your Consideration *the Sufficiency of his Righteousness* for that End.

It is *sufficient* in Three Respects; in Point of *Worth* and *Value*, in Point of *Acceptance*, and in Point of *Attendance*.

First, It is of *sufficient Value* to procure Justification for Sinners, which fully appears from the Perfection of his *active Obedience*, *the Depth of his Sufferings*, and *the Dignity of his Person*, concerned in both. His *active Obedience* was absolutely perfect; so that he completely fulfilled the Condition upon which the Law promised eternal Life to Man.

The

The *Weight of his Sufferings* was inconceivable ; so that He fully bore the Penalty of the Law. And the *infinite Dignity of his Person* put an infinite Value on them ; so that his Sufferings of a finite Duration, were of equal Value, for the answering of the Law's Penalty, to a whole Eternity of Sufferings in a mere Creature : For He is GOD as well as Man ; He is *Immanuel*, God with us ; God and Man in one Person. But, though the Righteousness of Christ be of sufficient Value to purchase Sinners Redemption ; yet it is not fully sufficient, unless God will accept of it for the Sinner ; and He may justly stand upon the Terms of a personal Satisfaction, which the Sinner cannot give but by suffering for ever. But, Oh! behold, in the next Place, the admirable Grace and Love of the Father ! He has abundantly declared his Pleas'dness with the Righteousness of his dear Son, so as whoever leans upon it, by a true Faith, shall be accepted by it. *1 Pet. ii. 6. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Cornerstone, elect, precious, and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded.* We have God's own Word for it, that an undone Sinner need not fear to lean the whole Weight of his guilty Soul, and all his eternal Concerns, on Jesus Christ: Neither, in the last Place, is there any Danger of a Believer's perishing through Want or Neglect of Application of the Virtue of Christ's Righteousness to him. Indeed, a Thing may be sufficient for a particular End upon all other Accounts, and yet, for Want of Attendance and looking after, may never effect it ; but there is no Danger of that here : The Lord JESUS, who died, has rose again, and ascended into the highest Heaven, there to appear in the Presence of GOD for his People, *Heb. ix. 24.* He is exalted at God's right Hand, looking after the Application of his Righteousness to the Redeemed ; making Intercession for his People that believe in Him ; pleading the Merit of his Righteousness for them ; and will, in the End, bring them, against all Opposition, to eternal Glory in the Virtue of it. Hence the Apostle deduces such Matter of Consolation from the Resurrection, Exaltation, and Intercession of Christ,

Rom. viii. 34. and in other Places. Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. Thus you see that Christ's Righteousness is the only sure Foundation for the Soul to lean upon. Let others trust to what they will, I desire with the Apostle to be found in Him, not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is by the Faith of Christ. Oh Sirs! there is no where else where you can find Relief: And Wo, Wo, will be to you for ever, if you do not come to CHRIST, that you may have Life.



S E R M O N III.

ROM. chap. x. ver. 4.

For Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth.

TH E S E Words (according to what I before observed to you in the Explanation) are brought in here to shew what is the Righteousness which GOD has appointed for the Justification of a condemned Sinner; for the freeing him from the Claims and Charges of the Law against him: Teaching us, that it is only to be found in *Jesus Christ*; and (as I have fully made appear from the holy Oracles) consists in what he has done and suffered in the Discharge of his Mediatorial Undertaking, when he was bodily present in this World. And the inspired Apostle not only in general declares what the Sinners only justifying Righteousness is, but, particularly, characterizes the Persons that are actually justified thereby, pointing forth what

is the great Qualification requisite in order thereunto, telling us, *that Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth.* By which last Words (as I before observed) he not only extends the Benefit of Justification to all Believers, but also limits and restrains it to them only: And so the Point of Truth from hence, now to be insisted upon, is, That

Faith in CHRIST is necessary in order to Justification by Him.

The Truth of this Proposition is sufficiently attested by the Word of God: *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* *John iii. 18. He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of GOD.* So ver. 36. *The Wrath of God still abides upon the Unbeliever.* *Gal. v. 5, 6. We, through the Spirit, wait for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith; for in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.* And hence the Righteousness of Christ is called *the Righteousness of Faith,* *Rom. iv. 11.* and chap. x. ver. 6. and *the Righteousness which is by Faith,* *Phil. iii. 9.* *Rom. iii. 22.* because of this Necessity of Faith, in order to the Soul's saving Interest in it.

The Method in which I propose to speak to this great Truth, is,

First, A little to open up the Nature of Faith in Christ, and shew you what it is.

Secondly, To shew you its Necessity, in this Case of a Sinner's Justification, by considering the Interest and Concern that it has in it. And,

Thirdly, To consider something of the Excellency and Beauty of this Method of a condemned Sinner's Recovery, through Faith in the Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

First, I return to the first of these, wherein I am to open *the Nature of a true Faith in Christ*. It is well described in our *shorter Catechism* to be *A saving Grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for Salvation, as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel*. Agreeable to this, (that I may speak as clearly upon it as I can) take this Description of it, *viz. Faith in Christ is a saving Grace, whereby a Person receives Him for his only Saviour, leans and depends upon his Righteousness, and that only, for his Justification before GOD, and all Things that he stands in need of*.

In this Description you may especially take Notice of these two or three Things,

1. That a very principal Benefit, which a Person in believing rests upon Christ for, is his Justification, to be delivered from the Guilt of Sin, and Condemnation of the Law, and consequently from deserved Damnation; and to be entitled to eternal Happiness, and, consequently, in the End, actually to obtain it, and be glorified in Heaven. This a Person in believing, especially in his first Closure with Christ, principally respects, and has his Eyes primarily upon; for this he is most intimately and awfully concerned in. But yet he stops not here, but all Things that he wants, and that GOD has promised, he looks for through Christ alone, upon the Account of his Mediation; for Christ is the Mediator, through whom all Blessings come from God to his People: Therefore he directs his Disciples to ask whatsoever they want, in his Name, *Joh. xiv. 13, 14. and xv. 16. and xvi. 23, 26.* All Things that the Soul needs, are treasured up in Him as Mediator, to communicate to his People: *Col. i. 19. It pleased the Father that in Him should all Fullness dwell.* And He is made all Things to his People, *1 Cor. i. 30. Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.*

2. In the Description you may observe, that the Person in believing puts Trust and Confidence in nothing else but Christ, for his Justification. Thus the holy Apostle disclaims all other Trust in this Case, *Phil. iii. 8, 9.*

But,

But, 3. The Soul, in believing, not only rejects all Confidences besides Christ, but he positively and really depends upon the Righteousness of Christ, for his Reconciliation and Peace with G O D. Justifying Faith consists not only of Negatives: The true Believer, as he rejects all other Dependence, so, he positively, with a sweet Satisfaction of Soul, rests on Jesus Christ. By a positive real Act of his Soul he lays hold on Him, as the only sure Foundation and Pillar for his sinking Soul to be supported and upheld by: So the Church is represented, *Cant. viii. 5.* leaning upon her Beloved.

That I may more fully open up to you the Nature of *Faith in Christ*, as it is revealed in the holy Scriptures, I shall briefly shew you,

I. *How it is that a Believer receives Christ, and leans upon his Righteousness.*

II. *That this is the Scripture Doctrine concerning justifying Faith.*

III. *The Grounds and Encouragement, upon which the Believer, with such Satisfaction, leans on Christ, and adventures his Soul upon Him.*

I. As to the first, You must consider, the Terms here generally made use of to signify the Soul's Acting of Faith on Christ, are not to be understood in a corporal Sense; as when we conceive of the Leaning of one Body upon another. We cannot, in this gross Notion, lean or rest on Christ: But the Believer relies upon Christ by the Assent of his Mind, and the free Consent of his Will. In these two Acts of the Soul is comprised the Whole of *saving Faith*. His Assent is nothing else but his firm Belief and certain undoubted Persuasion of the Truth of these Things, which God has revealed in the Gospel, especially concerning his undone Condition by Sin, and absolute Need of a Saviour, and concerning the Way of Recovery and Salvation through the Righteousness of Christ only. These great Truths he certainly and firmly believes, with a particular Application
to

to himself, so as to be answerably affected by them; he so believes them as to feel the Power of them upon his Heart, producing those Affections and Dispositions which they have a native Tendency to excite in him, and which the true Belief of them will certainly effect. In this Assent is necessarily included a distinct Knowledge of the Things believed. The blind implicit Faith, which the *Papists* teach as sufficient to Salvation, (*viz.* if Persons do but believe as the Church believes, *i. e.* if they believe that the Church believes right, though they do not know one Thing distinctly which the Church does believe) is of no Value. It is altogether insufficient to sanctify the Heart, not having the least rational Tendency, as a Means, that Way; whereas the true Faith purifies the Heart, *Acts xv. 9.* and overcomes the World, *1 John v. 4.* also, it makes the Soul spiritual and heavenly, that before was base and earthly, led away with the Honours, Profits, and sordid Pleasures of the World; it breaks the Interest which these Things of the World had in the Heart: But, surely, a blind Faith, without the Knowledge of Gospel-Truths, can never effect this; it is by beholding in the Gospel, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, that the Soul is changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, according to *2 Cor. iii. 18.* There can be no true Faith in Christ, without a competent Knowledge of the Substance of the Gospel. The Person that believes in Christ, perceives and understands that it is the Report of the Gospel, and as firmly believes it to be God's Truth, that he is a guilty and condemned Creature by the Law of God which he has broken, helpless and undone in himself, that the only Way of Relief is through the Righteousness of Jesus Christ; there he must come, and have an Interest in it, or perish: He apprehends that Christ has laid no Bar against him in the Gospel, more than others, but offers himself a Saviour to the most Guilty, Wretched, and Undone.

And, then, the second and completing Act of Faith is the Consent of the Will, whereby the poor and humbled Sinner
 freely

freely consents and chearfully complies to take Christ for his Saviour; and to lean the whole Weight of his guilty Soul and all his eternal Concerns upon Him. The Person, seeing his condemned undone Estate by Sin, is deeply humbled, and made poor in Spirit, altogether stripped and left quite empty of all Hopes of Relief from himself: And, seeing the Way of Salvation through Christ, which is revealed in the Gospel, he heartily closes with it, and, by a sensible lively Act of his Soul receives Christ, and leans upon Him for his only Saviour, with a sweet Satisfaction he rolls over himself upon Christ, to save him, through the Virtue of his Merits and continual Intercession. He is well pleased with this Way of Salvation through Christ, and lays up all his Hopes in Him. And this Faith in Christ is not only a transient passing Act, but a settled Habit and abiding Principle in the Soul, which is often, more or less, in a sensible feeling Exercise, in a Believer's Heart; so that *the whole Life which he now lives in the Flesh, he lives by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him,* Gal. ii. 20.

Now this Knowledge of the Truths of God's Word, which discovers the miserable undone Condition of the Soul without Christ, and the Way of Salvation through his Mediation and Righteousness, with the powerful Belief of them, and the hearty unfeigned Consent of the Will to this Way of Salvation, whereby the Soul freely quits all other Hold, and sweetly rolls itself over on JESUS CHRIST, is the Substance and Sum of saving Faith. And, by these Actings of the Soul, the Believer truly rests and leans on the Son of God, and Him only, for his eternal Salvation, has his Eyes fixed upon his Mediation alone for it, and makes Him the Ground of all his Hope, and the Foundation of his Confidence towards God.

From these Things you may see the Reason, why this Grace is so frequently in Scripture expressed by the Terms of *Knowing, Believing,* and ordinarily by this Name of *Faith,* which properly signifies the *Believing of some Doctri-*

nal Proposition; and not only by the Terms of, *Leaning, Depending, Trusting, &c.* The Reason is, because it consists in a knowing and certain Belief of the Gospel Revelation of the Way of Salvation through Christ's Righteousness, together with the Soul's free and affectionate Compliance with it: And in this Faith the Soul necessarily receives Christ for his Saviour, and rests upon Him.

Hence also you may see, that such as are not firmly persuaded of the Truth of the great Foundation Truths of the Gospel, (particularly those which I have shewed you the Soul in believing gives its hearty Assent to) much more such as positively deny and misbelieve them, have no true Faith in Christ; for it is by the Believing of these that the Soul comes to close with the Lord Jesus, and to put a saving Trust and Affiance in Him; and without it he cannot, it is impossible. There are many who do not dispute these Truths; yea, farther, they give a Kind of a dead and ineffectual Credit to them; but yet they are not Certainties and Realities with them. They are inclined to believe they are true, but yet, for what they know, they may be otherwise: They would be far from venturing to lay down their Lives upon the Truth of them. It is evident that the Faith of such Persons is nothing else but a doubtful Opinion; whereas the Language of true Faith is that of the Disciple, *John vi. 69. We believe, and are sure.* This is witnessed by all the holy Martyrs of Jesus, who have laid down their Lives for the Truths of the Gospel; *Who were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held, Rev. vi. 9.* Oh Sirs! here is the great Danger and Mischief of Ignorance in the Understanding, of Unfixedness and Error in the Judgment; that they keep the Soul from Union with Christ, and dishonour God: *For he that believeth not GOD hath made Him a Liar: Because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son. And this is the Record, viz. that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son, 1 John v. 10, 11.*

II. Having thus far opened the Nature of saving Faith, I am next to shew you, that this is the true Notion of it taught in the holy Scriptures; that this is the Faith which God requires in his Word. Which very evidently appears,

1. In that the wretched, condemned Condition of Sinners, and the Way of Justification, and Relief through the Virtue of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings alone, is the true Scripture Doctrine; as I have sufficiently made appear in the former Sermons.

Now, if these are the Truths of God's Word, then, sure; they are to be believed; and it is as certain, that the Person who truly believes them, in so doing, must necessarily acknowledge and be sensible of his most miserable undone State by Sin, renounce all Confidence in his own Righteousness, all Trust in himself, or any Thing that he can do, and put his whole Trust in Christ alone, his whole Dependance upon his Righteousness; for any other Trust and Dependance in this Case, would be both contrary to the Doctrines of the Gospel, and inconsistent with the real Belief of them. Thus, the Lord offering Christ to Sinners, in the Gospel, as their only Saviour, certainly he requires them to receive Him as such; and this, when it is done really, freely and affectionately, is the Faith which I have described. So that these Doctrines, taught in God's Word, sufficiently discover the Nature of a true Faith in Christ. But,

2. The Scriptures hold forth the Nature of Faith by such Expressions as necessarily and clearly determine it to this believing Dependance upon Christ's Righteousness: *Rom. iii. 24, 25. Being justified 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.* Faith in his Blood here plainly signifies a Dependance upon his Death and Sufferings; as the only Price of our Redemption and Peace with God; as That through which only a condemned Sinner must be justified; and can intend nothing else. To this Purpose the Apostle declares the Nature of his Faith, *Phil. iii 7, 8, 9.* expressing his entire Dependance

upon the Mediatorial Righteousness of Christ, renouncing all Trust upon any other Righteousness. After he had particularly related his strict legal Righteousness, and personal Advantages, in the former Part of the Chapter; *But*, says he, *ver. 7. what Things were Gains to me, those I counted Loss for Christ.* As if he had said, Those Things I have now related, and all others of the like Kind, upon which, before, I highly valued myself, and which I counted great Gain, by which I thought to gain Heaven, I came to see that they were so far from being such Gain, that they were but as Dross without Christ; and so I quit all Dependance upon them for Him: *For whom (says he) I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ; and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ.* In a Word, his whole Doctrine in the Case of Justification, discovers this to be the Nature of his Faith; as when he says, *Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, (by) being made a Curse for us.* The Lord Christ himself shews this to be the Nature of Faith in Him, *John vi.* from *ver. 51.* when he speaks of it under the Notion of eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood.

III. And now, to conclude this Head of the Nature of Faith, I shall endeavour to shew you, how a Person comes to put such Trust in the Lord Jesus; upon what Ground and Encouragement he leans on Christ with such Satisfaction and Peace; so as, rejecting all other Dependance, to adventure his guilty Soul wholly upon Him.

And, in the first Place, Negatively, You must consider, that he takes not his Encouragement from the Consideration of any peculiar Privileges, or personal Righteousness of his own, thinking thereby to recommend himself to Christ, or render himself any way worthy of his Righteousness: For this is but a more plausible Way of seeking Justification by Works, by our own Righteousness, and laying the Foundation of it upon something in ourselves, and not entirely upon Christ.

But,

But, in the next Place, Affirmatively, The Progress of Faith in Christ is much according to these several Steps.

1. The Soul sees that he is brought into a miserable and condemned State by Sin; that he is a most undone Creature for ever, unless he can find some Way of Relief, wherein he shall obtain a full Removal of his awful Guilt, and total Discharge of his Obligation to punishing and vindictive Justice.

2. He sees and is sure that there is no other Way of Relief for him but through the Mediation and Righteousness of the Redeemer Christ; according to the Scripture, and these Places in particular, among others, *John xiv. 6. Acts iv. 12. Rom. iii. 20 to 26.* And,

3. He conceives a strong Probability at least of Relief this Way, for himself in particular; a Probability of Peace with God, and escaping his Wrath through Christ's Righteousness; that God will receive him to his Love and Mercy, poor, wretched and Hell-deserving as he is, in his beloved Son. And this Encouragement, and Ground of Trust in Christ, he takes not from a Conceit of any Worthiness in himself or his own Doings, (as I have but now said) which will recommend him to his Acceptance; but from the All-sufficiency and Fulness which he discovers in Christ himself, and the free Offers of Him in the Gospel. He sees that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him; seeing he has offered himself for Sin, a Sacrifice of infinite Value; and poured out his Soul unto Death; and not only so, but has risen again from the Dead, and ascended up into Glory, sits at the right Hand of the Majesty on high, and now ever liveth to make *Intercession for them.* He discovers likewise, that Christ is fully and freely offered in the Gospel, as a Saviour, to the most Unworthy and Hell-deserving: As *Isai. lv. i. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price. Matth. xi. 21. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give*

give you Rest. Now, sure, here is Encouragement enough for the convinced Sinner to receive Christ; and a sufficient Foundation for his Trust in Him. And thus, the poor humbled Soul seeing that he is miserable and undone by Sin, and that there is no other Way of Relief or Help for him, and a high Probability, at least, this Way, considering the Sufficiency of the Redeemer, and the Freeness of his Offer; he lets go all other Dependance, and resolves to venture himself entirely upon the Lord Jesus; to Him he will cleave, and will not let Him go: For there is none else that can help him; like a Man among the devouring Waves in the open Ocean that lays fast hold upon a single Plank that is by him, with which he will not part, utterly despairing of Help any other Way. The Case of the Soul, in believing, some times, is much like that of the four Lepers at the Gate of *Samaria*, when the City suffered a Siege from the Enemy without, and a cruel Famine within, *2 Kings vii. 3, 4.* *There were four leprous Men at the entring in of the Gate; And they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, we will enter into the City, then the Famine is in the City, and we shall die there: And if we sit still here, we die also: Now, therefore, come, and let us fall unto the Host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.* These Men, in their Extremity, had some Probability of Help from the *Syrians* in their View, but quite gave up all Hope any other Way; the truly humbled Sinner sees himself in the same Strait; but he has much more Ground offered him in the Gospel to trust in Christ for his Relief, than these Men had to confide in the *Syrian* Army; he considers, like them, that if he sits still where he is, he shall die; if he continues in that condemned State in which he is without Christ, he shall surely die; and if he goes any where else but to Christ, he shall die there: If he trusts to his own Righteousness, depends upon his personal Obedience and Reformation, that cannot save him, but he shall die there also. Thus, being reduced to the greatest Extremity, and beholding the glorious Encouragement opened in the Gospel

Gospel of Relief and Help in Jesus Christ, he joyfully lays hold on Him for his Saviour, and there he rests his weary Soul. And this is saving Faith, called the *Faith of Adherence or Dependance only*, being short of a bright and full Assurance; yet it has very precious and sweet Effects: It causes the Soul to dart out the Beams of pure and transcendent Love to the glorious God; it introduces a sweet Joy into the Soul, and brings a balmy Peace to the wounded Conscience, in Proportion to the Degree of Faith and Trust which the Soul reposes in Jesus Christ. I pray you to compare these Things with the Experiences of your own Souls, as I pass along, and examine whether ever you have so received Christ. Oh Sirs! It is much to be truly sensible of your utter Undoneness without Christ, and absolute Need of Him, that nothing else can help the condemned Sinner: Without a Sense of this, it is impossible to come to Christ; the Soul is not at all in the Way to believe in Him. Although a Conviction of a Sinner's Misery, and the deepest Poverty of Spirit renders the Sinner no way more worthy of Christ, yet it is necessary to put the Soul in the Way to close with Christ, and believe in Him. It is necessary in order to the acting of Faith upon him. But to proceed,

4. There is yet a higher Degree of Faith, a more full and sweet Recumbency on the Lord Jesus, that more effectually frees the Soul from anxious Fear and Mistrust, which a Believer may advance to, and for which he has answerable Ground and Encouragement from God. The God of Truth, who cannot deceive, has positively promised, that whosoever comes to Christ in this manner, and leans his guilty Soul wholly upon Him, be he never so vile, poor, and unworthy, shall be accepted in Him. What a blessed Assurance is that which Christ himself, the Lord of Life, gives, *John vi. 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* And ver. 40. he assures us, that it is the Father's Will and Pleasure, that such as so believe in Him, should be eternally saved. *And this, says he, is the Will of him that sent me,*
that

that every one which bath the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last Day. What a sweet Word is that to a Believer, 1 Pet. ii. 6. *Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.* Now, when the poor and humble Soul discovers this, he receives Christ, and leans upon Him with the greater Confidence; for he has the sure Word of God for his Warrant, the infallible Promise of *Jebovab* for the Foundation of his Faith: When he has a Sight of this Security for his Acceptance in Christ, and the Acting of his Faith in Christ thereupon, is so full and sensible as to be clear to his own View, then it is the *Faith of Assurance*, and he is as sure that G O D is reconciled to him in Christ, as that there is a God, or that himself lives upon the Earth.

Thus I have laid before you the Nature of a true and saving Faith: And from what has been said upon it, you may conceive how humble, low and base in his own Sight a true Believer is; how deeply sensible of his Wretchedness and Poverty in himself. Hence you may see what a strong and unspeakable Love must needs fill his Heart to the gracious God, who has provided such a Remedy for so undone and vile a Creature. Oh Sirs! his Heart within him burns with the purest Love to the Divine Majesty! How exceeding dear is Christ to his Soul! Well might the Apostle say, *To you that believe, he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Christ is to him as *the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood*: His very Name is as an Ointment poured forth, Cant. iii. 4. What a sweet Peace and Satisfaction possesses his Soul in leaning upon his Saviour! In a Word, how freely and fully does he give up himself to Christ, to serve Him while he lives, to be for Him, and none else, for ever. And now,

Secondly, I proceed to shew you the Necessity of Faith in Christ, in order to Justification through his Righteousness. That it is indispensibly necessary to this End, is beyond Dispute with all that understand and believe the Scriptures. But I am to consider upon what Account it is so necessary; what

what is the Concern which it has in the Justification of a Sinner, upon the Account of which he cannot be justified without it. Here then you must know that Faith is not concerned in Justification, as a Qualification that is any way meritorious of it: Nothing has any Hand or Part in Justification, as a Merit or Price, but the Righteousness of the Lord JESUS, as I have sufficiently made appear, which is so full and sufficient, that nothing else is necessary this Way. To Christ belongs the whole Honour and Praise of the Purchase of Salvation. But Faith is concerned in Justification, as the Hand or Instrument which receives the Righteousness of Christ, and applies it to the Soul, according to the wise Constitution and Appointment of God in the Gospel. Upon this Account it is so necessary to Justification: By Faith the Soul lays hold on Christ for its Saviour; and as the Believer receives Christ, and depends upon his Righteousness, the LORD then imputes his Righteousness to him; that is, he receives it for him, and accepts him upon the Account of it, as fully as if he had produced a Righteousness sufficient of his own. The Lord now looks upon it as the Believer's Righteousness, he having laid hold upon it as his only justifying Righteousness, and put all his Hopes in it. This is the Way which the Lord has appointed for the Sinner's Interest in Christ's justifying Righteousness, *viz.* By his receiving and laying hold upon it by Faith; so that as soon may a Man be saved from Drowning by a Plank in the Water without laying hold upon it, as soon may a Beggar be enriched by an Alms offered him, without putting forth his Hand to receive it, as a Person can be justified by Christ, without receiving Him by Faith. And, indeed, it cannot in Reason be expected that any should be benefited by the Gospel-Method of Grace and Salvation without their hearty Compliance with it: The Lord will save none in any way against their Wills; and none do consent and agree to this Way of Salvation through Christ, which God has appointed, until they embrace Christ, and close with Him by Faith, but are still for being saved some other Way: But, Oh Sirs! there

there is no other Way in which you can be saved; and therefore, if you agree not unfeignedly to this, you are eternally undone. And so I pass on to the

Third General Head proposed, which was, to lay before you something of the Glory and Excellency of this Method which G O D has established for the Justification of a condemned Sinner: It consists, you see, of two Parts; of *Merit* and *Purchase* upon Christ's Part, and *Faith* in the same, on our Part. I shall a little consider the Beauty of it in both these Respects.

1. Then, as to the *meritorious Cause of Justification, the Obedience and Suffering of the Son of God*, this is certainly a Scheme every Way worthy of G O D to project for the Recovery of a fallen and condemned Creature; for in it his adorable Perfections receive a very glorious Display. How glorious does his infinite Wisdom appear in it! The Law of God, or the first Covenant Treaty of God with Man, requires a perfect Obedience in all Things, and at all Times, as the Condition of eternal Life; the Condition must be fulfilled, or eternal Life cannot be obtained: But Mankind has here universally come short, and so is condemned to a privative Misery, the Loss of Glory and Happiness for ever. And as, upon Consideration of the bare Non-performance of the Condition of Life, Man is shut out of Heaven, and deprived of a glorious Immortality by this first Covenant; so, upon Consideration of his transgressing the Law of God, he is by the Law, according to the Tenor of this Covenant, condemned to that positive Punishment which his Sin deserves, which is very dreadful and unspeakable, and which must be sustained. Now, Man is utterly incapable to answer these Demands of the Law for his Recovery; and there is no other Creature able to answer the Law for him, nor willing to undertake it: Which Way then shall the Law be answered, and the Sinner relieved? He cannot answer it himself any other Way than by suffering eternally: And supposing he should, in a limited Duration, bear all that positive Punishment which the Law doomed him to for his Sin, yet he could have no

Access to the glorious everlasting Enjoyment of God; because he had failed in his Obedience, and not fulfilled the Condition upon which this Happiness was promised: Oh then, how shall both the Law be answered, and the poor Sinner saved! Would not this one Question have put the whole Creation to Silence; and eternally non-plussed the highest Reach of Creature-Thoughts? The Resolution of it exceeds the utmost Bounds of all Creature-Invention. It would appear utterly impossible that the Law could be answered any other Way than by the Sinner's falling a Sacrifice to vindictive Justice. But, Oh Sirs! behold and admire the astonishing Wisdom of *Jehovah*, whereby he has made foolish the Wisdom of the World: The second Person in the glorious Godhead, the eternal Son of God, who is God equal with the Father, takes upon him our Nature, a human Body and Soul into a personal Union with himself, and thereby becomes capable of fulfilling the Law which Sinners had broken, and bearing its awful Penalty; and the infinite Dignity of his Person adds an infinite Value to his Mediation; so that the Law is fully answered in the utmost of its Demands, and a Door of Hope opened for guilty and wretched Creatures. Oh, astonishing Mystery! *Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, GOD was manifest in the Flesh,* 1 Tim. iii. 16. Though a crucified Christ be *to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness, yet to them that are called, whether Jews or Greeks, He is the Power of GOD and the Wisdom of GOD,* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. Such Wisdom as astonishes all the Saints on Earth, and all the Hosts in Heaven: Infinite Wisdom shines all round the Contrivance, such as strikes us with Astonishment and Wonder to behold. What a strange Method has God proposed to answer the Law, and save the condemned Sinner, by the Union of God and Man in one Person; so that *Wonderful* is justly put as the first Part of our *Immanuel's* Name, *Isai. ix. 6.* How difficult, and even, to a created Understanding, impossible was the Discovery of any Method sufficient for the Compassing of this great End:

But it was no Difficulty with God, He has found a Ransom and how fit and sufficient is the Means proposed for the obtaining of the End designed. Again, the unspotted Holiness and inflexible Justice of God are clearly manifested in this Method of Salvation: Therein he has testified the dreadful Desert of Sin, and his infinite Abhorrence of it; rather than it should go unpunished, he would punish it in his own dear Son: And so he has maintained the Honour and awful Respect due to his Royal Law. But, in the last Place, how gloriously is the infinite Love of God, the Riches of his Grace and Compassion declared in it! Oh admirable Love, that God should give his own well-beloved Son a Sacrifice for Hell-deserving Sinners! That the Son of God should stoop so low to save rebellious Worms! Oh Sirs! how does this Thought endear G O D to his People, and enflame their Hearts with a returning Love to Him! So that by this Method of Salvation G O D eminently displays his sweetest Glory to his People, highly endears Himself unto their Hearts, and advances their Happiness and Delight in Heaven, even above the Angels, who have only to sing the Praises of creating Goodness, but they shall also sing the Praises of redeeming Love, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever, while they behold the *Lamb that was slain* in the midst of the Throne of G O D. How dreadfully then do they err, to the Dishonour of God and the Ruin of their own Souls, who, from a Condit of raising Religion to a very sublime Height of Spiritualness, look upon a crucified Jesus as too mean and carnal a Thing to be the Object of a Believer's Faith, or to have his Heart much influenced and affected by: This is Spirituality, indeed, so to undervalue and despise the most glorious Expression of the divine Perfections that ever the World was acquainted with; the most beautiful Scene that ever was opened to the View of God's rational Creation; such is the Method of Redemption through a crucified Saviour; and such as are truly spiritually enlightened, see it so: Though *Christ crucified* be to others *Foolishness*, to them *He is the Power of G O D and the Wis-*

dom

dom of GOD. 2 Cor. iv. 6. GOD, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of JESUS CHRIST. And then,

2. As to Faith, the instrumental Cause of Justification; the Gospel-Method of Salvation appears amiable and beautiful in that Faith in Christ is therein made of indispensable Necessity for the Application of his Righteousness to the Soul: For is it not very becoming a guilty and vile Creature, deserving of God's Wrath, that he should be sensible to whom he is beholden for his Salvation, especially when it has been purchased for him at so dear a Rate; and so, that he should give the whole Glory and Praise to the Author of it, and take to himself Shame and Confusion of Face? Is it not reasonable that the Lord Jesus should have the whole Glory of Redemption given to Him by his Redeemed Ones? Now, these Things are only provided for by this Appointment of Faith; without Faith Christ should not have the just Honours of his Mediation paid to him; the Unbeliever robs Him of them. And then again, By this Constitution of the Necessity of Faith, there is Provision made for the Sanctification and Holiness of those who are justified by Christ: Had there been no Provision made this Way in the Gospel-Method of Justification, had Provision only been made for the Salvation of Sinners from the Punishment of Hell, and not also from the Power and Dominion of Sin, this had been a Stain and Blemish in it, and marred all its Beauty: But Faith in Christ has a powerful Influence upon Holiness of Life; as evidently appears from its very Nature, as I have before explained it to you: For Faith endears Christ to the Soul, and fills it with the purest Love to his Majesty; it works by Love, as the Apostle tells us, (Gal. v. 6.) and Love works by Obedience; a Person that truly loves Christ, delights to honour and please Him, by obeying his Commands, and therefore himself tells us, John xiv. 23. *If a Man loves me, he will keep my Words.* A total Rejecting of all Dependence upon our Obedience, and depending entirely

upon Christ, is the surest Foundation of Obedience, and the only Principle from whence a pure Obedience flows: GOD regards not that mercenary Obedience which blind Sinners perform from a legal Principle, thinking by their faithless, graceless Services to recommend themselves to the Acceptance of the holy God: When Obedience, I say, flows from this Spring, it is no true Obedience to God; He detests and abhors it; that is only pleasing in his Sight which proceeds from a pure Love, kindled by the Grace of Faith.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

And now, my Hearers, I intreat you to examine yourselves whether you have true Faith in Christ or not. You have heard the absolute Necessity of it, that without it you never can be saved; and you have heard the Nature of it laid open. Now then, I beseech you to search your own Souls, whether you are true Believers in Christ. Have you ever been thoroughly convinced of your guilty and condemned State by Sin, so as to be deeply distressed upon the Account of it, and seek in Earnest what you should do to be delivered out of it? Have you rejected all other Things, and quitted all Dependance upon any thing else, and laid hold on the Lord Jesus for your Soul's Salvation, depending on Him alone for it, through the Virtue of his Merits and Mediation-Works? Have you received Him by such a Faith as makes Him exceeding dear and precious to your Hearts, dearer to you than your own Lives, so that it is the unfeigned and fervent Desire and Endeavour of your Souls to serve Him in all his Ways, and obey Him in all his Laws? Such of you as have so cloied with Jesus Christ, have great Ground of Comfort, for *he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life*. But you, who have not so received Christ, are yet in your *condemned State*: This Moment you are under the Wrath of God; all your numberless Sins stand in Force against you, unforgiven; not one of them is pardoned; divine Justice is every Day ready to take Vengeance on your guilty Heads; there is nothing stands between you and its dismal Strokes,

Strokes, but the mere Long-suffering and Forbearance of the gracious God, which will be worn out in Time, and his fiery Wrath being once kindled against you, the LORD will pursue you in his Fury, and precipitate your ever rebellious and stubborn Souls into the deepest Hell for ever; and then you shall see (but, Alas! too late) what a dreadful Thing it was that you did not come to Christ. *He that believeth not, says Christ, shall be damned.*

Farther, You that believe in Jesus Christ, let me entreat you, dear Brethren, to be much in the Exercise of this precious Grace of Faith; that you may say with the Apostle, *The Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.* This is the Way to honour God, and to get Comfort to your own Souls. You should be frequently looking by Faith to *Jesus*, the Captain of your Salvation; and leaning your Souls upon Him, you should endeavour to strengthen your Faith, by considering that he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded: He is an able and all-sufficient Saviour, *able to save them to the utmost that come unto GOD by Him; seeing He ever liveth to make Intercession for them,* Heb. vii. 25.

And you who have never received Christ by Faith, I call to you from the great God, now to hasten to the Lord *Jesus*, and to throw yourselves at his Feet, craving his Mercy, and and to depend wholly and solely on Him for your Salvation, if you do not chuse to be eternally undone. There are two Things which are the greatest Hindrances in the Way of Sinners Coming to Christ; First, An Insensibleness of their extreme Need of Him: They do not see that wretched Condition which they are in without Him; They will not be convinced of it; and therefore they sit still at Ease, and will not come to Christ for Relief, while they are not aware of their Misery. And, secondly, When they are in some measure sensible of their undone Condition, they are often seeking Relief in a wrong Method, depending upon their great *Reformation*, their Repentance and Obedience, for it; there they take Sanctuary for themselves, short of Christ. Now,
I have

I have endeavoured to remove these two undoing Evils, which keep the Souls from Christ: I have shewn you that condemned wretched State which Sin has brought you into, and the only Way of Recovery out of it, through *JESUS CHRIST*: And what can I do more? I beseech you to consider these Things, and lay them solemnly to Heart: I call Heaven and Earth to Witness against you this Day, that I have shewn you that Way in which you may escape eternal Perdition; the Way in which you may flee from the Wrath to come, and, by getting an Interest through Faith in the dearest Redeemer, you may be made happy Creatures both in Time and Eternity. Oh, why then would you be resolved to die in your Sins! May the *L O R D*, the High and Holy *G O D*, follow with his powerful Blessing what has been spoken, to your true Conversion to *CHRIST*, that your Souls may be saved in the Day of the *L O R D J E S U S*. *Amen!*



S E R M O N I V.

2 *C O R*. chap. iii. ver. 18.

But we all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

IN this Context, from the 6th Verse, the Apostle is manifestly running a Parallel between the Law and the Gospel; or between that Revelation of the divine Mind, which God made to *Israel* by *Moses*, in Matters relating to their eternal Salvation, and the Revelation which he has made

made by his Son *Jesus Christ*, and by his holy Apostles, in an extraordinary Manner inspired by his Spirit; shewing, in several Instances, how infinitely the *latter* is preferable to the *former*. These two Dispensations he calls by various Names: The *Mosaic* Dispensation he calls the *Letter*, the *Ministration of Death*, the *Ministration of Condemnation*, and the *Old Testament*: The *Christian*, or more full Gospel Dispensation, he terms the *New Testament*, the *Spirit*, and the *Ministration of Righteousness*. The *legal* Dispensation he calls the *Letter*, in Allusion to the Engraving of the moral Law, in legible Characters, upon two Tables of Stone; as also, because it fell much short of that Life and spiritual Influence upon the Heart, which the more clear Revelation of the Gospel is attended with; which, upon the other hand, he calls the *Spirit* upon this Account, *viz.* Because, more fully opening the great and blessed Mystery of the Recovery and Salvation of undone Sinners, through the Mediation of the Son of God, it is generally attended with more of the precious, sanctifying and comforting Influences of his Holy Spirit upon the Hearts of his People. The first Thing wherein the Apostle observes that the Gospel exceeds the Law in Excellence and Glory, he expresses in these Words, *The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life*. The *Mosaic* Dispensation very clearly revealed God's Law and Man's Duty: It plainly discovered the awful Deserts of Sin; and set forth its Penalty in the flaming Colours of Dread and Terror. These Things, I say, were *clearly* revealed; but the Way of Relief for undone Sinners more *dimly*, in dark Types and obscure Prophecies: So that God's People, being conscious of Sin, were generally liable to very great Disquiet and Distress of Mind; and could not fetch such a sweet and sovereign Balsam from that dark Dispensation, to the Healing of their wounded Consciences, as now they may from the clear Revelation of Christ, who has brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel: And therefore the Apostle calls that a *killing*, and this a *Life-giving* Dispensation. But let not any presumptuous un sanctified Sinners foolishly

foolishly conclude from hence, that they have no Reason for such Anxiety or Distress about their Souls now, under the gracious Dispensation of the Gospel: It speaks Peace to none but humble sanctified Believers in the Lord Jesus; and declares you to be in a perishing Condition, under the Wrath and Curse of the great God, every Moment, while you continue in your unregenerate State.

The Apostle, *farther* to shew the great Excellency of the Gospel above the Law, takes Notice of the Glory that was even in that killing Dispensation; which was signified by the Glory that shone in the Face of *Moses*, after God had delivered the Law to him in the holy Mount, so that the Children of *Israel* could not stedfastly behold him for the Glory of his Countenance. And hence, ver. 9. he justly argues, that *if the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory.* That is, if that Dispensation that was attended with so much Terror, even to the Godly themselves, had such Glory in it; much more must be the Glory of the Gospel Dispensation, wherein is clearly revealed that blessed Righteousness which God has provided, and Christ has wrought for their complete Justification, from the Guilt of all their Sins that can annoy their Consciences.

In the *last* Place, (not to be critical and tedious in Remarks upon the Context) the inspired Apostle takes Notice of the Pre-eminence of the Gospel above the Law, in Point of Light and Clearness. The old Dispensation, comparatively, made but a very dark Discovery of the glorious Method of Salvation, through the Righteousness of Jesus Christ: Which, the Apostle observes, was signified by *Moses's* covering his Face with a Vail while he published to the People all that God had spoken to him in the Mount. The Glories of the new Covenant were contained in that Dispensation, but darkly, as it were under a Vail; so that the Church of God could then discern but some Glimmerings of them; but now, says he, *We all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, &c.*

Thus

Thus you see, with what Design these Words are here introduced. The Text contains very glorious, weighty and substantial Truths: For the Explication of it you may take Notice of these six Particulars. 1. The *Persons* spoken of, *We all*. 2. The *Act* ascribed to them, *Beholding*. 3. The *Object* of this Act, about which it is exercised, *The Glory of the Lord*. 4. The *Medium* by and in which this Object is beheld, which is compared to a Glass, *Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord*. 5. The *Effect* produced by the Beholding of God's Glory, beholding the Glory of the Lord, *we are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory*. 6. The *efficient Cause*, by which this great Effect is wrought, *the Spirit of the Lord*.

The Opening of these Particulars will put the Text in a just and clear Light. And as to the

1. The *Persons* spoken of, are all *true Believers* in Christ, in this Time of clear Gospel Light, since He has been manifested in the Flesh.

2. The *Act* of beholding ascribed to them, is not to be understood of a bodily, but an *intellectual Vision*, performed by the Eye of the Mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God; and signifies, not a hasty transient Look, but a steady continued Contemplation, like a Person viewing himself in a Glass.

3. The *Object* beheld and looked upon, is *the Glory of the Lord*: That is, the divine Glory which shines in the great Truths of the Gospel; that Glory of God which He has manifested and declared in them.

4. The *Medium* in and by which this Glory of God is discovered, which is here compared to a Glass, is the *Gospel itself*, viz. that Revelation which God has graciously vouchsafed to us by his own Son, in Things relating to our eternal Salvation. The Things therein revealed and made known to the Children of Men shine with an orient and divine Brightness. In them much of the Glory of God himself is displayed before our Eyes. It is true, much of God's Glory is seen in his Ordinances; especially that *glorious one*

which we have this Day been attending upon before Him*; but then it must be remembered that they receive all their Light from the Gospel, as the Moon does from the Sun; without this they would be very dark Instructors, and rather Vails to cover than Glasses to discover the Glory of God: But in the Light of the Gospel they are blessed Mediums, whereby GOD communicates much of Himself to his People.

Now the Gospel is compared to a Glass upon the following Accounts;

First, Because of its great *Clearness*; not only absolutely in itself, but, in a special Manner, relatively, compared with the foregoing Revelation under the Law, which as much transcends it in this Respect, as a Glass, for Discovery, exceeds a Vail. The mysterious and ravishing Glories of the new Covenant which were veiled under the Law, are brought to open View by the Gospel. And this is manifestly one of the Designs of our Apostle in this Similitude: For, having observed the Darkness of the former Dispensation, represented by *Moses* his veiling of his Face, so that the Children of *Israel* could not stedfastly look to the End of that which is abolished, than with an adverbative, but he subjoins, *we all, with open Face, behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord.* They, as through a Vail, but we, as in a Glass.

Secondly, The Gospel may be compared to a Glass because of its relative *Darkness* and *Obscurity*, compared with the bright Dispensation in the Church Triumphant above: For although a Glass is clearer than a Vail, yet it is more obscure than immediate Vision: Hence says the same Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see through a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.*

Thirdly, The Gospel is here compared to a Glass because of the exact *Agreement* and *Resemblance*, that is between

* This Sermon was preached upon a Sabbath Evening immediately after the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

a Person looking in a Glass and the Image which he beholds in it: For as there is an exact Similitude between the Person and the Image in a Glass, so there is a Similitude between the glorious Things discovered in the Gospel and the Person that beholds them. Only there is this Difference to be remarked in the Comparison, That a Person looking in a Glass reflects his Image upon it, but the Person looking in the Gospel does not bring his Image into it; but the glorious Things he therein beholds reflect their Image upon him; so as that he is even changed and transformed into their very Likeness: As if a Person, in a Glass, should behold the glorious Image of the Sun, and receive the Reflection of its Brightness back again upon himself. Now, although there is this Difference in the Similitude between the Gospel and a Glass, as to the Thing producing the corresponding Image; yet such a Correspondence and Agreement there is, in both Cases; and in this Respect the Comparison is just and suitable: As there is a Resemblance between the Image in the Glass and the Person that beholds it, so the Glory of God, in the Gospel, reflects its own Likeness upon the Beholder, and changes him into the same Image. And it is plain that the Apostle, in the Similitude, had his Eye particularly upon this Part of it from the next Words, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are, says he, *changed into the same Image.* As if he had said, when we look into the Gospel of Christ, and therein behold the Glory of God, immediately there is a Likeness struck up between it and us; and, herein, it is as if we were looking in a Glass. We are changed into the same Image, *from Glory to Glory.*

In these Words is contained the 5th Thing observable in the Text, which is the *great Effect* produced by beholding God's Glory in the Gospel. By beholding the Things which God has revealed in the Gospel in their divine Glory and Lustre, the Soul is so powerfully wrought upon as to be transformed into the very same Image, from Glory to Glory. By this Image and Glory into which such as are truly en-

lightened, are changed, is undoubtedly meant their Sanctification, and Conformity to God in Holiness, which is wrought by the Instrumentality of the Gospel in the Hand of the blessed Spirit: But I cannot think with some judicious Interpreters, that the Apostle's Design in these last Words, *from Glory to Glory*, is to signify the Progress and Growth of Sanctification in the Godly: As if he had said, From one Degree of beautiful Holiness to another. But what he means by *Glory*, in the first Word, is that which before he had called the *Glory of the Lord* appearing in the Gospel: So that this latter Sentence, *We are changed from Glory to Glory*, is much the same with the former, *Beholding the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same Image*. Only in this the Apostle expressly declares what was but implied in that, *viz.* That *Holiness* is a very *glorious* Thing; and more fully expresses the Interest and Instrumentality which the Gospel has in the Production of it; shewing, that from the *Glory of God in the Gospel*, is reflected and impressed this *Glory of Holiness* upon those who behold it; and that, not transiently and superficially; but so as they are wholly changed, and altogether new formed into the same glorious Image.

The 6th and last Particular to be observed in the Words, is the *Author* of this great Change; expressed in these Words, *Even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. The Particle *as*, in this Place, is not a Note of *Similitude*, but of *Reality*: It does not signify, that this Change is wrought only as if it were done by the Spirit of the Lord, but in Reality is not. Says Mr. Beza, it is not a Note of *Comparison*, but of *Congruency* or *Fitness*, and so signifies the *Truth* and *Reality* of the Thing. In the same Sense we have like Particles elsewhere used by this Apostle: Thus, Ver. 5. of this Chapter, he says, *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any Thing as of ourselves*. And in the last Verse of the preceding Chapter, *But as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the Sight of God, speak we in Christ*: Where the Sense is the same as if the *as* were wanting; for, sure the Apostle does not mean that

he only made an Appearance and Show of Sincerity in
preaching the Gospel.

From the Text thus explained, I shall take Notice of
these three *Propositions* of Truth, clearly contained in it.

I. That there is *much of God's Glory* revealed and displayed in the Gospel.

II. That the Sight of God's Glory in the Gospel is of a *transforming Efficacy*: The Soul that beholds it, is thereby changed into the same Image.

III. That the Holy Spirit of God is the *great Author*, and efficient Cause of this glorious Change.

I begin with the first of these, *viz.*

Proposition I.

That there is much of God's Glory revealed and displayed in the Gospel.

In treating doctrinally upon it, I shall only consider wherein so much of God's Glory is manifested in the Gospel; and what of his Glory is manifested therein.

And here I shall principally take Notice of that which is the great Subject and Foundation of the whole Gospel, *viz.* That adorable astonishing Method which God has contrived, and, in the Gospel, revealed for the Recovery and Salvation of fallen undone Sinners. This is the very Substance and Quintessence of the Gospel: This is that which, above all Things, makes it so infinitely transcend and excell all the Revelations that ever God made to Man: *If the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory*: This is that which above all Things casts a blooming Glory all round the Gospel, as the Sun is the chief Glory of the visible Heavens. God has set much of his Glory before our Eyes in the visible Creation: *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work. The invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by*
the

the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head: They shew forth the infinite Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and adorable Sovereignty of their great Author: But, Oh! Sirs, the Glory of God shines infinitely brighter in the astonishing Contrivance of Salvation revealed in the Gospel.

That I may the more clearly open this Subject, and set it before you in its divine Glory, it will be necessary to consider a little what a deplorable Condition Sin had brought Man into: Man, by Sin, fell into a twofold Misery, the Misery of a condemned State, and of a depraved vicious Quality. So soon as Man had broken the Law of God, he was thereby condemned to undergo the Punishment which his Sin deserved, which Penalty he could fully discharge in no shorter Duration than that of *Eternity*: Hence, in order to the Sinner's being restored to Happiness, he must be legally delivered from this Sentence of Condemnation, and brought into a State of Justification as complete as if he had never sinned. By Sin, also, Man lost the glorious moral Image of God in which he was at first created; consisting in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness: He is now become naturally propense to Sin, and averse to Holiness; his Understanding dark, his Will perverse and obstinate; his uniting Affections are turned away from God, terminated upon the Creature, and on Sin; so that *his carnal Mind is Enmity against God*; he hates God and his righteous Law: And so, in order to the fallen Creature's Restoration, there must of Necessity be a great and universal Change wrought upon his Soul: It must be adorned with new and heavenly Qualities, the old wicked Dispositions mortified, and the Power of Sin taken away; it being the greatest Inconsistency imaginable, in the very Nature of the Thing, for a Creature to be happy in the Enjoyment of God without Conformity to Him, having his Heart possessed with Enmity against Him. Now, any effectual Method for the Restoration and Recovery of undone Sinners, must remedy this double Misery, by obtaining for them the *twofold* Benefit of

Justi-

Justification and Sanctification: In the Method which God has established for this End, and revealed in the Gospel, he has amply provided for their Relief in both these Respects. For,

1. He has therein determined that his own dear and eternal Son should take upon him our Nature into a perfect Union with Himself, and therein yield a full Satisfaction to the Law, answering to the utmost all its Demands upon the Sinner, by obeying and suffering. This was the strange Way which the great GOD proposed for obtaining the Justification of condemned Sinners: They were to be delivered from under the condemning Sentence of the Law by Christ's taking it upon himself, and answering it for them.

2. The Lord determined to send the Holy Ghost to sanctify their wicked and unclean Hearts, who, in the Use of suitable Means appointed for that End, should convince his Elect of their utter Undonefulness by Sin, of the All-sufficiency of Christ alone for their Relief, and so, uniting their Hearts to Jesus Christ by Faith, should turn them again to the blessed God, and renew his holy Image upon them, that God may again delight in them, and they delight in Him.

This is briefly that blessed Scheme that was laid in the eternal Mind from everlasting, for the Recovery and Relief of undone Creatures, fallen into such deplorable Circumstances: And sure, the Relation which it bears to us, as it is an effectual Scheme laid for advancing us to the highest Happiness, from eternal, deserved, and the most abandoned Misery, were enough to make it very glorious in our View, and high in our Esteem, without any other Consideration. But let us a little farther enquire into the Nature of the Thing itself, and we shall find it the greatest Expression of the Glory of God, the most beautiful Representation of the divine Perfections that ever was discovered to the intelligent World; the most bright and glorious Scene that ever was laid open to the View of the rational Creation; which puts

a new Song into the Mouths of all the Angels in Heaven, and is a Subject of the sweetest Contemplation for ever to all the Saints of God, who are brought to the immediate Enjoyment of his Glory in the Vision of it. And,

1. You may observe that the Glory of God's infinite Wisdom very eminently shines in it. This you may see,

1. By considering the great and (to a created Understanding) insuperable Difficulties that stood in the Way of any Method sufficient for the Recovery of fallen Sinners.

2. By considering the Method itself, which God has proposed to answer all these Difficulties, and obtain the Sinner's Happiness. And,

3. The Fitness and Sufficiency of the Mean proposed to obtain the End designed.

If we duly look into these Particulars, and compare them together, with the Help of the Holy Spirit, we shall find ourselves plung'd in a Depth of the divine Wisdom that knows no Bottom, which our finite Understanding can never fathom, and be oblig'd to use the Apostle's Exclamation, *Rom. xi. 33. 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! Who hath known the Mind of the Lord? or who hath been his Counsellor? Wisdom, in the general, consists in the proposing of a worthy and valuable End, and the most suitable Means for the attaining of that End; but when a fit and sufficient Mean is projected in the midst of the most perplexing Difficulties, in the present Case, this sets off the Discovery with a very bright Lustre: The surmounted Difficulties shew the Greatness of the Wisdom. Something of the Difficulty of this Case, will appear, by considering the Nature and Tenor of the Law of God, which he at first delivered to Man to be the Rule of his moral Government. God at first delivered his Law to Man with the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, in the Form of a Covenant, which, from the Nature of it, is generally term'd, *The Covenant of Works*; the Tenor*

of

of which was, that upon Condition of perfect Obedience he should enjoy an everlasting Life of Happiness; but, upon the other hand, in Case of Disobedience and Rebellion against God, his rightful Sovereign, he should infallibly bear the Punishment which his Sin deserved, either in his own Person, or by a Surety for him; in short, that the Punishment which his Sin deserved, should be some Way or other sustained. This Method the all-wise God established as an invariable Law to himself to act by, in his judicial Processes with Man: And in this Covenant-Form I would be understood to speak of the Law, whensoever I shall have Occasion to mention it upon this Head.

That perfect Obedience was constituted the only and indispensable Condition of Life, is plain from that of *Paul*, Rom. x. 5. *Moses*, says he, *describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, that the Man which doth those Things shall live by them.* With many other Scriptures. See *Matth. xix. 17.* where a Person asking our Lord, *what he should do that he might have eternal Life*, the Lord answers him according to the Notion which he had of the Way of Life, which was the Way of the old Covenant, by his own Works, saying, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments, i. e. if thou wilt enter into Life the Way that thou apprehendest, thou must perfectly keep the Commandments.* The Lord refers him to the Condition of the first Covenant, in order to convince him of his Mistake, when he thought of obtaining eternal Life by his own Obedience, giving him to understand that his own Obedience would not do unless it were absolutely perfect, which he could not justly pretend to, and therefore it concerned him to look somewhere else for Life than to his own Works, even to Christ Himself, by Faith. See also *Luke x. 27, 28. Gal. v. 3.* And, that the Law condemned to condign Punishment, upon the first Transgression, is as plain, *Gal. iii. 10. As many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse: For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* This

is the Voice of the Law in its first Covenant-Form. Both these Parts of this Law-Covenant are comprised in that brief Sum of it, *Gen. ii. 17. In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

Now, this being the Tenor and Constitution of the Law of God, as he at first delivered it to Man, it's evident that upon his Disobedience an awful Sentence of Condemnation immediately devolved upon his guilty Head, and the Law took hold upon him as a Transgressor that must die the Death: The Punishment which his Sin deserves must be sustained to satisfy the Law, there is no avoiding of it: So that it is not to be admired, that our first Parents, when they had disobeyed the divine Law, were struck with such Fear and Dread at the hearing of the Voice of God, though it was their Folly to think of hiding themselves from his Presence, and an early Evidence of their Loss of the divine Image. And this being the woful Circumstance of fallen rebellious Man, an effectual Method for his Relief must needs be of very difficult Discovery: For the Penalty of the Law must be answered in its utmost Extent, for maintaining the Honour of God's adorable Sovereignty, his Truth and Immutability. The Question is not singly, *How shall the Law be answered?* The Reply to this had been easy, The Creature that has sinned must suffer: But, alas! then he must suffer to Eternity; no less, from a finite Creature, is equal to the Demerit of Sin, or can make Satisfaction for Rebellion against infinite Majesty: And then where had his Salvation been? But the Question is, *How shall the Law be answered, and yet the Sinner saved?* How shall the Sinner be relieved from the Execution of the condemning Sentence of the Law, and yet the Sentence fully executed? What Scheme can be projected and brought to Issue that will compass both these Ends? Whereby the Sinner's eternal Happiness and the Law's Execution shall consist together: No Method can be sufficient for obtaining the Sinner's Happiness, but such as at the same time shall provide for the full Satisfaction of the Law in all its weighty Claims upon him; so that our Con-
dition

dition was plainly reduced to the last Extremity. Had this one Question been put to Creatures for a Resolution, how long, think you, had it remained unanswered? Would it not have struck a profound Silence through the whole Creation? Shall miserable Man be delivered by the Interposition of the holy Angels? Alas! they are but finite Creatures, unable to sustain the Weight of Sin's deserved Punishment, in any limited Duration: And were they able, yet, they are not willing; they have not the Compassions of a God. And the poor Sinner himself cannot satisfy the Law, otherwise than by suffering eternally. How long should the condemned Wretches have racked their Inventions for the Solution of the important Question, to no Purpose? How many elaborate Contrivances had vanished, like a Vapour in the Air, and come to nothing? How many fair Schemes had been crushed in the Embryo, and never come to Perfection. Some such fruitless Proposals, as might have possibly been the Issues of their distressed Consultations, we have excellently represented by the Prophet *Micah*, in the sixth Chapter of his Prophecy, the 6th and 7th Verses, *Wberewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* Alas! what are all these to the just Demands of the boldly violated Law of God? And yet, What can the guilty Creature do more than he here proposes? Is his Case then utterly irreparable? Is it quite desperate? Must the whole sinful Race infalibly perish for ever without Remedy? Oh! Let Heaven and Earth be astonished and admire; the great God has found and provided a blessed Remedy, which easily surmounts all the Difficulties in the Way. Behold the Product of *Jehovah's* Wisdom, what a strange Way he has contrived to satisfy the broken Law, and save the guilty Rebel: God's own eternal and co-equal Son, the second Person in the glorious Godhead, takes our Nature, a human Body and

Soul, in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, into a personal Union with Himself, so that the divine and human Nature are but one Person, but one Lord Jesus Christ; and in this human Nature he yields a perfect Obedience to the Precept of the Law, thus fulfilling for Sinners the Law's Condition of eternal Life, and sustains its awful Penalty to the utmost, bears that unspeakable Weight of Punishment which the Law condemned the Sinner to; and so the Son of God himself becomes a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sinner, the Creator for the Creature. Now, what a bright Glory of divine Wisdom strikes our Eye at the first View of this Method, which God has found out for the Deliverance and Salvation of condemned Creatures! Who could ever have thought of the Creator's becoming a Creature! Of God's becoming Man! That the divine and the human Nature, in the Person of the Son of God, should be so nearly united as to be but one Person! Indeed, so great, so vast is the Mystery, that now it is revealed to be so, yet we cannot comprehend it, how it is so: It as well astonishes as saves us: So that it justly deserves the Apostle's Epithet, *1 Tim. iii. 16. Without Controversy, says he, great is the Mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the Flesh.* When no less a Sacrifice would answer the Law, and atone for the Creature's Sin, the eternal Son of God, by this strange Union with Flesh, offers up himself, a Sacrifice of infinite Value. *Heb. x. 4, 5. It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats (those Jewish Sacrifices) should take away Sin; wherefore, when he cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not, but a Body hast thou prepared me.* No other Expedient but this was found sufficient. The Apostle here refers to the 6th Verse of the xlth Psalm, where the Words are, *Mine Ears hast thou opened;* but the Apostle rightly interprets the Intendment of them to be, *a Body hast thou prepared me;* which the Psalmist means, when he speaks of the Formation and Organizing of the Ear, one of the Members of a human Body.

Thus you have heard something of the *Intricacy* of the Case of Sinners Restoration to Happiness, and the Expedient

proposed. Let us now consider how the divine Wisdom appears in the *Fitness* and *Sufficiency* of this Method for the obtaining of its designed End. It was designed for the Deliverance of the guilty Sinner from the Condemnation of the divine Law, and advancing him to eternal Happiness, by answering all the Claims and Demands which the Law had upon him, and which stood as so many flaming Swords, guarding against him the Way to the Tree of Life, and terribly forbidding his Approach. The Law demanded two Things of the Sinner,

1. A perfect and sinless Obedience, as the Condition of eternal Life: Upon no other Terms could eternal Life be enjoyed; this Condition must be fulfilled, otherwise the promised Life cannot be obtained. Now our blessed Lord Jesus fully answered this Claim of the Law in the Sinner's room; he yielded a perfect and sinless Obedience to it; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners; and so obtained for Believers the lost Title to eternal Happiness, by fulfilling for them the Condition upon which only it was promised: He was therefore *made under the Law*, that so *he might redeem them that were under the Law*, Gal. iv.

4, 5.

2. The Law demanded of the Sinner Punishment for his Disobedience: And this must also be answered before his Happiness can be obtained: Our glorious Lord submitted his blessed Head to the Stroke of Justice, standing between the Sinner and the awful Blow, taking it upon himself: He fully satisfied the penal Demands of the violated Law, so that it could require no more. This will appear if we consider the vast Weight of Suffering which our dear Redeemer bore, and the exalted Dignity of his Person who sustained it. How did he suffer in his *Name*! That awful Name which the holy Angels low adore, and at which every Knee shall bow: With what Scorn and Derision, with what Indignity and Mock-Homage was our sovereign Lord abused, by an inhuman and insulting Rabble! What did he suffer in his *Body*! Being scourged with cruel Whips, crowned with pointed
Thorns,

Thorns, pierced through with Iron Nails, and racked upon the cursed Tree. But, Oh! What did he suffer in his *Soul!* In the Garden and upon the Cross! *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his Soul, as well as his Body, an Offering for Sin.* God the Father made all the Sea-Billows of his Wrath pass over him: So weighty was the amazing Pressure, so deep the Agony of his Soul, that it expressed a heavy Shower of Blood from his sacred Body, and makes him say, *Now is my Soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* But, who was he that bore this unspeakable Load of complicated Misery? Why, his supporting Strength may tell you who he is: It is the high *Immanuel*, God-man; the personal Union of the human Nature with the divine, puts an infinite Worth into his Suffering; so that he is a richer and more valuable Sacrifice to answer the divine Law, than if the whole Race of sinning Creatures had suffered to Eternity: By this great Sacrifice the awful Authority and just Honours of *Jehovah's* Law are better maintained, and the fearful Regard due to it better secured: Oh, Sirs! in what triumphant and tremendous Majesty does the royal Law of God appear, when the Son of God himself becomes a Sacrifice to it, to atone for the Creature's Sin: And what an ample Satisfaction to the Law must this be, which thus *magnifies it and makes it honourable*, as was prophesied of our Lord Jesus, *Isai. xlii. 21.* Thus you see that all the Claims and Demands of the Law are fully answered by our Lord Jesus Christ: The Law loses nothing by the Sinner's Salvation in this Way, but comes off with infinite Advantage: God's sovereign Authority is seated on a Throne of awful Majesty: His infinite Holiness and Justice, his sweetest and richest Mercy are rendered gloriously conspicuous, as we shall afterwards observe, and God himself exceedingly endeared to the Hearts of his People. Oh Sirs, how glorious must this Method of Salvation be which obtains all these high and noble Ends!

Now Brethren, Do but consider these Things which I have but very darkly represented to you; the perplexing Difficul-

ties which stood in the Way of fallen Man's Recovery, the strange Method which God has proposed for that End, with its Suitableness and Sufficiency, how it surmounts all the opposing Difficulties, and compasses its designed and invaluable Ends; and, Oh! how glorious does it shine, with the refulgent Rays of the divine Wisdom, that bright Pearl of the Crown of Heaven! How amiable does it appear to the bright Intelligences of the higher House, the holy Angels! They soon discovered, in the Procedure of Providence, that there was a Design of Mercy for fallen wretched Man in the divine Breast; but possibly, the Way in which this Mercy was to be dispensed, was not revealed to them, and so they could not think upon the Method whereby the Design could be accomplished: These Morning-Stars, which sang together and shouted for Joy, beholding the Works of God, when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, they beheld with a surprising Pleasure all the Dispensations of God towards his Church in its gradual Advancements to the bright Period of the Redeemer's Coming: But, Oh! when they come to see the glorious Scene laid open, when they behold the eternal Son of the eternal Father, their God and Maker, descend to take our Nature upon him, and bring about the Sinner's Salvation in this strange Manner, with all these Advantages, what low Prostrations were then in Heaven! Adoring and admiring the astonishing Issues of the divine Council! Before I proceed any farther, I cannot forbear making this Remark, That all Unbelievers, such as are looking to any thing else for their Pardon and Justification beside the Mediation of Christ alone, have never yet understood the Gospel; they have never seen their wretched State by Sin as it is, nor rightly apprehended the Method which God has established for their Relief; and so cast a Dash upon the whole glorious Contrivance of Salvation, rob God of the Glory, and deprive their own Souls of the Benefit of it. But farther,

2. The Wisdom of God in this Method of Salvation appears, in his bringing about the great Design by the Instrumentality

mentality of the most wicked Agents. This certainly deserves a Remark, that when the wicked *Jews* were only gratifying their Malice against the Son of God in all their cruel Sufferings they inflicted on him, He was thereby carrying on a higher Design, which they little dreamed of, even the Salvation of lost Sinners. God, by permitting them to execute their most unjust Revenges upon his dear Son, was thereby bringing Life and Salvation to guilty undone Creatures. Every Suffering which they laid upon the holy Jesus, as the most inhuman Murderers, God the Father laid the same upon Him, and Himself bore it with this Design, thereby to make Atonement for undone Sinners: And possibly his Death was positively designed for the eternal Salvation of some of those who were wickedly instrumental in it; as may seem probable from that Prayer of his, upon the Cross, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* At least it intimates, that their Crime, though great, was not unpardonable; but, that upon their Application to Him afterwards by a true *Faith*, their Souls should be washed from the Guilt of that and all their other Sins through the Virtue of that Blood which they shed. Is not this astonishing, that he who suffered as a Malefactor, should indeed be the Saviour of Sinners, bringing about their Redemption by those very Sufferings? That those who contracted a most horrid Guilt by inflicting them, could only be healed by those Stripes which they laid upon Him? How strangely has the LORD brought about Salvation for us! Oh, the *Depths of the divine Wisdom!* Surely God's Judgments are a great Deep; his Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the great Waters, where his Foot-steps are not known.

3. The divine Wisdom in the Gospel-Method of Salvation appears beautiful, in that God has therein proposed to send his *Holy Spirit* to renew and sanctify the wicked Heart of rebellious Sinners, by the most proper Means, suited to their rational Nature. Had there been Provision made only for their Justification by answering the penal Demands of the Law for them, and none for their Sanctification, this had

had been such a Blot and Defect in the Contrivance, as had marred the Beauty of the Whole : For the poor Sinner will not, cannot sanctify his own Heart : Man has so lost the Image of God, and is by Nature so much in Love with Sin, and wedded to it, that he never will love God and Holiness until the Lord open his blinded Understanding, and powerfully change his obstinate Will : And how disagreeable had it been, and unbecoming the divine Wisdom, to have advanced such loathsome vile Creatures in this natural Condition to the Glory of Heaven : There is no such Thing : *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord* : Those whose eternal Salvation Christ intended by his Death, in his own Time he converts and sanctifies by his Spirit, powerfully working with his Word. Were it not so, he would not have a Seed to serve Him on the Earth ; the great Design of his Death, the eternal Happiness of Sinners, had been frustrated, and their Salvation but half effected. But there is not the least Blemish nor Defect in the divine Scheme : It is all over consistent and harmonious. This is the Declaration of the divine Mind, *A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them,* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

4. The Wisdom of God in this Method of Salvation appears in the blessed Security that is therein laid for the eternal Salvation of his People. The Lord Jesus himself is the Believer's Surety in the new Covenant. All Man's Security in the first Covenant, was in himself ; his eternal Happiness depended upon his own mutable Will, and he soon made Shipwreck of it. And so it might be, and certainly would be with Believers now, did their Salvation stand upon the same Bottom. If *Adam* in Innocency turned from God to Sin, yielding to Temptation, when there were no previous Principles of Sin in him ; surely, those who have such Remains of the old sinful Nature within them ; such delusive

Snarés and powerful invisible Enemies without them, would not stand, did their Perseverance depend upon their own Management; were they entirely left to their own Conduct: And so all that Christ has done for them would be to no Purpose: Their eternal Happiness would be nothing the nearer: And then how deficient had the Plan been that was laid for their Salvation? All the Cost and Expence that had hitherto been laid out upon it, (if I may here borrow Terms from human Transactions) had been in vain. But the Lord Jesus takes the Salvation of his People entirely into his own Hand: He is equally *the Author and Finisher of their Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. He undertakes to bring them to eternal Glory against all Difficulties, Oppositions, Fears or Snarés that may come in the Way; both by interceding, and ever appearing in the Presence of God for them, and by preserving the Life of Grace in them, and restoring them again in all their Strayings, to walk in the Paths of Righteousness. The Lord Christ has this Charge of his People committed to him, as a Part of his mediatorial Office. See that blessed Declaration of Christ himself to this Purpose, *John vi. 39, 40. This is the Father's Will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting Life: And I will raise him up at the last Day.* Here he tells us that he has the special Charge of his People given to him by his Father, that he should lose none of them, and accordingly engages to put the completing Act to their Glorification, in raising them up at the last Day. No less worthy are those precious Words of his, *John x. 27, 28. My Sheep bear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand.* He takes them in his own Hand, and keeps them safely and securely, so that they shall never perish: Never, until either his Hand shall grow weak, or his Faithfulness and Truth shall fail. But yet, if they transgress his Laws, and wander
away

away from God, they must expect to smart for it. Though God will not cast them off for ever, and crush them under his terrible Justice, yet he has a chastning Rod, whereby, as a tender Father, he will reduce his Children to their Duty. He will, it's probable, take away the sweet Peace of their Consciences, and spread a fearful gloomy Cloud of Darknes over their distressed Souls, so that they shall find it is an evil Thing, and bitter, that they have so far forsaken the Lord their God. Some way or other he will correct them for it, *Heb. xii. 6, 7.* And this is one of the Means he uses for maintaining and advancing their Sanctification, and preserving them to Life eternal. Verse 10. *He chastens us, says the Apostle, for our Profit; that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.*

Thus I have shewn you something of the glorious *Wisdom* of God displayed in the admirable Method of fallen Man's Salvation: And you see how effectual it is, and consistent in all its Parts; with that admirable Wisdom every thing relating to it was concerted in the divine Council. But again,

Secondly, The Glory of God's *Justice* and *Holiness* is brightly set forth in this Method of Salvation. Here you may see that he is a God of infinite Holiness and inflexible Justice. To make Laws without Penalties, those necessary Guards against Violations, is such a bad Piece of Government, as is inconsistent with human, much more with the divine Wisdom. And to make penal Laws without ever regarding their Execution, is but a mean trifling, infinitely beneath the divine Majesty: Such a Negligence as this exposes Authority to the greatest Contempt, and degrades it to the lowest Degree of Baseness. Who would regard that Authority that suffers itself to be insulted with Impunity? The great and sovereign God is not such a contemptible Being: He will keep up the awful Dignity of his Authority in his Method of Government, and not suffer it to be trampled upon at Pleasure by his Creatures: Before Sin should go unpunished, he would punish it in his own beloved Son: Behold

the Son of God in his Agonies, pressed under the Weight of God's terrible Justice, and there you may see what a just God JEHOVAH is, and what infinite Indignation he justly conceives against Sin: There you may see the hateful and provoking Nature of Sin, that fills the divine Mind with such high and terrible Resentments. Oh! ye Christless and un sanctified Sinners, consider what a God you have to deal with: *It is a fearful Thing, says the Apostle, to fall into the Hands of the living God. Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong, in the Day that he shall deal with thee? Ezek. xxii. 14* Awake, awake, out of your Death-Slumpers, and look about you; see what awful Justice is engaged against you. I know that the loose Notions which you entertain of the great Goodness and Mercy of God, keeps your Consciences in a stupid Quiet. God's saving Mercy is indeed inconceivably great, and appears in his sending his dear Son to redeem us, and accepting of his Satisfaction for such as by Faith lay hold upon him; which is done without any Injury or Disadvantage to his sovereign Authority and Government: But in no other Way can the Exercise of his saving Mercy consist with the Security of his glorious Authority: And sure, the all-wise and glorious God will not exalt one of his Attributes upon the Ruins of another; nay, even of his whole Majesty and Greatness: So that you who have never come to Christ by Faith, and so have no actual Interest in his satisfactory Righteousness, are bound over to answer the great and terrible Justice of God in your own Persons: And unless you fly to the Lord Jesus, who has bore the Weight of it for Sinners Relief, you shall be crushed under it to all Eternity: The great God will not debate himself for your Salvation, but will maintain the Rights of his Royalty. Oh Sinners! tremble at the Thoughts of these tremendous Truths, and know assuredly, that unless you comply with that most wise and gracious Establishment of God, wherein he has both provided for his own Glory and your Happiness, you shall feel the Weight of his vindictive Arm and the Lashes of his Iron Rod for ever.

Thirdly, The boundless *Love* and dear *Mercy* of the blessed God is illustriously displayed in the Redemption of wretched Sinners by his dear Son. The wondrous Love of God in our Redemption by Jesus Christ, is indeed an infinite and boundless Theme, which might afford us a Discourse commensurate with Eternity itself, had we but Words in Weight and Number equal to the Subject. But here we must be short: Oh! may we come to that blessed State at last, where our capacious Thoughts shall be better able to take it in, and never meet with any ungrateful Avocations from the joyful Contemplation. The Greatness of God's Love herein will appear,

1. If you consider the reasonable and strong Claims of Justice, I mean, for punishing Sinners in their own Person according to their Demerit. They had rendered themselves odious to God's Holiness, were guilty of the most heinous and criminal Rebellion against the most adorable Sovereignty, the most awful and righteous Authority, and had broken the strongest Bonds and most endearing Obligations, and violated the Rights of Heaven. Is it not wonderful that the Claims of Justice so powerfully enforced had not been granted! Oh! Sirs, consider, that when Pity and Compassion turned the Ballance, Justice might have done it; and then how miserable had we all been for ever, shut up with the apostate Angels, under the gloomy Horrors of eternal Desperation.

2. How great is the Love of God, not only in condescending to save us, but that at so dear a Rate! When no other Way could be found, (at least that we can conceive) consistent with the Security and maintaining of the Honours of his Majesty, he sent his own dear Son, the very Brightness of his own Glory, and express Image of his Person; who as freely came in our Nature, reconciling himself to all the Circumstances of Abasement, bore an inconceivable Weight of Misery, and poured out his Soul unto Death: And all for the Redemption of poor vile and hell-deserving Creatures. Surely, the Love of Christ passes Knowledge,
Eph.

Eph. iii. 19. Well might the Apostle say, 1 John iv. 10. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.

Thus have I opened to you something of the bright Glory of God that is to be seen in the Gospel of Christ, by considering the Displays of it in that astonishing Method which God has taken for the Recovery and Salvation of undone Sinners therein revealed. I might farther shew you how we may discover much of God's Glory in many other Things of the Gospel; such as the Account it gives us of the general Resurrection and Judgment at the last Day, with the august and glorious Solemnity of it, and the manner of Procedure in it: As also, of the Happiness of the Godly in a future State in the glorious Enjoyment of God. The precious Gospel of Christ reveals much of the Glories of the invisible and future World, such as may justly fill us with great Thoughts and deep Impressions of God, and so affect our Hearts as to conform us more to his glorious Image.

But I must proceed to make some Reflections by way of Interence upon what has been offered. And,

1. From the Whole, we may farther take Occasion to admire God's glorious Wisdom: Particularly, in making Sin, the very worst of Evils, thus to subserve the Illustration of his own Glory. Sin, above all Things, is far from having any such Tendency in its own Nature, and yet God will have Glory to his own Name even from it, in the Redemption of Sinners; such a Glory as we had never beheld, if Sin had never been. Is any thing then too hard for God; who in the Vastness of his Wisdom can make Sin itself an Occasion of shewing forth such Glory.

2. From what has been spoken, you may observe how much a clearer Light we now enjoy under the bright Dispensation of the Gospel of Christ, than the Church of God was favoured with before his coming in the Flesh. You have heard more at this Time, of the Way which God has
taken

taken for the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners, though from one of the meanest that Christ has employed to serve him in the Gospel, than all the Old Testament Prophets could have told you. He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, *i. e.* the least and meanest true Gospel-Minister in the Church of Christ, after his Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, when he had gloriously set up his Kingdom in the World, is, in this Respect, greater than *John the Baptist*, and all the Prophets that ever were before him, *Matth. xi. 11.* He has a much more excellent Ministry, and a clearer Knowledge of the glorious Mysteries relating to our Salvation.

3. This Doctrine informs us of the great Blindness of such Persons as see nothing of the bright Glory of God in the Gospel. If it be so that the Glory of God is therein presented to us as in a Glass, then surely they must be very blind who do not discover it. And yet, alas! how many such blind earthly Souls are there; who, though they read never so much of the holy Scriptures, yet never discern any thing of this bright Glory in them; but they are to them as common Stories, or empty Tales. Oh lamentable! Although the Vail is taken off the Gospel, it remains still upon their Hearts. Oh Sirs! consider this is a certain Evidence that you are in a Christless, perishing Estate: You have never been savingly illuminated by the Holy Ghost. All the Godly do behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, so as to have their Hearts much influenced and sanctified by it: *Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same Image. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling Block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: Whose Minds the God of this World hath blinded, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. And Verse 6. God, who commanded the*
Light

Light to shine out of Darkness, but shined into our Hearts, so give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.

4. You may think with yourselves, from what you have heard, how bright and ravishing the Glory must be which the Saints of God shall behold in Heaven, when both Vail and Glass shall be taken out of the Way, and they shall see it as it is. *Now we see through a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.* All these Things shall be opened with a brighter Glory there, affording a delightful Entertainment to all the blessed Minds for ever; where they shall be ever celebrating the Praises of redeeming Love and Wisdom, in the Possession of the precious Inheritance, and Presence of their G O D and Saviour.

5. Hence be informed of the high Excellency of the Gospel; how much we ought to prize and value it. How excellent and worthy must that be which brings the Glory of God himself to the View of Creatures, especially in their Redemption from the Pains of Hell to the happy Enjoyment of himself. *Rom. i. 16.* says the blessed Apostle, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* There is a Meiosis in the Words, more intended than expressed; he means, I highly esteem the Gospel of Christ, and account it my greatest Glory. And the Reasons which he gives for it are the very same afforded in our Text. First, Because of its Efficacy to the Sanctification, and, consequently, the Salvation of Souls: *For, says he, it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth.* And, Secondly, Because of the Way of Salvation through Christ's Righteousness revealed therein, and the Subject thereof; for therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith. Oh! What a high Favour is it that we should enjoy the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, as the Apostle calls it, *1 Tim. i. 11.*

6. From the foregoing Doctrine we may clearly infer the high Excellency of that holy Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which we have this Day been honoured with, which repre-

represents a crucified Lord Jesus. Oh Sirs! this holy Sacrament represents and holds forth the greatest Wonder of Angels as well as Men, the Son of God himself bleeding and dying for the Salvation of his poor guilty Creatures. The astonishing Glory of God revealed to us in the great Doctrines of the Gospel is here visibly represented before our Eyes. How glorious and venerable is this holy Ordinance. Our blessed Lord appointed it to be a Signification of his bitter Sufferings, to revive in the Memories of his dear People his cruel Death for them; that so, in attending upon it, their Souls might be immediately employed in contemplating all the divine Glories of their Redemption, whereby suitable and heavenly Affections might be excited in them, and so they might enjoy near and sweet Communion with himself! Thus should we have all the Graces of the Spirit of God enlivened and advanced in us by this holy Ordinance, and be setting out with renewed Strength and Resolution in the Way of Holiness even unto Death.

But it is Time to dismiss this Head of Doctrine: And so I pass on, to speak something to the two remaining Propositions observed from the Text.

The first of which is,

That the Sight of God's Glory in the Gospel is of a transforming Efficacy; the Soul that beholds it, is thereby changed into the same Image.

And the other is,

That the Holy Spirit of God is the great Author and efficient Cause of this glorious Change.

And for Brevity's sake I shall treat upon them both together, without Distinction, in the following Order;

First, I shall shew you what is meant by being changed into the Image of the Glory of God that appears in the Gospel.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to illustrate the Truth of this *Proposition*, That such as do behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, are thereby changed into the same Image. And,

Thirdly, I shall shew you how the Holy Spirit effects this Change by the Gospel.

First, I return to the first of these Heads, which is to shew, *What it is to be changed into the Image of that Glory of God which appears in the Gospel.*

For opening this to your Understandings, you must know,

1. As has been already observed, that by beholding the Glory of God in the Gospel, is understood a Beholding the revealed Truths of the Gospel in their Glory; a Beholding of them shining with that Glory of God which they manifest and discover, (something of which has been already considered) so that the Glory of God in the Gospel is not to be taken in this Place separately from the System of Gospel-Truths which discover it; and so, to be changed into the Image of God's Glory here, is to be made answerable to the glorious Truths of the Gospel. And hence,

2. You must observe, that the Truths of the Gospel have a native and inherent Tendency to influence and affect the Heart in a holy Manner; to excite and work holy and heavenly Dispositions in the Soul, agreeable to the Will of God, and well pleasing in his Sight. It is the peculiar Excellency of the Gospel of Christ, that it is fully sufficient in its Kind, as a Mean, to dispose the Heart in all Things agreeable to the divine Will; which noble End the best improved Philosophy never could attain. It is the great Scope and Design of the whole Gospel, both in its Doctrines and Precepts, to make Sinner's holy, and conform to God's moral Image: To this it tends in its own Nature: And when the Heart is affected and disposed answerable to Gospel Truths, then it is sanctified, pleasing in the Sight of God, and agreeable to his holy Will. And this is what is
here

here meant by being changed into the Image of his Glory; or into the Image of the glorious Truths of the Gospel. The Soul is then changed into the Image of the glorious Truths of Christ when their Design and moral Tendency is impressed upon it, so that it is rendered answerable to them; as the Impression upon the Wax answers to the Seal. This is to have the Law of God written upon the Heart, according to *Jer. xxxi. 33.* Where, I think, the Law of God is to be understood in its largest Extant, both for the Doctrines and Precepts of God in his Word; in which Sense it is frequently used in the holy Scriptures: Now, when the Heart is affected answerably to the divine Law, it bears (though an imperfect) yet a legible Transcript and Copy of that divine Original; so that if you knew the Heart of a godly Man you might read God's Law upon it; you might spell it out in the Dispositions of his Soul, as so many legible Characters of it.

To make this yet easier to your Apprehensions, I shall particularly instance in some of the Truths of the Gospel, and shew you what Dispositions they have a Tendency to influence the Heart with.

And, First, The Gospel informs us that all Mankind are brought into a State of Condemnation by Sin, so that whosoever has not an Interest in the Mediation of Jesus Christ, his only Remedy, shall surely perish for ever*. It farther informs us that there is no other Way of Relief for the Sinner, but through the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Now, Is it not evident that these Truths tend to humble the

* If any should be dissatisfied at my saying that this is revealed by the Gospel, supposing it to be only discovered by the Law, I would have it considered that the Doctrine of a Sinner's Justification before God, and Salvation from Hell by CHRIST alone, (which is the very Substance of the Gospel) necessarily supposes and implies antecedent Condemnation: When the Gospel tells a Sinner, That unless he believes in Christ for his Salvation, he shall surely perish for his Sin, in this it certainly tells him that he is under a Sentence of Condemnation to Hell upon the Account of his Sin, from which he can be no other Way relieved.

Sinner exceedingly under a Sense of his Wretchedness, and to bring him off from all Self-dependence, from all Trust in himself or his own Doings, and to make him truly poor in Spirit? And when these Things are rightly apprehended and certainly believed, they will of Necessity produce these Effects in the Heart.

Again, The Gospel informs us of Christ's mediatorial Undertaking for the Relief of undone Sinners; of his All-sufficiency and Fulness, and his gracious Offer of Salvation through his Righteousness, to all such as humbly and unfeignedly acknowledge their guilty and helpless Condition, and fly to him for their Relief, leaning their guilty perishing Souls only upon him, depending upon his Grace, Ability and Faithfulness. Now, these glorious Truths of the Gospel have a manifest Tendency to bring the Soul to close with the Lord Jesus by Faith, and repose a sweet Trust and Affiance in him, and to fill it with a very strong and dear Love to him. When all these Truths are realized to the Mind, the Weight and Importance of them discovered, the Soul is then heartily willing to be saved by Christ in any Way, upon any Terms, and depends on him, and him only, for its Salvation.

Also, the Glory of God's Wisdom, Holiness, Condescension and Love, which so clearly shine forth in the Gospel, fills the Soul that discovers it, with a very affectionate Admiration and Astonishment.

Thus, when the revealed Truths of the Gospel are so applied to the Heart as to influence it with such answerable Dispositions, habitually residing in it, then is it changed into the glorious Image of the Gospel, and made answerable to it, as the impressed Wax is to the Seal; the Heart is turned as it were into a Gospel Mold.

Secondly, And so I proceed to the second Head, Which is to illustrate the Truth of this Proposition, *That such as behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, are thereby changed into the same Image.*

And

And to make this appear,

1. It is evident from the Nature of the Thing. It is impossible for the Understanding to perceive and look upon the Truths of the Gospel in their divine Glory and Excellency, without answerable Impressions upon the other Powers of the Soul. So great is the Importance, Weight, Excellence and Glory of the Truths of Christ, that when they are rightly apprehended and conceived of by the Understanding, it powerfully recommends them to the Approbation and Complacence of the Will; so as it no longer resists, but freely complies with their practical Use and Tendency. It is true, the Will of fallen corrupted Man is naturally disposed to the greatest Obstinacy to practical Holiness, and the great Truths of Christ: But when they shine bright in the Eye of the Understanding in their divine Beauty and Glory, then the Will is sweetly overcome and persuaded to be for God. The Understanding, you know, is the directive and leading Faculty of the Soul, which is to guide and influence the Will and other Affections. Indeed, the blessed Harmony of our Souls Powers is miserably broken by the Fall, so that the Will often refuses Obedience to the Understanding's Dictates; but when the *Holy Spirit* comes to restore God's moral Image upon the Soul, he restores much of that original and happy Concord between its Faculties; and so make all Things become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Resistance of the Will is much occasioned by the Blindness of the Understanding, by its mean and confused Conceptions of the Truths of God: Hence, although a Person may be able to furnish himself with Reasons which sufficiently convince his Judgment that GOD is to be loved and served above all, that *Holiness* is the most reasonable, necessary and comfortable Practice; yet, his Will will not comply until he has clearer Apprehensions of the Truths of Christ, and discovers the transcendent Excellency and attractive Glory of the Gospel; and then he is much taken with it and allured by it. It is indeed difficult to

convince such as are yet in their natural State of Ignorance and Blindness, of the powerful Efficacy of the Doctrines of the Gospel upon an enlightened Soul: But it is most certain from this Text, and the Nature of the Thing, That none ever beheld them in their divine Glory, but they were sanctified by them, and made truly holy: Beholding in the Gospel the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same Image.

Again, 2. Consider, That the Soul must first be wounded by the Law of God before he can see the Glory of God in the Gospel. Persons may profess the Truths of the Gospel as the Articles of their Faith, and have a superficial Knowledge of them, and yet never see the Glory of God shining in them. Until a Sinner comes truly to see his wretched and undone Condition by Sin, the glorious Doctrine of Salvation through the Mediation and Righteousness of the Son of God, will be but a senseless and empty Speculation to him: But when he comes once to be thoroughly convinced of his Need of Redemption by Christ, of his condemned and undone State by Sin, Oh! then he is in another Condition to behold the bright Glory of the Gospel of Christ: So that this Discovery of Guilt and Condemnation is necessarily presupposed in the Person who beholds the Glory of God in the Glass of the Gospel. And now, when a poor Sinner sees his condemned and undone Condition by Sin in the Glass of the Law, *that without Relief somewhere out of himself he must eternally perish*; Oh, how is he then taken with the *Doctrine of Redemption in Jesus Christ*, when it shines in upon his Understanding as it is in itself! How beautiful and glorious then does he behold the Gospel Revelation of Peace with God, and Salvation from Hell and deserved Wrath, through Jesus, a Mediator! How reasonable is it to think that his whole Heart should be sweetly overcome by it, and all the Powers of his Soul yielding up to its blessed Influence so as to be changed into the same Image. If such of you as are here this Day in an unconverted Christless State, who now slight the Gospel, and think little of a Saviour, did but see
your

your wretched perishing Condition as it is, you would then know how to prize a *Redeemer*, and see a bright Glory in the *Golpe*, if the *Holy Spirit* enlightened your Minds by it to discover Salvation for your perishing Souls in Christ: You would then know something of its attractive and transforming Efficacy.

It is clearly manifest from what has been spoken, that such as have been savingly enlightened, and are true Believers, have their Devotion much enlivened and their Sanctification promoted by the Contemplation of the revealed Truths of Christ! Whence it is also apparent, that true Piety and experimental Religion, even in its highest Advancement, is very remote from Enthusiasm, and being the mere Product of the blind Fancies of injudicious and ignorant People, as it is generally deemed by unsanctified Souls who know little of it. It seems the Apostle's great Flights of Affection towards God, and flaming Zeal for Christ had exposed him to the same Censure in his Day, and the Godly at this Day may say with him, *If we be besides ourselves, it is to God: For the Love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 13, 14.

But to conclude this Head with a brief Reflection upon what has been hitherto said upon it; it is plain, That if it is the Nature of a rational Soul to entertain Impressions answerable to the Discoveries of the Understanding, and proportioned to the Weight and Importance of them; to have the Will influenced and swayed by the Understanding; and if the Truths of the Gospel are of such Weight, Excellence and Glory, as to be sufficient in their abstracted Nature, to engage the Will of a rational Creature to a Compliance with their moral Tendency, then it is plain, I say, that the Soul which beholds them as they are in their proper Glory, must needs be transformed into their very Likeness, and made so answerable to them that it may properly be said to be changed into the same Image. The same is likewise evident from the other Consideration, of the previous Preparation of the Soul for such a Discovery by a Sense of Guilt

Guilt and Condemnation, which gives it still a farther Advantage to the Production of this Effect. But, in the meantime, we must be careful that we do not carry the Demonstration so high as to imagine that the bringing about this glorious Change were in our own Hands; as though the Conversion and Sanctification of a Sinner depended only upon his own Improvement of his rational Powers; as though all that is necessary to that End were only an external Gospel Revelation from God, and the Exercise of Reason in ourselves. At the same time that the Apostle tells us, That by beholding the Glory of the Lord in the Gospel, we are changed into the same Image, he also tells us, That this is done by the Spirit of the Lord. Although the Lord requires us to be diligent in the Use of the Means for our Sanctification, yet the Thing itself is always attributed to the Holy Ghost, as his peculiar Work, without whose powerful and almighty Concurrence, all our Endeavours will be ineffectual.

Which leads me to consider

The *Third* and last Head proposed, Which is to shew, *How the Holy Spirit effects this Change by the Gospel.*

And, 1. The Holy Spirit opens and enables the Understandings to behold the revealed Truths of God as they are in themselves, and so by them enlightens it to conceive rightly of divine Things. The first and principal Work of the Spirit of God in Conversion, is the causing of Light to shine in the Soul's dark Hemisphere. Although Persons, by the Improvement of their Understandings, may acquire such a Knowledge of the Gospel as to be able to distinguish between Truth and Error, and to evince and maintain the former by Reason and Argument; yet, it is the proper Work of the Holy Spirit to give such true Conceptions and right Apprehensions of these Truths which they thus profess, as to make them effectual to the Sanctification of the Soul: This is beyond the Compass of our natural Abilities since the Fall: To this Purpose is that of the Apostle,

1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* That this right and sanctifying Understanding of the revealed Truths of God, depends so much upon the Operation of his Holy Spirit, is attested by the certain Experience of the Godly, who find that, by his blessed Influence, they have at some Times much more clear and Soul-affecting Views and Apprehensions of them than at other Times they can attain to. By a special and supernatural Illumination of the Mind, the Holy Spirit leads and guides the Soul in the Way wherein it should go, directs it how to come to Christ, and please God: So much is clearly intimated in that of the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 14. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

2. The Holy Spirit establishes the Heart in the Faith of the great Truths of the Gospel; so that they are no longer Matters of Opinion, but the most certain Realities to the Person. He can venture his Life, and (which is more) his Soul and eternal Salvation, upon the Truth of them, which he does, when by Faith he closes with the Lord Jesus. He is now affected with them as with the most important Certainties. And then,

3. By the Truths of Christ thus discovered and believed, the blessed Spirit agreeably draws and engages the Will to comply with the Gospel: In this Manner he powerfully overcomes its Obstinacy, and causes it to bow. At first he batters against it as it were by Compulsion, with the fiery Darts of the Law; and then opens the Scene of redeeming Love in Jesus, causes the Doctrines of Redemption, through the Son of God, to shine in the Eye of the Understanding with all their heavenly Glory, and then it can no longer withstand, but most freely and affectionately complies with the Demands of the Gospel, and the Soul is made a most willing Captive

to the Lord Jesus. Thus the obstinate Sinner, by a rational Violence is overcome, so that universal *Holiness* is his most affectionate and unreserved Choice. And although these several Steps are not so discoverable in the Experience of some as of others, nor the Transition or passing from one to another so distinct, yet this is the Way in which the blessed Change from Nature to Grace is constantly effected, whatever circumstantial Diversities may be.

4. Having opened the principal Doctrines contained in the two foregoing Propositions, I shall now conclude with a brief *Improvement* of the same.

And the first USE I shall make of what has been said, shall be for *Information*.

And, 1. You may hence be informed, How agreeable to their rational Nature God deals with Sinners in their Conversion. Although the Conversion of a Sinner is the Work of God alone, and he, in his natural State, entertains the greatest Obstinacy and Prejudice against true Holiness, yet this Change is not wrought in him by a blind brutal Necessity; by such a mere physical Operation, as that whereby we can work upon a Block or a Stone; much less by a compulsive Force against his Will, as this Doctrine of the powerful and irresistible Efficacy of converting Grace has been unjustly charged, which is inconsistent with the very Nature of the Thing: But the Soul is directed, and the Will irresistably determined by the Light of the Understanding: And this is so far from being contrary to the Nature of a rational Creature, that, I am sure, it were contrary thereto for it to do otherwise. When a Sinner is made willing in the Day of God's Power, he sees the highest Reason for his Choice, whereby every Thought is brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ, according to 2 Cor. x. 5.

2. From what has been spoken, you may easily learn the great Mischief and pernicious Tendency of Ignorance. Poor deceived Souls are apt to make Ignorance their Confidence and Refuge, and think it will be a great Plea for them; but, alas! it is like to be their Damnation, both, because it is willful when they enjoy the Means of saving Knowledge, and as it keeps them altogether out of the Way of Conversion to Christ. To this Purpose says the Lord by his Prophet, *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge*, Hos. iv. 6. The dreadful Consequences of Ignorance is expressed by the Apostle, *Eph. iv. 18.* where he speaks of Souls *being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts.* The Devil well knows that this is one of his best Securities for the upholding of his Interest: and therefore that Prince of Darkness endeavours to keep poor Souls blind-folded, to their Destruction. *2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.* *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them.* He knows that if the Light of the glorious Gospel should shine into the Minds of his Subjects, his Empire would be in Danger of tottering, and falling to the Ground, but if he can prevent that, he has no Reason to fear*. Alas! how many precious Souls are kept in the Possession of the Devil and under his Dominion, through the Ignorance that is in them.

3. The foregoing Doctrine teaches us a very great and sovereign Mean for the advancing of Sanctification, *viz.* The Study and Knowledge of divine Truths, *Beholding*, says the Apostle, *as in a Glass the Glory of the*

* The Pope and the Devil unanimously agree in attaching poor People to their Interests, by keeping them in Ignorance.

Lord, we are changed into the same Image. The Contemplation of the glorious Truths of Christ admirably enlivens *Grace* and promotes *Holiness* in the People of God. It is true, in Conjunction with this, they do profitably make Use of other Means which the Lord has appointed, such as Prayer, Praise, and the other Ordinances of God; but it is this that gives Life and Influence to them all. Wherefore, among all other Means, we ought to have a very special Regard to this, endeavouring to increase in the Knowledge of God, to meditate much upon and apply to our Hearts the Truths of the glorious Gospel of Christ.

USE II. *Of Examination.*

What has been said, affords Matter for the Trial of the State of our Souls toward God. You have heard that the Conversion and Sanctification of the Soul is wrought by the Instrumentality of the Gospel, enlightning the Mind, and so renewing and sanctifying the whole Soul. Now, Sirs, pray examine yourselves: Have the Truths of God ever had such powerful Influence and Effect upon you? Or, Do not many of you rest contented with a mere dead lifeless Profession of them, while they never effectually reached your Hearts? A certain Evidence that you are yet dead in Trespasses and Sins; in a natural Christless State: The truly Godly beholding in the Gospel the Glory of the Lord are changed into the same Image. Neither is it sufficient to have some transient Impressions at some Times made upon your Hearts by divine Truths, but the habitual and prevailing Dispositions of your Souls must be answerable to the Gospel, so that you may be properly said to be transformed into the same Image. Oh Sirs! try and inquire faithfully how it is with you in these Respects. There is much depends upon it; either the
eternal

eternal Life or Death of your most precious Souls: If you have not been begotten by the Word of Truth, *i. e.* changed by it into the same Image, you have never been born of God, without which you can never be saved, *John* i. 13. and iii 3.

3. I shall now conclude with a **USE** of *Exhortation*.

And, 1. To such of you as are yet in an unconverted State; who have never been changed into the Image of God; whether any of you have been at the Lord's Table To-day or not. Oh Sirs! Consider what a deplorable Condition you are in, in which, if you die, you will surely be damned to all Eternity. Humble yourselves low before the great God, and seek to Him Night and Day for his pardoning Mercy in Christ, and renewing Grace. Consider, Oh! consider what he speaks to you in his holy Word, that thereby you may be roused out of your stupid Security, and directed how to come to Christ, that you may be saved. And, to this End, be persuaded to attend upon the Word preached by the Ambassadors of Christ, with the utmost Attention and Carefulness. This is the great Means which God has appointed to convert and save Souls. *Luke* xvi. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the Dead.* *1 Cor.* iv. 15. says the Apostle, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.* *James* i. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth.* It is through the Illumination of the Mind by the Truths of God's Word, as you have heard, that Souls are sanctified and brought to Christ. And what a dreadful Damnation must such expect as so far slight the great Mean of their Salvation, as, either not at all to attend upon it, or to attend in a careless and indifferent Manner. *Him that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*

2. I would offer a few Words to the Godly: And particularly to such of them as have been drawing near to Christ at his Table. Have you seen this Day the Glory of God in the Glafs of his Ordinance, 'so as to receive the powerful Reflection of its Image upon yourselves? So as to have your Souls melted down into the heavenly Mould? Well, dear Brethren, endeavour to retain these blessed Views, and the pure Affections wrought in your Hearts by them. The Lord Jesus will always be as beautiful as he is now. The Glory of God is ever shining in his Face. Such of you as have not had such clear and lively Discoveries of the Glories of the Redeemer, as you wanted and longed for, bless God for lesser Measures, and seek for greater. Bless the Lord, I say, for what you have had; especially, if you have been humbled, made little and base in your own Sight, applying as you could to a full Saviour: Perhaps that was most needful for you.

Finally, Let us all go on in the Strength of Christ, renewed in his precious Ordinances, until we come to drink new Wine with him in the Kingdom of his Father, where we shall be with him to behold his Glory, and see Him as He is.



S E R M O N V.

GEN. chap. i. ver. 1.

In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.

RELIGION is a Thing of that Dignity and Importance, that some have thought it a more proper Definition of Man, to say that he is *an Animal capable of Religion*, than just that he is *an Animal endowed with Reason*. Indeed, were it not for Religion, we should find nothing to do, or enjoy, that were worth our being intelligent, immortal Beings: For as we are not self-sufficient, independent Beings, our rational Faculties would be in a manner lost and useless, were there not an infinite Being to be an Object of Adoration, and Fountain of Happiness, to us. Nay, were Men to act upon the Principles of Atheism and Irreligion, they had much better be in the low Rank of Brutes, or Inanimates, than Men. That *Supreme, Independent Being*, whom we design by the Name **GOD**, is the *Foundation of all Religion and Morality*. In the Persuasion of his Existence and Perfections all Religion begins. Wherefore it is of the last and highest Consequence that we be well settled in this great Point.

The Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God is my particular Province at this Time, in the Course of these Presbyterial Sermons: And I think the Ground-Work of such a Design cannot be any where more properly laid than where the first Account of the Divine Being occurs in that

Book

Book which we acknowledge as the Rule of true Religion, the holy Bible; especially, since in the same Place, the main Evidence of his Existence, *viz.* the Works which He has made, is pointed out to us. With these Accounts the Book of God begins, just where it ought to begin: Acquainting us, that *in the Beginning* GOD CREATED *the Heaven and the Earth.*

In order to evince the Existence of a GOD, it is first of all requisite, that we settle the Idea for which we use the Name. And all that is necessary this Way here, is only such a brief Description of the Divine Being, as is sufficient to distinguish Him from all Things else. We shall more particularly enquire into his Properties afterward. By God, then, we mean, *a self-existent, necessary Being, who is the Cause of all other Beings.* Or, in brief, *The first Being, who is the Cause of all others.* The *first Being* and a *self-existent, necessary Being* are convertible Terms; which may be all reciprocally predicated one of another: And so both the Descriptions amount to the same Thing. For, that the first Being must be a self-existent Being can admit of no Dispute; because there was no Being before the first, to cause it to Be; and therefore it must be of itself, without any extrinsic Cause. And then 'tis easy to demonstrate, that a self-existent Being is a necessary Being, *i. e.* such a Being as that it is impossible for it not to be. For, since it could not pass *from Not-Being* to Being, it must have always been, that is, it is a *necessary Being*, which always was, and still is, impossible not to be. I say, it still is impossible not to be: For, for the same Reason that it was impossible for it not to be at any Instant of its Duration past, it is impossible for it not to be still, both now, and for ever hereafter. Absolute Necessity of Being is universal, not belonging to any one Point of Duration more than to another. Moreover, an eternal Being, which always was, without Beginning, possesses infinite Duration: But *infinite Duration at an End*, is a Notion that destroys itself, and is abso-

absolutely inconceivable, being a flat Contradiction in Terms.

But the other Part of our Idea of God is that which is of more Importance in the present Argument, *viz.* That He is the Cause of other Beings. For the Atheist himself is unavoidably obliged to grant a self-existent necessary Being: Because as Something actually now is, Something always must have been; otherwise there never could have been any Thing. But that the self-existent Being has produced *other Beings*, that is, *Substances*, this he will by no means grant: And here our Ways part; for whoever admits this, admits a GOD. The Atheist by his self-existent necessary Being, means the World, or whole System of universal Being, in some Shape or other; and maintains, that the Creation, or Production of Substance out of Nothing, is an absolute Impossibility, rhyming over his mistaken and misapplied Maxim, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. Indeed, for a Thing to be, and not to be, at the same time, is an Impossibility: Or, for a Thing from Not-being to come into Being of itself: But for a Thing from Not-being to come into Being by the Virtue of a prior Cause, is a Supposition that contains nothing impossible or absurd in it. And therefore we may, with a good Face, set about to prove the Reality of the Creation, or Production of Something out of Nothing; which is a proper and sufficient Medium whereby to prove the Existence of a God. The Argument will stand thus,

If this World was created, there is a GOD that created it.

But this World was created:

Therefore there is a GOD that created it.

The major Proposition is, I think, next to self-evident; at least, Creature and Creator are relative Terms, which mutually infer one another. To suppose a Creation without a Creator, is absurdly to bring an Effect upon the Stage without a Cause. And whatever intermediate Causes may

be supposed, we must unavoidably at last come to a First: A Being who is himself uncreated, that is, a self-existent, eternal, necessary Being, who is the Cause and Maker of all Things beside; and that is GOD.

The minor Proposition is easily demonstrated thus: This World either was created, or it is self-existent. This is a just logical Disjunction, because the Terms are immediately opposed. There is no Medium between a Thing's existing of itself, and its being caused to exist by another: But this World is not self-existent; therefore it was created. That the World is not self-existent, may be thus irrefragably made out, *viz.* It has not the necessary Characters, and certain Properties of a self-existent Being belonging to it; such as Immensity, Immutability, and absolute Infinitude. As that which exists of itself, exists necessarily, as we have seen already; it must exist every where, and exhaust infinite Space: Because this Necessity of Existence is unlimited, and every where alike. If then this World were self-existent, not only the whole Compound must fill all Space, but even every particular Part, and minutest Particle of it: For every one, according to the Supposition, is self-existent; which is contrary to plain Fact, and the well-known Properties of Body. Again, As that which is self-existent is necessarily existent; it must be constantly the same, without any Variation or Change. For whatsoever it is, it necessarily is that which it is; that is, it cannot in any respect be other than it just is: But how full this World is of Changes, is obvious to every one's Notice. Once more, A self-existent, necessary Being must be an all-perfect Being; absolutely, and in all respects, infinite. To have the high Perfections of necessary Self-existence, and infinite Duration; and yet to be without other Perfections, or imperfect in them, are Predicates too disproportionate and wide of each other, to agree to the same Subject. But there can be none so extravagant, as to assert such absolute Perfection and Infiniteness of this World. From all which 'tis manifest, that as this World has not the Perfections, and certain Properties, of a self-existent

existent Being, it has been created, and made to exist, by a prior Cause. Moreover, Even supposing the minute Particles of which it is composed, had been from Eternity; yet the present Frame of the material World could never have risen out of them, without a God: Much less could *Mind*, *conscious Perception*, and *Reason*, have ever proceeded from such Materials, under any Modifications whatsoever. There are also such Marks of Wisdom and Contrivance, visible in the Frame of the World, in the admirable proportioning and fitting of one Thing to another, as manifestly declare Council and Design at the Formation of it; and that it could never be merely the Result of the casual Rencounter, and Combinations of undesigning Atomes. From all which it appears, with the brightest and most irresistible Evidence, that this World was created and made.

And now, both the Premises being confirmed beyond all reasonable Contradiction, the Conclusion unavoidably follows, That there is a GOD. So just is the Apostle's Reasoning, *Rom. i. 20* *The invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.*

There are several particular Arguments which fall under some of the forementioned Topics, that are largely prosecuted by sundry learned Men, to very good Purpose. As the Impossibility of Motion, without a Cause distinct from Matter, with all its Properties. The actual Existence of immaterial intelligent Minds: Such as the Souls of Men. The great and stupendious Phænomenon of the Gravitation, and universal Attraction of all Bodies, with its important Effects, and invariable Laws; except in the Case of Miracle. The regular and constant Revolutions of the Planetary Globes: In particular the double Motion of our Earth, and of our attending Planet, the Moon. The Obliquity of the Zodiac to the Equator; or, which is the same Thing, the Inclination of the Earth's Axis to the Plain of the Ecliptic: Whence proceed the various Seasons of the

Year, so necessary for the general Good of Mankind. With a thousand other striking Evidences of the most exquisite Wisdom, to be seen in the Make and Order of Things, which I cannot now take Time so much as to mention.

There are other Arguments brought from the universal Consent of Nations; the inward Testimony of Conscience; Miracles, Prophecies, the Necessity and evident Marks of a superintending Providence, conserving and guiding all Things. But I must not insist on any of these Topics; nor is it needful that I should, after the first Head of Argument. But there is another Topic of Argument, made use of by some on this Subject, from the very Idea of God, which I would beg Leave to propose as briefly as may be. This Topic is variously improved. By some the Argument is stated thus: We can have a Conception in our Minds of an all-perfect Being: Therefore such a Being actually is. The Reason of the Consequence is, because we cannot form any Notions of Things without Types to form and derive them from: As we can have no Idea of a Colour that never was, nor of any other Sense than those we have.

Again, the Argument is represented thus: The Idea of God includes Necessity of existing in it: Therefore he actually does exist. Here the Consequence is thus made out, As of Things, whose Idea includes in it an Impossibility of existing, we may thence be assured, and certainly infer, that they do not exist: So, by a Parity of Reason on the other hand, of a Thing, the Idea of which includes in it an absolute Necessity of existing, we may affirm, and be assured, that it actually does exist. For such a Being, whose Idea and essential Conception contains in it a Necessity of existing, or Impossibility of not existing, bears the same Relation and Habitude to Non-existence, that a self-contradictory Thing, the Idea whereof contains an Impossibility of existing, bears to Existence: That is, As impossible as it is for the latter to exist; so impossible is it for the former not to exist. To say, against this Method of Reasoning, that it proves

proves no more than that in case such a Being does exist, it exists necessarily, and cannot but exist, seems to be just as reasonable as to say of the like Method of Reasoning concerning a self-contradictory Thing, a round Square, for Instance, that the Impossibility of Existence, or Necessity of Non-existence, included in its Idea, only proves, that in case it is not, it necessarily is not. But, sure, in this Case it proves that it absolutely is not, without *if* or *and*: And so in the former, that it absolutely and actually is. Moreover, this Exception to the Argument supposes a Contingency of Existence in that Being, whose essential Conception and Idea is confessed to contain Necessity of Existence; which is a Contradiction. As then a Being whose Idea contains in it necessary Existence, is not impossible to be, nor yet contingent to be, or not be; it follows that it surely *is*.

Again, A Demonstration of God's Existence, from his Idea, is attempted after this Manner: If God is not, it is impossible he ever should have been. But it is not impossible that he should have been: Therefore he is. The Consequence of the Major appears from hence: Because necessary Existence is essential to God, included in the Idea of him; and therefore, if he be not, it is impossible he should ever have been. For what *is not*, has, at most, but a Contingency of existing belonging to it; and therefore, exist when it would, it could not be God; because it would not be a necessarily existing Being. The Minor appears evident; because nothing is absolutely impossible but what includes a Contradiction and Self-repugnancy in the Idea of it. One Part of the Idea of every Thing that is naturally impossible destroys the other: So that, though each Part may be well conceived separately, yet both together are utterly inconceivable; as in the former Instance of a round Square, we can have an Idea of a Circle, and of a Square, apart by themselves; but when we would connect them together, and predicate the one of the other, we can have no Notion of such a Thing, only that the two Ideas are utterly inconsistent with one another. But we can have a consistent harmonious Idea of
 God;

God. His Idea contains nothing contradictory in it: As, that he is a Being who exists of himself, without a producing Cause, by an absolute Necessity of Nature; all-knowing, all-powerful, &c. in a Word, possessing all Perfection; and therefore it is possible he *might have been*. The Premises then being confirmed, the Conclusion follows, that he *actually is*.

Again, It is certain that if God does not exist, he never can exist hereafter: Because, whatever begins to be cannot be a necessarily existing Being, and so cannot be God. But whatever is possible to be, as God is, it either actually is, or, if it be not, it is possible to be afterwards: And therefore God actually is. The Sum of this Reasoning is, If God be possible to be, he is; because if he is not, he is not possible to be: But God is possible to be; therefore he is. And therefore the Atheist, in denying the Existence of God, denies that to be possible which is possible. 'Tis readily granted, that we cannot infer the actual Existence of any Thing else from the Possibility of its Existence: Because all other Things are only contingent to Existence; they may be, or they may not be: But it is otherwise with God, whose very Essence includes Existence.

These Reasonings indeed, require very close Application of Mind, to get thoroughly into them; and are of so abstract a Nature, that perhaps we shall not be able, with full Certainty, to pronounce any thing concerning them: Yet this I must say, that they appear generally solid and conclusive to me. And I think it is reasonable to suppose that there should be some other Way of obtaining a Knowledge of the Existence of God than merely from his Works; since we can be as certain from other Arguments, before mentioned, of the Existence of God, as we can be of the Existence of any Thing whatsoever; And since it is certain that he exists necessarily, and cannot but exist; it follows, that though properly there can be no Cause of his Existence, yet there is a certain eternal Reason of it, why he could not but be existent. It is therefore reasonable, I say, to suppose, that

that there should be some Way of demonstrating, or perceiving his Existence, without the Consideration of his Works. Nay, It would seem strange, that the Necessity of so necessary a Being should not some how appear to our Minds; but that, notwithstanding, we should be left to collect his Existence only by Deductions from his Effects. However, these Arguments are only added *ex abundantis*; and how good soever they may be, yet I much doubt if any disposed to Atheism would be convinced by them; they would be apt still to suspect, that Reasonings so abstruse and metaphysical, may have some latent Falacy in them, though they may not be able to make it appear. But whatever becomes of these Arguments from the Idea, the Cause of Religion is quite safe: For the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work. The glorious Scene that opens with the rising Sun, utters Speech concerning him in the Day-time; and the admirable Phænomena disclosed in the Night, shew Knowledge of him. These Monitors speak to Men in all their different Tongues and Languages. Their Line encompasses all the Earth, written in bright Capital, so that he may run that reads it; and their Words reach to the Ends of the World, proclaiming their almighty Maker and Ruler.

I proceed now to the second Part of my Design, *viz.* To give some Account and Demonstration of the Attributes and Properties of God; to shew, more at large, what Conceptions we are to have of him. It has been made appear already, that, as he is the first Being, he is self-existent. And hence it has been likewise evinced, that he is eternal, always existing, without Beginning and without End. I would just here observe upon God's eternal Duration, that it is without Succession: It is not divided into Parts, of Past, Present, and Future. It's true, we are often obliged to use such relative Terms and Ideas concerning his Duration, to speak and think of it as past and future, in relation to the temporary Existence of ourselves and other Creatures; but in
itself

itself, and in respect of him, it is absolute and without any Succession: For there was no first Instant, or Moment, for a second to succeed. As there can be no Addition in Number without a Unite; there cannot be Two, or Ten, without One; so there can be no Succession in Duration without a Beginning. And there are no Changes, nor is there any Succession of Thoughts, or Ideas, one after another in God, to distinguish, or, as it were, divide out his Duration into different Parcels. It is therefore not proper to say that God is older, or of longer Duration, *now*, than he was *at the Beginning of the World*: His Duration being infinite can admit of no Increase. But, to proceed, it has, moreover, been shewn, that an eternal, self-existent Being, is a necessary Being; it is of such a Nature that it is impossible that it should not be. And now, from what has been already demonstrated of God, *viz.* That he is a necessary, eternal, self-existent Being, the Maker of this World, and all Things in it, we may go on to make farther Demonstrations.

And, first of all, we may hence infer more generally, that all Perfection whatsoever belongs to him. What Perfection can reasonably be denied to that Being which has such a Perfection of Being as to be independently of himself; and so as that it is absolutely impossible that he should not be. 'Tis manifest from the various Excellencies apparent in his Works, that there is Goodness and Excellency in him; since the Effect cannot be more excellent than its Cause. But now, as he is what he is of himself, independently of any other, by an absolute Necessity; thence can be no imaginable Reason, why he should have any one Perfection, or any one Degree of Perfection, and not another. The Effects which he has produced, prove, that he has Power and Understanding: He is then necessarily Powerful and Intelligent. But now there is the same Necessity for his having every other Perfection, as there is for his having Power and Intelligence. The Necessity must be universally equal, as to all Perfections, and their Degrees, in an absolutely necessary Being: Thus it appears, that GOD is an all-perfect

perfect Being, both intensively and extensively. And this points out to us a good general Rule, for directing our Attributions to him, and Conceptions of him, *viz.* to deny of him every Thing that involves in it any the least Imperfection, and to ascribe to him every Thing that is an Excellency and Perfection, implying no Imperfection in it. And so I might now do no more upon this Head, than just shew what are such pure Perfections: But yet I shall take Notice of such particular Arguments as occur, for the Demonstration of each particular divine Perfection.

And now I pass on to observe more particularly, first, that God is a singular and only Being: By this is not intended that there are no other Beings, but that there are no other Gods besides him; that his Nature is not a common, specific, but singular Nature, that admits of no Multiplication into sundry Individuals: Or, in a Word, that there is but one God. And this, I think, appears from the Necessity of his Existence. That there is one necessary Being, has been proved: But if there be two, or more, such necessary Beings, I cannot see but there must be a Number, properly and strictly infinite; for there is the same Necessity for an infinite Plurality as for any Plurality at all. But a Number, properly and positively infinite, is an Impossibility, and a Notion that contradicts itself: And therefore there is but one God. This farther clearly appears from his infinite Perfection. It has been already proved, that God has all Perfection belonging to him: Dependency is a Perfection; but, on Supposition there were more Gods than one, he would not be absolutely and every way independent. For Instance, He could not exercise a universal Empire, without entering into another's Claims, and doing it by another's Leave. In a Word, it is a self-evident Truth, that there cannot be two, or more, distinct Beings, or Essences, of which each one possesses all Perfection. Agreeable to this Principle of natural Reason, the Unity or Onlyness of the divine Nature is frequently and strongly asserted in holy Scripture, *Ijai. xlv. 5, 6, 7. I am the Lord,*

and there is none else: there is no God besides me, &c. See also *Isai. xliv. 8. Deut. iv. 35. and xxxii. 39.* It may be proper here just to observe, that this Truth of Natural Religion is no way repugnant to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity: For the Christian Trinity is not a Trinity of divine Essences, but of divine Subsistents or Persons, in one and the same individual Essence. This grand Peculiar of Revealed Religion teaches not three different independent Natures, but one and the same singular Nature, in three different Modes of subsisting: So that the Essence of all the three divine Persons, and which each one wholly possesses, is numerically one and the same individual Essence. But to go on,

In the next Place, God is an immense Being. His Essence is where-ever there is any created Thing: And this is strictly called his Omnipresence. But he is not limited within the Bounds of created Being, but is moreover where-ever there is no created Thing: And this his existing every where, without any Limits, is called his Immensity. That this is a Property of his Nature appears from the Independency of his Existence: For being self-existent, he has his Being without any Limitations put upon it by another; and, sure, he has not limited himself, any more than he has made himself. But it farther clearly appears from the Necessity of his Existence: For there is the same Necessity for his existing one where as another. Absolute Necessity of Existence must be alike every where, and cannot be peculiar to any particular Bounds whatsoever: And therefore if God necessarily is at all any where, (as 'tis certain he is) by the same Necessity he is every where. And to this Dictate of natural Reason agrees the Testimony of inspired Scripture: *Behold, the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee,* says Solomon, *1 Kings viii. 27. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence,* says David: *If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there,* Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8. See also *Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. Acts xvii. 27, 28.* I shall only farther observe

observe upon this Attribute of the divine Immenſity, that it is without Parts and Extenſion. An infinite Preſence, or Ubiquity of Eſſence, made up of finite Parts, is a Contradiction. This Property of God's immanent Eſſence farther appears from his Simplicity; which I ſhall next ſpeak of.

God is a ſimple, ſingle Being, without Mixture or Composition. This appears from his Independency: For whatſoever is compounded depends for its Perfection upon its compounding Parts. Moreover, If the divine Nature is ſuppoſed to be an Aggregate, or *Compoſitum* made up of ſundry different Things, then every ſingle one of theſe Things, all of which together conſtitute the Godhead, either has all and infinite Perfection, or it has not. Each one by itſelf has not all Perfection: For, as has been already obſerved, there can be but one ſuch infinitely perfect Being. And if there were ſeveral ſuch infinitely perfect Things, really different from each other, they would be ſo many Gods, and not merely conſtituent Parts of Godhead. If each one of theſe ſuppoſed Parts has not infinite, but only partial Perfection; then it will follow, that either God is imperfect; which is both impious and abſurd to imagine; or that an all-perfect infinite Whole is made up of imperfect finite Parts; which is alſo groſſly abſurd. If it be ſaid that each Part is infinitely perfect in its Kind, though it have not every Kind of Perfection; as the underſtanding Faculty, for Inſtance, is infinite, as Underſtanding, though it have not the Perfections of executive Power, Will, &c. to this 'tis eaſy and juſt to reply, that Infiniteness in any reſpect, is too great for any Thing that is not infinite in all reſpects. A finite Infinite is an incoherent Notion. From all which it is manifeſt, that God is a ſimple, uncompounded Eſſence. And this is what is principally intended when he is called a *pure Act*. By this Designation of him is meant, that there is nothing in him any way imperfect, or dependent; that has in it any Capacity of receiving farther Perfection from any other Thing; as it is in all compound Beings.

And now from this Simplicity of the divine Nature it appears, that what we call Attributes of God, such as Power, Understanding, Justice, &c. are not so many different Things in him: But, as they are in him, are only one single infinite Perfection, exerting itself in so many different Ways towards its Objects, and Effects. And this Perfection is not in him as a Quality distinct from his Essence; but is his very Essence itself, bearing all that Variety of Respects and Habitudes towards its various Objects.

Again, From God's Simplicity it appears, that he is without Extension. We must not say that he is in sundry Places by extended Parts; that a Part of God is here, and another Part there; but that God is here, and God is there. In a Word, that his entire indivisible Essence is every where.

Once more, I would just remark upon this Attribute, that it is not at all inconsistent with a Trinity of divine Persons, which the Christian Revelation teaches: For the divine Essence is not shared and divided among the Persons; nor do they constitute the divine Essence as a certain Whole, to which each one contributes a respective Part: But the same undivided Essence is entirely in each Person. The subsisting of the divine Essence in some three several Manners, infers no real Composition in it. It is, notwithstanding these Modifications, and personal Distinctions, a simple unmixed Substance still. But to proceed,

I would next observe, that Spirituality is another Property of the divine Nature. God is an immaterial, incorporeal Substance. For, what exists necessarily, as God does, exists every where, as we have seen; and consequently cannot be Body: For, on Supposition that it were Body, or Matter, as it would then consist of quantitative Parts, and each of these Parts would be necessarily existent, they would every one be every where; which is the highest Absurdity. 'Tis contrary to the Nature of Body, the known Property whereof it is to have Parts beyond others, *i. e.* where others are not. It would infer an infinite Number of immense Beings, and that an infinite Number of Bodies were all in the

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the same Place; whereas two Bodies cannot be in the same Place, at the same time. The Spirituality of God is also manifest from his Simplicity, but now demonstrated; and likewise from his Intelligence and Self-activity. And this leads me to observe, in the next Place,

That God is a conscious, intelligent Being. Understanding and Knowledge is an undoubted Perfection; and so must needs belong to the all-perfect Being. The admirable Order of the World declares Council and Design in the Framing of it. And as there are created Beings intelligent; their Creator is surely so: Since there cannot be greater Perfection in the Effect than in its Cause. *He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not be know?* Psalm xciv. 10. Now, since God is every way and infinitely perfect; and since whatever he is, he is necessarily, and consequently infinitely; it follows, that his Understanding is infinite: And that not merely as a Capacity to know all Things, but as actually knowing all Things. A Being cannot be said to have infinite intellectual Perfection, by having only an infinite intellectual Faculty or Capacity, without infinite Intellection itself. God's Understanding is no other than his very Essence itself, considered as respecting Objects, by way of *conscious Perception* and *actual Knowledge*, and not merely as a *Principle of Knowledge*. And therefore he is necessarily, and of consequence, infinitely knowing. He knows both his own infinite Being, and all Things beside; whether actual, future, or only possible. His Knowledge of his own boundless Perfection is the Knowledge of all possible Things: For his Being is the Fountain of all Possibility, from whence it results; and all Possibles are eminently and virtually, as the Schools speak, contained in him. So that in knowing what himself is, and what he can do, he knows whatsoever is possible to be. And as he perfectly knows the Natures, Relations, Connections, and Dependencies of all Things; and his own Purpose concerning them, whereby they are either brought into a State of Futurition, or left in their original State of mere Possibility; he infallibly knows
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all Things future; even such as in their own Nature are most contingent, and stand in a necessary Connection with the arbitrary Determinations of intelligent Creatures. And the same Considerations, as well as his Omnipresence, prove his Knowledge of all Things that actually are, or have been. I shall only farther observe, upon the divine Understanding, that, being perfect, it is intuitive and independent. The Knowledge of the infinite Intelligent is all by immediate Intuition, and not by a Process of Ratiocination by Premises and Inference: He sees all Things, and all their Connection, at one View.

The next Perfection of God, which I shall speak of, is his Will; which, were it not commonly otherwise expressed, I should rather chuse to call his Volition, or Willing: Because in God it is ever in Act; and his Act of Willing is ever the same, without any Change. For, since from all Eternity he knew his own infinite Perfection, and all possible Things; he must needs have had some and the same Act of Will from all Eternity, concerning both himself, and all Things beside. As a Power of Willing is essential to an intelligent Being; God wills himself, by an infinite Complacence in his own Perfection. Of other Things, some he wills to be the Matter of his Creatures Duty; and under this View his Will is called his preceptive Will: And others he wills as Events to come to pass in Time; and his Will under this Consideration is called his decretive Will, or the Will of his Decree. Now, although God wills, whatsoever he wills, freely and with Liberty; yet some Things he wills necessarily, and cannot but will; and others he wills arbitrarily and with Indifference. He wills Himself, and all Things, which, in any Case (that is supposing him to have willed that Case itself) have a necessary Connection with his Holiness and Glory, necessarily; though yet most freely, in Contradistinction to all Compulsion or Force, with a Complacence in them, and Approbation of his own Act of Will concerning them. All Things, which have no necessary Connection, either absolutely or hypothetically, with his
 Glory,

Glory, he wills indifferently; so as that, though he does not will them without Reason, yet there is nothing to hinder why he might not have willed otherwise. To this Purpose it is commonly and justly said by Divines, that some Things God wills because they are good, and some Things are good only because he wills them. Yet we must not imagine, that there is any Good necessarily determining the divine Will, but what bears a Respect to God himself, and has all its Goodness from that Relation it stands in to him, the Original and Fountain of all Goodness. There can be properly no Cause, impulsive or final, of God's Volition, in any Instance, out of himself. To suppose otherwise, were to suppose him indigent and dependent, and something else independent of him. I shall only farther observe here, that the divine Volition concerning all Things whatsoever, is, really and properly, but one single Act. A little Consideration will readily convince us that it must be so, in an infinitely perfect Being, who by one Act knows all Things. And therefore, although, by reason of the Variety of the Objects, and of the different Things willed concerning them, we frequently speak of Decrees of God in the plural Number; yet we are not to conceive, that there are sundry decreeing Acts in him, as if there were a distinct Decree for every Thing decreed; any more, than that the Centers of ten thousand Circles, which have all a common one, are manifold, as if there were a distinct several Center for every Circle. And hence it is manifest, that there can never be any new Purpose in God, which he had not before.

I go on to observe,

That Immutability is an essential Perfection of God. He is absolutely unchangeable, and that both as to his Essence, and his Decrees. First, as to his Essence: There is nothing either intrinsic in him, or extrinsic to him, that can necessitate a Change in him for the worse: And therefore, if he should so change, it must be by his own Choice; which is as impossible, as that he should suffer such a Change by Necessity. He cannot change for the better; because he

possesses all Perfection, and so cannot be more perfect than he is. Neither can he change for a Condition just equal to his own; because there is no other such Condition: Therefore he is absolutely unchangeable. This farther appears from the Necessity of his Existence: For what necessarily is, it necessarily is just what it is, and as it is. That is, in other Words, it cannot be changed from any Thing within itself: And, sure, its Creatures cannot change it. Again, I say God is unchangeable as to his Decrees and Purposes. He can never purpose otherwise than he has done; either by altering a former Purpose, or conceiving a new one: And that not from any Weakness, or Want of Perfection; but because of the infinite Greatness of his Perfection. For such a Change would manifestly argue a Defect of Understanding, or Power, or both; that his Scheme was not wisely enough laid out before; and now he saw better what to do: Which to suppose of the great God were horridly blasphemous, and brutishly absurd. It is then the Dictate of Reason, as well as Revelation, that *the Council of the Lord standeth for ever; and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.*

I proceed next to speak of his Power, that Perfection of his Nature whereby he can produce Things out of nothing, and manage and order them as he pleases. That there is such a glorious Perfection in God as this, is undeniable; from its Effects which we behold, and whereof we ourselves are Instances. *His eternal Power and Godhead are clearly seen, by the Things that are made.* I shall only offer a few Things to demonstrate that his Power is almighty, and properly Omnipotence; which Terms import a Power of doing all Things. Such a Power is in God; namely, a Power to do all Things which are properly the Objects of Power, *i. e.* which are intrinsically possible, not implying a Contradiction; and all Things which are not inconsistent with the infinite Perfection of his Nature; which may be made appear from this Argument; *viz.* The Power of God is sufficient to produce some possible Things: Therefore it is sufficient

sicient to produce All. The Antecedent is manifest, because in fact he has produced Some: And the Consequence appears from hence, in that all Possibles are equally possible; they all bear a like Respect to actual Existence; (indeed the Distance of them all from actual Existence is infinite; as there is no Proportion between Something and Nothing, Existence and Non-existence) so that being all alike distant from actual Being, there can be no Difference as to the Degree of their Possibility of Existence: And therefore, that Power which is sufficient for the Production of any one, is equally sufficient for the Production of any other. And such a Power as this, I think, may properly be called infinite: Not only because infinite Power is necessary for the Production of actual Being from the infinite Distance of Not-being; but because there is no End to the Number of possible Things: There can never be so many of them brought into actual Existence, but that there may still be more. And here I would take Occasion just to observe, that as God's Essence is immenè, and his Duration eternal, I think we cannot determine, either what Worlds he may have made before this, or may make after it: And that, as Being is infinitely distant from Not-being; and the Production of it is an Effect of infinite Power; I cannot but think that infinite Power is necessary to annihilate it again, as well as at first to create it.

The Perfection of God which I shall next take Notice of, and which emblazons all his other Perfections with a lovely Glory, is his Holiness. By which we understand his Complacence in moral Good, and Aversion to moral Evil. So holy is his Nature, that it is impossible he should be either the Author or Approver of a wrong unreasonable Thing. Such moral Rectitude is a most amiable Excellency; and therefore must belong, in the utmost Perfection of it, to the all-perfect Being, the infinite Mind, the Comprehension and Origin of all Reason. As all moral Goodness, with the Excellency of it, is within the View of his all-comprehending Intellect; he cannot but infinitely love it, and hate the Con-

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trary. Moreover, he can have no Interest to serve by doing any moral Evil. His Affairs are above all Necessity of this Sort. Hence, as says the Apostle James, *God cannot be tempted with Evil.* So that we may rest assured, with the fullest Satisfaction of Mind, that *the Lord our God is holy; that all his Ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity: just and right is he.*

God's Holiness includes in it his Justice, and his Truth: Which require to be a little opened particularly.

The Justice of God, in general, is that Perfection of his Nature, whereby he deals justly and rightly, in all Respects, with all his Creatures. It may be distinguished into his Disposing and Juridical Justice. The former respects him, merely as the Supreme Lord and Proprietor of all Things, having a Right to manage and dispose of them as he pleases, being all his own; and refers to his Administration of his general Providence. His Juridical Justice relates to his more special Providence; his moral Government over his rational Creatures; and respects him as their Lawgiver and Judge. It is distinguishable into his Legislative, and Executive or Distributive, Justice. God's Justice, in the former Sense, is that Perfection of his Nature, whereby he imposes just and equal Laws: In the latter Sense, it is that Perfection, whereby he dispenses just Retributions of Rewards and Punishments; and accordingly is distinguished into his Remunerative, and Vindictive or Punitive, Justice. And here arises a great Question, *viz.* Whether Vindictive Justice be essential to God; so, that on Supposition of Sin's being committed, it is not indifferent and arbitrary, but necessary with God, to inflict for it deserved Punishment? This I must hold in the Affirmative, for such Reasons as these, which I can but only mention: First, It would be dishonourable to God not to act up to the Character and Dignity of the Judge and Lawgiver of the rational World. But to pass by Sin, without Punishment, would be acting beneath that Character: And consequently unbecoming himself. Which cannot be. Secondly, It had been unsuitable to the Wisdom
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and unalienable Rights of God, for him not to have made his Authority and Laws respectable, by annexing a Penalty to the Breach of them. And the Dispensing with the penal Sanctions of the Law, is a mean Trifling, highly unworthy of the Supreme Ruler of the World, and contrary to his Unchangeableness: And therefore it is necessary that he punish for Sin. Thirdly, Christ Jesus gave a legal Satisfaction for the Sins of all those that are saved. But his Satisfying for them was not unnecessary, in order to their Salvation. And, Fourthly, (which is also implied in the last Argument) all that are not saved through Christ's Atonement, are eternally punished for their Sins: But, sure, they are not eternally punished unnecessarily. God has no Pleasure in the Misery of his Creatures, for its own sake. But to proceed,

The Truth of God is that Perfection of his Nature, whereby he is infinitely distant from all Falsifying and Deceit. *St. Paul* justly calls him *θεός ὁ ἀληθεύς*, *God that lies not*. All his Declarations are according to the Reality of Things, and his Commands, Promises, and Threats, are all true Significations of his Will. His Veracity is all the Security of his Creatures. All his Saints in Heaven and Earth depend upon his Word for their eternal Happiness: And 'tis impossible that an infinitely perfect and holy Being should prove false to them, and disappoint that Trust which himself has required them to repose in him. Were it possible for God to deceive his Creatures, what a wretched, doubtful Case should we be in? *But the Strength of Israel will not lie. A God of Truth, and without Iniquity; just and right is he.*

I shall only farther observe, that Goodness belongs unto our God. I do not here take Goodness in the metaphysical Sense, for the universal Excellency of his Nature; nor yet properly in the ethical Sense, for the moral Rectitude of his Will: But I here understand it as it signifies a Communicativeness of Good. Heaven and Earth are full of Demonstrations of this Glory of God. This divine Perfection obtains several different Names, according to the different Considerations of its Objects: Thus, when we consider the Object

to which God communicates Good, merely as indigent and dependent, then we call his Goodness Benignity, or Bounty; when we farther consider the Object as undeserving, then his Goodness obtains the Name of Grace; and from an Object considered as miserable, it receives the Denomination of Mercy. So likewise the Goodness of God, considered as deferring the Execution of Punishment upon an ill-deserving Creature, is called Patience, and Long-suffering.

I shall only farther remark upon it, that the actual Communication of Benefits, in any of the forementioned Views, is a most free and sovereign Act of God, which is no way necessary to him on the Score of natural Equity, or any intrinsic Reason of Things so requiring: So that he may exert his Goodness among his Creatures just in what Kinds and Degrees, and to what particular Objects, himself pleases. No Creature can make any Demand on God, on account of any native Right or Desert. If they could, the divine Goodness would come under the Notion of communicative Justice; which can have no Place between God and his Creatures. Hence that Challenge of the Apostle, *Rom. xi. 35. Who bath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* And the Argument he uses, is very just: *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all Things.*

But it is Time to conclude with some Improvement of this great Subject.

And, *First*, From what has been said, infer the incomprehensible Greatness and Glory of God. 'Tis impossible for a finite Mind, with the utmost Effort of Thought, to form an equal Conception of Infinity. All our Thoughts are swallowed up, and lost among the Incommunicables of God. What Intellect, but his own, can comprehend the Eternity of his Existence, and Imensity of his Being? How amazing is it to be always, without Succession; and every where, without Extension? How vast is the divine Understanding, which sees all Things? *Oh the Depth, both of the Wisdom, and Knowledge of God! And, the Thunder of his Power, who can under-*

understand? What a Power is creating Power? Who, by Searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto Perfection? There is infinitely more contained under his Name, than Men or Angels can explain. Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who hath bound the Waters in a Garment? Who hath established all the Ends of the Earth? What is his Name, and what is his Son's Name? if thou canst tell, Prov. xxx. 4.

*Secondly, Infer the Excellence and Necessity of Religion. God is a Being worthy of the highest Veneration, and most unreſerved Obedience, of all intelligent Creatures. And as he is worthy of this univerſal Homage; ſo he has an inalienable Right to it, as he is the Creator, Sustainer, and Supreme Lord of all. Oh, may we ever revere, love, and obey the infinitely glorious *Jehovah*, our Maker, our Life, and our Happineſs; *the High and Loſty One, who inhabits Eternity**

Thirdly, Infer the infinite Unreaſonableneſs and Baſeneſs of Sin. Oh, how unreaſonable, how vile is it, to ſlight the God of Glory! To contradict his Will, and trample upon his Authority! To diſown our Dependance; and, as if we were ſelf-ſufficient Beings, to ſet up on our own Bottom againſt the God that made us! Oh, the ſhameful Baſeneſs, the exceeding Sinfulneſs of Sin!

Fourthly, Infer the aſtoniſhing Condeſcenſion, Grace, and Mercy of God, in ſending his Son to redeem, and his Spirit to ſanctify, ſuch provoking, rebellious Creatures. How amazing is it, that the independent, ſelf-ſufficient God ſhould thus concern himſelf about our Happineſs, after our horrid Apoſtacy and Rebellion! Oh, how ſhould it affect our Hearts, and inſpire us with the tendereſt Reſentments of Gratitude and Love!

But, more particularly, every divine Attribute affords proper Inferences: Some of which I ſhall name, and can but only name. From God's Eternity infer, that we are not to pay the leſs Regard, either to his Threatnings, or Promiſes, becauſe the Accompliſhment of them may ſeem to us long deferred: For a thouſand Years is with the Lord as one Day;
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and one Day as a thousand Years. From his Unity infer, that all religious Worship is due to him alone; and that there can be no controuling of his Designs. His Immensity should excite us to be careful in our Behaviour; since we are always in his Presence. From his Simplicity and Spirituality we may observe, how impious and absurd it is to make corporeal Images to represent him by. From his infinite Knowledge infer, that his Councils can never be disconcerted: There can be no unforeseen Accident to disorder his Affairs. As also, that he is able to dispense the final Awards to Men and Angels with exact Righteousness. From the unchangeable Holiness of God infer, that that Liberty which is necessary to denominate an Agent free, and constitute an Action morally good or evil, consists not in an Indifferency to act or not to act, or to do a Thing, or its Contrary: For it were horrid Blasphemy to say, that God is holy with such a Liberty as this; but it consists in acting spontaneously, of one's own Accord, with rational Complacence, in Opposition to Co-action, or Force. The divine Holiness should excite us to be holy, and to hate and avoid Sin. The vindictive Justice of God should alarm Sinners to fly from impending Vengeance, to the Remedy which God has provided, Jesus Christ, a Mediator; who has made Reconciliation for Iniquity, and brought in everlasting Righteousness, by bearing the Penalty of the Law in the stead of guilty Transgressors. To conclude, As all the Perfections of God speak Terror to impenitent Sinners; so they all, but especially his Goodness and Truth, afford Matter of abundant Consolation to those who truly love him, and heartily comply with the Method of Reconciliation which he has proposed. Such may, indeed, rejoice, that the Lord liveth: For he will be their everlasting Happiness. Let us ever love, adore, and delight in this infinitely glorious and lovely Being. And now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.



S E R M O N VI.

MATTH. chap. iv. ver. 10.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

THAT this World, with all its Contents, is a created, made Thing; and that there is a God who made it, who is himself unmade, and self-existent, and to whom belongs all Excellency, Blessedness, and Perfection; are most certain demonstrated Truths. Our further Enquiry now is, Whether, as we are *rational* Creatures, we are under certain, necessary Obligations of Duty and Obedience to this great Author of our Being? Or, If Mankind are left entirely free, to live at random, just as they please, and agree themselves? It is, indeed, strange there should be any Occasion for a laboured Decision of this Case; our Obligations to Religion so obviously resulting from the forementioned Grounds, that their Evidence seems even to force itself upon us, whether we will or no: Yet such is the Perverseness and Absurdity of Men, as to make it but too necessary to maintain and defend, in a set Discourse for that Purpose, the sacred Authority and Rights of Religion. For, although its Obligations are generally acknowledged among Mankind, (so great is their Evidence) yet the greater Part, alas, live so as to practically disown them: Which shews their Conviction and Sense of them is but very superficial. And neither is this all; but there are such, and who would not take it well to be called Atheists neither, who, by sufficient Hints, profess themselves irreligious upon Principle; and offer to defend the Cause of Irreligion with a Pretence of Argument. With this

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Sort of People all Religion is Superstition; and, having taken up a false and disadvantageous Idea of an Object too bright for their vitiated Eyes, they bless themselves in their happy Freedom from its disagreeable Demands. Their great (and, indeed, only) Argument is taken from the infinite Highness, Self-sufficiency, and independent Happiness of God. And it is to this Effect; That, as God is so far (even infinitely) above all his Creatures, as a self-existent, omnipotent, omniscient Being, he cannot be reasonably supposed to make any Account of their Behaviour, or concern himself less or more about it. It must be beneath so great a Majesty to take under his Notice so low and mean Things as the Actions of Creatures, who are as nothing before him. God is infinitely blessed and happy in himself alone, and so can have no Need of our Service; we can neither benefit nor hurt him. And can we imagine him so vain, as to be pleased and elevated with the Praises, or disturbed at the Reproaches of silly Creatures? What would any of us regard it, what Thoughts a Worm in the Dung-Hill had of us? This is the Sum of all they have to say that has any Face of Reason in it. Both the Principle and the Argument have been supplied to their Hands, two thousand Years ago, by Epicurus; who held, as Lactantius relates it, *Τὸ μέγιστον καὶ ἀσθενέστατον, οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει, οὔτε ἄλλα παύει: ὥστε οὔτε ἔργα, &c.* That the happy and immortal Being neither has himself any Concerns, nor does he give any to others: That he neither bears Anger nor Favour towards any; for that every Thing of this Sort belongs to a weak Being.

The Truth, which, in Opposition to this execrable Opinion, falls to me at this Time to endeavour the Confirmation of, is this, *viz.* That God requires Worship and Obedience of us. *Thou shalt worship, says he, the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Or, as it is in the Place to which our Saviour here refers, *Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him.*

In order to pave the Way for the direct Establishing of this Truth, I shall, first, make appear, that there is nothing

to hinder, why God may not require us to worship, honour, and serve him. For we do, indeed, in vain attempt to prove it, if it can be made appear to be inconsistent with his Perfections. And to make this appear, that God may enjoin Religion upon us, and demand Homage and Service of us, I shall shew,

First, That he has a Right to demand it. And,
Secondly, That he may proceed on that Right, and actually make the Demand.

God has a Right to give Law to us, and to require Obedience and Worship of us; as being our Creator; who has created us rational, intelligent Beings, capable Subjects of such moral Government. Hence it appears, both that he is worthy of our Service; and has a Title to it. There cannot be a more natural and just Sentiment than what is expressed to this Purpose in *Psalms* xcv. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Jebovab is a great God, above all Gods. In his Hand are the deep Places of the Earth: the Strength of the Hills is his also. The Sea is his, and he made it: and his Hands formed the dry Land. Ob come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* No other Potentate in the Universe has so fundamental a Right to Dominion, and the Obedience of Subjects, as God: His Right is antecedent to all Consideration of our Consent: 'Tis a Right to demand it; as we are his absolute Property by Creation. How reasonable, how fit and becoming is it, that we should adore and honour the great Author of our Being: That we should make his Will our unalterable Rule and supreme Law in every Thing. And, on the other hand, how abhorrent to Reason, how base and unbecoming, for the Creatures which he has made, and, of his mere Good-pleasure, brought from Nothing, to disown Subordination, and claim Independency; to set up for being their own absolute Masters; for being governed only by their own Wills, without any superior Laws: And to refuse all dutiful Acknowledgments to the God that made them. Now, if it is a Thing so reasonable and fit, that we

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Should love and honour the great Parent of our Being, he has a Right to require it of us: For, surely, he may demand a fit and proper Behaviour towards himself from his own Creatures. Can there be a particular Kind of Deportment towards him reasonable and due, and yet not a Right in him to require it, of his own Creatures? Strange Absurdity! Is it most obviously unbecoming and vile in them, to claim a natural Right of being their own absolute Lords, and yet shall God's Right of Legislation be denied too at the same time? Ridiculous Inconsistency! But, this Proposition, that the Creator has a Right to give Law to the Creature, is so obvious and self-evident, that I judge I should expose myself to the just Censure of this Reverend Audience, did I insist more largely for the Confirmation of it.

I say then, in the next Place, That, as God has a Right to demand an Homage and Service of his intelligent Creatures, there is nothing to hinder why he may not actually make the Demand, and, in fact, require it of them. To say, that he has a Right to require it, (I mean an absolute Right, which must be meant in this Case) and yet, that he may not, in fact, require it, is, I think, pretty near a Contradiction: That is, a Right which is no Right. I grant there may be a respective limited Right, where yet it may not be reasonable and just, on all Accounts, to practise upon it, and make use of it: In which Case there is no Contradiction; because the Right is not allowed and denied both, in the same Respect: But God's Right to the Homage of his Creatures, is absolute, unlimited, and supreme. And therefore, to grant this Right in God, and, at the same time, deny that he may act upon it, is a direct Contradiction: It is both to say and unsay the very same Thing. In many Cases, indeed, a Person in whom a Right is subjected, may waive the Use and Privilege of it; but the Use of it can never be denied him in the same Respect in which the Right itself is allowed. To be brief, As the very Notion of Right implies something due; so, where that is so due as that the Withholding of it is absolutely unreasonable and unrighteous, in
such

such Case it can never be unbecoming the Person in whom the Right is, to insist for it. Unless it can be unbecoming to act according to Reason: And such is the Case here, as to the Honour we owe to God, our Creator, our Preserver, and our Happiness.

By what has been said, the Way is now, I think, sufficiently cleared for proceeding to the direct Proof of the Doctrine in Hand. But, that our modern *Epicureans* may have no Pretence for charging us with being afraid to deal with their Argument, let us for a little engage it, and try its boasted Strength. God is an independent, self-happy Being; therefore, say they, it is perfectly indifferent to him how we behave. But this Inference is either inconsequential and false, or else it is a downright Shifting of the Question. If the Meaning of it be, that it is indifferent to God's Happiness how we deport ourselves, whether well or ill, it is a just Conclusion, and perfectly true; but as perfectly foreign to the Purpose. If it means, that it is indifferent to God whether he shall require and authoritatively oblige us to behave dutifully and becomingly towards him, or no; we resolutely deny the Consequence. (Though, if we should grant it, I see not how they could prove their Point by it; for what is indifferent to him, he may do: As, for Example, his creating the World.) For supporting the Consequence of their Argument, they will readily tell us, that, as God's Happiness is independent and infinite, so that he can receive neither any Profit nor Damage by us, there can be, therefore, no Cause why he should require any Sort of Behaviour from us; unless he can be capable of so mean a Vanity as to be taken with the Dignity of exercising Dominion over a Parcel of Creatures, and receiving their Esteem and Applauses: But it is equally inconsistent with his infinite Perfection and Blessedness, to require any thing of us, either for no Reason at all, or for such as the one mentioned: Therefore he no way concerns himself how we shall act. But here we deny the Consequence again. Because we can neither increase nor lessen God's Happiness, it does not, therefore, follow, that there can be

no Reason why he should concern himself about our Manners, except it were (with Reverence be it expressed) to pleasure, or rather pride himself in our Adorations, and that he might value himself upon exercising Authority over silly Creatures. Though it is a great and God becoming Thing, for him to bear Rule over such Numbers of intelligent Beings of his own making, yet we are not to imagine that his Satisfaction is thereby advanced beyond what it was before the earliest Date of Creation. Nor does he, in the least, esteem himself any thing the more happy for being esteemed and honoured by his Creatures. All this we most freely allow. But then does it hence follow that there can be no sufficient Cause why he should require us to esteem and honour him? By no means: It is Cause sufficient that it is most reasonable and due; and that a contrary Behaviour in us would be most base, detestable, and vile: So that, without requiring such a dutiful Temper and Carriage of his rational Creatures, he could not justify his Proceedings to himself; he could not have the Satisfaction of approving his Management to his own infinite Reason and Wisdom: But must have the Unhappiness of being conscious that he had not acted as became him; as became him who is the supreme Reason, the Fountain of all Rectitude and Goodness whatsoever. If it can be made appear to be unbecoming God, and inconsistent with his infinite Perfection, not to require Duty and Homage of his reasonable Creatures, then it must be allowed by every one that would not forfeit all Right to the Name of a Man, both that there is sufficient Reason why he should require it, and that he actually does require it. Now, this I hope to make appear: And thus, am cast upon the positive and direct Proof of the Point in Hand, *viz.* That God does actually require of us Worship and Obedience. In order to evince this, I shall, first of all, observe, that in Matters of Practice there is such a Thing as Right and Wrong, Fit and Unfit, Reasonable and Unreasonable, resulting from the various Natures and Endowments of Beings, and the various Relations and Respects they bear one to another. This Proposition

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I look upon to be as true and certain as any Truth whatsoever: And, by a few Instances, it will appear to be (at least in many of its particular Cases) self-evident. I instance, first, in what has been noticed already, *viz.* It is thus right and fit that rational Creatures should love and honour their infinitely glorious Creator; that they should acknowledge his Right to govern them; and that they should obey him in whatsoever he shall require. As on the other hand, It is unfit and wrong for them to hate and despise him; disobey and dishonour him; and to set up their Wills in Opposition to his. Again, It is reasonable and fit that Men should treat others in the same Manner, in which, upon an Exchange of Circumstances and Relations, they might reasonably desire those others to treat them. And, without very special Suppositions, 'tis unreasonable and wrong to inflict extreme Misery upon such as have done nothing to deserve it; and still worse, if they have been our kind Benefactors: That there are such moral Fitnesses and Unfitnesses, is a Thing so self-evident, that we have the general Sense of Mankind concurring in it: Even such as do not chuse to conform their own Practice to the Rules of Righteousness and Equity, must yet, in their Judgment, assent to them: How else come they to distinguish between a good and a bad Character? Or, to be displeas'd with any for any of their Actions? If no Action be wrong, why do they yet find fault? And, as the Difference between moral Good and Evil is certain, so likewise 'tis not precarious or arbitrary, but immutable and eternal, as unchangeable as the Being and Perfection of God, wherein it is founded, and whence it takes its Rise. It is as impossible it should be right, or indifferent, to hate Excellency and Goodness, or to return Evils for Benefits, as it is for a square Figure to have all the Properties of a Triangle, or for twice Two to be Five. Moral Rectitude and Fitness, as really as any mathematical Truth, is founded in the very Nature of Things: And no Authority whatsoever can alter it, any more than it can take away the essential Differences of Things, and make a Circle

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and a Square to be the very same. Mr. *Hobbs's* extravagant ridiculous Attempt to evince the Contrary, has been solidly and clearly confuted by several learned Men.

I proceed to observe next: That, as, on Account of the Qualifications and Endowments of Beings, and the Relations they stand in to one another, there are some Actions good, amiable, and fit; and others bad, hateful, and wrong; it cannot be but that God must require those that are good and right, of his rational Creatures, and forbid those that are evil and wrong. It has been proved, in the preceding Sermon, before this Presbytery, and so is here taken for granted, that God is an infinitely perfect Being, possessed of perfect moral Rectitude and Goodness; and hence it follows, that he must needs approve what is right, and disapprove what is wrong; and, consequently, enjoin the former on his Creatures that are capable of moral acting, and forbid the latter. For since he is essentially holy and righteous, it is inconsistent with his Nature to give Licence to his Creatures to act wickedly and unrighteously. As it is manifestly inconsistent with his Nature, and impossible for him, to command any of his Creatures to dishonour and hate him, for this very Reason, *viz.* Because such Behaviour is base and unbecoming; for the same Reason it is impossible for him to allow it; *i. e.* not to forbid it. It is becoming him, and God-like, to order the universal Observance of Right and Justice through his whole intelligent Creation; to order all his Creatures, endowed with moral Capacities, to act as is fit, and becoming them, according to the Endowments he has respectively given them, the Relations they bear to one another, and the Place wherein he has put them, in the Scale of Being. This is so congruous and suitable to the infinite Reason and absolutely perfect Will of God, that it is repugnant to his Nature to do otherwise. Right and Wrong are not indifferent Things with him; but the one is the Object of his infinite Complacence; the other of his infinite Aversion: So that, without requiring Piety and Righteousness of his reasonable Creatures, he would not act agreeable

to his own Nature, nor as becomes his infinite Perfection.

Thus, I presume, the Point is fairly demonstrated, from the Perfections of God; and the Obligations of Religion set in a just and rational View. The great God does not require any Thing of us from any Indigency in him, or any Ability in us to add any Thing to him. We heartily concur in the truly noble and sublime Sentiments of *Elihu*, Job xxxv. 6, 7, 8. *If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? Or if thy Transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man.* And of *David*, Psalm xvi. 2. *My Goodness extendeth not to thee.* And of *St. Paul*, Acts xvii. 25. *God that made the World, — is not worshipped with Mens Hands, as though he needed any Thing, seeing he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things.* He does not in the least exalt or value himself upon our Praises: It is no Part of his Happiness that we behave dutifully towards him. In this Sense *Eliphaz* said well, Job xxii. 3. *Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?* Yet, notwithstanding all this, he requires Duty and Service of us: And that not of mere arbitrary Pleasure neither; but because, for us to love and honour him, to deal justly and mercifully with one another, &c. are Things in themselves right: Because they are reasonable, becoming, and due; and their Contraries, even the bare Omission of them, infinitely unreasonable and vile. These moral Decencies and Fitnesses have an intrinsic Comeliness and Beauty in the Eye of God. He is of such perfect moral Goodness and Rectitude, that in all such Things he delights; they are most agreeable to his pure and perfect Nature, and their Opposites most disagreeable: He is of purer Eyes than that he can look upon Iniquity but with Abhorrence. This essential Rectitude of God is the eternal and only Security of his Creatures against all Injury from his Hands.

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This I look upon to be a true Account of the Rise, and to be the clearest Demonstration of moral Obligations. The Account of Mr. *Hobbs*, and some others, resolving all Right of Legislation, and the Ground of all Obligations, into mere Power and superior Might, is most irrational; and highly injurious to Religion. It falsely represents Religion as a Kind of mere arbitrary Imposition; strips her of her attractive Beauties; and debates her Honours, as though she had nothing to recommend her but mere Will and Force; as though she had no Excellencies in herself to engage our Esteem and Regard.

I proceed now to improve the Subject in some proper Uses. And,

1. Since it is clear, that there are certain Dues, which, according to the eternal Rules of Reason, inasmuch as we are rational Creatures, we owe to God and one another; and since it is as clearly manifest, from the essential Perfections of God, that, by his Will and Authority, he requires of us the Discharge of these various Duties; hence we may collect, in the first Place, that it is highly reasonable to suppose that God should require of us, over and above, some Performances of mere positive Institution; which have no such necessary Foundation in the very Nature and Reason of the Things, and the various mutual Respects of Beings. For, as the forementioned natural Duties (as I may call them) are of necessary Obligation, 'tis altogether reasonable, and very requisite, that those of them which immediately respect God as their Object, especially among Creatures of our Make and Circumstances, should have some external Notifications. It is necessary that we worship God, not only singly, and apart, but in joint Communion and Society; and that we testify due Regards to our adorable Creator with and before one another; whereby true Piety may be further advanced, and God more honoured in the World: For which Purposes some external Modes of Worship are, in a manner, absolutely necessary. This Matter may be in some measure

measure illustrated by the Necessity of external arbitrary Signs for our communicating in each others Knowledge: As the human Mind is a cogitative Being, it must needs be still conceiving, and connecting or separating Ideas; and, as Mankind are mutually dependent on each other, they must have some external Mediums whereby to communicate their Ideas; as, for instance, articulate Sounds, written Characters, or the like: But now, though some such Mediums or other be absolutely necessary for the mentioned Purpose, yet what those Mediums in particular shall be, is altogether arbitrary; as, what particular Idea such a particular Sound, or Sett of Characters, shall stand for. Thus the Matter nearly is in the present Case: The social Worshipping of God is our indispensable Duty; for which Purpose, as to us at least, in our present State, there is a Necessity of some or other external sensible Modes of Worship, wherein all the Worshipers may discernably communicate and join: But then, what those Modes of Worship in particular shall be, is, for the most Part, of mere positive Institution. The main Difference in the two Cases is, that in the former the Institution is human; in the latter only divine: To God alone it belongs to settle the Methods of his Worship. The high Expediency of such positive Ordinances in Religion, may further appear from the Consideration of our lapsed State, as degenerate Sinners, standing in Need of a Restitution of pious and spiritual Qualities, which we are to seek to God for: For, both on what Account these Blessings are to be restored, and the Methods wherein they are to be sought, as the Mediums for their Communication, must belong to the free Determination of God. Which, by the Way, is a strong Proof of the Necessity of a divine Revelation; and how unreasonable it is to reject a Religion merely on account of its containing Things of pure Revelation, and mere positive Institution.

2. From the Argument of this Discourse we may infer, how rational, how amiable, how divine a Thing Religion is. To be religious, is to act up to the Character and
X Dignity

Dignity of Men; as becomes intelligent, rational Creatures. Religion is the highest Glory and Perfection of Angels; and the Want of it, the Deformity and Bane of Devils. Religion ennobles a dependent Nature, and is the highest Perfection of its Faculties: So worthy is *Jehovah*, the Great, the only Self-existent, of the Subjection and Veneration of all other intelligent Beings; and so just his Title to it: 'Tis He, and He alone, can fill all the Capacities of immortal Spirits: He only is an Object sufficient and large enough for all their Powers, in their highest possible Degrees. So that, without Religion, our excellent Faculties are, as it were, thrown away upon us, lost, and useless. Take God from us, and we may, indeed, well cry out, what have we more? If Religion is gone, the Glory is departed: 'Tis our Shame and Disgrace to be Men without it. The Authority and Obligations of Religion stand upon the impregnable Foundations of eternal, unalterable Reason. She glories in its severest Trial. Let it be but indeed Reason, and she is well pleased that it be the Judge of her sacred Rights. What fit Name then shall we find for such as have Understanding enough to know that they are created, dependent Things, and yet will slight Religion? How basely out of Character is such a Conduct! And what signify all their unjust Reproaches? Is she the less honourable because she is abused? Not at all. The Sun, the glorious Eye of the Heavens, may as soon be made ashamed for the Reproaches of the Night-owl, as Religion for the Ridicule and abusive Name of unreasonable Men. There is no Argument in scornful Laughter and witty Burlesque: Come and let us reason together: Is it any real Disgrace; or just Ground of Shame to a Man, that he reveres and honours that infinite, adorable Being that made him? That he supremely esteems and loves the God of Glory? That he delights and rejoices in Him, as his Portion and Happiness, more than in all the Wealth, Pleasures, and Honours of this World? That he confides and trusts in Him who rules the Universe? And that, out of a dutiful Respect to the Divine Majesty, and a
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full Conviction of the Dueness of the Thing, he makes it his chief End and Concern to please and honour Him? Can any one allow himself to think, and, in sober Earnest, to treat such a Character as this with Derision and hard Names? But, however Men of corrupt Minds and a reprobate Sense may judge and speak, Wisdom is justified of her Children. Under this Designation Religion is honourably recommended by the wisest of Men, in *Prov. iv. 7, 8, 9.* *Wisdom is the principal Thing, therefore get Wisdom:—Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: She shall bring thee to Honour, when thou dost embrace her: She shall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace: A Crown of Glory shall she deliver to thee.* How high should Religion be in our Esteem! How should we welcome her Return to an apostate World, and to our depraved Souls! And, what pity is it, her sacred Honours should be exposed by the contemptible Mimickry of Hypocrisy, Enthusiasm, and Superstition? Again,

3. From the preceding Demonstration we may take Occasion to observe, how we are to understand God's requiring us to make his Glory our chief End and Aim in the Course of our Actions. To act principally for this End, is to act according to the highest Reason: And therefore it is that the infinite, all-perfect Mind requires it. Since the Divine Majesty is infinitely worthy that we should glorify him, and we are under infinite Obligations thereto, as being his Creatures, who have our All from him; 'tis therefore infinitely reasonable and due, that we should make the Glorifying and Honouring him our ultimate and highest Design. God requires the Preference in every Competition; not because he places any Happiness in it, (to himself I mean) but because it is right and fit he should have it, and the natural indispensable Duty of every rational Creature to give it.

4. Since we are naturally and necessarily under moral Obligations; since there is a right and fit Behaviour towards God and towards one another; which it is the Will

and Command of God we should observe; then certainly, considering how we find the present Condition of Mankind in this World is, it is a Thing, at least, very desirable, and much to be wished for, that God would afford us a well-attested Revelation; if it were but to teach us, in its full Extent, the Law of Nature. For, supposing we could make as large Concession as any can desire us, in Favour of a few thinking Men; it must yet be allowed, that the Bulk of Mankind at least, whose Concernment in Religion is as great as that of any others, have, in every Age, been so sunk in Ignorance, so full of Prepossessions on the Side of Irreligion and Vice, and so unqualified for, and disinclined to, strict rational Disquisitions, that it cannot be expected they should ever, by the bare Light of natural Reason, come to a sufficient Knowledge and Conviction of the Duty they owe to God and Man; much less of sufficient Motives to enforce it in Practice. But the Truth of this Inference appears yet more manifest, when we consider, that the Truth is, even the most learned, inquisitive Men, who have been destitute of supernatural Assistance to human Reason, were never yet able to furnish the World with a complete System of even natural Religion: But were both very defective and erroneous, in several Instances of great Importance. And many of the Discoveries they actually made, were yet destitute of enforcing Arguments adapted to the Apprehensions of the Generality. From all which 'tis easy to refute the vain Pretence of our modern Infidels, that "there is no need of Revelation." There is great need that even natural Religion be more plainly and fully discovered, and more strongly bound on the Consciences of Men, than Philosophy could ever attain to. But farther yet, the Necessity of Revelation rises still higher from the Consideration of the Breach that Sin has made between God and us: For, as the Method of Reconciliation belongs to him, the offended Party, and his infinite Wisdom, to prescribe and settle, it must be of impossible Discovery otherwise than by Revelation from him. However, I say, were Revelation much less necessary than

it is, it must yet be acknowledged, that it would be a very kind beneficial Vouchsafement, worthy of a good God to afford, and, which should be very thankfully received, as of great Advantage to Creatures so imperfect. But these Things are only to be hinted in this Place. And so I pass on to observe,

5. We may further learn from the preceding Doctrine, what are the Reasons and Qualifications of true Obedience, and Repentance towards God. We ought to be determined to regulate our Practice in all Things according to the Will of God, for the Excellency and Duties of the Thing. In regard of most of the Things he requires, they are reasonable and fit in themselves, considering our Capacities, Relations, and Circumstances: Reasonable, in such Sort as that the very Neglect of them, much more their Contraries, is unreasonable, and unfit. Because, therein we give due Honour and Glory to his Divine Majesty, of which he is infinitely worthy, and to which he has an inalienable Right. And because therein we give reasonable and due Returns of Gratitude for great and free Benefits. As likewise for this further Reason, namely, that such a Practice is Obedience to God: That is, because so he wills and requires us to practise: For, to act from this very Reason, is as reasonable as any Thing else whatsoever can be: Nothing can be more fit and right than that the Creator's Will should be a determining Law, and decisive Rule to the Creature. Thus, we are to be virtuous and religious, not only that we may act becoming ourselves as Men; which seems to have been the utmost View which the wiser Pagans in general had of the Matter; but, out of Respect to God; from honourable due Regards to his glorious Majesty. This, which I have now described, is true sincere Religion in Practice. This is right Obedience. Such Obedience is rational; 'tis free and pleasant. Religion, without these Views and Principles, is but, either a Piece of vile Hypocrisy and Vain-glory; or, a slavish Drudgery, forced from the Fear of Punishment; or else a mere lifeless Custom, without any Spirit or Life in it.

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And then, as to Repentance; As it is nothing else but the Return of a delinquent Sinner to due Obedience, the Reasons of it are the same with those of Obedience itself. And from the same Reasons arise that Shame and Grief for Sin, and Hatred of it, which are the Qualifications of a true sincere Repentance. They, therefore, quite mistake the Matter, who place Repentance just in some Remorse of Conscience, and Pangs of Distress for Sin, rising merely from a Fear of Punishment for it. As also, they, who foolishly look upon such Distress of Spirit for Sin, and a Conversion to a better Life, as a Kind of Compensation to God for their past Transgressions; and so are principally, if not only, induced to it from an Imagination of thereby making Amends for their former Offences. A truly religious Man, upon the most rational Grounds, loves Religion as a most amiable Thing; and hates Sin, as most detestable and vile. From all this 'tis manifest, that true Religion is the most honourable, most pleasant, and most happy Course of Life. Once more,

6. Let us all be influenced and persuaded to seek to be religious. This, Oh! this infinitely and eternally concerns us. Without Religion we can never be happy, but must be unavoidably and interminably miserable, both from the very Nature, and the Demerit of Impiety. Consider how strong and indissoluble your Obligations to Religion are: That Impiety is the Shame and Disgrace of human Nature. Sin is the Sickness and Disease of the Soul: Holiness its Perfection, Health, and Soundness. Oh, that we might once taste the Happiness of pure and perfect Innocence! What it is to be full of Holiness, and full of God! Then, and not till then, shall we be quite well; then, and not before, shall all our Complaints be at an End, and all our Desires satisfied. If you desire to be religious indeed, it is necessary you observe these few Directions: In the first Place, Seek to get religious Knowledge. Such as pretend to Religion without Knowledge, are like a Horse in a Mill, that still goes round without knowing why; or like a Tyro in the Rudiments

ances of Logic, that forms Syllogisms by casting his Propo-
 sitions into Mood and Figure, according to Rules of Art, for
 which he can assign no Reason. Such Religion is not worth
 the Name. Seek to get an Insight into the fundamental Rea-
 son, the Grounds, and Obligations of Religion. Study the
 glorious Perfections of God; and the divine Method of guilty
 Sinners Salvation, as revealed in the Gospel of Christ. A
 clear Knowledge of these Things will make your Religion,
 indeed, a reasonable Service. In such a Light Religion will
 approve itself to your Judgment, and recommend itself to your
 Choice, as a most lovely Thing. In the next Place; Seek to
 God for the necessary Influences of his sanctifying Spirit, to
 form your Hearts into Piety and Religion. Consider, that, as
 you are destitute depraved Sinners, you need the holy Spirit
 of God, to clear your darkened Minds, and rectify all your
 Faculties. Finally; Look to God for all the Blessings you have
 need of for eternal Life and Godliness, only through the Vir-
 tue of the Mediation of his incarnate Son, our Saviour; whom
 he hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood.
 It is only the Merit of this divine Mediator, that spiritual sa-
 ving Mercies are communicated from God to guilty apostate
 Men. Heartily close in with the Way of Salvation by him;
 cast the whole Dependance of your Souls, for Acceptance with
 God, and all the Mercies you need for complete Happiness,
 upon his satisfactory Atonement, and you shall find Virtue
 come from him, to the healing of your diseased Souls. This
 is the only Method, in which, according to the wise Consti-
 tution of Heaven, lapsed Sinners can attain to Holiness and
 Happiness. In this Method, therefore, endeavour to be per-
 fecting Holiness in the Fear of the Lord. I conclude in the
 memorable Words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *Phil.*
iv. 8. Finally, Brethren, whatsoever Things are true, whatso-
ever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever
Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things
are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise,
think on these Things: — and the God of Peace shall be with you.
 Amen.



S E R M O N VII.

JEREM. chap. viii. ver. 6.

*I bearkened and beard, but they spake not aright :
No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying,
What have I done? Every one turned to his Course,
as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.*

TH E S E Words are a Part of a Prophecy, or divine Message, which begins with the foregoing Chapter, wherein the Lord, by his Prophet, calls us, sinful, rebellious and apostate People, to Repentance and Amendment, to turn from their sinful Courses, and abominable Transgressions, to the Obedience of his Laws, as may be seen in the 3d, 5th, and 6th Verses of that Chapter. This the Lord presses upon them from two great Arguments, viz. *The Benefit they should enjoy upon their true Reformation; and the terrible Judgment they should sustain upon their obstinate Refusal and Impenitence.* Upon their thorough Reformation the Lord promises them a peaceable and prosperous Possession of their pleasant Land, ver. 7. But, upon their proceeding on still in their wicked Ways, he threatens them with the most dreadful Desolation, Death, and Captivity, generally throughout the Chapter.

This Argument the Lord farther prosecutes in the Beginning of this Chapter, shewing the Extent of that *Misery* and *Contempt* which he was about to bring upon them, and which in a little Time he did bring upon them by *Nebuchadnezzar's* Army: And then in the 4th and 5th Verses he aggravates the *Folly* and *Madness* of their Obstinacy and bold

Resolutions in persisting in their Wickedness, by observing to them that it was Folly unexampled, of which there are no parallel Instances to be found in any other Cases. Thus saith the Lord, *Shall they fall and not arise? shall he turn away and not return?* As if he had said, Can any Person so sottish and unwise be found, as will not rise up again, after they are fallen down upon the Ground? Can any such demented Person be found, who will not return to his right Road, after he has wandered out of it, and gone wrong? Surely no; common Prudence will teach Men better in such Cases. Why then, says he, is this People of *Jerusalem* slidn back by a perpetual Back-sliding? Oh, unexampled Madness! Though they have gone wofully out of the Way, and are wandering in their own Ways, to their eternal Destruction, and have been over and over told of it from me, in the most moving and awful Terms; yet they presumptuously go on, and turn not; their Back-sliding is perpetual, they hold fast Deceit, and refuse to return. And this their Continuance in a Course of Sin and Disobedience, against all the Warnings he had given them, and Pains which he had bestowed upon them, the Lord more fully and pathetically expresses in the Words of our Text, *I hearkened and heard, but they speak not aright: No Man, &c.* In the Words you may notice these few Particulars,

1. It is intimated, that the Means which God had used with that People, were such, as that a Reformation among them, might reasonably have been expected by them. This is implied in these Words, *I hearkened and heard*: In these Words are presupposed the Means which God had previously used to them especially by the frequent Messages of his Word, in the Mouth of his Prophets: And so they signify how reasonably a thorough Reformation among them, might have been expected thereupon. *I hearkened and heard*, says the Lord, *i. e.* as if he had said, having used such proper Methods with them for their Repentance, which were sufficient to have influenced them thereto, then I hearkened and listened to hear whether there were any Discourse like Re-

repentance among them, any Talk that might give Hopes of their Amendment and Conversion, whether any were bewailing their past Impieties, and Transgression, saying, with Shame and Sorrow, Alas, what have I done!

The great God represents himself in a familiar condescending way, after the manner of Man, as expecting and hoping that the Means which he had used with them, might possibly have had some good Effect upon them, in their Reformation; and so he hearkened to hear what they were saying about it. He carefully looked and observed, whether there were any Signs and Appearances of their Repentance, after his Pains with them for that Purpose.

Yet these and all other such like Expressions, must be understood in a Way agreeable to the divine Perfections, so as not to infer those Weaknesses and Imperfections in God, which are in Creatures, and therefore not to be understood in the most strict and literal Sense of the Words. God's Design in these Words is only to signify, how reasonably a Reformation, and strong Endeavours after a true Repentance, and the Favour of God might have been expected of that People, in Consequence of such Means as he had afforded them for that End; and, consequently, that their persisting after all in their old Courses, was a Guilt of a most aggravated Nature: And so here is one Point of Doctrinal Truth which arises from the Text, viz. *That a Reformation in Sinners from their wicked Ways, and earnest Endeavours in seeking after the Favour of God, might very reasonably be expected by Means of the Messages of his Word sent to them for that End by the Mouth of his Servants and Ambassadors.*

Again, 2. We are told of the Unsuccessfulness of all these Means, with that obstinate People: They had not that Influence and Effect upon them, which it was very just to expect from rational Creatures, *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? But every one turned to his own Course,* notwithstanding the repeated Councils, moving Invitations, awful Threats and Warnings sent to them with

God's own tremendous Authority, which ought to have excited them to Repentance, and filled them with the Language of humble Penitents, confessing with Shame and Confusion their by-past Follies and Impieties, expressing sincerely their Sorrow and Self-abhorrence for them, saying, *What have I done?* Yet, alas, there was no such Discourse to be heard among them, *they spake not aright*; they spake not to this Purpose; *I hearkened and heard*, says the Lord, *but they spake not aright: No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done?* Here you may observe what Kind of Repentance it is which God requires of Sinners, under the Hearing of his Word, faithfully delivered to them: A Repentance attended with an ashamed Confession of their Sins and Iniquities; that they acknowledge what they have done, and that with deep Regret of Soul, with confounding Shame and Indignation against themselves; at the interrogatory Form of the Expression, required of the true Penitent, imports, *What have I done?* The penitent Sinner is represented as looking back upon his former Ways, freely confessing what they have been, and reflecting upon himself for them, with the saddest Grief and Sorrow; as a Person, who, through some Mismanagement, some bold or thoughtless Action, has brought Disgrace and Misery upon himself, will, in his Distress, sadly recoil upon himself, saying, *Wo is me, what have I done? what have I done? By what I have done, I have undone myself.* Now, because there was no such Thing to be heard or discerned among the People of Jerusalem, it was evident that *no Man repented him of his Wickedness.* And so here is another Point of Doctrine to be observed in the Text, viz. *That the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word, must be attended with Confession, deep Shame, and Sorrow.*

3. The Text declares how wilfully and brutishly resolute these People were in their wicked Courses. This is set out by the Similitude of a Horse, furiously running without Thought or Fear into the Battle: *Every one turned to his*

Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle. Perhaps they might give God a bodily Hearing for an Hour or two sometimes, while his Servants declared to them his Messages, but that was all; as soon as that was over, ther away every one immediately to his Course again, without Restraint, as the Horse to the Battle; as it is now lamentably among us.

This Comparison implies in it these two Things; First, The brutish Unreasonableness, bold Presumption, and Fool-hardiness of Sinners, who go on in their sinful Courses against all the awful Warnings of Heaven, and all the Restraints of Reason and Conscience. Hence they are compared to a head-strong uncontrolled Horse in his Fury, that will be under no Controul, but rushes madly on in the Face of *ten thousand* Terrors. Secondly, It implies the terrible Dangerfulness of the Sinner's Course. He is a-going wilfully on to his own Ruin and Destruction, as the Horse rushes into the Battle, into the midst of Dangers and of Deaths. And to this Branch of the Text affords us these two Propositions of Truth more, 1. *That it is brutish, irrational, and wilful for Sinners to go on still in their sinful Courses, against all the Instructions and solemn Warnings of God's Word.* And, 2. *That Sinners, going on in these Courses, are rushing upon the most terrible Dangers and Miseries:* Every one turned to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.

And now I shall gather together the several Propositions of Truth, which I have taken Notice of from this Text, in the Explication of it, for our farther Consideration. And they are these *four*,

1. *That a Reformation in Sinners from their wicked Ways, and earnest Endeavours in seeking after the Favour of God, might very reasonably be expected, by Means of the Messages of his Word sent to them for that End, by the Mouth of his Servants and Ambassadors.*

II. That the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word, must be attended with Confession, deep Shame, and Sorrow.

III. That it is brutish, irrational, and wilful for Sinners to go on still in their sinful Courses, against all the Instructions and solemn Warning's of God's Word. And,

IV. That Sinners going on in these Courses, are exposing upon the most terrible Dangers and Miseries.

These are Truths clearly enough contained in this Verse, *I bearkened and heard, &c.*

I shall speak something to each of these Propositions in their Order. And,

I. I say, *A Reformation in Sinners, &c.* I shall a little illustrate the Truth of this Doctrine, shew what we are to learn from it, and the Use to be made of it in Practice, very briefly; and then pass to the next Proposition.

The Truth of this Proposition will clearly appear by considering and comparing one or two Things,

1. That Sinners are rational Creatures, and so ought to be influenced and wrought upon in Matters of Practice, if they would not forfeit all Claim to that Character, by rational Means, by powerful convincing Arguments and Considerations. If there is no dealing with Mankind, and persuading them in this Method of rational Argument, they act no more like rational Beings than the brute Beasts: To direct us in our Choice and Practice, is certainly the very greatest Use and Benefit of our Understanding and Reason; and therefore it might be justly expected from rational Creatures, in this Case as well as all others, that they should be swayed by Reasons, which they are capable to understand, according to the Weight and Importance of them; otherwise, if they will not be governed and acted from rational Considerations, but

but from sensual Appetite, Lust, and blind Wilfulness, they put off the Man and put on the Beast: Yea, much worse, they rather put on the Devil, acting against the Light of Reason and Conscience, which Beasts do not, and so are the nearest Resemblance to the diabolical Nature; indeed, a rational Creature, acting cross to the very confessed Laws of Reason, and that in Matters of infinite and eternal Moment, is the most unaccountable Kind of Being within the Compass of the whole Universe. It could hardly be believed, that there could possibly be such an irregular, self-repugnant oblique Kind of Thing in the whole System of Beings; did not sad Experience so undeniably confirm it, such a Being would seem a Sort of natural impossibility, and the very Mention of it a direct Solœcism.

And then, 2. Consider, That the Messages of God's Word to Sinners for their Reformation and Repentance, are the most solemn, weighty, and powerful of any Thing that can possibly be proposed to the Reason of Mankind.

He would be justly looked upon as a most demented and brutish Man, who would not be persuaded in other Cases by ten thousand times less weighty Reasons than those which are proposed and urged in the Word of God for Sinners Repentance. The great God lays before Sinners in his Word the Reasonableness, Equity, and Excellency of Holiness; the just necessary Title and sovereign Claim which he has to their Obedience, both as he is a God of inconceivable Glory and infinite Perfections, worthy to be served, honoured and adored by all rational Beings beside; and, as they are his Creatures, created by him for that End, to glorify and serve him, and enjoy the highest Blessedness in him; and as he is their constant Preserver, the Upholder of their Lives, and Giver of all their Benefits; upon all which Accounts they owe themselves entirely to him as his own Property, and the Subjects of his moral Government, by a most necessary and inalienable Right. He tells them of the unspeakable Happiness and Comfort which would attend the
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hearty affectionate Choice and Practice of their Duty, and that eternal Glory with himself, which he will give to them that truly repent, and love him. He tells them likewise, what an immense, what an astonishing, amazing Price was laid down to redeem lost Sinners from eternal Ruin, without which none could possibly have been saved consistent with the exalted Dignity and Glory of his Majesty; how low the eternal Son of God condescended; how deep he was humbled; how cruelly he suffered, even Death itself in its most hideous Form: Yea, worse than *ten thousand* Deaths; and all to purchase Salvation from the deepest Miseries to the highest Blessedness for guilty Rebels: Oh! What a surprising, melting Argument is here to excite Sinners to Repentance, to turn to the living God, with all their Hearts. Oh Sinners, will you, dare you, trample under Foot the Blood of the Son of God! Disregard and undervalue the dearest Love of the Father, Son, and blessed Spirit! And go on in these Wickednesses, which cost a Life that was worth *ten thousand* Worlds to redeem you from them! Farther, the great God sets before them in his Word, the awful and dismal Scene of those eternal Pains, Miseries, and Horrors, which they shall infallibly endure for ever, without Regeneration and Conversion. He tells you, Oh ye rebellious Sinners, that if ye do not reform and repent, seek his Mercy with humbled pained Hearts, and turn to his Ways, the Damnation of Hell will infallibly be your Portion to all Eternity: That you are every Day in Danger of being cast into never never ending Anguish, Pain, and Horror, for your continued Rebellion. Now, are not here Reasons for Sinners Repentance, turning from the Ways of Sin, and most earnest seeking the Favour and Mercy of God, of the greatest Weight imaginable? And are not Sinners rational Creatures, to understand, consider, and apply these Things? How reasonably then might their Compliance with them be expected. If the Consideration of these solemn Things will not work upon them, nothing else will: *Luke xvi. 31. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, i. e. the*
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holy Scriptures, the Word of God, written by *Moses* and the Prophets, *neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead.* Surely, if Sinners did but act ingenuously and rationally here, as they do for the most Part in other Cases, they would immediately abandon their Lusts and wicked Ways, and betake themselves to the Ways of Religion with the most earnest Application, and most importunately and perseveringly cry for the Mercy and Pity of the great God, against whom they have rebelled, seeking an Interest in his saving Love through Christ. Oh Sinners, these would be the Effects of God's Word with you, if you did but act any way agreeable to your noble Characters of reasonable Creatures.

Agreeable to what I have offered upon this Head, is that Passage which we have in the Beginning of the vth Chapter of *Isaiab*: The Lord there represents the Pains which he had taken with the People of *Israel*, and the Means he vouchsafed them under the Notion of the Provision which a careful industrious Husbandman makes for the Fruitfulness of his Vineyard, and then signifies that it was but reasonable to expect good Fruit in Consequence of such Means, when he says, *be looked that it should bring forth Grapes; But* (Oh wonderful!) *it brought forth nothing but wild Grapes* after all; no other Sort of Grapes than if it had been a wild Vine in the Forest, that never had been taken any Care of. And then the Lord expressing the great Pains he had bestowed upon this Vineyard, says, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* i. e. as to outward proper Means: He proposes the Question as it were with a Kind of Wonder, *Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* Wherefore brought it forth wild Grapes after such Means used with it? What a strange Thing is this? Yes, strange it is indeed; other Things might well be looked for.

Thus, I think, the Truth of this Doctrine is sufficiently evidenced. And now, to make some Improvement of it,

First, If it be reasonable to look for the Reformation of Sinners, and their earnest Application to God for his pardoning Mercy, as the Effects of God's Word faithfully delivered to them: How inexpressible heinous then is the Sin, and how awfully aggravated is the Guilt of such bold and daring Sinners, who after all go on in their old Practices? Who repent not of their Wickedness, but turn still to their own Course again, *as the Horse rusheth into the Battle?* And yet, alas, is not this the deplorable Case of Multitudes who are favoured with the Word of God! Oh Sirs, are not the Reasons and Arguments of God's Word sufficient to persuade you every one to turn from his Iniquities, and to seek after God and your own eternal Salvation in Earnest? Sure, there is Reason enough in them to do so.

Secondly, This Doctrine informs us of the Excellency of the Word of God: It contains Things of the utmost Moment and Consequence imaginable: It treats of Things which are of infinite Importance to the Souls of Men; no less than Things which concern their everlasting States, either of unspeakable Happiness, or inexpressible Misery; such Things as have Reason and Weight enough in them to reclaim rebellious Sinners from their wicked Courses, and to excite them with the deepest Concern to seek after God: *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead.*

Thirdly, Ungodly and irreligious Persons, as well as others, should hence be excited to esteem and reverence the Word of God. It is the Means which the great God uses with you for your Conversion and Salvation: *Pf. xix. 7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple.* Your cursed Lusts, the wicked Inclinations and Dispositions of your un sanctified Hearts are like to be your eternal Ruin, and, unless the Power of these Things is overcome, they will inevitably plunge you in a doleful

Deluge of everlasting Misery and Wo : Now, the Word of God, faithfully preached to you, contains such weighty and solemn Things, the due Consideration and Application whereof might well be effectual to break and overbalance the Prevalency of these Soul-destroying Evils in you, and awake you to seek after God and your Salvation in good Earnest. And, Oh Sirs, if Things were once brought to this pass with you, then there would be some Hopes of your true Conversion to the living God, and the Salvation of your Souls : And, Oh ! how carefully ought you to improve that which has so great a Tendency to bring about your eternal Happiness and Deliverance from endless and deserved Torments. Believe it, Sirs, the Word of God is not like an insignificant useless Story, which you may either hear or let alone, to little Loss or Profit : *Is not my Word like as Fire ? saith the Lord ; And like a Hammer which breaks the Rock in Pieces ?* Jer. xxiii. 29.

II. But I must proceed to consider the *second* Proposition, which is, *That the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word, must be attended with Confession, Shame and Sorrow.*

Here I shall a little farther open up and explain the Repentance intended in this Proposition : And my Design is not particularly to open up the Nature of the saving Grace of Repentance, which is only in regenerate and sanctified Persons, and necessarily requires the supernatural Principles of sanctifying Grace, implanted in the Soul by the Holy Ghost, as the Foundation and Spring of it ; but the Repentance which I design to speak to, and which, I think, is the Repentance intended in the Text, is that which Sinners, through the Means and Advantages of God's Word faithfully delivered to them, may generally, by the ordinary Concurrence of God's Spirit, perform, if they

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poor Creatures deceived in their Imaginations? Especially, seeing Persons may repent, even so far as I have described, without being in a saving State, and fitly qualified for eternal Glory.

2. As to the Qualifications of this Repentance, they are *Confession, Shame, and Sorrow.*

First, *Confession*: To repent with Confession of their Sin, is what the Lord requires of Sinners who enjoy the Light of his holy Word. This was his Complaint against the obstinate Jews in our Text, *No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done?* No Man among them repented acknowledging the horrible Sinfulness of his past Practice. It is not enough that Persons barely acknowledge the sinful Actions and Neglects that they have been guilty of: There is no Doubt of their acknowledging them, if they remember them; for it is not possible that they can deny these Things before God, whatever they may do to Men; so far as their Memory serves them, they cannot but be self-conscious of what they have done or not done; but they must acknowledge and be sensible of their Sinfulness and Wickedness in these Actions and Omissions; that the general Course of their Practice has been a Course of wicked Rebellion and Disobedience against God. While Sinners continue to justify their Practices, and though they will confess in general Terms that they are very sinful Creatures, yet will hardly acknowledge it in any one particular Instance, or, if some inward Acknowledgments of their Sin in some or many particular Things be extorted from them by the Light of their Consciences, while they endeavour still to lessen the Sinfulness of these Things in their own View, to make it appear as very little and trivial, or always plead Excuses and make Apologies for themselves to their Consciences, I say, so long as it is thus with Sinners, they are far far from Repentance. And yet, alas, thus it is with Multitudes of perishing Souls, who are rotting in the Graves, in the stench and Pollution of Sin; they are willingly blinded by
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the Devil to look upon their Sins as very Trifles: This is but a small Evil, and that is not much amiss, the Effect of human Frailty, and the other Thing, is not so bad as many are guilty of, *I wish I may never do worse, I had no ill Design in it, or, It was such a One's Fault as much, and more, than mine;* and so it goes on. What base and contemptuous Notions have these Persons of the great God, and his awful Authority, who think so lightly of their wilful and insolent Disobedience against him! Oh, ye haughty and unhumiliated Sinners! your Notes will be changed in a little Time; and, unless ye repent quickly, you shall feel the Weight of these Sins you foolishly thought so light, in everlasting Miseries: *Rom. ii. 9. Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* To you I would apply what the great God says to Sinners of a like Stamp, *Jer. ii. 22, 23. Though thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Soap, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God. How canst thou say, I am not polluted? I have not gone after Baalim? See thy Way in the Valley, know what thou hast done.*

Secondly, *Shame* is another Ingredient in this Repentance. When a poor Sinner comes to see and solemnly consider Things as they are, the infinite Greatness and august Majesty of the eternal GOD, and the strong Bonds that are upon his Soul to live a Life of holy Obedience to the Lord that made him, Oh, how unreasonable, heinous, loathsome, and vile does he then see his Sin to be! Especially considering how he has proceeded in it against so clear Light, tender Mercy, and awful Warning, as he has had! Shame and Confusion covers him, when he thinks of his irrational, bold, and insolent Course of Disobedience and Sin against God. Until Sinners are ashamed of their Sin before God, and their Souls blush within them, looking upon themselves as most vile and brutish Creatures for what they have done, all their Repentance is little worth: Shameless, whorish Foreheads shall be struck down to Hell; *Jer. viii. 12.*

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Were they ashamed when they had committed Abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore shall they fall among them that fall, in the Time of their Visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

Thirdly, Another Qualification of this Repentance is deep Sorrow, and Grief of Heart. Oh Sirs, a repenting Sinner is humbled to the Dust, the Springs of his Grief are set open, and many are the sorrowful Reflections of his Heart upon his past Practice, crying out, Oh! What have I done? Oh! What a miserable Pass have I brought myself to by a Life of Sin? The Sorrows of his Heart gush forth, when he considers what a Course of Life he has led, what a great and sovereign God he has rebelliously disobeyed and provoked to Wrath; when he takes a View of the sad and dismal Scene of Hell's Horrors, which he sees he deserves to be cast into, Oh! then Sorrow and Anguish invades his trembling Heart, fearing lest these be his everlasting Portion. Before this, in the Time of his stupid Carelessness, he thought in his Haste, without any due Consideration, that there was no great Danger of his missing Salvation, *that God, sure, would not be so cruel as to damn such a one as he*; but now, when he comes seriously to consider Things and lay them to Heart, and takes a deliberate View of the Number and very heinous, provoking Nature of his Sins, Oh! then his Tune is altered; he is afraid that the holy and tremendous God will eternally reject him, and cast him into Hell, where he deserves to be: He sees it will be a Wonder of Mercy, indeed, if ever such a Wretch as he be saved; if ever God pardon and glorify such a Rebel: Ah! it can hardly enter into his Heart, he is afraid he never will; and this fills his Heart with the deepest Sorrow for his Sins that have brought him into such deplorable Circumstances: *Who is me, what have I done? What have I done?* says the poor Penitent: What a mad distracted Creature have I been? Why, Oh! why, wretched Creature that I am! did I not consider these Things long ago, and not have thoughtlessly and boldly gone on in a

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Course of Sin, rushing upon the dismal Precipice of the Damnation of Hell *as the Horse rushes into the Battle?* These Considerations fill the Sinner with Indignation against himself, so as to loath himself in his own Sight for his Abominations: These Thoughts excite him with the greatest Earnestness to implore the divine Mercy, and to dread the Commission of Sin as Hell itself. This Repentance the great God very reasonably requires of Sinners, *Jeel ii. 12, 13. Therefore also, now saith the Lord, &c.* See the Parable of the prodigal Son, &c.

In the Beginning of the Discourse upon this Head of Doctrine, I signified that there was a Difference between this Repentance and that which is the Effect of sanctifying Grace, which only is infallibly connected with Salvation; and here, before I dismiss this Head, I would just mention one or two of the principal Differences: 1. In this Repentance the Person forsakes his Sin, and betakes himself to the Ways of Religion only from the Constraints and Awakenings of his Conscience: But in evangelical Repentance, when the Person has received the new Nature, he forsakes Sin and practises Holiness out of Choice, freely and affectionately, from a renewed and sanctified Will. 2. In evangelical and saving Repentance the Terror and Dread of God's Wrath for Sin is chiefly taken away from the Conscience, by the Sinner's Closure with Christ by Faith, and believing on him, but yet he hates Sin and grieves for it from another and more noble Principle, a Sense of its inherent Baseness, and a true Love to the blessed God, which is shed abroad in his Heart; whence he is most affectionately inclined and engaged to please and honour him, and is sorrowful that he can no better serve him. Whenever Repentance comes to have these two Qualifications, then it is a blessed Evidence of the Person's being a regenerate Child of God, and in a saving State.

Now, this Repentance and Humiliation which I have been discoursing of, is necessary for Sinners to practise in
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order to their Regeneration, and the true Conversion of their Souls to God; in order to the Sanctification of their Hearts by the Holy Ghost, without which it is impossible for them to be saved: For, *except a Man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. And, *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14

And now, Sirs, to make some Application of this Head, I would propose to you this necessary and important Question, *Have you ever thus repented?* Pray, put the Question to yourselves, and answer to it in your own Consciences. Have not many of you gone on for a long Time in vain and sinful Practices, with a Neglect of God and serious Religion? Well then, now I ask you, *Have you ever thus repented*, so as to be in the Way of Mercy? What say you to it, Sirs? You see the absolute Necessity of it, *Luke xiii. 13. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Nothing that defileth, or is unclean, shall enter into the new Jerusalem*; there is another Place: for such, *the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*. Have you turned from your Ways of Sin, and universally forsaken them, and betaken yourselves to the constant Practice of Religion, according to the Direction and Command of God? Are there not some of you that have never done so yet unto this Day, but are still persisting in the same negligent, rebellious Course? Let the Conscience of the guilty Person witness to his Face, and wound his hardened Heart.

Again, Have you turned from your Sins with free Confession of them before God? Acknowledging in yourselves that your Practices have been irreligious, ungodly, and vile? Have you been so sensible of your Sins as that you could put your Fingers as it were upon your Sore, and cry, *Unclean, Unclean?* So sensible of them as to take the whole Guilt and Shame of them upon yourselves? Ah! are there not some of you whose proud Hearts would never come to such an Acknowledgment? But you have been always excusing yourselves and lessening your Sins, to still the Clamours and

Accusations of your guilty Consciences : Though in general you will easily acknowledge you are Sinners, yet when it comes to Particulars, there is no Sin at all, or very little, to be found : Some wretched brutish Plea or another you will always have to make your ungodly Practices appear to yourselves as very innocent Things, though you cannot but know that you live contrary to the Law of God.

Farther, Have you turned from your Sins, being deeply ashamed of them before God? Have you seen the base Brutishness and Unreasonableness of your Stupidity and Boldness, in a Course of Sin and Irreligion, against the strongest Rights and justest Claims of Heaven, and all the Light and Warning which God has given you, so as to loath yourselves in your own Sight for your Iniquities and Abominations? Have not some of you a Whore's Forehead, that refuses to be ashamed? Not being ashamed of the most impudent, manifest Transgression of the Laws of the great God : Nay, do not some rather glory in their Shame? *i. e.* their Sin, of which they ought to be ashamed : Some of you, perhaps, make a Boast of your Wickedness, your Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Quarrelling, and the like : And do not you pride yourselves in your Stoutness against all Admonitions and Councils to be religious? In your making light of the most awful Things that can be proposed to your Consciences? This, you think, bespeaks a great and heroic Spirit : Let Children and the uncultivated Vulgar give way to the Impressions of such Things, but for your Parts you have a braver Mind. It must be confessed, it is pretty great, indeed, thus to swagger it out in the Face of Almightyness, and make light of these Things at which the Devils tremble. But, Oh! you will tremble as fast as they by and by, unless ye repent ; your great Spirit will be brought down, when you shall be as dry Stubble before the consuming Flame, see *Nab. i. 6. Who can stand before his Indignation? &c. Ezek. xxii. 14. Can thine Hand be strong? &c.*

In the last Place, Have you turned from your Sin, with such deep Humiliation, Grief and Sorrow for it as I have

described? Have you turned from all your old sinful Courses with such a Sense of your miserable Circumstances thereby, your Danger of the eternal Damnation of Hell, as made your Hearts to ache and bleed within you; so that nothing could yield any Peace or Satisfaction to your distressed Souls, until you had a believing View of Jesus Christ, the glorious Mediator, and some Apprehensions of having your Sins pardoned, and being accepted of God in him, which Faith has been attended with a very sensible sanctifying Change and Alteration in your whole Souls? Alas, are not many of you utter Strangers to this? You have gone on several Years in the Way of Sin and rebellious Neglect of the Ways of Godliness, and yet have never so much as had your obstinate Hearts bowed in true Humiliation before God on that account; but are still boldly persisting on in the same Course. Oh Sirs, consider what a deplorable Condition you are in, where-ever you sit or stand in this Assembly, you have a whole Life of very aggravated Sin and Wickedness to answer and suffer for, you are under the dreadful and damning Guilt of all; not one of all your numberless Sins is pardoned or forgiven, and Death will arrest your Souls by and by, and carry you into the invisible World of Spirits, where (unless you are before brought out of your present Condition) you will be cast into the Prison of Hell, and lashed to the Wheel of Justice, to suffer for all your Sin and Obstinacy against God, and slighting of the glorious Redeemer: There shall be Weeping, Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth to all Eternity. But perhaps you think you are pretty safe for all; the Improvement of two or three Days of Sickness upon a Dying-bed, will secure you for Eternity without all Doubt: Oh blind and damning Delusion! God may then be as deaf to you and all your Cries, as you have been for many Years to him. What Insolence and Haughtiness is this in vile sinful Miscreants, to think that the great and sovereign God must be just at their Beck and Pleasure! They, for their Parts, have Liberty to trample upon his Authority, abuse his Mercy,

and

and fly in his Face all their Life, but he must be entirely at their Motion, and engaged to pardon them, and take them to himself for a few whining Confessions of their Sin, and Cries for Mercy, when they can go on in Sin no longer: Oh base unworthy Thought of God! It is To-day To-day, Oh Sinners! *if you will bear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.*

III. But I pass on to speak a little, and but a little, to the *third* Observation, viz. *That it is brutish, irrational, and wilful for Sinners to go on still in their sinful Courses, against all the Instructions and solemn Warnings of God's Word.*

Indeed, to sin against God, much more to continue to do so, in any Circumstances, is a very brutish Thing, inasmuch as it is most unreasonable; Obedience to the sovereign God being most justly due from a rational Creature. The *Latin* Word for Sin, *Peccatum*, some suppose to be derived from the Word *Pecus*, which in that Language signifies Cattle, because to sin is to act without any Regard to the just Reason of Things, and so to act like a Beast.

But, how much more brutish and irrational is it for Persons to go on still in a Course of Sin and Rebellion against God, who are favoured with the clearest Light and strongest Arguments of his holy Word, most solemnly and repeatedly urged upon them: Arguments justly brought from all the Topics of rational Persuasion, from the intrinsic Reasonableness, Beauty, and Excellence of Obedience to the great God; and consequently the Unreasonableness and unspeakable Baseness of Sin, from the endearing and tender Obligations of Goodness and Mercy, and so from that amiable Disposition of Gratitude and thankful Sense of undeserved Favour, and from the Topics of immortal Happiness and Misery in the Life to come, both which are unspeakable in their Duration and Degree. What will a brute Beast do more than disregard all these Things? And so do such impenitent Sinners. It is not to be admired that a Brute will not be moved by

the strongest Reasons, because it has not a Capacity of understanding them: But what Account can be given for such Brutishness in rational Creatures! Be astonished, O! Heavens!

The Truth of this Observation may sufficiently appear from what has been said already upon the first Head of Doctrine: For, if a Reformation from Sin, and earnest Endeavours in seeking after the Favour and Mercy of God, may be reasonably expected of Sinners to whom God has sent the Messages of his Word for that End, then certainly their Impenitency and Continuance in Sin after all, is most unreasonable, and consequently brutish. Sinners persisting in a Course of Impiety and Irreligion after such Means, I am well assured can never be the Result of impartial Consideration, nor owing to the Conduct of right Reason, but must be imputed to an irrational, brutish *Impetus*, viz. mere Willfulness. They do not go on in such a Course because they can justify it upon a fair Trial to their own Consciences, much less to the almighty God, but because they are inclined to it, and so WILL do it. You that live in a Course of Sin, and secure Unconcernedness about your eternal States, I am well persuaded that the most plausible Defence which you can possibly offer for yourselves, will not be able to stand an impartial Trial, even yourselves being Judges: Whence it is manifest, that you act wilfully and brutishly, *and turn to your Course just as the Horse rushes into the Battle.* Consider but the Reasons which I have briefly mentioned under the first Proposition, which God offers you in his Word for your Repentance and earnest Application to him for his Mercy, and then try if you can find any more weighty to oppose to them.

But farther, Is it not irrational and brutish for Persons to be chiefly taken up about present Things, and little or nothing concerned about the Condition in the Time to come? This is the very Case of impenitent Sinners; and I may appeal to the World if this is not acting like the most senseless
and

and improvident Brutes in the whole Creation. Oh, how unreasonable and absurd is this Practice and Disposition! Especially, considering that in a little Time your Condition will be unalterably fixed for all Eternity, either in complete Happiness or inexpressible Misery.

Again, Is it not most irrational and brutish to go on in the Face of the clearest Warning and most awful Threatning, without Fear or Turning? This is likewise the Case of impenitent Sinners amongst us. How dreadful are the righteous Threatnings of the true and faithful God in his holy Oracles against impious Transgressors of his Law, Neglectors of his Commands, and Slighters of his Authority and offered Mercy, and yet (bold Mortals!) they will not be deterred: Yea, though the terrible Threats and Comminations of the great God, the sovereign Lawgiver and Ruler of the Universe, may be often denounced in their Hearing, so that they might see the awful Armour of Heaven as it were pointed at their very Breasts, yet they brutishly slight all these Things, and boldly rush on in the same Course, *as the Horse rushes into the Battle.* An elegant Description of *the Horse's rushing to the Battle,* you may find *Job xxxix.* from Verse 21 to 26. particularly accommodated to the Custom of those ancient Times, when Battles were generally fought by close Engagements, and so the two contending Armies violently rushed upon each other. *He paweth in the Valley, and rejoiceth in his Strength: He goeth on to meet the armed Men: He mocketh at Fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the Sword; though the Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear and the Shield.* The most awful Things will neither restrain nor terrify him, but on he will go. Just thus it is with impenitent bold Sinners: You are with a brutish Madness rushing upon the Spear-point of the divine Vengeance, and nothing will hold you back. *The Wicked stretcheth out his Hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty: He runneth upon him, even upon his Neck, upon the thick Bosses of his Bucklers,* *Job xv. 25, 26.* The Horse
mocketh

mocketh at Fear, *i. e.* he despises all the Objects of Terror, they shall not stop him : And, ch. xxxix. ver. 25. among the Warriour's Trumpets he saith, *Ha, ha* : Thus do Sinners contemn and make light of the most awful Threatnings of the great *Jehovah*. Leviathan, like you, laughs at the shaking of the Spear : But, Oh Sirs ! you will not laugh so at the Stroke of it, when God comes to make his Sword red with Blood, and that with the Blood of the Slain, rendering Vengeance to his Enemies, and a Reward to them that hate him ; Oh ! then you will be convinced of your brutish Folly, to your eternal Shame and Horror.

Thus, I think, the Truth of this Proposition is clearly manifest : And, how little Cause then have obstinate Sinners to pride themselves of their great Wisdom ! Or rather, What Cause have you to blush and be ashamed, when you think how you debase yourselves to the Level of the brute Creation, vilely disgracing the Excellency and Dignity of the human Soul ! It is no Shame for the Brutes to act as they do, because they act according to the Endowments of their Nature ; and are not capable Subjects of moral Government : But, sure, it is a Shame for you to act like them, especially in Things of the highest Moment, and everlasting Concern. I am persuaded, that many such Persons as I now speak of, would be sadly ashamed of acting irrationally in many other Things of an infinitely lower Order ; and how comes it then that you think it no Disgrace to conduct yourselves like the unreasonable Creatures in the Things of God and your own eternal Interest ? Wherein you pay no Regard to the strongest Reasons imaginable. Alas, a Course of Sin, and Neglect of practical Religion, is become so general, that this takes away the Ignominy and Shame of it in the Eyes of the brutish World.

But the chief Inference I would deduce from this Doctrine, is this, It informs us that such presumptuous wilful Sinners must expect to meet with an awfully aggravated Damnation in the next World, unless ye repent in Earnest, and

God extend undeserved Mercy to you, and renew your un sanctified Souls, and fit them for his heavenly Glory, it will be more tolerable in the Day of God for *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* (the Cities which the Lord destroyed in his Anger for the most unnatural Wickedness) *than for you*, Matth. xi. 20, 24. Your Impiety and Impenitency is of a more heinous and aggravated Nature than that of the Pagan World, who have never had the high Advantages which you are favoured with, and therefore your Torment will be greater, in Proportion to your Crime.

This Circumstance of Sin's being committed and continued in against the clear Light and Warning of God's Word, has a twofold Influence upon the Increasing of Sinners Punishment in Hell, viz. *Physical* and *Moral*.

First, It will have a *Physical* Influence upon it: The Misery of such Sinners will of Necessity be greater than of others, from the very Nature of Things; for one Part of the Misery of the Damned consists in the cutting and terrible Reflections of their Consciences upon themselves for the Folly and Madness which they have been guilty of in their past Life in this World, for which they now suffer: But such Gospel Sinners will have a far higher Degree of brutish Wilfulness and affronted Boldness against God, to charge themselves with; and therefore their Remorse of this Kind will naturally, of Necessity, be more deep and piercing; the Worm that never dies, an accusing, tormenting Conscience, will gnaw more sharply upon their Hearts.

Secondly, A Continuance in a Course of Sin after all the Councils and Arguments of the Word of God, that are used with Sinners, will have a *Moral* Influence upon the Heightening of their Damnation, inasmuch as thereby they are rendered more heinous Sinners; as you have seen made evident. The higher Advantages Persons enjoy for living a religious Life, the more thoroughly and solemnly Sinners are dealt by the Messages of God's Word, the more
criminal

criminal is their Impenitency: The heinous base Qualities of their Sins, such as brutish Wilfulness, Contempt of God, &c. are much more aggravated, so that they deserve a greater Punishment; and Justice will undoubtedly distinguish the Degrees of Punishment, according to the Degrees of Merit. Oh thou wilful and incorrigible Sinner! consider what a terrible aggravated Damnation thou deservest, and art like to meet with in a little Time, for thy Brutishness and Heaven-daring Insolence, in paying no Regard to all the Councils, Arguments, and Threatnings of the eternal God: Oh! consider, and tremble at the Thought; humble thy obstinate and rebellious Heart in Time before the God that made thee, before he tear thee in Pieces, when there shall be none to deliver; *and be not (any longer) like the Horse or the Mule, which have no Understanding,* Psalm xxxii. 9. And you who think that your Sin is so small and trivial, consider these Things, and see your blind Mistake.

IV. But I hasten to the *fourth* and last Proposition, which is, *That Sinners going on in their sinful Courses, are rushing upon the most terrible Dangers and Miseries.*

And if nothing that has hitherto been spoken, will move such Persons, Oh! that what may yet be offered upon this Head, might awaken them to Repentance, and seeking after God, that they may be saved.

Upon this Head I shall speak very briefly to these *two* Things, and so conclude,

First, I shall shew you some of these sinful Courses which lead Sinners to such terrible Miseries. And,

Secondly, What those Dangers and Miseries are, which Sinners in these Courses are rushing upon.

As to the *former* of these:

In the first Place, A Course of more gross and prophane Sinning leads Souls to most awful and eternal Miseries:

such

Such as Swearing, Lying, taking the sacred and venerable Name of God lightly and in vain, Drunkenness, Quarrelling, Whoredom, prophane Sabbath-breaking; Stealing, Defrauding, Revenging, Mocking and Scoffing at Piety and Religion, and all such enormous Wickedness: All Persons who go on in these, or any of these, Practices, are posting directly and speedily to eternal Destruction; bound in straight Course for Hell.

2. Another Course of destructive Sinning is a Course of licentious Merriment, Jollity, and sensual Pleasure. This is directly contrary to that Sobriety and holy Fear of God which is inseparable from true Christianity: And I would ask such as are addicted to this Course of Life, whether you can possibly think that this is *being holy in all manner of Conversation?* according to 1 Pet. i. 15. Whether you can imagine that this is *that Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord?* You cannot but know in your own Consciences that it is not, if you would but allow yourselves to think impartially and deliberately: Is it not rather a Casting-off all due Fear of the divine Majesty; and living without God in the World? Oh Sirs! the End of all Things is at hand: *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer. The Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe, and Wine, are in their Feasts; but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operation of his Hands; therefore Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her Mouth without Measure, and their Glory, and their Multitude, and their Pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it,* Isai. v. 12, 14.

3. An habitual Neglect and Omission of the positive Duties of Religion, is another Course of Life wherein Sinners are hastening to their own Ruin. All prayerless Persons, such as bear not a religious Regard to God's holy Day, and do not attend upon his instituted Worship and Ordinances, in order to serve him, stand charge-

able with high Disobedience and Rebellion against God, in the Neglect of his Appointments, and Contempt of his Authority. Is not the Sovereign Authority of God, the great Lawgiver, as much contemned and trampled upon in not performing what he enjoins, as in committing what he forbids? It is the same adorable Authority that is slighted and disobeyed in both Cases. Hear your Doom, ye Neglecters and Slighters of Religion, *The Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance upon all them that obey not his Gospel,* 2 Thess. i. 8.

4. A Course of covetous Worldliness: Which is an idolatrous preferring of the Creature before God, and setting it up in his room. Hence says the Apostle, *Eph. v. 5. No covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.*

5. In the last Place, A Course of stupid Security, groundless Peace, and Unconcernedness about their eternal Condition, is another Course wherein Sinners are going on to their Destruction. By Persons living in such fatal Security and Unconcernedness, I mean all such, of whatsoever Character and Conversation they may otherwise be, who have not the sanctifying Graces of God's Spirit in their Souls, who have not the Disposition of true Holiness implanted in their Hearts by Regeneration, but have the natural Aversion of their Wills to God still abiding and prevailing in them, and yet are stupidly insensible of their sinful and dangerous Estate of the deplorable Condition they are in, little distressed or concerned about it, not earnestly seeking after God for his renewing sanctifying Grace, and a State of Favour with Him. These Persons, though they may be pretty moral for the most Part in their Practices, and likewise have an outward Form and Appearance of Religion; yet, their Souls are utterly unhol-
and vile in the Sight of God: They have never lai-
hol.

hold on Jesus Christ, and embraced him by a true and living Faith, for their Salvation, and so slight the glorious Mediator, and cross the Design of the whole Gospel; they do not truly love God above all Things, and most affectionately desire to please and serve him, making it the great Design of their Lives, from a Sense of their Obligations and a Principle of Love, to live to his Honour and Glory; and thus the very Temper and Disposition of their Souls is directly contrary to God and Holiness: And while they are going on in this un sanctified Condition, with secure Consciences and whole unconcerned Hearts, as if all were well with them, they are heedlessly and very irrationally going on to their eternal Ruin: And, alas, this deep Sleep, unreasonable damning Security and Unconcernedness (as it may be justly termed) very generally prevails among Mankind: They are so taken up about other Concerns, (and many of them very trifling, of no Moment even as to the present Life) that they do not take Time thoroughly to consider and examine the State of their Souls in relation to the future World: But, as if that were a Matter of no Importance, readily take it for granted that they must be in a safe Condition, without ever duly enquiring, by the Rule of God's Word and unbiassed Reason, whether they have the Qualifications necessary for the heavenly State; and so enjoy a very unreasonable Peace and Quiet in their Minds against the plainest Evidence.

These are briefly some of the sinful Courses wherein Persons are going on to their own Ruin and Destruction, and that against all rational Means that can possibly be used with them, *even as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.* But,

Secondly, What are the Dangers and Miseries which in these Courses they are rushing into? In a Word, they lie open and exposed at all Times to all those Plagues and

Evils which God at any Time inflicts upon his Enemies, either in this Life, or that which is to come: And if they are not punished with such severe Strokes of Justice in this Life, it is not owing to the Goodness or Safety of their State, or any Security which they have against it, but merely to the free and gracious Forbearance of God, whereby for a Time he defers the Strokes of his Wrath: For *God is angry with the Wicked every Day*, Psalm vii. 11. And however they may prosper in this Life, there is a solemn Time of Accounts and Payments hastening on. But, more particularly, there are two or three Dangers and Miseries I would briefly mention, which such resolute Sinners are apparently rushing upon.

1. Being judicially given up of God to Hardness of Heart, Searedness of Conscience, and so to their own Lusts, without the least Restraint. Thus God dealt with the Heathen World, for abusing the smaller Light of Reason, as the Apostle informs us *Rom i. Therefore God gave them up to Uncleaness, through the Lusts of their own Hearts*, ver. 24. *For this Cause God gave them up unto vile Affections*, ver. 26. *And even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, to do those Things which are not convenient, being filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, &c.* ver. 28. and downwards. Thus he dealt with the People of Israel, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. *But my People would not hearken to my Voice, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts, and they walked in their own Council.* This is the Condition which Gospel Sinners are like to come into: And is it not an awfully dangerous one? All Hope of their Conversion and Salvation is then almost quite gone. *Wo unto them when God departs from them*, Hos. ix. 12.

2. An utter and dreadful Despair of Mercy, even in this Life, is a Misery which such Sinners are in Danger of.

The Lord sometimes in this manner gives some Foretastes of Hell upon this Earth to such as have thus gone on in Sin against all Light and Convictions, for a Warning and Terror to others. *Cain, Judas*, and, in later Times, *Francis Spira, John Child*, and others, have been awful Instances of this. For all so stupid, and stout against God, as Sinners are now, he may pass the Sentence of their eternal Damnation in their own Bosoms yet before they die, and cause them to feel something of the Desperation and Horror of the Damned World. A wilful persisting in the Ways of Sin against all the Light and Warning of the Word of God, is the ready Way to this Misery.

3. In the last Place, Such obstinate wilful Sinners are rushing into an awfully aggravated Damnation in the next World. Their Pain and Torment through all Eternity will be more intolerable than that of others, as has been made appear upon the foregoing Proposition. Oh Sinners! without a saving Conversion to God, this will be your dreadful Portion in a little Time: And can you think of this without a trembling Heart, without any Concern or Distress? You know not how soon Death may put an End to the Day of Life, and that will be an End to all possible Hope; then you are irretrievably gone for ever, if you are taken away in this impenitent State: You stand as it were upon the very Brink of the burning Furnace, and how soon you may be cast in and sealed up to Eternity in the dismal Vault of Hell, you know not; is it not then of the last Necessity to try to escape for your Lives while there is any Hope, before your Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, and you fall into the Gulf of irreparable Ruin. Oh! Is there no irreligious Christless Person in this Assembly that is ready by this Time to cry out with the trembling Jailor, *What shall I do to be saved?* I am now come to the Conclusion of this Discourse: And what more shall I say to persuade obstinate perishing Sinners to awake out of their unreasonable Security, and seek after God in
good

good Earnest, that they may escape the Wrath to come? I have shewn you the Nature of that Repentance which you ought to set about with the utmost Application, in seeking to God for your Souls Salvation. I have shewn you some of the strong and weighty Reasons and Arguments which the great God urges upon you in his Word to persuade you to it: The unreasonable horrid Brutishness and wilful Obstinacy of your disregarding them, and going on still in your old Courses; and the most awful terrible Dangers and Miseries which you are thereby rushing yourselves into: And, Oh Sirs, will none of these Things move you! What a Make are you of! Will nothing that can be said to you, persuade you from Death and Ruin! Or, so much as to seek after your everlasting Happiness! Are you so intoxicated with a Love to Sin and disobeying God, from whom you had your Being, and still have all your Benefits, and who alone must be your Happiness, that the everlasting Interest of your immortal Souls will not overbalance it! Are you resolved upon your own eternal Destruction? To sell your deathless Souls to eternal Pains for a Thing of nought? If any of you are brought to a Sense of your miserable perishing Condition by a Life of Sin, and hearty Resolution to seek for Relief out of it, let me direct and beseech you not to suffer these Impressions to wear off and die away without saving Effects; but endeavour to apply these Things still closely to your Hearts; take the eternal Concerns of your Souls into solemn Consideration, and abstain from all your former Courses of Sin and Negligence; cry, Oh! cry earnestly and often to the great God for his pardoning Mercy in Christ, and renewing Grace, that you may be entitled to and prepared for his glorious Kingdom. And one Thing I would have you very particularly to take Notice of, *viz.* To consider in all your Applications to God for your Salvation, that if ever you are saved and received to Mercy, it must be through the

Merits

Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ alone, and nothing else. If you lay your Dependance and Hope for Pardon and Acceptance with God upon your Reforming, Praying, and Repentance, you will eternally miss of it: For this is acting contrary to the very Design of the Gospel, and new Covenant-Way of Salvation. You are to observe and practise these Things as the Means which God requires you to use to seek his Mercy and your own Salvation by: But if guilty Sinners hope by these Things, by their own filthy Rags, and impure Righteousness, to encline the Love and Favour of God towards them, they may expect he will frown them into Hell for their Impudence: He has established another Method for their Relief, which is more agreeable to his Wisdom, better suited to the glorious Dignity and Perfections of his Nature, and requires that they comply with it, humbly and thankfully embrace their Salvation in that Way in which he is willing to give it. If ever God have Mercy upon you, and be reconciled to you, it will be for the perfect and pure Righteousness of his own Son alone: The Merit and Righteousness, the Obedience and Sufferings of Jesus Christ, must be accepted for you; there is no other possible Way for your Salvation, *John xiv. 6. Acts iv. 12. Rom. iii. 24, 25.* with many other Scriptures. And if ever you have a Share and Interest in his Righteousness and Mediation, and are brought into a State of Justification and Peace with God by it, you must close with him by Faith, reject all Trust and Confidence in any Thing else, fly to him alone for your Relief, lay the whole Weight of your Salvation upon his Merit and Mediation, and so take him with all your Heart for your only Saviour. And whosoever do so come to Christ, shall never be confounded; his faithful Word is engaged for it: And therefore, Oh! beg of God that he would give you true Faith to embrace the Redeemer,

and

and enable you to receive and close with him in a right Manner. And know that there is a blessed and glorious Change wrought in a Sinner's Heart, when by Faith he closes with Christ, as to the Actings and Dispositions of it towards God; which likewise produces an answerable Alteration in the outward Practice and Deportment. Oh! ye secure and impenitent Sinners, awake, awake out of your deep and deadly Sleep, out of your delusive Dreams, before the burning Flames of Tophet kindle upon you, and bring you to your Senses, and fly to Christ, that you may be saved. *May the LORD bless these Things to our everlasting Benefit!*

The E N D of the SERMONS.



VINDICATION

OF THE

BRETHREN

Who were unjustly and illegally cast out of the
SYNOD of *Philadelphia*, by a Number
of the MEMBERS,

From MAINTAINING

Principles of *ANARCHY*
in the CHURCH,

AND

DENYING the due *scriptural Authority* of
CHURCH-JUDICATURE:

AGAINST

The CHARGES of the Rev. Mr. JOHN THOMPSON,
in his Piece, entitled, *The Government of the*
Church of Christ; &c.

BY

SAMUEL BLAIR, *Minister of the Gospel at*
New-Londonderry in Pennsylvania.



T H E

Excluded B R E T H R E N vindicated from
 PRINCIPLES of *ANARCHY*.

IT is no new or unheard-of Thing, that in a degenerate decayed State of the visible Church, when the Power and Life of true Religion is far gone, those who faithfully and diligently bestir themselves for the Restoring and Promoting it, should meet with Oppositions and hard Usage from their professed Brethren, so as to be much interrupted and hindered in their main Work, by a necessary Defence of themselves against the Misrepresentations and invidious Charges of such Brethren. The great King of the Church has given us such plentiful Notice and Warning of this in his Word, that we need not be exceedingly surprized when we find it come to pass, as if some strange Thing had happened unto us; as you may see in *Cant. i. 6. and v. 7: Isai. lxvi. 5. Luke xii. 51, 52.* with many other Places. The first Passage of Scripture I have here referred to, as well as the rest, is exceeding applicable unto, and expressive of, the present State of Things among us; in which the Church is represented complaining of a Number of Fellow-Professors in such Strains as these, *My Mother's Children were angry with me, they made me the Keeper of the Vineyards; and so my own Vineyard I have not kept.* For my own Part I had much rather be left free to attend to the great and most important Business belonging to my sacred Calling, than to be called off to debate with angry Brethren; and it is always with Reluctance that I am this Way

engaged: But yet, from sundry Considerations I am constrained to it, notwithstanding the little Time or Will I have for it.

As, no doubt, some Account of the Transactions and extraordinary Events of this Day will descend down to Posterity, and especially the glorious Power that has attended the Gospel of Christ far and wide in our Day; so, the Memory of this great Work of divine Grace would be transmitted down to the coming Generations under very great Disadvantages, unless the Prejudices laid against it by such as have unhappily opposed it, were taken out of the Way: Therefore, to remove the Grounds and Foundations of these Prejudices, that they may not lie against this Display of God's Power and Grace, to the Hindering of the Use and Advantage of it to After-ages, is, I think incumbent on those who are true Friends to Christ's Interest among Men. They are called, in Duty to God, and Love to their Children, thus to vindicate and defend his Work, and so to *come and declare unto a People that shall be born, that he hath done this*; Psalm xxii. 31. and the same Argument holds in respect of distant Parts of the World in our own Time; and in respect of those nearer the Scene of this Work of Grace, who yet may be imposed on by laboured Misrepresentations, wrong Principles, and unreasonable Objections.

Several have very sufficiently answered the Objections raised against the Work itself: As Mr. *Edwards* in *New-England*, Mr. *Dickinson* in *New-Jersey*, Mr. *Finley* in *Pennsylvania*, Mr. *Robe* and Mr. *Webster* in *Scotland*, and Mr. *Kennedy* in *Holland*, in his Preface to the Narrative, with Attestations from *Scotland*, by him translated into the *Dutch Tongue*, with many others; but then there is moreover another Set of Objections, which, though not directly and immediately made against the Work itself, yet they do prevail to the Prejudicing of many against it; and bring them to wholly disesteem and reject it. And these are, Objections raised against some that are Instruments and Promoters of it. Through the great Goodness of God, the
heartly

hearty Promoters of it are many, in different and very distant Parts of the World; and doubtless there will be a Plenty of Aspersions cast upon them all, by such as do not fall in with the Work which they are endeavouring to carry on: But what I am only called to, and, in any tolerable Degree, capable of in this Case, is the Vindication of the Brethren here, who were by some of their Brethren both unjustly and illegally cast out of Communion of the Synod, from the Charges unjustly laid against them. And what is especially incumbent on me this Way, is to free them from what is laid to their Charge in relation to external Government and Order in the Church. We have been represented by our Opposives in sundry Parts of their Writings, and especially by Mr. *Thompson*, in his Piece, entitled, *The Government of the Church of Christ*, as very mischievous Instruments in the Church, maintaining Principles of mere Anarchy, Confusion and Disorder in all ecclesiastical Affairs. But I hope it will appear, ere all be done, that there is a proper Medium between Tyranny and Anarchy; between unjust Oppression and lawless Confusion: And that we have only rejected the one, without inferring the other of these Extremes. Although the general Title of Mr. *Thompson's* Performance is, *The Government of the Church*, yet he first proceeds upon other Matters, and that for above the third Part of his Book, endeavouring to confute two Papers that were brought into the Synod, the one by Mr. *Gilbert Tennent*, and the other by me, in the Year 1740, from which Papers Mr. *T-----* endeavours to convict us of the most wicked and horrid rash judging of our Brethren: He begins first with Mr. *Tennent's* Paper, though it was given in last; and when he has dismissed both these, then, on the Subject of Church-Government, he proceeds to speak to the Apology, which was given into the Synod by the Presbytery of *New-Brunswick*, the Year before the two Papers; (*viz.* 1739.) so that Mr. *T-----'s* Method is entirely retrograde. However, as he was at Liberty to chuse his own Method, so am I to chuse mine.

I shall

I shall then, according to the due Order of Things, in the first Place, consider what he lays to our Charge on the Head of Church-Government, and the Authority of Ecclesiastical Judicatures; and then offer what is needful in relation to the two Papers above-mentioned: But I would have it observed here, that I think it no way necessary to enter into a particular Examination of his whole Piece of Mr. T-----'s; to consider what is right and what is wrong in every Part of it. This, I believe, would be neither worth the Reader's Pains or mine. What I chiefly design is to clear myself and Brethren from Mr. T-----'s Misrepresentations of us, and unjust Charges against us. If this be done, I have my proximate End in this Undertaking.

To proceed then as proposed: Let it be seen what it is that Mr. T----- charges us with in the Matter of Government: Why, it is the utter denying and rejecting entirely any Authority in Church-Judicatures whatsoever. He charges us over and over again, with holding that the Judicatures of the Church, have no manner of governing Authority less or more, and he pretends to find this in the forementioned Apology. Oh amazing! This would be to make the visible Church and Family of Christ on Earth, a strange Sort of a lawless Crowd indeed; destitute of all Government and Authority, as a Church, for their Regulation; so that every one might do just what he pleased, without Controul. Such a Company as this would be more like a confused Mob than the Church and Kingdom of our glorious Mediator; and yet, of such a monstrous Principle does Mr. T----- plainly accuse us, as necessarily infers all this, when he asserts we deny all Authority of Government to Church-Judicatures: For he does not seem once to charge us with holding the Congregational Plan, or, that Government is to be exercised by the Church any other way than in her Representative Judicatures; and therefore, if we deny all Authority of Government to these, we manifestly deny it to the Church altogether.

That Mr. T-----n charges this upon us, none can be ignorant of that read his Book: In Page 5 he says, *It is plain and evident, that, in our Judgment, Presbyteries and Synods when regularly constituted, have no Authority at all, either over their Members or People.* In Page 51, (where he begins to proceed on the Subject of Government, which he says is the second Ground of Difference between them and us) he says, that *our Judgment or Principles in relation to Church-Government, are quite different and opposite unto the Principles of Church-Government contained in our Directory.* Page 55 he says, *It is certainly our Judgment, that there is no Authority, but only Advice belonging to a Presbytery:* Page 56, 57, says he, ‘But the plain and genuine
 ‘ Design of all these Assertions, as in all this Apology, is to
 ‘ overthrow all Authority, and cast out all Order and Go-
 ‘ vernment out of the Church. These are the Men, says
 ‘ he, who profess so much Zeal for Christ’s Kingdom, and
 ‘ yet are, by one bold Stroke, attempting to strike the
 ‘ Crown from his Head, by divesting his Officers and Courts
 ‘ of all governing Authority.’ In many other Places he asserts the same Thing; but it may suffice to refer to these.

Now, I think, Mr. T-----n, or any Man else, may easily find a pretty deal of governing Authority allowed to the Officers and Courts of Jesus Christ, in the Apology. Does it not plainly enough assert a Government appointed by Christ in his Church, and particular Officers for the Execution of it? See *Apology*, Page 50, 51, as now published, where the Words are, ‘According to the Presbyterian Constitu-
 ‘ tion, we conceive that all the Ministers of the Gospel are
 ‘ equal one with another in all the Parts of the Pastoral
 ‘ Office, so that none have any peculiar Powers or Privi-
 ‘ leges beyond others: And that particular Presbyteries,
 ‘ consisting of such a Number of Ministers, more or less,
 ‘ with the Elders of their several Congregations, as can con-
 ‘ veniently meet together so often as Occasion may require,
 ‘ have full and complete Power for ordering all the Affairs
 ‘ of

‘ of the Church within their Bounds. In a Word, they
 ‘ have *Power to execute* all the Parts of *Government* which
 ‘ Christ has *appointed* in his Church, (which, by the Way,
 ‘ is not inconsistent with their Liableness to be brought to
 ‘ Account by Synods, or larger Assemblies consisting of
 ‘ Presbyteries, either for Errors in Doctrine or wrong Con-
 ‘ duct in Practice) and consequently, they have the whole
 ‘ Management of the Admission of Persons to the Preaching
 ‘ of the Gospel.’ Indeed, a great Part of the Apology
 goes on this very Ground, as a *Postulatum*, viz. That Christ
 has appointed a Government, and Officers for the Admini-
 stration of it, in his Church; the Apology was only designed
 to oppose the Exorbitancy of Church-Power, or Church-
 Officers claiming and exercising farther and higher Au-
 thority than the great King and Lawgiver Jesus Christ al-
 lowed them.

And in particular, does not the Apology say, that Pres-
 byteries have Power from Christ to ordain Men to the Of-
 fice and Charge of the Gospel-Ministry, Page 48? And is
 that no Authority? or belongs it not to the Government of
 the Church? Does not the Apology say, ‘ That the Lord
 ‘ has authorised the Stewards of his House to censure the
 ‘ Violators of his Laws? That the Lord Jesus has given
 ‘ Power and Authority to the Guides of his Church to deny
 ‘ Church-Communion unto, and to cast out of Communion
 ‘ such as by plain Scripture Directions are disqualified for
 ‘ it? And, to inflict such Censures upon irregular Church-
 ‘ Members as he in his Word makes due to such Offences as
 ‘ they are guilty of? And, that God in his Word has given
 ‘ particular obvious Direction in sundry Cases that may
 ‘ come under the Cognizance of Church-Judicatures, which
 ‘ divine Direction they are exactly to follow, and resolutely
 ‘ to adhere to? *i. e.* comply or dissent who will.’ Page 66, 67.
 And is all this no Authority? Or is it no Part of Church-
 Government? It is truly amazing how Men can so grossly
 out-face plain Truth, and assert palpable Falshoods! Is it
 not,

not, after all this, astonishing, that Mr. T----- should lay his Charge so high.

And now I shall proceed to shew the Weakness of the Grounds of his Charge, by giving a just View of those Passages of the Apology which he grounds it upon; and to this Purpose it will be necessary to see and consider what that Strain of Authority in Church-Judicatures is, which the Brethren who presented that Apology, do reject, and reason against in it. And this is laid down about the middle of the Apology, in Page 53. (as the Pages are numbered, *alias* Page 15.) The preceding Part of it is taken up in laying down our Reasons against two Acts of the Synod, made the Year before; which we dissented from. This Part of the Apology Mr. T----- meddles not with: And as we judged that those Acts were both without any Foundation in, and contrary to, Scripture: so, we apprehended that our Brethren were, notwithstanding, imposing them on us, and requiring our absolute Obedience to them, from their own sole Authority. Whence we judged that they were claiming a proper Legislative, or *Law-making* Authority; not only an Authority to execute the Laws of Christ, or to explain and apply them to particular occurring Cases; but, properly to make Laws of their own, in Addition to the Laws of Christ, which might also sometimes happen to be contrary to his Laws, as it was with some of the Constitutions of the *Jews*, when they took the same Work in hand, *Matth.* xv. 3, 4, 5, 6. Hence then we judged it proper and needful to oppose, and argue against such an extravagant Claim of Power; and this only is the Authority which we have disclaimed and denied to belong to Church-Judicatures, and it is laid down and stated in the Page last above-mentioned, thus, ‘ We
‘ humbly conceive that the aforesaid Acts, in their present
‘ Form, are founded upon a false Hypothesis, or Supposi-
‘ tion, *namely*, that a Majority of Synods, or other Church-
‘ Judicatures, have a Power committed to them from Christ;
‘ to make new Rules, Acts, or Canons about religious
‘ Matters.

‘ Matters, on this Ground or Foundation, *viz.* That they
 ‘ judge them either to be not against, or agreeable to, the
 ‘ general Directions of the Word of God, and serviceable to
 ‘ Religion; which shall be binding upon those that con-
 ‘ scientiously dissent therefrom, under certain Penalties
 ‘ which are to be inflicted even upon those who judge the
 ‘ Acts they enforce, to be contrary to the Mind of Christ,
 ‘ and prejudicial to the Interests of his Kingdom. This is,
 ‘ in brief, a legislative or Law-making Power in religious
 ‘ Matters; and this we do utterly disclaim and renounce.’

And then farther down, in the same Page, we shew that we
 understand by *new Rules, Acts, or Canons about religious
 Matters, viz.* such as God has not appointed in his Word,
 either as to their Matter or Penalty, that is, when either any
 thing is required or forbidden, which God has not required
 nor forbidden, or, when any new Penalty or Censure is an-
 nexed to his Laws, which he has not annexed. Here then
 you see the true State of the Case. Here is stated and laid
 down that particular Kind or Degree of Church-Authority
 which only is opposed in the Apology. And consequently,
 in all Right and Justice, the Whole of it is to be understood
 according to this State of the Matter. That which the Apo-
 logy opposes then, you see, is just this, *viz.* A Power or
 Authority in Church-Judicatures, to make Rules, Acts, or
 Canons, which they can only pretend, at most, are not con-
 trary to, or forbidden in, any Place of Scripture; but are
 agreeable to its general Directions, and good Expedients
 for the securing, or promoting, some good Purposes in the
 Church; and to impose them as obligatory Laws on such
 of their Members, or Communion, as judge them to be sin-
 ful, contrary to Scripture, and prejudicial to the true In-
 terest of the Church, so as that they cannot observe them
 with a safe Conscience. And now, what is there in this that
 need be so very displeasing to sober Church-Rulers, that are
 contented with their due Sphere of Stewards and Servants in
 God’s House; and not setting up for Lords or Masters, for
 arbi-

arbitrary despotic Government, upon the absurd tyrannical Maxim of, *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro Ratione Voluntas?* Is this to deny all Government and Authority in the Church? Is it to take the Crown off Christ's Head, and divest his Officers and Courts of all governing Authority? Oh strange! Is there no Authority besides absolute and unlimited? Or that which is very near it?

Or, Is it to deny all Authority in Church-Judicatures that shall be obliging or binding on their dissenting Members, or such as are Negatives in their Votes in any Cases? This Mr. T——n very often charges us with, but very unjustly. Are there no other Cases in which there may be Dissentients, or Negatives, but the Case above described? There are two general Cases especially, wherein we freely grant, Church-Judicatures must require, and insist upon Submission and Obedience from all their Members; whether they assent or dissent; whether they be Negatives or Approbatives, or Non-liquets, in the making of the Acts or Rules; on Pain of such Censures as appear from Scripture to be due to their Disobedience, according to the various Instances of it, or Cases wherein it may be: First, When the Judicature does judge that that very Particular which they determine, appoint, or forbid, is itself particularly declared, appointed, or forbidden by God in holy Scripture; whether the Point be determined in Scripture in so many express Words, or by plain Consequence, it is the same Thing; if the Judicature be persuaded that it is, in particular, there revealed and determined, they are to adhere to it, and enjoin it; whether it be a Point of Doctrine or Practice. As for Instance, if a Church-Judicature do determine from the Light of God's Word, as they (rightly) judge, that there is not an infallible certain Connection between the best Endeavours of natural Men, and their obtaining of the saving Grace of God: Or, If they order, in the same manner, that the Sabbath-day be observed, in abstaining from all unnecessary worldly Labour: Or, that every Family shall jointly worship God together

gether every Day: These Things they are inviolably to adhere to; and duly to censure the Contraveners; seeing they are persuaded they have the Authority of God for them in particular, in his Word: Yea, even though the Contraveners should oppose them out of Conscience; because, not their Conscience, but God's Word is to be a Rule to the Judicature. Upon this Ground it is, that Churches require Subscriptions, or Declarations, to Articles of Faith; and agree upon Tests of Orthodoxy, as Terms of Church-Communion, Christian, or Ministerial. All this is, not only nothing against the Principle before laid down from the Apology, but plainly enough contained and affirmed in that Paper. As, when it says, that Church-Judicatures have Authority to inflict Censures upon irregular Church-Members, the Violators of Christ's Law; to keep, and cast out of Communion, such as, by the Directions of Scripture, are disqualified for it; and, to use farther Authority than only Counsel or Advice, in such Cases wherein God has given particular obvious Direction in his Word. The other general Case wherein Submission and Obedience is necessary to be given to Church-Judicatures, and required by them, even of Dissentients and Negatives, is, when in Matters of human Prudence and Expediency, they can submit without Conscience of Sin in so doing. When the Majority of a Judicature judge a particular Thing, or Rule, to be a good prudential Expedient, in present Circumstances, to answer the Design of some general Direction or Injunction of God's Word; though the Minority, or lesser Number, judge it not so; yet, they are in Duty and Conscience bound to submit and obey, unless they judge the Thing or Rule to be contrary to God's Word, and so, that it is sinful for them to obey it. There may be Numbers of Things which the Members of a Judicature may differ in their Sentiments about, a major Part may judge them expedient, and a minor Part may judge them inexpedient, and yet not judge it to be positively sinful for them, in those Circumstances, to submit to them.

And

And that Man would be very unworthy of the Communion and Privileges of a Religious Society, who would refuse Submission to its judicial Agreements, on any other Score than that of Conscience; who would not submit, merely out of Humour, because he had not his own Will. So long as Men are in this imperfect fallible State, subject to such Diversity of Judgments, I do not see how the Peace and Order of Churches can subsist, unless the minor Part be subject to the judicial Determinations of the major in all Cases wherein they can be subject without Sin. It is undoubtedly the Duty of the Judicatures of Christ, to use their Prudence and Direction in judging what may be most for the Good of the Church, according to God's Word, in all occurring Cases and Circumstances: And it is a necessary Part of our Ordination-Vows, to be subject to our Brethren in the Lord; that is, so far as we can without Sin. And so we heartily agree with our *Confession of Faith*, Chap. xxxi. Sect. 3. That 'it belongeth to Synods and Councils to set down
' Rules and Directions for the better ordering of the Public
' Worship of God, and Government of his Church, to re-
' ceive Complaints in Cases of Male-administration, and au-
' thoritatively to determine the same: Which Decrees and
' Determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to
' be received with Reverence and Submission; not only for
' their Agreement with the Word, but also for the Power
' whereby they are made, as being an Ordinance of God,
' appointed thereunto in his Word.' All this then we freely allow, and there is nothing in the Apology, so far as I can discern, that can be produced, according to the fair Rules of Interpretation, contrary hereto: For, observe again, the Point denied is this, *viz.* That Church-Judicatures have a lawful Power of oppressing the Consciences of their Members, by imposing any thing upon them on Pain of Censure and Non-Communion, which they judge sinful, and cannot in Conscience comply with; when the Majority, in the mean Time, are not in Conscience bound, by the
Authority

Authority of God declaring or ordaining that very Thing in his Word. And, sure, this is very different from the foregoing general Case. Such a Power as this, is, I think, properly a legislative Power in religious Matters: For the Things enjoined are not pretended to be particularly enjoined by God in the Scripture; but only devised as good and useful Expedients for the Time, supposed to be agreeable, or not contrary to Scripture; certainly then, the Imposing of such Things as these in such a Manner, as absolutely necessary to be obeyed by all our Members, as an absolutely necessary Term of their Membership and Communion with us, when their Consciences will not suffer them to obey, and enjoy Membership on such Terms, is a making of Laws in the Church to a Degree. To censure, punish, and cast Persons out of the Communion and Privileges of the Church by any other Laws than those of Jesus Christ, is not this to assume his proper Prerogative and alone Power of giving Laws to his Church? If this is not Legislation, or Law-making, in the Church of God, I do desire to be informed what it can be. For, will ever any own, that the Acts which they make of this Tenour, are contrary to the Will of God? And I cannot possibly see that they are the more really Laws for being enforced with temporal Penalties. The Constitutions of Christ in his Church are confessedly Laws, in a most proper Sense, and yet their Penalties are not of a temporal and civil, but of a spiritual and ecclesiastical Nature. Now, Mr. T----- acknowledges (Page 69. of his Book, and elsewhere) that the Arguments in the Apology are valid and conclusive against a truly legislative Power in the Church, and professes to disclaim it, as well as we. And since those Arguments were only advanced against a truly legislative Power, which was first particularly stated and described, as we have seen; by what Authority then does he apply them otherwise? As if levelled against all Church-Authority? Is this fair Dealing, Friends? But I am sorry I cannot find Mr. T----- so clear of his legislative

tive Claim as he would appear to be: For, if I rightly take him up, he maintains that Church-Judicatures have a Right and Authority to enjoin whatsoever they think proper and expedient, on all their Members, to be obeyed on Pain of Exclusion. This Principle, in this universal Latitude, I cannot but look upon to be both a tyrannical and a Church-dividing Principle. That Mr. T----- holds it, appears to me from several Places of his Book. Page 63, 64, he says, ' If any Members of the Judicatory do think that the Judicatory is mistaken in their Judgment, yet it is their Duty in that Case to submit to such Determinations or Rules, if what is enjoined be not sinful in itself, or by Virtue of some divine Command antecedent to such Determination; only, such dissenting Party may and ought, in a decent and becoming Manner, to remonstrate their Grievance, and endeavour to convince the Judicature of their Mistake, in order to get it rectified, and the Grievance removed; which, if they can do, it is well; but if not, yet they ought to submit, if they may, without sinning against Light and Conscience.' In all this I heartily agree with Mr. T-----: But then he adds, ' Or else a Separation must of Course ensue.' Now, if by this he means, that a Separation must of Course ensue, if all the Members of a Church-Judicature cannot, without sinning against Light and Conscience, submit to whatsoever the Majority in all Cases may judge fit and expedient, then it infers the very legislative Principle above described. And that this is his Meaning and Principle, appears farther from what he next adds, *viz.* ' But if the Matter be unlawful, it is better to obey God than Man; *i. e.* it is better to separate than sin.' In these Words, considering them in their Connection with what went before, he seems plainly to signify that Church-Judicatures may take upon them Authority to enjoin whatsoever Things they think lawful and useful, upon such of their Members as even rightly think them unlawful, on Pain of Separation, and being cast out of Communion. For, although

Mr.

Mr. T——n expresses the Matter softly and tenderly, that the whole Force of it may not be readily observed, as, that the Part who cannot in Conscience comply, had better separate; yet it is plain, that, if they do not see Cause themselves to withdraw and separate, according to this Principle, it comes to this at last, that they must be authoritatively cast out. And it is plainly enough implied in the Words, that in such a Case they shall not be allowed the Privilege of Communion, unless they Sin for it, *i. e.* go contrary to their Conscience, even in a Matter enjoined which is sinful by the Command of God. Surely, the allowing such a high Strain of Authority and Power to fallible imperfect Creatures, lays an awful Foundation for the most dreadful Corrupting of the Church. According to this Doctrine, we must either all have always the same Judgment about the Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of Things, or we must have very pliable Consciences, and rately suffer the Church to be corrupted with our Eyes open, or else the Church must be rent and torn into no body knows how many Crumbs and Pieces. 'Tis very true, indeed, it is better to separate than sin: But, pray, what Necessity is there for either? I am satisfied Christ has not made this Necessity, by any of his Constitutions in his Church, though Church-judicatures may easily do it, by going beyond their due Sphere, and assuming upon his Prerogative. In Page 72 Mr. T——n calls Non-communication, with all that follows upon it, without any Restriction, the unavoidable inconvenient Consequences of a Person's differing in Judgment from others; this is express and home to the Point. As the Reader has seen already, we allow Church-judicatures are to agree upon, and determine such Things as they judge God has particularly determined in his Word, according as they judge he has there determined them; and to enjoin these Determinations on all their Members, under such Censures and Penalties as they judge to be due by God's Word to the Breach of them: Which in many Cases, that might be instanced in, can be no less than Exclusion from their Commu-

nion:

tion; and, in sundry Cases, might be authoritative Ex-
 communication from the Christian Church. And more-
 over, there are Multitudes of occurring Cases where-
 in particular Scripture-Decision cannot be pretended,
 wherein, notwithstanding the Minority, who dissent,
 must submit to the Determination of the Majority.
 As, if the Majority of a Presbytery judge of a Can-
 didate on Trials, that he is not suitably qualified for
 the Ministry, and a Minority judge that he is; or,
 if the Majority judge he is, and the Minority that
 he is not. Or, in a Case of Scandal, the Majority
 think such a particular Degree of Censure and Satis-
 faction necessary, and the Minority think less to be suf-
 ficient, or more to be necessary. Such as these are
 Cases that must be decided one Way or other; and
 when all the Members of the Judicature cannot agree
 in the same Judgment, then, in all Reason, the Judg-
 ment of the greater Number must be decisive; other-
 wise the Case cannot be decided. Without the Sub-
 mission of the dissenting Minority in such Cases, the
 Affairs of the Church could not be carried on. And,
 as to public prudential Rules, agreed to by the Ma-
 jority, they are to be submitted to, if consonant to
 the Word of God; if they are not contrary to
 Scripture. And the minor Part are, surely, to judge
 for themselves whether they are so or not. Thus far,
 I suppose, there is no Debate between us: But then,
 that universal unlimited Authority which Mr. T-----
 seems to contend for, is, I think, an extravagant Claim,
 under the Pretext of lawful, consonant and agreeable
 to Scripture, and very useful; unlawful and sinful
 Things may readily be introduced and enacted. All
 this has been said for Image-Worship, Sign of the
 Cross in Baptism, slated Liturgies, &c. by the Impo-
 sers of them. For Church-Judicatures to claim and
 exercise a Power of enjoining whatsoever Things they

may judge useful and expedient, not contrary to Scripture, upon such Members as judge them to be sinful and very prejudicial to Religion, so as that they must either comply, or be suspended, deposed, or cast out of Communion and Membership, to me appears an unwarrantably high Strain of Authority, such as I cannot think the Lord Jesus ever put into the Hands of fallible imperfect Creatures, who are liable to so many Mistakes and Prejudices. If it be said, in Defence of this Power, that this is no more than the common Right of all Societies, every Society joined together in a moral political Union having a Right to agree upon what they judge most conducive to their Advantage, and to require their Agreements and Constitutions to be complied with by all their Members, on Pain of forfeiting the Privileges of Membership with them: I answer, that there is a great Difference between the Church of Christ and merely civil secular Societies; as to the Extent and Right of such a Power. Civil Societies and Corporations, as such, are only concerned about their temporal Interests and Advantages; and voluntarily incorporate themselves only for those Purposes; and so may make whatsoever Constitutions and Agreements for themselves they please in these Matters, not contradicting the Laws of God, or public Laws of the State: And they may make all these Agreements Terms of Union and Membership; for there is no superior Law to the contrary; and their Orders and Agreements do not affect the Consciences of their Members; nor is it Matter of Conscience with them whether to continue Members or not; but any one may be Member or not, as he pleases: And, if he had rather be none of the Society than be a Member on their Terms, it is because he apprehends it most for his temporal Interest or Conveniency: But the Judicatures of the Church are solely Religious Societies; their Concern and Business is only
about

about the spiritual Interests of Men, all their Affairs relate to Matters of Religion and Conscience; and the Renting and Breaking the Union of the Church is in itself a weighty Matter of Conscience, wherein Conscience is deeply concerned, and of very sad Consequences to the highest Interest in all the World; wo to him by whom that Offence cometh. And therefore, on all these Accounts, the Lord Jesus, who is King and Head of the Church, does not allow such an arbitrary Liberty to the Judicatures thereof, to make Terms and Conditions of Union and Membership, as other Societies have. The confessed approven Right of secular Societies to exclude from their Membership such as do not comply with what they agree upon and constitute as a necessary Term of Membership, may, I grant, be advanced as a just Defence of Church-Judicatures excluding Persons from their Membership and Communion, upon the Laws and Constitutions of Jesus Christ: But can never justify their fixing as necessary Terms whatsoever they may judge serviceable and expedient, when some of their Members believe them to be sinful, and cannot comply with them. It may, perhaps, be farther urged, in Defence of this high Strain of Authority, that the major Part of a Judicature are Conscience-bound to enact as Terms of Communion, and to adhere to whatsoever they judge useful and expedient, as well as the minor Part may be Conscience-bound not to submit to them. To this it is sufficient at present just to answer in brief, that there is just as much Reason why the minor Part should be always bound in Conscience not to submit to any Thing they judge inexpedient, as why the major Part should be always bound in Conscience to enjoin what they judge to be expedient: So that if the Argument here be just, then it will follow, that Church-Judicatures must split and separate so often as ever they differ in Judgment about any Thing; which would be a Church-distracting and

renting Principle indeed with a Witness. It is granted, Conscience will bind them to enjoin whatsoever they find, in any Case, to be enjoined by God in his Word: And, it will also bind to enjoin whatsoever else they judge, in any particular Circumstances, to be most for the Interest of Religion, agreeable to the Word; except when they find that their other Members have a quite different Judgment of what they judge so useful and agreeable to Scripture, judging it to be against Scripture, and hurtful to Religion, so as they cannot submit to it; then, in such a Case, Conscience ought not to bind to the enjoining of it, though otherwise it might; and that, because Christ has not given so large Authority to Church-Judicatures in such Matters, to impose on the Consciences of their Brethren, and force to a Separation and Rent in the Church.

Can it be pretended with any Face of Reason, that our denying such an Authority as this to belong to Church-Judicatures, renders us incapable to be Members of them? as Mr. T——n and his Brethren would suggest we are, because of our Principles about Church-Government. Why more incapable than themselves, when we grant Submission due in all Cases wherein it can be given without sinning against Light and Conscience? Will any of themselves say that they would yield Submission any farther?

I have now given a just View of the Scope and Design of the Apology, and shewn what Authority in Ecclesiastical Judicatures that is which it opposes, which sufficiently shews the Injustice of Mr. T——n's Charge against us, in accusing us of denying all Authority of Government in the Church: and will easily discover the Weakness of his Grounds for such an Allegation: For the Grounds of it he cites some Passages in Page 67 of the Apology, where, concerning Presbyteries, it is said, 'They have likewise Liberty to agree, and conclude, among themselves upon such Things as appear to them

' to have a good Tendency to the Advancing of Reli-
 ' gion, and are founded upon, or agreeable to, the Word
 ' of God, and so engage themselves voluntarily to the
 ' Observance of these Things, provided that they do not
 ' encroach upon the just Liberties of the People under
 ' their Charge, nor pretend to bind their dissenting
 ' Members to observe their Agreements, who may have
 ' a different View and Apprehension of them.' To en-
 croach upon the just Liberties of the Christiana People,
 is to enjoin upon them Rules and Agreements of our
 own making and devising, as necessary Laws, which
 they must either comply with, though they may not
 be able to do it with a safe Conscience towards God,
 or else be denied the Enjoyment of the Ordinances and
 Privileges of God's House with us; and, sure, 'tis need-
 ful to provide against such an Encroachment: And, the
 different Apprehension of dissenting Members of Presby-
 teries, concerning Things which the other Members
 judge prudential and expedient, which is here mentioned,
 is to be understood, according to the foregoing State
 of the Case, of an Apprehension so different as is di-
 rectly contrary, *i. e.* of an Apprehension of those Things
 as sinful, and contrary to God's Word, which their other
 Brethren apprehend to be agreeable thereto, and useful.
 It is farther said in the same Page, that Synods are
 to take into Consideration Matters that are brought be-
 fore them by way of Appeal or Reference from par-
 ticular Presbyteries, and should give their best Advice
 in those Cases; but should not proceed to any farther
 Authority, except in such Cases wherein God has given
 particular obvious Direction in his Word, which is to
 be exactly followed. This Passage is, i think, so far
 from discarding all Authority of Government, that it
 plainly enough asserts it; declaring that Synods are ex-
 actly to follow the particular obvious Direction of God
 in his Word, in all Cases wherein he has given it:

And

And I am of the Mind that in most Cases which come to Synods by Appeal or Reference, there may be found obvious Direction in God's Word particularly enough relating to them; *i. e.* either to the very Cases themselves, or Cases of the same general Nature: And whereas it is said, that, in other Cases wherein there is no such plain Scripture Direction, Synods are only to give their best Advice, without proceeding to any farther Authority, this, in all Right and Justice, according to the fair Rules of understanding and interpreting any Writing, is to be understood, according to the previous State of the Matter, as it was at first laid down, to signify that Synods should not authoritatively enjoin their Decisions in such Cases against others Consciences; so as they must either comply against Light and Conscience, and submit to that which they believe to be a Sin to submit to, or be debarred from the Privileges of Christ's Church, for their Non-compliance in such Cases and Circumstances; for this Strain of Authority in Matters of human Prudence, is the very Authority opposed, first, particularly stated, and then still argued against through the Apology.

And now I have, I think, fully vindicated and cleared the Brethren who were in such an arbitrary illegal manner thrust out of the Synod, from maintaining Principles of Anarchy, and denying all governing Authority in the Church; which Mr. T——n has laid to their Charge. And I persuade myself, every understanding impartial Reader must be convinced of the Injustice of the Charge. And yet, he and eleven more of his Brethren, have as good as sworn it very solemnly against us in their Protestation, whereby, without any previous regular Trial, they excluded us. This Protest is entered with the greatest Solemnity possible. They say, they humbly and solemnly protest in the Presence of the great and eternal God, and his elect Angels, &c. Page 6, and in
Page

Page 9 they say, and give it as the first Reason of their protesting against our being allowed to sit as Members of the Synod, that in the Apology we expressly deny that Presbyteries have Authority to oblige their dissenting Members; and, that Synods should go any farther in judging of Appeals and References, &c. than to give their best Advice. I affect not hard Words, but Truth and necessary Self-defence oblige me to say, that what they say here, as thus indefinitely and without any Limitation expressed, is palpably false, as I have already made appear; and yet (most amazing!) they have so solemnly protested by way of Appeal to God, that both this and several other false Things are in fact true. For thus they say, Page 11, ‘ For these and
‘ many other Reasons, we protest before the eternal
‘ God, his holy Angels; and to you, Reverend Brethren,
‘ and before all here present, that these Brethren have
‘ no Right to be acknowledged as Members of his Ju-
‘ dicatory of Christ.’ I would just farther observe on this Occasion, that all who adhere to them, both Ministers and People, (which perhaps they are not all aware of) do really, by their Adherence to them, swear to all the same Things; for they have told them that they have sworn them all, in all their Names. Page 6 say they, ‘ We hereby humbly and solemnly
‘ protest in the Presence of the great and eternal God,
‘ and his elect Angels, in our own Names, and in the
‘ Names of all, both Ministers and People, who shall
‘ adhere to us, as follows.’ Whence it is manifest, that all who adhere to them, do, by that Adherence, make that Protest their own Protest and solemn Oath, in all the Parts of it, without Exception: For the Protestors have plainly enough told them that they have so protested in the Names of all who shall adhere to them; and therefore, whensoever any do join with them, or while they continue to adhere to them, they do hereby
openly

openly declare, (whether they intend it so or not) that they consent to have all those Things protested for them in their Names, and to be accounted of, as if they had actually protested them in all their own Persons, before God, Angels, and Men. And it might be well for each seriously to consider, whether they could possibly protest these Things in such a Manner with a clear and peaceful Conscience: And to consider, that they are really looked upon in the Eye of God as actual Protestors, while they keep that Course. Surely, the Consciences of many could not but boggle at this, if they duly considered it.

But, I have no farther Concern with the Protest here, than so far as it concerns the Subject I have been upon: And, I having done what is sufficient on that Subject, according to my proposed Design, which was to vindicate the excluded Brethren from the Charge of Principles of Anarchy, and denying Church-Government; I come, in the next Place, to offer something concerning the two Papers that were given in to the Synod *Anno* 1740, at which Mr. T----- and Brethren are so exceedingly offended. And here it would be quite a Misspent of Time, for which I have much better Use, to follow Mr. T----- through all that he takes Occasion to say from the Contents of those Papers. What is sufficient to my Purpose, is, to clear the Authors from the Reflections which Mr. T----- casts upon them for bringing in such Papers, and in such a Manner, to the Synod. He charges Mr. *Gilbert Tennent* and me, who brought them in, with an Attempt and Design to expose, without Distinction, the general Part of the Synod to public Prejudice and Reproach; with wicked, rash Judging of our Brethren; and, with an Intimation of a Design to enter upon their Congregations, in order to get them rooted out of them. These, I think, are the main Objections and

Accusations on this Head; and, whether just or not, must be seen. The Papers contained an Account of many Things which we found great fault with in several Members of the Synod: And, I can truly say, for my own Part, that what I aimed at, was the faithful Discharge of Duty, and a conscientious Testimony against those Evils, for the Good of the Brethren guilty of them, and the Good of the Church, and to shew the Reasonableness of Encouraging rather than Hindering of Ministers to preach Christ's Gospel as they had Opportunity, through the Land; because I saw there was evidently too much Remisness among Ministers up and down, and with some much worse than bare Remisness too. But Mr. T----- and others of his Brethren make a great Cry against us for Reading such Papers so publicly in the Synod, before all the Congregation that were present. It is really wonderful to me how they can charge this as a Crime upon us, when it was themselves were in the fault of it. The Paper which I had, was first proposed, (indeed I knew nothing of Mr. Tennent's having a Paper, which, after mine was read, he desired to read, because it was much to the same Purpose) and I particularly moved, and desired that it might be read privately, at an *Interloquitur* of the Synod: But it was concluded to hear it then publicly, and they would not comply with my Desire. Where then was the Ground for reproaching us with such a Crime, and evil Design, for the public Reading of the Papers? But it is said, we ought to have entered a regular Trial against the particular Members whom we had any such Charges to lay against, before their proper Presbyteries, and not have brought in such general Complaints to the Synod, without particularising the Persons complained of, in any or all of these Instances of Complaint. How little of these Measures was taken

with us the following Year, before either Presbyteries or Synod, when we were, in the very first Instance, protested and sworn out, is well known. However, I know, Recrimination, though with Advantage, is no Vindication. I say then, that for what I can yet see, the Method we took, provided the Thing had been allowed to have been done privately, before the Members of the Synod only, was the most proper, and likely to be useful: For, at the Synod the Ministers from all Parts were generally met, such as we believed to be guilty of the Evils complained of, as well as others; and we knew not but some others might be as guilty as they, without our Knowledge; so that then we had an Opportunity of doing such an Act of really Christian Charity to such Brethren all at once: And we knew not what good Effect a Representation of those Evils, and Recommendation of the contrary Duties by the Synod, might have; it might be a Means of the Amendment of their Members, so as to prevent, or remove, the Necessity of any farther Proccets. And I distinctly remember likewise, I told the Synod, that if they thought it proper, and required that I should process the Persons against whom I had such Matter of Complaint, I was willing to do it; only desired that a competent Time might be allowed for the doing of it: But this Proposal was declined, and a solemn Admonition given by the Synod to all their Members, in these Terms, *viz.* ‘ There being two Re-
‘ presentations brought into the Synod, by Mr. *Blair*,
‘ and Mr. *Gilbert Tennent*, representing many Defects
‘ in our Ministry, that are Matter of greatest Lamen-
‘ tation, if chargeable upon our Members; the Synod
‘ do therefore solemnly admonish all the Ministers with-
‘ in our Bounds, seriously to consider the Weight of
‘ their Charge, and, as they will answer it at the great
‘ Day of Christ, to take Care to approve themselves
‘ to God in the Instances complained of: And the
‘ Synod

‘ Synod do recommend it to their several Presbyteries, ‘ to take Care of their several Ministers in these Particulars.’ And now, what Hurt was there in obtaining, in the Way that was proposed, such a Synodical Admonition and Charge to all our Ministers, when there was really so much need of it, and more? Must our Mouths be muzzled from telling our Brethren of the Faults we find among them? And we desired to tell them only to themselves.

As to the other Charge of rash censorious Judging; I readily grant, that rash Judging is very sinful, and, in its Consequences, may be very pernicious; and therefore ought to be very carefully restrained: But, I think, I might safely leave it to the Judgment of any one rightly acquainted with the Principles of Christianity, whether there be not sufficient, rational, scriptural Ground, strongly to suspect the true Sincerity and good State of a Minister who is deeply guilty of the Things complained of in those Papers. *By their Fruits ye shall know them, says our Lord; do Men gather Grapes off Thorns? or Figs off Thistles?*

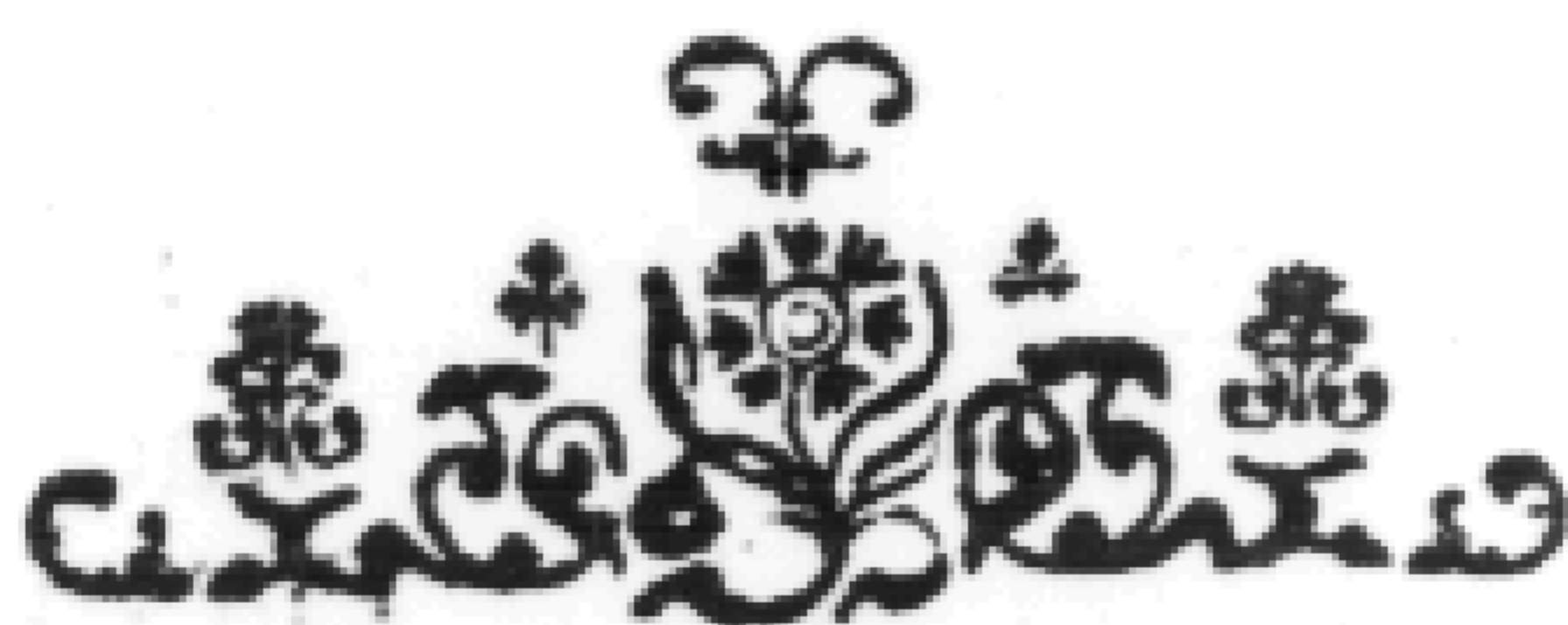
The other Thing which Mr. T.——— accuses us of, from our Papers, *viz.* A Design of dissolving the Pastoral Relation between them and their People, by preaching in their Congregation against their Wills, upon the Invitation of any of their People, is very unjust. The Synod had, for a Year or two before, laid, as we apprehend, an unreasonable Restraint upon Ministers preaching out of the Bounds of their own Presbyteries; and we in these Papers signified, that the Necessity of our preaching abroad was great and urgent, from the Soul-Exercises and strong Desires of the People, God succeeding his Word in an uncommon Degree, and from the manifest Unfaithfulness of sundry Ministers, and their great Opposition against the Revival of Religion. It was a Grief of Heart to us that

we were under any such Necessity on the last mentioned Account. Our Design, I hope, was to attempt to propagate the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, and save the Souls of Men; though we were obliged, indeed, frequently to take Occasion to vindicate the Work of God's Spirit from such Minifters and others Objections and Cavils; and to shew the Necessity of Ministers dealing searhingly and solemnly with their People. But they could never charge either of us, that I know of, with any Irruptions, as they call them, into their proper Congregations, that they could judicially censure; though I must observe by the Way, that had they been as friendly to a Work and Revival of Religion as they ought to have been, they and we both would have mutually rejoiced to have had one another to preach in our several Congregations. 'Tis a vain Shift for any of them, in order to clear themselves from the Charge of having made an Opposition to the late Revival of Religion, to say that they have only opposed Things that were evil and irregular, which ought to be opposed. We have not been wanting ourselves to be very careful this Way, as many Hundreds can witness: But there is a vast Difference between opposing what is evil, delusive, and irregular, for the more successful carrying on of a Work of divine Grace; and the improving of such Things by way of Reproach upon it, and Prejudice against it. This is a real Opposition to it, and this they are chargeable with; yea more, they lash against all high Degrees of Soul-distress and Terror in convinced Persons, as proceeding from the Temptations of the Devil. And do lash and reproach, in unlimited Terms, as the mere Effects of irrational Frights, or delusive Joys, all Cryings-out, and bodily Faintings; when such Things may be, and in Numbers have been, the Effects of the rational, spiritual, strong Exercises of the Soul, from the Laws of the Union

Union between the Soul and Body; and can only, at most, be ascribed to human Infirmary, which is such, in this present State, that no Man can see God and live. Yea, several of them have openly and plainly enough denied that any good Work more than usual has been going on, but quite on the contrary: Although Mr. T—— is obliged, inconsistently enough with himself, to make a Kind of an extorted Acknowledgment of it. And it is impossible for the Authors and Approvers of that bold scandalous Lampoon, called, *The History of a Wandering Spirit*, ever to clear themselves from having ascribed a divine Work to the Devil; as I could easily make appear, from Remarks lying by me that never were published.

Many Things which Mr. T—— takes Occasion, from the fore-mentioned Papers, to say, are highly deserving of Remarks: But, I think, all the Use of Remarking upon them would not countervail the Expence of Time and Pains. I have more important as well as more delightful Work to be employed in. Though I can hardly omit taking Notice of his unjust Reflection, in saying, Page 44, That ‘there is a manner of Diction or Phrasology become exceeding common and much in Vogue among us, which is a downright Disgrace to the sacred Function of the Gospel-Ministry;’ and asserting that such Instances of Diction as he there gives, are exceeding common and much in Vogue with us. I will not give Mr. T—— such uncivil and unchristian Language as he has given to me, in calling this ‘a devilish Slander;’ but a real Slander and a Falshood I am sure it is. I defy Mr. T—— to point out any two of our Brethren that ever used the most of the Expressions he mentions, or any such: And I am confident, that if such unbecoming, or presumptuous Expressions of any of our Members should seasonably come to our Knowledge, they would be condemned and censured as they deserve.

We have now seen, in many Instances, what a Latitude Mr. *T——n* takes in his Representations of Things : And in many more it could be shewn. I have endeavoured, I hope, with the Words of Truth and Soberness, to vindicate myself and Brethren from unjust Representations and Reproaches, to which I seemed to be necessarily called and obliged : And I now leave what I have done herein to the divine Blessing, and the sober Perusal and Judgment of serious Readers : Wishing and praying, that He who rules in *Zion*, may restore among us a Spirit of Peace, Truth, and a sound Mind.





THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION
Truly and Fairly stated:

CONFIRMED
From clear SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE,
And DEFENDED

*Against all the material Arguments and Objections
advanced against it.*

BY
SAMUEL BLAIR, *late Minister of the Gospel
at Shrewsbury in New-Jersey, now at Londonderry
in Pennsylvania.*



The P R E F A C E.

I Am very sensible that the Subject of the ensuing Treatise is none of the most acceptable in this Age, wherein we are so much degenerated and apostatized from the true Doctrines and Principles of the Reformation: Yet, being convinced that it is not only a Doctrine of Truth, but also a Truth of great Importance in the Christian System, I am willing to appear for the Defence of it, whatsoever Dis-esteem or Reproach it may expose me to, from such as cannot bear to see or hear it maintained with any Moderation of Temper. It is a Doctrine with which sundry other Doctrines of the Scripture are so inseparably connected, that they cannot, with any Consistency, be maintained without it; such as, Original Sin, the utter Impotency, or rather strong Aversion of the human Will to true Holiness, the irresistible Efficacy of Converting Grace, Free Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Christ alone, and the final Perseverance of the Saints. It is therefore a foolish Question which some ask, What need is there for preaching up this Doctrine, or meddling with it? It is necessary to stand up for it, against the Tide of Opposition, for the sake of all these other Doctrines of God's Word, which must stand or fall with it. It is necessary for bringing Sinners off from all Dependance upon themselves, to the meritorious Righteousness of Jesus Christ alone, for their Justification, and to the supernatural efficacious Power of his Holy Spirit for their Sanctification. It is necessary for stopping every Mouth from boasting before God, and that the apparent Heirs of Glory may ascribe the whole Praise and Glory of their Salvation to him. It is a strong Ground for the Consolation of Believers, and Argument for their Love. It is moreover necessary for the Glory of God's Sovereignty over his rebellious Creatures: On all these Accounts it is a Doctrine of great Use, though it be not very agreeable to proud, unrenewed Nature, and may sometimes appear awful to true Believers, when their Evidences of a converted State are very dark to them.

It is now some Years since I entertained Thoughts of publishing Something on this Subject; the chief Reason inclining me to it,

was, that there were so many small Pieces, in Opposition to the Doctrine, in People's Hands, abounding with a great deal of Misrepresentations and false Reasoning, yet fair and plausible to the ignorant and unthinking; and so few, on the other hand, in the Defence of it. There is, indeed, a great deal well written upon it; but then it is generally in larger Volumes, along with other Subjects, so that People in common have not the Advantage and Benefit of it. It's true, there have been some small Pieces upon it of late, of good Use: Mr. Whitefield's Answer to Mr. Wesley's bold Sermon; and another Answer to the same Sermon, done by an anonymous Author, are both very good, so far as they go; but I judge it needful to treat the Subject more fully, and so have taken a larger Compass, in shewing the Reasonableness of the Doctrine, confirming it from Scripture, and answering all Objections.

It is likely this Essay may come under the View of Persons of very different Sentiments about the Doctrine maintained in it. I would desire all to read it with Care and Attention, giving every Argument its due Weight, and carrying what you read, along with you, from one Thing to another; so that, when you have read it through, you may have the Substance and Strength of what has been said, in your View. If this Method be taken, I persuade myself, that such as are most opposite to the Doctrine, and prejudiced against it, will at least be convinced that it is not that horrid and monstrous Thing which perhaps they had conceived it to be: But whatever Influence this Treatise may have on the Opposers of the Doctrine, I hope it will, through the divine Blessing, be satisfying and confirming to others. I think the Doctrine of Election may be a comfortable Support to exercised Christians, concerning the true Interests of the Kingdom of Christ, at this Day, when there is such fierce Opposition made against the Revival of Religion and Success of the Gospel amongst us, though it is the Doing of the Lord. Bold Men set themselves with all their Might against it, and try to blacken it to the World with horrid Falshoods, and odious malicious Reflections: But God will carry on his own Designs, against all the feeble Attempts of Creatures.

I commit this little Piece to the Reader's serious Perusal, and the Blessing of the almighty God.



T H E
D O C T R I N E
O F
P R E D E S T I N A T I O N
T R U L Y and FA I R L Y stated.

IN order to speak clearly, and to Advantage, upon any Subject; and especially if it be much controverted in the World, it is in the first Place necessary, that it be exactly defined, and bounded by its proper Limits; that it be represented properly, as it is maintained by those who contend for it, that so both Parties may have the same fixed, determinate Idea of what they reason about, and speak both still to the self same Thing. Endless are the Confusions and Contentions that are introduced into the World, either for the Want of this Care in defining, and rightly understanding the Subject in Debate; or for Want of Honesty in an Opposite, when he will not keep close to the very Thing, though he doth understand what it is. It is the readiest Way to bring any Controversy to a right Issue, rightly to state and represent the Case, and then to keep close to it, as so stated, and not suffer another Thing, under the same Name, to be shuffled in, in its Place, through the Course of the Argument. In this Way, such Objections, as suppose the Case to be different from what it is, are easily answered, by reducing the Objector to the prefixed Limits, and so shew-

ing his Argument to be nothing to the Purpose in Hand. And, I think, there is no where more need of this Care and Attention, than about the Doctrine of *God's Decrees*, or *Predestination*, which is the Subject of this small Treatise. I know not any Doctrine more furiously opposed, without being rightly understood; or by being disingenuously and uncandidly misrepresented. I shall therefore, first of all, state the Doctrine truly, and then defend and confirm it.

I. As to the true State of the Doctrine, it may be taken up in these two or three Propositions,

1. That as God, from everlasting, was pleased, in his own free Sovereignty, to decree and determine to create this World; and to make Man in it a reasonable Creature, in his own Image, holy and upright, every Way fitted and empowered for that Duty which was due, from such a rational Creature, to the great God Creator, with full Ability to persevere and continue in that happy State of Integrity; and to enter into a Covenant of Life with him, wherein all the human Race were to be concerned and engaged; and *Adam*, their first Father, constituted their public Head and Representative; so that, as he kept or broke the Covenant, they were to enjoy or lose the promised Blessings of it: And as God infallibly foreknew the Fall and Transgression of *Adam*, as what he had decreed to permit, and so the Iniquity and Ruin of his Posterity consequent thereupon, according to the Covenant; with all the actual Sins which every Individual should ever be guilty of; so he was likewise pleased, of his own mere Grace and free Favour, to decree and determine, to recover and save a Number, only known to himself, of that fallen wretched Race, through the Mediation of his own Son's redeeming them, by answering the Precept and Penalty of the broken Law for them; and through the Sanctification of his eternal Spirit, making them fit for and capable of glorifying and enjoying him for ever.

2. That God's determining and appointing to save any of fallen Mankind, or any in particular more than others, was

was not upon the Foresight of any Difference which he foresaw they would make among themselves, by the better Improvement of any common Helps and Advantages, as the Reason of it: But it was purely of his own sovereign, free, wise Pleasure, and distinguishing Grace.

3. That the rest of fallen Mankind, not thus chosen and ordained to eternal Life, he was pleased, of his sovereign, wise and righteous Pleasure, as a just King and Lawgiver, to determine to leave in their fallen State; and punish them according to all the Sin and Disobedience which they should be guilty of, and chargeable with.

This is, briefly, a just View of the Case I am upon; which I hope, with the divine Direction and Conduct, to maintain against all the Arguments commonly opposed to the Doctrine. I cannot, indeed expect, that this Representation of it will render it generally acceptable and agreeable to those who have been long prejudiced against it; but that is not the Question, whether we would incline and desire to have it so; but, whether it be truly and really so, whether we would desire it should be so, or not? Many of the Laws and Commands of God are very contrary to the Will and Inclination of depraved Sinners; but they are not the less truly the Commands of God for that. In the Defence of this Doctrine, I would first shew, that it is a reasonable, and next, that it is a scriptural Doctrine; and speak to the Arguments which may be urged, both for and against it, from both these Topics, of Reason and Revelation.

II. 1. Those who oppose the Doctrine of absolute Decrees, generally bring in a heavy Indictment against it, as big with the most glaring Absurdities, Inconsistencies, and Contradictions to the very Light of Reason: And these such as involve in them the grossest Impiety, and most horrid Blasphemy against the divine Majesty; as, that it is directly contrary to, and necessarily infers the exact Reverse of most of, the glorious Perfections and Attributes which Reason as well as Scripture teaches us to ascribe to the great God;

that

that it makes him unjust, and tyrannically cruel : Some say, (I dread to express it) worse than the very Devil; that it makes him the Author of Sin, chargeable with most, if not all the Guilt of it; that it makes him a most gross, hypocritical Dissembler, &c. But, sure, it is not the proper *Calvinistic* Doctrine upon that Head, that these Men bring in all these awful and shocking Charges against; but some horrid Composition of their own Brain, which they will palm upon the *Calvinists*, whether they will or no: Or else they just resolve to bring a popular Odium upon the Doctrine, by such vile, bold, and daring Methods; to impose upon such as are not well capable to reason clearly or closely upon such a sublime Subject, that they may abhor the very Thoughts of it. I readily own, that whatsoever Notion infers any the least Imperfection in God, is unreasonable and worse than false. But let the Account I have given of this Doctrine, be but duly and unbiassedly considered; and then tell me, if there is any Thing so dishonourable to God, or unreasonable, in it: If there is, in which of the three Propositions, or Articles is it? Is it in the first, when it is said, that God decreed to permit *Adam's* Fall? But you must own, that he did permit it, *that is*, that he did not prevent it, if you own that *Adam* did fall; and consequently you must own, that God decreed to permit or suffer him to fall; for it is highly absurd to say, that he did permit it without determining to permit it; that is the same Thing as to say that he took no Notice of it at all, till it was done; that it never once came under the View of his all-comprehending, all-discerning Mind, how *Adam* would behave himself in such Circumstances as he was in, when he did transgress, if left merely to his own Use of his original Powers: But this is to deny God's infinite and boundless Perfection. Well then, if he had this View and Knowledge of what *Adam* would do in such a Case, if thus left to himself; *that is*, that he would sin; he determined either to hinder or suffer it, to prevent or permit it. It is manifest he did not determine to prevent it, for if so, it would not have been: And his not deter-

determining or decreeing to prevent it, when he infallibly knew it would be if he did not, was decreeing to permit it. And then, upon this Decree to permit the Fall, proceeded God's certain Foreknowledge of it, as future. Moreover, this permissive Decree, and Foreknowledge of Man's Transgression and Apostacy, plainly appears from God's having foreordained a Redeemer before the Foundation of the World, as according to 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20. And now, seeing these Things are plainly so, viz. That God did thus determine to permit the Fall of Man, which, in his perfect and boundless Knowledge, he saw would be, if he did not hinder it by his immediate, super-added Influence; and consequently foresaw it, as a Thing that would surely be; so plain, that he must have a strange Art of managing his Reason, who will carefully follow these few Steps I have here taken, and not be constrained to yield his Assent: Then, surely, one would think there was more Reverence and Honour due to the great and glorious Majesty of God, than for any poor Worms of the Dust to bring in their bold Charges against him here, and say, that for these Things he is the Author of Sin, either in that he created Man at all, or in that he did not prevent his Sin, when he could have done it. *is't he not, O Man, that replieth against God?* Surely, it becomes us to entertain more honourable, exalting Thoughts of God, than to give the least Way to such a vile Suggestion; even supposing our poor Mole-eyes should not be able to discern, to our Satisfaction, how it could be otherwise. We may, on the one hand, be clearly assent of God's permissive Decree, and certain Foreknowledge of Man's Sin; and, on the other hand, as well assured, that he is essentially and infinitely holy: And though we should not be able to reconcile these together, yet he can; and that ought to silence and satisfy us: It does not well befit us to put ourselves upon a Par with him; and think that he can know nothing but what we must know too. But yet, I see no Need of leaving the Case at this Issue neither: For how unreasonable and ridiculous is the Ground of the Charge?

God

God did not purpose and determine to prevent *Adam's* Sinning, when it was easy to his Power to have prevented it; well, and what then? Did not the Lord give him sufficient Power to have prevented it himself? And was not this enough to free the kind Creator from all Blame in the Case? Cannot God make a Creature perfect, and complete in its Order and Rank, endowed with full Ability and Power to preserve its Glory untainted, and put it in a State of Probation and Trial, without a criminal Charge? Must he be called to answer at the Creature's Bar, for its own Miscarriage and voluntary Rebellion, in such a Case? Indeed, if we maintained that God did not give *Adam* sufficient Power to preserve his Fidelity, and withstand the Temptation; or that God, by his immediate Energy, overpowered him to a Compliance; then, I confess, there would be no standing before the Argument: But, as we assert no such Thing, nor any Thing that will afford such a Consequence, how unfair and inexcusable is it, to give out as if we did: Which is the Method of too many, either ignorantly or wilfully. And let me observe, that the *Arminians*, yea, Men of all Sorts of Religions in the World, are no less obliged to answer this Difficulty than the *Calvinists*; for they must all acknowledge that there is Sin in the World, and that God has permitted it, otherwise it could not be; yea, you must acknowledge yourselves to have been guilty of Sins, and such as you might have avoided. But dare you lift up your Face before God, and say to him, ' I have done many Evils, ' even such as I had Power to refrain; but they are thy ' Sins, and not mine, because thou didst not keep me from ' them.' Would not your own Reason confound you with Shame, at the Thoughts of such a male-pert, senseless Speech to God? As little Reason is there, whatever less, for charging the righteous God in the Case of *Adam's* Transgression.

Or, is it Matter of just Prejudice against this Doctrine, that Mankind are said to have been considered, in the divine Decree, as universally fallen in *Adam*, in Consequence of his Breach

Breach and Violation of the Covenant of God, wherein he was appointed the Covenant-Head and Representative of his Posterity? But, sure, yourselves must acknowledge that all Mankind did fall in *Adam's* Transgression, if you profess to believe the holy Scriptures: So long as the Fifth Chapter of *St. Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans* stands in the Bible, it will be impossible, with any Face of Modesty, to deny it; where we are told, that *by One Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.* And, that *by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation.* When you say, that all Mankind are recovered again out of the Condemnation and Ruin which the Sin of *Adam* brought upon them, by Jesus Christ; is it not an Acknowledgment that they were all once fallen, and ruined by it? And inasmuch as yourselves acknowledge it was so, you must acknowledge it was reasonable, and no way inconsistent with the Perfections of God, that it should be so; or else you say, point blank, that God was, at least once, unrighteous. And now, seeing Mankind were fallen in *Adam*, which God's glorious Perfections will not suffer us to think it was any way unreasonable or unjust in him; it necessarily follows, that it would have been no way unreasonable or unjust in God, if he had so pleased, to have left them all in that fallen State, without restoring any. Seeing there was once a plain Forfeiture of all Rights and Privileges, according to Law and Justice, it was at the free Pleasure of the great Lawgiver, to bestow them again upon any or not; unless you will say that our Recovery by Christ was not of free and mere Grace, but what God was bound to order and bring about, or else oppose his own Nature, and be unjust; and so, that herein he did what we have no Reason to thank him for: Which to say is not only a gross Inconsistency in itself, but such an Impiety against God, that few, I believe, would be so bold as to venture upon it. It is ridiculous to talk of our being *redeemed* by God out of a miserable State, which it was unjust for him either to suffer us to come into, or yet to leave

us in. There is no Need of a Mediator and Redeemer in such a Case. Then indeed Christ is dead in vain. Thus far we have made our Way clear. Well then, I say again, if it would have been no way unbecoming God, if he had so pleased, to have determined to leave all Mankind in that fallen State; no Man will say, who duly considers what he says, that it would have been any way unbecoming him, had he so pleased, looking upon them in this fallen, guilty, apostate State, to have made this Distinction among them, in his eternal Purpose, which I am defending: And so the proper Doctrine of Predestination, in the right Notion of it, must be owned to be entirely reasonable; and the very Method, for what we know, that God (unless he has told us the contrary) was pleased to take.

But, to make all this yet clearer, I would give this farther brief Account of the Reasonableness of Mankind's partaking in the sad Fruits of *Adam's* Transgression. I would account for it from his being set up as their public Head and Representative, in the first Covenant. If this Constitution and Appointment of God was reasonable, then all that was natively consequent upon it, according to the Tenor of it, must be so too. To make it appear, that this Constitution was every Way just and reasonable, let it be considered, that it was in its own Nature adapted and directly calculated to the great Good and Advantage of Mankind; securing to them a confirmed State of Innocence and everlasting Happiness, upon their first Father's continuing obedient, so long as God saw fit to leave him in a State of Probation and Trial; so that none of them would have been any more in the Danger of a probationary State for themselves. *Adam* was sufficiently impowered to manage this great Trust, endowed with full Ability to keep the Covenant; yea, with as full as any of his Offspring would have had, had they been to pass a Time of Trial for themselves: And his Motives to Care and Watchfulness were as strong as theirs could have been, having his own eternal Interest as much engaged in the Case as theirs; so that their whole Stock, all their

everlasting Concerns, were every whit as safe in his Hands as they would have been in their own. And seeing their Case was, this Way, as safe as if it had been in their own Management; and there was a rational Prospect of a glorious, unspeakable Advantage by it, though there was an awful Evil on the other hand, in Case of Disobedience; yet, since the rational Hope, on the one hand, was far greater than the Danger on the other, it was surely a reasonable, wise, and good Plan; and which, I am satisfied, we would all have admired, and praised the glorious God for, had our Representative fulfilled his Part of the Covenant, and we now been enjoying the happy Consequences of it. If so, then how unreasonable and wicked must it be now, to quarrel with the Scheme and its glorious Author, on the Account of it, because it has eventually proved, through our Trustee's Default, to our Disadvantage? If it would have been just and altogether right, had he obeyed; does his Sin and Disobedience make it wrong, and unjust? One Thing more may be observed here, to free the Subject of all Misapprehension, *viz.* That it is not imagined, that the same Degree of Punishment is justly due to *Adam's* Posterity, merely on the Account of his Transgression, which was due to himself for it. Thus far only is certain in this Matter, that beside our being exposed by it to the various Miseries of this Life, and Death itself, we lost all Right and Title to the Life and Happiness which God promised in the Covenant, and the glorious moral Image of God in our Souls, *viz.* our original Righteousness: So that instead of being now naturally holy and upright, we are naturally depraved and sinful; which is the awful Foundation and Spring of our numberless actual Transgressions, whereby we deserve an awfully aggravated Condemnation: I say, Persons, for their actual Sins, though they flow from their original Corruption, as the Spring and Fountain of them, deserve an awfully aggravated Condemnation, or unspeakably greater than the Law denounces only on the Account of *Adam's* Transgression; inasmuch as that Man or Woman cannot be found,

of whom it could justly be said, that they had never been farther guilty of actual Sin, than what was absolutely unavoidable from the original Depravity of their Nature. These Things may suffice, to evince the Reasonableness of the Doctrine of all Mankind's being fallen in *Adam*; and of their being considered as such, in the Decree and Purpose of God concerning their eternal States; which, as has been already shewn, proves the Reasonableness of the Doctrine of Predestination; forasmuch as God might justly have determined, either to save none, or to save all, or to save only a Part, as he pleased.

But farther, If any should yet be unwilling to yield the Reasonableness of Mankind's being so disinherited of all their spiritual and eternal Privileges; and their being liable to such a State of Misery, by *Adam's* Sin and Disobedience; whatever temporal Calamities they might in Justice and Reason be exposed to by it: I would prove the Reasonableness of the Doctrine I am chiefly insisting upon, from Principles which they must unavoidably grant, if they are not lost to all the common Sense of Mankind. You must own, that all Mankind, except Infants, have actually sinned, whether you own it to be the Effect of *Adam's* Sinning or not; *All have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God*: That it is so, in Fact, is too notorious to be denied. Yea, you must own that Mankind are naturally inclined to Sin, and have a strong Bias and Propension that Way: These Things you must confess, account for them how you will: And I am apt to think, the Scripture Account, resolving the universal Depravity and sinful Propensions of the human Nature, into the Transgression of our first Parent, as the Cause, will answer full as well as any you can give: It will be as satisfactory as either *Plato's* pre-existent State in the Stars, or the eternal evil Principle of the *Manichees*; or yet the Imitation and Example of *Pelagius*. However, that Mankind are so universally guilty of Sin, let it come how it will, is but too manifest. Moreover, you must grant that they justly deserve Punishment for their Sin, from the sovereign Lawgiver

of

of the rational World; to say otherwise, is to say that Sin is not Sin; Sin must be as good as Obedience and Duty, if the Sinner deserves no worse for it; which is an Absurdity a little too big to swallow, that takes away all Distinction between moral Good and Evil, and destroys all the Notions of Justice in the World. You must also grant, that God, from all Eternity, certainly foresaw all the Sins of all Men, unless you have a God like yourselves, who knows now, what he did not know before, by Information from others. Now, lay these few Things together, and then see, if it does not follow, by an unavoidable, logical Necessity, that God might justly have decreed, and purposed from everlasting, to punish the sinful, disobedient Children of Men, and not to save any of them out of their guilty State: For if God from everlasting foresaw that they would deserve to be thus cast off and punished, then he might justly determine to deal so by them; unless you will say, it was unjust for him to determine to do what was just to do. And is the Justice of his determining to punish a Part of them only, according to the Rules of governing Justice, less conceivable, while he determines to save the rest, in a Way agreeable to the Glory of his Majesty and Government, through the Mediation and Redemption of his eternal Son? Thus you may see, the Denying of *Original Sin* does not overthrow the Doctrine of Predestination: all that is gained by it, is a Certainty that all such as die in their Infancy, were elected to eternal Life: But then, they were not chosen in Christ, a Redeemer, nor are they brought to Happiness through his Redemption; which is a Notion that does not chime very well with the Scriptures, which every where represent the Atonement of Christ as the only Way of eternal Happiness, to any of the human Progeny: Which, I think, is a farther evident Proof of *Original Sin*. And thus, I think, I have sufficiently cleared the first Proposition.

2. In the next Place, Is there any thing so horrid in the second Article? *viz.* That God's Decree and Purpose, to save any of the fallen, apostate Race, was not founded upon his

his Foresight of their good Works, and diligent Endeavours, as the Cause of it; but was purely owing to his own sovereign Pleasure and Grace. This is a Sentiment so far from being unreasonable, that I think the contrary is plainly so, absolutely considered, viz. That the imperfect, corrupted, and altogether selfish Endeavours of rebellious, guilty Creatures, should be of such high Price with God, as necessarily to determine him to save them; so that he would be unjust, if he did not thereupon design and effectuate their Salvation. Is this a Notion, either so very reasonable in itself, or honourable to God? And yet this is the Principle that must be maintained, if the Doctrine I am defending, be charged with being in itself unreasonable. To manifest a little the Unreasonableness of such a Notion, I would ask, If an entire and perfect Obedience to the Law of God, without the least Defect, would be any more than our Duty to him, as he is such a glorious Being, and we his Creatures? If it would not, (and no Man in his right Wits will say otherwise) then how can the very imperfect, the every way corrupt, and contemptible Obedience, that is performed by guilty Sinners, make it so necessary for God to pardon their past Disobedience, as that he would be unreasonable and unjust, if he did not? According to this Principle, Pardon would not properly be Pardon; it would not be an Act of mere Grace, and rich Mercy, but of just Debt. But who is there that has the Front to demand it, as such for all the good Works that ever he did? I believe you would find hard Work of it to bring the Notion into Practice, and very formally tell the great God, that ' though you had sinned
' against him, and contemned his Authority; yet you had
' done so well since, that you would not now be beholden
' to him for Pardon, you claimed it as your due, on the
' Score of his essential Equity, which, he would be unjust,
' if he refused.' It is, moreover, a Notion that entirely supersedes and takes away all Necessity of Christ's Atonement and Satisfaction. What Need of such a Propitiation and Ransom, if any thing that guilty Sinners could do, could render

tend it unjust in God, not to save them? And now, seeing these Things are plainly so, it as plain and necessarily follows, that it was no way unreasonable, nor unbecoming any of the divine Perfections, for God to make his own sovereign, absolute Good-will and Pleasure, the Rule of his Determinations, of dispensing his saving Mercies to any fallen, guilty Sinners; and not their Works or Endeavours. Yea, I will add, it is highly presumable from Reason itself, and seems to be its very Dictate, that this was actually the Way of God's Proceeding in the Case; as what was most suitable to his independent Sovereignty, for the maintaining, and Illustration of his exalted Glory; and to abase the Pride of all Fleth, that none should glory in his Presence; but as it is written, *He that glorieth, should glory in the Lord alone*: That his redeemed and saved People should for ever ascribe the *whole Glory and Praise* to his sovereign, free, distinguishing Grace. This Method, in the Case, was proceeding like a God; as becomes the supreme JEHOVAH: Exalts both his own Glory, and the Happiness of saved Sinners, to the highest; while they are ever sensible, that as he might justly have saved none, so they have nothing to ascribe to themselves in the Matter, why he saved them more than any others. Hence their Hearts beat high with the tenderest, sweetest Resentments of Love and Wonder, with the highest Ascriptions of Glory and Praise, to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the *Laus*, for ever and ever. So that, I believe; this Doctrine suits best with the Language of Heaven, however it be relished on Earth. If we consider the hateful, horrid, and criminal Nature of Sin, what can there be in any Sinner to engage to him the Love and Favour of a God of infinite Holiness, and incomprehensible Majesty; in whose Sight the Heavens are not clean; who *charges his Angels with Folly*? Now, though all these Considerations make it plainly appear, that it is every way reasonable, yea, most becoming the adorable Majesty of God, that the Reason of his appointing any fallen Sinners, in particular, more than others, to eternal Life, should be wholly

resolved

resolved into his sovereign Pleasure; that it should be entirely founded in himself, and not at all in them: Yet I am apprehensive that here lies the main Ground of the Quarrel; for though Sin has made Man extremely poor, it has not made him humble, but much to the contrary; the unbroken Pride and Haughtiness of Sinners Hearts, will not allow it to be right or equitable at all, that it should be altogether at the free, sovereign Pleasure of God, whether to save them or not; unless they have it in their own Hand, they will quarrel with God himself; although they deserve not so much as the least Ground for Hope that ever he will save them. It would surely better become such Hell-deserving Rebels as we, to be so humbly sensible of our vile Iniquities, as to acknowledge God's sovereign Right to dispose of us as he sees fit; that if he should abandon us to Misery for ever, it would be but just and right, notwithstanding all that ever we could do; and if he saves us, it will be an Instance of the most glorious, free, sovereign Grace and Mercy, which he might righteously have denied. But these Things may suffice here, to shew that this Part of the Doctrine also stands free of all unreasonable Absurdity, and unbecoming Reflections on God. And if you would have the whole Evidence again in a narrow Compass, you may take it thus: God, the great Creator and Upholder of all Things, is the rightful Lawgiver and moral Governor of the reasonable World; considering the infinite, boundless Glory and Perfections of his Nature, and his Right in and over us, as his Creatures, our Obligations of Love and Duty to him are inconceivably great and infinite: Hence Sin and Disobedience against such infinite Majesty, and Obligations, is infinitely evil; deserving the Sinner's everlasting Rejection from God, with a super-added positive Punishment. All Mankind, through the Sin and Disobedience of their first Parent, are become destitute of original Righteousness, and all Rights to the Life and Happiness promised in the first Covenant; and all such as are preserved to Years in the World, have sinned actually in their own Persons, and that far be-

yond what was absolutely unavoidable from their original Depravity; whence they in Justice deserve a far greater Punishment. God had as clear and certain a Knowledge of all this Apostacy, and Sin of Mankind, from all Eternity, as after it actually came to pass; so that in his Decrees concerning them, he considered them as in such a fallen, guilty State, deserving the Execution of his vindictive Justice; and altogether insufficient to do any thing that might in the least satisfy its Demands, for the averting of the Stroke. And so, from the Whole, it clearly appears, that God had as absolute, just, and great a Sovereignty over them, to appoint any Part of them for Life or Death, according to his own Pleasure, as the *Potter has over his Clay, of the same Lump, to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour.*

And now, after all these Things, what can reasonably be said against the third and last of the Propositions? Which is, That God determined to leave a Part of these guilty Sinners (*viz.* those whom he did not chuse to Salvation) in their fallen guilty State; and to execute Justice upon them for their Sins. To say, that this is unjust, &c. is to say that Justice is Injustice, &c. All I shall farther observe here upon it, is, how injurious and unfair Treatment it is, to give out, as too many that oppose the Doctrine, do, as though we maintained, That God doomed Men to everlasting Perdition, without any Respect to, or Consideration had of, their Sin. We say, That the Reason why God chose some, and rejected others, *that is,* these rather than those, was not because of the greater Goodness of the one Part, and greater Sinfulness of the other, for all were *Clay of the same Lump,* without any Difference of this Kind among them, amounting to such Value, but *because it so seemed good in his Sight.* We assert, that none are doomed to everlasting Perdition, but for their Sin: But then, it is not the Reason of the Difference that is made between them and those that are chosen to everlasting Life.

Now, though what has been already hitherto said, in explaining and vindicating the Doctrine of Predestination, might

might sufficiently furnish a careful, understanding Reader, with satisfactory Answers to the Objections that are usually supposed to be deduced from Reason against it; yet, for the more full Satisfaction of all, I shall a little consider them particularly.

One Objection, that makes a mighty Noise in the World, is, That *it makes God the Author of Sin.* - But it is as easy for me to deny this, as for the Objector to assert it; and asserting is all he can do, if he obliges himself to urge it against the Doctrine, only as I have represented and explained it in the preceding Pages. Let such Objectors shew us what Part of it is justly liable to such a Charge; and how it contains or infers any such Blasphemy: Does it make God the Author of Sin, to say, that he decreed to suffer *Adam* to sin; when in the mean time we assert, that he gave him sufficient Power not to sin; and only suffered him, without any Compulsion, to abuse his Liberty? How ridiculous and senseless is such a Charge for this? Such Objectors seem to think, or else to be willing to have it thought, that we maintain, that God either did not afford *Adam* sufficient Ability to persevere, or that by his superior Power he forced him to sin. But let their Slander die with them. Yet, I think I have met with an Author that pretends to prove this vile Absurdity consequent upon the Score of bare Permission. This, indeed, would be a rare Art, could he make it do, to free the whole World of the Blame of Sin all at once; for if God cannot so much as permit Sin, without being the Author of it himself, then I think we are pretty clear, and all the Devils too. He proves it by a Simile: *Suppose a Man to be standing on the Top of a very high Wall, holding a Child over it by the Arm; well, he does not press it down, or force it to fall; but only lets it go, and suffers it to fall; (if it will, I suppose) and then the Demand is, Whether that Man was not the Author of that Child's Fall and Death?* I think it is no great Difficulty to answer the Question: I believe none would pretend to vindicate such a gross Murder. But then I would demand, if the Cases are any way like one another?

If this Simile is supposed to be parallel to the Case it is brought to illustrate, then our Opinion must be, that God at first so upheld *Adam* by the Hand of his Power, as that it was impossible for him to sin; and then withdrew his Hand from him, so as that it was impossible for him not to sin: Whereas we assert the direct contrary of both. Before the Simile can be made in any tolerable Degree similar to the Case, many other Things must be supposed in it; particularly, that the Child is endowed with such a Power as that it is as easy for it to stand in the Air as to fall to the Ground; that the Man has a rightful Sovereignty and Authority over it, to put it in such a Situation, and make it its indispensable Duty to stand where he has put it; that it has clear Knowledge of its Duty, and Warning of its Danger; and the like. These Suppositions, I believe, will pretty much alter the Case.

Another Objection, brought against the Doctrine, is, *That it makes God chargeable with the most unjust Cruelty, and sovereign Tyranny.* But I have already sufficiently vindicated it from this awful Charge; unless it be unjust Cruelty to decree Justice; which is a Contradiction in express Terms. Was it not just in God to make Man free, as well as perfectly holy and upright? To appoint *Adam* the Covenant-Head, and Representative of his Offspring, as it has been explained? To permit him to act according to his original Freedom and Liberty? To permit all Men to sin, as they do? And to punish some of them, whom he pleases, for all the Sin they are guilty of? If these Things are all righteous and just enough, was it unjust in God to fore-appoint and determine them? Would those, who oppose the Doctrine of Predestination, but fairly represent it, and speak to it still as it is, they would surely be ashamed to offer such a Charge as this against it: And of this themselves seem to be sensible; and therefore they commonly so manage the Objection, as grossly to misrepresent the Doctrine, as though it contained in it, that God, in his eternal Purpose, doomed a Number of Mankind to Destruction, without any Con-

sideration at all had of their Sin, whereby they would justly deserve it; or that he purpos'd, by his irresistible Power, to compel them to sin, that so he might damn them with some Colour of Justice. Whereas we disclaim both the one and the other, with the utmost Abhorrence.

Again, it is objected, that this Doctrine *makes God partial, and a Respector of Persons*; which is justly reputed a very ill Character in Men, and therefore cannot in the least belong to God. This Argument seems to be much depended on among the more Ignorant: But those who make so much of it, ought to consider what that *Respecting of Persons* is, which is so criminal in Men. It is their making such a Difference between Persons, in their Temper and Conduct towards them, as is contrary to Right and Equity; on account of some accidental Things or Circumstances, wherein they may differ from one another; such as Nation, worldly Dignity, Relation, Gifts, Bribes, or the like. And I really own, that Partiality and Respect of Persons, in this Sense, is very far from God. *He accepts not the Persons of Princes, nor regards the Rich more than the Poor, Job xxxiv. 19.* He is not only far from doing Injustice to any, but he makes no Account at all of the little Differences among them, of Nation, worldly State and Condition, or the like, as a Reason of any of his Dealings towards them: And it is in this Sense, that Respecting of Persons is always taken in Scripture, where-ever it is condemned in Men, or denied concerning God. And, sure, the Doctrine I am defending, is so far from inferring any such Respect of Persons in God, that it is at the first View directly contrary to it. Yet farther I would observe, there may be among Men a Favouring of one more than another, which you may call Respecting of Persons; or, if you will, Partiality, or by what Name you please; but it carries no ill Idea in it: Such, for Instance, as our Lord speaks of *Matth. xx.* where the Lord of the Vineyard gave to some of his Labourers an undeserved Bounty, while he gave to others only what Justice necessarily required: And this is brought in by our Lord Jesus himself,

for

for this very Case, (see ver. 16.) to vindicate God's making such a Difference among guilty Sinners, against such as make this Objection: And God's Defence here is unanswerable against all the Murmurings of such as he has not chosen to Salvation: *Friend, I do thee no wrong, whatsoever good I do to others; Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine Eye evil, because I am good?*

It is farther objected, that, according to this Doctrine, it is God's Fault, and not theirs, that any perish; inasmuch as it was ever impossible for them to be saved, seeing they were under an irreversible Appointment to Destruction, before ever they had a Being. But what has been said already, will easily answer all the Difficulty that may seem to be in this Argument, viz. That God appointed them to be punished only for their Sins, whereby they in Justice deserve it: And, surely, their Sinning is not any Fault in God; nor yet his appointing them to deserved Punishment for it: But seeing all their Punishment will be only according to the Demerit of their Sin, their whole Destruction will properly be of themselves, and their own Fault. But if any should yet foolishly think, that the mere Necessity, or infallible Certainty of the Event, would render Sinners free of all the Blame of their Destruction, because it was always certain, that so it would be in the End; let them try any other Scheme they please, and see whether they can rid themselves of the Difficulty: For whatsoever at any Time is, was always infallibly certain to be, whether you allow a Decree concerning it, or not: So that you must either deny that it is so much as possible for any Creature to perish justly at all; or you must own that the bare Certainty of the Event, that they will perish, does not free them from being the proper blameable Causes of their own Perdition: And its being certain by a divine Appointment, makes them no more clear of the Blame; because the Decree only is, to punish them for, and according to, the Demerit of their Sins; which Sins it lays no forcible Constraint or Compulsion upon them, to be guilty of.

Again,

Again, it is said, That *if this Doctrine be true, then it follows, that God creates Men to damn them.* This seems to be a ready-hand Argument, almost in every one's Mouth that denies the Doctrine.

Before we speak to any Words or Propositions, we ought to understand what is meant by them. Now all the Meaning I can conceive in this Sentence, [*God creates Men to damn them*] consistent with the Propriety of Speech, is, that their Damnation is God's End in creating them; the final Cause and Reason of his bringing them into Being: And this imports in it that God loves and delights in the Punishment and Misery of Creatures, merely as such, and for its own sake; which is a Thing most blasphemous to suppose of him. To suppose, that the Misery of any Creature, strictly and abstractly in itself, without any other Consideration, is agreeable and pleasing to God; yea, so agreeable, that he makes them for this very End that he may have the Pleasure of punishing them; is, indeed, to represent him like the very worst of Beings. But then I would ask, Does God's decreeing to punish Men for their Sin, as they deserve, for maintaining the Dignity of his Government, and the shewing forth of his infinite Holiness, Justice, and rightful Authority; does this, I say, bear in it any such Thing, as that he delights barely in the Misery of Creatures, so as to create them for the sake of it? How irrational is such a Consequence? But if any will yet insist on it as a just Consequence, I desire them to consider a little how they will free their own Scheme of it; which is every whit as liable to the Charge: Unless they have stupid Ignorance and blasphemous Presumption enough to deny God's infinite Understanding and Foreknowledge of all Things, it is just as reasonable to bring this Objection against the *Arminians*, as the *Calvinists*; and say, that *God creates Men to damn them*, if he knows before-hand that he will damn them; if he foreknew that they would die impenitent, in Unbelief; and thereupon has decreed their Damnation before he has created them. The Truth of the Matter is this, God de-

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creed to create all Men for the Manifestation of his own Glory, which is his End in all his Works; and looking upon Mankind in their Apostacy and Sin, he decreed to leave a particular Part of them in that State; and to punish them according to their Sin, for the Manifestation of the Glory of his Sovereignty, Holiness, and Justice, and the Right and infinite Obligations of his Authority, as a Lawgiver over his reasonable Creatures. This View of the Case gives no Ground for the Charge contained in the Objection. Though God foresees that Mankind will sin against him, cannot he, notwithstanding, create them; and determine to punish them, or any Part of them, as their Sin deserves, for the Illustration of his Glory aforesaid, without being chargeable with creating them just that he might damn them? To say so, is the same Thing as to say, that the Sin and Default of the Creature must bind up God's Hands from doing that which is in itself every way reasonable and right; and, in short, to say that right is wrong. But I presume I have been long enough on the first Method proposed for defending and confirming this Doctrine: And that, from what has been said, it sufficiently appears, at least, that it is a Doctrine, free of all unreasonable Absurdity in itself, and no way dishonourable to God. So that Reason has nothing to say, why it may not be so. And if in the next Place we find, that God's infallible Word of Truth declares that it is so; this ought to put a final Conclusion to the Debate, and fully determine the Controversy. If there is nothing in the Doctrine absurd, or contrary to Reason, why it may not be so; then, when a Passage of Scripture is brought to prove that it is so, we must not be put off any more with this Answer, That 'whatever the Scripture means, it cannot mean Predestination.' A great Asserter of the *Arminian* Doctrine, I think, as good as owns the Reasonableness of the *Calvinist* Doctrine, I mean Bishop *Burnet*, when he says, 'It is one of the Points wherein all agree, that God might have condemned every Man to have pe-
 ' rished

‘ rished for his own Sins •. If God might have condemned all Men to Perdition for their Sins, then surely much more a Part of them only. But farther, Reason not only readily allows, that God might have formed his eternal Purposes and Decrees; concerning fallen Man, according to this Doctrine; but (if duly attended to, without selfish Prejudice) it seems, as has been already hinted, powerfully to persuade us, that so the Case really is, as being most becoming God’s independent Sovereignty; and most expressive of the absolute Freedom, and glorious Riches of his Grace, to those that are saved; whereby the whole Glory of it is secured to himself, and no Ground afforded to the Hell-deserving Sinner, for any Thing, contrary to those humble Acknowledgments of his own Wretchedness, that well become him: Whereas the contrary Doctrine leaves room to the Sinner, to trust to something in himself, and ascribe something to himself, in the Matter of his Salvation. It sets too high a Value upon the despicable, religious Endeavours of corrupted Sinners; when it maintains, that God is thereby induced to receive the Sinner to Favour, notwithstanding all his Rebellions. And by thus representing the God, whom by Disobedience we have contemned and dishonoured, as so readily and surely reconciled to us on such Terms, it depreciates his injured Honours, and takes off from the infinite Malignity and due Horror of Sin. If Sin against God is looked upon as a Thing that is so easily com-

• *Expos.* XXXIX. *Art.* pag. 167, *Fol.* This great Man manages the Debate with the greatest Candor and Temper of any I have met with, of the *Arminian* Side; and yet even he is far from dealing so fairly as he ought, especially when he represents the Maintainers of absolute Predestination, as maintaining, that the Decree lays a compulsory Force on the Creature to *fn.* On this Misrepresentation much of his arguing for the *Arminians* proceeds. He lays hold on the *Supralapsarian* Scheme for it, and, without sufficient Evidence, pretends that the *Sublapsarian* Scheme ultimately resolves and terminates in the same, as so represented.

penfated;

penfated; and the Breach occasioned by it, fo readily made up, on fuch low Conditions: What mean, unworthy Conceptions are we like to entertain of God's infinite Perfections, and adorable Attributes, when the Contempt of them by Sin is reckoned fuch a fmall Matter? But,

2. I proceed, with more exprefs Evidence and Certainty, to prove and confirm the Doctrine from the divine Oracles, the infallible Scriptures of Truth. And here I fhall firft prove, That God has appointed and chofen fome of fallen Mankind to eternal Life and Salvation; and that merely of his own fovereign Grace and good Pleafure, and not upon the Forefight of any Goodnefs of theirs, whereby they would diftinguifh themfelves from others, as the Reason of it. Next I fhall prove, That the reft of Mankind, not thus chofen to Life, God has appointed to leave in their Sins, and to punifh them for them, according to their Deferts. And then I fhall anfwer fuch Objections as are fuppofed to be in the Scriptures againft this Doctrine, and give the true Meaning of fuch Scripture-Paffages, confiftent with it.

The firft Place of Scripture I fhall adduce for the Proof of *absolute Election* is *Acts xiii. 48*, where, after an Account of the Opposition made to the Apoftles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, at *Antioch*; and the ftrong Endeavours ufed by fome, to prejudice the People againft the Doctrine which they preached, it is faid, that *as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed*. The plain Senfe of thefe Words is, that notwithstanding all the Means ufed in that Place, to hinder the People from believing the Apoftles Doctrine, yet a confiderable Number did believe; becaufe God had ordained them to eternal Life, and fo gave them Faith to believe, in Spite of all the Arts of Men ufed with them to the contrary; and therefore it was impoffible for the Enemies of Chriftianity to keep them in Unbelief. And this is perfectly agreeable to the Senfe of our blefled Lord, *Matth. xxiv. 24*. when he fays, that *false Chrifts and false Prophets fhould arife, fhewing fuch Signs and Wonders, that if it were poffible, they would deceive the very Elect*: Clearly implying, that

that God has elected some to everlasting Salvation, and the necessary Means of it; whom it is therefore utterly impossible for false Teachers, with all their Powers, finally to deceive and keep from believing in the true Redeemer. It any should say, that the Reason why these were ordained to eternal Life, and had Grace given them to believe, was, because they were more religiously disposed, and better than the rest: This is not only contrary to the Scope of the Place, and the Mode of expressing the Matter in the Text, but we find in the next Verse but one, that there were some of the most religious that believed not; we are told that these Opposers *stirred up the devout* (that is, the religious) *and honourable Women, as well as the chief Men of the City, to persecute the Apostles*; but they could not have the same Influence upon those whom God had ordained to eternal Life; *it was impossible for them to deceive the Elect.*

Another very clear, and most express Passage to our Purpose, is in Rom. xi. 5, 6, 7. *Even so then, at this present Time also, there is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace. And 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. — What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.* Here the Apostle observes, that as in the Time of the greatest Dilection of the People of Israel, in *Elijah's Days*, God had reserved to himself a Remnant of *Seven Thousand*; even so, at that present Time, when the greater Body of the Jewish Nation had rejected Christ, there was also a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace, that did believe: This believing Remnant of the Jewish Nation, were those who were elected and chosen out of it, to Faith and Salvation: And this Election, whereby they were thus chosen, was an Election of Grace. Well, you will say, perhaps, you owe all this, that God had elected a Remnant of the Jews to Faith in Christ, and Salvation by him; but then the Reason of God's electing them was their good Works; whereby he foresaw they would render themselves more worthy of his

his Choice than the rest. But don't you see, that the Apostle expressly bars against such an Imagination, when he says, *it is an Election of Grace; and that if it be of Grace, then it is no more of Works: Or else Grace is not Grace.* He tells you, that *the Election of Works, which you contend for, is not the Election of Grace, which he asserts: If it be of Works, it is no more Grace.* An Election of Grace and of Works both, is a downright Inconsistency, if we allow St. Paul to be Judge. *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; there were many of Israel, who were left to Unbelief; that were seeking for Righteousness and Life as much as the others that were notwithstanding sanctified by Faith: Though they were thus equal among themselves; yet there was an Election among them that obtained it, when the rest were blinded; that is, left to their own Blindness.* I cannot see how the Doctrine of absolute Election can well be asserted in more strong, plain, and express Terms, than the Apostle utters for it in these Verses. It cannot be said, that all he means by the *Election of this Remnant*, was only God's Purpose of allowing them the Privilege of the Gospel, and outward Means of Grace: For all the rest had these Advantages afforded them, as well as they, according to the Words of our Lord, *Matth. xx. 16. Many were called, but few (i. e. a Remnant of them only) were chosen;* which manifestly shews, that they were elected to the saving Benefit of those Means, in Consequence of which they actually did obtain it: When the rest, who had the same Advantage of these outward Means, and were seeking for Justification and Life as well as they, did not obtain it; but were left in their Blindness and Unbelief. To conclude this Argument, the Apostle here asserts an *Election of some*, out of others, to *eternal Life*; and asserts it to be an *Election of Grace*, in such a full Sense, as that it cannot be of *Works* in any Sense. So that you may see here a flat Contradiction between the inspired Apostle and the *Arminians*. They say, *Election is on the account of Works foreseen*; he says, *It is not of Works, but wholly of Grace.* They say, *it may be*

of Works and of Grace both; he says, It cannot, without destroying the Nature of both.

For another Proof you may look as far back as the viiith Chapter of this Epistle to the Romans, ver. 28, 29, 30. — *All Things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his Purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son. — Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Those whom the Apostle terms *the Called*, according to God's Purpose, he tells us, ver. 28. are those *that love God*; and ver. 30. they are those who are *justified*; and, in the End, will be as surely *glorified*. So that by Calling here the Apostle means being *called effectually, to Faith and Holiness by the Spirit of God, or saving Conversion*. And he tells us, that those who are thus effectually called, and converted by God in Time, are so called by him in Pursuance of his preceding Purpose and Decree concerning them; for *they are called according to his Purpose*. He predestinated, or fore-appointed them *to be conformed to the Image of his Son; to be like Christ in Holiness*. And as this Purpose and Fore-appointment of God made their Sanctification and Justification infallibly certain; so it equally secures their final Glorification. For *whom he did predestinate, them he called, justified, and glorified*. And those who are predestinated, and fore-appointed of God to Holiness and Happiness, are said to be those whom he foreknew: By God's foreknowing them we are not to understand his having a bare speculative Foreknowledge of them, and of what they would be before their effectual Calling; for in this Sense he foreknew all others, as well as them; but his having had a special Love to them, and gracious Design to do them good, beyond the rest of Mankind: Or it signifies his foreknowing them as his Own; as those whom he had chosen, and distinguished for himself, in his eternal Purpose, according to what is said 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

his. Thus you see, this Place is a clear Proof of an Election and Predestination to Grace and Salvation; and that represented to sovereign, and entirely of God, as not to be founded on any Qualification in the Creature: Insuring both the Sinner's *true Conversion* to Holiness, and his *final Perseverance* to the heavenly Glory: And all this according to God's Purpose, and not their own Management or Behaviour.

The ixth Chapter of this Epistle is very plain and express on this Argument. In the Beginning of it the Apostle speaks with Reference to the Unbelief of the general Part of the *Jewish Nation*, their Rejection of the true *Messiah*; declaring his great Grief on that Account. And then in the 6th Verse he comes to speak to a Difficulty which seemed to occur, concerning God's leaving the main Body of the *Jews* to Unbelief, and so casting them off from being any longer his People, taken from his Word of Promise to *Abraham*, and often afterwards, that *he would be a God to him, and to his Seed after him for ever.* It would seem, at that Time, when God had cast off that People, all to a very small Remnant, and removed his Church to the *Gentiles*, as if he had broke his Word, and his Promise had not been fulfilled, or taken Effect. To this the Apostle answers, that that was no Argument that *the Word of God had taken no Effect*; and he clears it up, by shewing that the Word of Promise peculiarly respected those of *Abraham's* Offspring who belonged to the Election of Grace; saying, *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*; that is, they are not all that *Israel* which God had principally in his Eye in the Promise, who belong to *Israel* by natural Relation, or external visible Union: The peculiar *Israel*, or Children of the Promise, were those whom the Lord had elected and chosen among them to everlasting Life; and to these the Promise was always made good, whether they were more or fewer: The Promise, indeed, being a plain Intimation that a large Number, belonging to the Election of Grace, should be of *Abraham's* Progeny, was the Foundation of a visible Church among them, and gave them all a Right to the visible Privileges of it, till they

they made a Forfeiture themselves : But the Promise, in the full Import of it, by way of Engagement on God, related only to those whom he had chosen among them ; that this is the Apostle's Meaning here, appears plainly from all that follows : For the Illustration and Confirmation of this Case, he shews, that God put a great Limitation upon that Seed of *Abraham* to which he particularly designed the Promise, in his Words to *Abraham* himself, saying, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called.* Hereby the Lord signified to him, that there was a greater Number of the Election to be of his Posterity in *Isaac's* Line than in the Line of *Ishmael*, or of any of his other Sons that he should ever have, as he had several by a second Marriage ; and therefore God would take a more special Care of *Isaac's* Offspring. And, indeed, no other Account can be given for his distinguishing Concern about them more than the rest of *Abraham's* Posterity ; or for his affording greater Advantages to one Nation than another at this Day, but because of a much greater Number of his elect Ones being among them ; because he knows whom he has chosen. And then the Apostle comes to give another Instance of the same Kind, *viz.* the Distinction which God made between the two Branches of *Isaac's* Offspring, in the 10th and following Verses, *And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our Father Isaac ; (For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, The Elder shall serve the Younger.* Here the Apostle shews, that though God had said, that *the Seed of Abraham*, which he chiefly intended in the Promise of being their God, *was to be in Isaac's Line*, yet he intended one Part of *Isaac's* Seed more than the other ; which he intimated to *Rebecca* before her Twin-Children were born, when he said, *The Elder shall serve the Younger.* And thus he observes, there was a distinguishing Purpose and Decree of God concerning them, *(before they had done any Good or Evil)* according to Election ; which Purpose of Election is

not of Works, but of him that calleth, according to his own sovereign Pleasure. The Apostle's Meaning is plainly this, that God's choosing *Jacob*, and a great Number of his Posterity, more than *Eſau* or his Posterity, was not on account of any good Works to be performed by any of them, more than by the others, as the Reason of it; any more than it was on account of good Works already done, before they were born, when neither of them had done either Good or Evil. So, though the Apostle's Words very likely refer to the respective Posterities of those two Brothers, as well as to their own Persons; yet they respect their spiritual Interest more than their temporal; and signify, that God had many more of his Elect in the Posterity of *Jacob* than of *Eſau*, at least while they continued two visibly distinct Bodies: And therefore he took more Care of *Jacob's* Posterity, taking them into, and keeping them in, a visible Church-Relation to himself, while he suffered the Posterity of *Eſau* to degenerate into Heathenism and Pagan Idolatry; so casting them off from so much as any visible Relation to him, as his Church. And this directly answers the Apostle's Purpose; which is to shew, that God had a peculiar elect Seed among the Seed of *Abraham*, and of *Isaac*, which he principally designed, and referred to, in the Promise; and therefore it was no Argument that the Word of God had failed, or taken no Effect; though great Bodies of their natural Seed were neglected, and separated from his Church; and it was as reasonable to suppose the same Thing of *Jacob's* Seed. This Election, he asserts, was *not of Works, but purely of him that calleth*, as he pleases. And so, ver. 14, & seq. he goes on, to answer the grand Objection which he saw would readily be laid against the Doctrine, viz. That it makes God unjust, cruel, partial, and all what not: *What shall we say then?* says he, *Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* For he saith to *Moses*, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion.* He observes, that God had sufficiently answered the Objection himself, in these Words to

Moses,

Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19. Which clearly signify that *all bad sinned*, and justly deserved the Execution of his Wrath; and so were become Objects of mere Mercy, which he might bestow, or with-hold, according to his own sovereign Pleasure, without any Unrighteousness: And, indeed, this is the Answer that will stand for ever; and wherewith God will one Day silence all the Quarrellings of haughty Creatures. And in these Words he declares, that as he justly might, so he really has reserved this royal Sovereignty to himself, of bestowing Mercy to guilty Creatures, just as himself pleases; that *he will have Mercy and Compassion on whom he will.* From whence the Apostle clearly infers, ver. 16. *So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy. i. e.* The Election of any guilty Sinners is not at all of themselves, as being better inclined and behaved than others, but altogether of God, who bestows Mercy as he pleases; *who will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and who will have Compassion on whom he will have Compassion.* But I presume I need prosecute the Argument no farther from this Chapter; it is fully clear already, beyond all reasonable Contradiction, that it maintains the very Doctrine I have undertaken to prove.

And it is no less clearly maintained in the first Chapter to the *Ephesians*: *According as he hath chosen us in him (viz. Christ) 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, ver. 4, 5.* The Election which the Apostle here speaks of, was more than a Chusing of them to external Church-Privileges, even an Election to eternal Salvation; for he says, *God had predestinated them to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself: And (as he says Rom. viii. 17.) if Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ.* Moreover, he describes them as those that were in a State of saving Grace, ver. 3. say-

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ing, God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly Places, in Christ Jesus: And then immediately adds, According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy. Their being blessed with all spiritual Blessings in Christ, was according to God's foregoing Choice of them; it was the Fruit of a gracious and eternal Purpose to that End; and they were chosen, not because they would be holy, but that they should be holy; their Goodness was not the Cause, but the Effect of their Election. And ver. 5. they were predestinated, or fore-appointed, to be the Children of God, not according to their good Works, or Dispositions; but according to the good Pleasure of his Will; not to their own Praise, but to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace; as it follows ver. 6. And very expressly, to the same Purpose, he says, ver. 11. In whom also we have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will. We are not predestinated to the heavenly Inheritance, says he, according to the Purpose of one who proceeds according to the Will and Behaviour of others; but according to the Purpose of him who does all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.

Another Place of Scripture, very expressly affirming an absolute Election, you may see in 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. The plain Meaning of these Words (if they can be made plainer) is, as if the Apostle had said, ' God hath saved us, and effectually called us, out of a State of Sin to Holiness; and this is not to be ascribed to any Works or Endeavours of ours, as the Reason of it, but to his own sovereign Purpose and Grace, or free Favour; which Grace was made sure to us in Christ; by the Father's Engagement to him in the eternal Covenant of Redemption, before the World began.'

This is a natural and easy Paraphrase upon the Words, though indeed they do not need any: I am very sure, if they were found any where else but in the Bible, every one would readily acknowledge they contained the Calvinist Doctrine of Election. See also *2 Theff. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2. John xv. 16.* with many other Places of Scripture, which it is needless to mention.

But beside these direct and immediate Testimonies of Scripture to the Doctrine, it may be farther clearly proved from such Scripture Passages as declare the Absoluteness and Sovereignty of God's Proceeding in the effectual Calling and Conversion of Sinners to himself. If God, in the Regeneration and Conversion of Sinners, proceeds in an absolute sovereign Way, calling whom he will, without regarding their previous Motion and Behaviour, as the Reason of his Proceeding, on which it is suspended; then his Chusing of them must be absolute, and sovereign too: For actual Renovation in Time is just the Fruit and Execution of the eternal Purpose; and therefore the one must exactly answer to the other. Many are the Places of Scripture which plainly teach us that God's renewing and converting of any Sinners is wholly owing to his sovereign, distinguishing Favour and Mercy, and not to any distinguishing Goodness of their own. I shall just only select a few. What can be more express to this Purpose than those Words? *Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy, he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In the same manner the Apostle speaks in the second Chapter to the Ephesians: And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Treipasses and Sins; wherein, in Time past, you walked according to the Curse of this World, according to the Prince*

of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience. Among whom also we all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind; and were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace ye are saved.) Oh Sirs, Thousands that are now in Heaven, would have been in Hell, had God waited for their good Works, or preparing themselves for his Grace, before he had laid hold of them by converting Power. And what great Excellency is there in all the good Works (falsly so called) of an unregenerate Sinner, when he has done them, to engage God to save him? How clearly is the free, absolute Sovereignty of God, in effectual Calling, declared, 1 Cor. i. 26 to 30. For ye see your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things which are mighty; and base Things of the World, and Things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are; That no Flesh should glory in his Presence. Here you see, God calls just whom he will, among the guilty Children of Men: Some of the High and Mighty of the World; but more generally he has ordered it that those whom he designs to call, shall be poor and mean in all worldly Respects: And the general Reason is, to dash down all human Pride, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence; but that he that glorieth, should glory only in the Lord, ver. 31. And it is remarkable, how the Apostle alters the Term, after he had begun with Calling, he puts in Choosing in the Place of it; because temporal Vocation exactly corresponds to eternal Election, as the certain Consequent and Evidence of it; and the one is as

free and absolute as the other, so that it was equal which of the Terms he used. Numbers of Scripture Instances prove this Truth. What good Works of Obedience to Christ had *Paul* done? Or what good Dispositions had he towards him, before he reached him by his powerful Grace, to induce the Lord to chuse and call him? Were not great Numbers of his Nation, as good as he, left to perish in Unbelief? What were the good Works and Dispositions of *Abraham*, more than others, when God called him, as he was serving other Gods on the other Side of the Flood, with the rest of his Father's House? *Josh. xxiv. 2.* of whom the Lord says, *Isai. li. 2.* *I called him alone, and blessed him.* This Argument is so clear, and certain in all its Parts, that I think it would be quite superfluous to bestow any more Pains upon it.

Again, the Doctrine of absolute Election appears from the only Way of fallen Sinners Salvation, as it is laid down and declared in the Gospel, *viz.* The Way of believing only and entirely in the Merit and Righteousness of the Lord Jesus, for actual Reconciliation with God. The Argument here may be thus formed: That Doctrine which leaves no room for guilty Sinners to rest and depend on any thing but the Merit and Atonement of Jesus Christ only, for the reconciled Favour of God, and their Acceptance with him; (the contrary of which does give room to Sinners to rest, and depend also, on something else for Reconciliation and Acceptance with God) must be true, and its contrary false, according to the Scriptures: But the Doctrine of absolute Election leaves no room for guilty Sinners to rest and depend on any thing for the reconciled Favour of God, and their Acceptance with him, but the Merit and Atonement of Jesus Christ only: And the contrary Doctrine does give them room to rest, and depend also, on something else for it, *viz.* something in them, or done by them; therefore the Doctrine of absolute Election is true, and the contrary Doctrine false, according to the Scriptures.

The Scripture clearly teaches us to look only to the Merit and Attainment of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings for actual Justification before God, and Reconciliation with him: And it is as clear, that the Doctrine of Sinners being chosen in Christ, and fore-appointed to Justification and eternal Life through him, of God's mere, sovereign, free Grace, agrees very well with this; it cuts all the Sinews of Self-dependance, and leaves the Sinner no other Foundation to cast himself upon, but the sovereign Mercy of God, through a redeeming Saviour. And I think it is as clear again, on the other hand, that the opposite Doctrine, of a conditional Election, founded either upon the actual Existence of some Good in, or done by, the Sinner, or upon the Foresight of it to be in him, or done by him, lays a Foundation for Self-dependance, and so tends to keep undone Sinners from closing with Christ in the Way of the Gospel. This delusive Opinion makes poor Creatures swell very big with a Conceit of themselves, and what they do, when they imagine their Qualifications and Doings are of such Price with God, it makes them halve the Procurement of their Salvation between Christ's Righteousness and their own, which he will never bear: it makes them patch their filthy Rags, and menstruous Cloaths, to his complete, unspotted Robe, for a joint Recommendation of them to God's Acceptance. Indeed I cannot see a material Difference between *Arminian* Protestants and the *Papists*, about the Doctrine of Justification. And I find two great Bishops, one of each Sort, of my Mind. Says Bishop *Burnet*, in his *Exposition* (more properly *Perversion*) of the XXXIX Articles of the *Church of England*, Page 126. ' This Matter ' was so stated by many of the Writers of the *Church of ' Rome*, (after the Reformation) that, as to the main of it, ' we have no just Exception to it.' The Bishop of *Meaux*, in his *Exposition* of the Doctrine of the *Catholic Church*, Page 97, after he has been explaining their Sense of Justification, and Merit of good Works, says, ' And indeed we ' must acknowledge, that the learned of their Party (mean-

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‘ ing the *Reformed*) do not contend so much of late about
 ‘ this Subject, as they did formerly; and there are but few
 ‘ who do not now confess there ought not to have been a
 ‘ Breach upon this Point. But if this important Difficulty
 ‘ about Justification, upon which their first Authors laid all
 ‘ their Strefs, be not looked upon now as essential by the
 ‘ wisest Persons amongst them, we leave them to think
 ‘ what they ought to judge of their Separation; and what
 ‘ Hopes there would be of a Union, if they would but over-
 ‘ come their Prejudice, and quit the Spirit of Contention.’
 Thus we see *Protestants* and *Papists* cordially shaking Hands,
 and agreeing again in one of the most material Matters of
 Difference. And all the Contest remaining, is, which Side
 has made the Approach to the other. The one says, *You*
have come to us: The other says, *No; but you have come to*
us. And this, I believe, will be judged but a small Matter
 for Brethren to fall out about. However, I think I might
 venture, in a Court of Equity, to undertake to obtain
 Sentence, upon this Plea, in Favour of the *Romish* Gentle-
 man.

The last Argument I shall offer, for Confirmation of this
 Doctrine, shall be taken from the declared Scope and De-
 sign of God in the Gospel; which is (as it is highly reason-
 able) to secure the whole Glory of Sinners Salvation to
 himself; and for ever hide Pride from Man: He assures us,
 he has so concerted the Scheme, and laid the Plan, that the
 saved Sinner shall not have the least Ground to boast, or
 glory: Which evidently proves, that Election is not con-
 ditional, founded on Sinners good Works or Disposition;
 but absolute, founded on God’s good Pleasure. For upon
 the conditional Scheme, the justified, converted Person has
 it to ascribe to himself, that he, more than another, is in
 such a happy State. The Reason cannot be God’s distin-
 guishing Love and Grace to him, beyond others; but his
 own distinguishing Goodness: For the others are supposed
 to have had as much Love and Kindness from God, as he:
 Whence then came the Difference that is between them?

Not from God, for he made no Difference; but from himself. And does not this give some Ground for boasting of himself in the Case? To arrogate some Glory and Praise to himself? But the true Gospel-Way of Salvation, will not, in the least, admit of any such Thing. It is cross to God's declared View, and Design in it. See *Eph. ii. 8, 9. For by Grace ye are saved, through Faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the Gift of God: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.* The Way which God has laid for Sinners Salvation, is such, that it precludes and bars against all Boasting in those that are saved; and therefore it is not of *Works*, but through *Faith*, which is a Soul-humbling, self-emptying Grace, and a Gift of God's royal Bounty, which he bestows at Pleasure, *Rom. iii. 27.* After the Apostle has clearly laid down the true Gospel-Way of guilty Sinners Justification and Salvation, through the alone Righteousness of Christ, imputed in a Way of believing; he asks, *Where is Boasting then?* and answers, *It is excluded. Not by the Law of Works, but by the Law of Faith.* All Boasting is entirely excluded by that Method which God has established. And hence we may, with abundant Evidence, conclude, that that Doctrine which affords any room for Glorifying and Boasting, is not of God, being directly contrary to the Plan and Design of the Gospel.

Having now, I think, with great Clearness, from God's Word of Truth, proved the Doctrine of absolute, unconditional Election; I proceed, in the next Place, to prove, That those of guilty Mankind, whom God did not thus chuse to everlasting Life and Salvation through Christ, he determined to leave in their guilty State, and inflict upon them their deserved Punishment. And upon this Branch of Predestination I need be but short, because it is abundantly proven already, by the Proof of the former; for the one is a necessary Consequence of the other. If God determined to deal with guilty Mankind in such a sovereign Way as has been proved, making his own righteous, sovereign Pleasure the only Rule of his Proceedings towards them, then

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it necessarily follows, that such as he did not ordain to Life; he did ordain to deserved Death. To suppose an absolute and certain Election of a Part of guilty Sinners to be redeemed and saved, and yet, that the rest are not reprobated or rejected, are very inconsistent Notions. For, seeing all Mankind were looked upon and considered by God, in his Decrees, as under a righteous Sentence of Condemnation to Punishment for their Sin; then, sure, such as he did not determine to deliver out of that Condemnation and Ruin, were left in it, to suffer the Law. To say, *That they were all elected conditionally, though the others were absolutely,* is as contrary to those Scriptures that have been adduced, as to deny an absolute Election altogether. For they assert Election to be universally absolute, contrary to such a Distinction of a two-fold Election: It is a Notion, especially contrary to those Passages which declare the Absoluteness of *Effectual Calling* in all those that are so called: And those Passages which declare, that all that are saved, are saved in such a Way as excludes all Self-glorying and Self-depend- ing. But I proceed to offer a few other Proofs from the Scripture, for the Confirmation of this Head. And first I argue thus, Those who were not given in Charge by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him, were left in their Sins, and ordained to suffer the Law for them themselves.

But those who were not certainly elected to Salvation, were not given in Charge by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him: Therefore they were left in their Sins, and ordained to suffer the Law for them themselves. That those, who were not certainly elected to Salvation, were not given in Charge by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him; is plain from this, That all those, who were so given in Charge to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him, shall certainly be saved by him; and were certainly and infallibly ordained to be so. This is clearly proved from the Words of Christ, *John vi. 38, 39. For I came down from Heaven, not to do*
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mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's Will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose Nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day. These Words, I think, plainly say, that all such as are not in the End actually saved by Jesus Christ, if he be faithful to his Trust, were not committed to his Charge to be redeemed by him, and consequently they were left under the condemnatory Sentence of the Law.

Another Proof, that those whom God has not absolutely elected to Salvation, he has left to perith, and abandoned from his saving Care, you have *Rem. xi. 7.* where, after the Apostle has said, that *the Remnant of Israel, which God had reserved to himself, according to the Election of Grace, had obtained Righteousness and Life;* he adds, *And the rest were blinded.* Vers full and express to the same Purpose are those Words, *1 Pet. ii. 8. Christ is a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.* God appointed to leave them to Blindness, Stumbling and Disobedience; which Things are always consequent upon God's leaving any to themselves.

This Doctrine, of Sinners *Rejection* or *Reprobation* in the eternal Purpose of God, is indeed, I acknowledge, a very awful and solemn one; especially to those who do not find in them the comfortable Evidences of Election; and might reasonably excite in them a deep Concern about the great Concerns of their Souls, and stir them up to take no peaceful Rest, till they find in themselves the hopeful Tokens of God's electing Love, in a supernatural Work of renewing, sanctifying Grace in their Souls. But then let us take Care, that we do not charge God foolishly and wickedly in the Case, as if he were cruel and unrighteous. What, if God was willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, upon *the Vessels of Wrath, fated to Destruction,* and worthy of Death, who can justly find fault with him? What, if he had reprobated all apostate Mankind, as well

as all apostate Angels, who could say, he had done wrong? Every Mouth must have been stopped, all the World being guilty before him.

But I come to speak to the Objections, commonly urged from the Scriptures against the foregoing Doctrine, in both its Branches. And here I shall first take Notice of the Method, which those, on the other Side of the Question, put a main Confidence in, for the Overthrowing of this Doctrine; by going about to prove a *Universal Redemption*; that *Christ died equally for all, and every Individual of Mankind; for one as much as another.* This, they think, they can very easily prove from such Places of Scripture as speak of *his Dying for all Men; for all the World; the whole World; for every Man;* and the like. But these universal Expressions of Scripture will not amount to sufficient Proof of what they bring them for, for all so plain as they think they are for them. If such universal Terms of Scripture must of Necessity be understood in such a large Extent as they might seem to carry in them; we shall then as easily prove many other Things from Scripture which no Man of common Sense will believe to be intended in it: For Instance, as readily and plainly as they will prove that Christ laid down his Life for *every* individual Person of *Adam's* Race; as plainly, I say, will I prove that every individual Person of *Adam's* Race will have Praise from God at the Day of Judgment; from 1 Cor. iv. 5. where the Apostle says, *Then shall every Man have Praise of God:* As plainly and fully will I prove, that after *John Baptist's* Preaching every Individual of Mankind pressed into the Kingdom of God; from Luke xvi. 16. *Since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every Man presseth into it.* And by the same Rule you may have it proved that every human Creature spoke of the Faith of the Christians at *Rome*, Rom. i. 8. *Your Faith is spoken of throughout the whole World.* These few Examples, instead of great Numbers which might be produced, are sufficient to shew that such universal Terms in Scripture must be often understood under very

very great Restrictions; and quite in another Sense than our Opposites will allow, when they are used concerning the Death of Christ. Some of those Places of Scripture, where such universal Terms are used, concerning Christ's Death, and the Effects of it, only signify the Virtue and Efficacy of it, to those who partake of the Benefits of it. Some others signify that his Death was designed promiscuously for some of all Nations, and of all Ranks and Conditions of Men, as not confined to any one particular Nation, or Degree of Mankind. Others again only mean, that Christ is the only Saviour, that none are saved but through his Death. In the first Sense we are to understand *Rom. v. 18.* The Design of that whole Chapter is, to shew, That Christ's Death and Satisfaction is of *sufficient* Virtue for the Justifying and Saving of the *most guilty* Sinners. For this Purpose the Apostle observes the Efficacy of *Adam's* Sin, and breaking the Law, to the Condemning of those to whom it was charged and imputed, declaring, that much more is Christ's fulfilling the Law effectual to the complete Justification of those to whom it is imputed, notwithstanding their former Condemnation. And so, when he says, 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.* His Meaning is, That as the Offence and Disobedience of *Adam* prevailed to the condemning of those to whom it reached, and was imputed; even so the Righteousness of Christ was sufficiently effectual to the full Justification of those to whom it was imputed, from the Guilt of that Offence, and all others; so as to entitle them again to eternal Life. So that the Apostle's Design is not at all to run a Parallel between *Adam's* Offence and *Christ's* Righteousness, in the Extent of their Influence and Effects; but to compare the one with the other, as to the Efficacy of their Influence; in respect of which he observes that Christ's Righteousness is *much superiour*, as it justifies to Life, even after *Adam's* Offence has condemned to Death. And thus the Phrase, *all Men*, in

both Parts of the Verse, is to be understood with this Limitation, *viz.* *All Men on whom it came*: In the first Part of the Verse, *Judgment came upon all Men*, on whom it came, *to Condemnation*; i. e. so as to condemn them: In the latter Part, *the free Gift came upon all Men*, on whom it came, *to Justification of Life*; i. e. so as to justify them to Life. I presume, if *every Man* had been in the Text, instead of *all Men*, the *Universalists* would have thought it every whit as strong for their Purpose as they do now. And you may see how that this Phrase must be understood the same Way *Mark viii. 25 **. Where it is said of the Man that had been blind, to whom Jesus Christ gave Sight, that *he saw every Man clearly*; which cannot be understood of the Extent of his Sight, that he saw every Man that was in the World; but of the Strength and Efficacy of his Sight, that he saw every Man, whom he did see, clearly. It is indeed true, that *by the Offence of Adam Judgment came upon every Individual of his Posterity*, except the human Nature of Jesus Christ, *to Condemnation*: And this Verse is a clear and certain Proof of it. But then I conceive it is not the *Universality* of the Term here that proves it: It is as fully proved from the next Verse as from this; where it is only said that *by his Disobedience many were made Sinners*; because the Imputation of his Sin *at all*, is Evidence enough that it is imputed to *all and every one* that descends from him in the ordinary Way of Generation; seeing his Relation was the same to all, as the natural and common Parent of the human Race. But farther, there is this plain Reason, evincing that the universal Term here must be understood in this limited Sense, *viz.* Because, if it be understood in the large, extensive Sense in which the *Arminians* will have it, it will prove a great deal too much for them; not a *uni-*

* I accommodate myself here to those who understand only the *English* Translation: The Term in the Original is in the plural Number, *all Men*, as well as in *Rom. v. 18*. But it is equal as to the Sense, which of the Ways it is rendered.

universal, conditional Redemption, which they contend for, but a *universal, absolute Redemption and Salvation*. It will then prove, that every *Individual* of the human Race are *actually justified* to eternal Life, by the *Righteousness* of Christ: And we are sure, that *whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. viii. 30. Thus you see the true Sense of this Text, and manifest Design of the whole Context, destroys all Foundation of an Argument for *Universal Redemption*.

The proper Import and Design of those Words 1 *John* ii. 2. *He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World*, is, That the Death of Christ was a Propitiation, or Atonement, not only for People among the *Jews*, or for those who were then Believers in those Parts of the World; but also for some, be they more or less, in all Parts and Ages of the World: For he was to be God's Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth.

When the Apostle says, 1 *Tim.* ii. 6. That *Christ gave himself a Ransom for all*; it appears from the Context, that he means Persons of all Ranks and Degrees; for he brings it in as an Argument to enforce his Exhortation, to *pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority*. The same universal Term he manifestly intends in the same Sense, in the first Verse, when he says, *I exhort therefore, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men*. He cannot mean, sure, that they should pray for the Millions of Men that were dead, and gone to their own Place before that Time: Neither can he intend, that they should pray for such as the Apostle *John* excludes from an Interest in our Prayers, 1 *John* v. 16. *There is a Sin unto Death: I do not say, that a Man shall pray for it; that is, for such as are guilty of it: But he explains his Meaning to be for Men of all Stations and Degrees, the High as well as the Low; adding, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority*. When the Apostle says, *Heb.* ii. 9. That *Christ tasted Death for every Man*;
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the Meaning is, for every Man that is saved ; to signify, that *none* are saved but through Christ's Death, that his Death is the *only Purchase* of Salvation for any Man. In the same limited Manner we must understand the same Term, Col. i. 28. *We preach Christ, warning every Man, and teaching every Man*; that is, warning and teaching every Man to whom we have an Opportunity to preach. So 1 Cor. iv. 5: *When the Lord comes to Judgment, every Man shall have Praise of God*; that is, every Man that is saved, or has been truly godly. Another Place of Scripture which is brought in, to serve the Cause of *Universal Redemption*, is, 2 Pet. ii. 1. where the Apostle speaks of some *who should privily bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction*. But the Apostle only speaks of the Lord's having bought them, as what might have been hoped concerning them as well as others. The Gospel Revelation of a Saviour that died to redeem Sinners, affords Ground to all to whom it comes, to hope that his Death might have been designed for them as well as others, (though it was not intended for *all and every one* alike) seeing it does not point out the Persons in particular for whom he did not intend the Benefits of his Death. And so, concerning these Persons here, the Apostle mentions it as a high Aggravation of their Crime, that they should *deny* that Redeemer, of whom they had no Reason to conclude to the contrary but that he had *bought and redeemed them*, when they had the same Ground for Hope this Way that any others had before they had the special Evidences of it in renewing Grace.

Thus I have considered some of the most material Passages of Scripture which are advanced in Favour of *Universal Redemption*. And, I think, any considerate Person might see, from what has been said, that they come far short of answering the Design they are advanced for. And any other Passages of the like Strain are to be under-

understood the same Way. I have already mentioned a Place of Scripture, *John vi. 39.* which proves that all those who were given to Christ to redeem, he will surely save, and finally glorify; unless it may be said he was unfaithful to his Charge: For it was *the Will of him that sent him, that he should lose none of them, but raise them up again at the last Day;* and so put the finishing Stroke to their full Glorification: Which confirms a *particular* Redemption, in Opposition to a *universal*. In the xth Chapter of *John* our Lord speaks of a *peculiar People*, which he had both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, whom he calls his *Sheep*; for whom, he says, *he laid down his Life.* And *John xvii.* he speaks of those whom *the Father had given him*, as *distinct* from the rest of Mankind: For these, he says, *he prays, and not for the World,* ver. 9. And ver. 19. he says, *For their sakes I sanctify myself;* that is, it is for their sakes that I set myself apart to the Office and Charge of a Redeemer, and devote myself to be a Sacrifice.

I shall only farther point out, as briefly as may be, some Absurdities attending the Doctrine of *Universal Redemption*; and so dismiss it. If GOD sent his Son to die for Sinners, with an equal View and Design to save them all by it, intending as much the Salvation of one as another, without any Difference; then it will follow, that those who are saved, are no more beholden or obliged to God than those that perish: And it was not from him that they were saved any more than others, but from themselves; and so he shall not have the Glory of it; nay, he is rather beholden to them, for letting him have his End. Again, it will follow, that God in a great Measure comes short of obtaining his End and Design, and that in the greatest Affair that ever he undertook, so far as we are acquainted: An End which he was so intent upon, that *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the Death,* that he might obtain it. The End which he was intently set upon, was the Salvation of all the hu-
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man Race, and yet he is greatly disappointed of it; for great Numbers for ever perish. Now, how can any Man reasonably persuade himself, that God really proposed to himself, and intended such an End, and yet did not make it sure, and ascertain the Attainment of it? Was it not easy to his Power to do it? Has he not *the Hearts of all Men in his Hands*? Would it have done them any Injustice to have persuaded them by almighty Power, and made them willing to be happy? But seeing he has not done so, it is plain that the Salvation of all was not the End and Design he had in View in sending his Son into the World to die. Would he have left a Design he had so much at Heart, upon the precarious Bottom- (to say the best of it that any can say) of the *Free-will* of corrupted Creatures, that were no way well affected towards him, but awfully disaffected? Nay farther, it will follow, that it might have so happened as that he would have entirely lost his End altogether? For, for all so seriously as he intended it, and was set upon it; yet it seems he did not make it certain, no, not as to the Salvation of any one Soul, but left it altogether to themselves. One would think by this, that he was not very intent upon it, for all the great Pretences of some, by this Doctrine, to magnify his Love and Goodwill to Men. And it may be considered, which Doctrine magnifies the Love of God most? That which renders the Salvation of a considerable Number infallibly certain, or that which leaves it altogether uncertain, as to any; leaving it entirely to the *good Pleasure* of their depraved Wills? I believe it will be found that *more* will be saved in *that* Way than would have been in *this*: For I think, upon this Score none at all would be saved. However, it is plain that great Multitudes do finally oppose and contradict this supposed Intention of God; and what hinders but all the rest might do so too, according to this *universal* Scheme; and so not so much as one be saved after all; for all are alike opposite to the Way of Salvation, by Nature? But you will say, perhaps, there was no Danger of such a great Disap-
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pointment and Frustration of God's End as this; for he foreknew who would comply with the Gospel, and be saved; and so knew that he would not altogether fail of his Design. But this is so far from clearing the Doctrine, that it introduces a new Absurdity. For how can it be conceived that God could really intend and design the Death of Christ, and the Benefit of it, for those who he infallibly knew would never be Partakers of it? Is it not an Absurdity, may not I say Impossibility, in the very Nature of the Thing? To what Purpose was the Death of Christ designed for them; or for what Advantage? Not to save them, for that the Lord knew would never be: And every designing of an End includes in it some Degree of Expectation, which could not be in this Case. Was it to purchase sufficient Grace for them, that so they might be saved if they would? Well, but the Lord knew that they would not make the saving Use of it; and why then was it intentionally purchased for them? Sure, you will not say it was to make their Guilt and Punishment the greater. Let the Admirers of *Universal Redemption* consider a little, how they will digest and solve these Things. But to proceed,

The Opposers of the Doctrine of *Absolute Decrees* argue farther against it, from some Places of Scripture, which they suppose declare a general Will and Desire in God of the Conversion and Salvation of all Sinners; and how much he would be pleased with it: Which they suppose is contrary to his having purposed not to give to some the Grace necessary and sufficient for their Conversion, but to leave them to perish in their Sins. I shall a little consider the principal Passages which they advance to this Purpose, and shew that they intend nothing contrary to this Doctrine. One of them is, *1 Tim. ii. 4. God will have all Men to be saved, and to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth.* If all Men here be understood for every individual Man in the World, then God's willing them to be saved, cannot mean his having willed and pur-

purposed that they shall be saved; for then they all would be saved, because he can easily fulfil all his Purposes, and surely will do so. For *his Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure*, *Isai. xlv. 10. The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart in all Generations*, *Psal. xxxiii. 11.* But if the Words be taken in this unlimited Sense, the Meaning of the Place must only be, that the Salvation of *all Men*, in the Way of Faith and Holiness, would be a Thing very agreeable to the approving and preceptive Will of God, as he delights in Holiness, and the Happiness which is connected with it; and that Sin, for which it is that any perish, is disagreeable and hateful to his holy Nature: And yet, all this is no way inconsistent with his determining to punish Sinners for their Sin. But I think it is plain from the Context, that by *all Men* here, we are to understand, *Men of all Characters and Degrees*; for the Words are brought in as an Argument to encourage Christians to *pray for Kings, and for all that are in Authority.* And in the same Sense the Term *all Men* is intended in the first Verse, as I have made appear before.

Another Place is, *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise; but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* I think it is pretty manifest, that the Persons the Apostle speaks of here, are the *Elect of God*: The Persons to whom he writes these Epistles, are considered under that Character: In his first Epistle, Chap. i. 2. he calls them *Elect, according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and to the Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.* And in the first Verse of this Chapter we are informed that he writes *this second Epistle* to the same, or same Sort of Persons: And of the same he speaks in the Verse under our present Consideration, joining himself, as being also an elect Person with them; saying, *The Lord is long-suffering to us ward; i. e. towards us, the Election*

of his Grace, *not willing that any, viz. of us, should perish, but that we all should come to Repentance, and be called in.* The Apostle's Design, in the Words, is, to shew the Reason of God's delaying to put an End to the present State of this World, and bring on the general Judgment; in Answer to *the Scoffers, that, he says, should be in the last Days, saying, Where is the Promise of his Coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation,* ver: 3, 4. In Answer, I say, to these *Atheistical Scoffs,* he observes that God had done as great, unlikely, and unexpected Things already, as the shutting up the Scene of this World in such a solemn Manner, though they wilfully neglected to take Notice of them. He had not only, by the Word of his Power, created the Heavens and the Earth out of Nothing at first, but a long Time after had destroyed the Earth and its ungodly Inhabitants by a Flood of Water: And so it was no incredible, nor unlikely Thing, that he should, at last, burn it *with Fire at the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men;* and notwithstanding it had stood so long, in much the same State, after the People of God had spoke of this, as what would surely be, he observes that a long Space of Time with us is but little with God; and then says, *The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, (as some Men count Slackness) but is long-suffering to us ward, &c.* that is, The Lord's deterring the End of the World and last Judgment so long, is not through Forgetfulness, or careless Neglect of his Promise to that Purpose; but the true Reason of it is, that *all his Elect* may be brought in, *not being willing that any of them should perish, but that all should come to Repentance,* be converted, and saved; and therefore he will not come to Judgment at a Time when there are any of them on the Earth unconverted, nor until the last of the whole Number is fitted for Glory;

There is another Scripture that is always brought in upon this Head of Argument, *Ezek. xxxiii. 11.* where the

Lord declares, with the Solemnity of an Oath, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live.* When the Lord says, *He has no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked;* the plain Sense of the Words is, that the Death and Misery of Sinners is *not a Pleasure* to him in itself, or for its own sake, merely as it is a Misery to the Creature. But this does not say, but that their Death and Punishment may be agreeable and pleasing to him under other Considerations; as it is an Execution of Justice, and Manifestation of his own Glory. If it were not so, would he inflict Punishment upon any of them? Would he displease and make himself uneasy? And when he says, *That it is a Pleasure to him, that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live;* the Meaning is, that Righteousness and Holiness in his Creatures, and the Happiness consequent upon it, is the Object of his Approbation and Liking, a Thing in itself agreeable and pleasing to his holy Nature. But this, sure, is no Proof that he equally and alike designed the Sanctification and Salvation of all sinners. If it proved any thing this Way, it would prove that he designed it certainly for them all, if his Power could effect it.

The Words of our Lord, *Matth. xxiii. 37.* are often brought in upon this Head, where he says of *Jerusalem* *How often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and would not!* If we understand the Lord Jesus to speak he of his Willingness to have gathered them, with Reference his divine Nature, as God, the Words only prove, that Sinners Compliance with the Gospel, and turning to Holiness, is a Thing in itself agreeable and pleasing to God's holy Nature; Holiness being the Object of his Love and Complacence; that his Dealings with that People, in Course of his Ministry among them, tended in their own Nature to bring them thus to their Duty; and that their Unbelief and Impenitency was owing to the Perverseness and Corruption of their own Wills, as the Cause of it. Bu

we suppose him to speak of his Willingness merely as Man, in his human Nature, then I see no Inconvenience in allowing that it might signify an intense and passionate Desire in him of their Conversion and Happiness: But, surely, no such Passions, or uneasy long Desires, and especially for Things which will never be effected, are to be ascribed to the divine Nature. For my Part, I cannot apprehend what Sort of a Will and Desire for the Conversion and Salvation of all Men, it is, which those who deny *absolute Predestination*, suppose to be in God, any Way consistent with his Perfections: They suppose it includes much more than that the Holiness and Happiness of his Creatures is a Thing in itself lovely and agreeable to him; that it is his preceptive and approving Will that they should be holy, and consequently happy: Which is very consistent with the Doctrine they oppose, from this Topic of a general Will: And they cannot allow it to include so much as a real Purpose that all shall be sanctified and saved; because then all would be so; which is contrary to Fact: Or else God's Purpose would be frustrated, and he would come short of what he certainly intended should come to pass, which is highly absurd. But they seem to fancy a Sort of an uneasy Wishing and longing Desire in God for that which notwithstanding will never be; and if this be not to make God such a one as ourselves, I know not what is: Does it not argue God to be subject to the Weaknesses of Creatures? And not only so, but that he suffers himself to be made uneasy, and to be crossed in his Desires, by that which he could easily prevent? Which is what no wise Man would allow in himself: And therefore, though GOD may sometimes condescend to speak to Sinners in such Language as they use to one another, when they would express the Greatness and Ardency of their Desire for any thing; yet we are not hence to imagine that there are any such human Passions and Creature-Weaknesses in him: The Design of such

Such Modes of speaking in God, is only to signify how desirable and excellent a Thing it is in itself for Creatures to love, to obey, and honour him; and how much it is both their Interest and Duty to do so: And the Reason why this is expressed in such a Manner, as imports weak Passions in Men when they speak so, is, because it is the most suitable Way of Dealing with such Creatures as we are, best adapted to our Capacity and Condition; it is a Method that has the most suitable Tendency in itself to work upon and prevail with rational Creatures, expressing best to their Capacity the Excellency and Necessity of Holiness, and the horrid, hateful Nature of Sin; for though it is the supernatural Power of God's Spirit that prevails with any Sinners to be holy; yet, as a wise Agent, he makes use of the most suitable and best adapted Means for that Purpose, dealing with Men in a Way suited to their rational Nature, and human Capacities. Thus it is we are to understand the various Expostulations and Entreaties of God in the Scriptures.

As another Topic of Argument against the Doctrine of God's *Decrees*, the Opposers of it seem to think that *all Men* have *sufficient* Power to do that which is required as *necessary to Salvation*, and with which Salvation is *certainly* connected; or, at least, that they have sufficient Power to *ensure to themselves* such supernatural Power as is necessary for that Purpose: And this is what is commonly called *Universal sufficient Grace*. For the Support of this Opinion they refer to such Places of Scripture, in which God commands *all Men* where the Gospel comes, *to be holy as he is holy, to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, to make themselves new Hearts, &c.* Hence they argue that *all* have Power some Way to do these Things; because, they say, it would be *unjust for God to require more of Men than they can perform*. To this I answer, That these Men seem entirely to overlook, in this Way of Reasoning, the Ruin brought upon the human Offspring, by the Fall and Apostacy of *Adam*

Adam, the Covenant-Head and Representative of all Mankind: He, indeed, until he sinned, was furnished with *sufficient Ability* to do whatsoever GOD did, or ever should require of him; at least, had he not sinned, his Ability would always have been increased equally with his Obligations: There was a *full Proportion* between his Power and the Law he was under. And so it would have been with all his Posterity, had he *fulfilled* the Conditions of the Covenant; but as, by his Transgression, they lost *all* Right and Title to *that* Happiness, and Life of Communion with God, which was secured to them in the Covenant, upon his Obedience: So they lost God's moral Image, and the Power of holy Obedience; and it was at God's *free sovereign Pleasure* to confer Happiness again, and the Grace necessary to it, as he pleased: And as God was then under *no Obligation* to afford Strength answerable to the Law, so neither was he *obliged* to bring down the Requirements of his Law to the Level and Capacity of the fallen ruined Creature: Though Man, by his own Default, has lost his Power of Obedience, that is no Argument that God must lose his Right and Claim: The Creature's Sin, and Wretchedness thereby, cannot dissolve his Obligations of Duty to God: God's Law must still remain the same, as a perfect and eternal Rule of Righteousness, let Creatures change and alter as they will. If it be asked, *For what End the Law of God is set before us, and his Commandments laid upon us in his Word, if we have not Ability to fulfil?* I answer, *For various Ends*: To teach us what is our Duty to God; what we ought to be aiming at, and endeavouring after: To shew us our Sins and Transgressions; *for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, Rom. iii. 20. as the Crookedness of a Line is discovered by laying it to a strait one: To teach us our utter Inability to fulfil the Law, and obtain Life by our Obedience; (for which Purpose our Saviour referred One to the *Keeping of the Com-*

Commandments, Matth. xix. 17. whom he found big with the Conceit that he could do much) that so we may see our Necessity of getting Righteousness and Strength from Christ, a Mediator: And thus the Law is given as a School-master, to bring us to Christ; it is a Means whereby the Lord brings in his Elect to the Redeemer by Faith: And it is given as a Rule of Life to the renewed Children of God, to direct them how they are to honour and glorify him.

If it be objected to the above Account of Sinners *Inability* to do what is now required of them under the Dispensation of the new Covenant, that *Adam* had not a Power of believing in a Redeemer, or repenting and renewing his Heart, as having no need of it; and the Exercise of it being inconsistent with his State of Innocence; and therefore we cannot be said to have lost it in him, seeing it was not given him while he stood in the Character of our *Representative*. To this it may be easily replied, That though he had not his Power for such Acts and Purposes as these, in his innocent State; yet, had we, in our guilty State, that Power restored which he had, we would be able to believe in the Redeemer, to repent, &c. The Impossibility of his putting forth such Acts, was not from the Want of inherent Power, but the Inconsistency of them with his Condition: It was inconsistent with his State of Innocence, to have had any Occasion for administering Physic, to recover his Health; yet that is no Argument that he had not *sufficient Ability* for it.

I would just farther refer it to the Consideration of those who offer this Argument against God's *Decrees*, and yet, in the mean time, acknowledge, that *no Man in this Life can fulfil the Law of God perfectly*, how they are consistent with themselves: For herein themselves acknowledge that *God requires more of Men than they can now perform, since the Fall*; and, sure, they will not own that it is *so*, and say it is *unjust* too.

For farther Proof of this *Universal Power*, or *Grace*, they urge the Invitations of the Gospel to believe in Christ, and its Promises to such as do believe: Such as *Isai. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth*: And *Rev. iii. 20. Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock; if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, &c.* Such Invitations, they think, infer that there is a Power in Man to comply with them, otherwise they would be vain and needless. But this is a vain Argument: For, though Sinners are without Strength, through the Darkness of their Minds, and Obstinacy of their Wills; yet such Invitations are needful, to shew them their Duty, and the only Way in which they can ever be happy; and to afford them a Ground and Warrant for believing in Jesus Christ, and resting their Souls upon him for Salvation: By these Invitations, and Promises to Believing, the Holy Spirit encourages and persuades convinced Souls to close with Christ, as their Saviour, and cast themselves upon his Mediation and Atonement, with humble joyful Confidence. The Spirit of God, by his Power, brings a Sinner to believe in Christ, in a Way agreeable to his Nature, as a reasonable Creature; and so makes Use of the Offers and Promises of the Gospel, as the Soul's Warrant for laying Claim to Christ, as his Saviour, and believing in him for his Salvation. Likewise, these Invitations and Promises are of great Use for the Comfort of true Believers, shewing that there is a sure Connection between Believing and Salvation. When *Moses* tells the People of *Israel*, *Deut. xxx. 19. That he had set Life and Death before them, Blessing and Cursing*, and bids them *choose Life*; the Words may be easily understood in the same Sense with the fore-mentioned Passages, to signify that there is a certain and inseparable Connection between true Holiness and eternal Life, though this Holiness is the Effect of a supernatural divine Power, exerted

only *in whom the Lord pleases*: And the Lord proposes this Holiness, which is connected with Happiness, to Sinners Choice, to import the Reasonableness and Necessity of their chusing it; and that he may deal with them in a Way agreeable to the Nature of reasonable Beings. But yet, I think it is plain from the Context, that the *Life and Death* there spoken of, was *temporal Prosperity and Adversity*; which Life was promised to *that People*, upon their strict Adherence to the outward Prescriptions of the Law that was given them: And it will be readily owned that they might thus chuse and perform Obedience without *special renewing Grace*: And, in this Sense *Righteousness and Life* are to be frequently understood in the Old Testament.

It is farther argued, for this *Universal Grace*, from the Parable of the *Talents*, Math. xxv. But we are not to understand by these *Talents*, *Universal sufficient Grace*, whereby *all Men* are enabled to convert themselves, if *they will*; and savingly to renew and change *their Wills*: But other Gifts and Bounties of divine Providence, such as natural Endowments of Mind, good Education, Health, worldly Goods, outward Gospel-Privileges, and the like; which God distributes to Mankind in various Measures, *as he pleases*. Those who made such Improvement of *their Talents*, signify the *truly Godly*, who are *effectually* renewed by God's Power, *according to his Purpose*. The Person that made no Improvement, signifies *unconverted Sinners* who do not *sincerely* love and honour God. The Account taken of these Servants, at their Lord's Return, and his different Retributions to them, according to their *past Conduct*, are designed to teach us that the Lord Jesus *will surely come at last to Judgment*, that we *must all appear* before his Judgment-Seat, to give an *Account of the Deeds done in this Life*, and that *our past Behaviour here*, both in Heart and outward Practice, will be the *Rule*, according to which the *Sentence of Judgment* will pass upon us: Though the Reward of Happiness to the *Godly*, will not be given them for
their

their Godliness, as the Cause of it; yet it will be given to *them only*, who have been thus qualified and fore-prepared by the Lord for it; and that in different Degrees, according to their different Degrees of Care, Zeal, and Diligence in the Ways of God, after their *Conversion*. On the other hand, all the *Ungodly* shall be condemned to Punishment, according to the Demerit of their Works; and to different Degrees of Punishment, according to their different Deserts. And thus, the *Works*, the *Dispositions*, and *Conduct* of Men in this Life, will be the *Rule* according to which the *final Rewards* will be made at the *last Day* to all Mankind, though not the *meritorious* or *procuring* Cause of them to all, but *only* to the *Wicked*. These Things I take to be the very Scope and Design of the Parable; and so the *Universal Men* have no Service at all to their Cause from it. It is mere Trifling to ask, as some do, *If the Servant that was punished, had made us good Use of his Talent, as the rest did of theirs, would not have been as well accepted?* That is, whether finally impenitent Sinners would not have been accepted of Jesus Christ, as well as true Believers, and sincerely godly Persons, had they been true Believers, and sincerely godly as well as they? I am free enough to answer in the *Affirmative*: Had they been such, it would have been a certain Evidence that they had been elected to Holiness and Salvation, as well as the others; for true justifying and sanctifying Faith *is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God*, given according to his Purpose and Grace, which was made sure to all Believers in Christ Jesus, before the World began. But then the Question does not at all touch the Matter in Debate, *viz.* Whether unrenewed Sinners have had a sufficient inward Grace given them to be true Believers and godly Persons, as those who are really such. Considering that Sinners Impotency consists chiefly in their Enmity, their Inability in the Opposition of their Wills to God's Will, I think it is plain that *no Grace* is sufficient, but that which is *actually effectual*: Their Wills are not just in *Equilibrio*, in

an even Balance between Holiness and Sin, as much inclined to the one Side as the other, so as that they might bring their Wills to a Compliance with, and Complacence in the Ways of God, by their own Reason; or by the Help of some divine Assistances, which they might also reject: But their Wills are strongly set against the New-Covenant Way of Salvation, and the holy Law of God, in its spiritual Nature and Extent; and therefore, *No Man can come unto Christ, except the Father draw him*, John vi. 44.

Again, they argue in another Method from the general Calls, Invitations, and Offers of the Gospel, reasoning after this Manner: *It would, say they, be the highest Instance of Dissembling and Deceit for God to call Sinners to repent and turn from their evil Ways, with such Appearance of real Sincerity and Earnestness, if he had before infallibly decreed that a great many of them should not repent and turn (not to communicate the Grace of Conversion and Repentance to many, it should be.) And what greater Insincerity and Illusion, say they, can well be imagined, than for God to make such a general, unlimited Offer of Christ, and Salvation through him, as Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely; when he has already purposed not to give Salvation to many? How can such an open Declaration agree with such a secret Purpose? Would there not be a direct Opposition between his outward Expressions and inward Sentiments? Which is downright Falsifying and Hypocrisy.*

But all this plausible Reasoning, on which some of the greatest Patrons of the *Arminian* Scheme bestow a great deal of Eloquence, is grounded on a mistaken Apprehension of the Nature and true Import of these Calls and Gospel-Offer: God's Calls to Sinners to *repent and turn to him*, to *believe in Christ*, &c. are only so many Significations of what is Sinners Duty, and what is agreeable to God's holy Nature, pleasing and approveable in his Sight: These Calls

do not signify what is God's *Purpose* concerning Men, but what is their *Duty* to him; and that he loves Holiness in his Creatures, that *the righteous Lord loves Righteousness*: And so, in all such Calls and Commands there is an entire Agreement between God's Words and his Will signified by them: For he does indeed *will these Things*, as the Matter of Sinners Duty, and loves them, as agreeable to his own holy Law. This just View of the *many Calls* of God in Scripture to Sinners for their Repentance, and Conversion to Holiness, destroys *all the Force* of the Argument taken from them, as though they were inconsistent with God's secret Will and Purpose to leave *many* in their Sins without *converting Grace*; for they import *nothing* in their true Design contrary to it. And when God condescends to use Arguments and Expostulations with Sinners about what he requires, it is, that he may deal with them as reasonable Beings, and convert his *Elect* in a Way agreeable to their rational Nature.

As to the Offers of Christ made to all where the Gospel comes, and Promises of Salvation, through him, to all such as truly believe in him: It is most certain, that God does will and purpose to save all such as truly accept of his Son Jesus Christ, and believe in him, as he is proposed and set forth, in the Gospel-Revelation of him; for he declares that *all such shall be saved*: But then, we are to consider this Faith in Christ as *the Gift of God*, according to *Eph. ii. 8.* and a Grace of his *powerful Operation* or *Working*, *Col. ii. 12. Eph. i. 19. 2 Thess. i. 11.* bestowed *only* upon, and wrought *only* in those whom he has *chosen*; and therefore called the *Faith of God's Elect*, *Tit. i. 1.* And thus, the *Promises of the Gospel* run exactly parallel with the *Election of Grace*, and do not import any thing contrary to it. Indeed, to say that God does *not* really design to save *all* who shall believe in Christ, notwithstanding he has declared that *he will*, were to impute the *grossest Falshood and Deceit* to him; but there is no such Thing in the *Doctrine* which the

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Argument is brought against. It is true, the *Offer* of Christ, as a Saviour, is *made to all*, to be accepted and believed in, for their Salvation in particular, where-ever the News of the Gospel-Salvation is sent: But then, this *Offer* does not signify or import that God designed him, and the saving Benefits of his Death, *equally for all*; but that, inasmuch as all have *equal Need* of him, and God has not revealed, or any way pointed out who they are whom he has *not chosen* to Salvation through him, so as they might be known either to themselves or others, it is the great Duty of *all* to accept of him with *all their Hearts*, according to the Declaration concerning him, in the Gospel, *freely and willingly* to comply with the Way of Salvation through his Atonement, casting a fiducial Dependance upon him, *and him only*, for their eternal Life; for which Faith the infallible Promise of Salvation to all such as so receive him, is sufficient Warrant and Encouragement. And it was necessary that the *Offer* should be thus *universal*, when it was not revealed who in particular *were elected* to Salvation through him, that so the *Elect* might be brought to believe in him, upon a rational Ground and Foundation; for they could not know that they *were chosen* to Life through him, more than any others, before their Believing; and therefore could not have had a Ground for Faith to go upon, were it not for the Promise to *whosoever believes*, and the Declarations that it is *every one's Duty* cordially to comply, and be pleased with that Way of Salvation, through an atoning Mediator; and, upon the Encouragement of this Promise, to cast a Reliance, and their whole Dependance of their Souls for Salvation, upon him. In this Manner it is that the *Offers of Christ* in the Gospel are *general and universal*: Not importing that *he died* *for all*, or that he was *equally designed for all*, in the Purpose of God; but that, seeing *none* have any Reason certainly to conclude against themselves that they were *rejected* in the divine Purpose; and, seeing *Acceptance and eternal Life*, through Christ, is promised to *all* that believe; it is the Duty

of *all*, with their whole Hearts, to *embrace* him as he is proposed, and *believe* in him: And yet *none* will so believe in him but the *Chosen* of God, who are called according to his *Purpose*. And thus, as God is entirely consistent with himself in the Case, so are the Ministers of the Gospel consistent with themselves, in maintaining God's *absolute Decrees*, and yet making such general Offers of Christ, as a Saviour, to all that hear them, calling upon them to accept of and believe in him, using Arguments with them for that Purpose, and promising Life and Salvation, in his Name, to all that truly comply with the Gospel, and believe in him: And though they do not know the *Elect* of God among their Hearers, He does, and will apply this Gospel to their Hearts, so as to bring them to believe in Christ, and become *truly godly*. These Considerations, if duly weighed and attended to, I think, may be abundantly satisfactory in this Case.

There is another Argument, commonly insisted on by those on the other Side of the Question, taken from God's Appointment of a Gospel-Ministry, Ordinances of Worship, and Means of Grace in his Church, as if they were *altogether vain and useless*, on Supposition of such *eternal Decrees*. According to the Calvinist Doctrine of Predestination, (say say) *it is quite needless for Ministers to preach, and as needless for People to hear, or to perform any religious Duty whatsoever; and the Reason is, because they cannot alter the Purpose of God concerning them, whatever it be, do they well or ill; they will fare as well, let them live as they list, as if they did never so well; and so they had even as good take their Swing: Nay, it had been much better for all the Reprobate, that they had never had the Privilege of the Gospel; because, according to the Scripture, the Condemnation and Misery of those that perish, will be much aggravated by it.*

This is an awful Charge, indeed; and if it be just, the Doctrine is certainly most insufferable; which takes off all Restraints from the most profligate Course of Life, farther than

than what proceed from our temporal Interest in this World; and Arguments from private temporal Interest do often sway more to the most inhuman Crimes than moral Honesty. But I hope to make it appear that the Objection is *most false and groundless*. And to this Purpose, let these few Things be considered:

First, Supposing there were no Arguments for a pious godly Life, to be had from our own eternal Interest; yet there are Reasons of another Nature, of sufficient Weight and Force in themselves, to induce us to it, and engage us to endeavour after it. Is not the great God, who is infinitely good and glorious, worthy of the greatest Esteem, profoundest Subjection, and highest Adorations of all the rational Creation? And has he not an inviolable Right and Claim to these Things from us, as our Creator and Preserver? And is not Conformity to God, and to obey and honour him, the greatest Honour and Glory of a created Being? These Arguments, I know, have little Weight with apostate Creatures, whose Understandings are darkened, and all their other Faculties wholly corrupted; but that is not for Want of sufficient Weight in their own Nature: Nothing can ever dissolve God's Title to the Homage and Obedience of his Creatures.

Secondly, I would have two or three Particulars considered and weighed together: First, that the *Elect* are elected to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit; *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*. And this effectual Calling, and sanctifying Grace, wrought in the Heart by the Holy Spirit, is the certain Fruit and Evidence of eternal Election; whereby those who are the Partakers of this Grace, may, and frequently do, come to a comfortable Satisfaction, as to their Election of God.

Again, you are to observe, that the *Elect* themselves, before their Conversion and effectual Calling, have no Notices or Evidences at all of their being elected, more than others; which must needs be a very uneasy and distressing Condition, when

when the Spirit of God touches the Conscience. . And then, in the next Place, let it be considered, that God has appointed the Preaching of the Gospel, and other religious Exercises, such as reading the holy Scriptures, and other good Books, Prayer, &c. to be the Means whereby he ordinarily converts and sanctifies his *Elect*, and affords them the comfortable Tokens of his electing Love. He has appointed these Ordinances and Means as the ordinary Channels wherein to communicate his special Grace to those whom he has chosen. Now if these Things be duly adverted to, I think, it will be clear, that there is Use, and great Use too, for the Preaching of the Gospel, and other Exercises of Religion, in a Consistency with God's *absolute Decrees*: And that there are sufficient Reasons to engage Persons to a very careful Observance of them, and of all the Commands of God; for the Ordinances of God are the Means which he sees fit in his Wisdom to make use of for the Conversion and Sanctification of his Elect, which Work of Grace is the only Evidence of our belonging to God, as his elect People: And therefore one can hardly think, that any, but such as are stupidly unconcerned about their Souls everlasting States, could reason in earnest in the Strain of the Objection I am now upon: Surely, one that is any way duly thoughtful about a Matter of such vast Moment as his eternal Well-being, would readily think with himself to this Purpose; ‘ Oh! what would I not give to have some comfortable, distinguishing Evidences of being chosen of God, and appointed to Life: Well, his Ways and Ordinances are the Means he uses for this Purpose; the Channels in which he is wont to communicate his special Grace to those he designs to save; I must wait upon and look to him in that Way of Hope, and keep at the Pool where he uses to come and heal diseased Souls; it may be he will some Time meet with me, in his own Way, which he has appointed for visiting his Chosen, and fulfil in me all the Good-pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith

• with Power, and cause me to rejoice in his Love. These
 • Ways of Religion are not only the Ways in which there
 • is only reasonable Ground of Hope to meet with such
 • Blessings, but they are the Commands and Institutions of
 • God, recommended with his awful Authority; and there-
 • fore, to disregard and neglect them, will be to disobey
 • and contemn God still the more, and also will expose me
 • to a more awful Punishment.' Consider now, if this be
 not a just and right Way of Reasoning in the Case: Nay, I
 am convinced, that the *Calvinist* Doctrine, rightly under-
 stood, and really believed, will make People much more
 careful, serious, and diligent Observers of the Ways of God,
 than the contrary Doctrine will; for it tends much more to
 bring them to a solemn, solicitous Concern of Heart about
 their eternal State, and consequently to make them more
 earnest in all the most hopeful, probable Ways of meeting
 with Satisfaction about it.

Thirdly, Though it is true, that such as are rejected in the
 Purpose of God, will never be converted in the Use of all
 the Means of Grace; yet, seeing they do not know the se-
 cret Purpose of God concerning them, but have the same
 Reason to entertain Hopes that they may be chosen to Life,
 that any other unconverted Persons have, it would be a high
 and provoking Contempt of God for them, to neglect the
 Ordinances which he has appointed as Means for the com-
 municating special Grace and sweet Consolation to his Elect;
 and which he, therefore, by his sovereign Authority, requires
 all, who have the Opportunity, to attend upon: And they
 shall find it, if guilty of it, brought into the Account against
 them, at the great Day, when *every Man shall be judged ac-
 cording to his Works*, and they shall receive, proportionably,
 the *greater Punishment*.

Fourthly, As to the *Elect converted*, their Hearts are so
 renewed, as to love God above all, and to make Obedience to
 his Will their hearty Choice: Believing in Jesus Christ, his
 Love is shed abroad in their Hearts, and sweetly constrains
 them

them to serve and honour him, to whom they are under such endearing Engagements. The Consideration of God's having elected them to eternal Glory, when he might justly have rejected them as well as others; the Hope and Prospect of that eternal Glory with him, and the Consideration of his having sent his Son to answer the Law for them, and suffer in their room, that they might be delivered from deserved Misery, and made happy in the Enjoyment of himself for ever; their Apprehensions of his Glory and infinite Excellency in himself, and his Right in and over them as his Creatures; all these Things are powerful Arguments with them, to love and praise God; it is their Desire and Delight to glorify and honour him. Moreover, the Lord Jesus takes them for his peculiar Charge; it is a Part of his Office, as Mediator, to bring them safe to Glory through all Dangers; accordingly, his holy Spirit dwells in them, as a Sanctifier and Comforter: Thus they are engaged to God, in the Way of Holiness, by the most inviolable Cords and loving Bands: So that the Doctrine of *absolute Election* is far from destroying Holiness of Life: It is a strong Excitement to it, in all the renewed Children of God, who love him, when they are enabled to see the hopeful Evidences of their own Election. And therefore, such as say (as some, no less wickedly than foolishly, do) that *if they were persuaded of the Truth of the Doctrine of Predestination, they would never be at any Pains or Care to serve God more*; had just as good say plainly, *they have no Love to God, and that they are entire Strangers to the Nature of true Godliness*.

Fifibly, Consider, the Method of Reasoning in the Objection is such as you would not allow to be just in other Cases of the like Nature. Can you think it would have been just Reasoning in King *Hezekiah*, to say, that, *because the Lord had ordained he should live Fifteen Years longer*, (2 Kings xx. 6.) *he had no more need of either Food or Physic*? The Prophet *Isaiab* was of another Mind, when he ordered *a Lump of Figs to be laid to the Boil*, ver. 7. This

shews us, that God brings about his Purposes in the Use of suitable Means, and that it is therefore necessary for us to observe them. Was ever any Thing more absolutely and positively fixed in the Purpose of God, than the Time and Manner of Christ's Death? *John* vii. 30. and viii. 20. and xii. 32, 33. Was he therefore unwise for using any Means for his Preservation from the Hands of his Enemies? Of which we have frequent Instances, *John* viii. 59. *Luke* iv. 29, 30. *John* xi. 53, 54. Was St. Paul so inconsistent with himself, when, though God had told him that both he and all that were in the Ship with him, should be saved through all the Hazards of their Voyage; yet, when the Ship-men were about to go off in the Boat and leave the rest in the Distress, he said to them, *except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved?* *Acts* xxvii. In the like Manner it may be as truly and reasonably said, that *except the Elect be converted and sanctified, they cannot be saved from Hell;* because of the certain Connection God has made between the Means and the End. And none have any Reason to expect *converting Grace* while they prophanely neglect *the Means of Grace.*

As to the latter Clause of the Objection, that *the Non-elect who have had the Opportunity of the Gospel, will be more miserable than if they had not:* I answer, it is very likely it will be so, with the most of them: But then, I think, if they improved the Gospel, as they might do, though they would not be converted and saved by it, yet they would not be the more, but perhaps the less miserable for it. If it be enquired, *For what End the Gospel is sent to such as God has not purposed to save?* I answer, It is chiefly for *the Elects sake* that are among them; that thereby they may be brought in to Christ, and prepared for the heavenly Glory.

I shall now conclude the Answer to the whole Objection with a *general Remark* or two. Seeing the Doctrine in itself does not take away our Obligations to a religious Life, but affords sufficient Motives and Arguments for it, then it is

no Argument against the Truth of the Doctrine, though some ungodly Men should abuse it to Liberty to sin: Other Doctrines of the Gospel are liable to the same Abuse, as well as this. Thus St. Paul observes, that some might be ready to infer from the Gospel-Doctrine of *Justification*, as he laid it down, that they might *continue in Sin, that Grace might abound*, Rom. vi. 1. That some would be ready to object against him, that he made *Christ the Minister of Sin*, i. e. one that gave Liberty and Encouragement to Sin, Gal. ii. 17: And that some did actually affirm that he said, *Let us do Evil, that Good may come*, Rom. iii. 8. Again, The Lord Jesus, who came to *destroy the Works of the Devil*, and purchase to himself a *peculiar People, zealous of good Works*, will have his End; though some Men of corrupt Minds should abuse his Truth, to the awful Aggravation of their Guilt in the Day of his appearing. And I think we have little Encouragement to go to the *Arminian* Scheme for the Advancement of true practical Religion, if we consider what Advancement this Way it has produced since it came in Fashion.

What is farther brought as an Objection, by some, I think is hardly worth taking Notice of, *viz.* That some will be apt to take Occasion, from the Doctrine of Predestination, to live in a *slothful Negligence and Security*, from a *Presumption that they are elected*, and so cannot miss of *Salvation*: And others will be apt to fall into *Despair*, from a *fearful Apprehension that they are not elected*. As I hinted already, we are to distinguish between the Abuse unreasonably made of a Doctrine, and its *natural Tendency* in itself: And what is there in this Doctrine that leads to either of these *wide Extremes*? How can it lead any to a *groundless Presumption* and *slothful Negligence*; when, according to it, none have Reason to persuade themselves *they are elected*, until they are renewed and sanctified; and then they cannot be careless about the Honour and Obedience due to God? *How shall they that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein?*

Rom.

Rom. vi. 2. All the Gospel-Arguments to a Life of Holiness, and this, of their Election, among the rest, do then effectually engage their Hearts to it. Indeed, if they knew their Election before their Conversion, before they believed in Christ and loved God, no doubt they would abuse it to Sloth and Licentiousness, till God changed their Hearts: But they have no sure Evidence of their Election till they are brought to a better Disposition. And how can it bring any to *Desperation*, when they *cannot* know that they are *not elected*? For Persons to conclude positively that *they are appointed to Destruction*, is to conclude without Reason, and a Pretending to know the unrevealed Secrets of God's Breast.

Some think the Words of the Lord Jesus, *Luke* xix. 42. are contrary to this Doctrine; where he says of *Jerusalem*, *If thou hadst known, in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Which Words, they suppose, import, that the Inhabitants of that City had, before that Time, had such inward Assistance from God, as put it in their Power to convert themselves; but which were then for ever withdrawn from them, for their Abuse of them, so that their Case was then beyond all Hope. And in this same Sense they suppose that *all Men have a Day of Grace*, in some Part of their Life, or, as they rather chuse to term it, *a Day of Visitation*. But this Opinion is without any Foundation in the Text: How can the Words signify that their Day there spoken of, was a Time in which they had sufficient inward Grace; when they clearly imply that they did not so much as know the Things that belonged to their Peace in that Day? The true Import of our Lord's Words is, That they had had, in that Day of his public Ministry among them, sufficient outward Means of Conviction that he was the true *Messiah*; sufficient to prevail with them, as rational Creatures, to acknowledge and own him as such; notwithstanding of which they rejected and persecuted him, and would in a little Time put him to Death; for

for which they should, before long, be punished with utter Ruin, both of their City and Nation, as it follows in the next Words. And so the Words also signify, that there was less Probability and reasonable Hope of their being converted to God, after all such Means had been so long quite lost upon them, than there was before, according to God's ordinary Way of Working.

And now I have gone through all the contrary Arguments and Objections, of any Consequence, that I know of; and, upon the Whole, must desire the careful Reader, seriously to look back, and consider, if the Doctrine of *absolute Predestination*, as it has been stated and represented, be not entirely agreeable to Reason, clearly founded on Scripture, and perfectly consistent with every Part of it, and, consequently, a most certain Truth of God. Let us not be willfully resolved against admitting reasonable Evidence, but *quit ourselves like Men*, and use our Understanding, with humble Application to God, on whom all Creatures are dependant, for a right Judgment and a sound Mind. Do not say, you will not believe it, just because you do not like it: That is both the Shame and Crime of a reasonable Being, and the greatest Folly in the World; for if be a Truth, it will be so, whether you like it and believe it, or not. And let us also consider, what is the proper Use, and native Tendency, of the Doctrine: And so, let us humbly lie low, as guilty Criminals, before the Foot-stool of God's Sovereignty, acknowledging his Right to *dispose of us*, for Life or Death, *as he pleases*. Let us not be stupidly easy in our Minds, without the Experience of supernatural, sanctifying Grace in our Hearts, the only Evidence of our Election, and Mean of solid Comfort, *without which no Man shall see the Lord*. Let us seek and long for it, in all the Ways of God's Commands and Ordinances, where it is most likely to be found; and not treasure up greater Loads of Wrath to ourselves, against the Day of Wrath, by Dis-

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obedience to the great Lawgiver's Authority. Let such of us as God has given the Tokens of his special Love unto, in our Sanctification, give the *Glory and Praise to him alone*: And still endeavour to live answerable to the Obligations of such wonderful, distinguishing Love and Grace. Let us give up all Confidence of our own Ability, and Dependance on our own Righteousness and good Doings, to entitle us to Happiness; casting ourselves only on the Mediation and Atonement of the Son of God, as he is revealed and proposed in the Gospel; seeking for that living Faith in him that brings Joy and Peace to the Soul, that works by Love, and the freest Obedience. Such as these are the Things which this Doctrine naturally leads to; and so, it agrees to the great Design of God in the *New Covenant*, the Illustration of the greatest Glory of his *Free Grace*, in the Salvation of guilty Sinners: Whereas the contrary Scheme defaces and sinks it down: But God will have the Glory, and it is fit he should: The whole Glory, from first to last, he has secured to himself. As he laid the Foundation of Sinners Salvation, in pure, free, and rich Grace, so, at the last Day, *he will bring forth the Head-stone thereof with Shouting, crying, Grace, Grace unto it, Zech: iv. 7.*



A P P E N D I X,

W H E R E I N

The DOCTRINE of *REPROBATION*

IS MORE PARTICULARLY

EXPLAINED AND CONFIRMED.

THE Doctrine of GOD's *Decrees*, in relation to the moral and final States of Men, is confessedly one of the most abstruse and mysterious in the whole System of Divinity. Yet, since we cannot duly study the Perfections of God, without some Consideration of these Acts of his Will; since our Determinations in several other Points, of considerable Moment in Religion, are, in a great Measure, to be regulated by our Decisions on this Subject; and since God himself sees meet to give us Instructions upon it in his Word; it is undoubtedly proper, and in a Degree necessary, for us to endeavour to come to the Knowledge of the Truth upon the Head, so far as the Knowledge of it is attainable by us in this State of Imperfection. And, indeed, all who endeavour to make out a consistent regular Scheme of Religion, do find a Necessity of coming to some Conclusions about the Decrees of God. But so it is, that, partly from the great Difficulties which attend the Case on every Side, and, I may add, partly from selfish Prejudices, Men considering *themselves* to be the Objects of those Resolves of Heaven, there is no Point on which the Christian World is more divided. And the main Debate is, Whether God's

Decrees and Purposes concerning Men, are absolute or respective; sovereign or dependent. The respective Patrons of these opposite Opinions, do both, in their Turns, burden each other's Doctrines with very heavy Consequences. Each have the Appearance of strong Arguments for their own Side, and strong Objections against the other. Which once observed, should induce them, one would expect, to treat the Argument in general with humble Modesty, and one another with Charity.

The Decree of Election, whereby God has chosen and appointed a Part of fallen ruined Mankind to eternal Salvation, to Holiness and Happiness, through Jesus Christ, has been already considered: And the Absoluteness of it evinced in the foregoing Treatise. It may be proper now to take into more full and distinct Consideration (although something considerable has already been said upon it) the Decree of Reprobation, as it is commonly called; wherein, it is supposed, God has determined and appointed, in a sovereign, absolute Way, to leave the rest of Mankind, whom he has not elected, to themselves as not to convert them by his Grace, but to suffer them to perish in their sinful Courses, and, in the Issue, to punish them as they deserve. Now, one would think there was nothing in all this that bore hard upon the Justice, or any other Perfections of God. And, I think, the inspired *Paul*, in *Rom. ix. 21.* assures us there is not. For, declaring himself directly on this very Point, by a very proper and pertinent Comparison, that comes quite home to the Case, he observes, that there is as little Reason for charging God with Unrighteousness, or having done any thing unbecoming him, in thus sovereignly making a Difference between Men where he found none, considering them all as equally and alike sinful and ill deserving, appointing some to eternal Glory and Honour, and others to Shame and everlasting Contempt, without taking his Measures for these different Determinations from any thing foreseen in them; as for finding fault with a Potter for his different Disposing of his Clay in the like sovereign Man-

ner: *Had not the Potter Power, Ignorance, Authority, or Right, over the Clay, to make of the very same Lump one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour?* This Interrogation is equivalent to a strong positive Affirmation; signifying, that, as a Potter may, without giving thereby the least Ground for any disadvantageous Reflection upon himself for it, determine with himself concerning a Mass of wrought Clay, to make of it Vessels of different Sorts for different Purposes, though it is in itself all alike, and every Part of it equally fit for either Sort of Vessel and Use, and so does not form his different Designs upon it from any Difference in the Clay itself, but distinguishes it purely of his own Pleasure; so may the great God, the Supreme LORD of all, without giving any just Occasion for the least reproachful Imputation upon him for so doing, determine and distinguish upon guilty Mankind by a sovereign Pleasure, appointing one Part to the Happiness all have forfeited, and the other Part to the Misery all have deserved, without making any thing in them the Reason of his thus distinguishing them in his eternal Purposes. We are farther to observe, that the Apostle's Design here is not merely what God in Justice and Honour *might* have done this Way, but to vindicate what *in Fact* he *has* done. I believe every one will allow that the Apostle is in this Chapter maintaining that God actually does what in this Verse he means to show to be just and right for him to do, whatever that be; and that his Design in the Words of the before-cited Text, is to vindicate his preceding Doctrine; which was concerning a Matter of Fact, and not just a merely possible Case, which had not been worth the contesting. It is evident he has been speaking, of the different Decrees and Purposes of God concerning Men, (as I shall by and by make appear) and is here defending what he had said on that Head against an Objection which he saw would readily be brought against it, importing, that it represented God as acting unrighteously by his Creatures, and unsuitably to his infinite Perfection; and, by a most apposite Comparison, he shews, that his

Doctrine was not justly liable to any such Charge. Now, from his Answer to the Objection, (if we allow, as, sure, we must, that he speaks to the Point) we more clearly and satisfyingly discern what his Doctrine was which was objected to. But his Answer here is a direct Vindicating of an absolute Reprobation; and could not, with any other Design, be pertinent to his Purpose. And so this Text, in the Connection wherein it here stands, gives us Ground to observe, as a revealed Truth, this Proposition, *viz.*

GOD, has, in an absolute, sovereign Manner, determined, to leave a Part of fallen, apostate Mankind to themselves in their Sins, and finally to punish them according to their Deserts.

In speaking to this Proposition, I shall,

First, Observe some Things, for the clearer Explication of it, and true Stating of the Doctrine contained in it. And,

Secondly, Shall evince and prove the Truth of it.

First, For Explication: It is to be observed, That God's Purpose of leaving a Part of Mankind in Sin and Impenitency, is included, and necessarily supposed, in his Purpose of punishing them for their Sins: For he purposed the final Happiness and Glorification of all those whom he determined to recover out of a State of Sin, by effectual Conversion; consequently, since his Purpose of converting and sanctifying by effectual Grace, was with a View to the eternal Happiness of all such as should be so restored, those whom he designed for Examples of his punishing Justice, he determined to leave unconverted and impenitent. I say, to leave them unconverted; for we are to conceive them to have been considered and looked upon by God, when he formed his Purpose concerning them, in a fallen State; a State of Sin and Opposition to him; so as that, without the Exertion of his Power and Influence upon them, they would
never

never become godly, or sincerely return to him. And so the Decree of Reprobation has no positive causal Influence upon their Sin, or Impenitency in Sin; But is only, so far as it respects this Case, to permit and leave them to continue as they are; to go on as they will, and chuse of themselves. I mean, a Purpose to leave them *so far* to themselves as not effectually to renew and sanctify them, and bring them over to a free Choice of true Holiness. For otherwise, we allow such is the Goodness and Mercy of God, that he does much Good even for the Reprobated, which has a Tendency in itself to bring to Holiness and Happiness. He affords to many of them the ordinary external Means of Grace and Salvation, and also many kindly Influences and Impressions of his Spirit: All which Advantages, did they improve them as they might, would prevent much Guilt and Misery; though 'tis to be feared, that, through their woful Abuse of them, they often prove Occasions of their greater Guilt and Condemnation.

But, that which requires chiefly to be explained in this Doctrine, is the Absoluteness and Sovereignty of the Decree. By this, then, we do not mean (as might be seen from what has been said already) that God had no View nor Respect to the Sin of Men in his appointing to punish them; that he determined to make them eternally miserable, without any Consideration of their deserving to be so dealt with: Far be such a Thought from us: Such Decreeing as this would not be a Decreeing to execute Justice, but rather, to exercise Cruelty: And would seem to argue Cruelty in the Nature of God; which were horridly impious and absurd to imagine. Whatever some Schoolmen may talk, in their bold Way, of God's Right, in Virtue of his absolute Lordship and Supremacy, to inflict the greatest Misery upon an innocent Creature, we learn no such Doctrine from the Scriptures, or sound Reason. There can be no Right to do what is unrighteous. And, to talk of a Right for such a Purpose, is a gross Abuse of Language. Such Propositions are contradictory and self-repugnant. Even such as go in-

to the *Supralapsarian* Account of Reprobation, do yet *religiously* maintain, that the *Execution* of the Decree is for Sin. But now, I cannot see how there can be a Necessity any more for the actual inflicting of eternal Misery, than in the appointing of it. If it can comport with the Perfections of God, to decree, without any Regard to Sin, so to punish, (if we may use the Word so improperly) why may he not actually inflict the Punishment without any Regard to Sin? If the formal Object of the Decree be not a Sinner, it must be an Innocent; as there can be no Medium between Sin and Innocency in a capable Subject: But now, if it would not be right to punish an innocent Creature with eternal Pains, how can it be right to decree to do it? Or, which is the same Thing, to decree to punish a Creature considered and looked upon as innocent in the decreeing Act? Can it be agreeable to the infinite Perfection of God, to *intend* to do that which it would not become his Perfection *actually* to do? If it be said, that God, in decreeing to punish, decreed that his Punishing should be for Sin; this is, I think, fully to grant what I am here contending for, *viz.* That God, in decreeing to punish, had a Respect to the Sin and Demerit of the Creature, whereby it deserved to be punished. And, unless we conceive God to have thus regarded Men as sinful and ill-deserving, in his determining to punish them, I cannot see how we can conceive of the Decree as consistent with his Perfections. It will not at all relieve the Case, in my Opinion, to say, that the Reprobated are always deserving of the decreed Punishment before it is inflicted on them. We can with the fullest Certainty affirm, that it is inconsistent with the Perfections of God to *determine* to do an unjust Act. It likewise appears, that, how sinful soever we suppose Men to be, yet, to suppose God actually to punish them without any Regard to their Sin, would be to suppose him to do an unjust Act, in respect of himself, the Author of it; though, indeed, altogether just in respect of the Object of it: But for God to determine without any Regard to the Sin of Men, that he will punish them, seems equi-

equivalent to determining that he will punish them without any Regard to their Sin. For, as I have said but now, to allow that he decreed that his punishing them should be for their Sin, is to allow that he regarded them as Sinners in the decreeing Act: Which is what we maintain.

But, to shew, positively and directly, what we intend by the Absoluteness of the Decree of Reprobation; it is just this, *viz.* That God, in his decreeing and determining with himself to leave a Part of fallen Mankind in the common Ruin, and to punish them according to their Demerit, was not moved and determined thereto by their Sin, so as that, when we consider those who are reprobated in a comparative View with those who are elected, it could be said they were reprobated rather than the others, because they were looked upon by God as greater Sinners: All, of the whole Species, were considered by God as corrupted and guilty, under a just Condemnation, (for their Apostacy and Disobedience was certain to him from Eternity) and, beholding them thus in Sin and Guilt, he proceeded in his Determinations about them, appointing some for Trophies of Mercy, and others for Examples of Justice, purely according to his sovereign Pleasure. But, when we say that God appointed some of fallen Mankind to Happiness, and others to Misery, *purely of his own sovereign Pleasure*, it is to be observed, we do not mean he had *no Reasons* for those different Appointments: Those Acts of his Will are undoubtedly ordered and regulated by his Wisdom; as he is said to work all Things after the *Counsel* of his Will, *Eph. i. 11.* But our Meaning is, that the Reasons of them are not fetched from any Qualities or Manners seen in those about whom they are made; any more than a Potter's making one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour out of the self-same Lump of Clay, is on Account of any Difference observed in the Clay. Sin, indeed, is a Condition *sine qua non* of Reprobation; a Condition and Quality in Men, *without which* they had *not* been reprobated: But yet, it is not the proper impulsive Cause of their Reprobation, as that
which

which can be alledged for the Reason why *they* are reprobated more than *others* who are elected to Salvation. Whatever are the Reasons of the divine Procedure in this Case, they are known only to God himself; we can give no higher than his sovereign, wise, and righteous Pleasure.

And now, to collect the whole Account into a short View; you may take it thus: God considered and looked upon Mankind as all universally fallen into Sin and Guilt, worthy of eternal Misery, alienated so far from him as not to be reclaimed but by his direct Influence and powerful Operation upon their Hearts; without which Sin and Guilt none of them had been reprobated, or appointed to be miserable. Though God, of his great Mercy, determined that he would not deal with all as he might in Justice; but to recover a particular Part of them, in a Method in which it was consistent with his Honour to do it; and could, in the same Way, have recovered all the rest, had he pleased; yet, as his Mercy and Grace was at his own sovereign Disposing, he determined to leave them in their guilty Circumstances, and make them Instances of his punishing Justice; And this without taking his Measures who to recover and save, and who to condemn and punish, from any Qualities and Behaviour seen in them concerning whom he made these different Appointments.

This now, and this only, is that absolute Reprobation which we assert; and which I am, in the next Place, to establish and confirm. But I would just by the Way desire again, that it might be considered here, whether God is indeed chargeable with any Injustice in all this.

Secondly, For the Proof of this Doctrine, I shall only at present adduce the Sentiments of the inspired *St. Paul* upon the Head, in this ixth Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, where he not only delivers it for a Truth, but vindicates and defends it against Objections. That we may, with the clearer Evidence discern his Meaning through the whole Argument, I must beg Leave to explain a good Part of the Chapter in Order. And to this Purpose, it will be proper,

first of all, to take Notice on what Occasion the Apostle here enters upon that Subject. He has, in the former Part of the Epistle, insisted largely on the Article of Justification; shewing, that the Justification of a Sinner before God, is purely on account of the mediatory Righteousness and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, apprehended by Faith; and not at all on account of any *personal* Qualifications or Performances. But now, as the Body of the *Israelitish* Nation, not barely neglected, but avowedly disclaimed and rejected Jesus Christ, and that Method of Forgiveness and Salvation, it was obvious, that, according to the forementioned Doctrine of the Apostle, they were in an unjustified Estate, and quite out of the only Way of eternal Life: And that, so as to bear no visible Relation to God, as his Church and People. The Apostle acknowledges this to be the Consequence of his Doctrine, in respect of them; and expresses the tenderest Concern, and most hearty Grief, for their deplorable Condition, in the Beginning of the Chapter. But he saw withal, that a seemingly very hard Problem lay in his Way here to resolve, *viz.* How this unchurched, rejected State of that People could be made consistent with the Faithfulness of God, in the Promises he had made concerning the Seed of *Abraham*, that he would be their God, and they should be his People for ever. The obdurate *Jews* were ready enough to urge this as an unanswerable Argument against the Truth of the Gospel; and others might be exercised with it as a very perplexing Difficulty. This Case the Apostle enters upon in the 6th Verse, saying, *Not as though the Word of God hath taken none Effect*, i. e. It by no means follows from all this, that the Word of God, in the great and good Things he has said and promised concerning *Israel*, and *Abraham's* Seed, has failed of its Accomplishment. And it highly concerned the Apostle to make this appear: For it was beyond Dispute that God had established an *everlasting* Covenant with *Abraham's* Seed, to be their God in all Generations, and that they should be his People; as in *Gen. xvii. 7.* and often else where, to the same Purpose, are the

Promises concerning *Israel*. And the *Jews* imagined themselves, and might seem to others, to be the only People in whom those Promises could be said to have their Accomplishment: And therefore, if God had now cast them off, and taken in People of other Nations, for his People, in their Place, and that even while they continued to adhere to him as the only true God, and to that Worship which himself had instituted among them, it seemed a very hard Matter to make it out how he had kept his Word. We are now to see, how *St. Paul* clears up this Case: And we shall find, that the Sum of his Solution of it is this, *viz.* That the alledged Promises, containing special, saving Benefits, such as Justification, and Life eternal, were not made to the whole *Israelitish* Nation in common, nor to the natural Seed of *Abraham*, as such, neither to them only, but to a select Part, which God had chosen out of them; and, together with them, to all such of all other Families and Nations of Mankind, whom he had, in like Manner, chosen out of them to eternal Life: And that the whole Body of those who were thus elected out of the World, of God's absolute sovereign Pleasure, of what Family or Nation soever they were, were the People whom God designed in those special Promises, under the Characters of *Abraham's Seed*, *Children of Israel*, and the like. To this Effect the Apostle expresses himself very plainly in the shutting up of the Argument, ver. 23, 24. declaring, that the Vessels of Mercy (by whom he means those who were chosen to Salvation, as the whole Context shews; and who were intended by God in the fore-mentioned Promises under the Name of *Abraham's Seed*) are those whom he calls, *i. e.* whom he converts and sanctifies, not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*. And in the xith Chapter, before he has quite dismissed the Subject, he observes, that notwithstanding God had cast away the Body of the *Jews*, of that and several succeeding Generations, yet he had faithfully kept his Word, and fulfilled his Promises, inasmuch as he had not cast away his People *which he fore-knew*, ver. 2. And in ver. 7. of that Chapter, he says,

Israel

Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the *Election* hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Not the *Jewish* Nation, then, in common; nor such *only* as were of that Nation; but such as God had chosen out of it, together with the Elect of other Nations, all considered as one Body, under Christ the Head, were the *Seed of Abraham* to which the Promises were made: So that there is no Difference of *Jew* or *Greek*, Bond or Free, Male or Female, but all are one in Christ Jesus; and such as are Christs, of whatsoever Nation, are *Abraham's Seed*, and Heirs according to the Promise; as our Apostle speaks *Gal. iii. 16, 28, 29.*

This Seed, which was particularly foreknown of God, and chosen by him out of Mankind, was that which God intended in the aforesaid Promises: And therefore, notwithstanding the Body of the *Jews* of that Age when *St. Paul* wrote, were out of the Favour of God, and he was not their God, he had, nevertheless, faithfully kept his Word, and fulfilled his Promise to *Israel*, and *Abraham's Seed*: For, says the Apostle, they are not all *Israel* which are of *Israel*: Neither, because they are the Seed of *Abraham*, are they all Children. That is, All who are descended of the Patriarch *Israel*, or who are of that People or Nation commonly called *Israel*, are not the *Israel of God* which he intended in the Promises under Consideration: Nor, because they are *Abraham's natural* Seed, does it follow that they are those Children which God designed by the Name of *Abraham's Seed* in his special Promises of saving Blessings. To make this appear, he observes, that God had given Intimation of it himself, in saying to *Abraham*, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called.* By which Declaration he sufficiently discovered, that under the Designation of *Seed*, concerning which he had made so great Promises to *Abraham*, he did not mean all his natural Offspring, who should descend from him: But that he had made a Distinction among them in his sovereign Purposes, choosing some, and rejecting others; and that his Promises referred only to those of them whom he had chosen.

But I would just observe here by the Way, that we are not hence to conclude, that all *Abraham's* other Children, and their Posterity, were reprobated; any more than that *Isaac* and all his Posterity were elected. The Apostle by this divine Oracle (I think) understands just only thus much, *viz.* That as there was nothing extraordinary in *Abraham's* having *Ishmael*, and his other Children by his second Wife, but *Isaac* was given him purely in the Virtue of a Promise, by an extraordinary Blessing, considering the Deadness of *Sarah's* Womb, almost by Miracle; so, those who were to be reputed for his Seed, to which the great Promises were made, were to be raised up to him purely in the Virtue of the gracious Purpose and Promise of God, by the converting Power and Grace of his Spirit. (See *Matth. iii. 9.*) This, I say, is the Sense of it, for which the Apostle here adduces it. Though God, doubtless, intended it moreover as a Signification, that far more of his Elect were to be of *Abraham's* Posterity in the Line of *Isaac*, than in that of any of his other Children: At least, while they should continue visibly distinct and separate Nations; and, consequently, that the Church, while it remained in his Family, should chiefly consist of *Isaac's* Descendants.

The Apostle next (ver. 8.) expressly tells us his Sense of the forementioned Oracle: *That is, says he, they which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of God: but the Children of the Promise are counted for the Seed.* From those Words of God to *Abraham*, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*, we may, says he, collect this, That they which are the Children of *Abraham* after the Flesh, by natural Descent, are not therefore those whom God intended by his Children and Seed. God did not mean his Children in this Respect: But those whom he had laid out in his foreign Purpose, and had in his Eye in the Promise; even those who should be his Children purely in Virtue of the Promise, as *Isaac* was in another Sense: Those who should be raised up out of the common Ruin, purely in the Strength and Fulfilment of the Promise; those, I say, are to be accounted

counted for the Seed which God spake of, and made so great Promises to. *For this, says he, (ver. 9.) is the Word of Promise; At this Time will I come, and Sarah shall have a Son.* By this he proves, that *Isaac* was properly a Child of Promise; and so, a fit Type and Figure of all the Seed: And that therefore, to understand God proposing him as such, when he said *in Isaac should the Seed be called*, was no Strain upon the Passage; but a taking up of the true Intendment of it. It is to be observed, however, by the bye, for preventing Mistakes, that, although the Seed of *Abraham*, which God intended under that Designation, whose GOD and Happiness he engaged to be, were his Elect only, and not *Abraham's* fleshly Seed, or natural Offspring; yet, by the Constitution of God, all his immediate Children by natural Generation, and the Children of all others who were visibly of the Church and People of God, had a *visible* Interest in the Promise, together with their Parents, while they did not forfeit it by After-crimes. That is, they were to be reputed, by Men, of the Seed to which the Promise was made; and therefore to be acknowledged Fellow-members of the visible Church, in which the said Seed surely was, and still is. And there is nothing, in the least, opposite to this in what *St. Paul* has here said.

Having thus opened and confirmed his Doctrine touching *Abraham's* Seed, under Debate, from the Words of God to *Abraham* himself, importing, that his Son *Isaac*, as he was peculiarly a Son of Promise, was the proper Emblem of that Seed which he had promised him, and of which he had promised so great Things: Whence it was apparent, that God meant the Seed of those whom he had chosen out of Mankind to eternal Life, whether of *Abraham's* natural Posterity or others; allowing in the mean time, that God intended in those Words to intimate withal, that his elect People were for many Ages to be chiefly of *Abraham's* natural Posterity by *Isaac*: The Apostle, I say, having thus proved his Point from the Instance of *Isaac*, proceeds farther to prove it from what God said of the Twin-children
of

of *isaac*, before they were born: Whence he takes Occasion to speak more expressly both of Election and Reprobation. *And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our Father Isaac, (for the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election, might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, The Elder shall serve the Younger, ver. 10, 11, 12.* Here he proves by another divine Testimony, that God had made a Distinction, in his sovereign Purposes, among *Abraham's* natural Seed; electing some, and rejecting others: And, consequently, that the Promises so often mentioned, so far as they respected the natural Seed, were, in the Intention of God, made only to the Elect of them; whatever visible Interest others of them might have in the Eye of Men. Which was the Thing to be proved.

I readily allow, that the Apostle understands the Answer of God to *Rebecca*, to intend not merely the Persons of *Jacob* and *Esau*, but also their respective Posterities; and likewise, as having a Reference to their *worldly* Circumstances and Condition: But he understands it *principally* to their spiritual Condition God-ward: For otherwise it had not been to his Purpose. It signified that God had preferred the Younger to the Elder in his Decree and Purpose.— That he had chosen the younger Family to bestow his special Favours on, and, generally, rejected the other.— That he had chosen a great Number of the Family and Offspring of *Jacob* for his peculiar People, whom he would make happy for ever; and therefore would take a very peculiar Care of his Posterity; preserving his Church and Worship among them: But that he had, generally, rejected the Family of *Esau*, and determined to give them up to themselves, and leave them to apostatize entirely from him to false Gods: Whence *Edom* should be at Enmity with *Israel*; but *Israel* should subdue him, and bring him into Servitude. Which was literally fulfilled in the Days of *David*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 13, 14. after which the *Edomites* were in
Bondage

Bondage to the Seed of *Jacob* to the Time of *Jebooram*, the Son of *Jeboſhaphat*, about an hundred and fifty Years, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 8, 10. As God, by what he had formerly ſaid to *Abraham*, that in *Iſaac* his Seed ſhould be called, had declared it to be his Purpoſe to propagate the true Religion in the Poſterity of *Iſaac*; this Declaration afterward to *Rebecca*, diſcovered it to be the divine Intention to preſerve the true Religion only in that Part of *Iſaac*'s Poſterity which was to deſcend from him by *Jacob*, and to leave the other Part, deſcending from *Eſau*, to fall off finally to Idolatry: So that the Children of *Eſau* would bear the ſame hostile Diſpoſition towards the Children of *Iſrael* with the other Heathen Nations round about them; but that *Iſrael*, as being the People of God, ſhould ſubdue and keep them under, as well as others who ſhould moleſt them. And thus it was a Declaration, that, as to thoſe two Families, God bore the greateſt Kindneſs to the Seed of *Jacob*. — That thoſe whoſe God he had promiſed to be under the Name of *Abraham*'s Seed, *i. e.* whom he had promiſed to bring into a State of Reconciliation and ſpecial Favour, to juſtify and ſave, were to be of *Jacob*'s Poſterity: And that he had, in a manner, wholly rejected the Family of *Eſau*. To this ſame Purpoſe the Apoſtle adds another very expreſs Paſſage, out of the Prophet *Malachi*: *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated*, ver. 13. underſtanding it, as before, of the *Iſraelites* and *Edomites*. Both Paſſages refer only to the Times before the Tranſlation of the Church to the *Gentiles*, under the Goſpel Diſpenſation.

The Apoſtle obſerves, it was ſaid to *Rebecca*, *The Elder ſhall ſerve the Younger*, that the Purpoſe of God according to Election, might ſtand. *i. e.* God declared he would order it ſo, for the Accompliſhment of his Purpoſe, whereby he had elected a large Number of *Jacob*'s Progeny to be recovered out of the common Apoſtacy and Guilt, and rejected the Poſterity of *Eſau*. He, moreover, particularly notices and aſſerts the Abſoluteneſs of the Purpoſe: Upon its being declared, and conſequently made, before the Children

(*Eſau* and *Jacob*) were born, and had either of them done any Good or Evil, he remarks, that the Purpose of God according to Election, is not of Works, but of him that calleth, *i. e.* It is not owing to the good Works of any that they are elected, but purely to God's Good-pleasure, who is to be conceived of as acting with a becoming Sovereignty in the Case, calling out of a State of Sin and Ruin just whom he pleases: And, consequently, the Rejection of the others is not on account of their being greater Sinners.

That this is the Apostle's true Meaning here, appears, not only from the Words themselves, but likewise from his supposing, (ver. 14.) that it would probably be objected to what he had said, that he charged God with Injustice: *What shall we say then? Is there Unrighteousness with God?* *q. d.* Shall we infer from this Doctrine, that God has acted unjustly? Is it chargeable with such a Consequence as this? Now, there could have been no colourable Pretence at all for drawing such a Consequence from God's electing some and reprobating others according as he saw they would differently behave: But a superficial, or a prejudiced Inquirer might be ready enough to imagine, that it would be contrary to Right and Equity for God to chuse and reject Men by an absolute Will; without any Regard to their various Conduct, whereby they might render themselves more or less worthy of Favour; whence such as deserve to be punished more than others, might, notwithstanding, be preferred to them.

The Apostle, in Answer to this Objection, which he supposes to be brought against his Doctrine, first of all denies the Justness of the Consequence; and declares his utter Abhorrence of it, with his usual, *μη γινώστω, God forbid.* But what Course does he take to clear his Doctrine from the Charge? 'Tis plain the Objection supposed him to have asserted on an *absolute* Election and Reprobation, in saying that the divine Purpose according to Election, was not of Works, but of him that calleth. Does he go to say that it was grounded upon a Mistake of his Meaning? --- That w

are not to suppose that God elects these and rejects those in such an absolute Manner? But, that he is determined in these different Acts by their Works, making them the Rule according to which he chuses and refuses? No such Thing; though this had been the proper Reply, had it been agreeable to Truth. But, directly on the contrary, he proceeds, first of all, farther to prove, by most express Testimonies from the Mouth of God, that he has, indeed, formed these his Purposes concerning Men, with this absolute Sovereignty. And first he proves it of Election, from what God said to *Moses*, *Exod. xxxiii. 19.* *For he saith to Moses, I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion, ver. 15.* It cannot be, says he, that it should argue any Unrighteousness in God, for him to determine to shew or withhold Mercy, merely of his own Good-will and Pleasure; seeing he himself, who does nothing unjust, positively declares that this is the Method he takes in the Case. This was a very proper Passage for the Apostle's Purpose, likewise on another Account; because, as it represents Mankind Objects of Mercy and Compassion, in Guilt and Misery by Sin, whereby they are all deserving of the divine Wrath, it plainly suggests to us, that **GOD** may, without the least Imputation on his Justice, chuse and appoint among them to Life and Happiness, just as he pleases, as in his Wisdom he sees fit; and without making any thing in them the Rule of his Proceeding: Since all are under a Forfeiture, and worthy of Death.

The Apostle clearly delivers his Sense of the Passage in the Inference he deduces from it, in the next Verse; *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD that sheweth Mercy.* How could an absolute Election be more expressly asserted? From this solemn Declaration that God made to *Moses*,

says he, 'tis manifest, that Election, God's appointing certain of Mankind to Salvation, does not take its Rise from any good Dispositions or Motions in them, as the Reasons why God chuses them; but is purely an Act of divine Sovereignty; — an Act of God as shewing Mercy, which he may extend or withhold as he pleases.

Having thus proven Election to be absolute, he proceeds next to prove the same of Reprobation, from the Instance of *Pharaoh*, ver. 17. For the Scripture saith unto *Pharaoh*, *Exod. ix. 16. Even for this same Purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my Power in thee, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* This Verie is also to be connected with the 14th; and the Sense runs thus, 'However it might seem to our narrow Minds, it cannot be unrighteous in God to determine in this absolute Manner; for himself declares, that he does in Fact proceed with this sovereign Freedom in rejecting as well as in electing them, when he says to *Pharaoh*, For this very Purpose have I raised thee up to the *Egyptian Throne**, viz. that I might

* Although the *Hebrew* Word used in *Exodus*, אֲרָאִיתִי, in the Conjugation *Hipbil*, will bear well enough to be rendered, *I have continued*, or, *I have upheld thee*; in which Sense the *LXX* understand it in that Place, rendering it in *Greek* by Στήριξάντος, *Thou hast been preserved*; and so several still understand it, as referring to his being spared and upheld in Life so long, notwithstanding his fixed Opposition to the divine Demand to let *Israel* go: Yet, I think it is plain *St. Paul* takes it in another Sense; and therefore with Design departs from the Translation of the *Septuagint* here, that he may give the true Meaning, rendering it by ἐξήγειρά, *I have raised thee up*, understanding it of *Pharaoh's* Advancement to the Kingdom, and not of his Recovery out of any mortal Disease which had been inflicted on him, as there is not the least Ground to believe that he had been smitten with any such Plague in his own Person, but the contrary.

shew my Power, and make my Name great through the World, by all those Plagues and Judgments, which I would inflict on thee and thy People, on Occasion of thy Hardness and Obstinacy. Thus these Words of God directed to *Pharaoh*, do more than intimate, that, as he had decreed in his eternal Counsels to raise him to the supreme Authority when *Israel* was to be brought out of *Egypt*, so he had likewise determined to leave him in his natural Blindness and evil Propensities, (which are common to all Mankind since the Fall) — to leave him so to his own Corruptions, and the Power of Temptations, as to suffer him to harden still more and more, in the Face of all Warnings and Means of Cure; and all this with a Design to raise a Glory to his Name, upon him, through the World, by mighty and dreadful Acts of righteous Judgment, even to the cutting of him off in the midst of his Wickedness and impenitency. In this plain and easy View of the Words they represent God as reprobating Mankind purely according to his own sovereign Counsel and Will, from Reasons of his own, without any Considerations of their acting worse than others in the same Case with them.

This is manifestly our inspired Author's View of these Words, and accordingly he observes in the next Verse, by way of Deduction from them, together with the preceding Proof concerning Election; *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*; or, more strictly after the Original, *So then he hath Mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth*. Here, in the most express Terms, the whole Affair of God's Chusing and Refusing among fallen Mankind, — of his determining to bestow recovering Grace and Mercy on some, and to pass by and leave others in their fallen Condition, is resolved into his sole Will and Pleasure. It is asserted that God elects and

rejects, with an absolute Liberty, just whom he pleases. The Apostle uses the Term of *hardening* in the latter Case, on Occasion of his having given *Pharaoh* (in whose Story we are so often told of his being hardened) for an Instance of absolute Reprobation: And his Words here shew, that *Pharaoh's* Hardness was not the Cause, but the Consequent, of Reprobation; and the same of the like final Hardness of others. But then the Expression of God's hardening Men is cautiously to be understood: It does not mean that he exerts an hardening Influence upon them; but, that he leaves and gives them up to themselves, and the influence of Temptation, whereupon they do continue and grow in Hardness.

The Apostle having (as we have seen) answered to the Objection, by Authority, proceeds now to reply to it another Way, shewing both how unbecoming and unreasonable it is to make it: And for this Purpose he brings it into View again, repeating it in other Words, in the 19th Verse, *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his Will?* The Meaning of which Words I take to be this, *q. d.* But you will still urge, how can it be just for God to reject Men? — to purpose that he will give them up to Ruin, and not shew them that Favour he designs for others, without being moved to it by their Sin? How comes he to reprobate Men at all, and to determine to deal with them as Sinners; seeing he is not influenced thus to reject them rather than others whom he chuses and appoints to Life, by any Disobedience of theirs to his Will and Commandments? that is, seeing no Disobedience of theirs is the moving Cause of his rejecting them beyond others, any more than if there were none at all to be seen in them. Since those whom he chuses in this absolute Way to Salvation, are altogether as undeserving of effectual Grace and saving Mercy, as those whom he rejects, the Sin of these latter cannot be al-
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ledged as the Cause of his rejecting them, any more than if they were not chargeable with any; because the same Objection was as strong against the others. And why does he, notwithstanding, find fault, and reject them, when the others are chosen? This (says the Objector) can never be just and equal Dealing. Why does he reject any, as if there were some peculiar Fault in them above others, whereby they were more undeserving of Favour, while yet that is not the Case: Or, if it be, yet that is not the Thing which determines him against them, more than if it were not so*?

* There is, indeed, a different Sense, and pretty plausible too, given of this Place, by several valuable Interpreters, to this Purpose, as if the Caviller had said, If God will the Hardness of some, as was said, but now, why does he yet find fault with, and punish them for that Hardness, and the Sins proceeding from it; seeing himself willed it; and of Consequence those other Sins that flow from it; and he has his Will and Choice in the Case, none of them have defeated it, or disappointed him of it. But I am obliged to depart from this Interpretation, and understand the Place in the Sense given of it above; and that for such Reasons as these: In the first Place, the two following Verses are, beyond Doubt, a Reply to the Objection urged in this. But I cannot see how the latter Part of that Reply can be at all pertinent to the Objection in any other Sense than that in which I have taken it; and in that Sense of the Objection the whole Reply is exactly to the Point. Neither can the Interpretation I have given, be called a forced one; but is such as the Words will readily admit. For, though the Word *μεμνησθαί* primarily signifies *to find fault with*, yet it may as properly signify *to reject*, or, (if the Object be capable) *purpose not to favour*, as the Word *reprobate* primarily signifies *to disapprove*: And in this Sense, or one very near it, it is used in *Heb. viii. 7, 8.* *If the first Covenant had been faultless, ἀμεμνηστος, such as to be acquiesced in, such as to rest satisfied with, no Place had been sought for a second, as there was: For, finding fault with it, he saith unto them, &c.* So it ought to be rendered, *μεμνησθόμενος αὐτοῖς λέγει, i. e. rejecting it, and choosing another in its Place.* The Expression of *resisting his Will*, can by no means, I think, be understood of frustrating his Intention, as this other

The Objector (as is here supposed) still insisting thus on his former Charge against God's electing and rejecting Men with such an absolute Sovereignty, without regarding any Difference of Behaviour in them, as his Rule, after it had been clearly proved by so plain Declarations of God himself, that such is his Method of proceeding in the Case, moves the Apostle to answer with some Degree of Warmth and Smartness, ver. 20. *Nay, but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* As if it were laid, Consider the Inconsistency and Presumption of thy Conduct, Man: To talk at this Rate, after God has so fully and positively declared himself on the Head, as we have heard, is a downright Replying against GOD, and charging him with Iniquity; and does not become thee: Consider who He is, and who thou art: He is God, and thou art Man, a Worm of the Dust: He is the Creator of all Things, and thou art his Creature; and so very unfit to judge what is right and fit for him to do: It is then the highest Reason, that thou submit thy dim, fallible Reason to his infinite Understanding, and rest satisfied of the Wisdom and Righteousness of all his Proceedings, from the certain Persuasion that the Most-High is pure Perfection.

Here the Apostle concludes his Answer taken from Authority; and next shuts up his whole Reply, with

Interpretation would have it, but must mean the opposing his Will, as expressed in his Precepts and Commands: For the Word *ἀντιτάξαι*, always, so far as I can find, signifies simply *to resist, withstand, oppose*, or the like, and never *to disappoint a Design*. 'Tis also observable, that the Apostle, to express God's Will here, does not use the Word *θέλημα*, from *θελεῖν*, the Word he had used in the former Verse, but *βούλημα*, which is of a quite different Derivation, as if he designed thereby to guide us to understand him of the divine Will as prescribing Matter of Duty, not as willing or intending an Event.

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shewing the Reasonableness of the Thing in itself. This he does by a very proper Illustration, which was naturally suggested by the mentioning of a Thing formed and him that formed it: *Had not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour and another unto Dishonour?* The Words open the Way very clearly to a full satisfactory Answer to the Objection, and scarce need any Comment. Their general Import is, that as all Mankind are one corrupted Mass, which God might have appointed to Destruction universally, as a Potter might make up a Mass of Clay wholly in mean, ignoble Vessels, if he pleased; and were so considered of God appointing their eternal Conditions, 'tis clear, he might, without the least Unrighteousness, appoint some to the forfeited Happiness, and others to the deserved Punishment, just whom he pleased, with an absolute Sovereignty, from Reasons that lay only within his own all-comprehending View, without taking Notice of any different Managements of theirs, as the Reason or Rule of his Conduct in those different Determinations concerning them; which is no greater Privilege or Right than we allow to any Master-Potter in respect to his Clay. In a Word, the Apostle's Meaning plainly is, that the great God is as little influenced or directed in his Chusing and Reprobating Men, from any different moral Qualifications in them, as a Potter in his designing one Part of his Clay for a Vessel of more noble, and another for one of meaner Use, from any Difference in the Clay, wherein there is none; and that GOD's Right is as indisputable in the one Case as the Workman's in the other.

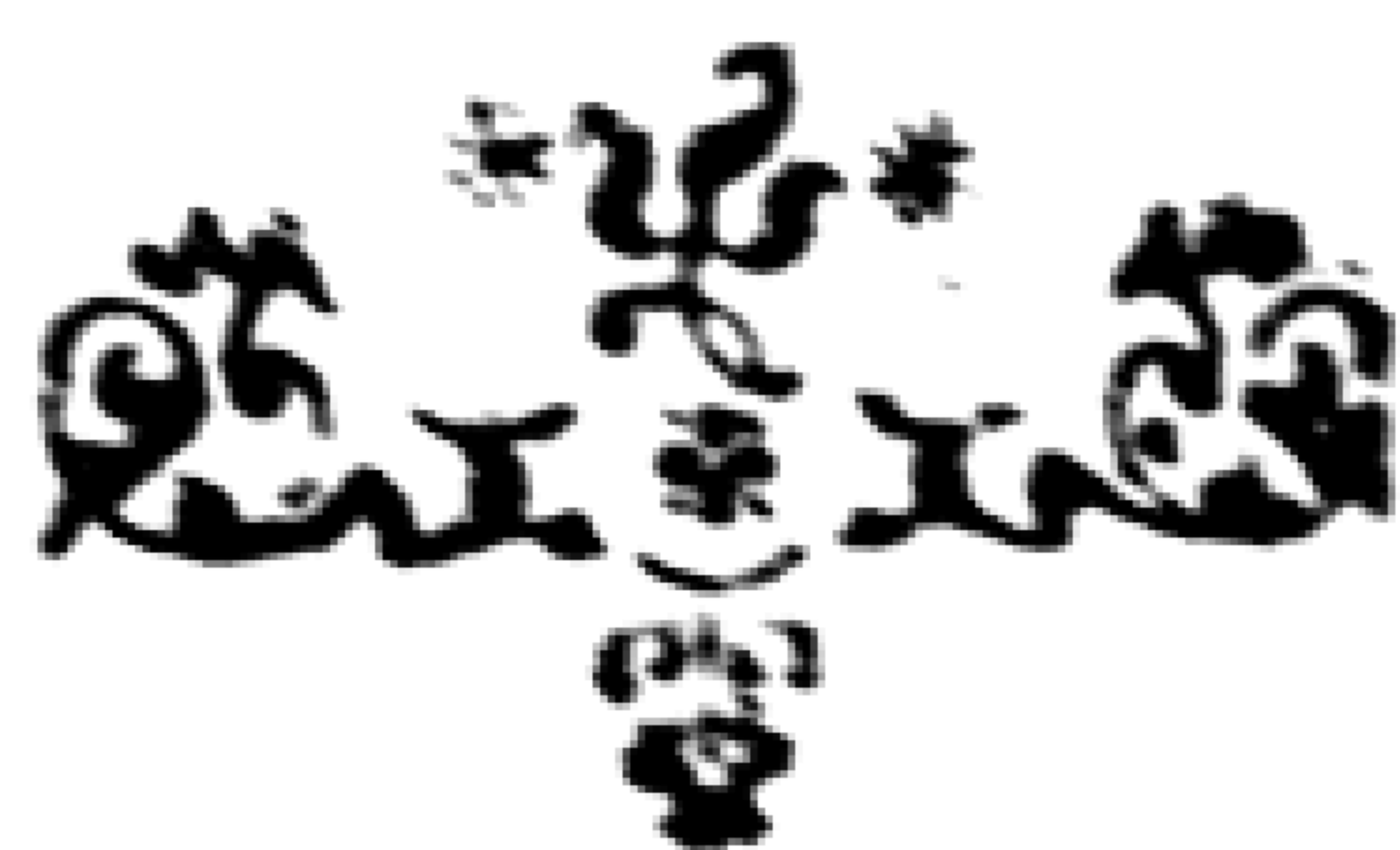
In the two next Verses he obviates another Objection, which might be readily moved against God's continuing Reprobates in Life, when they will but the farther increase their Sin and Misery; all which was to be seen in the Instance of *Pharaoh*, whom he had adduced as an Instance

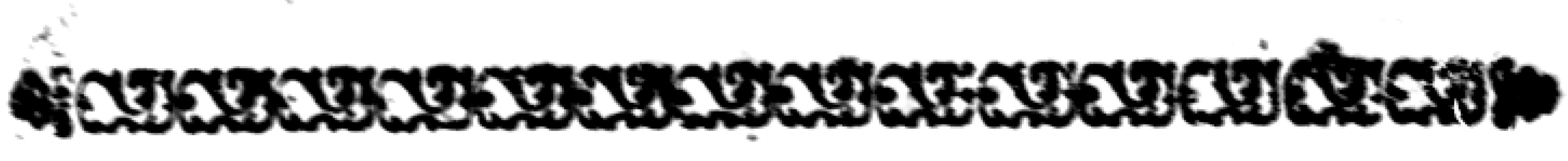
stance of absolute Reprobation; which likewise was the Occasion of his hinting such an Objection. To this Case he speaks in the following Words: *What, if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction: and that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory?* That is, If God for a considerable Time bears with and spares such as he has destined to Wrath, and are by their Sins fitted for present Destruction, with a Design to make his Wrath and Power the more illustrious in their final Punishment, and thereby to set off to greater Advantage the exceeding Abundance of his glorious Mercy and Goodness, in his different Dealing towards those whom he has destined to Mercy, and prepares before-hand, by sanctifying Grace, for that Glory to which he appointed them, what Blame is he chargeable with in all this? Surely, none at all. His deferring to execute due Punishment, is certainly in itself a Benefit and Favour; and is God to blame for it, if by their Wickedness through the Time of his Forbearance, they incur greater Guilt and Wrath? How senseless an Imagination were that! And why then may he not spare them for a Time, for these Ends mentioned?

And now, *St. Paul* having shewed, that when God promised to *Abraham* that he should always have a Seed in all Generations, whose God he would be in a Covenant of Peace, did not mean it of the general Body of his natural Seed, nor of his natural Seed alone, but that he particularly intended, and had in his Eye, an elect People, whom, by a sovereign Choice, and of his own absolute Pleasure, he had selected from among the rest of Mankind for this eternal Happiness: Which Doctrine necessarily and clearly inferred a like sovereign and absolute Rejection of the rest: --- And having

having particularly proved both such an absolute Election and Reprobation, and defended the Doctrine against Objections; he next, more expressly, shews, who this chosen Seed comprehends and includes under the Designation he had last given them of Vessels of Mercy, *Even*, says he, *whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*, ver. 24. That is, All such whom he effectually calls out of a State of Sin and Guilt, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. And, as it was very apparent, that, comparatively, very few of the *Jews* of that Age were thus called by effectual Grace, he goes on to shew that this was according to Scripture Prophecies, that God's People should chiefly consist of *Gentiles*, and but a Remnant of *Israel* be saved; and so more fully proves, that God had kept close to his Word and Promise, and exactly fulfilled it according to the true Intent and Meaning of it, notwithstanding the Body of the *Jews* were now visibly no more his People: Which was the leading Design of this whole Discourse.

I have now gone through this tedious Explication, which was necessary to bring to View the ample Proof this Chapter affords of the Doctrine I am upon; and seeing the general Tenure of Discourse in this Place is so much to our present Purpose, and the Apostle so explicitly, and, *ex professo*, reasons out the Point, it is quite needless to add more Arguments. And as to the Objections usually laid against this Doctrine, the most material of them are already substantially answered in the Treatise to which this Appendix is annexed.





A SHORT AND FAITHFUL
NARRATIVE

Of the late Remarkable

REVIVAL of RELIGION

IN THE

CONGREGATION of NEW-LONDONDERRY,
and other Parts of *Pennsylvania*:

As the same was sent

In a LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. PRINCE of Boston,

BY

SAMUEL BLAIR, *Minister of the Gospel at New-
Londonderry in Pennsylvania.*

*Psal'm xxvi. 7. That I may publish with the Voice of Thanksgiving,
and tell of all thy wondrous Works.*

*Psa'm cxlv. 4. One Generation shall praise thy Works to another,
and shall declare thy mighty Acts.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be proper to acquaint the Reader with the Reasons of the Composure and Publication of the following Letter: For which Purpose I must apprize him that there is a Book published at *Boston*, by the ingenious Mr. *Prince*, jun. under the Title of the *Christian History*, containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion (of late) in *Great Britain* and *America*: Which exhibits to us a large Number of very satisfactory and joyful Accounts, chiefly from the Provinces of *New-England*, and the Kingdom of *Scotland*. This History is first published in Weekly Papers, as Materials come to hand, and then all the Papers of the Year are bound up in one Volume at the Year's End. The first Year's Volume was completed in *March* last; and the young Gentleman expects to carry on the History for at least one Year more. His Reverend Father, one of the Reverend Ministers of *Boston*, was pleased to direct a Letter to me, desiring me to send him as cautious and exact an Account as might be, of the happy Revival of Religion in my Congregation, whereof he had got some Information, to be made public along with other Relations of that Kind in the abovesaid *Christian History*. This Motion was acceptable enough to me, as I am

convinced that it is our Duty, in the most open Manner, to declare and bear Testimony unto the Work of God's Grace among us at this Day, for the Honour of his Name, and Good of his Church, both in the present and future Generations: *According to this Time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath GOD wrought! Numb. xxiii. 23.* The *Christian History* is not like to be so common in Peoples Hands in these Parts as I could heartily wish it; and that is the Reason of my publishing this Copy of my Letter to Mr. *Prince* singly by itself here: That so People in this Country may more generally have the Use of this Account of the Work of God's Grace and Power in the Land than otherwise they would have. And in the mean time I hope this will not make them any thing the less, but abundantly the more desirous to have the Use of the *Christian History*, whereby they may see the astonishing Spread and Progress of the same Divine Work in other Parts of the World.

May the Lord bless this Relation of the Work of his Grace to the Reviving of those who have been the Subjects of it; to the Removing of the sinful and very dangerous Prejudices of many others; and, in a Word, to the solemn Conviction and saving Conversion of many Souls.

S. B.



REVEREND SIR,

I DO most gladly comply with your Desire in sending you some Account of the glorious Appearances of God in a Way of special Grace for us in this Congregation, and other Parts of this Country; and am of the same Judgment with you and many other pious and judicious People, that the collecting and publishing of such Accounts may greatly tend to the Glory of our *Redeemer*, and the Increase of his Triumphs. I much rejoyce in the Publication of such a Collection in the *Christian History*, so far as it is already carried on: I think it may serve to many excellent Purposes, and be a happy Mean of advancing the dear Interest of our glorious *Redeemer's* Kingdom, both in the present Age and the Ages to come. And I cannot but look upon myself as called of God in Duty, being thus invited to it by you, Rev. Sir, to put a Hand, among many others of my Rev. Fathers and Brethren on both Sides the Atlantic, to the carrying on of the Design of the said History, containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in this remarkable Day of Grace.

I cannot, indeed, give near so full and particular a Relation of the Revival of Religion here as I might have done, had I had such a Thing in View at the Time when God was most eminently carrying on his Work among us: I entirely neglected then to note down any Particulars in Writing, for which I have been often very sorry since; so that this Account must be very imperfect to what it might otherwise have been.

That it may the more clearly appear that the Lord has indeed carried on a Work of true real Religion among us
of

of late Years, I conceive it will be useful to give a brief general View of the State of Religion in these Parts before this remarkable Season. I doubt not then, but there were still some sincerely religious People up and down; and there were, I believe, a considerable Number in the several Congregations pretty exact, according to their Education, in the Observance of the external Forms of Religion, not only as to Attendance upon public Ordinances on the Sabbaths, but also as to the Practice of Family-Worship, and perhaps Secret Prayer too; but with these Things the most Part seem'd, to all Appearance, to be contented, and to satisfy their Consciences just with a dead Formality in Religion. If they performed these Duties pretty punctually in their Seasons, and, as they thought, with a good Meaning, out of Conscience, and not just to obtain a Name for Religion among Men, then they were ready to conclude that they were truly and sincerely religious. A very lamentable Ignorance of the main Essentials of true practical Religion, and the Doctrines nextly relating thereunto, very generally prevailed. The Nature and Necessity of the *new Birth* was but little known or thought of, the Necessity of a Conviction of Sin and Misery, by the Holy Spirits opening and applying the Law to the Conscience, in order to a saving Closure with Christ, was hardly known at all to the most. It was thought, that if there was any need of a Heart-distressing Sight of the Soul's Danger, and Fear of divine Wrath, it was only needful for the grosser Sort of Sinners; and for any others to be deeply exercised this Way, (as there might sometimes be some rare Instances observable) this was generally looked upon to be a great Evil and Temptation that had befallen those Persons. The common Names for such Soul-Concern were, *Melancholy*, *Trouble of Mind*, or *Despair*. These Terms were in common, so far as I have been acquainted, indifferently used as synonymous; and *Trouble of Mind* was looked upon as a great Evil, which all Persons that made any sober Profession and Practice of Religion, ought carefully to avoid. There was scarcely any

Suspicion at all, in general, of any Danger of depending upon Self-righteousness, and not upon the Righteousness of *Christ* alone for Salvation. *Papists* and *Quakers* would be readily acknowledged guilty of this Crime, but hardly any professed *Presbyterian*. The Necessity of being first in *Christ* by a vital Union, and in a justified State, before our religious Services can be well pleasing and acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common Notion seem'd to be, that if People were aiming to be in the Way of Duty as well as they could, as they imagin'd, there was no Reason to be much afraid.

According to these Principles, and this Ignorance of some of the most Soul-concerning Truths of the Gospel, People were very generally through the Land careless at Heart, and stupidly indifferent about the great Concerns of Eternity. There was very little Appearance of any hearty Engagedness in Religion: And, indeed, the Wise, for the most Part, were in a great Degree asleep with the Foolish. 'Twas sad to see with what a careless Behaviour the public Ordinances were attended, and how People were given to unsuitable worldly Discourse on the Lord's holy Day. In public Companies, especially at Weddings, a vain and frothy Lightness was apparent in the Deportment of many Professors; and in some Places very extravagant Follies, as Horse-running, Fiddling and Dancing, pretty much obtained on those Occasions.

Thus Religion lay as it were a-dying, and ready to expire its last Breath of Life in this Part of the visible Church: And it was in the Spring *Anno Domini* 1740, when the God of Salvation was pleas'd to visit us with the blessed Effusions of his Holy Spirit in an eminent Manner. The first very open and public Appearance of this gracious Visitation in these Parts, was in the Congregation which God has committed to my Charge. The Congregation has not been erected above fourteen or fifteen Years from this Time: The Place is a new Settlement, generally settled with People from *Ireland*. (as all our Congregations in *Pennsylvania*,
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except two or three, chiefly are made up of People from that Kingdom) I am the first Minister they have ever had settled in the Place. Having been regularly liberated from my former Charge in *East-Jersey*, above an hundred Miles North-eastward from hence; (the Rev. Presbytery of *New-Brunswick*, of which I had the Comfort of being a Member, judging it to be my Duty, for sundry Reasons, to remove from thence) at the earnest Invitation of the People here, I came to them in the Beginning of *November*, 1739, accepted of a Call from them that Winter, and was formally installed and settled amongst them as their Minister, in *April* following. There were some hopefully pious People here at my first Coming, which was a great Encouragement and Comfort to me. I had some View and Sense of the deplorable Condition of the Land in general; and accordingly the Scope of my Preaching through that first Winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for Persons in a natural unregenerate Estate. I endeavoured, as the Lord enabled me, to open up and prove from his Word, the Truths which I judged most necessary for such as were in that State, to know and believe, in order to their Conviction and Conversion: I endeavoured to deal searchingly and solemnly with them; and, through the concurring Blessing of God, I had Knowledge of four or five brought under deep Convictions that Winter. In the Beginning of *March* I took a Journey into *East-Jersey*, and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths. A neighbouring Minister, who seemed to be earnest for the Awakening and Conversion of secure Sinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my People in my Absence, preached to them, I think, on the first Sabbath after I left Home. His Subject was the dangerous and awful Case of such as continue unregenerate and unfruitful under the Means of Grace. The Text was, *Luke* xiii. 7. *Then said he to the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold these three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground?* Under that Sermon there was a visible Appearance

pearance of much Soul-Concern among the Hearers, so that some burst out with an audible Noise into bitter Crying. (a Thing not known in those Parts before) After I had come Home, there came a young Man to my House under deep Trouble about the State of his Soul, whom I had looked upon as a pretty light, merry Sort of a Youth: He told me, that he was not any thing concerned about himself in the Time of hearing the above-mentioned Sermon, nor afterwards, till the next Day that he went to his Labour, which was Grubbing, in order to clear some new Ground: The first Grub he set about was a pretty large one, with a high Top, and when he had cut the Roots, as it fell down, those Words came instantly to his Remembrance, and as a Spear to his Heart, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground? So, thought he, must I be cut down by the Justice of God, for the Burning of Hell, unless I get into another State than I am now in.* He thus came into very great and abiding Distress, which, to all Appearance, has had a happy Issue: His Conversation being to this Day as becomes the Gospei of Christ.

The News of this very public Appearance of deep Soul-Concern among my People, met me an hundred Miles from Home: I was very joyful to hear of it, in Hopes that God was about to carry on an extensive Work of converting Grace among them: And the first Sermon I preached after my Return to them, was from *Matth. vi. 33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness.* After opening up and explaining the Parts of the Text, when, in the Improvement, I came to press the Injunction in the Text upon the Unconverted and Ungodly, and offered this as one Reason, among others, why they should now henceforth first of all *seek the Kingdom and Righteousness of God, viz. That they had neglected too, too long to do so already.* This Consideration seemed to come and cut like a Sword upon several in the Congregation, so that while I was speaking upon it, they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most bitter Mourning. I desired them, as much as possible,

to restrain themselves from making a Noise that would hinder themselves or others from hearing what was spoken: And often afterwards I had Occasion to repeat the same Counsel. I still advised People to endeavour to moderate and bound their Passions, but not so as to resist or stifle their Convictions. The Number of the Awakened increased very fast, frequently under Sermons there were some newly convicted, and brought into deep Distress of Soul about their perishing Estate. Our Sabbath Assemblies soon became vastly large; many People from almost all Parts around inclining very much to come where there was such Appearance of the divine Power and Presence. I think there was scarcely a Sermon or Lecture preached here through that whole Summer, but there were manifest Evidences of Impressions on the Hearers; and many times the Impressions were very great and general: Several would be overcome and fainting; others deeply sobbing, hardly able to contain, others crying in a most dolorous Manner, many others more silently weeping, and a solemn Concern appearing in the Countenance of many others. And sometimes the Soul-Exercises of some (though comparatively but very few) would so far affect their Bodies, as to occasion some strange, unusual bodily Motions. I had Opportunities of speaking particularly with a great many of those who afforded such outward Tokens of inward Soul-Concern in the Time of public Worship and hearing of the Word; indeed, many came to me of themselves in their Distress for private Instruction and Counsel; and I found, so far as I can remember, that, with by far the greater Part, their apparent Concern in public was not just a transient Qualm of Conscience, or merely a floating Commotion of the Affections; but a rational fixed Conviction of their dangerous perishing Estate. They could generally offer, as a convictive Evidence of their being in an unconverted, miserable Estate, that they were utter Strangers to those Dispositions, Exercises and Experiences of Soul in Religion, which they heard laid
down

down from God's Word as the inseparable Characters of the truly regenerate People of God; even such as before had something of the Form of Religion; and I think the greater Number were of this Sort, and several had been pretty exact and punctual in the Performance of outward Duties. They saw that they had been contenting themselves with the Form, without the Life and Power of Godliness; and that they had been taking Peace to their Consciences from, and depending upon, their own Righteousness, and not the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*. In a Word, they saw that true practical Religion was quite another Thing than they had conceived it to be, or had any true Experience of. There were likewise many up and down the Land brought under deep distressing Convictions that Summer, who had lived very loose Lives, regardless of the very External of Religion. In this Congregation I believe there were very few that were not stirred up to some solemn Thoughtfulness and Concern more than usual about their Souls. The general Carriage and Behaviour of People was soon very visibly altered. Those awakened were much given to reading in the holy Scriptures and other good Books. Excellent Books that had lain by much neglected, were then much perused, and lent from one to another; and it was a peculiar Satisfaction to People to find how exactly the Doctrines they heard daily preached, harmonize with the Doctrines maintained and taught by great and godly Men in other Parts and former Times. The Subjects of Discourse almost always, when any of them were together, were the Matters of Religion and great Concerns of their Souls. All unsuitable, worldly, vain Discourse on the Lord's Day seemed to be laid aside among them: Indeed, for any thing that appeared, there seemed to be an almost universal Reformation in this respect in our public Assemblies on the Lord's Day. There was an earnest Desire in People after Opportunities for public Worship and hearing the Word. I appointed in the Spring to preach every Friday through the Sum-

Summer when I was at Home, and those Meetings were well attended, and at several of them the Power of the Lord was remarkably with us. The main Scope of my Preaching through that Summer, was, laying open the deplorable State of Man by Nature since the Fall, our ruined, exposed Case by the Breach of the first Covenant, and the awful Condition of such as were not in *Christ*, giving the Marks and Characters of such as were in that Condition: And, moreover, laying open the Way of Recovery in the new Covenant, through a Mediator, with the Nature and Necessity of Faith in *Christ*, the Mediator, &c. I laboured much on the last mentioned Heads, that People might have right Apprehensions of the Gospel-Method of Life and Salvation. I treated much on the Way of a Sinner's closing with *Christ* by Faith, and obtaining a right Peace to an awakened wounded Conscience; shewing, that Persons were not to take Peace to themselves on account of their Repentings, Sorrows, Prayers, and Reformatings, nor to make these Things the Grounds of their adventuring themselves upon *Christ* and his Righteousness, and of their Expectations of Life by him: And, that neither were they to obtain or seek Peace in extraordinary Ways, by Visions, Dreams, or immediate Inspirations; but by an understanding View and believing Persuasion of the Way of Life, as revealed in the Gospel, through the Suretyship, Obedience, and Sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, with a View of the Suitableness and Sufficiency of that mediatory Righteousness of *Christ* for the Justification and Life of Law-condemned Sinners; and thereupon freely accepting him for their Saviour, heartily consenting to, and being well pleased with, that Way of Salvation; and venturing their All upon his Mediation, from the Warrant and Encouragement afforded of God thereunto in his Word, by his free Offer, authoritative Command, and sure Promise to those that so believe. I endeavoured to shew the Fruits and Evidences of a true Faith, &c.

In some Time many of the Convinced and Distressed afforded very hopeful, satisfying Evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true Closure with *Jesus Christ*, and that their Distresses and Fears had been in a great Measure removed in a right Gospel-Way by believing in the Son of God; several of them had very remarkable and sweet Deliverances this Way. It was very agreeable to hear their Accounts, how that, when they were in the deepest Perplexity and Darkness, Distress and Difficulty, seeking God as poor condemned Hell-deserving Sinners the Scene of the recovering Grace, through a Redeemer had been opened to their Understandings, with a surprizing Light and Glory, so that they were enabled to believe in Christ with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. It appeared that most generally the Holy Spirit improved, for this Purpose, and made Use of some one particular Passage or another of the holy Scripture that came to their Remembrance in their Distress, some Gospel-Offer or Promise, or some Declaration of God directly referring to the Recovery and Salvation of undone Sinners, by the new Covenant: But with some it was otherwise, they had not any one particular Place of Scripture more than another in their View at the Time. Those who met with such remarkable Relief, as their Account of it was rational and scriptural, so they appeared to have had at the Time the Attendants and Fruits of a true Faith, particularly Humility, Love, and an affectionate Regard to the Will and Honour of God. Much of their Exercise was in Self-abasing and Self-loathing, and admiring the astonishing Condescension and Grace of God towards such vile and despicable Creatures, that had been so full of Enmity and Disaffection to him: Then they freely and sweetly, with all their Hearts, chose the Way of his Commandments; their enflamed Desire was to live to him for ever, according to his Will, and to the Glory of his Name. — There were others that had not had such remarkable Relief and Comfort, who

who yet I could not but think were savingly renewed, and brought truly to accept of, and rest upon, Jesus Christ, though not with such a Degree of Liveliness and Liberty, Strength and Joy; and some of these continued, for a considerable Time after, for the most Part under a very distressing Suspicion and Jealousy of their Case. I was all along very cautious of expressing to People my Judgment of the Goodness of their States, excepting where I had pretty clear Evidences from them, of their being savingly changed, and yet they continued in deep Distress, casting off all their Evidences: Sometimes in such Cases I have thought it needful to use greater Freedom that Way than ordinary; but otherwise I judged that it could be of little Use, and might readily be hurtful.

Beside these above spoke of, whose Experience of a Work of Grace was in a good Degree clear and satisfying, there were some others, (though but very few in this Congregation that I know of) who, having very little Knowledge or Capacity, had a very obscure and improper Way of representing their Case. In relating how they had been exercised, they would chiefly speak of such Things as were only the Effects of their Souls Exercise upon their Bodies from Time to Time, and some Things that were just imaginary, which obliged me to be at much Pains in my Enquiries before I could get any just Ideas of their Case. I would ask them, what were the Thoughts, the Views, and Apprehensions of their Minds, and Exercise of their Affections at such Times when they felt, perhaps, a Quivering overcome them, as they had been saying, or a Faintness, thought they saw their Hearts full of some nauseous Filthiness, or when they felt a heavy Weight and Load at their Hearts, or felt the Weight again taken off, and a pleasant Warmness rising from their Hearts, as they would probably express themselves, which might be the Occasion or Causes of these Things they spoke of? And then, when with
some

some Difficulty I could get them to understand me, some of them would give a pretty rational Account of solemn spiritual Exercises. And, upon a thorough, careful Examination this Way; I could not but conceive good Hopes of some such Persons.

But there were, moreover, several others, who seemed to think concerning themselves that they were under some good Work; of whom yet I could have no reasonable Ground to think that they were under any hopeful Work of the Spirit of God. As near as I could judge of their Case from all my Acquaintance and Conversation with them, it was much to this Purpose: They believed there was a good Work going on, that People were convinced, and brought into a converted State, and they desired to be converted too; they saw others weeping and fainting, and heard People mourning and lamenting, and they thought if they could be like those it would be very hopeful with them: Hence they endeavoured just to get themselves affected by Sermons, and if they could come to Weeping, or get their Passions so raised as to incline them to vent themselves by Cries, now they hoped they were got under Convictions; and were in a very hopeful Way; and afterwards they would speak of their being in Trouble, and aim at complaining of themselves, but seemed as if they knew not well how to do it, nor what to say against themselves, and then they would be looking and expecting to get some Texts of Scripture applied to them for their Comfort; and when any Scripture Text, which they thought was suitable for that Purpose, came to their Minds, they were in Hopes it was brought to them by the Spirit of God, that they might take Comfort from it: And thus much in such a Way as this some appeared to be pleasing themselves just with an imaginary Conversion of their own making. I endeavoured to correct and guard against all such Mistakes, so far as I discovered them in the Course of my Ministry; and to open up the Nature of

a true Conviction by the Spirit of God, and of a saving Conversion.

Thus have I given a very brief Account of the State and Progress of Religion here, through that first Summer after the remarkable Revival of it among us. Towards the End of that Summer there seemed to be a Stop put to the farther Progress of the Work, as to the Conviction and Awakening of Sinners; and ever since there have been very few Instances of Persons convinced. It remains then, that I speak something of the abiding Effects and After-fruits of those Awakenings, and other religious Exercises which People were under during the above-mentioned Period. Such as were only under some slight Impressions and superficial Awakenings, seem in general to have lost them all again, without any abiding hopeful Alteration upon them: They seem to have fallen back again into their former Carelessness and Stupidity: And some that were under pretty great Awakenings, and considerable deep Convictions of their miserable Estate, seem also to have got Peace again to their Consciences, without getting it by a true Faith in the Lord Jesus, affording no satisfying Evidence of their being savingly renewed: But, through the infinite, rich Grace of God, (and blessed be his glorious Name!) there is a considerable Number who afford all the Evidence that can reasonably be expected and required for our Satisfaction in the Case of their having been the Subjects of a thorough saving Change; except in some singular Instances of Behaviour, (alas for them!) which proceed from, and shew the sad Remains of original Corruption even in the regenerate Children of God while in this imperfect State. Their Walk is habitually tender and conscientious; their Carriage towards their Neighbour just and kind; and they appear to have an agreeable peculiar Love one for another, and for all in whom appears the Image of God. Their Discourses of Religion, their Engagedness and Dispositions

positions of Soul in the Practice of the immediate Duties and Ordinances of Religion, all appear quite otherwise than formerly. Indeed, the Liveliness of their Affections in the Ways of Religion is much abated in general, and they are in some Measure humbly sensible of this, and grieved for it, and are carefully endeavouring still to live unto God, much grieved with their Imperfections, and the Plagues they find in their own Hearts; and frequently they meet with some delightful Enlivening of Soul; and particularly our sacramental Solemnities for communicating in the Lord's Supper, have generally been very blessed Seasons of Enlivening and Enlargement to the People of God. There is a very evident and great Increase of Christian Knowledge with many of them. We enjoy in this Congregation the Happiness of a great Degree of Harmony and Concord: Scarcely any have appeared to open Opposition and Bitterness against the Work of God among us, and else-where up and down the Land, though there are pretty many such in several other Places through the Country. Some, indeed, in this Congregation, but very few, have separated from us, and joined with the Ministers who have unhappily quitted this blessed Work.

It would have been a great Advantage to this Account had I been careful in Time to have written down the Experiences of particular Persons; but this I neglected in the proper Season: However, I have more lately noted down an Account of some of the Soul-Exercises and Experiences of one Person, which, I think, may be proper to make public on this Occasion. The Person is a single young Woman, but I judge it proper to conceal her Name, because she is yet living. I was very careful to be exact in the Affair, both in my conversing with her, and writing the Account she gave of herself, immediately after; and though I do not pretend to give her very Words for the most Part, yet I am well satisfied I do not misrepresent

what she related. The Account then is thus : She was first brought to some solemn Thoughtfulness and Concern about her Soul's Case, by seeing others so much concerned about their Souls.

When she saw People in deep Distress about their Souls States, she thought with herself how unconcerned she was about her own. And though she thought that she had not been very guilty of great Sins, yet she feared that she was too little concerned about her eternal Well-being ; and then the Sermons she heard made her still uneasy about her Case, so that she would go home on the Sabbath-Evenings pretty much troubled and cast down, which Concern used to abide with her for a few Days after, but still towards the End of the Week she would become pretty easy, and then by hearing the Word on the Sabbaths, her Uneasiness was always renewed for a few Days again. And thus it fared with her, till one Day, as she was hearing a Sermon preached from *Heb. iii. 15. To-day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* The Minister, in the Sermon, spoke to this Effect, ' How many of you have been hearing the Gospel ' for a long Time, and yet your Hearts remain always ' hard, without being made better by it : The Gospel is ' the Voice of God, but you have heard it only as the Voice ' of Man, and not the Voice of God, and so have not been ' benefited by it.' These Words came with Power to her Heart : She saw that this was her very Case indeed, and she had an awful Sense of the Sin of her Misimprovement of the Gospel, of her Stupidity, Hardness, and Unprofitableness under the hearing of the Word of God : She saw that she was hereby exposed to the Sin-punishing Justice of God, and so was filled with very great Fear and Terror ; but she said there was no other Sin at that Time applied to her Conscience, neither did she see herself, as altogether without *Christ*. This deep Concern on the forementioned Account stuck pretty close by her afterward. There was a Society of private Christians to meet in the Neighbourhood some Day

Day after in the same Week, for Reading, Prayer, and religious Conference : She had not been at a Society of that Kind before, but she longed very much for the Time of their Meeting, that she might go there; and while she was there, she got an awful View of her Sin and Corruption, and saw that she was without *Christ* and without Grace; and her Exercise and Distress of Soul was such, that it made her for a while both deaf and blind; but she said she had the ordinary Use of her Understanding, and begged that *Christ* might not leave her to perish; for she saw that she was undone without him. After this she lived in Bitterness of Soul; and at another Time she had such a View of her Sinfulness, of the Holiness and Justice of God, and the Danger she was in of eternal Misery, as filled her with extreme Anguish; so that had it not been that she was supported by an Apprehension of God's All-sufficiency, she told me she was persuaded she would have fallen immediately into Despair. She continued for some Weeks in great Distress of Spirit, seeking and pleading for Mercy without any Comfort, until one Sabbath Evening, in a House where she was lodged during the Time of a sacramental Solemnity, while the Family were singing the lxxxivth Psalm, her Soul conceived strong Hopes of Reconciliation with God through *Jesus Christ*, and she had such Apprehensions of the Happiness of the heavenly State, that her Heart was filled with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory: She sung with such Elevation of Soul as if she had sung out of herself, as she expressed it; she thought at the Time it was as if the Lord had put by the Veil, and shewed her the open Glory of Heaven. She had very enlarged Views of the Sufficiency of *Christ* to save. She was clearly persuaded, to the fullest Satisfaction, that there was Merit enough in him to answer for the Sins of the most guilty Sinner, and she saw that God could well be reconciled to all elect Sinners in his Son, which was a most ravishing delightful Scene of Contemplation to her. But while she was in this Frame, after some Time, she thought
with

with herself, that, notwithstanding all this, yet she could not, with the full Assurance of Faith, lay Claim to the Lord *Jesus* as her own Saviour in particular. She could not say with such full Satisfaction and Certainty as she desired, that he would be a Saviour in particular to her: And hence, for want of thoroughly understanding wherein the very Essence of a saving Faith consists, she had some jealous Fear that she was not yet brought truly to believe in Christ; however, she was much free from her former Terrors after this sweet Interview; but after some Time she grew more disconsolate, and more sensibly afraid of her State on the forementioned Account. She heard, that Sinners, in closing with Christ by Faith, received him for their Saviour, which she thought included in it a certain Persuasion that he was theirs in particular, and she could not clearly say that this had ever been her Case, and so she came awfully to suspect herself as yet an Unbeliever; and though she came in Time to that sweet Plerophory and full Assurance of Faith, yet she has since seen her Mistake in that Matter, ~~and~~ ^{seen} the Nature of a true and saving Faith. She continued very much under these grievous Dejections for about two Years, and yet enjoyed considerable Sweetness and Comfort at Times, she often came to hear Sermons with a Desire to get clearly convinced of her being yet in a Christless State, and with a formed Resolution to take and apply to herself what might be said in the Sermon to the Unconverted, but most commonly she returned very agreeably disappointed, she would generally hear some Mark of Grace, some Evidence of a real Christian, laid down, which she could lay Claim to, and could not deny, and thus she was supported and comforted from Time to Time, during that two Years Space. It was still with much Fear and Perplexity that she adventured to communicate in the Lord's Supper; but she could not omit it, and she always found some Refreshing and Sweetness by that Ordinance. After she had been so long under an almost alternate Succession of Troubles and Supports, the Sun of Righteousness

ness at last broke out upon her to the clear Satisfaction and unpeakable Ravishment of her Soul, at a Communion-Table: There her Mind was let into the glorious Mysteries of Redemption, with great Enlargement; while she meditated on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus, she thought with herself, he was not just a Man who suffered so for Sinners, but infinitely more than a Man, even the most High God, the eternal Son, equal with the Father, and she saw that his being God, put an infinite Lustre and Value upon his Sufferings as Man. Her Heart was filled with a most unutterable Admiration of his Person, his Merit and his Love, she was enabled to believe in him with a strong self-evidencing Faith, she believed that he suffered for her Sins, that she was the very Person, who by her Sins had occasioned his Sufferings, and brought Agony and Pain upon him. The Consideration of this filled her with the deepest Abhorrence of her Sins, and most bitter Grief for them; she said, she could have desired with all her Heart to have melted and dissolved her Body quite away in that very Place, in Lamentation and Mourning over her Sins. After this Enjoyment her Soul was generally delighting in God, and she had much of the Light of his Countenance with her, and, Oh! her great Concern still was how she might live to the Lord, how she might do any Thing for him, and give Honour to him. The Lord condescended to be much with her by his enlivening and comforting Presence, and especially sacramental Seasons were blessed and precious Seasons to her. At one of those Occasions she was in a sweet Frame, meditating upon the Blood and Water that issued from the Wound made by the Spear in her Saviour's Side; she thought, that as Water is of a purifying, cleansing Nature, so there was sanctifying Virtue as well as justifying Merit in the Lord Jesus, and that she could no more be without the Water, (his sanctifying Grace to cleanse her very polluted Soul) than she could be without his Blood to do away her Guilt, and her Heart was much taken up with

the Beauty and Excellency of Sanctification. At another Time, a Communion Solemnity likewise, she was very full of Delight and Wonder with the Thoughts of electing Love, how that God had provided and determined so great Things for her before ever she had a Being. And a very memorable Enjoyment she had at another Time on Monday after a Communion Sabbath, when those Words came to her Mind, *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* The Glory and Delight let in upon her Soul by these Words, was so great that it quite overcome her bodily Frame; she said, it seemed to her that she was almost all Spirit, and that the Body was quite late by, and she was sometimes in Hopes that the Union would actually break, and the Soul get quite away. She saw much at that Time into the Meaning of her Lord, in those Words, *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

About a Time of Sickneſs she had had, concerning which I enquired at her, she told me that she expected pretty much to die then; and was very joyful at the near Prospect of her Change; and was sensibly grieved to find herself recover again; chiefly, because that while she lived here, she was so frail and sinful, and could do so little for the Lord's Honour. I was with her in the Time of that Sickneſs, and indeed I scarcely ever saw one appearing to be so fully and sweetly satisfied under the afflicting Hand of God; she manifestly appeared to lie under it with a peaceful Serenity and divine Sweetneſs in her whole Soul. In a Word, her whole Deportment in the World bespeaks much Humility and Heavenlineſs of Spirit.

One of our Christian Friends, a Man about 50 Years of Age, was removed from us by Death in the Beginning of *May* last, of whom I can give some broken, imperfect Account, which perhaps may be of some Use. His Name was *Hanse Kirk Patrick*, he was a Man of a pretty good Understanding, and had been, I believe, a sober Professor for many
Years,

Years, though he had not been very long in *America*: After the Work of Religion began so powerful among us, I found, in conversing with him, that he believed it to be a good Work, but seemed very unwilling to give up his good Opinion of his own Case. He told me of some Concern and Trouble he had been in about his Soul in his younger Years; but yet the Case looked suspicious that he had got Ease in a legal Way upon an outward Form of Religion: At another Time, being at his House, and taking up a little Book that lay by me on the Table, which I found to be *Mr. Matber's Dead Faith anatomized, and self-justiciary convicted*; he said to me that was indeed a strange Book as ever he saw, and that according to that Author it was a great Thing indeed to have a right Faith that was true and saving: Another Thing than it was generally supposed to be; or to this Purpose. He seemed to me at that Time to be under more Fears about his own Case than I had observed in him before. Not long after this, as he was hearing a Sermon one Day, the Word was applied with irresistible Evidence and Power to his Heart, so that he saw himself as yet in a perishing, undone Case; whereupon the Distress and Exercise of his Soul was so great that he fell off the Seat on which he was sitting, and wept and cried very bitterly. A little after this he went to *Philadelphia*, at the Time of the meeting of the Synod, in Hopes that perhaps he might meet with some Benefit to his Soul, by hearing the Ministers preach there, or by conversing with some of them. He told me afterwards, that while he was there, as he walked the Streets, he was unspeakably distressed with the View of his miserable Condition, so that he could hardly keep his Distress from being publicly discerned upon him, and that he seemed sometimes to be even in a manner afraid that the Streets would open and swallow up such a wretched Creature. He told me of his Trouble, and his very sweet Relief out of it, in a most moving Manner, under a very fresh Sense and Impression of both; but the Particulars of

his Relief I have quite forgot. He was afterwards chosen and set apart for a ruling Elder in the Congregation. He died of an Imposthume, and gradually wasted away for a long Time before his Death, and was for about two Months entirely confined to his Bed. He told me that for some Time before he was laid bed-fast, he had been full of very distressing Fears and Jealousies about his Soul's State, and was altogether unsatisfied about his Interest in Christ; but that soon after he was confined to his Bed, the Lord afforded him his comforting Presence, cleared up his Interest, and removed his Fears. After this he continued still clear and peaceful in his Soul, and sweetly and wholly resigned to the Lord's Will, until Death. ~~When~~ When he had Strength to speak much, he was still free and forward to discourse of God and divine Things. One Time, as two other of our Elders were with him, he exhorted them to continue stedfast and faithful to God's Truth and Cause; for he said, if he had a thousand Souls he could freely venture them all upon the Doctrines which had been taught them in this Congregation. One Time, when I took Leave of him, he burst out into Tears, saying, ' I had been the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts to him that the Lord had sent to call him out of ' the broad Way of Destruction.' For some Days before his Decease he could speak very little, but, to all Appearance, with a great deal of Serenity and Sweetness of Soul he fell asleep in *Jesus*.

There have been very comfortable Instances of little Children among us: Two Sisters, the one being about seven, the other about nine Years of Age, were hopefully converted that Summer when Religion was so much revived here. I discoursed with them very lately, and both from their own Account and the Account of their Parents, there appears to have been a lasting, thorough Change wrought in them; they speak of their Soul-Experiences with a very becoming Gravity, and apparent Impression of the Things they speak of. The youngest was awakened by
hear-

hearing the Word preached; she told me she heard in Sermons, That except People were convinced and converted, they would surely go to Hell; and she knew she was not converted. This set her to praying with great Earnestness, with Tears and Cries, yet her Fears and Distress continued for several Days, till one time, as she was a-praying, her Heart, she said, was drawn out in great Love to God; and as she thought of Heaven, and being with God, she was filled with Sweetness and Delight. I could not find by her that she had at that Time any explicit particular Thoughts about Christ as a Redeemer, but she said she knew then that Christ had died for Sinners. She told me she often found such Delight and Love to God since, as she did then, and at such Times she was very willing to die that she might be with God: But she said she was sometimes afraid yet of going to Hell. I asked her if she was troubled at any time when she was not afraid of going to Hell? she said, Yes. I asked what she was troubled for then? she said, because she had done Ill to God, meaning that she had done Evil and Sin against God. Some Time after she first found Comfort; one Night, when her Father and all the rest of the Family, but her Mother and herself, were gone to a private Society, she said to her Mother, that the People were singing and praying where her Father was gone, and she desired her Mother to do the same with her; and after they were gone to Bed she desired her Mother to sing some Psalms which she had by Heart, for she said she did not want to go to sleep. Her Sister was first brought into Trouble about her Soul that same Summer, by Sickness; it continued with her some Time after her Recovery, till one Day, coming home from Meeting, as she heard some People speaking about Christ and Heaven, her Heart was enflamed with Love to Christ. She says that when she has Christ's Presence with her, she does not know what to do to get away, and be with God. Their Parents told me that for a long Time they seemed to be almost wholly taken up in

Religion; that no Weather, through the Extremity of Winter, would hinder them from going out daily to By-places for secret Prayer, and if any thing came in the Way, that they could not get going out for Prayer, at such Times as they inclined and thought most proper, they would weep and cry. Their Parents say they are very obedient Children, and strict Observers of the Sabbath. There are likewise other young Ones in the Place of whom I know nothing to the contrary but what they continue hopeful and religious to this Day.

This blessed Shower of divine Influence spread very much through this Province that Summer, and was likewise considerable in some other Places bordering upon it. The Accounts of some Ministers being something distinguished by their searching, awakening Doctrine, and solemn, pathetic Manner of Address, and the News of the Effects of their Preaching upon their Hearers, seemed in some Measure to awaken People through the Country, to consider their careless and formal Way of going on in Religion, and very much excited their Desires to hear those Ministers. There were several vacant Congregations without any settled Pastors, which earnestly begged for their Visits, and several Ministers, who did not appear heartily to put to their Shoulders to help in carrying on the same Work, yet then yielded to the pressing Importunities of their People, in inviting these Brethren to preach in their Pulpits, so that they were very much called abroad, and employed in incessant Labours, and the Lord wrought with them mightily, very great Assemblies would ordinarily meet to hear them upon any Day of the Week, and oftentimes a surprizing Power accompanying their Preaching, was visible among the Multitudes of their Hearers. It was a very comfortable, enlivening Time to God's People, and great Numbers of secure, careless Professors, and many loose, irreligious Persons, through the Land, were deeply convinced of their miserable, perishing Estate, and there is abundant Reason to believe, and be

satis-

satisfied, that many of them were, in the Issue, savingly converted to God. I myself have had Occasion to converse with a great many up and down who have given a most agreeable Account of very precious and clear Experiences of the Grace of God, several, even in *Baltimore*, a County in the Province of *Maryland*, who were brought up almost in a State of Heathenism, without almost any Knowledge of the true Doctrines of Christianity, afford very satisfying Evidence of being brought to a saving Acquaintance with God in Christ Jesus.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give a brief Account of the Revival of Religion among us in these Parts, in which I have endeavoured all along to be conscientiously exact in relating Things according to the naked Truth, knowing that I must not speak wickedly even for God, nor talk deceitfully for HIM: And, upon the Whole, I must say it is beyond all Dispute with me, and I think it is beyond all reasonable Contradiction, that God has carried on a great and glorious Work of his special Grace among us.

I am,

REVEREND SIR,

New-Londonderry
in Pennsylvania,
August 6, 1744.

Your very respectful Son,

and Servant,

SAMUEL BLAIR.

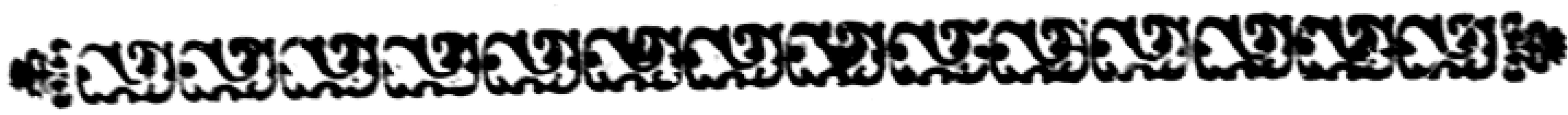
A T T E S T A T I O N.

WE, the under Subscribers, ruling Elders in the Congregation of *New-Londonderry*, do give our Testimony and Attestation to the above Account of the Revival of Religion in this Congregation, and other Parts of this Country, so far as the said Account relates to Things that were open to public Observation, and such Things as we have had Opportunity of being acquainted with. Particularly we testify that there has been a great and very general Awakening among People, whereby they have been stirred up to an earnest uncommon Concern and Diligence about their eternal Salvation, according to the above Account of it: And that many give very comfortable Evidence by their Knowledge, Declaration of Experience, and conscientious Practice, of their being savingly changed and turned unto God.

*James Cochran,
John Ramsay,
John Love,
John Smith,
John Simson,
William Boyd.*

N. B. One of our Elders not having had the Opportunity of seeing this Letter before it was sent away, his Name is not here subscribed.





THE
LAST ADVICE

Of the late REVEREND

Mr. *SAMUEL BLAIR*,

TO


A NUMBER of his CONGREGATION,
convened at his House, a few Weeks before
his DEATH;

CHIEFLY RESPECTING

Their *future Conduct*, as to their CONGREGA-
TIONAL AFFAIRS.

BY

ROBERT SMITH, Minister of the Gospel
at Paquay.





THE
LAST ADVISE

Of the late REVEREND

Mr. SAMUEL BLAIR, &c.

APRIL 7, 1751, Mr. Blair perceiving that his Disorder encreased, and, in all Probability, would soon issue in his Death, earnestly desired to communicate some Thoughts to his People, which he apprehended would be serviceable to them; and being his dying Sentiments, might influence them the more. He would gladly have spoken to the whole Congregation, but knowing that to be impossible in his then low State, he sent for the Elders, and two out of each Quarter along with them, to meet at his House the Day following; who accordingly came, and to them he addressed himself, designing that what he said should be communicated by them to the rest of their Brethren: As I was present myself the whole Time, and can readily recollect the Substance of what he spoke, at the Desire of some, I here deliver it, as near as possible, in his own Words. But as his Sayings on each Particular can be remembered with more Certainty than his Transitions, I therefore divide his Discourse into several Heads.

First, He introduced his Discourse with some Remarks on his former and present declining State of Body: ' I found myself (*said he*) on the Decline two or three Years before my sore Sickness in *Philadelphia*. In the Time of my Illness there, it was my Desire and Request to God, that he would recover me to so much Strength, as I might be able to speak to you once more in his Name. It pleased *him* to grant my Request; and, over and above, to continue me, and enable me to preach to you for a considerable Time, though with Difficulty, because of my Weakness. Now the Lord has laid his Hand on me again; and though I do not pretend to prophesy, or determine absolutely respecting the Event, yet I am very apprehensive my Sickness is unto Death: And lest this should be the Issue, I desired to communicate a few Thoughts to you *now*, and give you my last Advice, chiefly with Regard to your future Management of the Affairs of the Congregation.'

Secondly, As to the Congregation's Behaviour towards him, and his Family-Concerns, he said, ' I have Reason, with Gratitude, to acknowledge the Kindness of the Congregation to me, especially in sympathizing with me in my Sickness; one Instance of which I cannot but particularly notice, That, notwithstanding I have been frequently prevented from performing the Duties of my Office through weakness, yet I have not known the least Instance of any Grumbling at me on that Account. But though the Congregation has been kind to us in several Respects, yet my Wife was obliged to be particularly frugal and industrious, for the better Support of her numerous increasing Family. And now being about to be removed from being a Head over them, I recommend to your Care my disconsolate Widow, and half a Score of small Children. Not that I desire they should be a continual Charge to you; that would be an extravagant Desire indeed: But my Mean-

ing is, 1. That you would take Care to collect the
 Remainder of my Debts, for their Support. 2. That
 you would discover a good Countenance to them; which
 I should look upon as the best Testimony of Respect
 to my Memory.'

Thirdly, In respect of his own Conduct, as a Christian,
 and a Minister, he said, ' Though I have to lament
 many Infirmities, yet, I think I may say, without
 Ostentation, that my Conduct has been becoming the
 Gospel. I have Reason to bless God, that he has so
 kept me from Falls and Blunders, that I have not been
 a Reproach to Religion, nor given the Enemies of it
 Occasion to blaspheme. As a Minister, I have indeed
 Cause to be ashamed before God, for my poor Man-
 ner of serving him in that Office: Yet, blessed be his
 Name, that I have, by his Grace, studied to be faith-
 ful. My Conscience bears me Witness, that I have
 honestly endeavoured to explain to you the various
 Doctrines of Religion agreeable to the Mind of God:
 I studied them, that I might preach them to you; and
sought the Scriptures, to see whether those Things were
so; and am willing to attest the Truth of them with
 my last Breath; and could, with the utmost Freedom,
 urge upon you the Belief and Practice of them, were
 I sure that I was immediately to appear before the
 Bar of God.'

Fourthly, With respect to his spiritual State, God-ward,
 he said, ' I trust I may say, to the Honour of divine
 Grace, that my Peace with God is not left to be
 made up till this Day. It is a Thing of no new
 standing. This would be an uncomfortable Bed to me,
 if that great Business was yet to be performed. But,
 upon Searches and Researches into the Foundation, I
 cannot but hope that I shall stand acquitted in the
 Z z 2 ' Judg-

Judgment: Blessed be God! Death is not a Terror to
 me; for, not entertaining the least Scruple of God's
 eternal Love and Favour to me, I can with Cheer-
 fulness, and Peace in my Soul, embrace it, in full
 Expectation of a blessed and glorious Immortality:
 Yet, what Advantage Satan may be permitted to ob-
 tain over me before I die, I know not; but I hope,
 that, as my Extremity encreases, my Strength will be
 also encreased.'

Fifthly, In respect of the late glorious Revival of Re-
 ligion, and the Differences arising thereon, he said, ' It
 pleased the Lord to make me, and a Number of my
 Brethren, instrumental in promoting what I always be-
 lieved was a Work of his Power and Grace; and in
 that Faith I can depart into an eternal World. But
 some how or other our Mother's Children were angry
 with us who were the Instruments in carrying it on;
 and unjustly excluded us from Communion with them:
 Therefore I advise you to adhere to your own Pres-
 bytery, and make Application to it in order to obtain
 Supplies, and the Settlement of the Gospel Ministry
 among you. But if the two Synods unite again, be
 not obstinate against the Union, nor thereupon sepa-
 rate from the Church, or endeavour to make any Root
 or Schism in it.'

Sixthly, For their Direction in the Choice of a Mi-
 nister, he said, ' That you may obtain a useful Minister,
 who may be likely to promote the Interests of Reli-
 gion among you, endeavour to obtain rational Satis-
 faction respecting the Man you may have your Eye
 fixed upon, in the following Particulars,

I. ' Observe whether his Conversation and Deport-
 ment be such as favours of Piety, and becomes the
 Gospel: For if a Minister's Conversation be light, vain,
 and

and unfavoury, though he could speak with the Tongue of an Angel, his Labours would not have a Tendency to promote Godliness.

I I. His tender Care, and Ability to solve Cases of Conscience, should be observed. For if a Minister is unexperienced himself in the Exercises of Piety, he cannot natively and readily take up the Cases of Christians, nor will he faithfully endeavour to promote their Holiness and Comfort. He will not be faithfully engaged for his own Salvation, and how then can he be so engaged for the Salvation of his Hearers? His Disposition being selfish, himself will be his highest Aim. Moreover, such a one will be subject to Blunders, to the Wounding of Religion.

III. Observe his Ability to preach, and defend the Doctrines of Grace. But if he be a young Man, and appears capable of good Improvement, do not reject him, because, as you might possibly apprehend, he cannot explain the Doctrines of Religion as I have done: For it is not to be expected of a Youth, though ingenious and learned, that he should be as clear and full on those Doctrines as one of greater Experience in Preaching. It would be a Shame to me, if, after I have been above seventeen Years in the Ministry, I could not open Gospel Doctrines more clearly than a Youth just entered on the Office. Now, though you may possibly be deceived in a Man, and need not pretend to an absolute Certainty in these Things; yet try to get a competent rational Satisfaction, 1. By obtaining a previous Trial of him, that you may hear him frequently preach, may converse with him, and know his Conversation. And, 2. Lest you should be mistaken, enquire, concerning him, of those who are acquainted with him, and able to form a Judgment of his Suitableness for you, and who are most likely to give a true and unbiaſſed Account of him: And be not too rash and hasty in taking

‘up with any, but proceed cautiously in so very important
‘an Affair.’

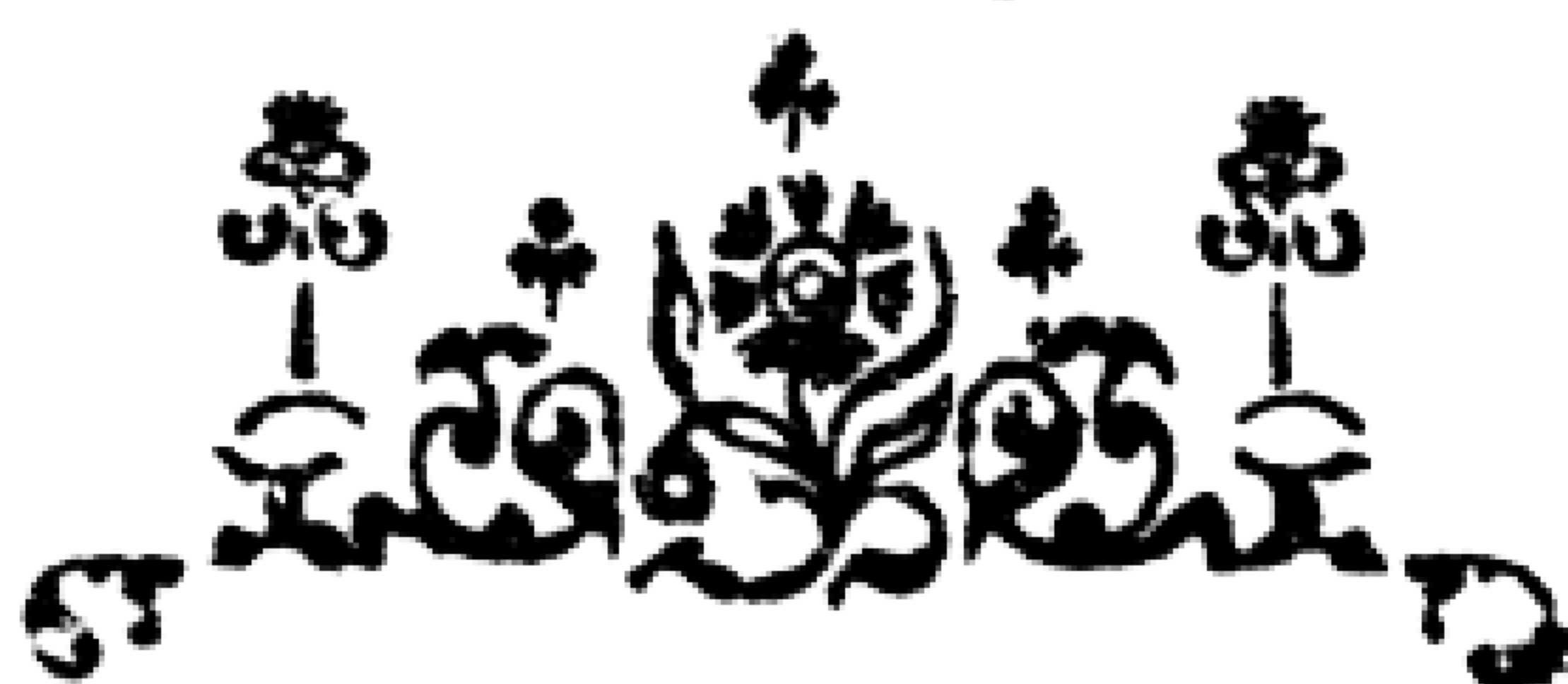
Solemnly, To engage them to Union and Peace among themselves, he said; ‘While you live vacant, keep together
‘in one Body, and do not break off, and join with other
‘Congregations; for in so doing you would do what you
‘could to lop off this Branch of Christ’s Vineyard. Vacant
‘Congregations are exposed to many Dangers; therefore
‘as long as you remain without a Minister settled among
‘you, you have need to take special Care that you do no-
‘thing that may weaken your Strength, or hinder the ge-
‘neral Good of the Body. And for this Purpose, see that
‘ye endeavour to maintain Peace, Harmony, and brother-
‘ly Love among yourselves in all your Proceedings. But
‘beware of Heats and Contentions, for they have a native
‘Tendency to divide and separate; and Divisions are the
‘Bane of Society. If any Difference shall at any Time
‘arise among you, reason the Point with one another calm-
‘ly, and in the Spirit of Meekness: And if, after all, a
‘Part are obliged to dissent from the Judgment of the Ma-
‘jority, let it appear to be with Reluctance: If they can-
‘not obtain Satisfaction, but still must look on themselves
‘as aggrieved, let mutual Forbearance be exercised, and
‘let them not separate from their Brethren, but continue in
‘Union with them, though some Grievance subsist.’

At the Conclusion he expressed the Desire of his Soul very pathetically thus, ‘Oh! that none of you may be wanting
‘in the Day of Christ, when we must appear before the
‘Judgment-seat; I, to give an Account of my Steward-
‘ship; and you, how you received.’

In this solemn Manner did Mr. Blair take Leave of his People: And if they conscientiously observe his dying Ad-
vices, which are now published with a particular View to
their

their Benefit, they may expect the Blessing of indulgent Heaven, and that they shall continue a flourishing Congregation, united in Love, and walking in the Faith and Fellowship of the Gospel. But it would be an Instance of daring Hardiness, if any of them should disregard the last Words of One who has left a Testimony of his Fidelity in their Consciences; One who fell with the Dignity of a Minister of Jesus, and gave such striking Proofs, in his last Moments, of the Truth of Christianity, on which he cheerfully ventured his eternal All; and of the Reality of his personal Religion.

The E N D.



Faithful Ministers the Fathers of the
C H U R C H.

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

A T

F O G S - M A N N O R.

O N O C C A S I O N

Of the Death of the Reverend Mr SAMUEL
BLAIR, who departed this Life July 5.
1752.

By SAMUEL FINLEY, A. M. Minister of
the Gospel at *Nottingham in Pennsylvania.*

Pfal. CXII. 6. *The Righteous shall be in everlasting
Remembrance.*

P H I L A D E L P H I,
Printed and sold by W. BRADFORD in *Second-Street.*

MDCCLII.



2 KINGS ii. 12.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, my Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.



H E S E Words are the Encomium of *Elijab*, one of the greatest Prophets; the History of whose Life is full of Wonders, and shines in the antient Annals of *Israel*. He was remarkable for burning Zeal, undaunted Courage, and miraculous Gifts: The Terror of boldest Transgressors, and favourite of godly Men. As he *was very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts*, and sought not his own Glory, so God eminently honour'd him while he liv'd on Earth, but still more in his Departure hence, having *translated him that he shou'd not see Death*. Of this God gave him previous Notice: And when the Time drew near, in which he was to be taken up to Heaven, he visited the Schools of the Prophets, as one tenderly concern'd for the Prosperity of the Church Militant. He was accompany'd by his faithful Attendant *Elisha*, who, full of Affection to his honoured Master, absolutely refused to leave him.

The intended Visitation being perform'd, the venerable Sages walk'd along, conversing, doubtless, with an heavenly Relish, of the important Concerns of Religion; when all of a sudden *appeared a Chariot of Fire, and Horses of Fire*. Holy Angels are employ'd

(3)

ploy'd in carrying departed Saints into *Abraham's Bosom*; and we may justly conclude that it was they who assum'd the Figure of a Chariot, and Horses, † that in Brightness, not in Heat, resembled Fire. They carry invisibly the departed Souls of the righteous to Glory, but as *Elijah* was to be taken to Heaven with his Body, there was the greatest Propriety in their appearing visible; and as he had acted the noble Hero in the Cause of God, it was fit and condecant, that he shou'd be carryed in State, like a glorious Conqueror in his triumphal Chariot.

The Chariot, most probably, appeared running along upon the ground to meet them, and *parting them asunder* caught up *Elijah* and ascended retulgent to Heaven. Here we are brought to an unvoiadable Pause: Our Tho'ts plunge and are lost, attempting to follow him further. Fancy cannot realize the vigorous, yet calm and peaceful raptures that elevated his Soul. We cannot conceive the Excess of Blessedness which necessarily sprang from the open Vision of uncreated Glory, and the Health and Purity of his own Spirit. Yea it never *enter'd into his own Heart*, what he now felt and saw, upon the sudden Change of his Condition from mortal and sinful, to immortal and holy.

But *Elijah's* Situation is more level to our Apprehensions; behold the Astonishment with which he views this surprizing Phœnomenon! He stands in the same Spot motionless as a Statue, his Eyes fixed, eagerly pursuing the shining Chariot, until he cou'd see it no more, — nor cou'd refrain from gazing up into Heaven

† Angels are called Seraphim, i. e. The Burners. In *Hai*, 6. 2. And Cherubim, which some considerable Critics judge has Affinity with Rechubim Chariots. Angels are called the Chariots of God, in *Psalms* 68. 17. And in *Psalms* 18. 10. He is expressly said to ride upon a Cherub. These Considerations, I presume, will fully justify my Conclusion that the fiery Chariots and Horses were Angels, and nothing else.

for a long Time after. One may almost feel the conflict of various Passions in his Soul; the quick Alterations of Admiration, Joy, and Grief. But upon deep Recollection Grief prevails: His own Loss, and that of the publick, affect his Heart; so that he rent his Cloaths as one bereft of Comfort, and cry'd, *my Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.* He consider'd himself as a destitute Orphan, and the Publick as having lost it's Strength and Beauty. *Elijah's* Departure is like the routing of an Army: Now the Chariots of *Israel*, and the Horsemen thereof are no more. Nothing greater cou'd be said than this, nor said more greatly on the Occasion. And no doubt, all of you see at first view whether they tend, and how applicable the Words are to that dear and Reverend Man, whose lamented Death affords the sad Occasion of my present Discourse from them. But that their Pertinency to our present design may appear, let it be observed, that Gospel Ministers succeed in the Room of the Old Testament Prophets. If then these Words cou'd be said of a Prophet, they can also of a faithful Minister of the New Testament. *

Should any one argue, that they are applicable to none, but such as are eminent above the ordinary Rank, because only spoken of *Elijah* and *Elisha*, I am under

* That Ministers of the New, are properly Successors of the Prophets of the Old Testament, may be argu'd, not only from the Sameness of their Employment as to the Substance thereof, but also from their common Appellations. Ministers are called Prophets 1 Cor. 14. 2. 3. 4. 29. 32. and often elsewhere. A Prophet is called a Man of God. 2 Kings 1. 9. 11. 13, and 4. 7. 16. 22. &c. So also Ministers 1 Tim 6. 11. 2 Tim. 3. 17. Prophets are Messengers. Job. 33. 23. and so are Ministers. 2 Cor. 8. 23. and frequently Angels, a Word of the same Import.

under no Necessity to dispute against him ; seeing on that Supposition, they are the more apposite and suitable on the present Occasion.

On the whole, the Text teaches us to consider faithful Ministers, at least those that excell, as Fathers, the Chariots of *Israel*, and the Horsemen thereof.

All that seems necessary to be done, in Order to the intended Improvement, is to explain the Import of these Phrases ; and shew their Applicableness to faithful and eminent Gospel Ministers.

First, I am to explain the Import of these Phrases, *Father, the Chariot of Israel, and Horsemen thereof.*

1. The Term *Father*, sometimes denotes one invested with Power and Authority. Thus when *Isaiab* predicts that *Eleakim* shall have the Government committed into his Hands, it is added, *and he shall be a Father to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem.* The Antient Romans rightly judg'd, that *Father of his Country* was the most honourable Title they cou'd give their best and greatest Consuls, and Emperors. The Original and first Authority among Men is that of Parents ; and hence, in the Fifth Commandment, *Father and Mother* are mentioned, rather than Magistrates or Ministers.

Sometimes *Father* denotes the Master of a Profession, a Teacher or Instructor. In this Sense *Jabal* is call'd *the Father of such as dwell in Tents* : And *Jubal* of such as handle the Harp and Organ. § And with the same view, the Eldest and Chief of the Prophets were call'd *Fathers*, and the younger *Sons of the Prophets.* †

Again, *Father* is a Term of Respect and Reverence. Accordingly we find them connected in *Mal.* 1. 6. *If I be a Father, were is mine Honour.*

So *Naaman's* Servants, approaching to him, call him *Father* : and the King of *Israel* addresses *Elisha* with the same respectful and affectionate Appellation.

Aged

Aged Men are commonly honour'd with the Title of *Father*. So when the Apostle directs us, not to *rebuke an Elder, but intreat him as a Father*. He does not design an Elder in Office, but in Years; as is manifest from the following Clause, where *younger Men* are opposed to him. It is still presumed, that *Multitude of Years shou'd teach Wisdom*: And hence this honourable Title denotes one that is wise by long Experience.

Again one of exemplary Faith and Conversation is call'd a Father. In this view *Abraham* is stil'd the *Father of Believers*: * He was worthy of Imitation, both as to the Temper of his Heart, and Conduct of his Life. So when God is set forth under the Relation of a *Father*, *Imitation* of him is recommended: Whereby we are taught, that as Children are prone to Copy, after their Fathers, so Fathers are, or ought to be proper Patterns for their Imitation.

Besides all these, we find *Tenderness* and *Affection* connected with the Idea of *Father*; as also Care to provide for, direct, reprove and correct his Children. It is so confessedly the Part of the Father to *lay up for Children, that if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own House, he has deny'd the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel*. And the Language of every dutiful Child is, *my Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth. The Fathers of our Flesh correct us, and we give them Reverence—for what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not*.

Lastly, they are called Fathers who have been the Instruments of Conversion. On this ground the Apostle claims the Title of *Father* from the *Corinthian* Christians, when he says, *tho' you have ten Thousand Instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many Fathers: For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you thro' the Gospel*.

2. The

2. The other Phrases, viz. Chariot and Horsemen, may be consider'd conjunctly. In General they signify military Strength, Protection, or Defence, and Ornament:

1. That Chariots and Horsemen were esteem'd the chief military Strength of a Kingdom, the Psalmist intimates, when he tells us, that *some Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses. Jabin* thought himself Safe, and was terrible to his Neighbours, because *he had nine Hundred Chariots of Iron.* * And many other Instances might be produc'd to the same Purpose.

2. As a Consequence of the Former, they were consider'd as a Defence and Protection. Hence, when God so remarkably appear'd for the Protection of his People from the Egyptians at the Red-Sea, he is said to have *rode upon his Horse and Chariots of Salvation.* † And when the Syrian Moab had encircled the City of *Dotan*, in order to take *Elisha*; and his Servant being struck with great Terror, he pray'd that God wou'd discover the powerful Guard they had against their Enemies. *And the Lord opened the Eyes of the young Man, and he saw the whole Mountain full of Horses, and Chariots of Fire round about Elisha.* *

3. Chariots are for Ornament, having commonly been used for the Conveyance of honourable Personages. Accordingly, when the Grandeur and Majesty of *Jehovah* is expressed, he is represented as *making the Clouds his Chariot.* And it is promised as a Blessing to the Jews, on Condition of their Obedience, that there shou'd enter into the Gates of *Jerusalem*, Kings and Princes—*riding in Chariots, and on Horses.* † And when the Stateliness and Beauty of the spouse of Christ is designedly set forth, she is compared to a *Company of Horses in Pharaoh's Chariots*

On the whole, we may conceive the Text as tho'
Elisha

* Judges 4. 3. † Hab. 3. 8. * 2 Kings 6. 17. † Jer. 47. 25.

Elisha had said, that, “ however *Elijah* was vilify’d by
 “ many, and look’d upon as a common Pest, yet he
 “ was in Reality the most important, most useful, and
 “ honourable Person in the Nation; who by his pious
 “ Example, seasonable Instructions, and fervent Prayers,
 “ did more for the Defence and Safety of Israel
 “ than all their Chariots and Horsemen.”

We are now to manifest secondly, that these Characters are applicable to faithful Ministers of the New Testament. This will be evident from the following Observations.

1. God has invested them with Authority, and order’d that they be honour’d as Rulers in his Church. Hence the Apostle exhorts the *Hebrews* in these remarkable Expressions. *remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God, ---obey them---and submit your selves: for they Watch for your Souls. ** ---It is confessedly the Duty of Ministers to speak the Word of God, and watch for their Peoples Souls; and it’s plain that the same Persons have also the Rule over them. It is true, their Authority is not Legislative, but Ministerial: they are not to be Lords over God’s Heritage, being only appointed to put in Execution the Laws of Christ: But even this is great Authority, and an high Trust. Accordingly God commands his People to *Count those who Rule well and labour in the Word and Doctrine, worthy of double Honour.†* ---And to esteem them very highly in love for their Work’s sake. In these Directions it is supposed, that faithful Ministers will behave themselves, in the Discharge of their Office, with such Discretion, Gravity, and Impartiality as will command Esteem and Reverence; and will manage their Power with such Propriety as tends to secure the End of it, viz, Edification.

B

They

* Heb. 13. 7. † 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 12. 17.

2. They are *Examples to Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*. * The Gravity of their common Discourse Decency, of their Deportment, their Benovolence to Men and Zeal for the Glory of God, the Soundness of their Doctrine and Holiness of their Lives, are to be such as Believers may safely imitate. They must preach and live the same Thing. Then can they exhort their Audience to *do what they have heard and seen in them.* § Inconsistency is the Disgrace of Gospel Ministers, and will ever make them despicable and base in the Eyes of the People; nor will the greatest Parts, and finest Accomplishments protect their Character, or Screen them from Censure.

3. Faithful Ministers are careful, and affectionately tender, of their Peoples best Interests. They reprove the guilty, Censure the scandalous, instruct the Ignorant, and comfort the dejected, with the Bowels of a Father. Hence they can appeal to their Hearers in the strain of blessed Paul; *you know, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a Father doth his Children.* † They do not perform the Circle of Ministerial Duties for selfish Ends, but are excited thereto by a genuine, and *natural Care*, †† for the Souls of the People. And there is good Reason why they are thus affected, for,

4. They are the *Fathers of the Church*, in an higher, and more proper Sense than any of the forementioned Respects, being ordinarily the Instruments of Regeneration. By them Sinners are *begotten thro' the Gospel to a lively hope*. ** It is the Constitution of God, that *Faith sh^d come by hearing*: † Hence the Apostle's Query is Argumentative; *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* § It is remarkable, that thro' God

* 1 Tim. 4. 12. § Phil. 4. 9. † 2 Thes. 2. 11. †† Phil. 2. 20. ** 2 Cor. 4. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 2. † Rom. 10. 17. § v. 14.

God sent an Angel to *Cornelius* the Centurion, § It was not to instruct him in the Doctrines of the Gospel, but only to direct him to *Peter*, a Minister of Christ. So great Honour does God put on the Ordinance of preaching.

5. Faithful Ministers are the Defence, the Strength, and Ornament of the Church.

The Apostle considers himself as one *set for the Defence of the Gospel*. And to manifest that this is the Province of every Minister, it is requir'd as a Qualification for the Office, *that they may be able, by sound Speech, both to exhort, and convince Gain-sayers.* * It is expected in a peculiar Manner from them, that they shou'd endeavour *to make up the Hedge and Stand in the Gate.* † To interpose between an offended God, and a sinful People; and interceed for them as *Moses* often did for *Israel*.

They are in a secondary Way, the Support and Strength of the Church. Their Prayers, instructions, and exemplary Steadyness, are the Means of Courage and Strength to other Christians: Hence they are compar'd to *Pillars*, †† the known Supports of Buildings.

Lastly they are the Church's Ornament. This is design'd by the Appellation of *Stars* § frequently given them; and when the Church is represented as a *Woman* admirably and gloriously apparell'd, these *Stars* compose her *Crown*.** The Apostle expresses this in Terms, that seem still Stronger, while he calls them the *Angels of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ.* §§ Thus, with a special Emphasis, faithful Ministers may be called the *Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*

From this Doctrine we may take Occasion to observe.

1. That

§ Act. 10. 3. † Tit 1. 9. * Ezek. 27. 30. ** Gal. 2. 9
§ Rev. 1. 20. †† chap. 12. 1. §§ 2 Cor. 3. 23,

1 That however much the Ministerial Office is vilify'd by the Proud and Impious, yet it is and will appear to be, a most important, and honourable Office. It must be acknowledg'd a great Matter to bear a Commission under the King of Kings, to be cloathed with his Authority and entrusted with the vast Concerns of his Peoples Souls; a People so dearly bought, and so infinitely beloved. But when Sinners reject the Lord of Glory himself, it is not marvellous that they disdain his Servants. *If they call the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more may they of his Household expect such Treatment?* § *Elijah* was a most eminent Man of God, the Ornament of his Nation and Age, and very serviceable to *Israel*; yet he was consider'd as a Blemish to the World, a *Troubler of Israel*, * and so treated as a Miscreant. But following Generations commonly see the Mistakes of their Ancestors; they *Garnish the Sepulchers of the righteous*, † whom their Fathers persecuted to the Death, and disclaim their impious and cruel Conduct. This comes to pass by the over-ruling Providence of God, who has determined that excellent Men shall have an everlasting Name. The Character of an *Elijah* shall blossom in the Dust, tho' it seem wither'd and dead while he is alive. The most unblemish'd Life may for a Time, be obscur'd by the Clouds of Obloquy and Repeach; but like the Sun, it will break thro' all and Shine as the Noon-Day: § For God has undertaken to Honour those who Honour him. †† Faithful Ministers may therefore contentedly be counted vile, whilst they approve themselves to God, and their own Consciences; being assured that they shall appear in true Colours, and *be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord*, §§ notwithstanding the Envy of all the World. We may,

2. Inferred, that such as are destitute of the Characters already mentioned, are utterly unworthy of the Ministerial

§ Mat. 10. 25. * 1 King. 18. 27. † Mat. 23. 29. § Psal. 51. 6. †† 1 Sam. 2. 30. §§ Mat. 47. 5.

Ministerial Office. They who are ignorant of Experimental Piety are but *blind Guides*, § they who are not of exemplary Conversation, are *Stumbling blocks before the Blind*; they who are erroneous and profane are the Teachers and Promoters of open Rebellion against the Lord. They who seek their own Glory betray their Trust, and act a most perfidious Part. *H, and only he, who seeketh his Glory that sendeth him, is true.* §§ Therefore the Minister who seeks his own Honour, in Strictness of Speech, degrades himself; and God will *make him base before all the People.* * It cannot be supposed, that they who are destitute of Paternal Tenderness and Care will *watch for their People's Souls, or travail in Birth till Christ be formed in them*: §§§ And unless Severity be temper'd with Love and Gentleness, they may perhaps maintain the Authority of Bullies, but not of Gospel Ministers. It is therefore just Matter of Lamentation, that the sensual, the selfish, the frothy, the ignorant, and the proud, shou'd strive for the Ministry; and having obtained it, become the Peests of the Church, ruin Sinners, distress the godly, and aggravate their own Sins and Torments.

3. The loss of an eminent and faithful Minister is just Cause of Sorrow. How naturally do Children bewail the Loss of a dear Father? And a Kingdom that of their military Strength? If the Army is routed, both Horse and Foot broken, what sag'ning Damps does the Report thereof spread? Every Lover of his Country feels a genuine Grief, and will naturally express his Sensations in such an abrupt, pathetick, and Sententious strain as *Elisba* in our Text. And who in this Assembly, that loves the Interests of Religion, does not feel his Heart oppress'd with undimembled Woe? Who laments not our common Loss? Who knows not that a *great Man is fallen in Israel*? †
 Yea,

§ Mat. 23. 24. §§ Joh. 7. 18. §§§ Mal. 2. 9. • Gal. 4. 19.
 † 2 Sam. 3. 28.

Yea, we know that *Blair* the holy, the upright, and the Wise, is now no more.---The Lover of Religion, and the Love of religious Persons, has departed hence ---the Husband, the Father, and the Friend, is gone, ---O! *My Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.* Of whom can these Words be better spoken? To whom more justly apply'd, than to this faithful and wise Servant of Jesus Christ? He had the Temper and Deportment of Father of the Church; and was eminently qualify'd for the sacred Office.

He was blest with early Piety; on his dying bed he cou'd recollect, with delight, various Evidences of gracious Influences in his tender Years. by this Means he was happily preserv'd from being ever engag'd in vicious Courses, and at once grew in Stature and in Grace. Religion, far from being a fleshy Thing with him, was rational and solid; manifesting itself in an unreserved Obedience to all God's Commandments.

To an holy Disposition was added a great Genius, capable of the highest Improvements. He had a deep and penetrating Judgment, a clear and regular Way of conceiving Things, and a retentive Memory. He was an indefatigable Student, a calm and impartial Searcher for Truth; he *thought for himself*, and was determin'd in his Conclusions only by Evidence.

He had a very considerable Store of critical Learning; and was especially conversant in studying the Scriptures in their Original Languages. How great his Attainments in Philosophy were, was known by few: For in his last Years his Thirst for Knowledge did sensibly encrease; and he greatly improved himself therein. He studyed several Branches of the Mathematicks, and especially Geometry and Astronomy: Nor will these seem tasteless Studies to one who had such a Savour of living Piety, when it is consider'd, that he saw the Glory of God in all his Works, admir'd

admir'd and ador'd him in all : He delighted to see *the invisible Things of him, even his eternal Power and Godhead, manifested by the Things that are made.* † It was edifying to him to trace the Footsteps of divine Wisdom in particulars, and the infinite reach of Projection in the Frame and Contexture of the Whole.

But his critical and Philosophical Learning, and his large Acquaintance with Geography and History, were all exceeded by his Knowledge in Divinity. This was the Business of his Life ; and herein he made such Proficiency as few, of his standing in the Ministry, have attained unto. Herein he found what perfectly answer'd his refined spiritual Taste. The Contemplation of redeeming Love, did much more elevate his Soul, than that of the Works of Creation : For therein he saw the Wisdom, the Power, the Justice, and the Love of God, more clearly display'd. On every Subject he had a set of most accurately study'd Thoughts : He had often weigh'd in impartial Ballance every Theological Controversy, was a solid Disputant, and able to defend all necessary Truth. He was a judicious Casuist, and cou'd very satisfyingly resolve dubious and perplexed Cases of Conscience. He was not only a proficient in Systematick Divinity, which is comparatively a small Attainment, but a great Textuary. He studied the sacred Oracles above all other Things, and that it was not in vain, manifestly appeared from his great Ability in *dividing the Words of Truth.* § He cou'd *bring out of his Treasures, Things new and old.* * How clearly and fully wou'd he have explained his Subject ! With what irresistible Arguments confirm the Truth ! With what admirable Dexterity accommodate it to his Audience ! And with what Solemn Pungence did he impress the Conscience ! He spoke like one who
knew

† Rom. 1. 20. § 2 Tim. 2. 15. * Mat. 13. 52.

knew the Worth of Souls, and felt in himself the sweet constraints of Love to God and Man.

As he was diligent in the Exercise of his Office to the utmost of his bodily Strength, not *sparing himself*: so God did very remarkably succeed his faithful Ministrations to the Conversion of many Souls. He was the spiritual Father of great Numbers: I have had acquaintance with several Christians, in different Places, where he only preach'd occasionally, who gave all hopeful Evidences of a sound Conversion, and acknowledg'd him to be the Instrument of it.

As to his religious Principles, he was of noble and generous Sentiments. He had *not so learned Christ*, † as to be furious in his Zeal for meer circumstantial or indifferent Points. He understood the Nature of Religion better than to Place it in Things wherein it does not consist; and was too much in the Exercise of the *greater Matters of the Law*, †† to be equally zealous for *Mint, Anise, and Cummin*. Tho' *Sacrifice* be good, and ought to be practis'd, and contended for in it's Place, yet had he *learned that Mercy is better*. * He believ'd, and that agreeable to the sacred Scriptures, that the Communion of Saints is of much greater Importance than many of those Things, wherein Christians differ in Judgment, and was therefore far from such narrowness of Spirit, as to make every Principle and Practise, which he tho't to be true and good, a Term of Communion, and as far from the contrary extreme, a criminal Indifferency and Laxness.

He was strict in Discipline so as to be still candid; and so severely just as to be still compassionate and tender. And with how great Wisdom and Circumspection he judg'd in difficult Cases, his *Brethren* of this Presbytry well know. We waited for Sage Remarks, and heard attentive his prudent Reasonings:

After-

After his Words, how seldom had any one Occasion to speak again? His Speech dropped upon us, and we waited for him, as for the Rain. †

He has also been eminently serviceable to the Church, by assisting several promising youths in their Studies for the Ministry; who, becoming learned by his Instructions, and formed by his Example, are now wise, and faithful, and useful Ministers.

He was remarkably grave and solemn in his Aspect and Deportment; yet of a chearful, even, and pleasant Temper: In convers with his Friends, tacetious and witty, when the Season and concurring Circumstances wou'd properly allow him to indulge himself that Way; in Respect of which his Prudence cou'd well direct him.

He was of a generous and liberal Disposition, far from being niggardly and covetous: Was forward in Acts of Charity to the indigent, according to his Ability; and in all his Conduct plainly discover'd a noble indifferency towards earthly Things.

It we consider him as a Friend, he was as firm and stedfast, and might be depended on as much as any I ever knew. He was remote from precarious and fickle Humours: His Approbation was not easily obtained, nor easily lost. Nor was he a Friend only in Complement, but wou'd cheerfully undergo Hardships, and suffer Disadvantages, in order to do a friendly Office.

He was conscienciously punctual in attending ecclesiastical Judicatures, Presbyteries or Synods. His Presence might be depended on, if nothing extraordinary interveened, as certainly as the appointed Day. He was not absent upon every trifling Inconvenience: His Conduct herein was truly exemplary; and demonstrated his constant Care for the publick Interests of Religion. So great was his Attention to Matters of common Concern, as to incline him rather to expose himself, than balk an Opportunity of doing good. It is well known, that his going, upon an urgent

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† Job. 29. 11. 22. 23.

Call

Call, in a weakly State of Body, and in an unsettled Season, to a Convention of the Trustees of *New-Jersey* College, gave Occasion to that fatal Sickness of which he never fully recover'd.

He was worthy of Imitation in social Life: As an Husband, he was affectionate and kind; as a Father, tender and indulgent. In him Condescensions and Authority were duly temper'd. There was *that* in him that cou'd engage Love, and command Reverence at the same Time. Who, that was acquainted with him, wou'd not be ready to say, happy was the Family of which he was Head; and happy the Congregation that enjoy'd his Ministry; Happy the Judicature of which he was a Member; and happy the Person who was favour'd with his intimate Friendship? He was a publick Blessing to the Church, an Honour to his People, an Ornament to his Profession, and magnify'd his Office. He spoke as he believ'd, he practic'd as he preach'd, he liv'd holy, and dy'd joyful.

He had, for a long Course of Years, an habitual, unwavering Assurance of his Interest in the Favour of God, and that a *blessed and glorious Eternity wou'd one Day open upon him*; which were his own emphatical Words on his dying Bed. This his Assurance was Solid and Scriptural, arising from the many and clear Experiences he had of gracious Communications to his Soul. He was made sensible, in early Years, of his guilty State by Nature as well as Practice; felt his absolute Inability to deliver himself; saw plainly that he lay at Mercy, and that it was entirely at God's good Pleasure to save or reject him. This view of the Case created in him a restless Concern, until the Way of Life 'thro' Jesus Christ was graciously discover'd to him: Then he saw, that God cou'd save him in consistency with all the Honours of governing Justice; for that the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, in the Room of Sinners, have made a sufficient Attonement for Sin. He saw that Christ was a Saviour, every Way compleat, and

suitable

suitable for him: His Soul approved the Divine and glorious Plan, and freely disclaiming all Dependence on his own Righteousness, Wisdom, and Strength, most gladly accepted the Offer of the Gospel, that Christ shou'd be his *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.* * Strict Holiness was his Choice; and it was the delightful Business of his Life to *do always those Things that pleased his heavenly Father.* § And on his dying Bed he had the full Approbation and Testimony of his Conscience, as to the general Bent and Tenor of his Life. These particulars are the Heads of what he himself told me, in his last Sickness; and are deliver'd in the same Order as near as I can possibly recollect; tho' destitute of those lively Empases he then gave them.

When he approach'd near to his End, he express'd most ardent Desires *to depart and be with Christ*; and especially the three last Days of his Life were taken up in this Exercise. Many gracious Words he spoke, gave an affectionate Farewel to his most beloved, sorrowful Consort, and dear Children; tenderly committed them to the divine Mercy and Faithfulness; and fervently prayed, that the Blessings of the most High might be vouchsafed to them, and rest upon them: which Prayer, I trust, will be answer'd. His last Words, a Minute or two before his Departure, were these, *The Bridgroom is come, and we shall now have all Things.* “ And Thus under a Gleam of Heaven he breath'd out his Last.”

I have now set before you, *Brethren*, in brief Sketches, the excellent Character of your dear and worthy Pastor, in which I have determin'd to be scrupulously just, and impartial. I am, indeed, aware, the Encomiums on the Dead by their surviving Friends, are by many look'd upon as feign'd Characters, or at best, as far exceeding the Life. For they hear all good Things spoken of the deceased and no evil at all. Doubtless many notorious Instances of Partiality have given

Occasion

* 1 Cor. 1. 39. § Job 8. 29.

Occasion to such a Prejudice. But in the present Instance I speak freely, secure from Censure, because I speak to you, who know that this Character, in all the particulars which come within your Reach, is strictly true, and rather less than the **Life**. I have not told you his evil Things, because I have not known them. It is true, we all know that he had a Remainder of Moral Depravity, and was not perfect, while with us; but I could venture to appeal to all judicious and sober Persons that knew him, that they knew of no remarkable habitual Blemish in his whole Life.

I cannot allow myself to conclude this Subject without a short Address to the Parties more immediately concerned in the present Dispensation.

And first to the mournful relict, and Children of the deceased. My dear Friends, I know your Grief is very great, the Wound is deep, and an Attempt to heal it, will seem rather to irritate, and make it bleed more fresh. The very Proposal of Arguments to allswage your ~~Grow~~ Grief fits the sad Occasion of it a new before you. But nevertheless, since supporting Considerations, on deep Reflection, may have their proper Influence, I wou'd offer a few tho'ts with all the Sympathy of a Friend. *Madam*, you have lost one of the best of earthly Husbands: But these very Words contain something supporting; for they say, he was *only* on earthly Husband whom you lost. Now this loss does not make void the strong Consolation of this Text, *thy maker is thy Husband*. § You have lost one who was eminently useful, and respected; who lived beloved, and dyed lamented. Well, it is an Honour to you, and shou'd be a Comfort, that you have been so nearly related to so worthy a Person. You have lost one whose wife and holy Converſe was instructive and edifying to you: This is a most refreshing Consideration as it affords a solid Argument of his eternal Happiness: So that you cannot think of him, but at the same Time your Thoughts ascend

to Heaven. It is pleasant to think, that tho' you suffer **Loss,** yet he, whom you so much loved, has thereby got the great **Gain,** consider further, that God, who has taken him away, is absolute Sovereign and it is meet that he do what seems good to himself. He hereby designs to exercise your Submission and Patience. Resignation to his Will has more Sweetness in it, than the Enjoyment of the best created Comforts. He can make even this Affliction, Work together for good; whilst hereby he reduces you to the happy Necessity of more immediate Dependance on himself, and you know that he has undertaken the Widows Cause; and is their Patron in a special Manner. Therefore, since God lives, the source of your Happiness still remains, and will be sufficient for you.

And to you, his dear Children, here present, I w^ou'd observe; that your honoured Father dedicated you to the Lord his God, from whom he receiv'd you, while in your Infant-State; as long as he liv'd with you, it was his Desire and Endeavour that you shou'd *avouch the Lord for your God, and Father;* and when he departed hence he tenderly and believingly committed you to divine Mercy and Faithfulness. He set before you an Example worthy of your Imitation in the Course of his Life, and you saw him die with great Pleasure. Hence you are under inviolable Obligations, have strong and affecting Motives, and sweet Encouragements, to *yield yourselves to God,* in so doing you may expect, that he, who is *a Father, to the Fatherless.* † will be your Father; will protect you, and provide for you; guide you thro' the dangerous Mazes of this Life; and bring you to Glory at last.

Secondly to you the People who were under his Ministerial Charge. I cannot but express my high Approbation of your Conduct towards your Reverend Pastor, under his long Indisposition. Ye manifested a sincere Concern for the Continuance of his Life, and Restoration of his Health, and tho' he was incapable

to perform Ministerial Duties, as formerly; yet your Care for his and his Family's, temporal Support was not less'n'd, but rather increased. Ye were so far from murmuring, that he did not more frequently Visit and Catechise, in his weak State, that (as himself inform'd me) ye rather urg'd him to spare himself. Herein ye gave Evidence of true Respect and Love to him; and shew'd a generous Temper. In a Word, ye have the Satisfaction of having done all that a dutiful People cou'd do for the Comfort of their beloved Minister. But it has pleas'd God to call home his Ambassador; and now ye grieve most of all, because ye shall see his Face no more---ye will never hear him speak to you the Words of eternal Life---no more will he plead with Sinners to be reconciled to God,---and Comfort the dejected Christian no more.---Yet it may be edifying to you to recollect his past Labours among you; and I doubt not but some of you will have everlasting Reason to bless God for them. Ye know what earnest Desires he express'd, when sick in *Philadelphia*, that he might once more have Opportunity to treat with you about your everlasting Concerns; and especially with the unconverted. When God seem'd by his Providence, to order, that the *Barren Fig-Tree*, [the fruitless Professor] shou'd be cut down; he interceded, that the Lord wou'd let it alone one Year more, and suffer him to dig about it and dung it. † His Request was granted; he was restor'd to a Measure of Health and Strength beyond Expectation: He came and for the Space of a Year laboured to alarm the Secure and Carnal, and bring them to accept of *Jesus Christ*. But not observing his Endeavours to be Successful with those, he appeared discourag'd, and alter'd his Strain of preaching. Only he publickly reminded them, of a certain Day, the 25th of *March* 1744. when he was enabled to set eternal Things before them, with more than ordinary Solemnity and Pungency. He then enter'd upon a new Course of Sermons, for the

Edification and Establishment of the People of God; wherein he clearly explained, and satisfyingly confirm'd, the whole System of Gospel Doctrine : from the State of Innocency to the Consummation of all Things. He concluded this Course with a Sermon on 1 Cor. 15. 24, with which he may be said to have concluded his publick Ministry: For tho' he afterwards preached twice, it was with so little Strength and Efficacy, that he himself call'd them, *two Supernumary Sermons.*

But tho' bodily Infirmity oblig'd him to cease from preaching, he did not therefore cease from his Care of you. A memorable Instance of his paternal Tenderness, was his sending for as many of you as he tho't cou'd hear him speak, and giving you his last Advice, with much Solemnity; which doubtless, ye will remember with Affection.

But tho' he *was a burning and a shining Light*, yet may it not be judg'd, and that consistent with a Scriptural Charity, that some of you *rejoiced in his Light only for a Season?* § It is a shocking Thought, yet supposable enough, that a Number of you continue till this Day in a carnal State. He found you in the Way of Death, at his first settling among you; and after many Years earnest Endeavours to turn you to the living God, has been forc'd to leave as he found you. The Word of God, *like a Fire and an Hammer*. §§ has melted and broken others, but the same old *stony Heart is yet in your Flesh* † and perhaps, harder than at the first. A bright Gospel Day has been shining around you. yet you have not seen the attractive Beauty of Religion, nor the *Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.* * is not this a very deplorable Case? Can you think of it, and your *Hearts not meditate Terror?* † He's gone, who so solemnly, and so frequently, warn'd and exhorted you; who spent himself for you, but prevailed nothing. And have your Souls withstood so persuasive, so instructive, and so successful

§ Joh. 5. 35. §§ Jer. 23. 29. † Ezek. 11. 19. * 2 Cor 4. 6.
 † Hag. 2. 18.

a Messenger of Heaven? What think ye, then, is like to be the issue? Can you hope for one, more sincere, more skilful, or more desirous to bring you to *Jesus*? or rather, do you not fear lest your Corruptions continue Proof against all the Means of subduing them? You have already experienc'd their Power to be such, as may give you real ground of Fear. I do not intend so much as to think that Case is hopeless, yet I cannot but think it peculiarly dangerous. Nor do I mean to discourage, but only to alarm you: Not to weaken your Endeavours, but to excite winged Fear, that you may be engaged with greater vehemence to *flee from the Wrath to come*. Therefore, whilst there is any Hope; whilst the Door of Salvation is open; O strive, as in an Agony, to enter in. Seek to cast your Souls by Faith into the Arms of infinite Mercy, whilst they are expanded wide to embrace you. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him whilst he is near.*

On the other Hand, I doubt not but a Number of you have got saving Benefit by the Ministry of your deceased Pastor. Your Hearts have often glow'd with divine Love, and your Faith has been confirm'd, while he spoke to you the Words of eternal Life. As his Life was very serviceable to you, in spiritual Respects, so may his Death also be: For therein you have had opportunity to see the Power of that Religion which he practic'd himself, which he preach'd to you, and which ye have embrac'd. Behold that Religion can stand the Test of Death it self; and Support the Soul when all other Comforts fail! From hence, then, you may receive additional Courage in the exercise of it, and be engaged to adhere to it. *Be ye Followers of him, as he was of Christ.* § And tho' you have now a sorrowful parting, yet e'er long you will have a joyful Meeting in those blisful Regions, where Death and Sorrow never enter. Be ye faithful to Death, and the King of Zion will give you a Crown of Life. *Amen, Amen.*



ELEGIAC VERSES on the lamented
Death of the

Rev. Mr. SAMUEL BLAIR,

Who made his triumphant *Excite* from this mortal
Stage *July 5. 1751*, with the deserved Character
of a good *Scholar*, a masterly genius, a sincere *Christian*,
and successful *Minister* of the Gospel.

HARK! a long doleful *Eccbo* round me groans,
Heard by deaf Rocks, and felt by senseless Stones.
The sympathizing Hills of *Zion* toss,
The mournful *Eccbo*, and lament the loss.
Ten Thousand Bosoms feel a sudden Wound,
And Crowds grow pale, and shudder at the Sound:
From Heart to Heart with quick Contagion spreads
Th' infectious Grief, and half the Land invades.
To this far Clime the dismal Tidings flies,
And Deluges of Sorrow drown mine Eyes.
Now hardy Souls, that never wept before,
Dilolve;---nor is it strange, since **BLAIR IS NOW,**
NO MORE,

BLAIR IS NO MORE!---Then this poor World
has lost.

As rich a *Jewel* as her Stores could boast.
Heav'n in just Vengeance has recall'd again,
Its faithful Envoy from the Sons of Men:
Advanc'd him from his pious Toils below,
In Raptures there with kindred-Flames to glow:

While hov'ring on the verge of Life he lay,
Eager for Flight, and yet resign'd to stay;

D

How

did we, in Agonies of Pray'r,
Wrestle with Heav'n his sacred Breath to spare!
Upon our rising Prophet fix our Sight,
And anxious cry, "good Lord! delay his Flight"!

But ah! his Worth but cherish'd our despair,
And threaten'd the Denial of our Pray'r.
So great, so heav'nly, so mature a Mind,
Requir'd Employment of a nobler Kind.
What Earth could teach, he learned; and now must rise
To a superior Class above the Skies.
Too much refin'd in this dark World to bear,
The humble Place of *Zion's* Minister,
Heav'n call'd him to sustain some nobler Function there:
With *Gabriel* to perform the Orders giv'n,
And bear *JEHOVAH'S* Errands thro' the vast of Heav'n
Prompt as his Fellow-Angels to obey,
Zealous and bright and vigorous as they!
Heav'n kind to him, would not consent to hear,
Nor curse him with the Answer of our Pray'r.

Oh! could the Muse's languid colour's paint,
The *Man*, the *Scholar*, *Student*, *Preacher*, *Saint*;
I'd Place his Image full in public view;
His Friends should know more than before they knew.
His Foes astonish'd at his Virtues gaze,
Or shrink confounded from th' oppressive Blaz'.
To trace his bright Example all should turn,
And with the bravest Emulation burn.
His Name should my poor Lays immortalize,
'Till he t'attest his Character arise,
And the Great Judge th' *Encomium* ratifies.

Propitious Heav'n endow'd the Man it lov'd,
With Gifts t'adorn each Sphere in which he mov'd.

An Intellect clear as the Blaze of Day;
Sedate as Midnight, boundless as the Sea;

Free as the Wind, yet steady as the Po.
 Passive to Truth, impatient of controul
 From vulgar Error; regular and smooth
 As genuine Reason and harmonious Truth.
 Truth link'd to Truth, and Tho't to Tho't conjoin'd
 Spontaneous rose in his harmonious Mind.
 His rude unstudy'd Tho'ts in Order sprung,
 Exprest in equal Order by his Tongue;
 Clusters of ripen'd Sense on each young Period hung. }
 His Passions vigo'rous, yet by Reason rul'd;
 By calmest Reason kindied, temper'd, cool'd.
 His Heart reserv'd as Prudence and confin'd;
 And yet as Truth sincere, as weeping Friendship kind.

My Muse, now paint him in his studious Hours,
 In search of Truth exerting all his Pow'rs.
 To him familiar, Truths beyond the Reach
 Of vulgar Minds strain'd to the highest Stretch;
 His daring genius with exalted scorn,
 Forsakes the Path by hoary Custom worne:
 Eager to find a Treasure of his own,
 He tries new Paths and Regions yet unknown:
 Into th' Abyss of Science darts his Eye,
 Where the rude Elements of Knowledge lie:
 Where Truths with Errors wage eternal War,
 And Doubts with Embryo-Demonstrations jarr:
 A wasteful Chaos with wild Tempest tost,
 Whence cowards shrink, and where bold Wits are lost.
 Serene his plastic Mind digests the Mass,
 Assigns the blended El'ments each its Place;
 Ripens the Embryo-Notions into Truth,
 And gives to infant-Demonstration Growth.
 At length, behold! new Worlds of Knowledge rise,
 And sudden Light flash round the new-form'd Skies:
 Harmonious all the finish'd Systems roll,
 And Noon-Day Evidence illuminates the whole.
 Doubts disappear, and Error flies away,
 As Midnight Gloom before the rising Day.

the new-found Stores around dispense,
Enlarge the petty Stock of *common Sense*.
So yonder Sun, th' exhaustless Source of Day,
To Earth's dark Caverns darts his vital Ray;
Transforms to Gold what was but Dross before,
And ripens useless Stones to precious Ore:
Transmits his radiant Influence thro' the Seas,
To make the Ruby glow, the Di'mond blaze:
These Secret Stores, collected and refin'd,
Enrich the World, and polish Human Kind.

Now with great NEWTON'S Eyes he dares to look,
On the wide Pages of deep Nature's Book.
Reads the great Maker's Name in every Line;
Above, below, around, his glories shine;
Imprest on all in Characters divine. }
'Till cold Philosophy, at length refin'd,
Kindles to warm Devotion in his Mind.
Adoring Transport, Pleasure, Love, Surprise,
In sweet Confusion in his Bosom rise:
So Boyle his Maker's Works explor'd;
The more he knew, the humbler he ador'd.

Now in the sacred Desk I see him rise,
And well he acts the Herald of the Skies.
Graceful Solemnity and striking Awe,
Sit in his Locks, and deep Attention draw.
His speaking Aspect (in the Bloom of Youth
Rev'rend) declares unutterable Truth.
Unthinking Crowds grow solemn as they gaze,
And read his awful Message in his Face.
Solemn, and conscious of the present God,
As tho' before th' eternal Throne he stood:
Solemn, as when some Angel lifts on high,
His awful Hand with God-like Majesty,
And swears by the UNUTTERABLE NAME;
While trembling Rev'rence spreads thro' Nature's Frame.

Thro' various Mazes now his Lips
 Intricate Truths, and bring them full to view.
 Celestial Mystries, hid from human Sense,
 Shine forth in their Almighty Evidence.
 Bright Demonstration every doubt controuls,
 And forces the Assent of sceptic Souls.
 Glaring Conviction with resistless Light,
 Flashes on Minds wrapt in eternal Night.
 Dull Ignorance starts at th' unwelcome glare,
 And coward Error dreads th' unequal War.
 Triumphant Truth assumes her native State,
 And trusts her Rights to such an Advocate.

So when the Splendour of the Morn appears,
 Deformity its native Horrors wear:
 Beauty puts on her charms; Confusion flies,
 And well-distinguish'd, Objects round us rise.
 Conscious of Guilt the Ravagers of Night
 Abscond from the ungrateful glare of Light.
 Thick Glooms, obscure as Error, disappear;
 And Day succeeds, as Demonstration clear.

Now to secure Impenitents he turns;
 And from his Tongue Almighty Vengeance burns.
 The vengeful Flames and Thunders of the Law,
 Equal the Terrors trembling Moses saw.
 He sets incens'd Omnipotence in Arms,
 And sounds the final Trumpet's dread Alarms.
 The Charmer Sin with hideous Aspect glares,
 And see! in naked Horrors Hell appears!
 The wasteful Deeps lie open to our Eyes,
 And Flames and Groans and Curses blended rise.
 JEHOVAH frowns; the Sword of Justice drawn
 Above; below the Gulphs of Tipheth yawn!
 See! The great Judge his burning Throne ascend,
 Death and Destruction on his Nod attend.
 Hark! A dread Clangor! Death's old Prisons burst,
 And sudden Life inspires the rising Dust.

Expectation Millions stand,
 To hear their Sentence at the King's left Hand:
 Confounded with the Sound "DEPART," they shrink,
 Screaming away, and down to Hell they sink.
 The Elements dissolve; Earth, Skies and Seas,
 Vanish in one fierce universal Blaze.

The hardy Sinner, happily deceiv'd,
 Now feels the Pains he ne'er before believ'd:
 With Bright Description dazzled, knows not where
 He is, but feels the Vengeance now to bear.
 Internal Twinges thro' his Bosom dart,
 And Hell's dire Pangs already rend his Heart:
 He thinks the Miseries describ'd, his own;
 Sinks in Despair, and Cries, Undone! Undone!

"Lift up (says BLAIR) lift up thy dying Eyes:
 "Say, who hangs yonder rack'd in Agonies?
 "Pity and Torture, Love commixt with Pain,
 "Throbs in his Heart, and pants in every Vein.
 "See! from his Hands and Feet his Head and Side,
 "Rivers of Blood and Mercy mingled glide!
 "JESUS! THE SAVIOUR!--Yes! 'Tis He!--Forbear,
 "Thou dying Sinner, to indulge Despair.
 "BELIEVE and LIVE, there wash thy foulest Stains,
 "In this dear deluge from his bleeding Veins.
 "Now Justice smiles; thy Guilt appears no more;
 "And Sinai's Thunders cease to flash and roar.
 "Of Calvary's Balm receive a cordial Drop,
 "And black despair will brighten into Hope:
 "The tortur'd Conscience no more agonize;
 "But hellish Fears to heav'nly Transports rise."

Oh! here the raptur'd Muse could ever dwell;
 And still with unremitting Wonder tell,
 How oft' has BLAIR allur'd our Minds to rove,
 Thro' all the Myll'ries of redeeming Love;
 JESUS display'd in his Almighty Charms,

To draw reluctant Sinners to his
 With JESUS' charming Name cold Ethics
 And every Theme with Gospel-Sweets inspir'd.
 His darling Subject this; A heav'nly Flame
 Sublim'd his Language when he touch'd the Themes,
 This Cord of Love around our Hearts he threw,
 And backward Souls with pleasing Violence drew.
 Reluctant and with pitying Fears, he shew'd,
 The vengeful Terrors of an angry God;
 But Oh! With Joy proclaim'd a Saviour's peaceful
 Blood.

Conscious of all the Sorrows others feel,
 He kill'd to cure, and wounded but to heal.

But in what nobler Language shall I paint,
 The pure, Seraphic Ardors of the *Saint*!
 His Life a fixt unerring walk with God;
 A constant Progress in the heav'nly Road.
 His Heart the Seat of constant Peace and Love;
 There glow'd the Passions Seraphs feel above;
 There pleas'd and unmolested dwelt the heav'nly Dove.
 His Breath like grateful Incense, to the Skies,
 Did daily in refin'd Devotion rise,
 His Soul exerted with his praying Breath,
 Th' Almighty Importunity of Faith.
 Hence guilty Heads escape the falling Blow,
 And Blessings to unworthy Millions flow,
 Nations partook the bounty of his Pray'r;
 And future Times the Benefit shall share.
 This gen'rous Legacy he left Mankind,
 Which, while he sleeps in Death, Heav'n will remind.
 So while great *Moses* rais'd his praying Hands, *
 Vict'ry and Triumph wait on Isra'l's Bands.
 Each warm Petition slays a haughty Foe;
 And Am'lek Falls, but *Moses* strikes the Blow.

But

† Morality.

* Exod. 11. 12.

When the melancholy Hour appears,
 When BLAIR must rise, and leave the World in Tears.
 With zeal consum'd, with pious Labour spent,
 Too much refin'd for this gross Element,
 Mature for Heav'n, he breaks the Pris'n of Clay ;
 Soars, and expatiates in eternal Day :
 Enjoys the Glories he describ'd unseen,
 And ev'n his Views immense Improvements gain.
 Heav'n smil'd upon his Life ; but then most kind
 When friendly Death releas'd th' imprison'd Mind : }
 But oh! The Loss to those condemn'd to stay behind! }

Extensive as the Loss, Oh! be the Grief ;
 And in a hopeless Case, despair Relief.
 Sinners, lament ! that animating Breath
 By which Heav'n Life inspir'd, is stopt in Death.
 Saints join your Tears ! no more shall ye rejoice,
 Beneath the cheering Influence of his Voice.
 Ye doubting Souls, lament ! now you may rove,
 Perplex and doubtful since our BLAIR'S remove.

Surviving Remnant of the sacred Tribe,
 Who knew the Worth these plaintive Lays describe ;
 Tommet's, three Worthies of immortal Fame,
 Brethren by Office, Birth, in Heart and Name :
 Finley, who full enjoy'd th' unbosom'd Friend ;
 Rodgers, whose Soul he like his own refin'd,
 When all Attention, eager to admit
 The flowing Knowledge, at his rev'rend Feet
 Raptur'd we sat ; and thou above the Rest,
 Brother and Image of the dear deceas'd,
 Surviving BLAIR ! Oh ! let spontaneous flow
 The Floods of tributary Grief you owe.
 And (in your Number if so mean a Name,
 May the sad Honour of chief Mourner claim)
 Oh ! may my filial Tears more copious flow,
 And swell the Tide of universal Woe.

O BLAIR! whom all the tend're
 My Father, Tutor, Pastor, Brother,
 While Distance the sad Privilege denies,
 O'er thy dear Tomb to vent my burbling Eyes,
 The Muse erects (the sole return allow'd)
 This humble Monument of Gratitude.
 Faint are her Lays; the mournful Theme she sings,
 Extinguishes her Fire, and cloggs her Wings.
 Affected Sorrow in a loftier strain,
 May flourish, and with nicer Art complain.
 These elegiac Numbers would appear,
 More warm and noble, were they less sincere.
 "Grief unaffected suits but ill with Art,
 "Or flowing Numbers with a bleeding Heart." †

But tho' eternal Silence seize my Tongue,
 And the Dumb Muse no more attempt a Song;
 Yet to Life's close, my grateful Soul shall feel,
 The secret Sorrow Language fails to tell:
 In all my gay or studious Moments prove
 The pining Anguish of bereaved Love,
 'Till our Reunion heal th' invit'rate Wound above. }

Lamented Shade! tho' rais'd beyond the Reach
 Of mortal Sense, my Tho'ts their Pinions Stretch
 In quest of thee; thro' unknown Regions rove,
 To find thee 'mong the shining Hells above.
 But ah! insufferable Light furrounds,
 Thy Mansion, and my feeble Sight confounds.

How dark the Views benighted Mortals have,
 Of that strange neighb'ring World beyond the Grave!
 O! Where in the unbounded Realms of Space,
 Has Heav'n allotted thee thy blissful Place?
 What glorious Novelties rush full to View,
 Which not before ev'n they vast Geniuses knew?
 Dost thou with Seraphs hymn th' eternal Throne,
 E in

Scraphs would not blush to own?
 O how generous Tho't, as usual, rove,
 To ro' all the Mazes of redeeming Love?
 Or still the gen'rous Labour undergo,
 As Guardian-Angel to the Church below—
 But this wild License, raving Muse! Restrain;
 Nor pry to Things hid from the Sons of Men:
 Ere long Eternity's amazing Light,
 Will shew these Myst'ries naked to my Sight.

Blest Shade! Adieu!—When a few Days have run,
 Their tedious Rounds, my painful Labour done,
 Ripen'd for Heav'n, may I resign my Breath,
 And smile like thee at the grim Face of Death!
 Foll'wing the Path thy Feet unerring trod,
 May I like thee ascend the heav'nly Road.
 And ever dwell with thee beneath the Smiles of
 God!

There in divinest Intimacy spend,
 Eternal Years in Bliss and Friendship ne'er to End!

Hanover in Virginia,
November 10th 1751. }

Sic cecinit mærens!
 S. DAVIES.