

Amicus Amicus
Amicus



S E R M O N S

O N

Sacramental Occasions

B Y

Divers MINISTERS.



1841

THE
Unsearchable Riches

OF
CHRIST

Considered, in
Two SERMONS

On *Ephes. iii. 8.*

Preached at *New-Brunswick* in *New-Jersey*, before the
Celebration of the LORD'S-SUPPER ; which was the
first Sabbath in *August*, 1737.

By *Gilbert Tennent, A. M.*

And Minister of the Gospel there.

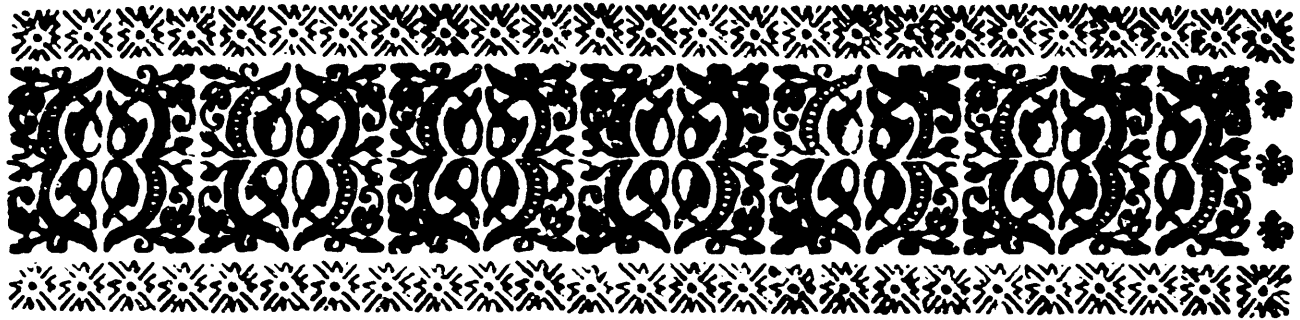
*Phil. 3. 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the
Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I
have suffered the Loss of all things, and do count them but Dung
that I may win Christ.*

B O S T O N :

Printed by *J. Draper*, for D. HENCHMAN in Cornhill.

MDCCLXXXIX.

1739

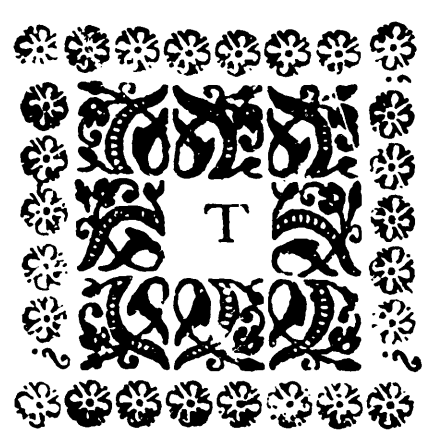


A

Prefatory Address,

To the Dear People of my Charge,
*Grace unto you, and Peace from God
our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;*

Christian Friends and dear Brethren,



HE Desire of Happiness is co-natural to the human Soul, and yet remains with it, notwithstanding the Ruins of its Apostacy from the blessed GOD.

But alas, such brutal Blindness infatuates the Understandings, and sensual Pravity byasses the Wills of the most; that they pursue wrong Measures to attain the Happiness they desire.

Some of a lofty Genius, with unwearied Assiduity, labour to secure Honours, thinking therein to obtain Happiness; and to that End they climb the aspiring Top of *Parnassus*, emaciate their Bodies, and waste their animal Spirits in long and deep Studies, thinking by their labour'd and learn'd Lucubrations, to spread and eternize their Fame. Others for the same Purpose, boldly tread

the Crimson Fields of War, fearlessly open their senseless Bosoms to all the numerous Engines and sudden Avenues of pregnant Dangers, and of cruel Deaths, thinking themselves great Gainers, if through the Loss of their Lives, they can secure martial Honours and perpetuate Renown for their heroick Bravery, in the Records of Fame. But alas! how much is the unhappy Simplicity of those gallant Souls to be pity'd! for what Good can martial Glory do to the dead?

Others by deeper but securer Policies, & more ungenerous Methods, seek to mount the Wings of Honour, and reach the highest Pinnacle of Fame, by labouring to enhance great Places in the Church and State, through the softest Flatteries and most subtil Stratagems; Methods to be abhor'd by every honest and ingenious Mind. But when Men have obtain'd Honour, what is it? It is neither a substantial, nor a durable Good; it cannot make us good or happy; it may indeed *corrupt* us, by elating our Pride; but it can never *content* us: We may as easily grasp an Arm full of our own Shadow, as content our Minds with Fame; and as it is a meer empty Bubble in its Nature, and often corrupting in its Effects; so it is various and vanishing in its Continuance, as fickle as the Wind.

Some on the contrary of a baser Temper, and meaner Mould, being void of every Thing sublime or noble, dreaming that Happiness is to be had in terrene Pleasures, plunge themselves in a Pool of lawless Sensuality; so that in order to be happy, they make themselves Beasts, nay worse than they; living in Defiance to all the Dictates of Reason, and of GOD; purchasing at the Price of their eternal Salvation, these poor Pleasures, which being of a gross Nature, limited Degree, and contracted Duration, debase the Dignity of the Soul, and defile its Honours; but can neither suit its noble Nature, and perpetual Existence, nor satisfy its sublime and intense Desires.

But there is yet another Generation, of as mean and sordid Wretches, in whose grovling Bosoms, beats nothing that is great or generous; who imagine Happiness

pineness is to be had in temporal Wealth and Riches. *This*, these *Moles* are in the continual and eager Chase of ; to *this Mark* all the Lines of their busy Thoughts, anxious Cares, subtle Projects, humerous Speeches, strong Desires, and unwearied Labours bend and terminate. But poor Creatures, if ye did obtain that Measure of Riches ye seek after, do ye think it would better your State, bound your Wishes, or secure your Happiness? No! no! don't ye see the contrary with your Eyes, that the most grow in Wickedness, in Proportion to the Increase of their Wealth, and that instead of satiating, it does but whet their Appetite for more ; and ye should remember that the *Redemption of the Soul is precious, and that it ceaseth for ever.* As to these Things, a high Mountain afar off seems to touch the Clouds, but when we come near, the Distance seems as great as before. Not to add, that temporal Enjoyments are of very uncertain Continuance, *Why then do ye spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labours for that which satisfies not ?*

But the noble Subject of the following Discourses, opens a Treasury of inexhaustible Riches, which do indeed better the State, satisfy the Desires, and save the Soul. This is a *Theme* that deserves our most solemn Meditations, a *Mark* worthy of our most sincere and vigorous Pursuits !

O ! that I could persuade you, dears Sirs, to seek with restless and persevering Importunity, an Interest in those unsearchable Riches ; without them ye cannot be rich, in any valuable Respect, and with them ye cannot be poor. I would direct my Exhortation to graceless Persons, in various Conditions of Life. Are ye poor in Temporals, and do ye find but little Rest and Comfort in this World ? Oh ! then will ye be persuaded to accept of the most durable and noble *Riches, Riches* most dearly purchased, by no less a Price than the Blood of GOD ; *Riches* most freely, frequently, and condescendingly offered, by the Love of GOD in the Ministry of his Servants, upon the most easy and most honourable *Terms*, that the Majesty and Purity of the divine Nature

Nature, and the Dignity and Felicity of the human Nature could admit. Poor Sinners, you are under peculiar Obligations to seek for and accept of the Riches of Grace and Glory, lest ye be miserable in both Worlds. It is a most dreadful and shocking Consideration, to think that ye should make a hard Shift, to rub through the many Difficulties, Labours, and Sorrows of this present World, to enter into ten thousand Times worse in the next. Where there will be no *Hope*, no *Ease*, no *Interruption*, no *End*. Alas, my Brethren! It had been better for you ye had never been born, than that this should be your *dismal, dismal* Lot. Others have some sorry sensual Comfort in this Life, but ye have none, or next to none. Oh! it is most terrible to think, to be without Comfort and Quiet in both Worlds! Dear Sirs! If ye had but the Riches of a SAVIOUR'S Love, it would sweeten your present Difficulties, conform you to the suffering REDEEMER, support your sorrowful Souls, with the certain Prospect of perfect Felicity, and distinguished Glory, in the next State. For as the Apostle observes, with a noble Emphasis, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory.*

O unhappy Sinners! It would not be hard to persuade you, I suppose, to accept of worldly Riches, and why then will ye not be induc'd to accept of Riches worth Millions of Worlds? Sirs, here, in the blessed Gospel, is the glorious *Pearl of Price*, the inestimable *Jewels* of the Covenant, try'd *Gold*, more pure and noble than that of *Ophir, Peru, and Mexico*; and white *Raiment*, to enrich and adorn you; and will ye not accept them, on the reasonable Terms they are offered? O cruel Murder! O vile Ingratitude! O detestable Madness! Be astonished and horribly afraid ye Heavens and Earth at this! Ah ye blessed Angels; ye cannot but wonder to see this terrible Tragedy acted! O ye Saints of GOD! Look how the adorable dying SAVIOUR, and the rich Purchase of his Blood, is slighted, by indigent, ungrateful, and degenerate Rebels! *Matth. xxv. 4, 5.* Oh! Can ye keep your Hearts from Mourning on this Account?

count? See what huge Numbers of Mankind are lying in their Blood and Gore, and yet wont accept of Help and Healing, when it is freely offered. If ye can keep your Hearts from Bleeding upon this Occasion, they are very hard indeed! Ah! It peirces my very Soul, to see my Lord and the Riches of his bleeding Love, treated with such Indifference; while on the contrary, Things of an infinitely meaner Nature, and shorter Duration, are courted and labour'd for with the greatest Vehemence. Truly, Brethren, I know not how to express my Sorrows on this Account; if I could bewail it in Tears of Blood, I would.

Are ye in Bondage and Servitude? here is a spiritual, noble, and everlasting Liberty offered to you, in the Riches of CHRIST! Oh! if the Son of the Father's Love do but make you free, ye will be free indeed.

Are ye rich in worldly Goods? then I beseech you seriously and speedily to consider, that awful Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, and especially the 23, 24, and 25 Verses of it. *And in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom. And he cryed, and said, Father Abraham, have Mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue; for I am tormented in this Flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good Things, and likewise Lazarus evil Things: But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* O poor unhappy Sinners! see what a dreadful Change there will be in your Condition in a little Time. Remember ye that now wallow in generous Wines, ye will quickly (except ye repent) want Water to cool your flaming Tongues, but shall not obtain a single Drop; ye will be obliged to make your humble Court to these pious Poor, you now contemn as the Dirt under your Feet; but in vain. I, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, the King of the Church, do earnestly, as on my bended Knees, beseech all of you that are Graceless and Unconverted, of whatsoever Age, Order, Sex, or Nation ye are, speedily to make sure of an Interest in the Riches of CHRIST; otherwise as ye will

will continue to be poor and wretched here, be your outward Condition as it will, so ye shall be much more miserable hereafter, *Rev. iii. 17.*

The Subject of the following Discourses, ministers matter of great Support to convinced Sinners ; there are Riches enough in CHRIST, both of Grace and Power to pardon the Guilt, and break the Dominion of your Sins, how numerous, heinous and prevalent soever they be !

And this blessed Subject also ministers matter of great Consolation to backsliding Saints, and younger Christians, under their afflictive Fears, Sorrows, and involuntary Weaknesses. See *Hos. vi. 1.* and *Isai. xl. 11.* *He will gather the Lambs of the Flock by the Arms of his Power, carry them in the Bosom of his Love, and gently lead the burdened and oppressed, by his Word, Spirit and Providence.*

Dear Brethren ! I believe I have a Witness in your Consciences, that the principal Scope of my Projects, Desires and Labours among you, is your Happiness. I don't know that I have given you Cause to think otherwise, from the Course of my Life and Labours among you, for these many Years past ; though I freely confess that both have been very defective (yet through Grace, preserved from those scandalous Blemishes which some Enemies to GOD and Religion have devis'd to asperse me with formerly, which of their own Accord, have long since vanished, to the Shame of their Inventers) and that I am the greatest of all Sinners, and less than the least of all Saints ; less than the least of all GOD's Mercies, not meet to be called a Servant of GOD, much less a Minister of CHRIST. Yet I do rejoice in the Office that GOD has called me to, notwithstanding all the Difficulties that do embarrass it ; and so far as I know my own Heart, I wou'd not lay it down for all the World. *For wo is me, if I preach not the GOSPEL.* I am griev'd that I have come so far short of my Duty to GOD and you, and that I have not with more Skill and Vehemence sought your Happiness ! However, through pure Grace I know, that the great LORD of the
Vineyard

Vineyard has accepted and blessed my sincere though weak Attempts, for the Conviction, Conversion, and Consolation of some of you, for which I bless the most high GOD, and in which I sometimes rejoice in the midst of my Sorrows.

My Dear Brethren! I do without boasting, inform you, that I obtained these following Sermons of JESUS CHRIST the KING of the CHURCH, with many Prayers and Tears. And that as they have been already blessed to Sinners and Saints, so I am persuaded they will be further blessed and follow'd by the Almighty Power of the HOLY SPIRIT. These Discourses do now appear to the World in the same Order and Words in which they were at first deliver'd, excepting the Addition of one Paragraph in the 16th Page. Thus begging of the blessed GOD that you and all who read these Discourses, and especially such who first heard them; (whom I beseech most earnestly in the Bowels of CHRIST to consider and apply them solemnly, closely and speedily) may profit by them. I conclude, and remain

New-Brunswick,

Aug. 20.

1737.

Your very

unworthy Pastor,

G. Tennent.



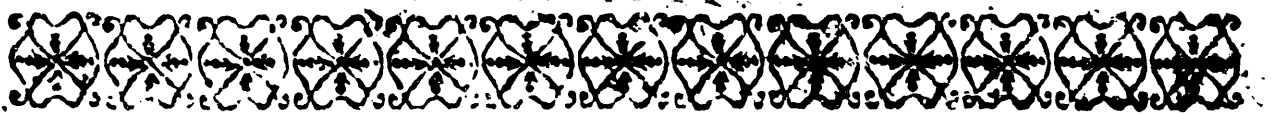


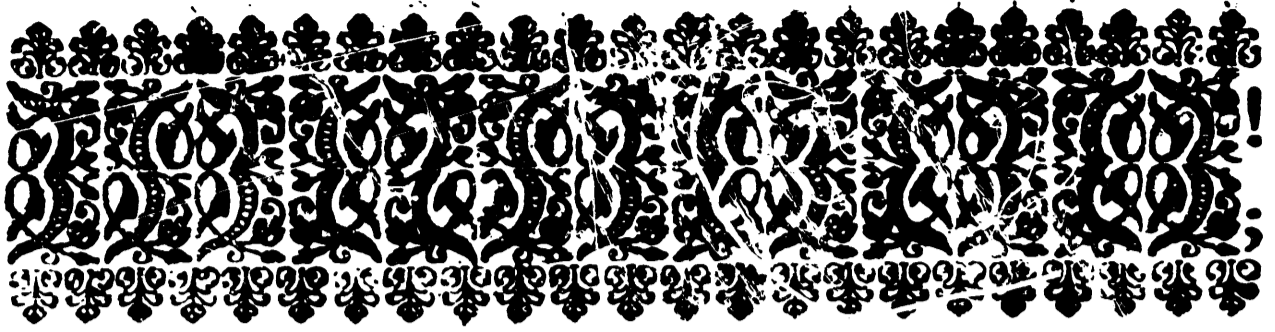
Just Published,

A Treatise of being Born again, without which no Man can be Saved. To which is added, A Discourse on the *Duty and Advantage of Singular Piety*. And some Extracts from a *late Writer*, suited to the Design of the Treatise. The Sixteenth Edition. By *S. Wright, D. D.*

A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of GOD, in the Conversion of many Hundred Souls in *Northampton*, and the Neighbouring Towns and Villages of the County of *Hampshire*, in the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*. In a Letter to the Rev. Dr. *Benjamin Colman*, of *Boston*. Written by the Rev. Mr. *Edwards*, Minister of *Northampton*, Nov. 6. 1736. Published with a large Preface by the Rev. Dr. *Watts* and Dr. *Guyse* of *London*: To which a Shorter is added by some of the Rev. Ministers of *Boston* Together with an Attestation from some of the Rev. Ministers of *Hampshire*. The Third Edition.

Sold by *D. Henckman* in *Cornhill*.



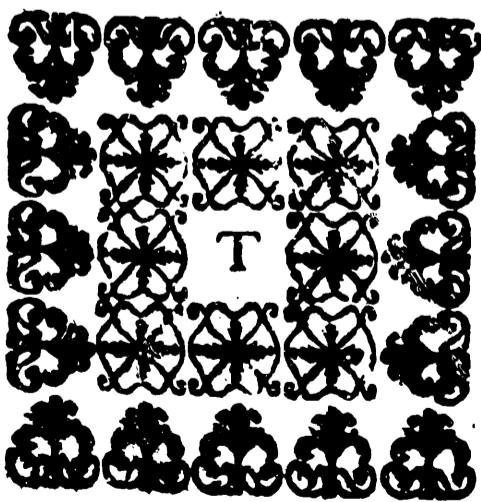


THE
Unsearchable Riches
OF
CHRIST.



E P H E S. iii. 8.

Unto me, whom am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of CHRIST.



THE loving Apostle *John* informs us, That he who loves dwells in God, and God in him; for God is Love. And this the blessed *Jehovah* is in four Respects, viz. Essentially, Efficiently, Exemplarily, and Declaratively. And (1.) I say, the blessed God is Love Essentially; his very Being is Love.

Love is that glorious Attribute of the divine Nature, which shines with the most solemn Majesty, brightest Beauty,

and greatest Glory. Verily, *Dear Brethren*, such is the amiable Splendor of the Love of God, that it is enough to charm and ravish the whole rational Creation, could they behold it. (2.) God is Love *Efficiently*, he is the sole Cause, both efficient and meritorious, of all that Love, whether Natural, Civil, Moral, or Spiritual, which glows in the Bosoms of his Creatures. *Every good and perfect Gift descends from above, even from the Father of Lights.* And, (3.) God is Love *Exemplarily*; his Love is the most noble and perfect Pattern for ours to imitate; hence we are bid to *be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful; and to walk in Love, as Christ also has lov'd us, and given himself for us,* Eph. 5.2. Add to this, (4.) That the blessed God is Love *Declaratively*; and in nothing has the divine Majesty express'd his Affection with such charming Triumph, unsearchable Riches, and astonishing Magnificence, as in sending his blessed, beloved, and only begotten Son out of the Bosom of his dearest Embraces, to assume the Nature of Man into an inseparable Union with his Deity; that therein he might satisfy his offended Justice and blessed Majesty, through the unwearied Labours of his Life, the amazing Sorrows of his Soul, and the cruel shedding of his Blood; and thereby save perishing Sinners from the deepest Ruin, the most doleful and yet deserved Damnation; and reinstate them in the forfeited Friendship of an offended Sovereign, both in this and the next World, and conform them to the moral Excellencies of the divine Nature, and the pure Precepts of the divine Law. *Herein is Love, not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us, and sent his only begotten Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins.* And that these truly noble Purposes might be secured and effected, in a way worthy of the divine Wisdom, in a way suited to the human Constitution; is not the Love of the eternal Majesty exceedingly conspicuous, and eminently apparent, in appointing a stated Order of Men, to expand and proclaim the admirable Glories, and unsearchable Riches of this great Salvation, this incomprehensible Prodigy, of stupendous and endearing Affection.

Of these things, the Text under our present Consideration, speaks, with the strongest Emphasis ; and the sweetest Elegance. In which we have three Things considerable, namely, (1.) The Apostle's humble Esteem of *himself*. (2.) His honourable Esteem of *Christ*. And (3.) His high Esteem of his *Office* in preaching him. And,

1. I say, We have the Apostle's humble Esteem of *himself*, in these Words *emoi to elachistotero, pantwn twn agiwn*. The Greek Word *bagios*, which we translate *Saint*, signifies *a holy Person*, and so does the Latin Word *sanctus*, from which the English Word *Saint* is derived. The Word *elachistotero*, is a comparative made of a superlative ; it signifies *longe minimo vel minimissimo*, a great deal the least, much the least, or by far the least. The Apostle says not here, as in 1 Cor. 15. 9. that he is *the least of the Apostles* ; but after many noble, long, glorious, and successful Labours, his Humility encreasing even to a Prodigy ! he looks upon himself to be *less*, than *the least* of all God's People. O strange ! and stupendous, but golden Speech ! well worthy of a Father of the Churches, and Prince among the Apostles ! Blessed *Paul* ! Surely thou wast a Star of the first Magnitude, which shone with distinguished Glory in the Orb of the Church, a burning and a shining Light ; deservedly and peculiarly Famous, for Learning, Labours, and Success, a very Seraphim for wasting Zeal, and unwearied Activity, in the Cause of God and precious Souls. Who was like thee, O thou Man of God, among the holy Apostles ! who constantly bore upon thy generous and compassionate Bosom the Burden of all the Churches ! 2 Cor. 11. 29. And yet dost thou prefer ~~the~~ meanest Babe in Christ before thee. Blessed God, what a Stoop is this ! Here is something for Men and Angels to wonder at ! In the mean time it is probable, according to the Opinion of some learned Interpreters, that the Apostle had some Reference in this Expression, to his former Persecution of the Church of Christ, while of the Jewish Religion.

The Unsearchable Riches

But,

2. We have in the Words before us; the Apostle's honourable Esteem of *Christ*, upon the Account of his *Riches*, which he asserts to be *unsearchable*; *anexichriston pluton tou Christou*. This Word *anexichriston*, signifies unsearchable, incomprehensible, immense; it's derived of *alpha particula privativa, et ichnos ichneos vestigium*, signifying that the Riches of Christ are boundless; a traceless immense Waste, Space, or Treasury; which cannot be trac'd by a human Understanding. The Word *ichnos* is derived from *iemi ec, ἴσθω, cognosco*, Words that signify to go, and understand. The Word *plutos*, Riches, is derived *ex polus multus, et etos annus*, to signify, that Wealth is usually acquired in long Proce'ss of Time; Riches are the Revenue of many Years: So that these Words complexly considered, signify to us these things following; (1.) The *inestimable Worth* and Excellency of the Grace of Christ; for this above all other things, deserves the Character of Riches. (2.) The *incomprehensible Fulness* thereof in him, as Head of the Church; which is sufficient to supply his People in all their Wants, and support them under all their Miseries. There is an immense Ocean of Grace and Love in Christ, both for Jews and Gentiles, which no human Line can Fathom: an Ocean which knows no Bounds, Brim, or Bottom!

Now the Riches of Christ are unsearchable in four Respects; namely, as to their Contrivance, Compass, Communication, and Continuance. And,

1. The *Contrivance* of that peaceful Covenant, thro' the Channel of which, the Riches and Rivulets of glorious Grace are convey'd to the perishing Children of apostate *Adam*, was above the Reach of all Mortals to find out. *This, O This!* would have forever non-plu's'd all Creatures, both Angelical and Human. *This* was a Device indeed well worthy of an eternal Mind! and which none but a God was equal to! And,

2. The *Compass* and Extent of the Riches of the Grace of Christ is unsearchable; his Mercy is great above the Heavens, and his Truth reacheth unto the
Clouds

Clouds Psalm 108 4 See also Ephes. 3 18, 19. *And may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height; and to know the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge: that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

3 The Communications of the rich Grace of Christ are unsearchable, See John 3. 8, *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The Manner of the holy Spirit's Operations upon the Souls of the Elect, is *mysterious and wonderful.* Tho' we feel them, yet none is able to describe them.

4. The Continuance of the Riches of Christ, is unsearchable, and eternal. As the essential and primæval Glories and Goodness of his Deity, have subsisted from everlasting; so his communicable and mediatorial Grace and Love, will endure to everlasting. For *his Gifts and Calling are without Repentance,* Rom. 11. 28. *He gives his People eternal Life, and they shall never perish,* John 10. 28.

Now tho' we may offer some dark Hints concerning Eternity, *viz.*

That it is a Duration without Beginning, Succession, and End. Yet our feeble Powers are not able to form adequate Ideas of it; but are lost and swallow'd up in a mazy Labyrinth, when we would pierce and grasp this impenetrable, incomprehensible Abyss.

But,

3. We have the Apostle's high Esteem of his Office, in preaching the unsearchable Riches of Christ. The Word translated *preaching* here is *evangelizesthai*, to evangelize, it's deriv'd of two Words, *eu bene, et angello nuncio*, which signifies to report good or glad Tidings. And verily, my Brethren, the unsearchable Riches of Christ's Righteousness, and pardoning Love, are such with the strongest Emphasis and highest Eminence, to all convinc'd and humbled Souls! *The whole need no Physician, but the sick.* Now the Apostle magnifies his Office

Office in our Text on several Accounts ; as particularly,

1. Because his Authority to preach, and Assistance in preaching, was a free and *honourable Gift* of God, he calls it a *Grace* that was *given* him ; *edothē he Charis aute* ; the Word *Charis* signifies a *free Gift* or Favour vouchsafed.

2. Because this honourable *Gift* was given to an *unworthy Person*, i. e. to one who was so in his own Apprehension. *To me who am less than the least of all Saints.*

3. Because the free *Gift* was given to be improv'd upon the most *delightful Subject*, the unsearchable *Riches of Christ*. This is a *Theme* which grasps Fountains of the most pure and permanent Sweets ! which at once enoble and satiate the longing Soul, with the brightest Ornaments, and serenest Comforts ! A *Theme* that pours forth chrystal Streams, which water the Garden of God ! A *Theme* that couches Clouds pregnant with living Waters, which refresh the Mountains of Zion, with numerous and pearly Drops ! A *Theme* that contains the inmost *Bowels* of the gracious Gospel of the blessed God ! A *Theme* which amazes our Minds with awful Wonder, and ravishes our Hearts with sweet Delight !

4. Because this *Gift* was given to be exercised among a *needy People*, viz. the *Gentiles* --- This Word comes from the Latin Word *gens*, which signifies a Nation : and thus, by *Gentiles* in the Text, we are to understand all the rest of the Kingdoms of the World, besides the Jewish ; who were of old God's favourite People, to whom was peculiarly committed the Oracles of God, and the Covenant. Now to preach the Riches of Christ among these poor People, was,

1. A *necessary Work*. Seeing that there is no Name given under Heaven by which Salvation can be obtain'd but the Name of Jesus ; *Acts* 4. 12. And that Faith in this Name is of absolute Necessity to Happiness, *Mark* 16. 16. And that this cannot ordinarily be attained by the adult, without hearing the Word. *Rom.* 10. 14. *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God, Ye cannot hear without a Preacher, and he cannot preach except he be sent.* Memorable is that saying of the *Apostle*

apostle Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Epist. 1 Chap. 23 Ver. We preach Christ crucify'd, to the Jews a stumbling-block; and to the Greeks foolishness; but to those that believe, whether Jews or Greeks, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. Now this Jesus, and the Way of Salvation by his Blood, the poor Gentiles were utterly ignorant of, which made their Case very *perilous*, Isa. 27. 11. Pro. 29. 18. and attempts to help them very *necessary*.

And;

2. It was a *noble Work*, to preach the Riches of Christ among the Gentiles; which appears in two particulars: (1.) There was great *Magnanimity* in it, and that both in a heroick *encountring* pregnant and imminent *Dangers*; and a patient *enduring* numerous and pressing *Difficulties*! To be willingly bereav'd of the Society of dear Relations, as well as of all the Honours, Comforts, and Emoluments of human Life; and in the mean time, expos'd to the Fatigue of continual Travels among Strangers, to Reproach, Penury, Contempt and Death, in all its hideous Forms; through the Treachery of false Friends; or Violence of open Enemies; and that for the immortal Good of Mankind, was a generous and gallant Enterprize, very worthy of a brave Mind, and a great Soul! Again, Was it not Magnanimous and truly Noble, to lay the first Foundation of the Messiah's Kingdom, among a barbarous, rude, and uncultivated People? who were involv'd in the grossest Ignorance, greatest Idolatry, and most fordid Prophaneness. Such have been renown'd for Heroes who have first attempted, by plowing unknown Deeps, to find out unknown Regions; but what is this, tho' famous in civil Story, in Comparison of the other? no more than the vilest Dross, in Comparison of the finest Gold! Laying the first Foundations for gaining Kingdoms to the blessed God, is a Work of the highest Moment, longest Duration, and greatest Importance; well worthy of immortal Glory! But (2.) there was great *Mercy* in it, and that to the best Part of Men, their precious Souls. Mercy to the Miserable is the very Crown and Flower of Vertue; the most noble Passion of the ~~Human~~ Nature, and the nearest Resemblance of

the divine. O what generous Pity to the human Nature, disrob'd of its original Glory and Innocence, sunk in Sin and Obscurity, and swallow'd up in Blood and Ruin, beat in the Bosoms of these holy Apostles ! who freely risk'd all that is naturally dear to get it restored to its antient Honours, to its primitive Beauty and Dignity.

From the Words thus explain'd, I observe these two Propositions following.

1. *That the greatest Saints are least in their own Esteem.* And,
2. *That it is the Duty and Privilege of Gospel Ministers, to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ.*

I return to consider the first Proposition, which was this ; viz.

1. *That the greatest Saints are least in their own Esteem.*

In discoursing upon which I would (1. enquire what a *Saint* is, and (2.) offer some Reasons to confirm the Truth of the Proposition.

And,

1. The Word *Saint*, as I observ'd before, signifies a holy Person. And now let me farther observe, that a Saint indeed is holy in these four following Respects,

Namely,

1. He is holy by *Profession*: He professes an Esteem of, and Love to, the Truths and Ways of Holiness, in the worst of Times, and worst of Places ; how much soever he may be despis'd and oppos'd on this Account. With holy *David* he values the Laws of God above the finest Gold, and they are sweeter to his Taste than Honey from the Comb. The Tabernacles of the great and good God are amiable to him ; and he loves the Place where his Honour dwells. We are inform'd *Mark 8. 38.* that *he who is ashamed of Christ in a wicked and adulterous Generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

2. A true *Saint* is holy by *Dedication*. He has deliberately devoted himself to the Fear and Service of God, in a Life of Holiness. *Psal* 119. 38. He is with brave spirited *Joshua*, embarked in the Cause of God and practical Religion; and come what will, he's resolv'd to serve the Lord.

3. A real *Saint* is holy by *Principle*. He has experienc'd a Work of Sanctification or Renovation in his Soul; which is indeed the great Root, Foundation and Source of all acceptable Holiness in Life; without which it is but a Shadow without the Body, or rather a Body without a Soul. And as a Preparative to this Work of *Sanctification*, he has been humbled under an afflictive Sense of his Sin, both Original and Actual, of Heart and Practice, and his Liableness on this Account to the Damnation of Hell; as well as his utter Inability, by all his religious Labours, to help himself out of this Condition, till he was taught of, and drawn by the Father, *John* 16. 8, 9. *Luke* 15. 17. *Acts* 2. 37. *John* 6. 44. By this Work of Sanctification, as his View of things is very different from what it was formerly, so his Judgment concerning them is exceedingly alter'd. He is now fully persuaded that Sin is in its own Nature exceeding sinful, and Holiness very venerable, that the World and all its Enjoyments are very vain, and that Christ Jesus is exceeding precious: And that no true Rest can be attain'd any where, but in Fellowship with him, and Living to him. He judges powerful and strict Religion to be as rational as necessary, as delightful as ornamental; and such who profess it, whom he was wont either thro' Ignorance, or Enmity, or both, to fear, shun, or slight before; he now highly Esteems and dearly Loves; and such Company he seeks after, and delights in. The *Bent* of his *Will*, and *Course* of his *Affections*, move from an inward Principle, *freely* and *generally* to what is holy and heavenly; for he that is of the Spirit, favours the things of the Spirit. He that is in Christ, has crucify'd the *Flesh*, with its *Affections* and *Lusts*; and he that is risen with Christ, hath set his *Affections* on things above, *Rom.* 8. 5. *Gal.* 5. 24. *Col.* 3. 1.

And,

4. A *Saint* indeed, is holy by *Practice*. He makes it his constant endeavour to be,

(1.) *Evangelically* Holy. As his Desires after Holiness are insatiable, i. e. he *earnestly* Hungers for more, and *honestly* Grieves he has so little, *Mat.* 5. 6. *Rom.* 7. 24. so his Labours for Holiness, are sincere, humble, sorrowful; Love constrains him to serve God with his Heart, or Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *Rom.* 1. 9. And he is sensible of and griev'd for his Inability to, and Weakness in the Service of God; in some Measure, for the most Part, *Mat.* 5. 3. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. 2 *Cor.* 3. 5.

And,

(2.) The *Saint* of God (in the general) labours to be *universally* holy, without excepting any Duties of Religion, because of any Cost or Difficulty attending them. *Psal.* 119. 6. And,

(3.) He labours faithfully for the most Part, either in a greater or lesser Degree, to be *perseveringly* Holy; knowing that such only who persevere to the End, shall obtain that Crown of Life which fadeth not away, *Rev.* 2. 10. That Principle of divine Life which is in them, enclines them to Desire and Endeavour, to be in the Fear of God all the Day; yea, all the Days of their appointed Time, *Job* 14. 14. *Psal.* 119. 5. And is not this the Cause of those Fears which sometimes Distress holy Souls, that they shall be suffered to fall, to the Scandal of Religion? O, with what trembling and melting Hearts, will they sometimes use the Psalmist's Petition! *Psal.* 69. 6. *Let none that seek thee be ashamed, for my sake, O Lord of Hosts.* I proceed to the

2 Thing *propos'd*, which was, to offer *some Reasons* to confirm the Truth of the *Proposition*, viz. That the greatest Saints are *least* in their own Esteem.

And,

1. Such have more *Knowledge* of God than others. Growth in Grace is necessarily accompany'd with Growth in the Knowledge of God, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. Such blessed Souls have more frequent, more clear, and consequently more affecting Views, of the adorable Perfections

tions of the divine Nature, and spiritual Extent of the divine Law ; which is but a Copy thereof. Each of God's *Properties* or *Attributes*, when they are set home upon the Soul by the Power of the Holy Spirit, fills the Soul with Wonder and Amaze ; and makes it shrink into Nothing, (as it were) in its own Esteem ! when it looks by Faith upon the spotless Purity, serene Majesty, and blazing Glory of God, shining with inaccessible, and inexpressible Lustre and Magnificence ; and compares its own abhorred Impurity, and contemptible Meanness therewith ; what holy Dread and humble Reverence does it inspire the Soul with ? Then how apt is it, with all its Powers, to express the Seraphs Acclamation ! *Isai. 6. 3. Holy, holly, holly, is the Lord of Hosts, the Heavens and Earth are full of his Glory !* Or the royal Prophet's Lamentation, *Isai. 6. 5. Wo is me, I am a Man of unclean Lips ! for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts !* Sometimes after a poor Believer has wandered from his God. and turned his Back upon the inexhausted Fountains of *Zion*, the un sullied Snow, and sacred Sweets of *Lebanon* ; and hunted after broken Cisterns, blasted Beauties, and muddy Waters ! O ! when a Beam of Mercy, from the Bowels of the blessed God, beats on this wandering Sheep ! it beautifies the Mind with its Brightness, and breaks the Heart with its Warmth ! How is the poor Believer astonished at this Miracle of pure Grace ? Ah ! how exceeding sweetly do the Thoughts of the undeserved, unchangeable, and fatherly Love of God, break and thaw the Heart, into the silent Tears of the softest and tenderest Contrition, for their Sins against this blessed God ! O how are their bleeding Hearts bow'd within them, when they think of their Ingratitude against the good Majesty, and yet they can't contain them from bursting forth into Streams of filial Affection, to that compassionate Father of his People ! O ! how high and venerable are their Thoughts of God, and yet griev'd that they are not high enough ! The Child of God is much pain'd, yea, his Heart is ready to break, that he cannot exalt the great God, and supream Majesty of Heaven and Earth enough, either

by the Conceptions of his Mind, the Speeches of his Lips, or Actions of his Life ! and indeed his Thoughts are as mean of himself, as they are high of God. What a poor, contemptible, vile Worm am I ? ah, how sinfully have I sinn'd against the blessed God ! and yet does the Lord look upon such a dead Dog as I am ? I blush and am ashamed, because of the great Father's pure Love ! O how bright and beauteous are the Glories and Riches of his Grace ! how boundless and great, the Ocean of his Goodness ! how unfathomable and amazing are the dear and valuable Treasures of his Love ! Wonder, O ye Heavens and Earth, at this ! and all ye holy and blessed Angels and Saints of the Church triumphant and militant ! Exalt ! O Exalt ! the venerable Honours of the tremendous *Majesty*, inviolable *Fidelity*, unexcited *Affection*, and unmerited *Mercy*, of the blessed God ! And why, my poor Soul, wilt thou not stretch forth all thy Powers in expanding the Glories of this sacred, serene, and venerable Majesty ; and in opening the transcendent Excellencies, and ravishing Charms of his Grace ? but ah ! I faint beneath the Weight, and my Thoughts and Words fail to express this Love suitably !

And,

2. Another Reason confirming the Truth of the Proposition, is this, That the more holy a Person is, the more they *know* of themselves. The Knowledge of God is that *Glass* in which they behold their own Blemishes, the secret Corruptions of their Hearts, the Sins of their Practice, and Defects of their religious Services. Now the more they see of their own Vileneſs, the more by Consequence they are griev'd and humbled upon this Account, *Rom.* 7. 24.

And,

3. *Great Saints* have more Love to God than others of a *lower Stature* in Christianity. God himself who is the Fountain of Holiness, is Love ; now the more holy any one is, he must needs be more like God, who is the Father thereof, and therefore must grow in Love ; now *Charity*, or *Love*, for so the original Word *Agape* signifies, *suffers long, and is kind, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things,* 1 *Cor.*

13. 4. 7. It inclines us to put the most favourable Construction upon our Brothers Speeches and Actions, that they can in Reason bear. And as the true *Saint* who is govern'd by this noble, godlike, heavenlike Principle of *Love*, is thus favourable to others, so he is very severe against himself in judging of his own Actions, and will much aggravate his own Failings. This was the Practice of *David*, the *poor Publican*, and *penitent Prodigal*. 2 Sam. 24. 10. *And David's Heart smote him, after that he had numbred the People; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the Iniquity of thy Servant, for I have done very foolishly.* See also, Luke 18. 13. *And the Publican standing afar off, wou'd not lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote on his Breast, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner.* And, Luke 15. 21. *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy Sight.*----- Thus holy Souls are inclin'd by Love to think themselves worse than others, and to prefer others before themselves, according to the Apostle's Advice, Rom. 12. 10. *Fbi. 23.* But hypocritical Pharisees being govern'd by other Principles, viz. (Ignorance, Pride, Covetousness and Malice,) like naughty Whores, keep much from their own Homes. And as they flatter themselves, so they are cruel and merciless, in their judging and censuring of others Speeches and Actions; and are very ready, desirous and laborious, to prefer themselves before others; and are griev'd when any outshine them, and so as it were stand in their Light.

4. Great Saints live more upon Christ than others, and consequently are more poor and mean in their own Eyes. Gal. 2. 20. *I am crucify'd with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me* ----- Philip. 3. 8, 9. *I count all Things as Dross and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT of this Proposition.

And,

1. What has been offer'd concerning the *Characters and Properties* of a Saint of God, should invite us to
examine

examine whether we our selves be indeed such, and especially at this Occasion, seeing that without this we have no Right in the Sight of God to partake of the holy Ordinance in View; nor can in Reason, expect any Comfort or Benefit thereby, should we be so profanely bold, as to adventure without a Warrant; but on the contrary, dreadful Frowns from the Face of God. For without Faith, which is the Root of undisguis'd and acceptable Holiness, we can neither spiritually discern the Lord's Body, nor feed upon it. Without this we are like to lose the Design of the Ordinance, and incur the dreadful Threatning denounc'd against the unworthy Partakers of it.

Are you therefore, my dear Brethren *holy? by Profession, Dedication, Principle, and Practice, Evangelically, Universally, and Perseveringly holy.* If so, then may ye come with humble Hopes of Acceptance, to the holy Table of the Lord. But alas! are there not many among us, who are the very reverse of what has been observ'd: For are ye not ashamed to own Christ's Ways and Truths in bad Times and Places? Ah! do ye not hypocritically shift, just as it suits your worldly Honour, or Interest? Are not some instead of being devoted to a Life of Holiness, devoted to serve their Lusts and temporal Interests? Do not ye make Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lust thereof; and pursue the World with such anxious Care, and earnest labour, as tho' it were your chief Good? *Psal. 4. 6.* And are not many of you utter Strangers to such a Work of Sanctification, as was beforehinted? Alas! are not many of you, in the general Course of your Speech and Practice, covetous, vain, sensual? Are not many of you legal, and mercenary in your religious Labours? Is not the *Fear* of Punishment, or *Hopes* to commend your selves to God's Favour by your Doings, the principal and general Spring of your religious Sacrifices? If so, you are under the Law, and by Consequence under the Curse, *Gal. 3. 10.* --- For all, do not some of you except against some Duties of Religion as too strict? and is not this, when habitual, an awful Evidence

Evidence of your Hypocrisy? *Psal.* 119. 6. Are not the Affections and Endeavours of some of you, in religious Matters, like the Morning Cloud and early Dew? for have ye not put your Hand to the Plow, and look'd back, with *Lot's Wife*, upon the World? Or with the murmuring *Israelites* upon your Lusts? And so are not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven; unqualify'd to be Members both of the Church Militant and Triumphant.

Alas! are not some so far from being *Saints* in Reality, that they make a Jest and Banter of the very Name *Saint*, and use it as a *Term of Contempt* and *Badge of Disgrace*; to depreciate those they dislike. As soon as ever any Body begins to be sorrowful for his Sins, zealous for God's Glory, and affectionately Laborious in seeking his own Happiness, in the Way of unfeigned Holiness; they presently lose their former Esteem of him, despise him as a Fool, and oppose him as an Enemy to himself and others. O! ye merciless and foolish Pharisees, will ye neither enter into the Kingdom yourselves, nor suffer those that are entering in to enter, *Matth.* 23. 13. Good God! what a horrid Degree of blockish Stupidity, and hellish Malignity, have some of the Sons of this sordid Generation, degenerated into? That they belch out the most implacable Spite, against what is most venerable in its self, and therefore most worthy of the Esteem of all Rationals! viz. *Holiness*, the least Lineaments of which are the Objects of their Abhorrence. There seems to be but little Difference, between such, and Beasts, as to Knowledge, and Devils as to Malice! If such be Holy, then the Devil himself is a holy Person.

Now to conclude this Head, I abjure and obtest all those Sorts of Sinners just mentioned, in the Name of the most high and eternal God, the King of the Church, that ye wou'd speedily consider and lay to Heart this dreadful Truth, viz. That *without Holiness, no Man shall see God*. And that if ye remain in the Condition you are now in, ye will be lost to all Eternity. For, *he that sows to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption*, *Gal.* 6. 8.

And,

And,

2. What has been observ'd concerning the *Humility* of a Saint of God, serves to reprove the *contrary Practice* of some, who profess themselves to be such. If it be so as has been prov'd, that the *greatest Saints* are the *least* in their own Esteem; then we may learn by the Rule of Contraries, That such are the least, or none at all, who frequently Esteem themselves the *greatest*: For as this demonstrates great Pride of Heart, so it signifies that such have but little Knowledge of God, or of themselves; little or no true Love to God or Man; little or no Fellowship with Christ, or Reliance on him: otherwise their haughty Arrogance, would be broke, more broken; and their Hearts humbled, more humbled.

But wherein do some Professors shew their *high Esteem* of themselves? I answer in the following Particulars, namely,

1. In being *dogmatical*, positive and imperious in their *Opinions* about dark, doubtful, and difficult Matters; being more ready to speak, than hear, contrary to the Apostle's Direction, Jam. 1. 9. *Wherefore, my Brethren, let every Man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.* And in speaking, being not only rash and precipitant, but void of self Suspicion, and impatient of Contradiction. This proud, positive, domineering Way of speaking, is condemn'd by the Apostle James in the 3d Chapter of his Book, and 1st Ver. *My Brethren, be not many Masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater Condemnation.*

2 In *speaking highly* of their own *Graces* and *Actions*. The Direction of Solomon, in this Case, is very worthy of Notice, Prov. 27. 2. *Let another Man praise thee, and not thine own Mouth.* It is true, it is lawful, yea expedient, at proper Seasons, to speak to such as fear God, of our gracious Experiences; for this, no doubt, is a principal Branch of the Communion of the Saints; and when well manag'd, acceptable to God, Mal. 3. 16. But a light, over-frequent, imprudent, and boasting Way of relating those things, is very much to be censur'd; and much more when it is mix'd with *Falshood*. So, no doubt,

doubt, it is equally lawful and expedient, sometimes to relate the Success God has graciously given to our Labours; for this we have the Example of the Apostles, *Acts* 15. 34. But this should be attended with humble Caution, lest the blessed God be sacrilegiously rob'd of his Honour, our own Pride elated, and another's Envy enflamed, which it is apt to be, if he is out of Frame, and we stand in his light. But,

3. The *Pride* of some Professors, appears in their *rash* and censorious *Reflections* upon *others* Conduct; in their giving a wrong Turn to, and putting an unmerciful Gloss upon another's Speeches and Actions, either by cruel Slander, charging them with Evils they are not guilty of, or by envidious Detraction, lessening the real Good they do. For it is as difficult for some, to look upon their own Virtues without Pride; as upon the Virtues of others without Envy: or where they are guilty of real Blemishes, through Uncharitableness, representing them to be much worse than they are, (and with what View can we reasonably suppose) but to establish their own Character, upon the Ruin of another's. All that differ from their infallible Judgment, must be presently doom'd Erroneous; and all the Good that it pleases the gracious God to do by others, must be mean and contemptible, forsooth; and why? but because they didn't do it! They had no Finger in the Pye, and therefore to be sure it must be nothing worth. O the horrible Pride, and Selfishness, that is in the Heart of Man! yea in the Hearts of good Men! To antidote this poisonous and shameful Disease, I will mention a Passage of the Apostle Paul to the *Galatians*, 5. 15. *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

4. The *Pride* of some Professors appears, in their hasty and *cruel judging* the *State* of others towards God; either in their Absence, passing Sentence before Tryal, without any necessary Cause; which Backbiting can be of no Service, but to occasion and increase sinful Contention, and scandalous Debate, and prejudice People against Christianity. Or in their Presence, without sufficient

ficient Grounds, rashly judging their State to be bad: Against this the Apostle James speaks plainly and pungently, Jam. 4. 11. *Speak not Evil one of another, Brethren, he that speaketh Evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, speaketh Evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law.* By this Method, weaker Christians have been very much wounded, and Religion exceedingly reproached. It is true, the other Extreme of daubing with untempered Mortar, ought to be, with equal Care, avoided.

If it be so, that such are truly *eminent in Holiness*; who esteem themselves the *least*; then alas, how few are eminent among us! For are not many Professors, instead of preferring others before themselves, industriously preferring themselves before others? Is not almost every one exalting himself, and striving to be esteem'd the greatest; more than in Reality laborious to be so? And is not this the true Cause of those Contentions and Debates; which sometimes subsist among Christians, *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*: Which if it was removed, Love and Concord would undoubtedly prevail.

But I must hasten to the Conclusion of this Discourse, by exhorting my Hearers, to two Virtues mentioned in this Text, viz. *Holiness* and *Humility*.

And,

1. Dear Brethren, let us labour to be *holy*, as God is holy. --- Holy in all manner of Conversation.

Holiness in the General recommends it self to our Esteem and Pursuit, by the strongest Arguments and Incentives, that can possibly be suggested to a human Mind. As it is enjoin'd by the highest *Authority*, and that upon Pain of Death, eternal Death: so it is the very *Perfection* of our reasonable *Nature*, in a Conformity to the moral Perfections of the Deity; and directly conducive to our present *Tranquility*, and future *Glory*. Without it we can neither enjoy our Selves, nor our God, in this, or the next World. Without it, our deathless Souls will be buried in everlasting *Ruins*; but this introduces
the

the most sublime and satisfactory *Pleasures*, crowns us with the noblest *Dignities*, and instates us in the most durable *Glory* and *Happiness*. And,

More particularly, The Exercise of holy Habits, are peculiarly necessary at the venerable Solemnity before us, when we approach before a holy God. It's then extremely necessary to have our Loins girt, and our Lamps trim'd and burning. Hence is that of the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 26. 6. *I will wash mine Hands in Innocency, so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord.* I would address you, my Brethren, on this Occasion, in the Language of *Joshua* to the People of *Israel*, before the Ark was carried through the Waters of *Jordan*; and as *Samuel* the Prophet, before the Offering of Sacrifice, *Sanctify yourselves, for To-morrow the Lord will do Wonders among you, Josh.* 5. 3. Perhaps the blessed God may work Wonders of his Grace and Power among us. Sanctify your selves, and come with me to the Sacrifice.

But how?

1. By *Repentance*. (1) Confessing your Sins freely, fully, affectionately, without Constraint, Reserve, or Indifference. Say with *David*, *I will confess mine Iniquity, and be sorry for my Sin.* (2) Mourning over Sin from Love to God, and with Bitterness, *Psal.* 51. 4. *Zech.* 12. 10. Especially over our Covenant-breaking, which is attended with Ingratitude, Perjury, and Hypocrisy. (3) Loathing our selves for Sin, *Job* 42. 6. (4) Resolving its Death through the Strength of Christ's Death.

2. By *Faith*, let us look upon Christ whom we have pierced, let us behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the Sin of the World; by Faith let us renew our Covenant with God, two ways, (1.) By a new Act of accepting of Christ according to his Gospel Terms; and (2.) By a new Act of resigning our Selves, and our All to him.

And,

3. By *Prayer*, let us send strong Crying and Tears to God, that he would be pleas'd to sanctify us, from the Guilt of Sin, by the Blood of Christ; and from the Power and Pollution of Sin, by the Word and Spirit of Christ, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctific us through thy Truth; thy Word is Truth,*

And,

And,

2. My dear Brethren, I would exhort you to be *humble*, Col. 3. 12. *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, humbleness of Mind.*

Humility in the General commends it self to our Affection and Practice, by the following Arguments ;

1. A humble Life is the *safest* Life. Such as walk in low Places are not like to have such dangerous downfalls, as those who tread upon Precipices, and meddle with things too high for them. *Psal. 131. 1.*

2. It is the *sweetest* Life ; it helps us to the Possession of our own Souls, by preventing the Ruffles of Passion, occasion'd through Reproach and Opposition ; and thus preserves a serene Calm in the Heart, amidst the most boisterous Tempests. It also introduces the Presence of God into the Soul, *which is better than Life it self*, *Isai. 57. 15.*

3. It's the most *profitable* Life ; for *God resists the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble.* Humility is indeed the *Mother* of other Virtues, and a necessary Comparison of all acceptable religious Worship. Such as humble themselves shall be exalted ; --- *Humility* is the *brightest* and most *beauteous* Ornament of our christian Character ; a Garb with which we should be ever cloth'd, and without which we are indeed naked ; *1 Pet. 5. 5.* This would commend us to the Esteem of Mankind, when we most shun it, and least design it. This would cement the broken Societies of Christians, with the beautiful Band of brotherly and undisguis'd Affection ; and prevent or heal those unhappy and uncomfortable Jars, which marr their mutual Edification : And incline the Sons of the same Father, and Heirs of the same Inheritance, to Travel without jostling, in the same Road, to the same Rest : This would induce them to conspire with harmonious Unanimity, to carry on the same blessed Work of God.

And,

4. A humble Life is the most *equal* and *rational* Life : It's the highest Reason and Justice, that we should be perpetually humble, whether we reflect upon the absolute Sovereignty, august Majesty, unfulled Purity, and
inaccessible

Inaccessible Glory of God, or our contemptible Meanness, abhorred Vileness, and continual Dependence upon God. But,

More particularly, The Exercise of this precious Grace, is highly necessary, when we draw nigh to such a high God and immense Majesty, in the ho'y *Eucharist*. It is as unreasonable for us who are the least, to look upon our selves to be the greatest; as it was truly noble in the blessed Apostle, who was really the greatest, to think himself the least. If we want to speed at the *Sacramental Solemnity*, we must bring empty Vessels, humble and hungry Hearts, and then we may expect through Grace to be fill'd out of the Fountains of Life, and enrich'd out of the unsearchable Treasures of Salvation. Behold, the blessed and beauteous Bridegroom cometh, dear Brethren! O let us labour by a sincere Faith, and profound Humility, to go out of Sin and Self to meet this glorious and magnificent King of *Zion*! A neglecting to come to this Feast of fat Things, by such who have suitable Furnitute, contains in it these three Evils, viz. Rebellion, Ingratitude, and Madness. (1.) *Rebellion* against his commanding Authority; *Do this in Remembrance of me*. (2.) *Ingratitude* against his dying Love, in slighting that Institution which he ordain'd for his People's Benefit, just at his Entrance into the Vale of the Shadow of Death. In which the Fruit of his Sufferings, and Purchase of his Blood are presented to us, and conferred upon the worthy Receiver. When the King has provided such a rich Banquet, at such a dear Rate; for such mean, base, worthless Wretches as we are! Shall we slight it? (3.) There is *Madness* in it, great Unkindness to God, and barbarous Cruelty to our own Souls, in rejecting that precious Food, which the loving Saviour has provided for our Comfort and Nourishment; we are like to have reason to complain long enough, of our Deadness and Barrenness, when we won't use instituted Means to get them remedied.

Object. 1. I am *unworthy*. I answer, The Worthiness that Christ requires, is an afflictive Sense of our Unworthiness,

worthiness, and an earnest Hunger after his Righteousness, *Isai. 55. 1. Matt. 5. 3, 6.*

Object. 2. I am afraid I ~~should~~ fall to the Scandal of Religion, if I should come. I answer, You will be more likely to fall, if you don't come, if prepar'd; because thereby you offend God, and therefore are like to bereave your selves of his Help, without which you cannot stand. Your Fear of falling, if real, is a probable Means to prevent Falls, and an Evidence of Love to Christ's Kingdom.

Object. 3. I fear I am not in a *good State*. I answer, If you have been made so sensible of your Sin and Misery, and of Christ's Beauty and Allsufficiency, as to close with the Saviour as he is offered in the Gospel, and find the principal *Bent* of your Hearts and Practices, running freely towards God. Then is your State good, according to the Scriptures. And, my dear Brethren! you may come to this holy Ordinance, with Fear, mixed with Faith and Trembling with Hope. If you have experienc'd such a Work of God, tho' you be in some afflicting Fears whether it be right or no; Yet you may come to have your Fears remov'd, and your Faith strengthened.

Object. 4. I am not in a *right Frame*, and therefore I have not the Wedding Garment. I answer, If you have examin'd your Souls, and endeavoured to humble your selves before the Lord, and honestly resolve God's Glory and your own Good in this Matter: Tho' you don't find such Degrees of Vehemence in your Affections towards Christ as you do desire, or as you have felt, yet may you come to have your smoking Flax inflam'd, your faint Desires increas'd. For surely, the blessed Jesus never intended this Ordinance only for the *strong*, but also for the Support of the *weak*; the Nourishment of the Babes of the Family, and Lambs of the Flock, whom the compassionate Shepherd carries in his merciful Arms and gently leads those that are with Young, *Isai. 40. 11.*

Object. 5. That Text 1 *Cor. 11. 29.* terrifies me. I answer, the Greek Word *crima*, translated *Damnation*, primarily signifies *Judgment*, and the unworthy Partaking

king according to the Context, seems chiefly and directly to intend *Irreverence* in this Matter, which was the Sin of the *Corinthians*: But if we should take it in a more large Sense, yet is there no reason to believe that an unworthy Participation, even in *this* Acceptation of the Word, is the unpardonable Sin. For that is malicious, and against Light, but this through Ignorance; and with a good Design. Now we are inform'd, that all manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men excepting that; *Matth. 12. 31* Therefore let every honest experienc'd Person, come to the Table of the Lord; in Obedience to his Command, that they may profess his Name before Men and Angels, and renew their Covenant with him here, in order to enjoy him hereafter. *Amen!*

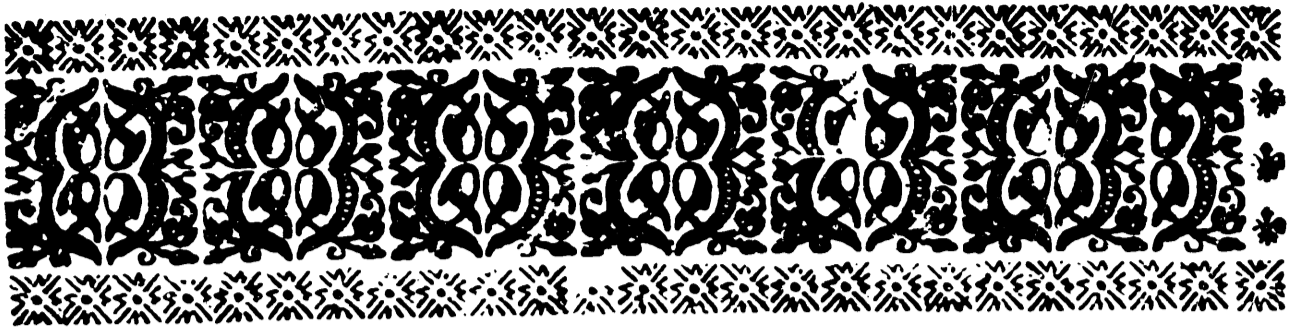
*To Peter's Alley - Stone Map
1667*



C 2

THE





THE
Unsearchable Riches
OF
CHRIST.

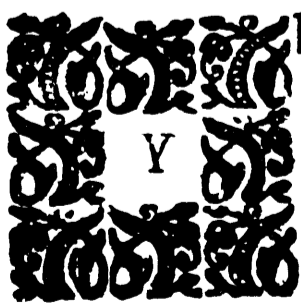


SERMON II.



E P H E S. iii. 8.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of CHRIST.



ESTERDAY I open'd this Text, and observ'd two Doctrinal Propositions from it; one of which was then discuss'd, and therefore the other comes now to be consider'd, which is this, namely,

II. *That it is the Duty and Privilege of Gospel Ministers, to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ.*

In

In opening of which, I design (to speak upon the following Heads :

1. Shew what it is to preach Christ.
2. How this appears to be the Duty, and Priviledge of Gospel Ministers.
3. Shew what is imply'd in the Notion of Riches in general.
4. Shew wherein consists the Riches of Christ in particular.
5. Shew what are the peculiar Properties of the Riches of the Lord Jesus.
6. Enquire what are the Arguments, by which we may be induc'd to believe in the Unsearchableness of Christ's Riches?

I return to consider the

1. Thing propos'd, which was to shew, *What it is to preach the Riches of Christ.* And,
 1. *Negatively, to preach the Riches of Christ, does not intend that a Minister should speak upon no other Subjects, but such as have immediate Relation to, or make express Mention of the Person, Natures, and Offices of Christ.* For this we are sure was not the Practice of the *Apostles*, who well knew the Duties of their Office. They prudently adapted their Discourses, according to the Times in which, and Places where they preach'd. When blessed *Paul* was to discourse before *Felix*, an unjust and intemperate Man, He reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, which seasonable Discourse from the Prisoner at the Bar, struck the Judge on the Bench, into such a trembling, as put him to his Trumps to get rid of his Fright. And thus when the same Apostle was at *Athens* perceiving their Superstition, Idolatry, and Security, he inveigh'd against those Vices, and labour'd to alarant them, by the Terrors of the last Judgment, *Act. 17.* It is true the Apostles being sent out to profelie the Jews and Gentiles, to a new Religion ; were naturally led to speak much about

Christ's

Christ's being the promised *Messias* ; for the Gentiles had no Notion of *this*, and *this* the Jews deny'd ; and it being a fundamental Truth, it was highly necessary, that both should be convinc'd of it, and instructed concerning it. But the Case, as to Christianiz'd Nations, is very different; such want more to be convinc'd of their Need of a Saviour, than that Christ is the promis'd one. For this they drink in with their Mother's Milk, and learn by Education ; but the other they cannot know without spiritual and supernatural Illumination.

And,

2. Much less does preaching the Riches of Christ intend, an unnatural, affected, and *over frequent mentioning the Name of Christ*, when it suits neither the Subject, nor Order of the Discourse. This is like the Practice of the *Papists*, who in their Prayers mention the Name of Jesus nine times together, and above a hundred times in one Mass of Prayers. Such a Devotion as owes its Birth and Exercise to Chimes and affected Tuning of Words, is childish and foolish, unworthy the Dignity of a human Soul, and inconsistent with real Religion, which is a *reasonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1. Such Affections as are rais'd by Tones and Senseless Charms of Words, without a preceeding Conviction of the Mind, and Persuasion of the Will, by Reason and Argument, are more fit for Theaters than Churches, for Children and Fools, than Men of Learning and Understanding.

But,

2, *Positively*, Preaching the Riches of Christ intends, *our making the Lord Jesus Christ the great Scope of all our Sermons*. For no other Foundation can any Man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Christ in his *Person, Nature, Offices, Obedience, and Sufferings*, is the Substance and Marrow of the Gospel ; take this blessed Lord out of it, and it is but an empty Shell. Now a Minister truly preaches Christ, when he forms his Discourses upon such Subjects as suit the State of his Audience, so as to have a direct Tendency to convince secure Sinners of their absolute Need of Christ ; so as to guide convinc'd Sinners to Christ, and build up converted Persons in
him

him, as the alone Foundation of Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Salvation, 1 Cor. i. 30. When his stupendous Fullness, Allsufficiency and Willingness to succour the Miserable, are display'd : When all the Lines of our ministerial Labours run towards Christ as their Scope and Center ; if not formally and expressly, yet virtually. But to open this more fully, let me observe, That a Minister ought to preach the *Riches of Christ,*

1. *Prudently,* By observing a reasonable Order in the Subjects of his Discourses, as well as in the Manner of handling them. He should first according to the Order of the Spirit's working, labour by Discourses upon Mens Sin and Misery to affect them with a Sense of their present Danger, and thus convince them of their Need of a Saviour. Then when poor Sinners are convinc'd, and only then are the Tidings of the Saviour's Fulness, and Riches seasonable and sweet ! For *the whole need no Physician, but the sick.*

But Preaching much of the Riches of Christ, before Sinners are prepar'd for it, by Humiliation, and that after a lax Manner, is like sending for a Physician in haste, when there is no Body sick, or like applying a Plaister, where there is no Wound ; or like Sowing before Plowing. And yet, alas ! this is the blind or blundering Method, which too many Preachers follow ; sometimes through gross *Ignorance* of the Nature of their Work, and sometimes it may be fear'd through *Self-Love*, consulting more their own Credit, and worldly Interest, than the Happiness of Men's Souls ! And thus it is no wonder, that there comes little Good, by their Preaching.

And, dear Brethren ! There should be Caution us'd in the Manner, as well as Order of Subjects ; a close and distinct Application is exceeding necessary, both for the Conviction of Sinners, and Consolation of Saints, 2 Tim. 2. 15. And in discoursing upon the Riches and Sufficiency of Christ, should not Care be taken, that this be so explain'd and its Terms propos'd, that the Presumers
and

and Prophane may have no handle to strengthen them in their Delusions, and debauch'd Practices ?

And,

2. A Minister ought to preach the Riches of Christ *plainly*. Tho' the Discourses of Ministers should smell of the Lamp, and be express'd in grave and masculine Language: Yet all bombast, and such unnatural Affectation of the Flowers of Rhetorick, as do obscure their Speeches, should be carefully avoided. *Paul*, tho' a Master of Language, preached the Gospel *not with Wisdom of Words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect*, 1 Cor. 1. 17.

3. *Pungently*. Christ's Servants should declare his Truths with great Earnestness, Zeal and Compassion: They should cry aloud and not spare, and shew to *Israel* their Transgressions, and to the House of *Jacob* their Sins; they should speak with the most awful Sense of the Majesty of that God, for whom they speak; the most compassionate Sense of the Miseries of those Souls, to whom they speak; the most affecting Sense of the Truths, which they speak; the important Messages which they bear, from the great God, to the precious Souls of Men! This was the blessed Practice of the holy Apostles, 2 Cor. 2. 17. *For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God, but as of God, in the Sight of God, speak we in Christ*. It's best when Sermons are steep'd and seal'd with the Speaker's Tears, *Joel* 2. 17. *Act* 20. 31. how much soever both their Words and Tears may be despis'd, by a Generation of blinded and hardned Mortals, who are Strangers to true Contrition.

I proceed to consider the

2. Thing *Propos'd*, which was to shew, *How this appears to be the Duty and Priviledge of Gospel Ministers ?*

And,

1. It appears to be their *Duty*, from three Considerations; (1.) From the *Command* of Christ, *Matth.* 28. 19. (2) From the *Practice* of the Apostles, as the Text teacheth us. And (3.) From the *Nature* of the Thing, Christ and the Blessings he has bought by his Blood for

poor Sinners, in the Substance of the Gospel ; and therefore if Ministers do not preach Christ, and direct Sinners to him, they do not preach the Gospel, but the *Religion of Nature*.

Not to add, That it is for this End, that Christ has ascended up on high, led Captivity Captive, and given Gifts to Men ; for this Christ upholds his Servants in their Work, and recompenses them after it. Now if Christ does all this for his Ministers, it is but reasonable and grateful, that they should preach of his Fullness and Riches. Which is,

2. Their great *Privilege*. Notwithstanding all that Contempt that is pour'd upon, and Opposition made against the faithful Ministers of Christ, by ignorant and wicked Men ; and notwithstanding the many Discouragements that do attend their Work, partly from the censorious Reflections of good Men, and partly from its own Weight and Difficulty, and their Weakness, Coldness, and sometimes Unsuccessfulness ; or from the Temptations of the Enemy of Souls, who does with uncommon Vigour beset them, knowing that in them, if he prevails, he may wound a Multitude. Partly from the Straits they are sometimes expos'd to, on the Account of their Support ; among a poor, penurious, and ungrateful People. I say, notwithstanding all the aforesaid Particulars, the ministerial Work, is a great *Privilege*, which will appear by the four following Considerations.

Namely,

1. It is a *noble Work* ; it aims at what is of the highest Importance, and Value, no less than the perfect and eternal Happiness of immortal Souls. *This* is what the great and blessed God has had his Heart upon, from all Eternity. What his unsearchable *Wisdom* has projected his almighty *Power* compass'd, and eternal *Love* proclaim'd. *This* suits the Dignity of a human Soul ; *this* exalts and expands it with Desires and Projects, worthy of its noble Nature, great Design, and sublime Original. *This* is what the venerable Son of God, has laid down his Life to purchase, and the eternal Spirit labours to secure to Men, by his blessed Operations in them. In
Comparison

Comparison of *this* all the other careful Contrivances, and painful Labours of busy Mortals, are not worth one *Rush*. Nay they are as the basest *Rubbish*, and the vilest *Dross*, not worthy of being once mentioned.

2. It's an *honourable Work*. It is not only honourable, by being truly noble; but it's honourable by divine Appointment. Hence is that of the Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, 1 Epist. 5. 12. *And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them that labour among you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love, for their Works sake.* Hence the *Elders* are said to be *worthy of double Honour*, especially *those that Labour in the Word and Doctrine*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And hence even the *Feet* of those that bring the glad Tidings of Peace are said to be *beautiful*, *Isai.* 52. 7. And hence Christ looks upon the Honour done them as done to himself, and the Contempt put upon them, as cast upon himself. Luke 10. 16. we are told, that *he who receives a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward.* And we are further informed, *Luke* 10. 12. that such as did not receive the Apostles, *the very Dust of their Feet will be a Witness against them; so that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha, in the Day of the Lord, than for them.*

3. It's a *pleasant Work*; especially at such Times, when the blessed God enlarges his Servants Hearts by his Love, and succeeds their Labours by his Power. O! then it's a sweet Recreation, to spend themselves to Faintness in labouring for Souls! with what inward Pleasure, will they pour out their vehement Crys to God for them; their compassionate Complaints over them; and their ardent Addresses to them! Oh! when they perceive that the Eyes of the Blind are opened, and the Dead begin to live, that the Lame walk, and the Leapers are cleansed; that the Proud and Secure begin to get their Hearts humbled and broken, and cast mournful longing Looks after the Saviour; it makes their Hearts leap in their Bosoms for Joy and Gladness. Believe it, Friends, never had a Man such Gladness at the increase of his Treasure, as a faithful Minister feels, at the turning

ing of a wandering Prodigal to God. The Apostle testify'd of themselves that they were *sorrowing, yet always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. 6. 10. And above all other Subjects, *the Riches of Christ* amaze their Minds, and melt their Hearts, into Admiration and Love. But,

4. It's a *profitable Work*; tho' in many Places there is no Prospect of any temporal Reward, but that of *Reproach, Contempt, and Penury*, in the faithful Discharge of this Work; yet blessed be God, there is a Degree of distinguished Glory in the next World, which the gracious God will certainly confer upon such, who turn many unto Righteousness. Such shall surely *shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. 12. 3. And thus I am led to speak upon the

3d Thing *propos'd*, which was to shew, *What is imply'd in the Notion of Riches in general.*

And,

1. *Riches* signify what is *excellent or valuable*, either in it self, or in the Esteem of Mankind. A Man is not esteem'd Rich who has a great deal of *Trash and Rubbish*; so *Christ* is in himself, and in the Esteem of all that know him, and believe in him, *exceeding precious*; he is that inestimable *Pearl of Price*, which whosoever finds hid in the Field of the Word, with Joy sells all in order to obtain it. If the whole Heavens and Earth were turn'd into the finest Gold, and richest Jewels, and put into the Scale with Christ, they wou'd not Weigh so much as one Grain, against the massiest Mountain in the Universe. If all the Angels of God, were employ'd for Millions of Ages, to cast up the Worth of Christ, they could not effect it. No! those wise and penetrating Spirits, after all their laborious Enquiries, and sublime Ideas, would be non-pluss'd; and more wou'd remain of Christ's Riches, ten thousand Times ten thousand, than they could conceive or express! O the inconceivably rich, and excellent Lord Jesus!

2. *Riches* imply an *abundance* of what is *excellent or valuable*; not only what suffices our selves, but what is sufficient

sufficient to relieve many others. Now in Christ it has pleased the Father, that *all Fulness should dwell*; even the *Fulness of the God-head bodily*; Col. 1. 19. An *un-created* Fulness of his Father's essential, incommunicable and communicable Attributes, dwells in Christ; the Glory of God shines in his Face; and a Fulness of *created* Grace and Excellency; hence it is said, that the *Law* was given by *Moses*, but *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, and that he was anointed with the Oil of Gladness *above his Fellows*. Thus it appears that this blessed Lord is not only *autarces*, but *pantarces*, not only Self-sufficient but All-sufficient.

3. *Riches*, all in general *Desire*. Now the venerable Lord *Jesus* is justly stil'd, *The Desire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 7. He is that blessed Person, whom all Nations should desire; and whom wise and good Men of all Nations have desir'd; and without whom none in any Nation, can have their Desires satisfied. With what pious Passion does the *Psalmist's* Soul pant after this blessed God, in the 42d, 63d, and 84th *Psalms*? Even as the pursued *Hart* after the Water Brooks, or the parched Earth after the Rain; yea, his very Heart and Flesh cry'd out after God, even after the living God, and followed hard after him! With what holy Vehemence, does the poor Church long for this Redeemer? *Isai. 26. 9. With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea with my Spirit within me, will I seek thee early. Cant. 2. 5. Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love Cant. 5. 4, 5, 6. My Beloved put in his Hand by the Hole of the Door, and my Bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my Hands dropped with Myrrh, and my Fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh, upon the Handles of the Lock. -- But my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, my Soul failed when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him. O! that the compassionate Lord Jesus would bless our poor Souls with such a Sickness this Day! O! that the rich and good Saviour, would set us as a Seal upon his Heart, as a Seal upon his Arm, and give us Desires stronger than Death!*

4. *Riches*

4. *Riches* cannot be usually obtain'd without *Labour*; it's the *Hand of the diligent*, as *Solomon* observes, *that makes rich*. Now *Christ Jesus* and his *Love*, which is the true *Riches*, cannot be obtain'd without *Labour*; *the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the violent, and none but such, take it by Force*. Hence we are bid to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate; for many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able*, Luk. 13. 24.

5. *Riches* can procure a *Supply* of all our *temporal Wants*. Concerning such Things, *Solomon's* Observation is just, *That Money answers all Things*: It can purchase *Cloathes* to cover us, *Bread* to support us, and *Wine* to refresh us. *Riches* will procure us *Houses* and *Liberty*, pay our *Debts*, and so prevent our *Imprisonment*.

And thus, dear *Brethren*! the *Riches of Christ's Love* can *satisfy* all the *Wants* of our *Souls*, and fill us with *Marrow* and *Fatness*: They can cloath us with the *Robes of Righteousness*, nourish us with the *Bread of Life*, revive us with the *Wine of divine Consolation*, and satisfy us with the *crystal Waters of eternal Salvation*. *Christ* has purchased by his *Blood*, and can confer a *spiritual, noble, and everlasting Liberty*, from *Satan, Sin, and Death*. John 8. 36. *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed*. The *Riches of Christ* can easily discharge our *Debts*, and so prevent our *everlasting Imprisonment*, in the *Jail of Damnation*; and introduce us into that *House* not made with *Hands*, whose *Builder and Maker* is *God*. And,

6. *Riches, Misers delight in, and joy in the Increase and Acquisition of*: So the *Riches of Christ's Love* rejoice the *Heart of a gracious Person*, more than *worldly Wealth* can a *graceless one*; hence is that *Saying of the Psalmist*, Pſal. 4. 7. *Thou hast put Gladness into my Heart, more than in the time that their Corn and Wine increase*. This! O this! makes *holy Souls* rejoice with *Joy* un-speakable and full *Glory*. *We are the Circumcision*, says the *Apostle*, Philip 3. 3. *which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus*.

7. *Riches, Misers* will exceedingly *grieve* for the *Loss of*; So when *gracious Souls* have lost the *Sight of Christ's Face*,

Face, and Sense of his Love, they passionately wail and mourn like the Turtle-Dove bereaved of its Mate : *When thou hidest thy Face*, says the Psalmist, *I am troubled*. And hence is his expostulatory Complaint, Psal. 42. 5. *Why art thou cast down O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* And was not this the Spring of the Spouse's Labours after her Lord, and affecting Enquiries concerning him? *Cant. 3.* She travelled the broad Ways in seeking him, and asked the Watch-men if they saw her Love?

8. Such as seek *Riches*, often meet with *Opposition* in their pursuits; and thus those who truly seek *Jesus* and his *Love*, are generally oppos'd by Men and Devils. Gal. 4. 29. *But as then, he that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*: Even so it is now, Ephes. 5. 12. *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood (i. e. not only) but against Principalities, and Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World.*

9. Such as possess *Riches* are either really or feignedly esteemed. And thus those who possess the *Riches* of the *Grace* of Christ, as they are really more excellent than their Neighbours, so they obtain the just esteem, and sincere Respect of all who have a right Judgment of Things. *Psal. 16. 3.* *Yea, Goodness shining in a Degree of distinguish'd Eminence, commands a fearful Reverence from all such as are not wholly lost to a Sense of Virtue and Honour.*

10. *Riches* are earnestly labour'd for by the most; for them they get up early, and sit up late, eat the Bread of Care and Sorrow; for them their busy Minds are continually working with careful Contrivances, and painful Projects. And with the same Vigour and Vehemence, do all convinced Sinners seek the *Riches* of Christ, yea with much more. Hence it's said, *That from the Days of John the Baptist, the Kingdom of Heaven suffered Violence, and the violent take it by Force.* O! with what Tears, Trembling, and Groans do these Souls cry to Heaven Night and Day for Mercy! Go to *Saul* of *Tarsus*; behold he prayeth. O! with what anxious Fear
and

and deep Concern will they enquire the Way to Christ? What shall I do to be saved! O can you direct me!

I hasten to the

4. Thing *propos'd*, which was to shew, *Wherein consists the Riches of Christ in particular*. And now, dear Brethren, I must launch with a small Boat into the boundless *Ocean* of the adorable and amazing Excellencies of the holy and venerable *Lord Jesus*. It cannot be expected, that in the Compass of one Discourse, I should speak upon all the amiable Perfections of the eternal Son of God; no Sirs, this would require a vast Volume. I must only labour with Fear and Trembling, to give a few dark and broken Hints of the Riches of Christ, in these following Properties, viz. *Wisdom, Power, Grace, Glory, Beauty, Love*. And,

1. *Christ is rich in Wisdom*; he is the Wisdom of the Father, the Wonderful Counsellor. *In him are hid the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Col. 2. 3. And hence mention is made of the *Riches of his Wisdom*, Rom. 11. 33. And that by his Knowledge he should justify many. *Isa. 53. 11*. He is the *great Prophet* of his Church, who makes the Heart of the rash understand Judgment, and the Tongue of the Stammerers speak plain.

2. He is *rich in Power*; as he is the wonderful Counsellor, so he is the *mighty God*, the everlasting Father. As his Wisdom is unsearchable, so his Power is irresistible; by his Power he can do all Things, that are neither contrary to his pure Nature, nor contradictory in their own. His absolute Power is only limited by the Possibility of Things, *Luke 1. 37*. His ordinate Power by his own good Pleasure, *Ephes. 1. 11*.

1. He is *powerful as God*; and this his creating the World demonstrates, *John 1. 3*. How vast and glorious must that Power be, which by one Word of Command made Nothing spring into Being, and out of that rude Chaos of confus'd Matter, form'd the beautiful Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, with all the numerous and magnificent Hosts of both; and also laid the Foundations of the Globe we tread upon, and spread forth the
visible

visible Heavens, as a Canopy or Curtain to cover it ; checker'd with beautiful and various Luminaries, to enlighten and fructify it, *Rom. 1. 20.*

2. He is *powerful as Mediator* ; hence we are told that *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given to him*, *Mat. 28.* Were not the miraculous Works he effected in his humbled State, a sufficient Declaration of his glorious Power ? What less than Almightyness could by a Word and in a Moment, call forth the sleeping Dead into Life and Motion, sooth the raging Winds, and still the angry Deep into a silent Calm ? What but the Finger of Omnipotence could open the Eyes of the blind, and make the Tongues of the dumb move in Praise ? Or turn the Tongues of others to express the Honours of his Grace, in Languages they had never learned. What but Almightyness cou'd cure incurable Diseases, create Bread for Multitudes, and raise the Lord of Life from the Depths of Death ? Now the Power of Christ as God, is

1. *Underived.* He is that Fountain of Power from which all natural and civil Power and Rule is derived. *1 Chron. 29. 12. Prov. 8. 15, 16.*

2. *Supreme.* All created Strength combin'd into one, cannot withstand it. *Psal. 115. 3.* Nay the Power of Creatures is but an Instrument of it, to effect the divine Purposes ; even when they themselves dream not of it. *Isa. 10. 6, 7.*

3. *Infinite.* Hence we read of the *exceeding Greatness* of his Power: (*Eph. 1. 19.*) the *Glory* of his Power, (*2 Thes. 1. 4.*) the *Might* of his Power, *Eph. 1. 19.*

3. *Christ is rich in Grace.* *Eph. 1. 7.* *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.* What is Grace, but Gifts given freely, or Love undeserv'd ? Now how many Instances of pardoning Mercy to the most vile, and supporting Mercy to the most miserable of Sinners, do the holy Scriptures abound with ? And are not these eminent Illustrations of the pure Grace of Christ ? O ! who can read without the deepest Wonder, the surprizing Change of a *Manasseh*, a *Saul*, a *Mary*

Mary Magdalene! Sure nothing but the most sovereign Power could, and the most pure Grace would, wash such *Ethiopians* white! And indeed this the Apostle acknowledges, 1 Tim. 2. 14. *And the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.*

As *Grace* is the impulsive or moving Cause of Election; hence the People of God are call'd a *Remnant according to the Election of Grace*, Rom. 11. 5. So it is the impulsive Cause of the Vocation, Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation of the elected. Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he predestinates, those he calls* Rom. 3. 24. *Being justified freely of his Grace.* Eph. 1. 3, 4, 6. *Who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, to the praise of his glorious Grace.* Eph. 2. 8. *For by Grace are ye saved; and that not of your selves: it is the Gift of God.* And further to illustrate the Riches of the Grace of Christ, let it be consider'd, that Grace is said to be pour'd into the Lips of Christ *Pf. 45. 2* He has the Tongue of the learned; and can speak a Word to the weary in Season: Again, Christ is said to be *full of Grace and Truth*, and *of his Fulness his People receive Grace for Grace*, John 1. 14, 16. Thus you see that not only the *Lips*, but *Heart* of Christ is full of Grace; yea, mention is made of the Glory of his Grace; (*Eph. 1. 6.*) The Riches of his Grace; (*Ver. 7.*) The exceeding Riches of his Grace; (*Eph. 2. 7.*) The exceeding abundance of his Grace, (*1 Tim. 1. 14.*)

4. *Christ is rich in Glory*, Eph. 3. 16. *That he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with Might.* Dear Brethren! This is so bright and dazzling an Attribute, that our Thoughts, in their sublimest Flights, cannot reach it: but all our feeble Powers in their highest Elevation; faint before it! And neither are able to bear the Lustre of that inaccessible Brightness; which compasses the Throne of God; nor pierce the Clouds which attend his Pavilion. The blessed *Seraphims* themselves cannot stedfastly behold, the Glory of the supreme Majesty, in its open'd Beauty, and direct Radiancy; without covering their Faces with a Vail.

How then can we who are of a meaner Mould, and unhallowed Lips, speak of this adorable and tremendous Attribute, without debasing its Purity, and obscuring its Eminence. Yet seeing we are indulg'd the Liberty of offering our broken Thoughts, let it be consider'd, That Glory, according to the Notion of most Divines, is an Excellency or Perfection in a Subject, which either is, or ought to be honoured. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is *glorious* in the following Respects.

1. He is *essentially glorious* as God, by the eminent Excellency and Perfection of his Nature; which possesses all his Father's Attributes; on which account he justly Merits the profoundest Veneration, from all intelligent Creatures; hence he is call'd the *mighty God*, and that he counted it not Robbery to be equal with God. (*Isai. 9.*) Hence he is said to be glorious in Holiness, in Majesty and Dominion, *Exod. 15. 11. Psal. 145. 5. Psal. 45. 11.* And the Lord Christ is

2. *Originally glorious*; He is the Fountain of all possible Excellency. Whatever is truly noble or glorious in any Creature, borrow'd its Being from Christ, as its Cause efficient or meritorious, and is either formally or virtually in him, and that in the highest Degree of Eminence.

3. *Incomprehensibly glorious*; his *essential Excellency* is the very Face of God; which we cannot see and live, *Exod. 33. 20.*

4. *Christ is unchangeably glorious*; His essential Eminence is far from the Shadow of Change, and neither can admit of Increase or Decay, because it is God himself. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the same from everlasting to everlasting.

5. *Christ is incomparably glorious*. Our noblest Excellency is but Darkness, when compared with Christ; our Strength Weakness, and our Wisdom Folly, *1 Cor. 1. 25.* He looks to the Moon, and it shineth not, and the Stars are not pure in his Sight; yea, he chargeth his Angels with Folly, *Job 25. 5.* As the Sun, when it shines in its Strength, drowns lesser Lights; turns the Stars into Darkness, and the Moon into Shade: so the surpassing Glory of Christ, obscures all created Excellency; it

it must vanish at the approach of that august and serene Majesty, or blushing hide its Deformity with a sable Mantle.

6. *Christ is declaratively glorious, both as God, and as Mediator*: As God, he has manifested his essential Excellency by the *Works of Creation, and Providence, which declare his Glory, and shew his handy Work*, Psal. 19. 1. In the vast Volumens of Creation and Providence, the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God, are written with broad and beamy Characters, Rom. 1. 20. As *Mediator*, the Glory of God shines in his Face, and thro' his Redemption has had its brightest Triumph; in this a Constellation of divine Attributes, (viz. Wisdom, Justice, Truth and Love) harmonize and kiss each other, and shine forth with such a Lustre, as justly amazes Men and Angels! Now the majestick Brightness of the divine Glory is so tempered and allay'd with the Humanity of Christ, that we may behold it; which otherwise would break or blind our feeble Powers, 1 John 1, --- 9.

7. *The Lord Jesus Christ is ultimately glorious*: He is the End as well as Original of all Excellency; As it comes from him as its Cause, so it should tend to him as its Scope, and Center; *for of him, and through him, and to him are all things.*

The blessed Lord Jesus is call'd *the Brightness of his Glory*, (meaning God the Father) Heb. 1. *The Lord of Glory*, Jam. 2. 1. And it's further said, that *he was counted wortby of more Glory than Moses*, Heb. 3. 3. Is it not the superlative Glory of Christ that gilds the Gospel with Glory? 1 Tim. 1. 11. *According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.* This is the *Glass*, upon which his transcendent Eminence, shines with directest Rays, and reflects the strongest Light; a Glass which opens the harmonious Beauties of the Deity, and transforms his People from Glory to Glory, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

5. *Christ is rich in Beauty.* And,

1. His Beauty is *universal*. Every thing in him is lovely; he is beautiful in his *Natures, Offices and Relations*. He is cloath'd with the sublimest *Majesty*, and possess'd

possess'd of the most spotless *Sanctity*. His Name is as *Ointment pour'd forth*. He is the most faithful *Friend*, compassionate *Husband*, and prevailing *Advocate*. As there is nothing in him but what is truly amiable, so there is a perfect Concurrence of every thing that is such. He is *Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, *Sanctification*, and *Redemption*. The blessed Jesus is not only possess'd of every thing in it self lovely, but of every thing that is suitable to, and necessary for us. He is *Wisdom* to direct us, *Righteousness* to justify us, *Sanctification* to adorn us, and *Redemption* to save us. He is a hiding Place from the Wind, a covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of Waters in a dry Place, and the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land. Hence the poor Spouse justly observes concerning him, Cant 5. 16. that *he is altogether lovely*.

2. His *Beauty* is incomparable and superlative; He is *fairer than the Children of Men*, Psa! 45. 2. *Fairer than the Sons of God*, the holy *Angels*, who cover their Faces in his Presence, lie prostrate at his Feet, cast their Crowns before his Throne, and are charg'd with Folly, though they be the wisest Creatures in the whole Universe, Job 4. 18. *Fairer than the Heavens*, for even these bright Bodies which are the most beautiful of all Things visible, *are not pure in his Sight*, Job 15. 15. These obscure Shadows of Beauty and Excellency, which are dispersed among created Beings, unite in this blessed God, as their sole *original*, and proper *Center*; and shine in him with perfect *Eminence*, and distinguish'd *Glory*. Hence is that just and passionate Expression of the admiring Spouse, Cant. 5. 10. *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*.

3. His *Beauty* is unchangeable and eternal, without Variation or shadow of Change. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *First* and the *Last*. His perfect Beauty neither admits of Wane or Increase. But on the contrary, O how variable is all created Excellency! The *Angels* fell from their first State of Happiness, the *Heavens* wax old as a Garment, and all the *Glory of Man* fades as the Grass: But Christ is the same Yesterday, to Day and forever. The noblest Excellencies in Heaven and
Earth

Earth invariably conspire in his Person ; those Beams of Beauty which are dispers'd among Creatures in both Places now mention'd, meet in him as the Sun, from which they proceed. This venerable Lord Jesus is the Desire of Nations, the Wonder of the holy Angels, the Beauty and Delight of the Heavens, the Darling of the blessed God, the inestimable Pearl of Price, the Rose of *Sharon*, the Lilly of the Vallies, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the only Hope of our poor Souls. All Nature faints before this transcendent Beauty, and yields nothing to represent his Excellency fully.

But most dear and venerable *Lord Jesus* ! How can I who am of stammering Lips, the meanest and the vilest Dust, speak forth the Honours of thy Beauty ? When the highest Angel is not equal to this Task. Wo is me, it grieves me at the Heart ! that while I wou'd disclose the Saviour's *Beauty*, I should through Ignorance, cloud its Glory. But,

6 *Christ is rich in Love*, 2 Cor. 8. 9 Now the Love of Christ is *Unmerited, Incomprehensible, Effectual, Eternal.* And,

1. The *Love* of *Jesus* is *Unmerited* : He lov'd us when we had nothing that was lovely in us, when we were strip'd of the Robes of our original Innocence and Beauty, and be-mear'd with Blood, Pollution and Deformity, *Ezek.* 16. When we were possess'd of the strongest Enmity against his Person and Government. *Rom.* 5. 8. *When we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.*

2. *Incomprehensible*, *Eph.* 3. 19. The Love of Christ which passes Knowledge. The strongest Love which passes between the dearest Relations, is but a dark Symbol of it. The Love of a Woman to her sucking Child is very dear and passionate ! That of *Jonathan* to *David* surpasses this (*1 Sam.* 20. 17.) whom he lov'd as his own Soul. But that of *Moses* and *Paul* to the *Israelites*, was of a higher Degree and nobler Nature, whereby the one was willing to be blotted out of the Book of Life ; and the other to be accursed from Christ, for their Happiness. These were high and noble Flights of Love indeed ; but yet being in human Bosoms do not surpass

human Knowledge: But the Love of Christ passeth Knowledge, and is without Peer or Parallel: There is no compleat Resemblance of it in the whole Verge of Nature; and therefore when Christ would represent it, he compares it to the infinite Love of God the Father, John 15. 9. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.* And this is what no human Mind can conceive, or Tongue express.

3. *Effectual.* This Love the blessed Lord express'd by his Incarnation, Obedience and Death. What but Love enclin'd him to assume the Nature of Man, under the Ruins of its apostate State, and pass by that of Angels? And in this human Nature to perform the strictest Obedience, and endure the severest Punishments, upon the Account of his People! Hence is that beautiful Passage of the Apostle Paul, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. 8. Ver. 9. *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus, that tho' he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor, that we through his Poverty might be rich.* What a stupendous Stoop of amazing Condescension! What an astonishing Prodigy of the dearest Affection was this, that the eternal Son of God should become the Son of Man! That he who was in the Form of God should assume the Form of a Servant! Leave his Throne in Heaven, to be condemn'd on Earth; (by those whom he will judge at last) that he who is blessed for ever should be nail'd to an accursed Tree! That he who is immortal, the Father of Spirits, the Fountain of Life, and Prince of Peace, should taste of Death, and that in order to deliver us from the Dominion of it! O the ravishing Beauty, and surprising Glory of this blessed Love! No wonder the holy Angels admire it, and sing its sacred Honours, on their golden Harps! No wonder the Saints of the Church Triumphant, on this Account fill the Heavens with their just, grateful, and continual Acclamations! And cast their Crowns before the Throne of God! No wonder the Saints of the Church Militant are melted into Love and Ravishment, while they behold, by an Eye of Faith, the amiable Glory and burning Radiancy, of this unmerited, incomprehensible, and

effectual

effectual Affection ! And labour by the utmost Stretch of all their feeble Powers, to raise high the just Tribute of its Honours !

4. *Eternal*, Isa. 54. 8. He loves his People with an *everlasting Love*, --- *Before the Mountains were form'd, his Delights were with the Sons of Men.* And as this Love was in the divine Bosom before the Foundations of the Earth were laid ; so it will continue after they are shaken and burnt ; even to all Eternity. *John* 10. 28. After his People have play'd the Harlot with many Lovers, yet he invites them graciously to return again to him, and promises to heal their Backslidings, upon their so doing, *Jer.* 3. 1.

I hasten to the

5th Thing propos'd, which was to shew, *What are the peculiar Properties of the Riches of the Lord Jesus.*

And,

f. They are *excellent* in their *Nature*. The *essential Riches of Christ*, are so noble and exalted, that they exceed the utmost reach of our Thoughts to conceive suitably of them ; they are immense and infinite, and our Thoughts and Minds but dark and finite ; so that as great as the Disproportion is between what is finite, and what is infinite ; so great is the Disparity between our Minds, and the surpassing Riches of Christ. Such is the double Blaze of Glory in them, that they surcharge our weak Powers with their Brightness ! If the beauteous Seraphims, that are of a nobler Frame, must veil their Faces, because of the beamy, burnish'd Glory of that radiant Majesty, must not then our feeble Powers faint before the Face of God ! Does not Darkness cloud our Mind, and therefore may not Silence seal our Lips ?

The *communicable Riches of Christ* are also truly excellent The Tryal of *Faith* which is a Branch of those Riches, is said by the Apostle *Peter* to be much more precious, than that that of Gold which perisheth.

2. The *Riches of Christ* are *enobling* in their *Effects*. They adorn, perfume, and enrich all that possess them. *By them they are made Partakers of the divine Nature,*

(2 Pet. i. 4.) i. e. of holy Qualities, resembling the moral Perfections of God; *by them*, they are made *all glorious within*, and cloath'd with finer Gold than that of *Opbir*; so that the King greatly desires their Beauty, *Psal. 45.* *By them*, with open Face, they behold as in a Glass the *Glory of God*, and are chang'd into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, *2Cor. 3. 18.* *By them* their Garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes and Cassia, out of the Ivory Palaces. *By them*, they are perfum'd with Frankincence, and all Powders of the Merchant. *By them* they are entitled to an *incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading Inheritance*, (1 Pet. i. 4.) *By them* their Hearts are made to rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. *By them* they obtain that *Rest* to their weary Minds, which they in vain seek elsewhere. Hence is the *Psalmist's* reasonable Resolution, *Psal. 116. 7. Return to thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me.*

3. The *Riches of Christ* are in their Degree *unsearchable*. There is an immense boundless and bottomless Ocean of Fulness and Riches in *Christ*, both as *God*, and as *Mediator*, between *God* and *Man*; which no human Mind can grasp. or Tongue express! This is confirm'd by *Zophar*, the *Nzamatbite*, in bold and beautiful Language, *Job 11. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* All the Glories of the *Deity* shine in *Christ*, with amazing Majesty, inaccessible Brightness, and serene Beauty. For he counted it not Robbery to be equal with *God*. And as *Mediator*, there are unsearchable Riches in *Christ*, for it pleased the *Father*, that in him should all fulness dwell. Hence the *Lord* is said to have laid Help upon one who is mighty, (*Psal. 89. 19.*) And that *Christ* is able to save to the Uttermost all that come to *God* by him. (eb 7. 25.) able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, (*Eph. 3. 20.*) The boundless Treasures of the *Riches of Christ* are no more lessen'd by our Supplies therefrom,

therefrom, than the Sun, or a Fountain, by our being directed by the Beams of the one, or refreshed by the Streams of the other.

4. The *Riches of Christ* are in their *Duration* eternal. The *incommunicable Glories* and *Riches* of his *God-head*, admit not the least *Variation*, or *Shadow of Change*; but run *Parallel* with the *Line* of his eternal *Existence*, who is from everlasting to everlasting God.

The *communicable Riches* of the *special Grace* of Christ are in their *Nature* immortal, and in *Continuance* eternal, (*a parte post*) Hence the *Seed of God* is said to be immortal, and the *Gifts* and *Calling* of God, without *Repentance*, *Rom. 11. 29.* The *Saints Perseverance* in the rich *Grace* of Christ, is secur'd by the *invariable Purposes* of God; the *unchangeable Nature* of God; the *everlasting Covenant* of God; the *faithful Promise* of God; the *Fullness* of Christ's *Satisfaction*; the *prevailing Nature* of his *Intercession*; as well as by the *peculiar Oeconomy* of the holy Spirit. Truly noble is the *Saying* of *Solomon* concerning the *Mediator's Riches*, *Prov. 8. 18, 19, 20. Riches and Honour are with me; yea durable Riches, and Righteousness. My Fruit is better than Gold, yea than fine Gold; and my Revenue than choice Silver.*

But, on the contrary, all *temporal Riches* are

1. Of a *finite* and *decaying* Nature. The deepest worldly *Treasure* may be *search'd* and *estimated*; because it is bounded both as to *Duration*, and *Existence*; it had a *Beginning*, has a *Bottom*, and will have an *End*. The *Rust* corrupts it, and in *Process* of *Time*, it will of its own accord, crumble into *Dust*.

2. *Temporal Riches* are of *uncertain Continuance*; they often make themselves *Wings* and flee away, by tempting the *Pride* and *Avarice* of wicked Men, to ravish them by *Fraud* or *Force*, from their just *Owners*: Them the *Thieves* sometimes by breaking through the strongest *Inclosures*, steal; and truly they are liable to a thousand *Accidents*. But at present for *Brevity* sake, let me only observe, That in respect of them, we are expos'd

pos'd to a double Uncertainty, namely, their Continuance with us, and ours with them ; so that the greatest worldly Treasure may be *lost*.

And,

3. They are *corrupting* in their *Effects* ; hence it's said, *That they who will be rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition, 1 Tim. 6. 9.* It's true, temporal Riches consider'd in themselves absolutely, are good, being the Gift of God ; but consider'd relatively, in respect of us, who are so deeply corrupted, they are oftentimes not good, i. e. they are the Occasion of much Sin and Security ; they generally, tho' very unreasonably, swell Mens Pride, and feed their Luxury. I say, it is extremely unreasonable to be lifted up with worldly Riches ; for they can never make us *wise, good or happy* here, or hereafter ; they are but external, accidental, and separable Enjoyments, which make not their Possessors noble or virtuous ; but indeed through our natural Pravity, are apt to debase us ; it's impossible, seeing they are of a gross, elementary, and limited Nature, that they shou'd satisfy the expanded Wishes of a spiritual and immortal Soul. *Eccl. 5. 10. He that loveth Silver shall not be satisfied with Silver.* And as impossible it is that such mean Rubbish should bribe the blessed God, and purchase a Happiness for us in the next Life. *Psal. 49. 8. For the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever.*

I proceed to consider the

6th Thing *propos'd*, which was to shew, *By what Arguments we may be induced to believe in the unsearchable Riches of Christ ?*

And,

1. The holy Scripture proves that Christ is rich in three Respects. (1) as *God* ; hence Christ informs us, *That all the Father hath is his, John 16. 15.* And the Author to the Hebrews calls him, *The Brightness of God's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* (2) *Christ is rich as Man* ; hence he is said to be anointed with the Oyl of Gladness above his Fellows ; and that he

he is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners.

(3) That *Christ* is rich as *Mediator*, hence he is said to be made Heir of all Things, *Heb. 1. 2.* And,

2. The holy Scriptures inform us, that *Christ* as *Mediator*, hath obtained his *Riches* three Ways.

1. By *Donation* from his Father ; hence our Lord instructs us, *Mat. 28.* That all Power is given to him, in Heaven and in Earth.

2. By *Purchase*. *Philip. 2. 8, 9.* And being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name. The blessed Lord Jesus has purchased by the invaluable Price of his Blood, Gifts, Grace, and Glory for his People. *Eph. 1. 3, 11, 14.* Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ : Which is the earnest of the purchased Possession, to the Praise of his Glory. Nay, my Brethren, Christ hath not only bought those Blessings for his People ; but he has by his Blood bought them. *Acts 20. 28.* To feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.

And,

3. By *Conquest* ; the blessed Jesus has by Death destroyed him who had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, *Heb. 2. 14.* The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, has by his Sufferings and Resurrection, bruised the Serpent's Head, i. e. he has broke his Dominion, and taken the Prey from his Teeth ; he has ascended up on high, and led Captivity Captive, and given Gifts to Men, even to the Rebellious. The hellish Legions, as Lightning, are forc'd to fly from, and fall under the victorious Arms of Zion's King, the venerable and all-conquering Lord Jesus.

3. *Reason*, from Scripture, demonstrates the Riches of Christ to be unsearchable, by the following Considerations ;

1. Because he has enriched so many Millions of Souls, since the first Period of Time commenc'd, with the most invaluable and inestimable Jewels. *Rev. 5. 11.* And I beheld,

beheld, and heard the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne: and the Beasts and the Elders, and the Number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands.

2. Because he supports by his Power, and provides by Love, sufficient Food for all the Armies of the Universe, out of the inexhaustible Treasures of his boundless Bounty, Psal. 104.

3. Because he had enough to satisfy divine Justice, which we had wrong'd; and cancel all the Debts, even to Millions of Talents we ow'd to it, (*Eph. 5.*) which all the Riches of the Angels in Heaven, and holy Men that ever have been, are, or shall be on the Earth, put together and multiply'd, to the amount of Millions of Times more, cou'd never have compass'd; because the Debt is infinite, and those are but finite.

To conclude this Head of Discourse, Let it be considered, that the holy Scriptures assert the Riches of Christ to be in their Nature, incomparable, and in their Extent, unfathomable; hence the Observation of Solomon, concerning Wisdom, is truly excellent, (*Prov 3. 14, 15.*) that he is happy who gets it, that its Merchandize is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold. The smallest Grain of true Grace is more valuable than Crowns and Kingdoms, than Mountains of the purest Gold, and richest Pearl; and the Extent of Christ's Riches, is so vast and infinite, that he is able to supply the whole Creation, and yet his Treasures not be exhausted: On this Account we may justly use the Apostle's Exclamation, *Rom. 11. 33. O! the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!*

I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT.

And,

1. If it be the Duty of Gospel Ministers to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ, then such are to be reprov'd either who neglect it, or are discourag'd in it, thro' much Opposition, and many temporal Straits; or perform

form it not in the Order and Manner before express'd ; for as this opposes the Command of God, so it frustrates the Design of their Ministry. And,

2. If the Riches of Christ be so *great* and *unsearchable*, then how *inexpressible* must be the Father's Love, in providing such an allsufficient Mediator for lost Mankind, in whom is treasured up every Thing that is suitable for the Pardon of our Sins, the Supply of our Wants, and the saving of our Souls ? 1 Cor. 1. 30. *Christ Jesus is all in all* ; he is a *Bundle of Myrrh* to his People. Hence is that of the Evangelist, John 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish.* O Brethren ! It is very affecting to consider the unsearchable Depth of the Father's Affection to poor Sinners in this Matter ! For how Self-sufficient was the great Giver ; how unspeakably dear the Relation, and intimate the Union, between the Giver and the Gift vouchsafed ? O Sirs ! there is enough in this to stir up our Wonder and move our Love, if we are not very blind and hard indeed !

3. If the Riches of Christ be so unsearchable, then how surprising is it, that such a blessed and all-sufficient Saviour should *set his Love* upon such mean Dust as any of the Children of Men are ? What are they, but poor deform'd, impotent and contemptible Creatures, starving to Death for want of Bread ? *Rev. 3. 17.* Void of all Beauty, and stain'd with the vilest Deformity, *Isai. 1. 2, 3.* Unable to do any Thing to the Glory of his Name, and the Good of his Kingdom, *Rom. 5. 6.* And in the mean Time fill'd with the strongest Enmity against his Person and Government, *Rom. 8. 7.* And yet is it not amazing, that this rich Redeemer should love such poor base Creatures *better* than the dearest Friends and Relations love one another ! *Rom. 5. 8.* *But God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.* *Isai, 49. 15.* *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child ? yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee.* *John 15. 13.* *Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend.*

Friend ; but Christ hath laid down his Life for his Enemies : *Better* than the best of Men love *themselves* ; for their Love at best is but imperfect, whereas the Love of Christ is perfect : Yea, Christ loves poor Man *better* than the *Angels* ; for he took not on him *their* Nature, but the Seed of *Abraham*, (Heb. 2. 16.) *Better* than Heaven and Earth ; for he left the one, and rejected the Offers of the other for their Sakes ; yea, *better*, in some Respects, than he lov'd *himself* ; he willingly suffer'd himself to be wounded, that we through his Stripes might be heal'd. He pray'd more for Men than for himself as Man, and express'd more Joy at their Welfare than at his own, *John* 17. *Luke* 10. Blessed Lord Jesus ! how stupendous are the Riches ! and how dear the Glories of thy Grace and Love ? It is enough great God ! cou'd we behold it in its naked Beauty, to ravish our Hearts into the deepest Admiration and strongest Affections !

4. If the Riches of Christ be unsearchable, then here is matter of Encouragement and Support to the convinc'd. Poor Sinners ! do your bleeding Hearts tremble within you, through Discouragement ? Do ye doubt whether Christ is able or willing to forgive you, your Sins are so many and so great ? Well, dear Souls ! I am bound to declare to you this Day, the unsearchable Riches of Christ my Lord and Master. My dear Friends ! the holy and precious Lord Jesus is almighty in Power, *able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by him*. If your Sins were as many as there be Stars in the Firmament, as great as Mountains, and as red as Crimson ; he can with one Word blot them out as a thick Cloud ; bury them in the Deeps of his Mercy, like a small Stone in the great Ocean ; and make them white as Snow. And dear Sirs ! His Grace and Love is as unsearchable and free, as his Power is great ! The Inclinations of his merciful Nature, and Declarations of his Word, are full of Pity. *Exod.* 34. 6. He is *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious*. How soon did poor *Ephraim's* moans, pierce the Ear of Christ ; and the Prodigal's Complaints move his compassionate Bowels ! See how readily the
gracious

gracious Majesty stoop'd to pity those poor Penitents, and embrace them in open Arms? Tho' besmear'd with Blood, mingled with bitter Tears; and groaning under a Load of Sin and Guilt! See *Jer. 31.* and *Luke 15.* Was not that a strange Instance of Christ's Love to *Mary Magdalen*, which I hinted before? See the poor Creature, when she was fill'd with a Sense of Christ's Love; how she stands at his Back, washing his blessed Feet with her Tears, and wiping them with the Hairs of her Head! See how her Heart bleeds and breaks with Sorrow, her Face blushes with Shame! See how her Eyes burst forth Fountains of Tears! See how her Lips are blubber'd with passionate Weeping! And what a Mixture of Pity and Love appears in her Aspect! O! I would to God there were many such amongst us. How dear and precious, how compassionate and tender, is the Kindness of Christ to poor Souls? O Sirs! He came from the beautiful Bosom of his blessed Father, to seek and to save that which was lost. With what Care and Love does he gather wandering Sheep into his Fold, he carrys the Lambs in his Arms, and lays them in his Bosom. Dear Brethren! he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. No, he has receiv'd a Commission from his Father to bind up the broken hearted, to make the Captives free; to beautify and comfort sincere Mourners, with the Oil of Joy and Garment of Praise, *Isa. 61.* And he has promis'd to give the weary Rest, when they come to him. *Matth. 11. 28.* Well, poor Sinners, What say ye to a Covenant with Christ this Day? O! can ye keep your Hearts from panting after this rich Redeemer? This infinitely *wise, powerful, gracious, glorious, beautiful, and loving Saviour!* O Brethren! Can the great God give a *richer* Gift than this, which is himself? And can ye receive one more *necessary*? And can any thing be tendered upon more easy and honourable Terms, than the glorious Lord, and his bleeding Love? What have ye, poor Hearts, against a Marriage with this blessed God? *Behold now is the acceptable Time; behold now is the Day of Salvation.* Is not his *Person lovely*, are not his *Benefts pre-*

cious,

rious, his Wisdom deep, his Power great, his Grace and his Love endearing, condescending and glorious?

5. This Subject speaks *great Consolation* to all such as have an Interest in the Riches of Christ; but who are these, and what Consolation does this Subject afford to such? To the first Question I answer, That all that have a Right to the Riches of Christ, have had the following Experiences; by which it is extremely necessary that we examine our selves. And,

1. They have once had a distressing Sight and Sense of Sin, original and actual, and their miserable and lost State because of both, *John 16. 8, 9. Luke 15. 17.*

2. They have had an affecting Discovery of the Riches and Sufficiency of Christ, by the Word and Spirit of God, *2 Cor. 4. 6.*

3. They have had an afflictive Sense of their utter Inability to come to Christ, unless they were taught of, and drawn by the Father, *Acts 2. 37.*

4. They have had an earnest, univerial, transcendant, permanent and insatiable Desire after Christ, and the Riches of his Love, *Psal. 84. 2. Cant. 5 last. Psal 73. 25. Cant. 2. 5. Cant. 5. 4, 5.*

5. They have labour'd with unwearied Vehemence to obtain the Object of their Desires, *Cant. 3.* When the Spouse cou'd not find her Lord upon the Bed, she wandred through the Streets and broad Ways in quest of him; and enquir'd of the Watchmen whether they had seen her Lord, her Love.

6. Such have clos'd with Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, *John 1. 12.*

7. Such have been made to rejoice at their finding of this Treasure, *Mat. 13. 44.*

8. The Thoughts and Affections of such run most freely towards Christ and Heaven: For as our Saviour observes, *where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be also, Mat. 6. 21.* See *Col. 3. 1.* and *Philip. 3. 8, 9.*

9. Such as have those Riches, labour to preserve and increase them, as Men do that have worldly Riches, by a humble, watchful and holy Conversation. He that is in Christ, has crucified the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts.

Lusts. See now, my Brethren, whether ye have had those aforesaid Experiences : If so, then this Subject opens a Spring of great Consolation to you, in all the Difficulties and Sorrows of human Life. Are you poor in temporal Goods, well, this may support and content you, that in Christ ye have Riches worth ten thousand Worlds. Your Husband, who has all Power in Heaven and Earth, will surely supply all your Wants ; and make your Bread and Water sure. He that feeds the Ravens and cloathes the Lilles, will much more supply his Childrens Wants. Are you tempted by Satan, or opposed by wicked Men, remember your Lord was tempted, that he might know how to succour such. Consider him, who endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, least ye be weary, and faint in your Minds. Your Lord is mighty in Power, and easily able to crush your Enemies under your Feet ; and will at length make you more than Conquerers. Have ye wandered from God, and are ye deserted by him ? Remember your Lord is rich in his Love. and glorious in his Grace. Though you have play'd the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return to him, and he will heal your Backslidings: See Isai. 54. 8, 10, 11. *In a little Wrath, I hid my Face from thee, for a Moment, but with everlasting Loving-kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* Dear Brethren ! you can be expos'd to no Difficulty, but what the unsearchable Riches of Christ, afford a Remedy for. He is a *Fountain open'd to the House of David, for Sin and for Uncleanness, Zech. 13. 1. A hiding Place from the Wind, a Covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of Waters in a dry Place, and the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land, Isai. 32. 1.*

But dear Sirs ! Is not there great Grounds to fear, that many of us have not the before-mentioned Characters ? For are not many of you yet in a deep Sleep of Sin and Security, settled on your Lees, and never yet so much as deeply convinc'd of your lost State ? And is not all the Discovery ye have had of the Riches of Christ, only by barren Speculation, through the Force of your natural Understanding ? And are not some

of you, instead of mourning under a Sense of your Impotency to come to Christ, boasting of your free Will, or secretly trusting that ye can commend your selves to God's Favour, by your Works? Are not the Desires of some of you hypocritical, more in Pretence than Reality; or partial, for Christ as a Priest to save you, but not as a King to rule in you and over you in every Thing? Are not your Desires weak, transient, and ineffectual like *Balaam's* Wishes, not flowing from the general Temper of your Hearts, or productive of good Fruits? Are ye not unwilling to close with Christ upon the Terms of Self-denial, and taking up of the Cross? Are not some of you like the Sluggard, whose Desire flays him, because his Hands refuse to labour? O Sinners, are not the Thoughts, Affections and Labours of most of you, chiefly about the Riches of this World? You love the World, and therefore the Love of the Father is not in you; you are of the World, and speak of the World, and therefore the World heareth you. Poor Creatures! don't you see you are Strangers to intimate Communion with God in Christ, and to the Riches of Joy and Solace, which flow therefrom? O Sinners! while ye remain in this State, you are poor, blind, miserable and naked, *Rev. 3: 17*. If you had the Wealth of both the Indies, ye are poor till ye obtain the Grace of Christ. And ye are blind without a Sight of God and your selves. O! if you cou'd but see your Misery, and the Beauty of Christ, you cou'd not keep from hungering after him. And ye are naked without spiritual Raiment; ye are without Ornament and Defence, continually exposed to Shame and Ruin; open to all the dreadful Inundations of divine Revenge: And ye are extremely miserable, being without God, without Hope, and Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, *Ephes. 2: 12*. Accursed by God, and condemned to the Damnation of Hell, *Gal. 3: 10*. *John 3: 19*. This Subject speaks great Terror to all these Sorts of Persons I have but now mentioned. For as the Lord Jesus Christ is rich in Love, and Grace to pardon poor Penitents; so he is rich in Wisdom, Power, Justice and Holiness to punish obstinate Sinners, who

who will not come to him that they might have Life. For as the Psalmist observes, *Who knows the Power of his Anger? According to his Fear, so is his Wrath!* Now the more condescendingly, freely and frequently rich and valuable Mercies are offered to you, the more exceeding heinous by Consequence, is your ungrateful Wickedness, in slighting them! Alas Sinners! this is the present woful Case of many of you. O! how shall you escape, if you continue to neglect this great Salvation? If you harden your Necks against frequent Reproofs, you shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy. Alas for you, poor Creatures, my Heart pities you! Is it not doleful and dreadful, that ye should perish for Thirst by such a full and opened Fountain! that ye should continue in the basest beggery, while the most noble Riches are offered to you, upon the most reasonable Terms, that the Souls of Men can possess or desire? Alas! it will be more tollerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, in the Day of the Lord, than for you, except ye repent. For this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil. Poor Sinners! I must with the utmost Vehemence intreat you, in the Name of the great God, that ye would speedily labour to make sure a Right to the Riches of Christ. *Wherefore do ye spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfieth not? Incline your Ear to Christ, and bear, bear, and your Souls shall live, I ai. 55. 2, 3*

O Sirs! The Riches of Christ are absolutely necessary for your Happiness; without an Interest in them, do what ye can, ye will be but miserable here; (for there is no Peace saith my God to the Wicked) and much more miserable hereafter. O Friends! are not the Riches of Christ of an excellent Nature, universal Use, and everlasting Continuance? But on the contrary, Does not the Fashion of this World pass away? There are three Seasons, when all your worldly Treasures will not be able to help you, *viz.* A Time of Soul Trouble, Death and Judgment; when the great God scourges

your Consciences with a Sense of Guilt; when the Almighty King of *Zion* girds his glorious Sword upon his Thigh, and stabs it into your Souls; or shoots the barbed Arrows of Condemnation from the Bow of his Law, into your guilty Hearts; then all your worldly Riches cannot ease the Smart; for a wounded Spirit who can bear? And much less when ye come to look pale Death in the Face, and shoot the dreadful Gulph of Eternity, what Service can your Wealth or worldly Friends do you then? Alas none at all! What Pleasure can it yield then to look on those Riches, which you have perhaps, sold your Souls to the Devil to purchase? When you must turn your Faces to the Wall, and bid them an everlasting Farewell. O then! one Grain Weight of the Riches of Christ wou'd weigh down in your Esteem, and be better to you than ten thousand Worlds. This would swim with you through the Shipwreck of Death, to the Shore of eternal Glory. And what Benefit can you expect of your Riches at the general Judgment, when the World and all its Works will be burnt up, and you be sifted, trembling and naked before the terrible Bar of Christ! O Sinners! if ye wou'd this Day cast down your rebellious Arms, and submit to the equal Terms of the Saviour's Love, your Sins, how great and many soever they have been, wou'd be freely pardoned; for *Zion's* King is glorious in his Grace: Your Hearts wou'd be comforted, Men and Angels wou'd rejoice; yea, the holy Jesus wou'd be glad! And, dear Sirs! how grateful a Sight wou'd this be to us, whose Office it is to preach the Riches of Christ among you? Ah it grieves us at the Heart! that so many of you make light of this great Salvation! This is heavier to us, God is Witness, than all our Labours and Sufferings: O this! is ready at Times to sink us in Death. Poor Sinners, pity your own Souls! Poor Sinners, pity the Messengers that God sends among you, to make Tenders of the Riches of Christ to you. O let us not have Reason to complain to God and Man, that we labour in vain! Poor Sinners! won't ye shew some Regard to the great God, that has made you, the blessed Saviour that has bought

bought you ! O Sirs, have ye not been ungrateful long enough against the gracious God and merciful Redeemer ? O can ye find in your Hearts to be unkind any longer ! And is there no Hopes, that the Riches of God's Goodness and Long-suffering shall lead you to Repentance ? O Sirs ! how swift are ye carry'd upon the swift Wings of Time, to that eternal Ocean, from which there is no returning ! Before long, the Opportunities of Mercy will quite expire, God will not always strive with you, Christ will not always wait to be gracious to you, and offer you the Riches of his Grace and Love. Ye know not poor Souls, but that this may be the last Offer that ever may be made to you ; this Night, for what you know, your Souls may be requir'd of you ; and if this should be your Case, what a dreadful Condition would ye be in, think ye ? O ! that I could perswade any poor Sinner to embrace the rich and blessed Redeemer ! Dearest Lord ! what Words and Arguments shall I use, and how shall I spread thy precious Net, O compassionate God, and gracious Father ! grant that the blind may see their present Misery, and the unspeakable Riches and dear Glories of thy Grace, that they may so pant after the precious Redeemer, as to consent to his Terms, and embrace his Love. O ! why halt ye poor Sinners, if God be God serve him, but if Baal, then follow him.

But this venerable Solemnity before us, requires that I should more particularly observe,

1. That such as have not experienc'd the foresaid Characters of a true Claim to the Riches of Christ, wou'd not venture to come to the Lord's holy Table, in their present Condition, lest they eat and drink Judgment to themselves. It's unreasonable and preposterous, that such should come to commemorate the Riches of Christ, who have no Right to them.

But,

2. Let such as have those Characters mentioned, and Grace in Exercise, come to the Table of the Lord, in order to commemorate the Riches of his dying Love.

Wisdom hath built her House, mingled her Wine, and furnished

nished her Table, she hath sent forth her Maidens, and crys upon the high Places of the City, who so is simple, i. e. humble, let him turn in hither, come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine I have mingled; forsake the foolish and live, and walk in the Way of Understanding, Prov 9 The Marriage of the Lamb is come, O! let the Bride make her self ready to meet with her Lord, in the following Manner:

1. Endeavour to come to this Feast of fat Things, of Wine on the Lees well refin'd, with *humble Reverence*, because it is the Feast of a King, a Banquet you are unworthy of. If blessed *Paul* look'd upon himself to be the least of all Saints, well may we.

2. With *believing Expectations*; seeing the Riches of Christ's Glory, Grace and Love are unsearchable; let us come with honourable Thoughts of Christ, great Expectations from him, and a believing Dependance upon him, to his holy Table. By this we honour and obey God, and engage him to help and bless us.

3. With *insatiable Desires*. Dear Brethren! the most inestimable Riches are set before us at this holy Solemnity, and shall we not desire them? O! shou'd not our Hearts cry out after God, even after the living God! O Brethren, let us behold that all-wise, all-powerful, infinitely, precious, transcendently glorious, and unspeakably lovely, and loving Lord Jesus! the plain Symbols of whole dear and dying Affection are set before our Eyes, in this Ordinance! and see if our Hearts will not be sick in Longing after him, and our obstinate Bowels move for him! O why shou'd not the Desire of Nations, be the Desire of our Souls! O good God! have Mercy on us, and give us Love stronger than Death, to this blessed Jesus.

4. With *evangelical Resolutions*, to give up our selves to Christ in an everlasting Covenant, and to act up to the Obligations of it, in our future Practice.

But to such as keep back from this holy Ordinance, I would in the Name of Jesus Christ, who is the King of the Church, offer a few Words. Friends, What mean you by this Neglect? Do you pretend to be Christ's
Disciples

Disciples, and yet live in the continual Breach of one of his Laws? If you scorn to own Christ here, how do you think he will own you hereafter, when he comes in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels? If you think you are unprepar'd, why don't you seek Preparation where it may be had? Are not the Riches of Christ unsearchable? But if you have a Mind to go on in Sin, and therefore will not take this Bond upon your Souls? Wo to you, ye are false hearted Hypocrites! And must certainly expect, except ye repent, to be cut asunder by the Sword of divine Justice, *Mat. 24. 51.* But tho' you may shun this sacred Ordinance, yet you cannot escape the *Gripe of Death, or Sentence of the last Judgment, Matth. 25. 41.* O poor Sinners! When you see others admitted to the Table of the Lord, and your selves shut out, it may justly make you think with bleeding Hearts, upon the great Decision Day, when the Sheep shall be separated from the Goats, and blessed by Christ; while the rest are sent away with a Curse to *Tophet*; for *one shall be taken, and the other left; Matth. 24. 40.* I add no more at present; may the great and gracious God, bless his Word for the Good of Souls. *AMEN.*



THE
Great Glory of GOD,
Which is display'd in the
Gospel of CHRIST,

With its
Sanctifying Efficacy,

Upon the
Souls of Men.

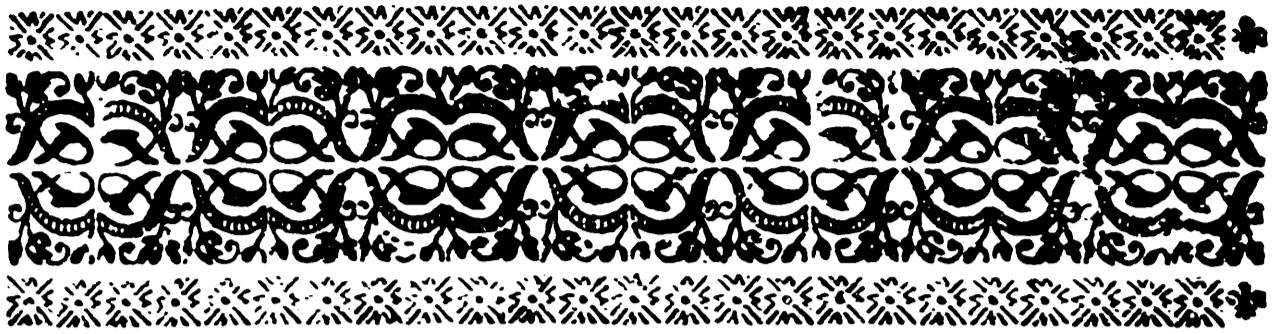
Consider'd in a
SERMON,

Preach'd at
New-Brunswick, August 7. 1737.

Upon the Sabbath Evening immediately after the
Celebration of the holy Ordinance of the LORD'S-
SUPPER.

By *Samuel Blair,*
Minister of the Gospel of CHRIST, at *Shrewsbury*
in *New-Jersey.*

BOSTON: Printed in the Year 1739.



T H E
Glory of the G O S P E L.



2 Cor. iii. 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 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 *Mosaick* Dispensation he calls the *Letter*, the *Ministration of Death*, the *Ministration of Condemnation*, and the *Old Testament* ;

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, thro' 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 Mosaick 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 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 Estate.

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, Verse 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 compleat 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, thro' 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 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

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, enlightned 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 look'd upon, is *the Glory of the Lord*: That is, that 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 it self*. 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 display'd before our Eyes. It's 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

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

1. Because of its great *Clearness*; not only absolutely in it self, 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 vail'd 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 vailing of his Face, so that the Children of *Israel* could not steadfastly 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 thro' a Vail, but we, as in a Glass.

2. 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 altho' a Glass is clearer than a Vail, yet it is more obscure than immediate Vision: Hence says the same Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.*

3. The Gospel is here compared to a Glass because of the exact *Agreement* and *Resemblance*, that is between 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 remark'd 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

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's 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 contain'd 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 enlightened 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 call'd 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 chang'd 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 :

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. 5th of this Chapter he says, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any Thing as of our selves*. 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 Shew of Sincerity in preaching the Gospel.

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

1. That there is *much of God's Glory* revealed and displayed in the Gospel.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Prop. 1. That there is *much of God's Glory* revealed and display'd 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 contriv'd, 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 Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead* : They shew forth the infinite Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and adorable Sovereignty of their great Author : But, O ! 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 that Punishment which his Sin deserved, which Penalty he could fully discharge in no shorter a 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 bro't into a State of Justification as compleat as if he had never sinned. By Sin, also, Man lost the glorious moral Image of God in
which

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 possess'd 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 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 personal 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 propos'd 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 Undoneness by Sin, of the All-sufficiency of Christ alone for their Relief, and so, uniting their Hearts to Jesus Christ by Faith, should

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 abandon'd 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 forever 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 it self, which God has propos'd to answer all these Difficulties, and obtain the Sinner's Happiness. And,

3. The Fitness and Sufficiency of the Mean propos'd 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 our selves plung'd in a Depth of the divine Wisdom that knows no bottom, which our finite Understandings

things can never fathom, and be obliged to use the Apostle's Exclamation, Rom. 11. 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 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 infailibly 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. 10. 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. 19. 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 tho't 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 10, 27, 28. Gal. 5. 3.* And, that the Law condemned to condign Punishment, upon the first Transgression. is as plain, *Gal. 3. 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. 2. 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 devolv'd 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 sustain'd to satisfy the Law, there's no avoiding 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, tho' 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.

Immutability. The Question is not singly, *How shall the Law be answered?* The Reply to this had been easy, The Creature that has sinn'd 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 bro't to issue that will compass both these Ends? Whereby the Sinners 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 Condition was plainly reduced to the last Extremity. Had this one Question been put to Creatures for a Resolution, how long, think you, had it remain'd unanswered? Would it not have struck a profound Silence thro' 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 rack'd 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 crush'd 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 6th Chapter of his Prophecy, the 6th and 7th Verses, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with Burnt Offerings,*

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 desparate ? Must the whole sinful Race infallibly perish for ever without Remedy ? O ! 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 contriv'd 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 says us : So that it justly deserves the Apostle's Epithet, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Without Controversy, says he, great is the Mystery of Godliness ; God was manifest in the Flesh.* When no less a Sacrifice would satisfy the Law, and atone for the Creature's Sin,

the

the eternal Son of God by this strange Union with Flesh offers up himself, a Sacrifice of infinite Value. Heb. 10. 4. 5. *It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats (those Jewish Sacrifices) should take away Sins ; 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 40th 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 Sinner's 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 enjoy'd ; this Condition must be fulfilled, otherwise the promised Life cannot be obtain'd. 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 obtain'd 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. 4. 4, 5.

2. The

2. The Law demanded of the Sinner Punishment for his Disobedience: And this must also be answered before his Happiness can be obtain'd: 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 poenal 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 sustain'd 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 abus'd, by an inhuman and insulting Rabble! What did he suffer in his *Body*! Being scourged with cruel Whips, crown'd with pointed Thorns, pierced thro' with iron Nails, and rack'd upon the cursed Tree. But, O! 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 express'd 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 maintain'd, and the fearful Regard due to it better secured: O 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

Law must this be, which thus *magnifies it and makes it honourable*, as was prophesy'd of our Lord Jesus, *Isa.* 42. 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. O 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 Difficulties which stood in the Way of fallen Man's Recovery, the strange Method which God has propos'd for that End, with its Suitableness and Sufficiency, how it surmounts all the opposing Difficulties, and compasses its designed and invaluable Ends; and, O! 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 Houë, 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 surprizing Pleasure all the Dispensations of God towards his Church in its gradual Advancements to the bright Period of the Redeemer's coming: But, O! 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

Advantages, what low Prostrations were then in Heaven! Adoring and admiring the astonishing Issues of the divine Council! Before I proceed any farther I can't 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 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 dream'd 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 A onement 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, tho' 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

could only be healed by those Stripes which they laid upon him? How strangely has the Lord bro't about Redemption for us! O! 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 Hearts 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 been such a Blot and Defect in the Contrivance, as had marr'd 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, & a new Spirit will I put within you, & 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. 36, 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 Snares and powerful invisible Enemies without them, would not stand, did their Perseverance depend upon their own Management; were they intirely 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 intirely into his own Hand: He is equally *the Author and Finisher of their Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He undertakes to bring them to eternal Glory against all Difficulties, Oppositions, Fears or Snares 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 6. 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.*

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 compleating Act to their Glorification, in raising them up at the last Day. No less worthy are those precious Words of his, John 10. 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 & Truth shall fail. But yet, if they transgress his Laws, and wander away from God they must expect to smart for it. Tho' 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 Darkness 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.* 12. 6, 7. And this is one of the Means he uses for maintaining and advancing their Sanctification, and preserving them to Life eternal. *Verie* 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 display'd in the admirable Method of fallen Man's Salvation: And you see how effectual it is, and consistent in all its Parts; with what admirable *Wisdom* every thing relating to it was concerted in the divine Council. But again,

2. 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

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 it self 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, press'd 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. O ye Christless and un sanctified Sinners! Consider what a God you have 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. 22. 14. Awake, awake, out of your Death-Slumbers, 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

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 debase himself for your Salvation, but will maintain the Rights of his Royalty. O Sinners, tremble at the Tho'ts 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 forever.

3. 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: O 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 Persons according to their Demerit. They had rendred 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! O Sirs, consider, that when Pity and Compassion turned the Ballance, Justice might have done it; and then how miserable had we all been forever, 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. 3. 19.* Well might the Apostle say, *1 John 4. 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 open'd 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 Inference 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 it self an Occasion of shewing forth such Glory.

2. From what has been spoken, you may observe how much clearer Light we now enjoy under the bright Dispensation of the Gospel of Christ, than the Church of God was favour'd with before his coming in the Flesh. You have heard more at this Time, of the Way which God has taken for the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners, tho' from one of the meanest that Christ has employ'd 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. 11. 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 sure they must be very blind who don't discover it. And yet, alas; how many such blind earthly Souls are there; who, tho' 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. O lamentable! Altho' the Vail is taken off the Gospel, it remains still upon their Hearts. O 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 influenc'd and sanctified by it: *Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image. 1. Cor. 1. 2.*

24. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews as a stumbling
G 2 bling

bling-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. 4. 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 to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.

4. You may think with your selves, from what you have heard, how bright and ravishing the Glory must be which the Saints of God shall behold in Heaven, when both Veil and Glass shall be taken out of the way, and they shall see it as it is. *Now we see thro' a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.* All these Things shall be open'd 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 purchased Inheritance, and Presence of their God 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. 1. 16.* Says the blessed Apostle, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* There is a Meiosis in the Words, more intended than express'd ; 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 thro' Christ's Righteousness revealed therein, and the Subject thereof ; for therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith. O ! What

a high Favour is it that we should enjoy the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, as the Apostle calls it, *1 Tim.*

5. 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 represents a crucified Lord Jesus. O 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's 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 sake I shall treat upon them both together without Distinction, in the following Order ;

1. I shall shew you what is meant by being changed into the Image of the Glory of God that appears in the Gospel.
2. 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,
3. I shall shew you how the Holy Spirit effects this Change by the Gospel.

1. 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

noble End the best improved Phil sophy never could attain. It is the great Scope and Design of the whole Gospel, both in its Doctrines and Precepts, to make Sinners 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 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. 31. 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 (tho' 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

* 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 be-

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 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 thro' 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.

fore 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.

Thus

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.

2. 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 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 Complacency of the Will ; so as it no longer resists, but freely complies with their practical Use and Tendency. It's 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 & 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 makes all Things become new, 2 Cor. 5. 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, altho' a Person may be able to furnish himself with Reason

sons 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 thro' the Mediation and Righteousness of the Son of God, will be but a superficial 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, O ! 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* ; O, 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

Salvation from Hell and deserved Wrath, thro' 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 wretched perishing Condition as it is, you would then know how to prize a *Redeemer*, and see a bright Glory in the Gospel, 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 meer Product of the blind Fancies of injudicious and ignorant People, as it is generally deemed by un sanctified 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 our selves, it is to God: For the Love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. 5. 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

formed 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 and Condemnation, which gives it still a farther Advantage to the Production of this Effect. But, in the mean time, we must be careful that we don't 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 our selves. 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. Altho' the Lord requires us to be diligent in the Use of 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

3d. 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, Altho' 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

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. 2. 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 sometimes 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 & 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. 8. 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, thro' 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 altho' 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. Altho' 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 meer 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'm 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. 10. 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

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 wilful 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*, Hof. 4. 6. The dreadful Consequences of Ignorance is expressed by the Apostle, *Eph. 4. 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. 4. 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 Lord, we are changed into the same Image.* The Contemplation of the glorious Truths of Christ admirably

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

enlivens *Grace* and promotes *Holiness* in the People of God. It's 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.

U S E 2. 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 your selves; Has the Truths of God ever had such powerful Influence and Effect upon you? Or, Don't many of you rest contented with a meer 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 Disposition of your Souls must be answerable to the Gospel, so that you may be properly said to be transformed into the same Image. O Sirs, try and enquire faithfully how it is with you in these Respects. There is much depends upon it; either the 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* 1. 13, and 3. 3.

3. I shall now Conclude with a U S E 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. O Sirs, Consider what a deplorable Condition you are in, in which, if you die, you will surely be damn'd to all Eternity. Humble your selves low before the great God, and seek to him Night and Day for his pardoning Mercy in Christ, and renewing Grace. Consider, O 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 perswaded 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 16. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from the dead.* 1 Cor. 4. 15. says the Apostle, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.* James 1. 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, do 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 Glass of his Ordinance, so as to receive the powerful Reflection of its Image upon your selves ? 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

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 cou'd 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.



AN
EXHORTATION
TO
Walk in CHRIST.
IN A
SERMON,

Preach'd at

New-Brunswick, August 8. 1737.

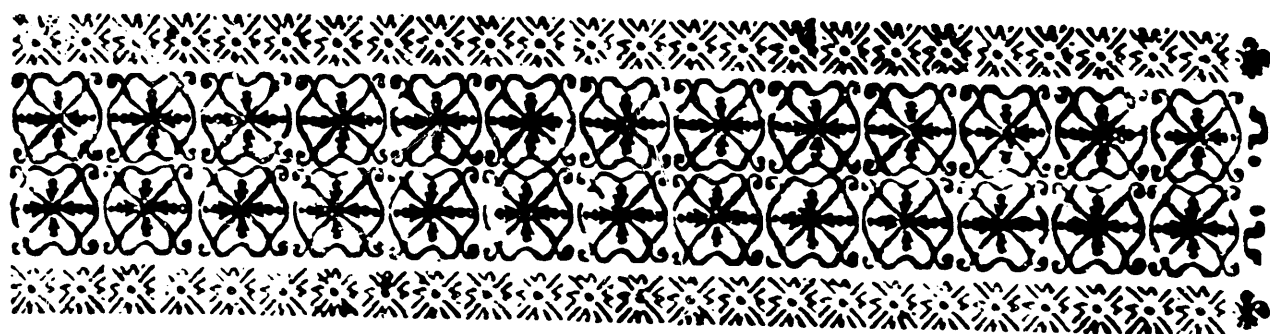
Upon the Monday after the Sacramental Solemnity.

By William Tennent,

Minister of the Gospel at *Freehold* in *New-Jersey.*

Gal. 2. 20. I am crucified with Christ : Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

BOSTON: Printed in the Year 1738.

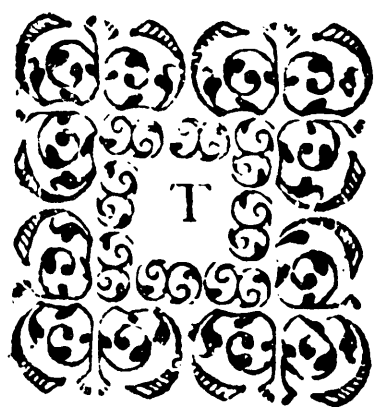


Walking in CHRIST.



COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.



THAT the best of Men may fall into Errors, both in Doctrine and Practice; is a Truth so incontestibly evident, that it cannot be deny'd, by any who are in the least acquainted either with their own Hearts; (in which to their Sorrow, they will find a Root of Bitterness and Unbelief, inclining them to depart from the living God, *Heb. 2. 15. and 3. 12.*) or History, either sacred or human; both which abound with pregnant Proofs of this sad Truth, in the awful Accounts they give of the Slips and Falls of Men whose Sincerity and Integrity is beyond all doubt, *e. g. Noah, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, &c.* So that we may say with *David, Psal. 39. 5. Verily, Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity.*

This our Apostle well knew; and although he was fully perswaded, that the Faith of the Brethren at *Coloss.*

was not feign'd and hypocritical, but true and genuine ; as is clear from Verse 5, yet saw it necessary to exhort them, to cautious Diligence and persevering Progress, in their christian Course, in the Words of our Text, *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* In which we have these three Things, (1.) The *Means* of their Stedfastness pointed to. (2.) The *Manner* in which they ought to be us'd. (3.) An *Argument* to enforce the Exhortation. Of each of these in their Order

And,

1. We have the *Means* of Stedfastness, or Perseverance, mentioned in that Word *walk* : which Expression is metaphorical, and has an Allusion to a Person traveling to some certain Place ; which he will never come at, unless he continues to go forward. So that the Word is to be understood as an Exhortation to constant Progress in Religion. Or as the Apostle otherwise expresses it, *Grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* ; as that without which they could not be able to withstand the beguiling Enticements they should meet with, to draw them from their religious Resolutions, Verse 4.

2. We have an Account of the *Manner* in which this Mean should be used, viz. *in Christ* ; so walk ye *in him* ; i. e.

1. In the Way of his *Commandments*. His Law is the Rule, according to which the whole Life must be squared. *Isai. 8. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak (and act) not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* This is that *sure Word of Prophecy, to which they must give heed* (for Direction, in the Course of their Practice) *as to a Light shining in a dark Place, 2 Pet. 1. 19.* Not offering to undertake any thing, that they cannot see is agreeable to, and approved by the holy Scriptures.

2. In his *Strength* ; not trusting to *themselves* in any Case ; not to their own *Wisdom*, to direct them in any of their Affairs, whether civil or religious ; it being *Foolishness* with God, *1 Cor. 3. 19.* Not to their *Power* to support them in doing the Duties required of them, or

or as a Shield to protect them from the Assaults of Enemies, which they shall undoubtedly meet with in the way of Obedience ; it being but *Weakness* it self. For without him *they can do nothing*, John 15. 5. Not to the *Sincerity* and Firmness of their Resolutions, to carry them on in their christian Course ; for *he that trusteth to his own Heart is a Fool*, Prov. 28. 26. For none of these Things now mentioned, altho' exerted in the best Manner, can Support the Soul under one Onset of the grand Enemy ; therefore the Wise Man advises, Prov. 3. 5, 6. *To trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not upon thine own Understanding. In all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths.* In a Word, To walk in Christ, is to seek wholly to him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, 1 Cor 1. 30. Giving him the Glory of all that you have or are ; as says the holy Apostle, *By the Grace of God, I am what I am.* And doing all things with an Aim to honour him. 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Praise and Glory of God.* But,

3. The *Argument* by which this Duty is enforc'd, is taken from their receiving Christ. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him* : He does not say, that they had only received the *Doctrine* of Christ, but his *Person* also, John 1. 12. Or that they had taken him only as a Saviour, but as a Sovereign and Lord, to rule and govern them. Seeing the *Colossians* had before consented to the Terms of the Gospel, in accepting of Christ as a *Prophet* to instruct them, a *Priest* to atone for them, and a *King* to govern over them ; they were therefore oblig'd by solemn Covenant-Contract, to continue their Subjection to his commanding Authority ; as well as entire Dependance upon his Merit and Influence. The Apostle not only urges the Necessity of their walking in Christ, because they had receiv'd him ; but also of doing it, after the same manner, as if he had said, *With the same Seriousness, Humility, Esteem and Resolution, with which ye at first received*

Christ, ye should *continue* to walk in him; for he is *now* as precious as ever.

D O C T R I N E.

That it is the Duty of all those that have received the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk in him.

The Doctrine needs no Proof, it being the Words of the Text. In speaking to which, I shall (God willing) observe the following Method. Namely,

1. I shall enquire, *How every one that has Christ, does receive him?*
2. Shew, *When Persons may be said to walk, so as to comply with the Design of the Text.*
3. Shew, *The Advantages of this Way of walking.*
4. *Apply the whole in some practical Uses.*

I return to the

1st Thing *propos'd*, which was to enquire, *How every one that has Christ, does receive him?*

And,

In *general*, They receive him as he is *offer'd in the Gospel*; for none shall have him otherwise. The *Terms* he hath already *fix'd* unalterably, for he is a God that *changes not*: You may read them, Mat. 10. 37, 38. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* The Evangelist *Luke* *proposes* the same *Terms*, Chap. 14. 26, 27. And *peremptorily* *excludes* all that have not *comply'd* with them, from being *Disciples* of Christ. Read the Text, dear Brethren! And try yourselves by it, whether or no ye have gone so far? As that the Love ye bear to Father, Mother, Wife, Children, yea to your own Life, is so much short of that Love ye have to God, that when compared with it, it appears as Hatred? And whether ye are deliberately
and

and habitually resolv'd to forsake these when call'd to it, as willingly as a Man abandons a Thing he hates? Now, if it is not so with you, I assure you, in God's Name, that you neither are, or ever can be (so continuing) Christ's Disciples, or have an Interest in him.

But particularly,

1. They receive him with *Understanding*.

1. Of *themselves*; of their own Undoneness, both by Nature and Act; as the poor Prodigal, Luke 15. 17. *Behold I perish for Hunger*; of their utter Inability to help themselves out of this Condition by all the Prayers, Tears, or other Duties they either have, or can perform; but that instead thereof, they run more in Debt to injur'd Justice; for, *when we have done all these Things, we must say, we are unprofitable Servants*, Luke 10. 17.

2. With Understanding of the Necessity, Suitableness, and Excellency of *Jesus Christ*, for their Relief, out of that damnable State, into which by Sin they had brought themselves. Act. 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name given under Heaven, among Men, by which we must be saved*. Without this Knowledge, both of Christ and themselves, no Man can receive him as a Saviour; and let them speak of him never so well, they have not an Interest in him; for we must *hear and learn of the Father, before we come to Christ*, John 6. 45.

2. They receive him with real *Sincerity*; and unfeigned Faith, 1 Tim. 1. 5. It is from *Necessity* and not out of Compliment, that the poor Soul receives him; their Case being like the Manslayer under the Law, who was at a Distance from the City of Refuge, under the hourly Expectation of a mortal Stroke, from the Hand of the Blood-revenger; with what eager Haste and unwearied Travel, would he post into the Sanctuary for Shelter, lest he should fall a Prey to the Destroyer's Rage? So it is with them that receive Christ; they see Justice pursuing of them for Satisfaction, for the Wrong done to God; and are really afraid that it will overtake them, before they are interested in a Saviour: This, O this! makes the Soul solemnly serious, in the Act of Reception!

But,

But,

3. They receive him *wholly*, in *all* his Offices, as he is a Prophet, Priest and King : Nay, they are convinced, that unless he had been so qualified, he wou'd not have answered as a Saviour for them, because they labour under a *threefold* Difficulty, *viz.* Of Ignorance, Guilt and Weakness ; each of which grievously presses them, and from which they groan for Deliverance. It don't satisfy the truly Godly, to have Sin pardoned ; unless its Power be broken, they have no Ease. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death ?* Neither will this satisfy, unless they are taught how to depart themselves for the future ; therefore does the Psalmist pray, *Psalm. 81. 11. Teach me thy Way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy Truth* But Hypocrites are not so ; if they cou'd get Christ to save them from the bottomless, burning Lake, which they justly fear, (some of them) will be their everlasting Dwelling-place, they could easily dispense with his prophetic and kingly Offices. As for their *Ignorance*, it never much troubled them ; they being *wise in their own Conceit*, as is the Fool or Staggard, *Prov. 26. 16.* Or, if their Ignorance be detected, then they please themselves with the Abuse of, *Mat. 12. 48. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.* But say they, I have but *little*, therefore *much* won't be required of me. Were those Persons *Ideots*, or *Heathens*, there might be more said for them ; but as they are neither, their Consequence is false ; if they were *Ideots*, they could not form a *Syllogism* ; and if *Heathen*, they wou'd not be able to quote the aforesaid Text. But however unreasonable this Way of arguing is, it serves to keep them from Christ, as a *Prophet*. But lest any of my Hearers should continue to bolster themselves up in their Ignorance, by an Abuse of the aforesaid Text, I wou'd offer a Word more upon it : *Unto whomsoever*, *i. e.* according to the Measure of Understanding that he gives us, and Opportunities to improve this Power, in obtaining divine Knowledge ; such is the *Increase* he requires us to make ; for tho' Knowledge be a Gift of God, yet it is given

in the Way of Means, and not otherwise ordinarily ; therefore such as do neglect to improve Opportunities offered them, are utterly inexcusable. *Isai. 27. 11 For this is a People of no Understanding ; therefore the Lord that made them, will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour.* Neither do Hypocrites desire Christ as a King from their Hearts, to rule over them, entirely ; no, right Eyes, and right Hands are too dear to them to pluck out and cut off for his Sake. In the mean time, There is none more full of Lip-Devotion than they ; they cry, *Hail Master, and Lord, Lord !* But it's all but a meer Sham and Court-Compliment ; for, *they will not have him to rule over them ;* and so not taking a whole Saviour, they have no Saviour at all.

4. They receive him as their *only Saviour* ; rejecting all things in Point of Dependance, but him ; *Acts 4. 12.* and this they do deliberately, having sufficiently try'd the Worth and Weight of all their Priviledges and Performances ; (which probably they were wont to value highly) and found them of no more Worth to their Justification, than Dung and Dross. Then do they desire with holy *Paul, Phil. 3. 9.* to be found in him, *not having their own Righteousness which is of the Law : but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God through Faith.* But it is time, I should proceed to shew, *When Persons may be said, to walk so, as to comply with the Design of the Apostle,* in our Text, Which is the

2d Head propos'd to be spoken to ; now this they may be said to do,

1. When they walk in the Way of God's *Commandments*, with Diligence and Activity ; making Religion their chief Business and Employ ; that whatsoever is neglected *this is followed.* *Matth. 6. 33. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness,* i. e. first in the Order of Time, in the Morning of your Life. *Eccl. 12. 1. Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth ;* and first in Point of Dignity ; as that which is infinitely more valuable than all other things. In respect of *Diligence*, it should

should be sought after with the greatest Application, and Intention of Mind: Thus the Godly are said to *meditate in the Law of God, Day and Night*, Psal. 1. 2. All things sublunary, ought to be sought after with Indifference, when compar'd with that Pains us'd in Religion. For so advises the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7. 30. to enjoy, *as if they possess'd not*, &c. But alas! This is ordinarily practised the backward Way. They pray, as if they prayed not; hear, as if they heard not, &c. A Spirit of Indifference runs through all the Veins of their religious Performances; yea, while they are burning hot in Pursuit of the World, they are cold as a Stone in the Service of God. These Hypocrites the Lord complains of, *Matth. 15. 7, 8.* Which Passage I pray you to read at your Leisure, and try your selves by it, that you may not go down to the Pit with a Lie in your right Hand, thinking you serve God, when you do but play the Hypocrite, in complimenting him with good Words; while your *Hearts run after your Covetousness* ordinarily, and that without Trouble and Grief for it. If this be the Case of any of you, (as I fear it is of many in this Assembly) the Lord tells you as particularly, as if he had mention'd you by Name, in that forecited Text, that you are but rotten hearted Hypocrites; and therefore none of those that walk according to the Exhortation in our Text.

2. When they go on in the Duties of Piety with *Freedom and Cheerfulness*. Psal. 40. 8. taking great Delight in the Ways of God, esteeming them infinitely more eligible than the best of all created Comforts, as did holy David, Psal. 19. 10. *More to be desired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey Comb.* As real Holiness is more valuable to the enlightned Mind, than the finest Gold, so it is sweeter to the renewed Taste than Honey from the Comb. What an extatic Rapture did the Psalmist seem to be in, when he was desired to go to God's House? Psal. 122. 1, 7. *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the House of the Lord;* and in Psal. 73. 28, he expresseth his Satisfaction in, and Advantage by it; *It is good for me to draw near to God.* But, on the other Hand,

Hand, Such as are ordinarily drawn to secret, private, or publick Worship involuntarily, rather counting it a Burthen than Delight ; such the Language of whose Soul is as Amos 8. 5. *When will the new Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn, & the Sabbath, that we may set forth Wheat, &c.* All such as count the Service of God a Weariness, and Excuse, to neglect the Duties of Religion ; may thereby know themselves to be Slaves and not Sons, else their Obedience wou'd not be of Constraint, but free.

3. Persons may be said to comply with the Exhortation, when they act in Religion *deliberately*, i. e. when their religious Progress, is the Effect of due Consideration and Choice. Psal. 119. 30. *I have chosen the Way of Truth ; thy Judgments have I laid before me.* i. e. I have thoroughly weighed the Advantages, that would ensue a right following of thy Ways, with the Disadvantages ; and found that cleaving to God was beneficial and reasonable, therefore I was not soon beat off from my Duty. Verse 31. *I have stuck unto thy Testimonies.* The Want of this, is one Cause why so many apostatize from their Profession, they inconsiderately took it up, not counting what it would, or might Cost them ; and as soon lay it down rather than suffer for it ; as says our Lord, Mark 4. 17. *Afterwards when Persecution or Affliction ariseth for the Words sake, immediately they are offended.* And that there are Multitudes of these inconsiderate Souls under the Gospel, who take up their Religion only by Custom, Education, or some good Mood, is clearly evident, not only by the many sad Instances of Persons Apostacy from the precious Doctrines and pious Practices which they formerly adher'd to ; but also by the Inability of many (who have not yet made such woeful Shipwreck) to render *a Reason of the Hope that is in them*, although it be a Duty commanded, 1 Pet. 3. 15.

4. Such as walk in Christ, are *constant* in their religious Performances ; the general Tenor of their Life being spent this Way. Some there are who serve God by Fits and Starts ; at a *Sacrament* Season you shall hardly see any Body more zealous and fervent in Duty, or on the *Sabbath* ; but so soon as the Task is done, (for so they

they esteem Attendance upon God in his Ordinances) they are easy, and so lay down their Watch, and return to their old Trade of Sinning again. Fear of Punishment drives them to Worship, but does not Change their Hearts; therefore they return to their old *Dalilah's* until the next publick Occasion; and so they go on in a continued Vicissitude of Duty and Sin, not considering that *if they regard Iniquity in their Hearts; the Lord will not hear their Prayers*, altho' God himself has taught them so, *Psal. 66. 18.* Is there any such *Ambo-Dexters* in this Congregation, who act in the aforesaid Manner? If there be, I assure them, be they who they will, that they rather walk in Satan, than in Christ. Hence the Apostle, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* directs his Brethren, to *be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*; and indeed, *If the Case be otherwise, the last State is worse than the beginning*, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* But, *If we are faithful to the Death, we shall receive a Crown of Life*, *Rev. 2. 10.* But not to insist,

5. They that walk in Christ, are *Progressive* in their Religion; they go forward in their Journey *Zion-ward*; or as the Apostle expresses it, *2 Pet. 3. 18.* they *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; they get more Power both to do Duties, and subdue Sins; more Wisdom to serve God in every Relation. In a Word, They do not rest in any Attainment, how great soever it may seem to be; for, by doleful Experience, they have learn'd how deceitful their Heart is, and therefore *fear least a Promise being left, of entering into rest, they should seem to come short of it*, *Heb. 4. 1.* Neither is their Fear unactive (as in the Wicked) but proves effectual, to make them *press toward the Mark of their high Calling, diligent to add to their Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge*, --- *2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8.* This is, *walking in Christ*; but if by your Religion you don't grow wiser and better, but are like the Door on the Hinges, (which though it opens and shuts, never moves out of the Spot) going to Duty and returning from it, without getting more Conformity to God, you have

have great reason to believe you never knew Christ, and so never did walk, as you are required in our Text.

But I proceed to the

3d general *Head*, which is to shew, *What are the Advantages of this way of walking.*

And,

1. It is a *plain Way*; it is so clearly chalk'd out, that he who runs may read it. Our good God hath so suited his Directions to the meanest Capacities, that all such who once get into the Way of Wisdom, tho' they are *weak*, yea *Fools*, yet they shall not err, i. e. for want of Instruction. Isa. 35. 8. *And a high Way shall be there, --- And it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the Unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those, the wayfaring Men, though Fools, shall not err therein.* The Way of Sin is *crooked*, Psal. 125. 5. but this is *strait and easy*. Matth. 11. 30. *For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light.* So that tho' the wisest are sometimes puzzled, it is not so much owing to the Way, or Want of Directions in it, as to their not attending to, or regarding of the Directions propos'd in the divine Word.

2. It is a *comfortable Way of Walking*. Prov. 3. 17. *Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* Now, there are these things, that make it truly so,

1. They have the blessed *Spirit*, who is the *Comforter*, for their constant Companion. John 14. 16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* And can there be any thing more comfortable, than to be bless'd with such an Associate? Who enlightens their dark Understandings, dissipates their distressing Fears, and guides them in all the Difficulties they meet with in their Way. No surely!

2. The holy *Scriptures* conduce to make walking in Christ comfortable. 1 John 1. 4. *These things are written, that your Joy may be full.* And as this is the End for which they were given, so God makes them to answer it compleatly. O the unspeakable Satisfaction that the gracious Soul finds in them! For they are a *Light*

to his Feet, and a Lamp to his Paths. They deter him from Sin, and excite him to Duty. Yea, the good God oftentimes by the Promises, as Conduits, conveys Soul-refreshing Cordials, to his poor fainting People ; by which their withered and almost dead Souls are refresh'd as with new Wine, and quickned in their Duty ; as saith holy *David*, Psal 119. *This is my Comfort in mine Affliction, that thy Word hath quickned me.* This, O this ! makes them sweeter to the Godly, than Honey and the Honey Comb, and more to be desired than Gold, yea much fine Gold ; for they are the Joy of the Heart. Jer. 15. 16. *Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart.*

3. The holy *Ordinances* make it exceeding comfortable, to walk in Christ, this being the End for which they were instituted ; whether (1.) *Prayer* ; What Tongue can express that Satisfaction, which arises from the right Performance of this Duty ? For by it the true Christian is both honour'd and eas'd. The *former*, in that he who is but a Worm, yea, less than a Worm, is permitted to speak to the great and infinitely glorious God, and that at all Times, and in all Places without Exception. The *latter*, in that he speaks to one, who he knows is both willing and able to help him ; for *his Ears are ever open to his People's Crys*, Psal. 34. 15. Is it not a Comfort to be permitted to speak to the beloved of your Souls ? To ask a Supply of your Wants, and Complain of all your Sorrows ? This is the Priviledge of all real Christians, they may come to their Father's Throne, with a filial Freedom ; a holy, humble Boldness, *Heb.* 4. 6. By this they are often so freed from their Distresses, that they are with holy *Hannah*, no more sorrowful, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. Or (2.) *Praise* : This being the Work of Angels, cannot but be very comfortable to them ; for in it they *make a joyful Noise, to the God of their Salvation*, Psal. 95. 1. But this is better felt than express'd. However, Brethren, the Time would fail me to speak of the Comforts, which arise from a right Attendance upon all divine Ordinances ; how he pours out his Spirit in *Baptism*, makes himself known in breaking of Bread at
his

his holy *Supper* ; warms the Heart by *Christian Conference*, and inflames the Affections by pious *Meditations* ; for, *while they muse, the Fire burns*, Psal. 39. 3. As also, how useful the *Sabbath* is to such as fear God, it unbends their Minds from worldly Pursuits, draws their Hearts out to God, as well as fits them for the Dutie of the Week following ; not to mention the inward Satisfaction they have in it, for indeed it's their *Delight*, Isai. 58. 13. The Sabbath is doubtless rendered the more delightful, by the Ministers of the Gospel, whose Work it is therein to *preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Light to the blind, and to set at Liberty them that are bruised*, Luke iv. 18. As also to *say to those that are of a fearful Heart, be strong*, Isai. 35. 3, 4. These Things consider'd, clearly prove that walking in Christ is comfortable beyond compare. But,

3. It is a *profitable* Way of Walking. For,

(1.) They are freed from the Soul-damning *Obligation* to *Justice*, with which they were bound, (for the Law hath concluded all under Sin) so that there is an open Defiance bid to charge them with a Crime, Rom. 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's elect, it is God that justifies. And seeing the Judge justifies, who can condemn them ?* None surely ! So that though the wicked (as alas they do to their own Hurt !) labour to blacken their Characters by notorious Untruths ; which they maliciously report of them, and anathematize them as the most execrable of Mankind ; deserving to be drove from Men, to dwell with *Nebuchadnezzar* among the Beasts ; yea, sentence them as those that shall dwell with Devils and damned Ghosts. Yet God shall pronounce them just to the Confusion of their Adversaries.

(2.) They have the Profit of *Friendship* to God. Joh. 15. 14. *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And this Tye of Friendship, which is between God and Believers, is of the strongest Nature, as that between the Father and his Children ; 2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Between the Husband and his Wife,

Isai. 54. 5. *Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name.* Between Brethren, John 20 17. *Go to my Brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* Now, Is not this an Advantage to be so related? For thereby they are enabled to address him with Boldness, for a supply of all their Wants: And nothing is more reasonable, than that Children should go to their Father, who is able and willing to help them, and *cast all their Care upon him, who careth for them,* 1 Pet. 5. 7. Again, surely it is very beneficial to be wedded to one, who is sponable for their Debt, for thereby they are freed from the Demands of the Law, it not being the Wife's Business to pay the Debts: After this Manner the Christian is free in Christ; and, *if the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed,* John 8. 36. Now, who wou'd not walk in Christ?

(3) They have Peace, John 14. 27. *Peace I have with you, my Peace I give unto you, not such a Peace as the World gives, give I unto you.* (1.) Peace with God, Col. 1. 21. (2.) Peace with your Neighbour; for altho' they are hated by others, yet they do what in them lies to live peaceably with all Men. (3.) Peace in their Consciences; which is so comfortable, that it causes those that have it, to rejoice, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, even the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World.* As nothing is more tormenting and distracting than a guilty Conscience, so on the other Hand, nothing is more sweet and comfortable, than Peace of Mind; for, *if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God,* 1 John 3. 21.

(4.) Such as walk in Christ are favour'd with the earnest of their Inheritance; or as the Apostle words it, *the Glory to be revealed in them.* 1 John 5. 15 *These things have I written unto you that believe, --- that ye may know that ye have eternal Life.* And this is nothing else but Canaan's Clusters, or the first Fruits of that glorious Harvest, which they are to reap eternally, with *the Fulness*

of Joy in God's Presence ; at whose right Hand are Pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11. To such as order their Conversation aright, will be surely shewn the Salvation of God, Psal. 50. But not to insist, they are favour'd with all things that are necessary for their Comfort, in Body, and Soul, in Life, and at Death, for Time, and Eternity. For saith our blessed Lord, John 6 35. *I am the Bread of Life : He that cometh to me, shall never Hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never Thirst.* Now, seeing that walking in Christ, is so plain, comfortable, and beneficial a Way of Walking ; then surely, well might the Apostle exhort to it, as in our Text ; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Thus much for the doctrinal Part of the Discourse ; I therefore proceed to the IMPROVEMENT ;

And,

1. For Information. Is walking in Christ so comfortable ? Then this Doctrine serves to refute the false Notions of those, who industriously Labour to represent Religion, as a *dull* and *melancholy* Business ; only fit for those who are become unable to Taste the Pleasures of Sense ! And although such as do so represent it, may pretend to be the *Wits* of the Age, yet they are really but *Fools*, and rather discover their Ignorance of, and Enmity against God and Holiness, than their Knowledge in such Discourses ; for Wisdom's Ways are *Ways of Pleasantness*. -- How such Persons, as are false Witnesses against the Way of Truth, shall escape the righteous Judgments of God, without a very speedy and thorough Repentance, I know not ! For by this they reflect immediate Dishonour upon Christ who is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* : and like the old *Pharisees*, neither enter in themselves, nor suffer other poor Souls, that would, to enter.

2. It informs us, That real Comfort is only to be had, in being truly and unfeignedly holy or religious ; for, as says the Psalmist, *In the keeping of thy Commandments, there is great Reward*, Psal. 119. 11. But on the contrary, the Apostle Paul observes, Rom. 2. 8, 9. *Unto them that are Contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but*

obey Unrighteousness ; Indignation, and Wrath ; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

The 2d USE is of *Examination* ; whether or no ye have received Christ according to the doctrinal Description of it, viz. with *Understanding, Sincerity, Wholly, Only*, expecting Salvation by none other but him ? Try yourselves deliberately by these Things ; and if you find you have not, (as I believe it is the sad Case of many in this House) I must tell you that you have refused him ; for he has been fairly offered to you, and so you are miserable, not only in Want of Christ Jesus, the most excellent of all Mercies, that others enjoy, but for your refusing you are expos'd to eternal Damnation. John 12. 48. *He that refuseth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him : The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last Day, (or Day of Judgment.)* For, *he that believeth not, or receiveth not Christ, (which are equivalent Terms) is condemned already,* John 3. 18. *Yea, the Wrath of God is already upon you, Verse 36.* That Wrath which will as surely be the Death and Damnation of your Souls, as his Favour is their Life and Salvation ; this you have incurr'd by the Breach of his Laws, and inflam'd by rejecting the only Remedy provided for perishing Souls ; this Wrath is treasured up for you against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. But on the contrary, If there be any here (as I hope there are) who have received the blessed Lord Jesus, ye are told your Duty in this precious Text, *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

The which, that you may the better do, I shall humbly propose to your Consideration, a few *Directions*, which may the good God grant you Hearts to observe, and practice. And,

1. Labour after the Exercise and Increase of *Love* to the Lord Jesus Christ. Love is so necessary that none can walk with Christ without it. Amos 3. 3. *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed ?* This the Apo-
stle

file well knew, and therefore he exhorts the *Ephesians*, to walk in Love, as Christ had loved them, and given himself for them: If this Grace be in you and abound, it will make you abundant in Doing, and patient in Suffering for Christ's sake. Thus it was with *Jacob* for his beloved *Rachel*, Gen. 29. 20. And much more so would it be with you, if that holy Fire was kindled and encreased in your Breasts. No Labour, how hard soever it is, you will stop at for him; no Suffering will be accounted painful, nor Life it self dear to you, if you can but win him. When Christ is the Soul's Treasure, the Heart is with him, and this necessarily produces a heavenly Conversation; the which as it is the Glory of every Christian, so it yields him inexpressible Comfort in his own Mind. For, *The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever*, *Isai.* 32. 17. But on the other hand, If Love be not exercis'd, then God's Worship will be wearisome to you, so that your Hearts will devise Excuses to neglect, or slightly perform it; and then will Sin appear small, so that you won't watch against it as formerly: And thus, if Mercy prevent not, ye will fall to the Scandal of your holy Profession, and the wounding of your own Souls. And in order to excite your Love, it will be necessary to think frequently and seriously upon the personal and mediatorial Excellencies of Christ, as well as his communicate Goodness to you: Consider what he is in himself; what he has done, and suffered for you; and what he has conferr'd upon you.

2. Keep a strict *Watch* over your Hearts. For,

(1.) it is notoriously deceitful, therefore not to be trusted by any wise Man; it being the Epithet of a *Fool* to do so, *Prov.* 28. 26. Yea, How often does it prove as a deceitful Bow, *Psal.* 78. 57. Which tho' it seems as if it wou'd send the Arrow to the Mark, yet drops it at the Foot of the Archer; after this manner does the Heart deceive by seeming Sincerity, when in the mean Time it's desperately wicked, *Jer.* 17. 9. For the Prevention of which, be very watchful lest you be cheated at last, and so ruined thereby.

(2.) It ought to be watched, because it is the Fountain of Action, out of it are the Issues of Death, and the Issues of Life ; and according as it is, whether holy or impure, such are the whole Streams of the Conversation, as saith our blessed Lord, *Luke 6. 45.* according to the *abundant Treasure* of the *Heart* the *Mouth speaketh* ; therefore, look to it, least there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.

3. Shun *all Sin*, yea the very *Appearance* of Evil, *1 Thes. 5. 22.* If you do not this, your walking in Christ is only imaginary, and not real ; for he has no Communion with *Belial*, nor Fellowship with the Works of Darkness. As all Sin in general is faithfully and carefully to be shun'd without Exception ; so these particularly,

(1.) Undue Thoughts of God and Religion ; either that he is severe in afflicting of you, or regardless of your afflicted Condition, neither suffer your selves to think, that the kind God is an austere Master, reaping where he has not sowed ; or that he will suffer the impenitent Sinner to pass unpunished, how secretly soever he may hide his Wickedness : For by these and the like Ways of conceiving of God, he is grievously wrong'd. Beware also of thinking or speaking of *Religion* as a melancholy Business, admitting of no Comfort or Pleasure ; or that in the Practice of it, you shall meet with no Trouble : If you represent it in any of these Colours, you wrong it ; for as there is a real Pleasure in it, *Prov. 3. 17.* so also upon the heavenly Road, you shall pass through *Tribulations*, and those not a few, *Acts 14. 22.*

(2.) Carefully guard against *Unbelief* ; and that both of the *Promises* and *Threatnings* of God ; it being very detrimental to walking with Christ ; for as the *one* detters from Sin, so the *other* excites to Duty. If we could believe that walking in Christ is so comfortable, as it is represented to be by the Promises of the Gospel ; and that departing from God was a Thing so evil and bitter, as it is reformed to be, by the Threatnings of the Law ; surely we wou'd be more careful how we walked ; but neither being believ'd, are disregarded, as fabulous ; and thus

thus Unbelief as it is has done, so it continues to ruin poor Sinner ; and as such, ought to be shuned, as a most destructive and Soul-damning Evil.

(3.) Labour to keep your Heart from *loving the World*, or the Things of the World ; for, *If ye love the World, the Love of the Father is not in you*, 1 John 2. 15. This Sin has ruin'd many fair Professors : It caus'd *Demas* to forsake his Profession, 2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having lov'd this present World*. And this made *Judas* to sell his Master and Lord ; yea, and if it gets Possession of your Hearts, it will cause you to do both ; therefore shun it

(4.) Shun all manner of *Uncleanness*, in Heart, Speech and Action ; as that which is inconsistent with and destructive to Walking in Christ. 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Be not deceived neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, shall inherit the Kingdom of God*. Therefore, I beseech you, dearly beloved Brethren, that you *abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. Say to the first Motions of it, as did a holy, tho' tempted *Joseph*, *How can I do this great Wickedness and sin against God ?* Yea, let it not be once nam'd among you, as becometh Saints.

(5.) Shun *Cowardice* in the Cause of God ; for it is a Dishonour to him, not to be own'd in the most trying Times : This we are guilty of, when we cease to do those Duties he has required of us, for fear of Abuse by those we live among ; as if he wanted either Power or Goodness, to protect us in his Service ; either of which to say, is blasphemous, in the highest Degree : And as it is dishonouring to God, so it is destructive to them, in whom it prevails. Rev. 21. 8. *But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their Portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone*.

(6.) Shun *Confidence* in your own Power or Goodness : This is fatal to the Soul ; for by it they are kept off from Dependance upon God, who is their alone Stay and Support. To deter you from this, remember *Peter* ; who, altho' he thought he cou'd die for Christ, was beat off from following him, by the Breath of a Servant Girl.

4. Study to *know the Scriptures*. Search these holy Oracles, and treasure them up plentifully in your Memories, that you may by them, as a Sword, be able to repell your Adversaries.

5. Be often at the Throne of Grace. *Pray without ceasing*; for the Lord will be enquir'd of, for all those Things you need; and take Care that ye pray with Humility, Faith and Fervor, else ye need not think to speed.

But to conclude, dear Brethren! I need not tell you, that the Eyes of Men and Angels are upon us, for *we are*, saith the Apostle, *a gazing-stock to Angels and to Men*; some are watching that they may find something whereby they may reproach us and the Way of Truth professed by us; and others that they may learn by our Example, to walk in Christ: In both which Respects a Fall will be very hurtful; not to mention the Hurt we shall do thereby to our own Souls, and Dishonour to God, whom we are bound, by the most solemn Covenant-Obligations, to glorify. Therefore, Let us watch and be sober, walking as Children of the Day; for our Enemy goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; from whom that you may be delivered, Let the God of Peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will; working in you, that which is well pleasing in his Sight; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. *AMEN.*



THE
D U T Y
OF
Self-Examination,
Considered
IN A
S E R M O N,

On 1. Cor. II. 28.

Preach'd at

Maiden-Head in New-Jersey,

October 22. 1737.

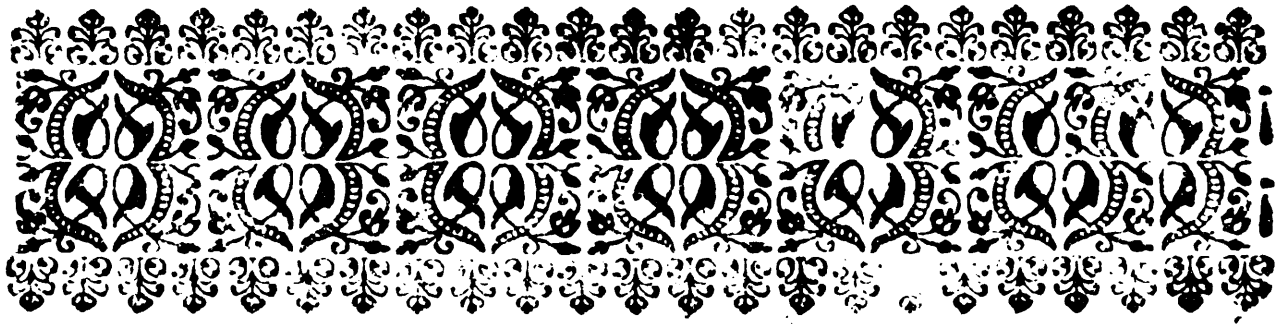
Before the Celebration of the LORD'S-SUPPER.

By Gilbert Tennent, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel at *New-Brunswick.*

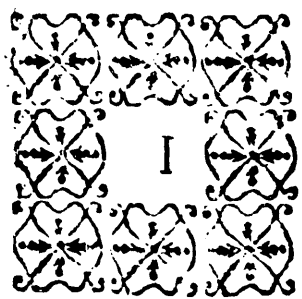
2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith ; prove your own selves : Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates.

B O S T O N : Printed in the Year 1739.



THE
P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,



It is a lamentable Consideration ! that Men should be so curious in the Search of other Sciences, while in the mean time they neglect the Search and Study of their own Hearts ; which is notwithstanding of more Importance to us, than all the rest.

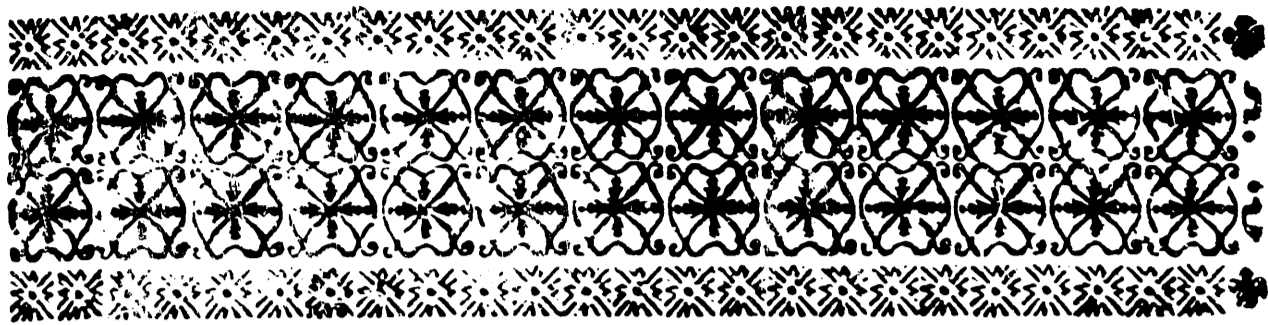
But the principal Cause of this unaccountable Conduct, is the necessary Uneasiness which such an Inspection occasions. Many would rather run the dreadful Hazard of eternal Ruin, than suffer a little temporary Pain and Sorrow. They think themselves safe (or act as if they were so) if they can but banish from their Minds the Thoughts of that Destruction they deserve, and are persisting to. But what can be the Tendency of this stupid Indolence, but to secure and highten their everlasting Damnation ? Whether ye believe it, and think of it or no ; the Threats of the just God will be executed upon you, and Death and Hell hastens to embrace you with their Iron Arms, except ye repent ! It's dreadful to Consider, How many Professors live contentedly in the
dark

dark as to the Knowledge of their State towards God ; for many Years. This I take to be a sufficient Sign of a damnable Condition, without any further Enquiry. Until we know our Disease and Danger, is it probable that we should, with any suitable Earnestness, seek a Remedy. This Consideration, methinks, should stir us up to examine our selves, and especially when we wou'd approach the holy Table of the Lord ; lest coming unworthily, we eat and drink our own Damnation. To prevent which, I have compos'd and publish'd the following brief Discourse, which I offer to the Reader's Consideration, and divine Benediction.

G. Tennent.



The

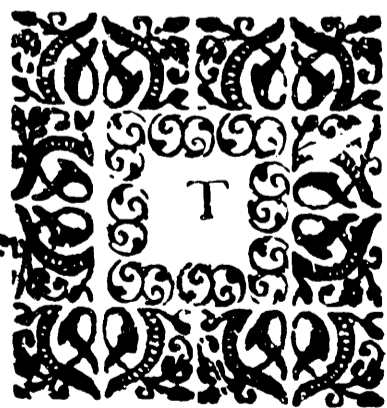


THE
D U T Y
O F
Self-Examination.



I C O R. xi. 28.

*But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that
Bread, and drink of that Cup.*



THE Apostle from the 17th to the 22d Verse, detects the *Corinthian Irregularities and Abuses* respecting the holy Sacrament. Two Things he charges them with especially ; namely *Divisions and Disorders*.

1. *Divisions, or Schisms*, Verse 18, for so the Word *Schismata* signifies ; Instead of a harmonious Concurrence, in the Celebration of that sacred Ordinance, they fell into angry Debates, and Contests with one another, " Here you may Note, " (says

“ (says Mr. Henry) That there may be Schism, where
 “ there is no Separation of Communion, Persons may
 “ come together in the same Church, and sit down to-
 “ gether at the same Table of the Lord ; and yet be
 “ *Schismatics*. Uncharitableness and Alienation of Af-
 “ fection, especially if it grows up to Discord and Con-
 “ tention, constitutes Schism. Christians may separate
 “ from each others Communion, and yet be charitable
 “ to one another, and may continue in the same Com-
 “ munion, and yet be uncharitable, the last is Schism
 “ rather than the first.”

2. He charges them with *Disorders*, Verse 21. and that very scandalous, much like the Heathen Frolicks at their Festivals upon their Sacrifices : Which were often attended with Gluttony and Drunkenness. The rich *Corinthians* seem to have been guilty of the same Profanity, at the Lord's Table ; or else at the *Agapai* Love-Feast, annex'd thereto. They despis'd the Poor, did not stay for them, but eat up the Provisions they brought, before they came : And so were guilty of gluttonous and drunken Excesses, whilst others were in Want.

The Apostle inform'd them, in the 20th Verse of this Chapter, that this irregular Conduct, destroy'd the Design of the Institution. Their not partaking of the sacred Supper solemnly and religiously, was not doing of it all, viz. to any good Purpose, or to the divine Acceptance.

Now in order to rectify the aforesaid Irregularities, the Apostle refers them to the original Institution of this holy Ordinance, which is related from the 22d to the 27th Verse of this Chapter. And,

1. He informs them how he obtain'd this Knowledge, Verse 23. *For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you.* He spoke by infallible Inspiration, just what he received from Christ, without Addition or Diminution.

2. He gives a particular Account of the Institution itself.

Namely,

Namely,

1. He asserts that the *Author* of it, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the King of the Church. He only indeed has legislative Authority, to appoint Ordinances of Worship; and to give them their necessary Sanction and designed Efficacy. Hence it must needs be a bold and daring Ufurpation, manifestly derogatory to the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures, and Fidelity of the blessed Redeemer, for the Church, who is a Subject, to intrude into the Legislator's Chair, and coin new Precepts, whilst she is not able to obey, (perfectly) the old. And he informs us,

2. That the *Time* when this Ordinance was instituted, was just when our dear Lord was entering upon these Sufferings, which it was designed to represent: *In the same Night in which he was betray'd he took Bread*. This was an eminent Evidence of the Riches and Tenderness of his Love to his People, that he should so far forget himself, as to remember them for good, to provide for their Comfort, while his own Sorrows, and Sufferings were so great

3. The *sacramental Elements* mentioned, are Bread and the Cup. A plain Confutation of the *Papists* Notion about *Transubstantiation*; the Apostle *Paul* ca's, that *Bread*, five Times over, which Christ calls his *Body*; because it was only a *Symbol* of it, not the real *Body*: Otherwise Christ would have eat his own *Body*, while he was alive. And the Word *Cup* here must of necessity be *Metonymical* and *Figurative*, intending the *Wine* in it. Which gives additional Force to the foregoing Explication.

4. The *Things signified* by these outward Signs; namely, his *Body* broken, and his *Blood* shed: *This is my Body*. The Passover was call'd, *The Lord's Passover*; whereas it was but a *Sign* of it. Of the *Cup* our Lord says, *This is the new Testament in my Blood, which was shed for the Remission of the Sins of many*. Undoubtedly the valuable Benefits of the *New Testament*, or *New-Covenant*, are convey'd and confirm'd by the Saviour's *Blood* and *Spirit*, in this Ordinance, to worthy Receivers.

And,

And,

5. *The sacramental Actions.*

(1.) Of our *Saviour*, namely, (1.) His taking the Bread and Cup, and giving Thanks. (2.) His breaking the Bread. (3.) His giving both to his Disciples. By which is signified, (1.) Our Saviour's free Donation of himself, for his People, to Pain and Misery. His Body must be broken, and his Blood shed, to purchase Life for them. And (2.) His giving Himself and all the precious Purchase of his Blood to them, in this Ordinance.

(2.) The Actions of his *Disciples*, viz. their taking the Bread and Cup, and eating and drinking : By which is signify'd, the worthy Communicants receiving Christ as their Lord and Life, and feeding upon him by Faith.

6. *The Design of the Institution. Do it in Remembrance of me.* It was appointed by Christ, to keep fresh in his People's Minds, the dying Love & Agonies of their dear Lord ; which he knew would be of great Use to them in their christian Course ; both to enflame their Hearts with Love to him, and wean them from a vain World, and its hurtful Lusts.

The Apostle having open'd the Nature of this venerable Ordinance, proceeds in the 27th Verse to represent the Sin and Danger of an unworthy Participation of it. Which he does in two awful Particulars.

For,

1. He tells us that unworthy Partakers are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*. By profaning a sacred Institution, wherein they are represented, they as it were crucify Christ afresh, put a new Spear into his blessed Side, and Thorns into his holy Head.

2. They expose themselves to the Judgment of God. *They eat and drink Judgment*. But in the mean Time, Let it be remembered, that *unworthy partaking* admits of Repentance as well as other Sins ; this Passage was never intended by the blessed God, to frighten humble and sincere Persons from their Duty ; but only to deter the Wicked and Secure.

Now the Apostle gives us an excellent Direction, in our Text ; to prevent both the Sin and Danger before mention'd:

mentioned, *But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* In which Words, we have the following Particulars,

1. A Duty propos'd, *Examination* ; *docimazeto de anthropos scauton*, the Word *docimazeto* signifies to try or prove. "It's a Metaphor, says *Burket*, taken from "Goldsmiths, who try the Truth of their Gold by the "Touchstone, the Purity of their Gold by the Fire, "and the Weight of it by the Scale." We must try our Experiences by the infallible Touchstone of the written Word of God ; and see if they can stand before the Force of it's Fire, (which consumes the chaffy Pretences of Hypocrites) or have due Weight in its Scales. We must also consider the Nature and Design of this Ordinance ; and examine whether our Dispositions and Intentions in attending thereupon, be answerable thereto, if so we may approach with Freedom

But,

2. We have the *Agent*, who should do this Duty, express'd indefinitely, *a Man*. Which the Matter so requiring (as the present Case is) is equivalent to a *universal* ; and is as much as to say, That every Man that would partake, with God's Approbation and Acceptance, must *examine* himself.

3. The *Subject* of the Duty specify'd, *eauton, himself*, i. e. his *State* towards God, his Thoughts, Words, and Actions. Although it be undoubtedly the Duty of Ministers to labour by Examination to know the State of their Flock, and to distinguish the precious from the vile. Yet it is a great and dangerous Sin in their Hearers, if they depend by an implicit Faith in their Judgment, neglecting Self-Examination.

From the Words thus Paraphras'd, Let me observe the following Point of Truth, Namely,

That Self-Examination is a necessary Preparative to a worthy Participation of the Lord's-Supper.

In opening of which, I would speak to the following Heads,

1. *Consider what we should examine.*
2. *Give the Reasons why.* And,
3. *Shew the Manner how this Duty should be perform'd.*
And then improve it.

The 1st Thing *propos'd*, is well answer'd by the *Westminster-Assembly*, in the 97th Question of their *Catechism*; "It is requir'd, say they, of them that would partake worthily of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their Knowledge, to discern the Lord's Body; of their Faith to feed upon him; and of their Repentance, Love and new Obedience." And much to the same Purpose, the Fathers of the Church of *England* express themselves in their *Catechism*; in answer to that Question, *What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?* "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins; stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life; having a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men." These I take to be a sufficient Explication of the Matter of the Duty enjoyn'd.

I am in the

2 Place, to give the Reasons, *Why we should examine our selves as aforesaid.* And,

1. The commanding *Authority* of the great God, in the Text under our present Consideration; should constrain us to perform this Duty; for surely he has the justest Right, to our Obedience and Service.

And,

2. The *Guilt* we contract, by coming Unworthily. The Word *anaxios* signifies *unbecomingly*, so as is not suitable to the Person or Action. Now there is a two-fold Unworthiness, *viz.* of *State* and *Frame*.

And,

(1.) Of *State*; when one in an unconverted Condition partakes of this holy Ordinance, such cannot discern the Lord's Body, or feed on it by Faith, for they are
both

both blind and dead, *Rev.* 3. 17. *Eph.* 2. 1. Their Persons, Performances, and Places of Residence are hated by God, *Psal* 5. 5. *Isai.* 1. 14. *Amos* 6. 8. And therefore they must needs partake unworthily.

(2.) There is an Unworthiness of *Frame* ; and this is (1.) When Persons partake without previous *Examination*, this our Text proves. Or, (2.) When they partake *Irreverently*, without distinguishing between the sacramental and common Bread ; this was the Sin of the *Corinthians*. Or, (3.) When without any Measure of the *Exercise* of those *Graces*, which are suitable to the Nature of this Ordinance ; such as Faith, Sorrow, Love, which are to be understood by the Wedding-garment, *Mat.* 22. 11. Or, (4.) When under the *Guilt* of any secret *Sin* unlamented ; whereby the Conscience is debauch'd, *Psal.* 26. 6. Or, (5.) Under *Prejudice* against our Brother, not having first labour'd to obtain Reconciliation, *Matt.* 5. 23, 24. Or, (6.) When, having Opportunity, we have *not labour'd* for Preparation, we should trim our Lamps, when we go to meet the Royal Bridegroom, *Matth.* 25. 7. Now the Guilt contracted by an unworthy Participation, is mentioned in the 27th Ver. viz. That such are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* But,

3. Persons incur great *Danger* by neglecting this Duty of *Self-Examination*. For then they are like to partake unworthily, because they observe not God's Command ; and if so, they eat and drink *Judgment* to themselves, so the Word *Crima* primarily signifies : Now, Judgments are of three Kinds, namely, *Temporal, Spiritua^l, and Eteⁿal* ; to the two first of which, even godly Persons may expose themselves, by an unworthy Participation ; as the Chapter from which the Text is taken, duly considered, sufficiently confirms. And by a Parity of Reason, we may conclude, That ungodly Persons, who cannot but partake unworthily, do expose themselves not only to temporal and spiritual, but also to eternal Judgments : By being guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, they do thereby increase their Guilt and seal their Condemnation. For, doubtless both the Pro-

mises and Threatnings of the Covenant of Grace, come under this Seal, and are therefore differently confirm'd to the worthy and unworthy Communicants: To the one it is a Seal of Salvation, and to the other of Damnation. But in the mean time it should be observ'd, that it was not the prime Design of this Sacrament, to be a Seal of Death. No! This is only through the Abuse of it, by unworthy Partakers.

4. Self-examination is necessary, in order to approach with *Comfort*, and Hopes of Acceptance to the Holy Table of the Lord; for how can we know without this, that we are invited Guests.

5. It is necessary in order to *know* our *Sins*, *Mercies*, and *Wants*; that we may mourn over the *first*, be thankful for the *second* and seek a Supply of the *third*.

I come to consider the

3d General Head of the Discourse, which was to shew the *Manner* how *this Duty of Self-Examination should be perform'd*. And,

1. More generally, It should be done *solemnly*, having first implor'd Assistance of Heaven, *Psal.* 26. 2.

2. *Speedily*, without Delay, because the Knowledge of our selves is not only peculiarly necessary, to the right Celebration of this holy Ordinance, but generally necessary at other Times also, to promote the Comfort and Happiness of our Souls; and hence it is so frequently urg'd in sacred Scripture.

3. *Impartially*; being willing to know the worst of our Condition, not passing Judgment in our own Favour, before we make Tryal. Unless Examination be manag'd with Impartiality, it serves for nothing but to strengthen our pernicious Delusions, and ruinous Mistakes.

4. *Universally*, & *decisively*; our Experiences, Thoughts, Designs, Affections, Speeches, and Actions, are the Subjects to be examined: the Grounds of our Hopes must be enquir'd into with the utmost Caution, and carefully weigh'd in the Ballances of the Sanctuary. And Sirs, We shou'd not rest satisfy'd until we come to a decisive Judgment, about the Goodness or Badness of our present State; because, without this we hang in an uncomfortable
and

and dangerous Suspense, not knowing how to perform the Duties of Religion, or whether we should apply to our selves the Terrors or Comforts of the divine Word.

and,

5. *Regularly*; not by such Signs as are peculiar to some, but by such as are common to all; not by our own Fancies, but by the sacred Oracles! But more particularly, The

1st Thing to be examin'd, is our *Knowledge*, to discern the Lord's Body: The Apostle insinuates, Ver 9. That without this we cannot partake worthily. Such is the Necessity of *Knowledge* in all religious Actions, that without it the Mind cannot be good, or any Service we perform accepted. The blessed God treats with Men as rational Creatures, by applying to their rational Powers; and therefore whatever Good they get passes through their Understandings, to their Wills and Affections; the great Majesty therefore mentions it as a singular Blessing, that he would give his People, Pastors, which shou'd feed them with *Knowledge and Understanding*, Jer. 3. 15. Now *Knowledge* is twofold, viz. Doctrinal and Experimental.

1. A *Doctrinal* and speculative Knowledge of divine Truth, is preparatory to what is experimental: In order to a worthy Participation of the Lord's Supper, it is necessary, that we should know the Causes of our Misery, with its Extent and Method of Cure, through the Fullness of Christ, as also something of the general Nature of that gracious Covenant, of which this Ordinance is a Seal as well as of the Nature and Design of the Institution it self.

2. There is a spiritual and experimental Knowledge, which is acquir'd by the Use of Means, while in the mean time the almighty Spirit of God opens the Mind to receive Truth by the Shines of a supernatural Light, and sets them home upon the Heart by an almighty Power, 2 Cor. 4. 6. 1 Thes. 1. 5. Our Knowledge shou'd be such as to warm our Hearts with correspondent Affections to the Elements and sacramental Actions, and

reform our Practices. We shou'd see to know the Truth as it is in Jesus.

The

2d Particular to be examin'd, is our *Faith*. Now in order to know whether our Faith be *saving*, let every one propose the following Questions to himself;

1. Have I been convinc'd of my lost State by Sin, and of my Inability to get out of it by my own Wisdom and Strength? *Luke 15. 17.*

2. Have I been effectually persuaded to assent to, and embrace the Testimony that the Father hath given of his Son Jesus Christ, as being suitable and sufficient to save me from Wrath and Ruin? Having satisfied wrong'd Justice by his Sufferings and active Obedience, and thereby purchased Life for those who accept him; and that there is Salvation in none else: This is necessary in order to excite our Motion to, and Compliance with an offer'd Saviour.

3. Have we been persuaded to venture our Souls upon Christ, and to trust in him by the Reason aforesaid; abandoning our own Righteousness as filthy Rags? *Psal. 11. 12. Isa. 64. 6.*

4. Have we consented to accept of Christ as he is offer'd, as a Prophet, Priest and King? *John 1. 13.*

5. Is Christ precious to us, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* in the following Instances? (1.) Do we prefer him in our Judgment above all? *Cant. 2. 3. Phil. 3. 8.* (2.) Do we choose him by an Act of our Will before all? *Heb. 11. 27, 28.* (3.) Do we desire him more than all? *Isai. 73. 25.* (4.) Do we delight to think and speak of him more than any? *Cant. 1. 3, 5.* (5.) Is it our chief Endeavour, to make sure of his Love, and preserve a Sense of it? *Mat. 11. 12. Cant. 2. 7.*

6. Have I the Effects and Concomitants of Faith? (1.) Does my Faith purify my Heart, not allowing any known Sin there? *Acts 15. 9.* (2.) Does it humble it? *Isai. 64. 5.* (3.) Does it make me thankful? *Psal. 116. 12.* (4.) Fruitful? Without Works it is dead, as *James* observes. (5.) Heavenly? *1 John 5. 4.* True Faith overcomes.

vercomes the World. (6.) Does it work by Love? Gal. 5. 6.

The 3d Particular to be examined, is our *Repentance*; the Parts of which are *Confession* of Sin, *Psal.* 51. 3. *Sorrow* for it, *Matth.* 5. 4. *Warred* against it, *Psal.* 97. 10. A *Resolution* to forsake it. --- And *Reformation* from it, *2 Cor.* 7. 11. Do we confess Sin unreiervedly and affectionately? Sorrow for it, chiefly from Love, as it is against God? Hate it as the worst of Evils? loath our selves for it? Resolve to forsake it, and actually leave all gross Sins in Conuerſation, and all others in Affection? *Psal.* 51. 3, 4. *Job* 42. 6. Do we keep up a continual War against it? *Rom.* 7. 23. And if at any time we are overcome in the Conflict, do we labour to rise by Repentance, and running to the Blood of Jesus? *Psal.* 51. And do we turn to God, and labour sincerely and steadily to walk in the Way of his Precepts? *Joel* 2. 12.

The 4th Particular to be examined, is our *Love*.

And,

1. Is our Love to God *supreme* and transcendent? So as to make us willing to forsake any thing, or suffer any thing for his Sake? *Psal.* 73. 25. *Phil.* 3. 7; 8.

2. *Lasting* and perpetual; accompany'd with afflicting Sorrow in his Absence, *Cant.* 5. 6. Vehement Desire, and unwearied Endeavour after his Presence, *Cant.* 2. 5. *Cant.* 3. 2. And sweet Delight in it when obtain'd, *Cant.* 2. 3.

3. *Effectual*; (1.) To encline us to love the Law, People and Ordinances of the great God, with an unfeigned and operative Affection, *Psal.* 119. 6. 1 *John* 3. 14. *Psal.* 84. 1. (2.) To keep his Commandments, 1 *John* 2. 4, 5. (3.) To hate Sin as contrary to God, *Psal.* 97. 10. (4.) To grieve at the Affronts that are cast upon his Name and People, *Psal.* 119. 53. *Psal.* 69. 9.

The 5th Particular to be examined, is our *new Obedience*. And,

(1.) Have we made Choice of God's Law for the Rule of our Life? *His Servants ye are to whom ye obey*, *Rom.* 6. 16.

(2.) Do we labour to perform Obedience to it?

1. *Evangelically* and voluntarily, with the Heart, and from Love. Rom. 1. 9. *For God is my Witness, whom I serve with my Spirit* ---. 2 Cor. 5. 14. *For the Love of Christ constraineth us.*

2. *Universally*; Psal. 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect unto all thy Commandments.*

3. *Sincerely*; for God's Glory, Mat. b. 5. 16.

4. *Resolutely* and *Perseveringly*; whatever Men or Devils say and do to the contrary; though we should suffer never so much, Dan. 3. 17, 18. Psal. 119. 112.

5. *Cautiously*; carefully labouring to shun all incentives to Sin. Prov. 4. 14. *Enter not into the Path of the Wicked.*

6. *Penitently*; bewailing our Defects with Tears and Groans, Rom. 7. 24. Psal. 31. 10.

I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT of this Subject.

And,

1. For *Information*. Seeing that our present Condition may be known, otherwise to what Purpose are we bid to examine it, and so many Helps laid down in holy Scripture to compass this Design, it argues great Disrespect to the Authority of God, and our own Happiness, to neglect this Duty, or to perform it in an undue Manner, so as not to come to a scriptural decisive Judgment about our present State God-ward, seeing it is of so great Necessity to our present, reasonable, quiet, and future Happiness.

2. For *Conviction*. What has been before briefly offered, may serve to detect many *unsound Professors*, and deter them from a presumptuous Approach to the Lord's Table. O how small is the Number that do in very deed possess that Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Love, and new Obedience, before describ'd! Are not some grossly Ignorant even of the doctrinal Knowledge of the Gospel; or content themselves with lifeless, barren Speculations. Will not the Lord judge be revealed in flaming Fire against such? The 1. 7, 8. And as to *Faith*; are not many of us unacquainted both with the Preparatives and

and Effects of it, lying in a deep Sleep of Sin ; the false Foundations of whose Hope have never been unking'd, Who are unacquainted with the Difficulty of venturing upon Christ, under an oppressing Sense of their Sin, Misery and Impotency, who have always been Believers in their own Fancy, and whose Faith works no abiding Alteration on their Hearts and Lives. Who are still Proud, Worldly, Fleshly, for all their strong Faith ; which is always alike. These Men who get and exercise Faith (as they conceit) without Opposition, Tears and Groanings, are Strangers to that Faith which is unto Salvation.

And as to *Repentance* ; how many, instead of confessing, conceal their Sins, love them more than Christ, and sorrow but superficially or legally over them ! And notwithstanding all their hypocritical Pretences to Repentance for Sin, still go on in a Course of it ; and thereby prove themselves to be the Children of their Father the Devil ; for *his Works they will do*, John 8. 41.

As to *Love* ; Do not many love their Lusts, and Worldly Possessions better than Christ, whatever they falsely pretend to the contrary ? Otherwise why would the general and free Run of their Affections be that Way ? And how few are they among Professors who are sometimes Mourning because of Christ's Absence, and at other times Rejoicing in his Presence ! Are not the most contented with a dry Form, without the Life and Power of Religion ? Do not some, instead of loving the People of God for, and in Proportion to their Holiness, scorn them and slight them, because of it, and rejoice in their Falls ? And alas ! How few among Professors shed Tears because of the Dishonour done to God by the Sins of the Wicked ? Their own Honour and Worldly Interest touches them nearly, they are Fire Hot about them ; but respecting the Honour of God, and Interest of his Kingdom they are Key Cold. It is a dreadful Truth, most awfully verify'd in this Age, that almost *all Men seek their own Things, and few the Things which are Jesus Christ's*.

As to *Obedience*; Is not the Obedience of a great Number of Professors *legal*; either flowing principally from a slavish Fear of Damnation, or hireling Views of gaining God's Favour by it? But they will find this Method ineffectual by their sad Experience, either in Mercy or Judgment; for the Apostle informs us, *Israel that sought after Righteousness, (or Justification) did not obtain it, because they sought it not of Faith, but as if were by the Works of the Law, Rom. 9. 31, 32* Or *Partial*, They observe some easy Duties, while they knowingly and generally neglect others, that are difficult or costly. And is not the Obedience of some *hypocritical*, chiefly to get a good Name; and *irresolute*, fram'd according to the Places they live in? And are not some habitually *bold*, in running into Places of Temptation needlessly?

Now all these Persons I have mention'd under this Use of Conviction, are rotten hearted Hypocrites; they lie under the heavy Curie of the dreadful God, and must expect, if they die in that State, to be torn in Pieces by the Hand of Justice, and damn'd to all Eternity, *Gal. 3. 10. Psal. 50. 22. Matth. 23. 51.* And therefore they are very unfit to approach the Lord's Table, which if they will notwithstanding venture to do, in their present Condition, they may expect to eat and drink their own Damnation, *1 Cor. 11. 29.*

But lest what has been now offered, shou'd deter any that are *sincere*, but weak in Grace, from that Feast of Love, which the Lord Jesus has provided for their Nourishment, I wou'd offer the following *Supports* to their Consideration, viz.

1. That the Lord's Supper was undoubtedly appointed for the Weak as well as for the Strong, for indeed they have the most Need of it; it's Childrens Bread, Bread for Babes.

2. That one may doubt of Grace and have the Truth of it; this was the afflicted Case of devout *Haman*, *Psal. 88. 14, 15* *Lord why castest thou off my Soul, why hidest thou thy Face from me?*

3. That the Promises of Life and Peace are made to the *Truth* of Grace, and not to the *Evidence* of it, John 3. 16.

4. That if none but assur'd Persons were to partake, the most of Christ's Flock must be depriv'd of the Food provided for them. " Our compassionate Saviour will
" not break the bruised Reed, or quench the smoking
" Flax. He will surely gather the Lambs in his Arms,
" and lead those gently that are with young. Under
" his merciful Wings the labouring and heavy laden Soul
" shall find Rest.

5. I wou'd add the following *consolatory Cautions*, namely, That none should condemn their State because they have not been so much humbled as some others have been, or as themselves wou'd be ; for the Degrees of Humiliation are various, according to the good Pleasure of God. Neither should any condemn his State, because he is not so holy as he thinks others are ; for our own Hearts are open to our View, and others are hid from us. Or because he has been without Comfort for some Time ; for one that truly fears God may *walk in Darkness*, *Iai.* 50. 10. Or because he thinks he makes no Progress in *Holiness*, if there be in the mean Time an afflictive Sorrow for the Want of it, and honest Endeavours after it, *Rom.* 7. 24.

In the last Place, be *exhorted* to put in Practice the Apostle's *Direction* in our Text. Let us conscientiously compare ourselves with what has been offered ; and if upon Examination we find the Characters of the afore-said Graces of Knowledge, *Faith*, *Love*, *Repentance*, and new *Obedience* in us, with some Measure of the Exercise of them, then should we come to the Lord's Table as to the Banquet of a Friend, eat that Bread, and drink that Cup. But if otherwise, stand off upon your Peril, till ye get your Hearts changed by divine Grace.

In the mean time, Let the People of God examine their Hearts and Lives, and see how many Blots and Blanders

Blunders have been in them since the last Time they commemorated the Death of their Lord at his Table; and let our perjurious, treacherous Unkindness to a gracious Covenant God, humble our Hearts this Day before the Lord.

I add no more, but beg that the Blessing of Heaven may be upon what has been offered. *A M E N.*



THE
DIVINITY
OF THE
Sacred SCRIPTURES

Considered ; And the
Dangers of Covetousness

Detected : In A
SERMON,

On *Jeremiab 22. 29.*

Preach'd at

New-Brunswick in New-Jersey,

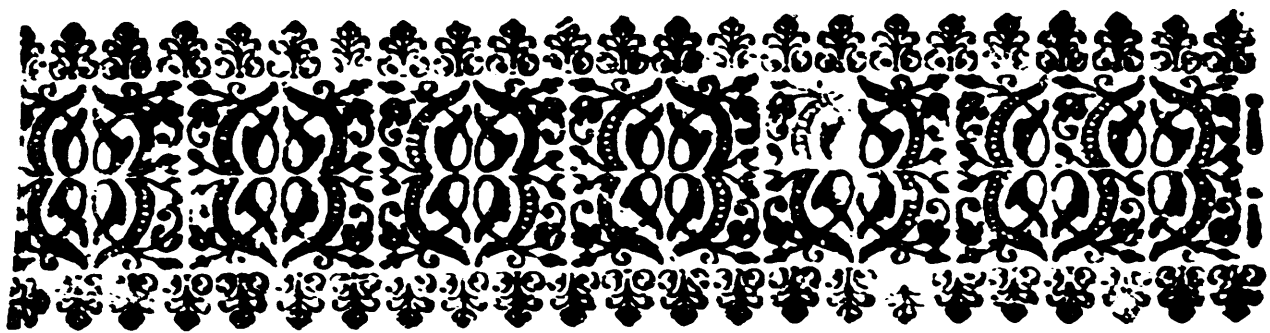
April ult. 1738.

By *Gilbert Tennent, A. M.*

Minister of the Gospel there.

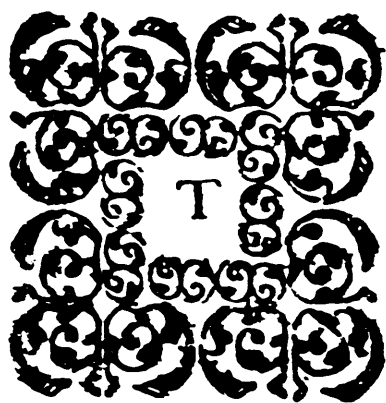
Pfal. 19. 8, 9, 10. The Statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the Heart ; more to be desired are they than Gold, yea than much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-Comb.

BOSTON : Printed in the Year 1739.



THE
P R E F A C E.

Courteous R E A D E R,

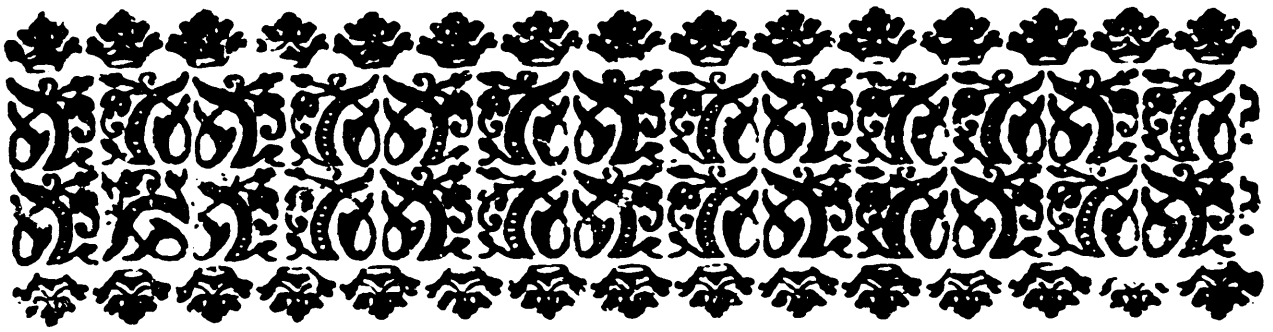


HERE be two Sins which peculiarly and dreadfully prevail in this Age, viz. *Covetousness*, and slighting of the *Word of GOD*; against which the following Discourse is pointed.

As the Earth did once of old open its Mouth, and devoured the Persons of ambitious *Corah* and his cruel Consorts, so it has of late especially expanded its Jaws and swallowed up the chief of the Thoughts, Affections, Speeches, and Labours of the greatest Part of the present Generation, and truis'd them in its Bowels; yet Multitudes are so mad, in the immoderate Chase of this World, that they will not allow themselves Time to think seriously upon another, and a better; or with Reverence to attend to, and solemnly ponder upon that *Word* which gives a *Description* of it, and proposes the *Way* to it; their Hurry is so great, poor infatuated Creatures! That they can't afford themselves Leisure from their more weighty Affairs, to look after such a small Trifle as their eternal Salvation!

Salvation! However, till God himself speaks from Heaven with almighty Power to their Hearts, we may as well pretend to still by our Breath a fierce Tempest, calm the disturb'd Deep, or turn the Course of a violent Torrent, as by our Arguments to stop the dismal Career of such demeritted Creatures. But because that in the Use of Means, we can only expect the divine Concurrence, I will therefore offer a few Words to the Consideration of the *Covetous*. Poor Creatures! Consider, that immoderate Cares about the Things of this Life are *needless*, because that our heavenly Father knows we need these Things without our Care: He has form'd our Souls and Bodies, which are of more Worth than Food and Raiment; and does not God cloath the Lillies and feed the Ravens without their Care, who are Creatures of less Importance than we? And are not such Cares *useless*? For can you by them alter the divine Alotments? *Mat. 6. 27.* Again, are not such Cares *foolish*, in that they antidote your real Troubles, afflicts you with imaginary ones, indispose you to take the most prudent Measures to prevent and assuage Trouble, and expose you to the divine Displeasure. without whose Blessing your Labours can't succeed: *Is not sufficient for the Day the Evil thereof?* Once more, are not such Cares very unsuitable to your Christian Character, and so prejudicial to others? *Mat. 6. 32.* And do they not destroy your own Souls, by choaking like Thorns the good Impressions made on them by the Word ye hear?



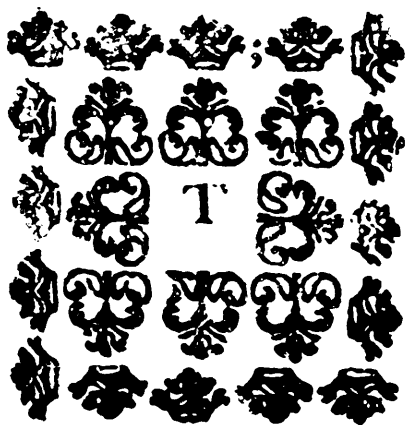


THE
DIVINITY
 OF THE
 Sacred **SCRIPTURES,**
 AND THE
 Dangers of Covetousness.



JEREMIAH 22. 29.

O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD.



THE Prophet in the preceeding Verses,
 (viz. the 20, 22, 23.) prophesies of
 the Desolations that were hastning
 upon the *Jewish State*; which is here
 spoken of as a single Person, and de-
 scribed under a twofold Character.

I. As very haughty in a Day of
 Peace and Safety, Verse 21. *I spake*
unto thee in thy Prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not bear;
this hath been thy Manner from thy Youth, that thou
obey'dst not my Voice. I spake to thee by my Prophets

L

and

and Providences, and that variously, frequently and patiently; sometimes in the Language of *Terror*, reproving thee for thy Ingratitude; and warning thee of the Danger thereby occasion'd; and sometimes in the Language of *Love*, and Charms of Endearment; inviting and counselling thee because of thine own Interest, to accept of the free Proposals, of the most necessary, durable and valuable Mercies: But thou stopedst thine Ear with the deaf Adder, and wouldst not hear my entreating Voice. *I stretched forth my Hands all the Day, to a gainsaying and rebellious People.* Thou wast obstinate and impudent in thy Wickedness, thy Neck is an Iron Sinew, and thy Brow Brais; for thou not only resolvedst to continue in Impiety, but openly, without Blushing, expressed thy wicked Purpose; and in this thou art grown old and hardened; *for this has been thy Manner from thy Youth, that thou obeyedst not my Voice.* It's common with those who live in Ease and Prosperity, to slight the holy Word of God, and contemn his gracious Warnings; when *Jeshurun* waxed fat he kicked. *Manasses* in his Prosperity was too lordly to hear the Lord's Voice; but in his Adversity he humbled himself before him, and reform'd. It is for a Lamentation that the Prosperity of Fools destroys many!

2. As very *serious*, and seemingly religious, in a Time of Trouble and Affliction, Verses 21, 23. The People of *Israel* were very much fear'd at the Approach of Trouble; they cry and lift up their Voice in *Basban*, as if they were quite undone; *O help! help!* And very submissive and devout under it; how gracious shalt thou be, when Pangs come upon thee? i. e. In Pretence and Promise. When haughty prosperous Sinners are bro't under severe Scourges; O then what a deal of Religion do they profess! They profess great Sorrow for their Sins past, and make very fair Promises, how good they'll be in Time to come: But as soon as the Rod is off their Backs, they are as bad or worse than before! See *Psal.* 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. *When he slew them they sought him, and returned and enquir'd early after God; and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high*

high God their Redeemer ; nevertheless, they did flatter him with their Mouth, and lied unto him with their Tongue ; for their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.

Here is also a Prophecy of the Disgrace of the King *Jeconiah* ; call'd by Way of Diminution, *Coniah* ; viz. That he shou'd be carried into Captivity, and his Days in Bondage, and leave no Posterity to inherit his Honour. Now the Prediction of this is usher'd in with a solemn Preface, in the Words of our Text. *O Earth, Earth, Earth, bear the Word of the Lord*, i. e. saith Pool in his *Synopsis*, "O ye Inhabitants of *Judea* !" Or rather as *Henry* in his *Annotations*, "Let all ye Inhabitants of the World take Notice of these Judgments of God, upon a Nation, and Family that had been dear and near to him ; and thence infer that God is impartial, in the Administrations of Justice."

The Note of Expostulation, *O!* in the beginning of the Verse, denotes the Prophet's Bowels of Compassion over that sinful and unhappy People ; and is a noble Pattern for the Ministers of Christ to imitate, in their Addresses to a secure and perishing World !

Also the *Denomination* the Prophet gives the *Jewish People*, namely, *Earth*, seems to signify three Things ;

1. Their *Covetousness* ; They were so immoderate in their Pursuits after the *Earth*, that they seem'd to be almost totally turn'd into that Element, very *Earth-Worms*, and *Moles*.

2. Their *Stupidity* ; which was such, that the senseless *Earth* itself, wou'd sooner learn than they ! The poor Prophet might turn the Edge of his solemn Warnings ; and Charms of his importunate Treaties, to the senseless Mountains and impenetrable Rocks, and expect equal Success ! O this pain'd and perplex'd the Prophet's Heart, that he knew not how to deal with that obstinate People, so as to reclaim them ! This fill'd his Lips with piteous Complaints, and moaning, as he himself expresses in the 6th Chap. & 10th Ver. ! *To whom shall I speak, and give Warning, that they may hear ? Behold their Ear is*

uncircumcised and they cannot hearken; the Word of the Lord is unto them a Reproach, they have no Delight in it.

3. The Denomination speaks their *Mortality*. It's a Call to Men considered as *mortal*; who have receiv'd their Original of the Earth, and will be quickly resolv'd into it. That in Consideration of this, we are concern'd to fear and regard the Word of the Lord; that thus, though we are *Earth* in our Original and Issue, we may be found among those who are written in Heaven.

The Words of the Text are a solemn Appeal to the Earth itself, on which we tread; since those that dwell on the Earth are so careless. (So *Calvin*, and the *English Annotations*) like that Deut. 30 19. *I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, therefore choose Life, that both thou and thy Seed may live.* Now *Moses* shewed the Way to obtain the one and escape the other; viz. By *Love* and *Obedience*, in the 16th Verse; and confirm'd his Instructions, by such Arguments, as were most proper to work upon their Fear and Hope: Such as the eternal Ruin of *Disobedience*, and immortal Advantages of *Obedience*; and having thus stated the Case fairly, he leaves it to their Choice. He had deliver'd his own Soul by his Faithfulness; but he wanted exceedingly that they shou'd deliver theirs, by choosing to do those Duties, and comply with those Terms, upon which Life spiritual and eternal is propos'd. And in Deut. 32. 1. *Moses* introduces his Song with a solemn Appeal to Heaven and Earth, concerning the Truth and Importance of what he was about to speak; and concerning the Justice of the divine Proceedings with a rebellious People. *Give ear, O Heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O Earth, the Words of my Mouth; my Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distill as the Dew.* The Heavens and Earth revolt not from their Obedience to their Creator, but have continued to execute his Pleasure, without the least Variation, ever since the first Period of Time began; (*Psal.* 119 90.) and therefore will rise up in Judgment against rebellious *Israel*, and witness against them the *Wooings* and *Warnings* given them,

them, and their Rejection of both, against their own Souls. See Job 20. 27. *The Heaven shall reveal his Iniquity, and the Earth shall rise up against him.*

Or, *Heaven and Earth* are here put for the *Inhabitants* of both ; Angels and Men shall both agree to justify God, in his judicial Process against *Israel* ; and declare his Righteousness. *Psal* 50. 6. *Rev.* 19. 1, 2. and *Isai.* 1. 2. *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and bro't up Children, and they have rebelled against me!* The Prophet, though he speaks in GOD'S Name, yet despairs to get Audience of *Israel* his People ; therefore he addresses the Heavens and Earth, and bespeaks their Attention ! Sooner will the *inanimate* Creatures hear, who observe the Law, and answer the End of their Creation, than this stupid, senseless People ! As the Light, Order and Harmony of the heavenly Hosts, reprov'd their Ignorance, Confusion and Anarchy ; so the Beauty and Fruitfulness of the Earth, reproached their Barrenness and Debauchery.

The *Repetition* of the Prophet's Call and Entreaty in our Text, shews ;

1. The great *Obstinacy* of the People he spake to, in that they needed such repeated Alarms to excite their Attention.

2. The great *Importance* of the Message he brought to them, which deserv'd such an importunate, earnest, and repeated Inculcation, for verily no less than their temporal and eternal Safety was embark'd and concern'd in it.

3. The great *Vehemence*, which the Prophet us'd in delivering the divine Embassy. He was not contented with crying *once, yea twice*, to this secure People ; but he repeats his solemn Warnings, and passionate Intreaty a *third Time*, that it might pierce the deeper into their hardened Hearts and secure Consciences ; *O Earth ! Earth ! Earth ! hear the Word of the Lord.*

From the Words thus briefly explain'd, I observe the following *Doctrinal Proposition*, viz.

That in order to escape God's just judgments, in this and the next Life, it's highly necessary for all Mankind, and more especially, for covetous unconverted Sinners, to hear God's Word.

In discoursing upon this Proposition, I shall enquire,

1. Who are *unconverted covetous Sinners* ?
2. Wherein consists the *Analogy* between the Earth and such ?
3. What *Word* these are to hear ; and how it appears that the *Scriptures* are the *Word of God* ?
4. How they shou'd *hear* this Word ?
5. *Why*, or wherein, appears the *Necessity* of this Practice ?

I return to consider the first Thing propos'd, which was to enquire, *Who are unconverted covetous Sinners* ?

In answer to which, let the following Particulars be seriously consider'd. And,

1. All such as persist in a *State of carnal Security*, without ever being deeply and effectually convinc'd of their lost Condition by Nature ; or brought to a believing Closure with Christ, on his own Terms.

2. All such are unconverted and covetous Sinners, whose general and free Course of Thoughts, Affections, Speeches, and Actions, are about *earthly Things*. Such as are of the *Flesh*, favour the Things of the Flesh. And these that *are of the World*, speak of it, and the World heareth them, as our Saviour observes.

3. All such are carnal, christless, and covetous Creatures, who are generally more *delighted* with *worldly Enjoyments*, and *Successes*, than in *Christ's Ordinances and Presence* : And more *dejected* at the Loss of the *former*, than the Bereavement of the *latter*.

4. All

4. All such as take *unlawful Measures* to compass their worldly Designs ; or generally make their religious Worship stoop to their temporal Business and Interest. Our Lord truly informs us, that we *cannot serve two Masters, God and Mammon*, i. e. We cannot in Reality serve two contrary Masters at the same Time.

In the

2d Place, I am to enquire, Wherein consists the *Analogy, or Resemblance*, between the Earth and unconverted, covetous, and carnal Sinners ? This I think appears in the following Instances,

1. The Earth is at a *great Distance* from Heaven ; so all unconverted, covetous Sinners are *far* from God, tho' not in respect of Place, yet in respect of their Condition. They are far from the saving and influential Knowledge of God, and contentedly continue, (many of them) in a State, and Course of Enmity against him, *Ephes. 2. 13. Rom. 8. 7.* Hence the Prodigal, while unconvinc'd, is said to *travel into a far Country*.

2. The Earth is a *heavy and gross Body* ; it naturally cleaves to Earth, as its proper Center. If a Piece of Earth be drawn upwards by Force, yet by an innate Propensity to descend, it naturally falls downwards. So natural People cleave to, and delight in earthly Things, as their *Center*. Though their Hearts may by Art, or Force, be lifted upwards for a little Time ; yet so soon as ever the Force is remov'd, down they will fall again, with Speed and Ease to the Earth, as their Center, *Psal. 4. 6.*

3. The Earth, after many and heavy Showers of Rain, when it's long shone upon by the Summer Sun, is *hard and condens'd* ; when the Heavens are for a Time like Brass, the Earth is like Iron ; so unconverted Sinners that are under many Showers and Shinings of God's Word, and improve them not, are *harden'd* like Pieces of Clay and Rocks of Adamant ! The same Sun that softens Wax, hardens Clay. Oh ! Is it not to be fear'd, that many of us have been rather harden'd than softened these many Years that we have lived under the Ministry of the Word, through our Abuse thereof ! O ! Let

such consider, that they are in exceeding great Danger (if they continue longer in Sin) of having that judicial Hardness inflicted on them, which is mention'd by *Isai.* Chap. 6. Ver. 10. And then wo to them, that ever they were born.

4. The Earth is *cold* ; especially that which is hid from the Sun's Influence ; so you unconverted covetous Sinners, though you are very *warm* and *zealous* about your temporal Interests, are not you quite *cold* and *careless* about the Affairs of Religion ? Where is there any of you convinc'd of, and distress'd about your lost, damnable State ? Where is your Zeal for the Glory of God and the Happiness of your Neighbours Souls ? No ! One may look (it wou'd seem) till their Eyes drop out of their Head, before they see much of that among some of you ! And how, *Nabal* like, sneaking and ignoble are the Spirits of some Men, who wou'd pretend to Christianity ? How narrow, base and contracted are their Views, terminated only in their own fordid, selfish Interest, without a generous and superior Regard to the Honours and Interests of the Mediator's Kingdom ! Like *Snails*, they creep into, and confine their Views within the narrow Circle of their own private Interests

5. The Earth is *dry*, when it wants long and gentle Showers of Rain ; so unconverted covetous Sinners are void of the Moisture of true Contrition. Ah ! Where are there any weeping *Feremiabs*, or mourning *Marys* among us ? She cou'd wash Christ's Feet with her Tears ; but you, dry hardned Sinners, have not a Drop, a Tear, to shed for your Iniquities, though perhaps some of you are as great Transgressors as ever she was. But, by the by, let me tell you, that Tears are not pleasing to God, unless they flow from a *broken Heart*. There are *Crocodile* Tears, that serve for little, but to deceive those that have them : And these are such as spring only from the natural Motion of the *Passions*, and leave the *Heart* as they found it, without any good Savour. And is not it to be fear'd, that some such has been shed among us ? Otherwise, how cou'd they be always after, quite dry'd up, like a Land Flood in time of Drought ?

6. The Earth is of it self a *dark Body*; What a dark Dungeon wou'd this World be, if it was depriv'd of the Light of the *Sun*? Now you unconverted, covetous Sinners, are depriv'd of the *Light* of the *Sun of Righteousness*; and therefore are in worse than *Egyptian* Darkness, *Eph. 5. 8.* Whatever notional, dead, dry Knowledge, you may have attained of some divine Things by the *Force of Education*, yet you have no clear, *experimental* Knowledge of them; otherwise you could no more live contentedly in the State you are in, than you could lye contentedly in a burning Fire: You only speak by Rote and Hearsay of divine Things, like *Parrots*. O! but, did you see clearly the horrible Guilt, and fearful Miseries, your wretched Souls are in; that burning Vengeance, that is every Minute ready to drown you in eternal Death; the fast Approaches you make every Hour to the damned World; it would soon put a Stop to your present foolish Mirths, and turn it into the bitterest Mourning and Bemoanings! Poor Creatures! If your Eyes were not close shut by the God of this World, there would surely be a Terror and Trembling in your guilty Consciences: But *Dangers* how great soever are not *fear'd*, if they be not *apprehended*.

7. The Earth is *unequal* in its Surface; thus ye unconverted, covetous Sinners, are in your Lives. You'll appear like Saints, and seem to serve God seriously for a few Hours in Meeting, while you are before Folks; but how wicked are you in private? Nay, for all your *Show* of Devotion in the Church, as soon as ye get out of the Doors of it, you'll get a talking about the World perhaps: And is not it the chief Part of your Contrivance and Labour through the Week, to gain the World, and humour the Flesh? Ay, This is your chief Good, and Soul's Portion, Sinners, tho' you wont own it. And a poor, sorry, short liv'd one it is indeed!

8. The Earth is *immoveable*; tho' some smaller Parts towards their Surface, are sometimes shaken by Earthquakes; yet the Foundations of the whole Globe, remain unshaken by all the Earthquakes and Thunders we hear. And is not it just so with you, ye unconverted

ted covetous Sinners ? All the Thunders of God's Word don't shake down the Foundations of your false Hope ; no, you *bold fast Deceit, and therefore refuse to return*, Jer. 8. 5. When God tells you by his Word, you shall perish, if you go on in the State and Course you are in ; No, You say in your Hearts, *You shall have Peace, tho' you walk after the Imaginations of your Heart ; to add Drunkenness to Thirst*. Remember ye Presumers, *That God will not spare you ; his Anger and Jealousy shall smoke against you ; and all the Curses that are written in the Book of God, shall lye upon you*, Deut. 29. 19. *While ye say, Peace and Safety, sudden Destruction shall come upon you, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and ye shall not escape*. Why then will you please your selves with Dreams, that you are rich and encreased in Goods, when in the mean time you are poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked ? Why, poor Sinners ! Will ye go on securely in that Way ; which, tho' it seems right to a Man, yet the end thereof are the Ways of Death ?

9. The Earth is *base* ; the *meanest* and *coursest* of the four Elements. So unconverted, covetous Sinners, are base in three Respects ;

(1.) In regard of their *Pedigree*, their Father was an *Amorite*, and their Mother a *Hittite* ; or rather, they are of their Father the Devil, John 8. 44.

(2.) They are of a base, mean *Disposition*, in aiming at, and enclining to, earthly and carnal things chiefly, they are of the *Earth, earthy* ; and being born only of the *Flesh*, are *Flesh*, and so like brute Beasts. And,

(3.) They are base and brutish in their *Actions* ; gripping, tyrannical, carnal. As their Hearts are narrow, so their Hands are shut from relieving the Poor and Needy, or promoting any publick Work. Or else they shew the Narrowness of their Souls, in the Smallness of their Donations ; being neither proportion'd to the Exigency of the Case, or their own Abilities. It's true, some unconverted People have a *natural Generosity* ; but alas ! Tho' this shews more Humanity, and is much better than the other crabbed *Nabal-like* Dispositions, inasmuch as it promotes the Good of Society ; yet it is but

a wild Flower, which grows in Nature's Garden, and springs but from mean Principles; such as natural Tenderness, Pride, Mercenaryness, or a Desire to get rid of the Trouble of importunate Petitioners. In short, the Projects of carnal People are low and base, confin'd within the narrow Boundaries of Time and Sense, unworthy of a human Soul. There's hardly any thing great, sublime, or truly noble in them, their Souls excepted; which they vilely prostitute to serve their sordid Lusts; and therefore they well deserve the ignoble Character of Earth. Even *Seneca*, by the Light of Nature, cou'd say, *Major sum, et ad majora natus; quam ut corporis mei, sum marcipium*; I am greater, and born to greater Things, than that I should be a *Slave* to my Body.

10. The Earth is, since the Fall of Man, naturally *barren*, of what is necessary for Food, Medicine, and Delight, until it be plow'd, harrow'd, and Seed cast into it. So Sinners bring forth nothing but *Briars* and *Thorns*; i. e. grosser Wickedness; or at best but the *wild Grapes* of moral Vertue, and Formality in Religion; until their hard Hearts be rent into deep Furrows, by the Plow of the Law, in the Hand of the Holy Spirit, and the Seed of saving Grace be sown into them. Hence is that of the Prophet, *Isaia* 10. 12 *Sow to your sowers in Righteousness, reap in Mercy, break up your fallow Ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he come and rain down Righteousness upon you.* And that of the Prophet *Jeremy*, in the 4th Chapter of his Book, and the 3d Verse, *For thus saith the Lord, to the Men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow Ground, and sow not among Thorns.* The Hardness and Obtinacy of your Hearts, Sinners, must be broken up, by sincere Conitition; and your filthy Lusts must be broken off, by a universal Reformation; otherwise ye need not expect that the Seed of Grace will be sown into your Hearts.

Once more, The *Earth*, by interposing it self between the *Sun* and *Moon*, as the *Mathematicians* observe) causes an *Eclipse*; so immoderate Love to, and Pursuit after worldly Enjoyments, and unnecessary Con-
 versation with worldly People, cause an Eclipse of
 Christ's

Christ's Face upon the believing Soul. For in Proportion to the Excess of our Love to the World, is the Decay of our Love to Christ; and it's observable that the *Moon* never suffers an Eclipse but at its *Full*; so in Prosperity and Fulness of earthly Enjoyments, it is most frequently the Lot of People, to be bereav'd of the divine Presence, because of their inordinate Love to, and Abuse of them.

But tho' there is some *Likeness* between the *Earth*, and *unconverted covetous Sinners*, in the aforesaid Particulars; yet there is a great *Unlikeness* in these following,

1. We can *pierce* the Earth with Plows and Spades, and other sharp Instruments; and so make deep Furrows in it: But no mortal can do so with you; when was there any deep Furrows made in your Hearts, by the Plow and Spade of the Law? Poor Sinners! Are not you like insensible, impenetrable Rocks? Under all the divine Warnings, you have from Time to Time; to this Day, you have not Eyes to see your Danger, or Ears to hear the Things that belong to your Peace.

2. The Earth is *pliable*; it may be moulded into this or that Shape, when Water is cast upon it: But ye unconverted covetous Sinners, are like dry Bones, hard and inflexible, *Ezek. 37*. Under all the gracious and condescending Calls of God, there is no moulding of you into the divine Image, *O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord*.

3. The Earth is *fruitful*; when its manur'd, sown, and well watered, it brings forth Fruits in its Season. But where are your Fruits? O Sinners! The great Husbandman has been manuring of you, these many Years, by his Word and Providences. It's now almost 12 Years since I came among you; and tho' my Labours have been attended with much Weakness; yet your Consciences can witness, that I have not declin'd telling you the Truth, either through servile Fear or mercenary Favour; and ye have had in this Town, and some of the neighbouring Places, the solemn Warnings of a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, many Years before I
came

came among you, who is yet through God's Mercy continued to labour amongst us unweariedly in another Language, for the eternal Salvation of the precious Souls of Men. But alas! To how little Purpose have all these Endeavours been, as to many of you; your wretched Barrenness continues, notwithstanding of all the Waterings and Cultivations of the divine Word, and Pruning of divine Providence! The Earth shews its *Sense* of the Sun's Influence, and near approach in the *Spring* Season, by bringing forth Flowers and Fruits, what a charming Scene of Verdure and Gaiety, does the whole Face of Things open to the Eye in this Month? But tho' the Sun of the blessed Gospel shines in its exalted Meridian, with unclouded Glory full in your Faces; tho' *Hermon's* Dew drops upon you, and ye are visited with the former and the latter Rain; tho' the sovereign and gracious God, has wrote to you the great Things of his Law, and good Things of his Gospel, in Characters of Majesty and Compassion, in Lines of Love and Blood; tho' the almighty *Jehovah* has plac'd you in a fertile Soil, and planted a choice and noble Vine among you, and sent the Rod of his Strength out of *Zion*; I say, tho' he has us'd all proper Measures to reclaim you from your Sin and Ruin; and that with great Importunity, amazing Condescension, and unwearied Continuance; so that the Lord may justly Expostulate with you, and say, *What could he have done more for his Vineyard among us, than has been done, in order to make it fruitful?* And yet when he looks Year after Year for Grapes, behold wild Grapes! *Isai. 5.*

But I proceed to the

3d Thing *propos'd*, which was to shew what *Word* Sinners should hear; and how the *Scriptures* appear to be the *Word of God*.

Now that *Word*, which unconverted covetous Sinners especially should hear, is the *Word of God*, contain'd in the sacred or holy *Scriptures*. But how does it appear that the *holy Scriptures* are the *Word of God*? And what *Word* of the *Scriptures* should unconverted covetous Sinners particularly hear? Now the following

Reasons

Reasons or *Arguments* are, I think, a sufficient Answer to the *first* Question. That the sacred Scriptures are the Word of God is evident,

1. From the *Pen-men* of them : The Connection of their Writings shews them to be *Men of Sense* ; and the continual Opposition they met with in their Work, from numerous, politick, powerful, and malicious Enemies, proves that they could serve no *secular Design*, either of Honour or Interest by it. Now that Men of Sense should run the greatest Risques, and face the most hideous Dangers, in order to propagate what they knew to be an Imposture, and that without any Selfish Views, is what cannot be accounted for by human Reason. And the principal Things the Apostles gave uniform and stedfast Testimony to, both by their Word and Writings, were Matters of Fact ; which were plainly obvious to the Senses ; such things as they had seen, heard, and felt ; and therefore were liable to no Mistake in the Matter. What is the Substance of the Gospel, but a Relation of the Life, Speeches, and Actions, the Death, and Resurrection of Jesus ; with the Benefits he thereby procured for his People, and the Terms upon which an Interest in them may be obtain'd ? Therefore, I say, the Apostles were liable to no Mistake in the Relation they give, unless it had been wilful ; and it is strange to conceive, that they should be guilty of this without any Temptation ; and so Seal what they knew to be false by their Blood !

2. The *Doctrines* of the holy Scriptures prove them to be the Word of God ; for,

(1.) There is a *pleasing Simplicity*, and yet *solemn Majesty*, often sweetly conspiring in one and the same Paragraph ; the like of which is not to be found in any other Writings under Heaven.

(2.) The *Tendency* of the Doctrines contained in the Scriptures is to exalt God, enoble and perfect the Nature of Man ; here we have a rational *Description* of our Disease ; I mean of our *original* and inherent *Pravity*, and the *actual* Evils that flow from it, as well of the complicated and pregnant Dangers thereby incur'd ;

free

free from the fabulous foolish Flights of the *Pagan* Poets, concerning their feigned *Box of Pandor* ; from which they dream'd that all the Evils first sprung, that now infest the human Race ! And here we have a *Method of Cure* open'd, and every *Way* worthy of God, and suited to the Miseries of Man ; a *Method* in which all the Attributes of the divine Nature, shine with surprising Glory, inexpressible Magnificence, and stately Majesty ; a *Method* in which is abundantly provided proper Remedies for all the Miseries and Maladies of the human Nature.

(3.) The *Harmony* of the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their Divinity. That amongst such a *vast Variety* of Writers, writing in such different Times, and distant Places, there should be such a beautiful *Harmony*, is admirable, and not to be found in any meer human Writings on Earth !

(4.) The divine and supernatural *Efficacy* of the holy Scriptures, in wounding the Secure, and healing the Convinc'd ; in changing the inward evil Dispositions of Men's Hearts, and reforming their outward bad Courses of Life, is a most manifest Evidence that they are the Word of God ; inasmuch as he smiles upon them, and concurs with them as Means, frequently in all Ages, to produce such supernatural, noble Effects, as none but himself can Form. *The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged Sword, Heb. 4. 11. The Law of God is perfect, converting the Soul, Psal. 19. 7. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart.*

(5.) The *Antiquity* of the sacred Scriptures, is also an Argument of their divine Authority ; for the *Pentateuch*, or five Books of *Moses*, are of an *elder Date* than any human Writings. The most ancient Things that the *Pagan* Historians write of, are the *Theban* and *Trojan* Wars ; as one of their Number witnesses, in the following Verse ;

Cur supra Bellum Thebanum, et funera Troje ;

Non alias alie, quoque res, cecimere Poete ?

Why, said he, did not the Poets speak of other Things, before the *Trojan* and *Theban* Wars ? Now these things

happen'd long after the Writings of *Moses*. The holy Scriptures give a historical Narrative of the most ancient Things, viz. The Creation, and the Flood, and which none but GOD cou'd know. It's true, the Pagan *Ovid* in his *Metamorphosis*, having borrow'd some broken Hints from the History of *Moses*, has some poetical obscure Flights, concerning the Creation and the Flood; he talks of the Chaos, which he says was a rude indigest-ed Heap, existing before the Sea, Earth and Heavens.

Ante mare et terras, et quod tegit omnia celum,

Unus erat toto, naturæ vultus in orbe,

Quem dixere chaos, rudis indigestaque moles.

But tells us not who made this Chaos. Whereas *Moses's* Account of the Order of the Creation, is exact, perfect and natural, in it he represents the Almighty as acting with infinite Grandeur and Majesty, with infinite Ease and Omnipotence; *Jehovah* spake, and lo the Earth existed, 'twas but a Word, and behold a World! *Ovid* also speaks of the Flood under the feign'd Names of *Deucalion* and *Phirra*,

Deucalion lacrymis, ita Phirram affatur abortis.

But some of his Flights are *fabulous*, and all but of a novel Original, compar'd with the Writings of *Moses*.

3. The *Attestations* given to the holy Scriptures, proves them to be the very Word of God.

(1.) By the *Fulfillment of antient Prophecies*, concerning contingent Events, to be brought to Issue after Hundreds, yea Thousands of Years were elaps'd; viz. such as these, concerning the *Messiah*, his Birth, Life, and Death, the Destruction of the *Jewish* State, and the In-gathering of the *Gentiles*; which we see with our Eyes, are exactly brought to pass. Now it is as simply Impossible for any human Understanding to pierce the Veil of Futurity, and foresee by the Situation of second Causes, at so great a Distance of Time, these Events which had no necessary Dependance upon them; but were the Produce of the changeable Wills of Creatures, who act by Deliberation and rational Complacency. And,

(2.) The Attestation by *Miracles*, which were wrought by Christ and his Apostles, in Confirmation of the Doc-trines

things contain'd in the Scriptures ; these were Works transcending the Verge, and contrary to the stated Order of Nature ; Works that were profitable in their Nature, to Mankind ; and thus exactly agreeable to the Prophet *Isaiab's* Prediction, *Isai. 35.* Who speaking of Gospel-Times, says, *That then the Eyes of the blind shall be open'd, and the Ears of the deaf unstopped, then shall the lame Men leap like a Hart, and the Tongue of the dumb shall sing.* Works that were many in Number ; Works wrought in the most publick Manner, before Multitudes of Spectators, Enemies as well as Friends, and that in an Instant of Time, by the meer Beck of his commanding Pleasure, as in the Works of Creation, either wholly without Means, or without such as were adapted to the Effect produc'd. Thus our blessed Saviour having an absolute Empire over Nature, spake the senseless Dead into Life and Motion, the Sick into Health, and the blustering Winds and angry Deeps into an undisturb'd Calm ; he caus'd the Ears of the Deaf to hear his Word, the Eyes of the Blind to behold his Beauty, and the Tongues of the Dumb to sing his Praise ; in a Moment he made the ignorant Vulgar proclaim the Glories of his Grace and Power, in all the learn'd Languages, which they were utter Strangers to before.

The blessed God having made rational Creatures, who are thereby capable of moral Service ; it's but reasonable to suppose that he would give them a Rule to direct them in it, seeing he is both wise and gracious, and best knows what will be most acceptable to himself. It's equally absurd to imagine, either that God wou'd make his Creatutes for no noble Design, or refuse to give them Directions how to obtain it, and so grant sublime Powers in vain ! It's also absurd, to conceive that an infinitely wise and good God wou'd vouchsafe a Revelation to his Creatures, destitute of such distinguishing Characters of its Divinity, as might manifest its Author ; especially considering that several spurious Ones have labour'd to obtrude themselves upon Mankind ; and that alas ! not without fatal Success, upon the Ignorant and Credulous.

The *Necessity* of a supernatural Revelation to guide Men to Happiness, since the Fall of *Adam*, is especially evident, from the Confusion of Sentiments among the *Pagans*, concerning the supreme Good. *Varro* reckons no less than *Three Hundred* different Opinions among them about it; their great Philosophers, were also guilty of gross Blanders, in their Notions of the Nature of Religion, and Vertue. They were utter Strangers to supernatural Principles and Aims in religious Actions; allow'd of Revenge, and many of their religious *Rites* were obscene and ludicrous. And since the Flood of *Noah*, the Life of Man is so contracted, that it renders a supernatural, external and durable Revelation necessary, to supply the Room of the *primeval* (or antient) patriarchal Tradition.

Now real Miracles wrought in *Confirmation of Doctrines deliver'd*, are the great Seal of Heaven, confirming the divine Mission of the Persons, who declare such Doctrines; and so by Consequence irrefragably evidence the Truth of the Doctrines themselves. Now no suppos'd Revelation has pretended Miracles for its Vouchers, with any Plausibility, or Probability, but the *Christian*; the feign'd Miracles of *Apollonius Tyaneus* the Pagan, were ridiculous in their Kind, and so unworthy of Credit; such as making Cups and Platters dance upon a Table. We can't, without crossing the Dictates of Reason, suppose, that the divine Majesty will exert his almighty Power in producing Trifles, and working Miracles of no Moment. And the suppos'd Miracles of *Mahomet*, were of the same Stamp; nothing but fabulous Dreams and useles Trifles, of no Service to Mankind; such as his splitting the *Moon*, *Asses* and other *Beasts* desiring his Prayers, a *Fish's* speaking to him privately at the Table after it was dress'd, that he shou'd not eat of it because it was poison'd; though others did eat of it and receiv'd no Damage. A *Pidgeon's* picking Pease out of his Ear; and an *Ox's* coming to him with a Leaf of the *Alcoran* upon his Horn; these were all his Miracles that ever I read of, excepting his hasty Voyage from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem* upon his Beast *Elborach*;

racb; and from thence to Heaven, and back again in the 10th Part of a Night. It may be objected, That *Devils* may do extraordinary Works, which may appear to us to be miraculous, as is evident from that of the *Egyptian Magicians*. I answer, It's true the *Devils* have great Power; but it is contrary to the Goodness of the divine Nature, to suffer them to work such Works in Confirmation of false Doctrines, as leaves those he has not abandon'd for Sin, under an inevitable Necessity of receiving an Imposture for Truth; surely the Truth and Goodness of the divine Nature, will encline him to discover the Fallacy, before the whole Scene be ended. The *Devils* cou'd, no doubt, soon destroy the whole rational Creation, and possibly tear the great Globe we tread upon in Pieces; and they have Malice enough to do the former, if they were permitted. But we know by Experience, that their Power and Malice is limited by divine Providence, blessed be God for it. As to the *Egyptian Magicians*, their Sorcery and Craft was discover'd to Contempt, before the Scene concluded; and it's probable, that for this Purpose, they were permitted to go so far as they did. Now it appears evident, by God's Dealings with the Christian Nations, that he has not quite abandon'd them (as he indeed might in Justice) inasmuch as he follows the *Revelation* they have, by a divine Power, to the changing the wicked Tempers and Practices of many. I may add, That supposing the infernal and unclean Ghosts cou'd perform Works that seem miraculous, yet we cannot without the grossest Absurdity imagine, that having such deep Penetration, and long Experience, they are so weak in Politicks, as to accomplish them, in Confirmation of such Truths, as have the directest Tendency to oppose their Inclinations, detect their Wiles, and destroy their Government; by conforming degenerate Creatures to the moral Excellency of that God they hate, and so preparing them for the eternal Enjoyment of him. Surely as our Lord observ'd, *If Satan's Kingdom be divided against itself, it cannot stand.*

But,

(3) The Attestation or Witness of the *Holy Spirit*, is a most sweet, satisfactory and sufficient Evidence, of the *Divinity* of the Scriptures, to those that have it.

To the *second* Question (aforesaid) I answer, That the Word of the Scriptures which unconverted covetous Sinners should particularly hear, is the Threatnings in general, scattered up and down the divine Word. For these are their proper but miserable Portion, and these Threatnings and Curses in special, which are directed as Flashes of Lightning, to their Case ! In God's Name I charge you to consider and apply these following ; Psal 9 17. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* And Ephes. 5. 5, 6. *For this ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor uncle an Person, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no Man deceive you with vain Words : for because of these Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience.*

But I hasten to the

4th Thing propos'd, which was to shew, *How the Word of God shou'd be heard ?* And indeed it ought to be heard,

1. *Believingly*, as the very Word of God, as a Message from Heaven to us ; for verily the Word will not profit us, unless it be mix'd with Faith in them that hear it.

2. *Attentively* ; with due Reverence and Concern ; considering the *vast Importance* of its Truths to us. It is recorded to the Commendation of *L. a*, that *she attended to the Things that were spoken by Paul*, Acts 16. 14.

3. *Applicatively* ; searching our selves by what is spoken, and applying every one his own proper Portion ; we should be as faithful to our selves herein, as *Nathan to David*.

4. *Obediently* ; acting in our after walk, according to the Word of God we hear. James 1. 22, 23. *But be*

ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your selves. For one that hears the Word, and does it not, is like one who beholds his Face in a Glass, spies some Spots in it; but after he leaves the Glass, forgets them, and so goes on contentedly.

The Application of this is easy, if ye are but willing.

The

5th Thing propos'd was to shew, *Why all Men, and especially unconverted covetous Sinners, should hear the Word of God.* The Reasons are these,

1. Because God commands it in the Words of our Text, and many other Places; *O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord.*

2. It's necessary as a mean to Conversion and Salvation; for *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God.* We can't hear without a Preacher, and he can't preach without he be sent, Rom. 10.

3. He that neglects hearing the Word of God, when he has Opportunity, despises Christ, Luke 10. 11, 16.

4. The Consideration of the *State of the Damned*, is a sufficient Excitement to this Practice; who for despising the Light, are put into utter Darkness.

I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT.

And,

1. Seeing all Men in general, are *Earth*; This should learn us to be *humble*. How vain and foolish is it to be proud of Beauty, or Apparel? Time will soon draw Furrows in your Faces; and the *Grave*, to which you are hastening, will quickly consume these Bodies, which you are now pampering, and reduce them to gashful *Skeletons*! And are not our *Garbs* Signatures of Shame, seeing our Sin produc'd the Necessity of them? Why then should Pride sit upon their Skirts? And,

2. Seeing that *covetous Sinners*, in particular, are *Earth*; this learns us the dangerous State of such Men. Which appears in the following Particulars,

1. God *hates* them; Psal. 10. 3. *For the Wicked boasteth of his Hearts Desire, and blessing to the Covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth!* Tho' wicked People praise
such

such *Nabals*, and call them *Industrious Men*; yet the great God abhors them.

2. The Lord *curses* them; Hab. 2. 6. *Wo unto him that ladeth himself with thick Clay.*

3. The Lord will *distroy* and *condemn* the Covetous, James 2. 13. *For he shall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath shew'd no Mercy. Those that will be rich, saith the Apostle Paul to Timothy, fall into many hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition.*

The 2d USE is of *Examination.*

Pray, my Brethren, let us examine our selves; and see, if the aforesaid *Characters* of Unregeneracy and Covetousness, do not cleave close to some of us? For do ye not live securely and contentedly in a State and Course of Sin? Without ever being thoroughly convinc'd of the Evil and Danger of either? Do not your Affections, Thoughts, Speeches and Actions most freely and generally run to the World and the Flesh? And are not you more delighted with earthly Things than heavenly, for the chief Part of your Time? And do not some of us either *neglect* to hear the Word of God, some times when we have Opportunity to hear, through Sloth or Indifference? Or, If we do hear, do it not believing, attentively, applicatively, obediently; but on the contrary, hear it only as the *Word of a Man*, with Indifference, not applyi g our own Portion, or doing according to what we hear; but observing People's Cloaths & Carriage, more than the Word that is spoken; or applying Portions to other People, while in the mean time we neglect our selves. Alas! How many forget the Word, and that through Carelessness, as soon as they hear it. As for such who Desire and Endeavour to remember the sacred Truths they hear, and yet cannot as they would; the gracious God will pity their Weakness, and help them. And how soon do many talk of worldly Things after hearing God's Word upon his own Day? This is a plain Evidence, that they don't hear aright, viz. as *the Word of the living God,*

which

which they shall quickly give account of before his Bar.

Be exhorted then, *Sirs*, in the Name of Christ, to endeavour to hear the Word of God in a right Manner. *O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear ye the Lord of the Lord.* And to this End avoid the following Hindrances, viz. *Pride*, (Jer. 13. 17.) *Prejudice*, and *Mistrings of Heart*. And on the contrary, ye should take *Pains* with your Hearts before you come to hear ; and encourage good Motions rais'd in you by the Word ; thro' earnest Supplication to God, and laborious Practice of your Duty.

To excite you to this, consider,

(1.) That but *few* hear aright. In the Parable of the Sower, *three* Sorts were bad, and but *one* good.

(2.) Bare hearing the Word of God, unless you *comply therewith*, will but encrease your Damnation. It shall be more tollerable for *Sodom* and *Gomor, ha* than for you.

(3.) You must *Reckon with God* for your present Opportunities ; and unless you hear him now speaking to you by his Word, he will not hear you, when Desolation, Distress and Destruction comes as a Whirlwind upon you, but rather mock at your Calamities, *Prov. 1.* I add no more at present.



1 1 1

Legal Bow bent,

O R,

Arrows on the String,

Against the

K I N G's Enemies.

I N T W O

D I S C O U R S E S

On *Psal.* 45. 3, 4, 5.

W H E R E I N

The natural Enmity of secure Sinners against CHRIST;
and the Manner of their Reduction to his Obedience,
by a Work of Conviction, is described.

Preach'd at *New-Brunswick* in *New-Jersey*,

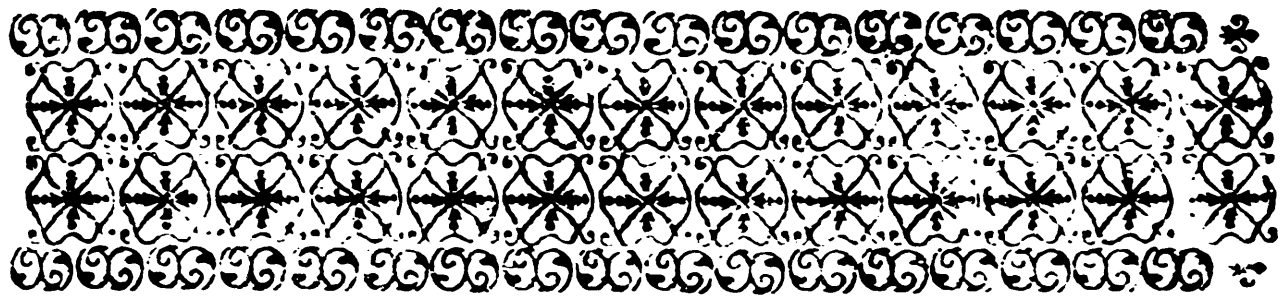
April 23. 1738.

By Gilbert Tennent, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel there.

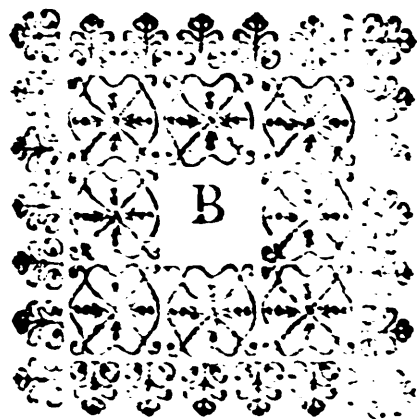
Jer. 23. 29. Is not my Word like as a Fire, saith the Lord? And like a Hammer that breaketh the Rock in Pieces?

B O S T O N : Printed in the Year 1739.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,



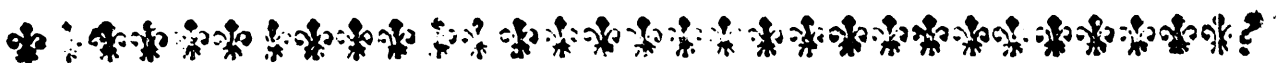
Being thoroughly convinc'd, by Scripture, Reason, Experience, and the universal Consent of the most godly, eminent, and useful Divines of the Protestant Churches, as well as by the Suffrage of the antient Fathers; of the great Necessity of a Work of *Humiliation, or Conviction*, in order to a sound *Conversion* from Sin and Satan, to God and Holiness. And perceiving, to my Sorrow, the gross Ignorance of this important Truth, greatly prevailing among many Professors of the present Generation; and thereby a presumptuous Security fatally introduc'd, whereby Multitudes of precious Souls are in the utmost Hazard of being deceived into eternal Damnation; for hereby they are inclin'd to content themselves with a dead Form of Piety, resulting from a religious Education, and historical Faith; instead of seeking after the Power and Life of Christianity. Nay, some of them are so far from this, that, with the *Pharisees* of old, through Ignorance and Enmity, they oppose it with the most implacable Spite, as tho' it were an enthusiastical Delusion! I say, Perceiving and considering the aforesaid Particulars,

The P R E F A C E.

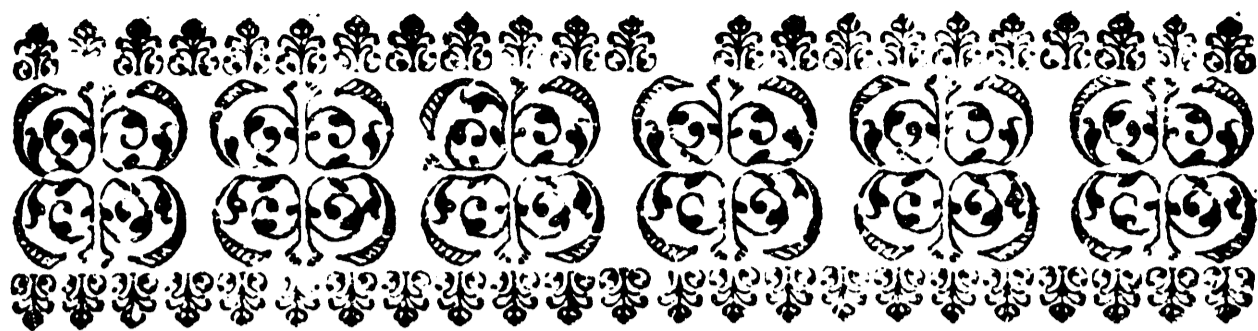
lars, I have thought it my Duty, to insist frequently upon this Subject in the Course of my Ministry ; and therefore do now, not unwillingly, offer some of my Thoughts upon it to publick View ; being perswaded that the Subject is suitable to the present Times ; & I cannot but wish with all my Heart, that the aforesaid Subject was more frequently and generally insisted on, both from the Press and Pulpit, than it is ! I am perswaded it would conduce much to promote, and spread vital Religion, thro' the Nations ; which is at present, alas for it ! in many Places, in a very languishing State. Smooth Stories about *Moral Virtue*, and the sweet Anodynes of the precious Promises promiscuously propos'd, will not do to alarm this lethargick Generation, out of their perilous Slumbers ; No ! No ! The Ax must be laid to the *Root* of the Tree, before it will bring forth good Fruit ; the Deceits of the Heart and Dangers of a secure State, must be declar'd and denounc'd with Plainness and Pungency. Pretending to build before the Foundation is laid, is very ridiculous ! It's pitty then it should be so frequently attempted as it is.

O Reader ! I beseech thee, for Christ's Sake, to examine thy State by the following Discourses. If thou hast not had a Work of Conviction or Humiliation wrought in thee, trust not the transient Tears of thy Affections, and outward Strictness of thy Life ; for these, without the former, are (ordinarily) but the Produce of selfish Nature, the common Workings of the Spirit, or a Delusion of the Devil. I remain thy Servant for Jesus Sake.

G. T.



T H E



T H E

Legal Bow bent,

O R,

Arrows on the String,

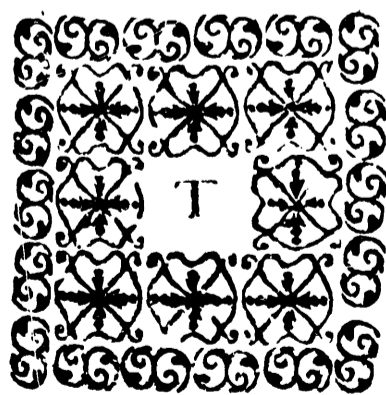
Against the

K I N G's Enemies.



P S A L. 45. 3, 4, 5.

Thine Arrows are sharp in the Heart of the King's Enemies ; whereby the People fall under thee.



TH E S E Verses do nobly point out the glorious State, and unbroken Strength, of the *Messiah's* Kingdom ; and the magnificent Triumphs of the victorious Arms of *Zion's* King, over all his Enemies, either in Mercy or Judgment, for their deep Humiliation or eternal Damnation ; their Conviction or Confusion. And in them we have more particularly these 4 Things considerable,

considerable, (1.) *The Character of the Messiah's Person.* (2.) *The Scope of his Wars.* (3.) *His martial Furniture.* (4.) *The Success of his Arms.*

And,

(1.) We have the *Character of the Messiah's Person*, viz. That he is *most Mighty*. This indeed is one of his Titles of Honour, *Isa. 9. 6. The mighty God of Hosts, the everlasting Father.*--- *To him all Power is given in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 28. 18. He hath on his Forehead, and on his Thigh, a Name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS ! Rev. 19. 16.* It's doubtless the infinite Power of Christ, which makes him so successful and victorious in all his warlike Expeditions; and more than a Match for all the Creation of God ! But,

(2.) We have an Account of the *Scope and Design of his Wars*; and that is to promote the valuable Interests of *Truth, Meekness, and Righteousness*; which had almost perished off the Earth. Christ himself is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; the Substance of all the antient Prophecies and Types. And in respect of his *Meekness*, he is compared to a *Lamb*, which when it is led to the Slaughter, openeth not his Mouth; and in him, who is *the Lord our Righteousness*, the great God has declar'd his Righteousness or Justice in a wonderful Manner; viz. In afflicting his beloved Son with the Punishments, which they whom he represented deserved; rather than that Sin should pass unpunished! "And indeed it is
 " the great Drift of the Gospel of Christ, which is Truth
 " in its Histories, Meekness in its Promises, and Right-
 " teousness in its Precepts; to establish Truth in Speech,
 " Meekness in Disposition, and Righteousness in Action;
 " and so far as the Gospel prevails with Men, it rectifies
 " their Mistakes by the Light of Truth, controuls their
 " Passions by the Power of Meekness, and governs their
 " Hearts & Lives by the Laws of Righteousness." The whole Frame of the Gospel is calculated to destroy the Works of the Devil, & conform Men to the Image of the most high God, which consists in Righteousness and true Holiness.

But,

But,

(3.) We have an account of the *martial Furniture* of the King, viz. his *Sword*, his *Glory*, and his *Majesty*. By the *Sword* we are to understand the *Word of God*, for this is call'd *the Sword of his Spirit*; by the *Threatnings* of the *Word* secure Sinners are convinc'd, and by the *Promises* of the *Word* convinc'd Sinners are perswaded to embrace Christ as a King, and submit to his Government. When the King's Arrows are sharp in the Hearts of his Enemies, then do the People fall under him. This *Sword*, which is girt on the Thigh of Christ, is the same which is said to proceed out of his Mouth, *Rev. 19. 15.* When the blessed Apostles were sent to evangelize the Nations, then the almighty JESUS girt his *Sword* upon his Thigh, and especially when he accompanies the *Word* preached with his holy Spirit, and makes it sharper than any two-edged *Sword* in the Hearts of Men. O then! he appears in the Eyes of Sinners, in his *Glory* and *Majesty*; they behold with *Amazement* and *Terror*, the *Glory* of his *Justice*; and the *Majesty* of his *Power* and *Greatness*: And when it pleases the eternal Son of God to apply effectually the precious *Promises* of the *Word* to Sinners, then do they behold with *Wonder* and *Ravishment*, the surprising *Glory* of the Redeemer's *Grace* and *Love*; and the inexpressible *Lustre* and amiable *Majesty* of his *Person*! O how dear and precious! How stately and glorious! How lovely and magnificent! does the unspcakably precious and very venerable Lord Jesus appear in the Eyes of his People, in the Day of his *Power*, in the Day of his *Espousals*! *And in thy Majesty ride prosperously*; this signifies both the *Promise* of his *Father*, that he should do so, i. e. That *the Pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his Hands*; that he should see the *Travail of his Soul*; and divide the *Spoil with the strong*, *Isai. 53. 10, 11, 12.* and the *Petition* of his *People*, that he would do so; namely, that he wou'd exert the *Glory* of his *Power* and *Grace*, in subduing Sinners to his *Obedience*, and in destroying implacable *Enemies*. *Ride prosperously*, this Phrase alludes to Kings who were wont at their

Coronation

Coronation, to ride upon a gallant Steed ; or after a Victory, to sit in a triumphal Chariot ; the white Horse upon which our Jesus rides, is the *Word of Truth*, the *Gospel of Salvation*, Eph. 1. 13. Rev. 19. 11. He is the faithful Witness, who in Righteousness makes War ; whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, and whose Head is covered with many Crowns ; whose Vesture is dyed in Blood, and whose Mouth sends forth a sharp Sword, which smites the Nations, Rev. 19. *Thy right Hand shall teach thee terrible Things*, i. e. Thy almighty Power, concurring with thy Word, shall produce Terrors in Sinner's Hearts, that thereby they may be brought to bow to the Scepter of the King ; and submit to the Laws of his Government, *John* 16. 8. This is more fully declar'd in the Words of our Text ; which contains two things remarkable.

(1.) A Description of the *Nature of Men* ; they are, while unconverted, *Enemies, Rebels*.

(2.) A Description of the *Manner of their Reduction* to a State of Subjection and Friendship ; and that is by the *King's Arrows* being *sharp in their Hearts* ; by which we are to understand the *Threatnings* of his Word, apply'd by his Spirit to their Consciences ; *Acts* 2. 37. When this is done, then, and not till then, do Sinners cast down their rebellious Arms, and fall prostrate at the conquering Saviour's Feet, covered with Shame and Trembling, with Dread of his just Revenge. Then do Sinners sue for Mercy earnestly, and submit to the Terms of it sincerely ; then do the People fall under Christ, acknowledge his glorious Sovereignty, submit to his commanding Authority, and implore his pardoning Mercy. There is doubtless an Allusion in the Phrase, to those who are overcome in War ; *Psal.* 18. 38, 39. With what submissive Court, and piteous Crys, will such supplicate the Conqueror, for their Lives ; when they see the Sword drawn by which they are ready to be slain ; but such, who being pierced by the King's Arrows, refuse Submission to his Government ; shall be brought forth and stabb'd to Death before him ! *Luke* 19. 27. Such Convictions are the Wounds of Enemies ;

a Savour of Death unto Death, and a dreadful Prefage of an aggravated Damnation; for Zion's King will be victorious over his Enemies: They must either fall under the reasonable Government of his Laws; or under the fearful Crush of the Feet of his Justice, which are like unto fine Brass burning in a Furnace, *Rev. 1. 15.* By which they shall be ground to Powder, *Matth. 21. 44.* They must either bow to the mild and equal Scepter of his holy Word, or be broken by the wrathful Stroaks of his Iron Rod! From the Words of our Text I observe these two *Doctrines* following, viz.

1. *That all unconvinc'd and carnal Sinners are Enemies to the King of Zion.*

And;

2. *That secure Sinners must be convinc'd by the Word of Christ, before they will submit to his Government.* His Arrows must be sharp in their Hearts, before they will fall under him.

I return to consider the

1st *Doctrine*, which was this, *That all secure and carnal Sinners are Enemies to Christ, the King of Zion.*

In their Hearts they entertain mean and low Thoughts of him; they see no Beauty in him, that they should desire him, *Isai. 53. Psal. 22. 6. I am a Worm and no Man, a Reproach of Men, and despis'd of the People;* and some are not ashamed to express their mean Thoughts of Christ in Words, either wondering at the Pains some enlightened Persons take in seeking him, with the blinded Daughters of Jerusalem; *Cant. 5. 6. What is thy Beloved more than another's Beloved?* As if they had said, What needs all this Pain and Labour in Pursuit of Christ? We cannot see any such peculiar Excellency in him as deserves it! Others fearlessly rend his venerable Name, and contemn his bitter Sufferings, by prophane Oaths; but let such remember, that the righteous God will not hold them guiltless, *Exod. 20. 7.* And that that Jesus whom they now so insolently and ungratefully despise, will come one Day with great Glory and Majesty, to execute Judgment

N

upon

upon all, and to convince all that are Ungodly of their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him, Jude 14, 15. And whatever vain Pretences some secure and carnal Sinners, may make of Love to Christ; do not all of them prove themselves to be Enemies to his Cross, by their Lives? While their God is their Pelly, their Glory their Shame, and they mind ea they Things, Phil. 3. 18, 19. Indeed, like Judas the Traitor, they salute him with an *hail Master*, and a *Kiss*, by their fair Profession, but in the mean Time crucify him by a filthy Conversation.

The inspired Apostle Paul, bears Witness to the awful Charge contained in the Doctrine I am discoursing upon. Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not Subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* O dreadful! Enmity is a high Degree of fix'd and inveterate Anger, Spite and Revenge; and yet the Witness is true, as will appear by what follows;

For,

1. Secure and carnal Sinners hate the Father of Christ, because of his glorious Perfections, especially these following, namely, his Holiness, Justice, and Sovereignty. His Holiness they dislike and harbour mean Thoughts of, Psal. 50. 21. *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self.* His Justice they dread to think upon, as the Thief of the Gallows, they put the evil Day afar off, Amos 6. 3. And cry Peace, Peace, while a sudden certain and dreadful Destruction hastens to embrace them, with its open Arms, 1 Thes. 5. 3. His Sovereignty, they through the Pride of their Hearts despise and disgust, they say they are Lords, they will come no more to him, Jer. 2. 31.

2. Secure Sinners hate the Person of Christ, especially because of his kingly Office, and strict Government; they will not have this Man to rule over them, Luke 19. 27. They hate the Laws of his Government; and imagine Obedience to them to be Slavery, although it be real Liberty; for, *if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed*, John 8. 36. The great Ones of the Earth take Counsel (join in a hellish League or Cabal) against
the

the Lord and his Anointed saying, *Let us break their Bands asunder, and cast their Cords from us*, Pſal. 2. 2, 3. And eſpecially thoſe Laws of Chriſt, which bear hard upon their pleaſant or gainful Luſts, are grievous to them, ſo that they ſecretly wiſh in their Hearts, that there were no ſuch Laws, that ſo they might take their full Swing in Wickedneſs; they atheiſtically queſtion the Truth of Chriſt in his Threatnings, and impiouſly contemn his Authority in his Precepts.

3. Secure Sinners hate the *Spirit of Chriſt*, which appears plainly in their oppoſing his convincing Work, in themſelves and others: What holy *Stephen* ſaid of the unbelieving *Jews*, I may aſſert of the unconvinc'd *Gentiles*; Acts 7. 51. *Ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſ'd in Heart and Ears, ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt: as your Fathers did, ſo do ye.* There is ſuch brutiſh Ignorance blended with helliſh Spite in unconverted Sinners, that as they (moſtly) are afraid of being convinc'd, and therefore they fooliſhly fear, and carefully ſhun cloſe Converſation with ſuch godly Perſons, as they think wou'd tell them their Danger; ſo when an unexpected Arrow from the Bow of God pierces them, they try, with all their Might to pluck it out; and if they can't cure themſelves by their carnal Prayers, ſome will fly to the *World*, with *Cain*, to drown their Troubles, with the Din and Cares of it; but if that won't do, they'll flee to *Diverſions* and *vain Company*, as troubled *Saul* to his Fiddle; and if this won't do, they'll drink ſtrong Liquors to remove their Melancholy, as they ſally and fooliſhly call the Conviction of God's Spirit in them: Verily they are under Conviction like a *young Bullock*, when the Yoke is firſt put on him; Jer. 31. 18. Or like a *wild Colt* when it's firſt bridled and rid, Job 11. 12. Trying every Way they can to get it off; and if through the Aſſiſtance of the Devil, or his Friends, they get it off, any way, they are heartily glad, and think themſelves well off indeed. O horrible Ignorance! And ſtupid Madneſs! What well off, when ye are forſaken of God! and prepar'd for Deſtruction?

And as secure Sinners oppose the Work of the Spirit of Christ in *themselves*, so they oppose it in *others*, either in a greater or lesser Degree: They don't like to hear of any convinc'd of, or distressed for Sin; they are apt to imagine that such are greater Sinners than others: But let such consider those Words of Christ, *Luke 13. 3.* Or they'll pity them who are under Soul-Trouble, for they are presently afraid that they'll get into Dispair and kill themselves: Ah, ye poor blinded Creatures! ye have more need to pity yourselves, for you are in a much worse Case than they; they are sensible of their Danger and so like to escape for their Lives to Christ; but you are going to Hell with a Lie in your Right Hand, and know it not; ye are in that Way which seems right to a Man, the End whereof is the Way of Death; the God of this World has blinded your Eyes, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel should shine upon you, and ye should be saved. Remember ye sleeping Hypocrites, and tremble at these awful Words of Christ, *John 9. 39.* *For Judgment I am come into the World, that these that see not might see, and that those that see, might be made blind,* i. e. That such who are puff'd up with groundless Conceits of their Wisdom and Righteousness, (as ye are) might be given up to a judicial Blindness and Infatuation; while the humble and sensible Sinner is enlightned with a saving Knowledge.

But some will go further, and try by Counsels or Scoffs, to murder beginning Convictions in others; they will tell them, Why, what need you be so much troubled, you have never been guilty of Murder, or Theft, or any such gross Crimes; you have done this and that good Action, and God is merciful; what, are you wiser than your Forefathers, and the chief of the Country? Others banter and laugh at People under Soul-Troubles, and esteem them crack-brain'd, because they mourn for their Sins, and labour to fly from the Wrath to come! Thus like the old *Pharisees*, They neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that are entering to enter. O dreadful Spite!

4. Secure Sinners hate the *People of Christ* in general, because of their Piety, as *Cain* did his Brother *Abel*, 1 John 3. 12. *If they were of the World the World would love them ; but because they are not of the World, therefore the World hateth them ;* saith the blessed Jesus, John 15. 19. There are these *seven Evidences* of their Hatred against them,

(1.) They *shun* them (especially when they have much of the divine Presence) as a Thing they hate.

(2.) They *rejoice to hear of their Falls* ; these give Ease to their guilty Consciences which were gall'd before by the Holiness of their Lives.

(3.) They sometimes *invent slanderous Reports* against them, to blacken their Character ; so the Prophets of old, so Christ and his Apostles were treated.

(4.) They unjustly *heighten their real Blemishes*, in their Representation of them.

(5.) They charge the *whole Body* with the Faults of *some*.

(6.) They *judge them rashly* to be *Hypocrites*, without any Evidence from their Lives ; thus they blasphemously take to themselves, one of God's incommunicable Attributes.

(7.) They *nick-name their Vertues* ; they ascribe their best Works to a secret bad Cause. Thus the *Pharisees* dealt with our Saviour, Luke 11. 15. Their *Zeal* they term *Faction*, Phrensy or Imprudence : So *Elijah* was treated by *Ahab*, as a *Troubler of Israel* ; yea CHRIST himself, and the Apostle *Paul*, were deemed to be out of their Wits, because of their Zeal ; their Meekness and Patience, is term'd Meanness of Spirit and Cowardise ; their Heavenliness and Diligence in the Duties of Religion, is term'd Simplicity and Sloth. Thus secure and carnal Sinners belch out their Serpentine Venom against the shining Piety of God's People ; like Dogs barking at the Moon, because of its Brightness.

5. Secure and carnal Sinners hate the *faithful Ministers of Christ* in particular ; as *Ahab* did *Micajah*, because they never Prophecy good of them but evil : Their close and powerful Preaching of the Word of Christ,

frets their Consciences, and make them Storm and Rage ; when *Stephen*, being full of the Holy Ghost, had told his Hearers plainly their Condition, they were *cut to the Heart, and gnashed upon him with their Teeth*, Acts. 7. 54.

But I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT of this Doctrine.

And from it we may learn,

1. The *horrible Depravity of the human Nature*, in that it is not only void of Good, but has the strongest Antipathy against it, *Rom. 7. 18*. This affords sufficient Matter of Shame and Humiliation : What a dreadful Sight is it, to see a Worm, that receiv'd its Being and all its Benefits from God, swell'd big with Spite against its Maker and Preserver ! And this is indeed the Case of every natural Man.

2. Hence we may learn, the absolute Necessity of *Reconciliation to God* by the Blood of Christ, and *Renovation* by his Spirit, in order to eternal Salvation. For there is both a legal and moral Unfitness, in all carnal and secure People for Heaven ; they are condemn'd by the Law as Rebels and Enemies, *Gal. 3. 10*. And they have Dispositions of Heart opposite to the Holiness of God ; now the first must be remov'd by *Justification*, and the latter by *Conversion*, otherwise they can't be saved, *Rom. 5. 1. John 3. 3*. It's against Reason to believe that God will take Rebels and Enemies, either in State or Disposition, into his Bosom.

3. If the Case be so, as has been represented, then we need not wonder at wicked Men's *Snarling* against godly Ministers and pious People, as if some strange Thing happened ; there is an *Enmity* put between the *Seed of the Woman* and the *Seed of the Serpent* ; and therefore, as it was of old, so it is now, *He that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*. The better you are, and the more good you do the more you will be hated by the Devil and his Children ; for *he that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution*. But, *If God be for you, who shall be against you?*

I hasten to the

2d USE, which is of *Examination* and *Conviction*. Have ye ever found your selves *Enemies* to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and to the People and Servants of God? Methinks I hear some of you answer me as *Hazael* did *Elisha*, 2 Kings 8. 12, 13. when he told him what Wickedness he should do afterwards, *What is thy Servant a Dog, that I should do this thing?* What do you think I am such a Monster as to hate God, and his People? I scorn your Words! No, God be praised for it, I never hated God in my Life, nor any that was Good! But let me reply in the Name and Words of my Lord and Master; miserable Hypocrites; *If ye were blind, ye should have no Sin; but now ye say we see, therefore your Sin remains*, John 9. 41. If ye saw your Sin and Danger, and were humbled upon the account thereof, there would be great Hopes of your obtaining Pardon; but now because you are blind and puffed up, your Case is exceeding perilous and damnable! If ye never saw your selves *Enemies* to Christ, as was before described, and never were humbled on that account, as the Lord lives, you are *Enemies* to him, and *Rebels* against him this Moment. The Disease must be *known* and *felt*, before it be *remedy'd*.

All you *Rebels*, *Enemies* and *Hypocrites*, who carry on the aforesaid Enmity against God, his Work and People, I exhort for your Souls sake, and charge you before God, that you lay down your Arms immediately, and submit to the Terms of Peace proclaimed by the Gospel. For your Rebellion is *unjust*, against your rightful Lord who has made you; *ungrateful* against your gracious Lord who preserves you, and offers Peace upon easy and reasonable Terms; as well as *unreasonable* against your own Happiness. Ye cannot maintain a *War* with Success against a God of infinite Wisdom and almighty Power; who are but shallow, frail Creatures. *He is wise in Heart and mighty in Strength, who has hardened himself against him and prospered?* Therefore seek, seek speedily and sincerely, *Reconciliation* to that

God against whom you have rebell'd : And to this End strive to be convinc'd of and bewail your natural Enmity and Misery. Which naturally leads me to the

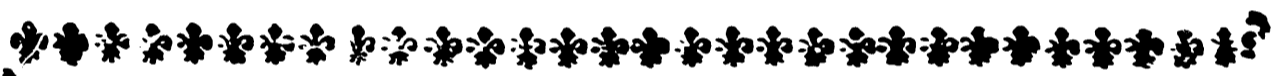
2d *Doctrine* I was to speak upon, which was this, namely, That the Hearts of secure Sinners must be pierc'd by *Christ's Arrows*, (or convinc'd by his *Word and Spirit*) before they will submit to his Government.

But the Consideration of this I shall leave till the Afternoon, and so conclude at present.





THE
Legal Bow bent,
 OR,
 Arrows on the String,
 Against the
 KING's Enemies.







S E R M O N II.

O N

P S A L. 45. 3, 4, 5.

Thine Arrows are sharp in the Heart of the King's Enemies: whereby the People fall under thee.

 N the Forenoon I discours'd upon the *natural Enmity* of secure Sinners against
 I  Christ. I proceed now to observe the following *Doctrinal Proposition*, which is
 this, namely,

That the Hearts of secure Sinners must be pierc'd by Christ's Arrows, (or convinc'd by his Word and Spirit) before they will submit to his Government.

In

In discoursing upon which I shall pursue the following Order, (1) Open the *Nature of Conviction*. (2) Explain the *Nature of Subjection to Christ*. (3.) Shew the *Necessity* of the former in order to obtain the latter. And lastly, *improve* the whole to practice.

And,

1. I am to open the *Nature of Conviction*. To which purpose it will be necessary to speak to these four things respecting it, viz. Its *Kinds, Causes, Ingredients* and *Effects*. And,

1. Conviction may be said to be two-fold, viz. *legal* and *evangelical*, the *first* principally springs from *Fear*, and goes before Conversion, *Rom. 8. 15*. The *latter* chiefly from *Love*, and follows after it, *Isal. 51. 4*

2. As to the *Causes* of Conviction, let it be observ'd,

1. That the *impulsive* or *first moving Cause* of that Conviction which has a saving Issue, is the *elective Love of God*. *Rom. 8. 30*.

2. That the *meritorious* or *deserving Cause* is the *Death of Christ*, *Eph. 1. 3, 4*.

3. That the *instrumental Cause* (generally) or usual Mean of Conviction, is the Word preach'd; and hence it's compar'd to *fire*, and a *Hammer that breaks the Rock in Pieces*, *Jer. 13. 20*. Because as Fire dissolves hard Metals, so does the Word when apply'd by the Spirit of God, dissolve hard Hearts; *Saul* and *Mary Magdalen* are eminent Proofs of this Truth, *Acts 9. 6. Luke 7. 44*. Also as Fire pains living Bodies, so the Word apply'd to hell's guilty Consciences, *Prov. 18. 14*. And as a Hammer in the Workman's Hand, serves to break Rocks and fasten Nails; so the Word apply'd by the Spirit, forms, fastens, and clinches Convictions, as a Nail in a fire Place, *Ecc. 12. 11*. It's on this Account also that the Word is compar'd in our Context, to a *Sword girt on the Thigh of Christ*; and elsewhere to a *Two-edged Sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit*, *Heb. 4. 12*. To a *sharp two-edged Sword, proceeding out of Christ's Mouth*, because of it's quick and penetrating Vertue; which speedily and powerfully pierces the innermost Parts of the Soul, as a Sword the Body; as also

because

because of its contrary Effects upon different Persons, as a Sword with two Edges cuts contrary Ways; so the Stabs of this Sword of God, when improv'd, issue in the Conversion of some, and so prove a Saviour of Life unto Life: And being oppos'd and abus'd by others, issue in their Obduration, and so are to them a Saviour of Death unto Death, the Wounds of an Enemy. To this Purpose it is, that the *Law* which is usually the chief Instrument of the Conviction of Sinners, is compar'd to a *Schoolmaster*, Gal. 3. 24. As a Schoolmaster scourges unto-ward Children, to bring them to their Duty, so the Almighty God by the Curses of the Law, as by so many Steel Whips, scourges the Consciences of the Secure, that by the Smart of their Miſery, and Sense of their Inability to help themselves, they may be brought to a blessed Necessity, of flying to Christ for Pardon through his Blood alone, Gal. 3. 24. And hence it is that the *Threats* of the Law are compar'd to *Arrows* in our Text, for these Reasons,

(1.) As an Arrow of *itself* can do no Execution, so the Threatning of the Law or Gospel, however severely denounc'd, will not, cannot, of *themselves*, awaken the secure; the Word has no inherent Vertue in it, to produce such an Effect; no, in this Respect it's like the Pool of *Bethesda*, into which the Angel descended at particular Times, and troubled the Waters.

(2.) But when an Arrow is taken into a skillful Artists Hand, and shot from a Bow well drawn, it will *hit the Mark*, and pierce between the Joynts of the Harness. so a Threatning, shot by the Holy Spirit from the Bow of the Law, will surely *pierce the guilty Soul* it's aim'd at, tho' circled with the greatest Croud, and arm'd with the strongest Prejudices, and rouse him from the Sleep of Death, to a smarting Sense of his Miſery; for surely the blessed Spirit never miss'd his Mark.

(3.) The Flight of an Arrow is *swift* and *strong*; so the Word of God, as the Apostle expresses it, is *quick* and *powerful*; *The Weapons of our Warfare*, says the same Apostle (meaning the Word of God) *are not carnal, but mighty through God; to the pulling down of strong Holds*

Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. The hardiest Sinner that ever breath'd must bow, when *Zion's* God and King girds his glittering Sword upon his Thigh, or bends his awful Bow, and shoots his barbed Arrows at him. And verily, it's wonderful to see, how suddenly and unexpectedly, both to themselves and others, secure Sinners are pierc'd by the Threats of the Word, just as with the sudden prick of an Arrow, stab of a Sword, or blow of a Hammer.

(4) The piercing of an Arrow will cause *great Pain*; and what Pain the Law apply'd to the Conscience, will occasion, we may see by the Behaviour of those *three thousand* that heard the Apostle *Peter*, Acts 2. 37.

(5.) Some Arrows are *barbed*, and some are not; a barbed Arrow is with great Difficulty pull'd out, but others more easily; thus some Convictions by the Law are but *superficial* and *general*, but Skin deep as it were, easily removed, which either dy away of their own accord, or may without great Difficulty be strangled by wicked Means: But others are *deep* reaching the Heart, and sharply wounding it to the Center: They are so fix'd, like an Arrow barb'd, that with all their tugging they can't get them out, till the Lord Jesus pulls them out by his own Hand, & heals the Wound by his Blood.

4. The *efficient Cause* or *Worker* of Conviction is the *Holy Spirit*; who is on this account call'd a *Spirit of Bondage and Fear*, Rom. 8. 15 2 Tim. 1. 7. Not that he brings any into Bondage; No! no! But because by his Light and Power, he makes secure and presumptuous Sinners sensible of that Bondage they have brought themselves into by Sin; and affects with Fear of that Punishment which is due to it. Before he shines into them by his Light and pierces them by his Power, they are sleeping in the thickest Darkness and deepest Security: And tho' they are in the greatest Dangers, and expos'd to the most dreadful Miseries; yet they are dreaming of nothing but Liberty, Safety and Happiness, *Joh 8. 33. Rev. 3. 17.*

But,

But,

3. The *Ingredients*, or Particulars, included in Conviction, are principally these three, viz. *A clear Sight of Sin, and the Miseries due to it; a distressing Sense of Sin, and despair of Relief in our selves from it.*

And,

1. There is in Conviction, *a clear Sight of Sin*; hence we are told, that it is the Design of the Ministry of the Word, *to open Sinner's Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light*; Acts 26. 18. And hence is that memorable Passage, 2 Cor 4. 6. *For God that commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shin'd into our Hearts.* It is the peculiar Office of the holy Spirit to *convince Men of Sin*, --- John 16. 8, 9. The holy Spirit often fastens Conviction on the Conscience of one Sin at first, by telling the Sinner as *Nathan* did *David*, *Thou art the Man* that's guilty of it; yet he after leads the Sinner to behold many others, with their Aggravations, *Psal.* 50. 21. Yea sometimes Sins committed many Years before, and forgotten, are brought fresh to their unwelcome Remembrance, *Gen.* 42. 21. *Job* 13. 26. From beholding the Sins of their Lives, they are led to behold the polluted Fountain in their Hearts; from which they proceed, *Psal.* 51. 5. The holy Spirit holds before the Eyes of their Mind, the pure Glass of God's Law, in its spiritual Extent; and shews their Iniquities therefrom, both in Heart and Life, and how they have exceeded, in Number and Heinousness, *Rom.* 7. 13. Being convinc'd of Sin in Heart and Life, they are made to see their perishing Condition because of both. *Luke* 15. 17. *I perish for Hunger*, said the Prodigal. They plainly perceive they must be lost forever, if they dye in the State they are in at present; and thus the Sinner is slain and smitten to Death by the Law, *Rom.* 7. 9, 10. The Sinner being thus convinc'd of Sin in Heart and Life, and of his State of Sin by Reason thereof, has the dreadful Scene of the last Judgment, and Torments of the damned World set before his Eyes, in the Night and in the Day, in a most affecting Light! *John* 16. 8. It seems as if he heard the sound of the last Trumpet, alarming

alarming the dead out of the Sleep of Death, as well as terrible Thunder Claps from above, and hideous Rumbings of Earthquakes from beneath; and at the same Time he sees all Nature in Confusion, the awful Judge seated on his Throne, and the whole Earth gathered before him, and himself among the rest, impanell'd at the Bar of the great God! It seems as if he heard that fearful Sentence pronounc'd from the Throne against him! *Go ye accursed into everlasting Burnings, prepared for the Devil & his Angels!* He also looks often into the Vault of Hell, by the Eyes of his Mind, and it seems to him, as if he saw the damned roul in Flames, and heard their dismal Roarings, Self-Revengees and Upbraidings, over their past Madness and present Misery; he looks upon this as his own Portion, (so continuing) for he hears his Condemnation founded from every Part of the Word of God, wherever he turns his Eyes. And the Thoughts of the *Eternity* of these Torments, pierce his Soul with inexpressible Anguish!

Now, It is a *clear Sight* of these things which the convinc'd Sinner has; as I observ'd before, which differs as much from the notional *View* he had of them formerly; as a Man's being actually in a Sea-fight, when he hears the roaring of the Cannons, and sees the Execution done by them, namely People falling down dead every where round him, and some with their Legs and Arms cut off, weltring in their rueful Gore, while in the meantime the Ship being wounded with the Bullets springs a Leak, and is sinking in the great Deeps; I say as much as this differs from a Sea-fight, which we only hear of by the Ear, or see drawn upon Paper.

But the 2d Particular included in Conviction, is a *distressing Sense of Sin, and the Miseries due to it*, Acts 2. 37. Although the Degrees of this Distress be various, in different Persons; yet thus far we may conclude concerning the *Properties* of it, viz

1. That it is such as *imbitters all Sin* to the convinc'd Soul, Jer. 2. 19. It makes those Lusts which were before *pleasant*, as *Gall and Wormwood*, Lam. 3. 19.

2. Such

2. Such as causes the humbled Sinner to *become himself* on the Account of Sin, with great Passion, because of his Folly and Ingratitude in it! *Jer. 31. 18.*

3. Such as causes *Shame, Self-Loathing and Abhorrence*, because of the vile Nature of Sin, and their Disingenuity in the Commission of it, and Continuance in it, *Jer. 31. 19. Ezek. 6. 9. Luke 18. 13.*

4. Such as *exceeds all Arrows* upon our worldly Accounts, *Zech. 12. 10.* This Distress swallows up all other Concerns, as the great Ocean the little Rivulets that run into it. When a poor Sinner sees his Salvation at Stake, all other things look like bare Dross and empty Trifles, in Comparison of this; he values not how other things go, if he can but secure that unspeakably important, necessary and everlasting Interest; and therefore his anxious Thoughts run this way continually, with the greatest Heart concern: Which is represented by these Phrases of a *broken and bruised Heart, Psal. 51. 17. Circumcising the Heart, breaking up the fallow Ground of the Heart, renting the Heart, pricking the Heart, and the King's Arrows being sharp in the Heart*, as in the Text. See *Jer. 4. 3, 4. Joel 2. 13.*

5. Such as makes a Person willing to *forsake all Sin*; and *close with an offered Saviour* on his own Terms. *Prov. 28. 13. John 1. 12.*

The 3d Ingredient or Particular included in Conviction, is *despair of Relief in our selves from Sin*. It is necessary that a Man be convinc'd of *Righteousness*, as well as of *Sin* and *Judgment*, *John 16. 8.* i. e. a Man must be made to see his absolute Need of the *Righteousness of Christ* for his Justification, and the Sufficiency thereof for that Purpose; otherwise he will never believe in him, or be saved by him. And to this End, the Sinner must be brought to despair of his own Righteousness, as utterly insufficient to help him out of his Distress. Convinc'd Sinners at first fly to their Duties as Saviours, for Help; and some indeed rest there and perish. They *seek Righteousness*, as it were, *by the Works of the Law*, and so do not obtain, *Rom. 9. 30, 31, 32.* But such as
 God

God intends Mercy for, he shews the Pollution of their Performances, and so helps them to loath them, and to fly to Jesus as the only Door of Hope, poor and helpless, for an Alms of pure Mercy, *Matth. 5. 3. Phil. 3. 7, 8.*

I proceed to consider the 4th Particular, which was to speak something of the *Effect* produc'd by Conviction. And,

1. One Effect is *Consternation*: The convinc'd Sinner is fill'd with a fearful Astonishment, thus it was with the *Faylor*, *Acts 16. 29. Then he call'd for a Light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? What a sudden and strange Alteration was wrought upon that Man? He who a few Hours before cruelly beat the Apostles, now falls down trembling at their Feet, enquiring of them the Way to Life, whom it's probable but a little before, he look'd upon to be the vilest Miscreants upon Earth: The like fearful Surprize the Apostle *Peter's* Hearers were put into, by his Sermon, *Acts 2. 37.* And persecuting *Saul* by hearing Christ's Voice, *Acts 9. 6. And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* It is enough to set the hardiest Mortal into a Fit of Trembling and Surprize, to behold themselves under the Guilt of Millions of Sins, the great God frowning from Heaven upon them, and his burning Vengeance every Moment ready to burst forth and consume them! To behold, I say, Hell open to receive them, and themselves on the very Brink of that dreadful Pit, every Moment ready to tumble down among Devils and damned Spirits! To hear the Law from *Sinai* cursing and condemning them; and in the mean time to feel themselves utterly unable by all their Doings to atone for the least of their Offences! Or help themselves out of their present Miseries! But as the aforefaid Particulars strike their *Fear*, so do these following their *Admiration*; namely, their former Ignorance of God, his Word, and Themselves; the divine Patience towards them; as well as their own, and others Folly!*

And,

And,

(1.) They are astonish'd at their *former Ignorance* ;

1. Of GOD ! They were won't in their prophane Thoughts of him, to rob him of his Justice, and liken him to themselves ; but now they see him to be a holy, dreadful Majesty, *who will by no Means clear the guilty !* Dan. 9. 4. They *only heard of him* before *by the hearing of the Ear*, but their Eye beholds him, *wherefore they abhor themselves*, and tremble before him ! Job 42.

2. Of God's *Word* : This they used to read formerly like an old Fable or Ballad, with Lightness and Irreverence, as if there were neither Truth nor Weight in it, and that very *seldom*, when they had nothing else to do ; but now they read it *frequently*, and hear it with Desire and Attention ; and at Times they see a divine Majesty shining in it, and feel an almighty Power working by it on their Hearts ; it's dreadful Threatnings make their Hearts tremble, *Isai. 66. 2.* So that they have an *inward Witness* of its Divinity. They used to take the holy Law of God in a gross and carnal Sense, as the *Pharisees* of old, as tho' it related only to *outward Acts* ; but now they see that it is *spiritual* and exceeding broad, condemning all abominable Thoughts, and sinful Motions, *Rom. 7. 14.* Again, they were won't to think that their Hearts were good, and that if they cou'd but regulate their Lives, they shou'd be sav'd : But now it amazes them to see the horrible Wickedness of their Hearts, which is like a Nest of Vipers ! *Jer 17. 9.* They perceive that all Sorts of Abominations are in it ; and that it is next to the Devil in Wickedness ! *Mat. 15. 19. Rom. 7. 18.* They see plainly that without a Change in it, they must be damn'd for ever ; this Sight of their Heart Corruptions, being somewhat exasperated by the Enemy ; and compar'd with the holy Law of God, shakes them exceedingly, they begin to think that they are Monsters by themselves, and that there is none in the World like them ! They think that there is some peculiar Treachery in their Hearts, that is not in any others, 1 *Tim. 1. 15.* And this inclines some to think that it is not any gracious Work they are under, but

rather that they are preparing as Vessels of Wrath for Destruction, and set up as Marks for the Arrows of divine Vengeance to pierce; and it is the aforesaid Sight that in some Measure inclines convinced Sinners so much to fear that God will not accept of them; that the Mercy of Grace is past, or that they have committed the unpardonable Sin. And it is this that makes them so much afraid to venture upon Christ, by believing.

2. They are astonished at the *divine Patience*, while they behold the spotless Holiness, and inflexible Justice of God, upon the one Hand, and their detestible Wickedness upon the other; they are as 'twere melted into Raptures of Amazement, that the righteous God has not cut them off before! by the Ax of his Justice. They wonder that some sudden Thunder-Bolt did not strike them dead and damned at one fatal Blow; and that the burdened Earth did not open its voracious Jaws, to devour them! O! The Thoughts of the abus'd and unwearied Patience of the blessed God, amazes their Minds, melts their Hearts, and makes Showers of Tears run down their Cheeks like Hail, or rather like Pearls!

3. They are astonished at their *own*, and *others Folly*, in continuing in Sin so long! Now they see, in an affecting Light, the odious Horrors, and inexpressible Dangers of Vice; the transcendent Charms of Christ, and infinite Importance of Holiness; and wonder that they did not before! They are apt to think that if others did but hear what affected them, they must needs be affected too. But upon Tryal, they soon find this to be but a Notion; but it is such a one as is owing to their clear Sight of Things. O! Now they wish from their Hearts that they had turned to God before! And grieve that they carried Satan's Yoke so long! And think it a strange thing, that the whole World is not affected with these things, that are so orient and important, as well as themselves!

2. Another Effect of Conviction is *Enquiry*. Acts 2. 37. *Men and Brethren, What shall we do?* They see and feel themselves in great Danger and Distress, and know not how to obtain Relief. Their carnal Wisdom

is brought to nought : They are maz'd and nonpluss'd, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. They are like People that are lost in a Wilderne s, and know not how to get out. And their Power and Righteousness is brought to nought in their Esteem ; they see they are but Weakness, Dross and Dung, *Phil.* 3. And their natural Pride is broken, *Mat.* 11. 29. These things encline them to ask Council of others (whom they apprehend able to give it) with great Earnestness and deep Concern ! *Acts* 16. 30 “ Do “ you think there was ever any Body in my Case ? Is “ there any Relief for me ? What shall I do to obtain “ it ? Alas, my poor Soul is in a most wretched Case ! “ Oh that I knew how to obtain Deliverance from the “ Wrath to come ! I wou'd be willing to do any thing “ or suffer any thing for it ! ” The Sinner at this Time, is like one who was to Travel with a precious Jewel, to a certain City, in Twenty four Hours, upon Pain of Death ; who had lost his Road and wandered into an howling Desert, till the Night drew its sable Wings over him, and knew not how to get out of it : How much wou'd such a Person be distress'd at the approach of the Darknes, as well as with the Fears of Wild Beasts and Robbers, of missing his Way, or coming too late to the Place appointed, least he should lose his Jewel, and his Life !

3. Another Effect of Conviction, is *earnest Prayer*. They us'd to perform this Duty but coldly, and perhaps but seldom, before their Eyes were opened ; but now their *whole Hearts* are engaged in it ; their Prayers are very frequent, and often fill'd with deep Sighs and Groans, and water'd with Tears ! *Acts* 9. 11. *Rom.* 8. 26. *Isai* 38. 5.

4. Another Effect is *Retirement and Solitude*. *Lam.* 3. 27, 28. *He sitteth alone and keepeth Silence, because he has burn it upon him.* Such as us'd to affect merry Companions before, now abhor them ! They say of *Laughter* (at this time) *that it is Mad,* and of *Mirth, What doth it ?* Their former *Lightness* and *Frothiness* is remov'd, and they become exceeding *serious* and *thoughtful* ; they creep into Corners, to ponder upon the *Miseries* of their

Condition ; and the solemn Subjects of Death, Judgment and Eternity exceedingly affect them in their Places of Retirement. There they labour to humble themselves before God, and pour out their whole Hearts before him. Lam. 3. 29. *He putteth his Mouth in the Dust if so be there may be Hope.*

5. Another Effect is *affociating with good People.* Their Judgment of Persons and Things is now very much alter'd ; such as they us'd to disesteem and avoid, now they Love, and want to converse with. Such as they think speak from Experience, with Humility and a Sense of Religion upon their Spirits, they love and keep Company with ; how much soever they may be despis'd by others, Cant. 6. 1.

6. Another Effect is *strong and earnest Desires after Christ*, Matth. 5. 6. O the insatiable Pantings, that are in such sick Souls after the Physician ! Matth. 9. 12. Nothing but the Application of his Blood and Righteousness, will satisfy them ; they feel an Emptiness in their Prayers, Tears, and all their Performances, till Christ come. They return praying from Prayer, and sorrowing from Sorrow, because of their defects, Phil. 3.

Again, I might further observe that poor convinc'd Sinners are won't to think that their Troubles are too small ; they would fain have them deeper, and they are also afraid that they will die away before they get Christ !

I proceed to consider the

2d General Head, which was to open the *Nature of Subjection to Christ's Government.* To this End I wou'd observe,

1. That it is *Evangelical*, from Love ; they are all Volunteers who are in Christ's Army ; he makes them *a willing People in the Day of his Power*, Psal. 110. 2.

2. *Universal*, Psal. 119. 6 *Then shall I not be ashamed when I have Respect unto all thy Commandments.*

3. *Sincere and spiritual*, Rom. 1. 9. *For God is my Witness, whom I serve with my Spirit, in the Gospel of his Son.*

A. Steady

4. Steady and uniform. *Pfal. 119. 112. I have inclin'd my Heart to perform thy Statutes always, to the End.*

I proceed to the

3d General Head, which was to prove *the Necessity of Conviction*, in order to obtain the aforesaid Subjection to Christ's Government. And,

1. It is necessary by the *Order of God*; hence secure Sinners are bid to *plow up the fallow Ground of their Hearts*; to *circumcise their Hearts*; to *rent their Hearts*; to *be afflicted, to mourn and weep*; to *let their Laughter be turn'd into Mourning, and their Joy into Heaviness*, James 4. 9. And hence we find encouraging Promises to the *bruised Reed*, the *contrite Heart*, the *Perious* that are *poor in Spirit*, and *tremble at God's Word*, and to those that *labour, and are heavy laden*, to those that are sick of Sin, and lost in their own Esteem and Feeling, *Isai. 42. 3. Psal 51. 17. Isai. 66. 2. Matth. 11. 28.*

And,

2. It is necessary in the *Order of Nature and Reason*, that a Person be first sensible of the Evil of Rebellion against his Prince, before he become a loyal Subject; that a Man be sensible of his Sickneis, before he be healed, *Matth 9. 12.*

3. It is necessary for the *Glory of God*; both that his absolute Sovereignty may be acknowledg'd, and his pure Mercy magnified; the proud Rebel will not bow before a sovereign God until the King's Arrows be sharp in his Heart, as our Text learns us; and indeed our Tho'ts of the Freeness and Riches of God's Mercy rise in Proportion to the Sense we have of our Danger without it, and Unworthiness of it.

4. Conviction is necessary for our *own Benefit*. Without this, secure Sinners will not esteem the Saviour highly, desire him earnestly, close with him sincerely, cleave to him closely and steadily, and labour for an Interest in him vehemently; for, *the whole need not the Physician, but the sick*, i. e. they feel not their Need of him, *Matth. 9. 12.* Before the *Israelites* look'd to the *Brazen Serpent*, which was a Type of Christ; they

were stung by the fiery Serpents. *The Spirit of Bondage* must go before the *Spirit of Adoption*, Rom. 8. 15. *From the Days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven suffered Violence*; When the People were awaken'd by his terrifying Preaching, then they were violent in labouring for their Salvation, and not before. But more particularly, Conviction is necessary to promote,

(1.) Our *Justification*. 'Till the Law and divine Justice punish us for our lives, we will not fly to the Horns of the Altar, or City of Refuge, Christ Jesus; as the only Door of Hope, with *Jeab* and the Manslayer under the Law. The Prodigal would not come to his Father till he was ready to famish, *Luke* 15. Neither would that Woman that had the bloody Issue come to Christ, while she had a Penny to spend upon the Physicians, *Luke* 8. 43.

(2.) Our *Sanctification*. A Sight of our own Hearts tends to humble us, a Sight of the Danger and a Sense of the Bitterness of Sin, tends to divorce Affections from it, for the present, and to make us watchful, lest we fall into it, for the future. The burnt Child dreads the Fire.

(3.) Conviction promotes our *Consolation*; For the greater our Sense is of any Misery, the greater, by Consequence, will be the Joy of a Deliverance from it. Now the greater our Distresses and Deliverances have been, they are the better remembered; and thus Faith is thereby the more strengthened; which is the general Conduit of all our Comforts. But,

5. Conviction is necessary upon the *account of others*, to prevent their having mean Thoughts of the Mercy and Holiness of God; and to excite in them some dread of Sin and Thoughts of their Danger, when they see others suffering so much for it. Conviction when it comes to a good Issue, makes Persons skilful in dealing with troubled Souls; Experience is most certainly a sweet Guide in these Matters, and helps Persons to speak with greater Clearness and Feeling about them. O! This make their Bowels yern towards such as they see under Soul Trouble! There are the Interpreters one among

a Thousand, that can shew a Man his Righteousness. That Reverend Man of God Mr. *Bolton*, in his Book of *Instructions, for a right comforting of afflicted Consciences*, proves what I have been offering and confirming under this Head, to be the Opinion both of the antient and modern Divines : And to this Purpose he cites the Words of *Austin, Chrysoſtom, Bernard, Peter Martyr, Calvin, Musculus, Beza, Tilanus, Rolock, Chemnitius, Davenant, The Westminster Assembly of Divines*, in their Sum of Christian Doctrine ; *Perkins, Greenham, Hierom, Forbes, Gouge, Yates, Slater, Dike, Culverwell, Throgmorton, Baine, Cade, Dr. Sibbs, Rogers of Dedbam, and Hooker* ; to which, if there was any Necessity, we might add another Cloud of Witnesses ; but having the *Testimony of God himself*, I think it may suffice us.

I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT.

And,

I. What has been said serves to *justify* those honest Servants of Christ, who endeavour, by proper Methods, first to awaken Sinners out of their Security, and convince them of their lost Condition ; before they apply Comfort to them. This is conform'd to the Practice of the *blessed Trinity*.

God the *Father* first convinc'd sinning *Adam* of his Fault, by a close Application, before he made mention of the promis'd Seed, *Gen. 3.*

God the *Son*, in his Discourses to the *Pharisees*, denounc'd many Curses against them, in order to alarm them ; and first convinc'd persecuting *Saul* of his Sin, before he sent *Ananias* to comfort him.

God the *Holy Ghost*, convinces of Sin, before he convinces of Righteousness, (*John 16. 8.*) or comforts by it.

The Prophets of old were obliged by divine Warrant to *cry aloud*, and not spare, either themselves, or the People ; and such as were faithful of them did so, see *Hosea 6. 4, 5.* The Lord complains of *Ephraim's* Instability in the 4th Verse ; in the 5th he informs us that he therefore hew'd them by his Prophets ; This supposes

that their Instability in Religion was owing to their Want of Conviction : The Almighty compares the secure *Israelites* to knotty Timber, which needs the broad Ax to hew it, and fit it for a Building. And sometimes the great God compares Sinners to Rocks, which must be broke before they are put into a House, to which purpose the Hammer is necessary ; so that the Sermons of faithful Ministers have been, and should be, like Sledge Hammers, sharp Axes and Arrows, weighty, cutting and pricking to the Hearts and Consciences of secure Sinners ! The Ministers of the New Testament have us'd this Method ; the Apostle *Peter* prick'd his Hearers in their Hearts, by his close pointed Discourse ; and *Stephen* cut them in their Hearts, *Acts* 7. And *John* the Baptist held the Ax of God's Judgments, which was ready to stub them up Root and Branch, before the Eyes of the secure *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* ; and told them plainly that they were a *Generation of Vipers* ; this was but a *coarse Compliment* you'll say, but it was the *Truth*, and that must be told, let who will take Snuff and be offended. You see this honest Man did not go about the Bush with them, telling them *fair Stories* ; and the Apostle *Paul* tells us that this was the Practice of all the rest, *2 Cor.* 5. *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men.* Two of the Apostles were *Thunderbolts*, Sons of Thunder ; which Name was no doubt borrow'd from their terrible Way of Preaching. In the Day of *Pentecost* the Spirit was poured upon all the Apostles, in the Shape of fiery Tongues, to signify the Zeal and Sharpness with which they should preach ; their Discourses must scorch secure Consciences. Hence they are call'd the *Salt of the Earth*, and the *Light of the World* : As Salt bites raw Flesh, and Fire burns it, and the Light pains sore Eyes ; so should the Preaching of Christ's Ministers scorch secure and guilty Consciences ; *Solomon* approves of this Method, for he tells us, *that the Words of the wise are as Goats and Nails, fastned by the Masters of Assemblies*, *Ecc.* 12. 11. Then certainly, soft flattering Words, to secure Sinners, are the Words of Fools or Knaves, and false Prophets.

I proceed to the

2d USE, which is of *Examination* ; Pray, my Brethren, have ye ever been brought to such a universal, evangelical, sincere and steady Subjection to the Government of Christ the King of the Church, as has been before hinted? And to this End, Have the efficient and instrumental Causes of Conviction, viz. the Spirit and Word of God, had due Influence upon you? Has the Word of God been brought home to your Souls by the Spirit? As a Fire and a Hammer scorching your Consciences, breaking your Hearts, and burning your Lusts? Pray, Have ye felt its penetrating Energy as a two-edged Sword in your Bowels? And as sharp Arrows in your Hearts? Dear Brethren! I ask you, as in the Presence of God, Whether you have experienc'd those Ingredients in Conviction, and those Effects which are produc'd by it, as was before mentioned? Pray, Have ye had a clear Sight of Sin? A distressing Sense of Sin? And despair of Relief in your selves from the Guilt and Power of it? And have these things produc'd in you perplexing Consternation, earnest Supplication, anxious Enquiry about the Way to Happiness, earnest Desires after the Mediator, vehement Labour to obtain an Interest in him, as well as Love to his People and a Closure with his Terms?

This leads me to the

3d and last USE, which is of *Exhortation*, to three Sorts of Persons, viz. the *unconvinc'd*, *convinc'd*, and *converted*. And,

1. I exhort the *unconvinc'd*, who have not experienc'd the aforesaid Work of God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to seek after Conviction. This is but what God himself inculcates, when he commands secure Sinners, to *plough up the fallow Ground of their Hearts* ; and to *rent their Hearts*. This Consideration with that of the *Necessity* of Conviction, in order to obtain unfeigned Subjection to Christ's Government, which was before proved, is enough to constrain any Man, who either Regards God's supreme Authority, or his own dearest Interest to seek after it,

To

To this End I advise you,

1. To examine your State towards God *speedily*, and *impartially*, according to the holy Scriptures; and finding the Grounds of your Hope insufficient, as they must needs be, if you have never been convinc'd as aforesaid, (whatever Thaws of Affection ye have had notwithstanding) then conclude *positively*, without any farther wavering or halting, that ye cannot be fav'd in your present State: This, through God's Blessing, would remove the Cause of your present Security, and prepare the Way for your Conviction and Conversion.

2. Seriously consider how *unreasonable* and *dangerous* your present Security is!

1. Is it not *unreasonable* to sleep in the midst of Dangers? If you attempted to sleep on the Round Top of a Vessel, labouring in a terrible Tempest, that had either sprung a Leak, or was ready every Minute to be dash'd in Pieces on a Rock, would not every one justly deem you out of your Wits? And therefore it was no wonder the Marriners ask'd *Jonah*, what he meant by sleeping in a Storm? *Jonah* 1. 6. So I may say to you that go on contentedly in a State and Course of Sin; *What mean you? O Sleepers! Arise call upon your God, that ye perish not.* Ye are in greater Danger than can be express'd by a human Tongue or Pen; tho' you see it not, tho' you feel it not. Poor Creatures! Ye are every Minute ready to be dash'd in Pieces against the Rock of Presumption, and drown'd in the horrible Gulph of eternal Damnation.

2. Is it not an *ungrateful* and *rebellious Sin*, both against the Authority of God commanding you to awake out of your carnal Security and Sloth? (*Eph.* 5. 14) and his Love Wooing and Warning you to this Duty! O Sinner! Consider that compassionate Complaint of the most high God, *Prov.* 6. 9. *How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard! when wilt thou awake out of Sleep?*

3. Is not thy present Security *dangerous*? For does not the great God curse thee, and threaten to punish thee, whilst thou remainest in this State? *Amos* 6. 1. *Zeck.* 1. 12.

4. Is

4. Is it not *destructive*? For this prevents the Efficacy of the Word, and turns it into a Saviour of Death. This also prevents that earnest Diligence which is necessary to obtain Relief: This makes you slight a Saviour, and all his purchas'd Benefits; and so brings upon you an unexpected, awful, inevitable, and eternal *Ruin*! While ye speak Peace to your selves, sudden Destruction shall come upon you, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and ye shall not escape.

3. Suffer the Arrows of God's *Threatnings* to come into your Hearts, and *peirce* them to the Center. Neglect not to hear the Word preach'd, and that with earnest Heed, and close Application, and frequent Reflection, upon what has been spoken: For this is the usual Mean, by which the King of *Zion* alarms the Secure.

4. Cry frequently and earnestly to the blessed God, that he wou'd be pleas'd to *set the Arrows of his Word sharply in your Hearts*; and thereby alarm you out of your damnable Security.

And,

2. Such as are *convinc'd*, I advise as follows,

1. Do not rest satisfied with *bare Conviction* of Sin, without Conversion from it; for the former is but a *Preparative* to the latter, and no Part of it: What avail'd *Abab's*, *Esau's* and *Judas's* Sorrow?

2. Do not look upon your Convictions of, and Sorrow for Sin to be *meritorious*: If ye seek Righteousness by the Works of the Law, ye will not attain it.

3. Do not conclude that God has quite forsaken you, or will not have Mercy on you, because ye find not Comfort so soon as ye desire or expect. You must know that God has his appointed Seasons of conferring Mercy; to some sooner, to others later.

4. Do not conclude that *the Day of Grace is past*, or that you have committed the *unpardonable Sin*, because of the great Evils you see in your Hearts and Lives; and because ye have sinn'd against Light, and lost many Opportunities of Mercy: For so many have done, that are now in Heaven. "God is merciful and gracious, slow to Wrath, and abundant in Loving-kindness, Goodness,

“ Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.” While ye are mourning over your Sins, ashamed of them, desiring and endeavouring to forsake them, God’s Spirit is striving with you, it is the very Day and Season of your Salvation ; God is waiting to be gracious to you, and wanting to be exalted that he may have Mercy upon you.

Object. But I am *unworthy* of God’s Mercy, and the *greatest Sinner* that ever was born !

I answer,

(1.) That all who *do obtain* Mercy are *unworthy* of it. God does not set his Mercies to *sale*, to the highest Bidder ; but gives them *freely* to those that see their *Unworthiness* of them, Eph. 2. 8. Mat. 5. 3. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit.*

(2.) It’s *usual* with Persons under Convictions, to think themselves the *greatest Sinners* ; but if it were so in Reality, Christ is *able to save to the uttermost, all that come to the Father by him* ; and he has said, *He will in no wise cast them off that come*, John 6. 37. Matt. 11. 28. The greater Sinner you are, the greater Need you have to come to Christ for Pardon ; and if ye repent, the more Reason you have to expect Pardon ; because God will get greater Glory by it. The Psalmist was aware of this, when he prays that God would pardon his Iniquities, because they were very *great*, Psal. 25. 11.

But if your Convictions are *laughing and dying away* of their own Accord, ye should endeavour to get them *increas’d and fix’d*, by frequent hearing and reading the Word of God ; by frequent Meditation upon the Dangers of your present Condition ; and how much worse it will be render’d, by your losing these gracious Calls of God, and Strivings of his Spirit ! For then it’s probable God will forever forsake you, and say to you, as he did to *Esau*, he is *join’d to Idols, let him alone*. And ye should also seek to get your Convictions fix’d, by frequent and fervent Crying to God, as well as associating with his People, and encouraging his gracious Workings in your Hearts ; and endeavouring to give up your selves to God in Covenant.

5. Take Care that ye *grieve not*, or *quench not the Holy Spirit*, by neglecting, or opposing any of his gracious Motions.

6. Wait at the *Pool* for the moving of the Waters, with *Pains, Patience, Hope, Fear* and *Trembling*.

But if you have been in some Measure convinc'd, and lost the Conviction entirely, your Case is exceeding dangerous, dreadful and deplorable ! For now ye are possess'd with *seven Devils*, Mat. 12. 44. You have *put your Hand to the Plow, and look'd back, and therefore are not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven*. You have gone back with *the Dog to your Vomit again, and with the Sow that was wash'd, to your old wallowing in the Mire of Sin*. So that your *latter State is worse than your former*, as the Apostle Peter observes, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. Now your Sins are against greater Light and Mercy than before : Now Christ has come and told you by his Word and Spirit of your Sin and Danger, and yet ye will persist ; and therefore *you have no Cloak for your Sin*. " This is
 " the Condemnation that Light is come into the World,
 " into Mens Hearts, and yet they love Darknes rather
 " than Light, because their Deeds are evil. Surely it
 " will be more tolerable for *Sodom and Gemorrah*, than
 " for you convinc'd Sinners, in the Day of God : " For
 ye go on resolutely with your Eyes open into Damnati-
 on. Ye court Destruction without a Covering ; " Being
 " often reprov'd ye harden your Necks, and therefore
 " you may expect to be suddenly destroy'd, and that
 " without Remedy." Being often call'd by God's Word
 and Spirit, " ye stop your Ears with the deaf Adder :
 And therefore ye may expect, (that so continuing)
 " God will be deaf to your Crys, when Distress and De-
 " struction comes like a Whirlwind upon you. You
 " Backsliders in Heart, may expect to eat quickly of the
 " Fruits of your perverse Ways. You that are asham'd
 " of Christ, his Truths and People, in the midst of a
 " perverse and adulterous Generation, of you shall the
 " Son of Man be asham'd, when he comes in the Glory
 " of his Father with the holy Angels." But poor un-
 " happy Creatures ! Tho' your Case be exceeding dread-
 ful,

ful, for you are the *only Persons*, that are in Danger of committing the *unpardonable Sin*, yet it is not quite *desperate*: Possibly, If ye will endeavour for it, your Convictions may be reviv'd, your crimson Sins pardon'd, and your wicked Hearts renewed! If your will speedily bewail your Wickedness, & seek to God with Vehemence, who knows but he will have Mercy upon you, for he is gracious, and merciful, and ready to pardon.

But,

3. I wou'd offer a Word to the *converted*, whose Convictions have had, through God's Mercy, a saving Issue.

And,

1. Ascribe *Glory to God*, for his *pure Grace*; for had it not been for *This*, ye wou'd have slept in a deep Security, with the greater Part of the blinded World; or else your Convictions wou'd have died away as they do with many, and never come to any thing.

2. Look back upon your *past Conviction*, and remember what Sin has cost you, and therefore be the more watchful against it for the Time to come. *Beware of Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life*, Luke 1. 34.

3. Walk *agreeable to the Light God has given you*; adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things. *More is expected of you* than others, because *more is given to you*. Ye shou'd be ready to be convinc'd of your Miscarriages, and shine as Lights in the World, that those who seek to accuse your good Conversation in Christ, may be ashamed.

4. Endeavour to *convince others*; and that by your Lives and Speeches. "Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your heavenly Father:" And also ye shou'd seasonably and discreetly, reprove for Sin in Life, and try to convince self-deceived Hypocrites of the Danger of their State; according to your Places, Capacities, and Opportunities; and in so doing, God will increase your Comforts here, and your Crown hereafter. *AMEN.*



THE
Solemn Scene
OF THE
Last J U D G M E N T.

Open'd in a
S E R M O N,
O N

2. THES. i. 6, 7, 8, 9,

Preach'd at

Maiden-Head in New-Jersey,

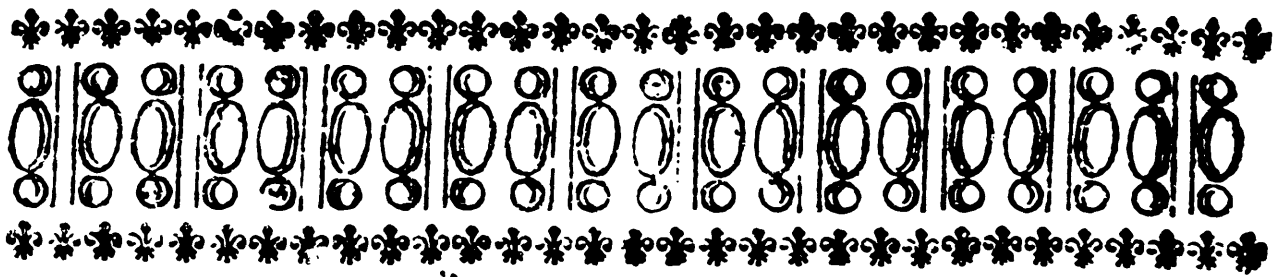
May the 23d, 1737.

By *Gilbert Tennent*, A. M.

And Minister of the G O S P E L at *New-Brunswick.*

*Judicis, ante JESU, sistetur quisque Tribunal, atque
feret factis, premia digna suis.*

B O S T O N: Printed in the Year 1739.



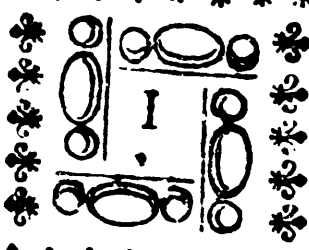
A

Prefatory Address

TO THE

People of *Maiden-Head*, and *Hopewell*.

Christian Friends and dear Brethren,


 H A V E made bold to dedicate the following *Discourse* to you, (which ye lately heard) as a small Testimony of my Respect for you, and Desire of your eternal Happiness. The Subject which I have chosen to discourse upon, as it is attended with the clearest Evidence, and is in it self of the utmost *Importance*; so I hope it will not be found altogether unsuitable to the Circumstances of your Places. Seeing it is the first Work of the *Spirit* to convince Men of *Sin*, of *Righteousness*, and the *Judgment* to come, then by Consequence, discoursing and meditating upon that *terrible Day* of God, must necessarily coincide with the Design and Agency of the *Holy Ghost*; and so prove peculiarly suitable to the Case of the Secure and Convinc'd, to the first to alarm them, and to the latter to fix Convictions in them; both which are necessary Preparatives to true and vital Goodness, *Jer.* 4. 3. *John* 16. 8, 9. *Rom.* 7. 9.

Dear Brethren, Seeing that nothing is more certain or more solemn, than the *last Judgment*, Is it not a Miracle of the most horrible and lamentable Madness, that nothing should be less considered and laid to Heart, by the far greater Part of Mankind ! *Zech. i. 11.* Alas ! That the inconsiderable and momentary Trifles of this perishing World, should divert Men from so profitable, so necessary and noble a Work, as preparing for the *last Judgment* undoubtedly is !

Perhaps some may say, That the following Discourse is very terrible. I answer, It is nothing so terrible as what ye will see with your Eyes ; See *Isai. 13. 9.* *Job. 37. 22.*

I would in all Humility offer a few Words to several Sorts of People among you.

And,

I To the Secure. I wou'd in the Name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, the great Judge of Quick and Dead, desire and demand an Answer to the following Questions, Namely,

1. Do ye not believe that there is a *Judgment* to come, when Rewards suited to the different States and Actions of Men will be rendered by the great GOD ? If ye do not believe this, ye contradict the clearest Dictates, both of Reason and Revelation ; and so are the vilest Infidels : But if ye do believe it, and prepare not for it, ye are the greatest Fools in Nature.

Quest. 2d. Are ye prepared this Hour to go before the *Judgment Bar* of the great GOD ? Which ye know not but ye may be forc'd to do in a few Minutes ; if ye think ye are, pray what Reasons have ye for it ? Alas, for you poor Creature ! Why do ye deceive your selves with a vain Hope ? Ye are unacquainted with experimental Religion. Ye have never yet been made so sensible of your lost and damnable State as to seek with restless Importunity, a Change of it. Never experienc'd such a Renovation in all your Powers as is necessary to Salvation. Are not your Hearts generally vain, worldly, and fleshly in their Dispositions ? And are ye not utter Strangers to Communion with God ? Now are not these Things plain Evidences of a damnable Condition ?

But

But perhaps you'll say, ye do what ye can in God's Service. I answer, That your Dependance upon Works is a plain Evidence that ye are in a State of Blindness and Death. Gal. 3. 10. *For as many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse.*

Quest. 3d. If ye are not prepared for the *general*, or your *particular Judgment*, how can ye be easy in such a dangerous and wretched State? May be this Night your Souls may be requir'd of you, and if so, how dismal wou'd your Condition be; what horrible Agonies wou'd rend your Bosoms? When your unwilling, shivering Souls were torn from your Bodies, and drag'd before the dreadful God, to receive their doleful and eternal Doom! O ye miserable Souls! how can ye think of the *Judgment* of God without Confusion and Horror? O unhappy Sinners! Are ye quite senseless, and will nothing pierce you? O! read and ponder upon these Places of Scripture following, and may the Lord set them home with Power upon your Consciences. The Places I intended to mention are, *Amos 6. 1. Mal. 2. 2. Zeph. 1. 12. Luke 11. 21.*

Dear Friends, If you wou'd be alarmed out of your present Security, which is exceeding necessary, in order to your Conversion and Salvation, *Luke 15. 17.* Put not the evil Day far off: But on the contrary, For Christ's sake, dwell in your fix'd Meditations, upon the solemn Subject of a future *Judgment*; and look on your selves as sifted at the dreadful Bar of Christ, and there expos'd and condemn'd, and see if this will have no Impression on you!

2. To the convinc'd, I wou'd observe, That there is no Subject so suitable as this of the *last Judgment*, to fix and rivet their Convictions in their Hearts, as a Nail in a sure Place. For God's sake, do not think it is enough to be convinc'd of Sin, unless you be converted from it in Heart and Life. Nay, sinning against and extinguishing of Convictions will highten your Iniquities, possess you with seven Devils, make your latter State worse than the first, infallibly ascertain, and inutterably aggravate your everlasting Damnation, except ye repent; *John*

3. 19. *Mat.* 12. 44, 45. O Sirs ! make no sinful Haste, and use no wicked Shifts, to get rid of your present Troubles, but wait in God's Way for his Time and his Help. Poor Things ! Consider that the blessed Shepherd *Jesus* has come out of the Bosom of his Father to seek and save that which was lost, and to bind up the broken-hearted, *Isai.* 61. And

3. To the Converted, this Subject is very applicable many Ways ; from *this* ye may derive the sweetest *Comforts* in *Adversity* ; from *this* ye may derive the strongest *Excitements* to Duty.

Very dear Brethren, I must address you in the Language of the Apostle *Peter* in his 2d Epistle, 3d Chapter 11. Ver. *Seeing then that all these Things shall be dissolved, what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness, looking for and hastning unto the coming of the Day of God.* I conclude, and remain your unworthy, but unfeign'd Friend and Servant in the dear and precious Lord *Jesus*.

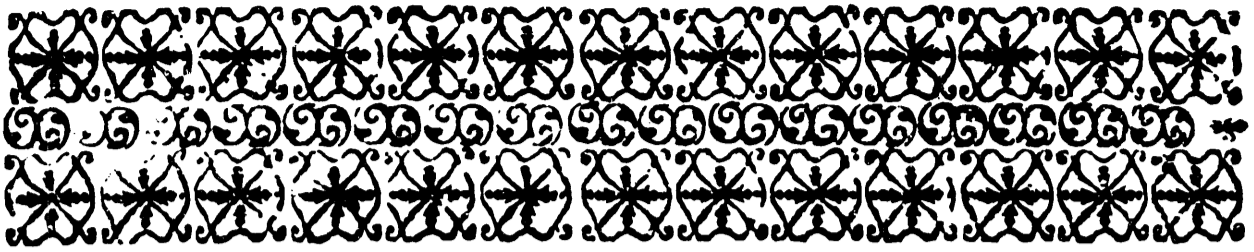
New-Brunswick, July
6. 1737.

G. Tennent.



T H E



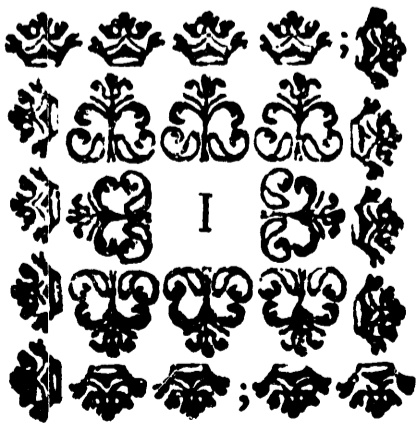


THE
Solemn Scene
OF THE
Last J U D G M E N T.



2 THESS. i. 6, 7, 8, 9.

*Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you ;
And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels,
In flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ :
Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*



It is a most dreadful and afflictive Sight ! to behold vast Multitudes of unhappy Sinners, who are inconsiderately hastning upon the swift Torrent of Time to that great Ocean of Eternity, whence there is no returning ; without considering what will be the Consequence of their present

Impieties, the severe Examen they shall undergo before
P 3 the

the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, the everlasting State of Misery and Woe which they shall be finally and irrevocably fixed in, except they repent; after a few fleeting Moments are expired! It's strange, to Amazement, to behold intelligent Creatures endow'd with rational and noble Powers, so far degenerated from their own Order, so far sunk into a brutish Stupidity; so far forgetting the Dignity of their Nature and Design of their Being, as to be chiefly intent upon, and prospective about, the securing and amassing temporary and perishing Vanities; while in the mean time they indulge the saddest Negligence about the Concerns of their everlasting State!

Now seeing the Security, which alas! too much every where prevails, is as prejudicial to all the important and truly valuable Interests of Mankind, as it is unreasonable and general; must it not be an Act of Friendship to a lethargick and infatuated Generation, to labour to shock them out of their enchanted Slumbers, by setting before them the *Terrors* of that GOD they provoke, the *Terrors* of that *Judgment* they shall pass, the *Terrors* of that *Damnation* they demerit: That so they may be brought to some Sense of their Misery, and be thereby prepar'd as Objects for the divine Mercy; it is in Pursuance of this that I have chosen to discourse upon the Verses I have read; which offer to our View a very solemn and magnificent Description of the *general Judgment*: In which we may Note these Particulars following, (1) A *Designation* of the *Person of the Judge*. (2) A *Description* of his *pompous Appearance*. And (3) A *succinct Narrative* of the *judicial Process*.

But before I proceed to discourse of these Particulars mentioned, let me beg Leave to premise a few Words.

That there will be a general Judgment of the Quick and Dead, appears evident from the following Considerations, Namely, The *Prophecies* of the Old Testament; *Ezech*, the seventh from *Adam*, prophesy'd of these things, saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten Thousands of his Saints*; *Jude* 14. The *Psalmist* also discourseth

courseth of this, in the 50th Psalm 3. *Our God shall come and shall not keep Silence: a Fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.* Very emphatical and solemn, are the Words of the Prophet Daniel, respecting this important Transaction, in the 7th Chap. & 9th Ver. *And I beheld till the Thrones were cast down, & the antient of Days did sit, whose Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool; his Throne was like a fiery Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire; a fiery Stream issued, and came forth from before him, Thousands of Thousands ministred unto him, and ten Thousand times ten Thousand stood before him.* Of this our Lord himself also prophesyd, Matth. 12. 36. *But I say unto you, that every idle Word that Men shall speak, they shall give Account thereof in the Day of Judgment.*

To this awful Truth the *Ap'stles* likewise gave Witness, according to their Master's Precept: Acts 10. 42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify, That it is he, that is ordained by God, to be Judge of Quick and Dead.*

This the Consent of Nations and Consciences of Mankind declare to be an unshaken Verity, by their solemn Appeals to God, when they cannot obtain Justice amongst their fellow Creatures. Yea, even when Men do commit such Crimes as human Laws take the Cognizance of; do not their Consciences sting them with a Sense of Guilt, and rack them with the Fears of a future Judgment. This is well expres'd by one who had nothing but the Light of Nature to direct his Sentiments.

Tacita sudant precordia culpa.

“ The Guilt which from unseen Pollution springs,

“ Pale Sweatings, Horrors, in the Bosom brings.

Of the like Tendency is this memorable Passage of another of the said Character.

Turpe quod acturus te sine teste time.

“ If thou wouldst do a vile ignoble Deed,

“ Thy Self, without a Witness, thou mayst dread.

Yea, a guilty Mind will sometimes Occasion such uneasy Sensations, by its just Reflections, that the rudest Profligate is not able to extinguish them, by all the impious

Arts of Diversion he can invent. While in the mean time *Innocence* inspires its Possessor, with the noblest Pleasure and bravest Magnanimity, in attempting, enduring and surmounting, the numerous Difficulties that attend the human Life. Hence are those famous Sayings of the Pagan Poets,

*Nil conscire sibi, nullane pallefcere culpa,
Murus æbeneus esto.*

And that of *Horace*,

Integer vitæ, scelerisq; purus, non eget muri, &c.

“ He who of Guilt, has but his Conscience free ;

“ As Walls of Brass, impregnable may be.

This also the *Reason of Man* suggests, from the Consideration of the *divine Perfections* ; particularly from the Wisdom, Justice and Truth of God. Seeing the great God has made rational Creatures capable of moral Government, and propos'd a Law to them as the Rule of it ; enforc'd by such Threats and Promises as were worthy of God, and suited to the Nature of Man ; sufficient to alarm their Fear, and excite their Hope or Desire, those two governing Passions of the Soul and great Sources of Action ; it is therefore extreamly necessary, that those Rewards which divine Wisdom has projected, and divine Truth and Justice engaged to issue, should be distributed according to the different Actions of Men, otherwise dishonourable Reflections would be cast upon the Attributes of the Deity ; namely, either that his Wisdom fail'd in the Proposal or Assignment of the Rewards ; or his Truth and Justice in the Execution of them, which to imagine of the blessed God would be the most crimson Blasphemy. Now it often happens in this State of Tryal and Probation, that Men receive not Rewards suited to their different Characters. Base and sordid Creatures are often flush'd with prosperous Successes, crown'd with Honours, and caress'd with Pleasures ; while brave and vertuous Souls are laden with Reproach, and suffered to grapple with all the Adversities of Fortune ! And that often times for their Firmness of Mind, their Zeal and Fidelity in their Master's Service ! Now, Is it not a righteous thing with God to recompense

recompense Tribulation to those that trouble his People? Is it not just that those pious Souls, who have had their Characters clouded by unjust Aspersions, should have their Innocence vindicated, and their Adversaries put to Shame? But this is sometimes impracticable in this World; and therefore there must be a time in the next, when all Wrongs shall be redress'd, and every thing made to appear in its true Colours.

As to that determinate *Time* of the last Judgment, that is known only to God, and reserv'd as a secret in the divine Bosom from all Mortals; and that for very wise Reasons; viz. to awaken our Fears, excite our Diligence, and support our Patience: That not knowing the exact Time of our Lord's coming, we may be every Day expecting of it, and preparing for it. In the mean time it may be asserted, that the coming of the Son of Man will be very *sudden* and *unexpected*: *The Day of the Lord, says the Apostle Peter, will come as a Thief in the Night, i. e. when it is not looked for, then the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, 2 Pet. 3. 10. At Midnight, i. e. in the secure State of the Church, there will be a great Cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him. As it was in the Days of Noah and Lot, so will it be in the Days of the Son of Man: They eat, they drank, married and were given in Marriage. They shall indulge themselves in the securest Sensuality, and little dream of so terrible an Event. For as a Snare will it come on all that dwell on the Face of the Earth. While Sinners cry, Peace, Peace, sudden Destruction shall come upon them as a Travail on a Woman with Child.*

The *Place* of Judgment, it is probable, will be the Region of the Air; so near to the Earth as to render the great Judge and his judicial Process visible to all it's Inhabitants. Hence is that of the Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, that *the Righteous will be caught up in the Clouds, to meet their Lord in the Air, 1 Thes. 4. 17.*

Having thus premised a few Hints, respecting those things which I deem'd necessary to give Light to the Subject to be discuss'd.

I proceed to consider the Particulars which I before observed were included (expressly) in the Text under our Consideration. The

1. Of which is, the *Person* who is to pass a final Judgment, upon *Men* and *Angels*, in the great Day of God; and this is no other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST; him *the Father hath ordained*, to accomplish this important Work, *Acts* 17. 31. Though the Son of God in respect of his *Deity* and *essential Glory*, being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, be the absolute Monarch of the Universe, having an original & unalienable Claim of Right to give Laws to govern the Creatures he has made; and to pass a final Judgment upon their eternal State, according to their Obedience or Non-obedience of them: Yet as *Man* and *Mediator*, he is inferior to the Father, and so acts by Delegation from him, in this great and solemn Transaction: *John* 5. 26, 27. *For as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself, and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man*: And indeed it is highly reasonable that the Person who is to transact this grand Affair, should be God and Man in one Person, in order to pass a righteous Sentence upon all the Thoughts, Words, and Actions of reasonable Creatures; and to execute it, nothing less than infinite Knowledge and infinite Power are necessary: Now these are Properties peculiar to the supreme Being. The secret springs of Action, from which their Guilt or Goodness is principally derived, devoid of all Disguise, are only open to the all-penetrating Eye of God. Not to say that as the divine Nature is only capable to execute so difficult a Task, so it is only worthy of the Honours of it. To pass a determinative Sentence upon the everlasting States of Men and Angels, is a Dignity too sacred and venerable for any meer Creatures to sustain. The Holy Lamb of God is only worthy to open the Seals of the Book of God's invariable Purposes, and to assign to Men and Angels, those endless Rewards and Punishments that are suited to their different Works, *Rev.* 5. 9, 12.

And

And is it not expedient, that he who is vested with the Character of supream Judge, should partake of the human Nature in Union with the Deity? That the judicial Procefs with embodied Creatures concerning their *overt* Actions, might be carried on *visibly*, and so the more satisfactorily? Should the *divine Glory* appear in its radiant Majesty and unclouded Brightness, without the Allay of *Humanity*, what Mortal could behold that inaccessible Light, before which the purest Seraphs veil their Faces! What mortal Ear could hear the Thunder of that Voice which melts the Mountains, and makes the Pillars of Heaven tremble? Hence we are told, that *the Father judgeth no Man, (i. e. immediately) but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son.*

The *Justice* of the final Sentence will appear the more conspicuous, because the Judge is of our *own* Frame and Constitution, *touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities*, possess'd of the strongest and tenderest Compassions towards us; and therefore will not doom any who are of the *same* Nature with himself, to extream and endless Misery; without the most clamant Cause and urgent Necessity. And,

The *sinfulness of Sin* will be doubtless hereby expos'd, and made to appear in its crimson Aggravations, and flagrant Malignancy; in that it turns the softest Compassion, into the sternest Severity; obliging the merciful Saviour, who came from the Bosom of his blessed Father, (that Throne of the brightest Glory, that Seat of the sweetest Felicity, that Center of serene Majesty) into a miserable World, and thereby the most astonishing Stoop of condescending Excellency, having assum'd the human Nature into a hypostatical, personal and inseparable Union with his Deity, endured inconceivable Pain and extream Misery, in order to save Souls from everlasting and deserved Ruin, and purchase for them an endless and a glorious Life: That he, I say, after such vast Expence of Labour and of Blood, should be obliged by Sin, to banish Impenitents into eternal **Death**; *This, This*, affords the most detestable Idea of **Sin** that can possibly enter into a human Mind. It might be

be further observed concerning the Wisdom of this Constitution of Christ to be the Judge of the Universe, that thereby the undisturbed Harmony of the divine Attributes, will be eminently apparent ; which here we have but very imperfect Notions of. For at the same time will be executed upon different Objects, the mildest Clemency and most awful Severity, the richest Mercy and severest Justice, the heaviest Vengeance and the noblest Love !

And as it must needs inspire the Hearts of all good Men with great Magnanimity, and peculiar Pleasure ; to think that that SAVIOUR, whom they love and serve from the Heart, is to be their supream and final Judge. So on the contrary, it can't but discourage and distress the Hearts of the Ungodly, to think that that JESUS whose Doctrine they have discredited, and whose Laws they have disobeyed, will determine their everlasting State. Hence is that solemn and Soul-affecting Passage of the Apostle *John* in the *Revelations*, the 1st Chapter and the 7th Verse, *Behold he cometh in the Clouds, and every Eye shall see him.* To this I may add one Consideration more, namely, That it is more than probable that the Power of the last Judgment, is an illustrious Branch of the *Kingly Office* of the Lord Jesus, confer'd upon him by God the Father, as a Reward of his deep Humiliation and astonishing Abasement. See *Phil. 2. 8, 9.* *And being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross ; wherefore also God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name.*

This leads me to consider the

2d Particular included in our Text, namely, The *Appearance* of this Judge whom the Father hath constituted, in that terrible Day of God, when the grand and solemn Scene of eternal Judgment shall be open'd ; and this no doubt will be full of inexpressible Pomp, and tremendous Majesty ; as our Text informs us : *Then the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire.* Now the Heavens conceal him, but

but then they shall disclose their Lord and Ornament, to the Admiration of the whole Universe ; for *every Eye shall see him !* The eternal Son of God shall descend visibly from the heavenly Paradise, that Throne of majestic Beauty and resplendent Glory, attended with all possible Ensigns of Power, and inconceivable Grandeur. He will come guarded with a Train of innumerable and mighty Angels ; he will come environed with a vast and glorious Retinue of perfected Spirits ; these will attend the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, the descending God, through the airy Regions, to the Seat of Judgment ; in order to grace that magnificent Solemnity, with the august State ! These holy and mighty Angels will doubtless, be employed as Ministers of Justice and Mercy at that great Day, in summoning Criminals to the Bar, and executing their woful Sentence upon them ; as well as gathering in the Elect, and accompanying them to their blissful Mansions. No doubt these Nobles of the Court of Heaven will appear in their brightest Robes. And we are told, that our great LORD himself will be reveal'd *in flaming Fire*. When the Law was given by *Moses* upon *Sinai*, the Mount trembled for Fear, and was wrapt in Fire and Smoke : And the Voice of the terrible JEHOVAH proclaim'd his venerable Law from the midst of the Flames ; which struck the whole Hosts of *Israel*, with the utmost Consternation. Now if the Lord appear'd with so much Majesty and Terror when the Law was given, how much more when he comes to avenge the Breaches of it. This Mass of Fire, which the Text mentions, being added to the Splendor of his glorified Body, “ will, as one well expresses it, cause
“ him to outshine the *Sun* in his Meridian Bloom and
“ Beauty, and drown all the Lights of Heaven with the
“ conquering Brightness of his Appearance. So that
“ when he comes from his ethereal Palace, and appears
“ upon the eastern Heaven, the immense Sphere of vi-
“ sible Glory that shall surround him, will in the Twink-
“ ling of an Eye spread and diffuse it self over all the
“ Creation, and cause both the Heavens and Earth to
“ glitter like flaming Fire.” It is with the utmost Mag-
nificence,

nificence, that the holy Scriptures describe the *second* Coming of the SON OF MAN ! When he came as a *Saviour*, his divine Glory was veil'd with the *Mantle* of his Humanity ; he who was God over all blessed for ever, appeared in the Form of a *Servant*, was willingly expos'd to Poverty and Contempt, with all the painful Maladies to which the human Nature is subject ! But when he comes as a *Judge* he will assume a Splendor and Greatness suitable to the Glory of his Deity ; suitable to the Dignity of his Character ! The Face of the Heavens will be convuls'd into a flaming Scowl, and the deep Foundations of the Earth shall shake, while its Surface, being torn by Earthquakes, shall send forth Rivers of Fire ! In the mean time while the Heavens and Earth are covered with a general Ruin ! The dreadful Clangor (or Blast) of the Archangel's Trumpet, which shall awake the dead out of their secure Recesses ; the awful Roarings of the great Ocean, with terrible Peals of Thunder from the Heavens above, and hideous Murmurs from the Earth beneath ; and the dreadful Shrieks of damned Creatures, now expecting to hear their final Doom pronounc'd ; shall so mingle and confound their Groans, that the whole Face of things shall present a doleful Scene of the most hideous, horrible and confus'd Ruin ! How dreadful will it be at this *Juncto*, for the Wicked, to behold the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, in the most triumphant Manner, with Myriads of the heavenly Hosts attending on him ; encompass'd with Power and great Glory ! Descending from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel and with the Trump of God ! When our Lord appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light : How splendid then must his Vesture be at this glorious Solemnity ? We may be help'd to some Idea of the Lustre of Christ's Appearance, by considering that memorable Passage of the Apostle *John*, Rev. i. 13, --- 17. *And in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a Garment down to the Foot, and girt with a golden Girdle ; his Head and*
his

his Hairs were white as Snow, and his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire, and his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace; and his Voice as the Sound of many Waters. And he had in his right Hand seven Stars; and out of his Mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword: And his Countenance was as the Sun shineth in his Strength. We are also inform'd, that he will come in his own and in his Father's Glory; the Light and Beauty, the Splendor and Majesty of which, is to us, in our present State, unconceivable and inexpressible! "When he comes to Judgment, saith one, it will be with his own glorify'd Body of pure and immaculate Splendor, with his Hair shining like Threads of Light, his Eyes sparkling with Beams of Majesty; displaying a most beautiful Lustre and dazzling Glory round about it." His Throne is said to be great and white, i. e. pure and immaculate, stately and magnificent; and from it are said to proceed Lightnings, and Thunderings and Voices. Yea, so terrible and insupportable will be the Majesty of the Judge seated on his Throne, that the Heavens and Earth are said to flee from his Face! If in the Time of his humble Abasement, there appeared such Majesty in his Aspect, that those who came to apprehend him went backwards and fell to the Ground, how will his Enemies be able then to abide the Day of his Wrath; when he will appear in his most exalted Glory and Magnificence!

I proceed to speak something of the

3d Particular, namely, The *judicial Process*, when the Son of Man is seated on his sapphire Throne, resembling the Body of Heaven in its Brightness, the whole Race of Men shall be gathered before him, to receive their Sentence from him! Rev. 20. 11, 12. *And I saw a great white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose Face the Earth and Heaven fled away, and there was no Place found for them. And I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books according to their Works.*

The

The Thunder of the Archangel's Trumpet, being accompanied with the almighty Power of Christ, shall resound to the utmost Limits of the Globe ; strike the Concave of the Heavens, and pierce the darkest Caverns, the most remote and silent Recesses of the Earth and Sea, and rouse their Inhabitants from the Sleep of Death : That the whole rational Creation who have ever lived in all the past Ages, since the Foundation of the World ; and shall hereafter come into Existence, to the utmost Period and extream Verge of the Line of Time, may appear at once, in a universal Rendezvous, before the dread Tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ, to receive their final Doom. Then the haughtiest Monarchs, the subtlest Politicians, the boldest Heroes, being disrob'd of the trifling Ensigns of their present State and Greatness, will forget their former Power, Courage and Grandeur, and cry to the Mountains to hide them from the Face of the Lamb that sits upon the Throne. They shall be forced to bow to that Saviour, whom they here contemned, and implore his Favour, but in vain, he will be inexorable to their unseasonable and rueful Crys. Their Lamentations over Sin, and Supplications for Mercy and Pardon, might here in the Time of Life and Health be serviceable to them ; but then it will be *too late ! too late !* The Master of the House will rise up, and shut too the Door of Mercy and Salvation against such wilfull Impenitents !

We may reasonably imagine, That when the Souls and Bodies of the Wicked are united, their Hearts will be torn with the most terrible Convulsions of Guilt, Fear and Shame ! O ! With what Confusion, Horror and Reluctance, will impenitent *Caitiffs* be drag'd to the Bar of Judgment, to hear their most secret Impieties openly expos'd, and their awful Doom pronounc'd, before the whole Creation ! While Crouds of innumerable Devils are at their Heels, ready to Witness against them, and hale them to the infernal Furnace ! While before them is that Lord Jesus, who once offered himself to be their Saviour, but now is their angry Judge ! When they behold his Eyes as Flames of Fire, and hear his Voice as
the

the Sound of many Waters, how will their Hearts be rack'd with the acutest Pain! Especially when they behold the Elements above their Heads melting with fervent Heat, and the massy Earth trembling and burning under their Feet; and every where around them the wildest Confusion and most deplorable Ruin blended together in a promiscuous Chaos, void of Beauty and of Order! And in the mean time, none in Heaven or in Earth to pity, or help them in their Extremity! But on the contrary, the great God and the Lord Jesus Christ who here offered his Love, and intreated them to accept it, in the most importunate and moving Strains, now frowning on them, and laughing at their Calamity! Yea and all the Hosts of Angels, and Armies of glorify'd Saints, rejoicing in their deserved Destruction! In which God's Justice will have a glorious but terrible Triumph.

The vast Assembly of the Quick and Dead being thus brought before the burning Tribunal! there will be a Separation made, the *Goats* will be put at the *Left Hand* of Christ, and the *Sheep* at his *Right*! Mat. 25. 32. Here it is impossible fully to discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, presumptuous Hypocrites will croud amongst pious Souls, with their specious Pretences; and sometimes deceive the most judicious: But there their Fraud and Subtilty will be fully detected, and their Persons separated from the Congregation of the Righteous, not one abhorred Hypocrite will be suffered to intrude, into that venerable and innumerable Army of the Saints.

Then will all the Thoughts, Words, and Actions of Men, with their several Circumstances, viz. the *Principles* from which they flowed, and *Marks* to which they were directed, be inquir'd into and scan'd. The most secret and disguis'd Impieties, will then be torn open, to the Contempt of God, Angels and good Men: For, *God will judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. 2. 16. Then shall neglect of Duty be expos'd, and censur'd, as well as Commissions of Sin; *I was hungry and ye gave me no Meat*. "He that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin." Then such as persecute

Q

God's

God's People, shall be recompenc'd with inexpressible Tribulation; and " those who know not God, and obey " not the Voice of his Gospel, i. e. who rebel against the Principles of natural and reveal'd Religion; " shall " be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. " The Wrath of God will be reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, " who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, i. e. labour to suppress the Convictions of the Holy Spirit. And alas, how many such Soul-Murderers may we fear will be found! who endeavour to extinguish Trouble for Sin, and put off Convictions of Duty, from one Time to another, *Felix-like*. Then surely such shall not escape who have neglected the great Salvation; made light of the Offers of God's rich and free Grace in the glorious Gospel; " For this is the Condemnation that Light is " come into the World, and that Men love Darkness " rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.

And then not only *great Crimes* will be examined, but those *lesser Evils* which many little consider, and think there is no Harm in now. Our Lord himself informs us, that *every idle Word that Man shall speak, they shall give an Account thereof, in the Day of Judgment*. And alas! What a dreadful Account will this be to many? *Mat. 12*. And as the Wickedness of the Wicked will thus be dissected, and laid open: So on the contrary, the Duties of Piety and Charity, which good Men have done, shall be proclaim'd with Honour: Their secret Sighs, Prayers, Tears, Sufferings for Righteousness Sake; those silent Virtues, which they here labour'd to conceal, as much as they could from others Observance with a Vail of Modesty, shall then come into Remembrance, be mentioned honourably, and rewarded openly. *I was hungry and ye gave me Food, sick and in Prison and ye visited me, naked and ye clothed me*. The least charitable Action of a gracious Person, even to a *Cup of cold Water*, shall neither be forgotten, or pass unrewarded; for it is a righteous Thing with God, to recompence Tribulation

bulation to them that trouble his, and to such as are troubled rest.

Albeit no desirable Reward for our Works (being both finite and imperfect and due to God upon other Accounts) can reasonably be expected, yet a Reward of Grace or Promise, according to their Degree of Eminence, shall surely be conferr'd, *Mat. 25. 20, 21.* Now is it not righteous in God to perform his Promises. And altho' the Reward vouchsafed in *respect of us*, be an *Act of Grace*; yet in *respect of Christ*, who has by his active and passive Obedience, answered the Demands of the Law for us; it is an *Act of Justice*. Hence is that admirable Passage of *Paul to the Romans*, Chap. 3. 26. *To declare his Righteousness; that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Agreeable to this are the Words of my Text, *Seeing it is a righteous Thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* The Books of God's Law and Gospel shall be opened to shew Man's Duty therefrom; and the Books of God's Remembrance, and Conscience, to shew how they have observ'd it. These are sufficient Evidences to convict the Wicked, and vindicate the Righteous: For even Conscience it self is as a thousand Witnesses, and the Knowledge of God nothing can escape; "The Darkness hides not from him, but the Night shines as the Day." There will be also other Witnesses to compleat the judicial Process. *Satan* the Accuser of the Brethren, who now excites to Sin, with the most assiduous Diligence, and crafty Stratagems, will then no doubt accuse for it, with the most virulent Malignity.

And *wicked Associates*, who here Devil-like excites to, and conceal one anothers Impieties, will there accuse and impeach for them. It is probable that all such as have been debauch'd in Principle or Practice, by the per-

nicious Influence of bad Advice, or Example, will openly
 rease and curse their Destroyers. And no doubt godly
 Ministers, Parents, and Masters, who have labour'd
 with the utmost Earnestness by their Councils, Examples
 and Tears, to reclaim those that were under their Charge,
 will bear Witnesses against them, for rejecting all their
 Labour of Love against their own Souls. Whatever Ex-
 cuses obstinate Sinners frame now to palliate their Guilt,
 in persisting in Sin, and slighting the Offers of God's
 Grace, they will then be expos'd and condemned. After
 the Case of the Wicked is fully examined, it will appear
 plain to the Conviction of Angels, and good Men, yea
 of their own Consciences ; that whatever they vainly
 pretend they had no reasonable Excuse for their present
 Managements : And so that they themselves were the
 wilful Causes of their own Damnation. This will occa-
 sion intolerable and eternal Reflections upon their own
 Madnes and Guilt : This is that Worm which will bite
 the Souls of the damn'd to all Eternity ! Matters by
 Examination being brought to *this Crisis*, then will follow
 the Pronounciation, and Execution of the different Sen-
 tences upon the Good and Bad. The Case of the Righ-
 teous being enquir'd into, their joyful Sentence will
 entire ; *Then shall the King, the Judge from his*
Throne of Glory, say to them on his Right Hand, Come
ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for
you, from the Foundation of the World, Mat. 25. 34. O
 precious Sentence ! O good LORD JESUS ! how sweet
 are thy Words ! and how happy are thy People ? What
 can be conceiv'd more full of divine Consolation ? Who
 ever accuses, asperies or condemns you, you are blessed by
 my Father, justify'd and approv'd of by him, *Come ;* on
 Earth you were slighted and deserted by my Enemies,
 and your false Friends, but I will never forsake you ;
Come, from a sinful and miserable World under the Sha-
 dow of my Wings, into the Embraces of my Bosom,
 and enjoy the Delights of my Love ; *Come,* inherit that
 glorious Kingdom, that princely Portion, which was pre-
 pared for you from everlasting, in the Purposes of my
 Father, and in the Fulness of Time purchased for you
 . by

by my Blood, and continued to you by my Intercession; *Come*, and possess that unspeakable Honour, and unmerited Happiness, for which you were prepared by the sanctifying Operations of the Holy Spirit; *Come*, not as Sojourners, but as Heirs Inhabitants of an unalienable Portion and everlasting Kingdom! *Come*, and dwell with God and holy Angels; *Come*, and drink the Delights of Heaven, the crystal Streams of Life which flow from the Throne of God; *Come*, ye troubled and weary Souls who have been troubled by Sinners, and weary of Sin, and *inherit the Rest prepared for you!* O! It is not possible to express with Words, the Rivers of Joy and Gladness, which will run into the Hearts of the Glorify'd! and make them triumph on this Occasion with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory!

Now after their joyful Sentence is pass'd, they will be honourably conducted by Hosts of Angels to the City of the great God.

After this will succeed the Sentence of the Wicked: These impure and unholy Souls, being sufficiently detected, and convinc'd of their ungrateful Rebellion against God, in breaking his Law and slighting his Gospel, must then hear these dreadful Words from the Mouth of Christ, *Go ye accursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. What can be conceiv'd more full of Terror than this Sentence? Ye bleis'd yourselves in your Prosperity and false Hope, and were flattered by others; but now you are accursed by God, curst to all Eternity: You wanted God to depart from you in this World, you lik'd not the Knowledge of his Ways, and slighted the Company of his Servants, and now you must depart from them for ever: Go ye accursed into never-ending Torments, prepar'd for the vilest and most malignant Spirits: Ye would obey their Suggestions, while ye contemned my Authority, quenched my repeated Calls, and abus'd my Mercy! And now ye must dwell with these infernal Ghosts for ever, and inherit the Burnings prepar'd for them! I will never offer you abus'd Mercy any more; but ye shall be punished

with everlasting Destruction from my gracious Presence, by my glorious Power !

After the Sentence is pronounc'd by the great Judge, immediately it shall be executed. Then will these unhappy Wretches be drag'd from the Judgment-Seat, to that terrible *Tophet*, whose Flames are kindled by the Breath of God ! For ever banished from the ravishing Sweets of God's Presence, from the amiable Society of Saints and Angels ! From the blissful Regions of Light and Love ! From all the Joys and Glories of the heavenly Paradise ! And the least Hope of ever attaining them ! To be tormented in the burning Lake, that gloomy Vault of thick Darkness, frightful Horror, and extream Despair ! With the Stings of their accusing Consciences ! The Upbraidings and Severities of Devils ! The continual Roarings, and awful Lamentations of damned Companions ; and the fearful and inconceivably terrible Vengeance of the most high God, pour'd forth upon them in full and never-ending Vials. The Shame, Confusion and Anguish of such miserable Souls, cannot be fully conceiv'd or express'd !

Now it's time that I proceed to some brief IMPROVEMENT of what has been spoken. And,

I. For *Information* : if there is a Judgment to come, as has been proved, then may we learn to think honourably of God's providential Dealings with Mankind. Many entertain unworthy Thoughts of God, and are strengthened in their Impieties because of the Riches of divine Patience towards some, and the Largeness of divine Goodness towards others : This the Psalmist acquaints us of, *Psalm 50. To what things thou hast done, and I kept Silence ; thou thoughtest I was such a one as thy self.* And *Solomon* justly observes, that *because Sentence against an evil Work is not speedily executed, therefore the Hearts of the Sons of Men are fully set in them to do Evil.* And as the *Sinner* is sometimes strengthened in his Iniquity by the divine Clemency and Bounty, which is often extended to and vouchsafed upon, very unworthy Wretches ; so the *Saint* beholding the Wicked triumph,

umph, and on the contrary, that Train of Calamities which afflict the Just, is sometimes stumbled in his Faith, and is tempted to think he has washed his Hands in vain: But let both Saint and Sinner consider, that this World is but a Time of Tryal, Patience and Probation; having Relation to another State and Time, when after the Conclusion of this *Dramma*, Rewards will be distributed according to Men's Actions here; then will God reprove the Sinner, and set his Sins in order before him. Those Impieties he now conceals & forgets, are sealed up amongst God's Treasures, reserved to the Day of Judgment to be punished; for to God belongs Vengeance and Recompence. As sure as God is just, so sure shall impenitent Sinners be punish'd. A Delay of the Execution of Justice will not alter its Nature, or satisfy its Demands. But on the contrary the Expende of abus'd Patience will exceedingly heighten them, and so inutterably aggravate the Damned's Pains. And on the contrary, the religious Labours and patient Sufferings of the Just, will be honourably remembred, and bountifully rewarded, by a good God. The Apostle *Paul* fully confirms this precious Truth in the second Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, the 6th --- 10th Verse, *Who will (saith he) render to every Man according to his Deeds: To them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality; eternal Life: But unto them that are Contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man: that doeth Evil, of the Jew first, (because first in Point of Privilege) and also of the Gentile.*

2. From this Subject springs unspeakable *Consolation* to pious Souls. The Relation they bear to the Judge, the Love they have for him, and Longings after him, will make his Appearance very joyful and refreshing to them. If the Feet of his faithful Messengers were beautiful, how much more will the Person of their Prince and Master be desirable? When he comes to judge the World, then the Troubled shall have rest. Such as are sincerely troubled for their Sins against God, so as to re-

form from them; such as are unjustly troubled for their Piety towards God, by wicked Men, and bear it patiently; such as are generously troubled for the Sufferings of the Church of God, so as to succour and help them as their Capacity admits; such as are evangelically troubled for their little Progress in Goodness and Usefulness; may expect a perfect, uninterrupted, and eternal Rest, from Sin, and every Sorrow that proceeds from it. All those gracious Souls, who in a good Cause are aspers'd with Reproach and Scorn, may expect to have their Innocency vindicated, and their Persons honoured; their Righteousness will surely shine as the Light, and their Judgment as the Noon Day; while their Adversaries will be put to Shame, and covered with Contempt. All such as Sigh for the Abominations of the Land, Sorrow for the Afflictions of *Joseph*, and honestly Lament their own Imperfections, will then be greatly comforted! For then that Light and Joy which is sown in the faithful Promises, and unchangeable Covenant of God, will spring up into a plentiful and everlasting Harvest. They will those that know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, obtain eternal Life. Then such as labour evangelically to keep God's Law, will be crown'd with Honour and Immortality! Then those that believe and obey the Gospel, will obtain the End of their Faith and Obedience, the Salvation of their Souls. Then the charitable Person will be honoured, before all the Hosts of Angels and perfected Spirits; and every one of their secret and silent Vertues, publickly proclaim'd! *I was hungry, and ye fed me---* And can we think they will miss a Reward of Grace proportion'd to their Beneficence? Then will all the secret Pieties of modest humble Souls, be open'd, with all their orient Beauties and blushing Excellencies! O Sirs! Shou'd not this be a powerful Inducement to us, to abound in those things which will then so much conduce to our Honour and Benefit.

And,

3. From this Subject arises unspeakable *Terror*, to the whole Congregation of the Wicked! Is there a Judgment to come? Then miserable indeed will be Case of such

such as know not God ! i. e. such as have wrong Conceptions of the divine Being, as tho' he were like themselves, and indulg'd Iniquity as much as they ; because his Patience suffer'd them to take their Swing in Sin for a Time, without Punishment. But then will they find themselves miserably Mistaken ; but alas *too late, too late !*

Such as continue in gross Ignorance of God's Word and Ways, may expect no favour then, *Isai. 27. 11.* Such as have no experimental Knowledge of God's Truths, who know not God to be their God in Covenant, will be covered with Shame and banished from Jehovah, *Rom. 5. 4, 5.* Such as profess they know God, but in Works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate ; contradicting, in the Course of their Conversation, the natural Notions of a God, which are insculpted on the human Mind, will be a terrible Plight at the general Judgment ; for *Whoremongers and Adulterers God shall judge.* The Apostle Peter observes, *2 Pet. 2. 9, 10.* that *the Lord knows how to reserve the Unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished ; but chiefly they that walk after the Flesh in the Lust of Uncleanness.* Hear, ye prophane Souls, what God speaks to you by the Apostle Paul, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.* *Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God ? Be not deceived : Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Then secure Sinners in Zion will be afraid, *Fearfulness shall surprise the Hypocrites : Who among us shall dwell with the devouring Fire ? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings ?* O ye wicked Prophaners of God's Name and Day, remember that the great God will not hold you guiltless ; let the Scoffers at Piety remember, that, so continuing, their Bands of Death and Destruction, will be then made strong. But will the secret Sins of the Wicked be expos'd ? Then how will you hide your Faces, you guilty Souls ? When God-Man appears to
judge

judge the Quick and Dead ; when all your crafty Villanies, and sordid Impieties, which here you labour'd to conceal with so much Art and Pains, shall be brought to the brightest Light, & open'd in all their crimson Aggravations, to the Abhorrence of God, Men, and Angels !

And all you who slight the Precepts, Promises and Offers of the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God, remember as you are condemned already, (*John* 3. 36.) that then, except ye repent, that Sentence will be executed against you ; A terrible Damnation expects you if ye continue in your Sins, it will be more tollerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorra* in the Day of the Lord, than for you. Hell from beneath is moved to meet you at your coming. If pious *Moses* was so affected with the Sight of God, upon Mount *Sinai*, that he did exceedingly Fear and Quake, *Heb.* 12. 21. If zealous *Isaiab* was so much affected with Fear, by beholding of a small Glimpse of God's Glory, when the Seraphs cry'd, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts*, that he complain'd, *Who is me I am undone!* --- *Isai.* 6. 5. If faithful *Daniel* was so surprized with a Vision, that he swoon'd away with the dread thereof! *Dan.* 10. 8, 11. Then how will you who are condemn'd by complicated Guilt, and covered with the basest Deformity ; be able to bear up under the Appearance of the Judge of Heaven and of Earth ; whose Loins will be girded a- with the finest Gold of *Uphaz* ; his Body like the Beryl, and his Face as the Appearance of Lightning, and his Eyes as Lamps of Fire, his Arms and his Feet like polish'd Brass, and the Voice of his Words like the Voice of a Multitude. If the Joints of *Belshazzar's* Knees were loosn'd by trembling, in the midst of his Grandeur and Jollitry ! by the Appearance of but a Hand-Writing upon the Wall, what Fear and Trembling shall possess you ! Guilty Dust ? Strip'd of all your present Comforts and Ornaments ; when you behold the Lord Jesus appearing in the greatest Majesty and highest Glory ! If the Appearance of a temporal Judge in his scarlet Robes, strikes such a Damp in a guilty Prisoner at the Bar, what Horror shall tear your Bosoms, if ye repent not, when ye behold the Son of God coming

coming in the Clouds of Heaven, or seated on his blazing Throne of Judgment ! If this Minute we heard the Heavens groan and roar with piercing Claps of Thunder, and were encompass'd with terrible and sudden Flashes of Lightning, from the murmuring Clouds, and in the mean time felt the labouring Earth tremble under our Feet, ready to open it's Mouth and devour us, and beheld the Lord Jesus descending to the Seat of Judgment, from the opening Heavens, on a Body of Light brighter than the Sun, with all his holy Angels about him ; what pale frighted Countenances and trembling Hearts would there be amongst us, what crying to God for Mercy and Pardon. But because Christ defers his coming, stupid Sinners will not believe it, and consider it, so as to prepare for it ! But be assured, my Brethren, that Christ will as certainly come to judge you, as tho' you now saw him coming from Heaven. All ye miserable Souls, who are guilty of any of those Evils I before express'd, and continue in them, believe it, the Time hastens when the Lord Jesus shall be reveal'd from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on you ; to inflict Punishments with Jealousy and incensed Indignation, suited to the Number and Heinousness of your Crimes. Then shall ye be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Ye shall be forever deprived of the gracious Presence of God, and expos'd to an intense, continual and eternal Destruction ! God's stern Justice and almighty Power, will be glorified, in your utter and eternal Ruin ! Dear Brethren ! If these Things will not affect you, I know not what will ; even a Pagan *Felix* trembled when he heard this Subject discours'd of ; but alas some of our Gospel Sinners, are more hardned than the Pagans !

In the last Place, I exhort you my Brethren, in the Name and Bowels of Christ, and by all that should be dear to you, that you would quickly endeavour to *prepare* for Christ's Coming to Judgment, which may be very speedily to you, even before to-morrow Morning.

In the Parable of the Virgins we read, that *at Midnight there was a great Cry, behold the Bridegroom cometh!* The Means I would prescribe to you for that End are, a frequent Meditation upon Death and Judgment, Examination, Prayer and a speedy Reformation. *Let the wicked Man forsake his Way.*---O ! methinks, The Consideration of the last Judgment shou'd deter us from secret Sins, and excite us to a conscientious Performance of the secret Duties of Religion ! seeing that then that which is now done in Corners will be published on the House Tops ; i. e. in the most open and conspicuous Manner possible. But my dear Brethren ! That which I wou'd especially and passionately recommend to you, as a principal and absolutely necessary Preparative, for the Judgment of the great God, is that you would speedily and vehemently labour to be acquainted with experimental and vital Religion : Namely, Justification from the Guilt of Sin, by the Grace of Christ ; and Sanctification from the Power of Sin by the Spirit of Christ. O Sinner ! *Agree with thine Adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the Way with him : lest at any Time the Adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast into Prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no Means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost Farthing, Mat. 5. 25, 26.*

O Brethren ! “ Wash your Hearts from Wickedness : How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within you. Cleanse your Hands ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts ye double-minded, be afflicted and mourn and weep :-- Life is short, Eternity is long, Death is near, and the Judge at the Door ; in a little Time ye will be past all Remedy, if ye repent not ; if there be any Convictions of Sin and Danger, in any of you, encourage and preserve them by Consideration and Supplication to God, as the most invaluable Jewels. Shun unnecessary Conversation with ungodly People. *Forsake the Foolish and live.*---Be humbly resolute in God's Service, whatever it cost you, for true Religion is its own Reward here, and how much more so will it be hereafter. *The Sufferings of this present World are not worthy to be compar'd*

compar'd with that Weight of Glory which shall be revealed. If it seem Evil to others to serve God in a profligate and perverse Age, let it not do so to you. O Sinners ! I beseech you by the tender Mercies of God, that you would not always halt between two Opinions, God and Baal. If ye will faithfully observe these Things, the Day of Christ will be a Day of refreshing to you ; and you will long for it, with the poor Church ; and say, Come Lord Jesus come quickly, even so come thou blessed Son of God ! Amen, Amen.



THE
Preciousness of *CHRIST*
TO
BELIEVERS,

Consider'd

IN A
SERMON,

ON

1 PET. ii. 7.

Preach'd at

New-Brunswick in New-Jersey

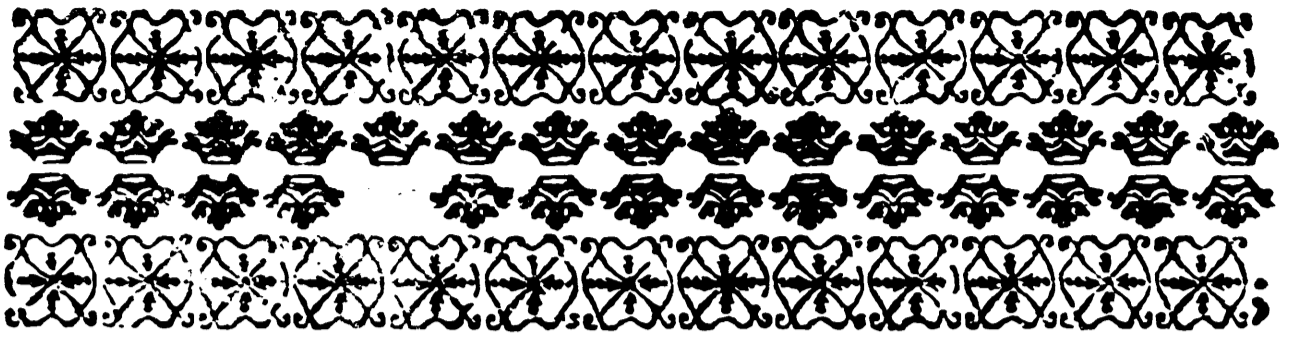
The first Sabbath in *August*, before the Celebration of
the Lord's-Supper, *Anno Domini*, 1738.

By *Gilbert Tennent, A. M.*

And Minister of the GOSPEL there.

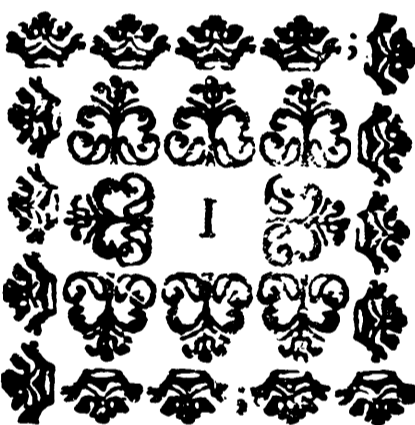
Phil 1. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.*

BOSTON: Printed in the Year 1739.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,


 A M heartily griev'd that the following Discourse falls so far short of the Dignity and Importance of the Subject it treats upon. The most exalted Seraphs, who continually attend the burning Throne of God, and behold the great Redeemer shining in all the ravishing Charms of his mediatorial Excellencies, adored by all the prostrate Hosts of Paradise ; who gladly cast their sparkling Crowns at the Feet of our venerable and very dear *Immanuel*, cannot by the highest Strains of their heavenly Rhetorick set forth the thousand thousandth Part of his adorable Glories and immense Preciousness, which infinitely transcends the utmost Verge of a Creature's Thought, although of the highest Order : What then can be expected of one of the meanest of all *Adam's* Posterity, while so far remote from the Courts of divine Glory : This I say, *Reader*, not to court thy Praise, which I neither desire nor deserve ; and which, if obtain'd, wou'd be but of little avail ; but to prevent thy having mean Thoughts of the dearest Lord JESUS, through the meanness of this Performance. However, Poor as it is,

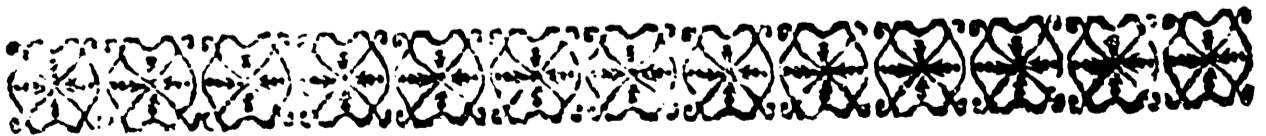
I believe it is my Duty to offer this *Widow's Mite* to be put into the Churches Treasury ; and I am perswaded, that God, for Christ's Sake, will accept of it and bless it for the Good of Mankind ; and that it will be acceptable to such as fear God : But as for ignorant, prophane and pharisaical Persons, I expect that some of them will be offended : Well, let them Grumble and Snarl it does but shew their Rottenness and Hypocrisy.

I have endeavoured to open the *Nature of Faith* in this Discourse ; by which I wou'd beseech thee, *Reader*, to examine thy self. What *Augustine* of old said of the Trinity, That *in nothing can one Err more easily or dangerously*, I may truly say of *Faith*. I remain thy Friend in the precious Lord Jesus.

G. Tennent.

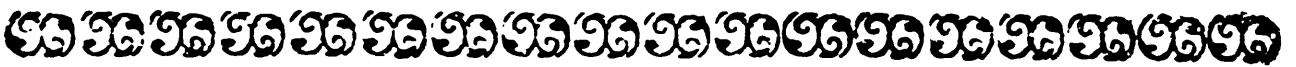


T H E





THE
Preciousness of *CHRIST*
TO
BELIEVERS.



I PET. ii. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.



IT may be as much admir'd as lamented, that the blessed Lord *JESUS*, who is so transcendently excellent in himself, and so absolutely necessary for the Comfort and Happiness of his People, shou'd be so much despis'd by the most of Mankind, after all the Labours of his unparallel'd Love, and Expence of the Treasures of his Blood ; after all the kind and condescending Court he makes to obstinate worthless Rebels, to pity their own Souls and accept his gracious Proposals ; in which their Salvation is infinitely concern'd What may be the *Cause* of this unaccountable Conduct, which runs so cross to all the Laws of Reason and Gratitude ? Now the Text I am at present to consider, gives an easy Answer to this melancholy Query ; by informing us, that to *those who believe, Christ is precious.* This plainly supposes, that *Unbelief* is the Cause, why Christ is so generally slighted. O ! if Sinners did but see their need of a Saviour, and had through

Faith a View of his All-sufficiency and Glory, they could not but love him and desire him. But so long as they are ignorant of these Things, they remain indifferent in their Estimation of an I Perfect after the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, there is an Inconvenience in the mean time, that however Christ may be despised by some, yet there are others to whom he is very dear. *Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.*

From these Words I would observe the following Proposition.

That to those who believe, Christ is precious, and to them only.

In discoursing upon which, I wou'd speak upon the following Heads, (1.) *Open the Nature of Faith or Belief.* (2.) *Shew how Christ is precious to such as believe.* (3.) *Shew why he is precious to t'em, and to them only.* And lastly, *Apply the whole to practice.*

And,

1. I am to explain the *Nature of Faith*; and to this end I would observe the *Westminster-Assemblies Description* thereof, which is this; "That it is a saving Grace" whereby we receive Christ, and rest upon him alone "for Salvation."

The Word *Faith* (*pistis a pepestai perswasus est*) is deriv'd from a Word which signifies to be *perswaded*. Now inasmuch as this Perswasion is built upon a *two-fold Testimony*, so by Consequence it begets a *two-fold Faith*, viz. *divine* and *human*. The Word *Faith*, in the *former* Sense imports these *four* Things following,

(1.) A bare Assent to the Truth of any ones *Speech*, which is wont to be call'd a *historical Faith*; of this the Apostle *James* treats in the 2d Chapter of his Book from the 17th to the 20th Verse.

(2.) Sometimes the Word *Faith* signifies an Assent to the Truth of a *divine Promise*, concerning the doing or receiving of a miraculous Work. *Matth. 17. 20. and 13. 58.* Which is call'd the *Faith of Miracles*.

(3.) Sometimes the aforesaid Word signifies such an Assent as flows from the *enlightning of the Mind* by **supernatural**

pernatural Light and Power, and is followed by some vanishing *Motions of the Will and Affections*, Heb. 6. 4, 5. Matth. 13. 20, 21. which bears the Name of a *temporary Faith*. And,

(4.) The Word Faith signifies that *act of the Soul* by which we apprehend, accept, and rest upon the great God as our last End, and the blessed Lord Jesus as our only Mediator, *John* 1. 12. and 3. 16. which is call'd *Faith unto Salvation*. Not as though it any ways merited Happiness, No, no, that Honour is to be entirely ascrib'd to the atoning Blood of Christ, who was slain as a Lamb without Spot, for the Atonement of divine Justice. But because of its Necessity as a Mean, prerequisite or depending Term, in order to obtain a Right to, or the Possession of Salvation. Sometimes this is call'd *the Faith of the Operation of God*; to signify, that it can't be produc'd by the Wisdom or Will of Man, that nothing less can effect it, then the unbroken unbarred Arm of the omnipotent Majesty of Heaven and of Earth. Sometimes Divines do not unaptly distinguish Faith in o the (*fides que creditur, et qua creditur*) Faith which is believ'd, and the Faith by which we believe. The *first* intends the Object or Doctrines of Faith, and the *latter* the Act of it; of the former some are said to make Shipwreck, *1 Tim.* 1. 19.

The *Assembly* more generally observe concerning the Nature of Faith, viz that it is a *saving Grace*.

(1.) It is a *Grace*; that is, a free Gift of God, neither wrought by our Power, nor purchased by our Merit, *Eph.* 2. 8. Divines do observe that Grace is two-fold either (*gratia gratis dans, or gratia gratis data*) Grace freely giving, or Grace freely given. The first is one of the serene Attributes of the blessed God; or rather, God himself, the latter his kind Communications of necessary and valuable Good to his indigent and worthless Creatures. It is in the *latter* Sense that the Word is taken in the present Argument.

(2.) It is a *saving Grace*; a peculiar Gift of divine Love which the great God only confers upon his chosen Remnant, *Tit.* 1. 1. By which as a mean they are

entitled to eternal Salvation, *John* 3. 16. And through which they apprehend, embrace, and encrease their Happiness, *1 Tim.* 6. 19. *Heb.* 11. 6.

But to proceed, I may observe, that in the Assemblies particular Description of Faith, the three things may be considered, viz Its Object, Acts, and Properties.

And

1. As to the *Object* of Faith ; Tho' the whole Word of God be the Object of Faith considered in its utmost Extent, yet as it justifies, Christ, as a Mediator, is its next Object ; and God, as an End, is its last. Hence Christ is call'd *the Way to the Father* ; and it is said, *that none can come to the Father, but by the Son.* And Faith in the Sinner's Justification, respects Christ as God-Man ; cloathed with the three mediatorial Offices, of Prophet, Priest and King. And hence it is that we are bid to believe in him indefinitely, *John* 1. 12.

But,

2. I am to consider the *Acts* of Faith, viz. *receiving, and resting upon Christ.* Now receiving Christ necessarily supposes these things following, namely,

1. An Offer of Christ, and the Benefits of his Blood, made by the Gospel ; whereby the Sufficiency and Willingness of Christ to succour needy Souls is represented, which being express'd in general Terms in the Invitation and apply'd particularly by the holy Ghost, do encourage poor trembling Souls to embrace and lean upon the Saviour. O what Life does these Sayings of the faithful God put into discouraged Hearts which are mentioned ! *Matth.* 11. 28. *Isai.* 55. 1. *Rev.* 22. 17. and 3. 20.

2. Receiving Christ supposes some *Knowledge* of the Necessity, Suitableness, and Sufficiency of the aforesaid Offer, by the Teachings of Christ as a Prophet, through his Word and Spirit. For *how shall any believe in him of whom they have not heard ?* *Rom.* 10. 14, 17. The holy Spirit opens the Eye of the Mind, which was before covered with Clouds of Darkness ; and lets Light from Heaven into it, that they may see the Necessity and Amiability of that Object which is presented to their

their Choice ; hence Believers are said to be *renewed in the Spirit of their Minds*, Eph. 4. 23.

3 Receiving Christ supposes *assent*. The aforesaid DayBreak of Light, which the holy Ghost sheds upon the Mind, he reflects upon the Conscience with convincing Power, *John* 16. 8, 9. Whereby the poor Sinner is made sensible of the Evil and Danger of all Sin in general, both Original and Actual, and of his darling Sin in particular : From the Evils of his Life, he is led to behold the devilish Wickedness of his Heart, and the damnableness of his State ; and despairs of his own Wisdom, Power and Righteousness to help himself out of it. Oa ! What deplorable Distress, and acute Anguish, is the poor, wounded, condemned, perplexed, nonplused and despairing Soul in, think ye, at this Time ? *Peter* led *Simon* the So-cerer, from the horrid Act he had committed, to the Consideration of the more dismal State he was in, *Acts* 8. 23. *I perceive that thou art in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity* Indeed we may justly observe, that the eternal Death and Damnation of most People, is not so much owing to the Power of their Disease, as to the Weakness of their Physician : They depend upon the flighty Cures of their abominable rotten Righteousness, their Prayers, Tears, Reformations ; and so are left incurable and eternally miserable. After the aforesaid Knowledge of their Sin and Misery, there is an affecting Discovery of the compleat Sufficiency, and real Readiness of the Lord Jesus Christ to help, and embrace helpless, sensible, sinful Sinners, that come to him, *John* 6. 37. *Heb.* 7. 25. Without this the convinced Sinner is more like to use the Sword or Gallows, to stab or hang himself, with the *Jaylor* and *Judas*, than to go to JESUS for Succour.

After having spoken of some things which are supposed by, or preparatory to receiving Christ, I come now to shew how the convinced Sinner does receive him when he believes. And,

1. He receives Christ *really*, not in Pretence and Show only, but Indeed and in Truth. The Soul is engaged in this Matter with the utmost Seriousness and Concern.

as for its Life. And herein it acts sincerely and heartily as unto the Lord, as being under the Eye of that God who is all Eye, *Acts* 16. 29,---32. Bare Shams and Shews in this unspeakably important Case, are the most foolish, detestable and damnable Hypocrisy, and Mockery !

2. The convinc'd Sinner receives Christ *readily* : He was won't to halt a defer in this marriage Contract before ; ah, but now the Case is quite altered, Matters are brought to the utmost Exremity with him, he sees as much Need of Christ for Pardon and Life as a Malefactor brought to the Scaffold to be executed, sees the Need of a Pardon, when he beholds the terrible Maiden lift up to give the fatal Blow, by which his Head must be sever'd from his Body ; or when his Head is laid on the Block in order to receive the deadly Stroak. O ! Then the poor Sinner is not for Delays as he was won't, but heartily grieves over and sobs for his past Delays ; perhaps in such Language as this, “ Alas ! For my in-
 “ preffible Folly and Madnes, in flighting such a glori-
 “ ous and dear Redeemer ! Alas ! Wo is me, that I
 “ have wandred so far from him, and so long defer'd a
 “ marriage Contract with him ! O ! Now blessed and
 “ adorable Lord Jesus, if thou wilt accept of such a
 “ Wretch as I, who am the meanest of all thy rational
 “ Creatures ; I desire not to defer one Moment longer,
 “ I take thee dearest Lord Jesus, for my God, my Por-
 “ tion, my Head, my Husband, and my All ; and do
 “ resign my Self and my All to thee forever, to do with
 “ me and them, as thou seeest meet.” Such as only resolve to receive Christ hereafter, do refuse him now.

3. The convinc'd Sinner receives Christ *regularly* ; having first a Regard to the Excellency of his Person, and in the second Place to the Benefits of his Purchase ; the Spouse in the Song was much enamour'd with the personal Beauty and Glory of Christ, *Cant.* 5. 9. to the End : And indeed it's the Sign of a Harlot, to love the Portion better than the Person she is to be espoused to. None can believingly behold the blessed Jesus, without being pleased and ravish'd with his Beauty.

4. The

4. The convinc'd Sinner receives Christ *resolutely*; whatever Dangers or Difficulties he may meet with in the Way of his Duty, yet this Purpose is firmly fix'd in his Heart, that he will never leave his Lord: All other Things are as Dross and Dung to him, compar'd with his dearest Jesus. Nay, he does not count his very Life dear, that he may finish his Course of Service to him with Joy. A temporal Marriage is made for Life, but this for all Eternity. Such speak in the Language of Ruth to Naomi, Ruth 1. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy People shall be my People, and thy God my God.*

5. The convinc'd Sinner receives Christ *unreservedly* and *evangelically*; without any Proviso against his Cross, his Yoke, his Scepter. For as Christ himself informs us, Luke 4. 27. *Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after him, cannot be his Disciple.* The convinced Sinner receives Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, as a *Prophet* to teach him his Duty to God and Man; as his *Priest* to atone and interceed for him by the Sacrifice of his Blood; and as a *King* to rule in him by his Word and Spirit, and over him by his Providence. And to this End, he is made deeply sensible of his Ignorance, Guilt and Slavery by reason of Sin.

The

2d Act of Faith is *resting upon Christ*; which of Necessity supposes the Soul's Distress and Perplexity. The Sinner sees himself extreamly miserable and helpless; and after all his Application finds no Sufficiency in himself or any meer Creature to relieve him, *Acts* 2. 37. In the mean Time, While he is weary of his Wandrings and hopeless of Escape, by his own Wisdom and Labours; he has some Glimpse of the glorious Fulness of Christ; to him therefore he flies for Succour with the utmost Haste and Eagerness, as the Manlayer under the Law, to the City of Refuge, when pursu'd by the Avenger of Blood: Now he plainly perceives that Christ is the only Door of Hope, and Rock of Refuge, the only hiding Place and Covert, that can shelter him from the
Storms

Storms of divine Wrath ; the only Ark and Zoar, that can save him from being scorch'd and drown'd, by the Showers and Deluge of the Vengeance of a provok'd God ; and therefore *upon him alone he rests for Salvation.* The other Phrases c^t Faith in Scripture, namely, Of cleaving to God, leaning upon the Beloved, coming to God, and trusting in him, sufficiently confirm what I have been observing : For they allude to Persons in great Distress, either drowning in Water and so fastning to a Plank to save their Lives ; or oppress'd with a heavy Burden, or hastily pursu'd. Now this *resting upon Christ* when it's saving, is

1. *Sincere* ; it's an *unfeign'd Faith*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. Not in Word and Tongue only, but in Deed and Truth. Many who are whole-hearted talk of their trusting in Christ, but this is a vain Pretence ; for no Man will really rest on Christ, till he really *feels his absolute Need.*

2. This resting is *orderly* ; it must follow our *receiving Christ* upon his own Terms, as the venerable Assembly have well observ'd, in their Description of Faith ; and indeed to pretend to rest upon Christ, or trust in him, before we receive him, as he is offer'd in the Gospel (as many do) is great Presumption, instead of Faith ; for there is neither Command or Promise for such a Practice : Nay, it is contrary to the express Declaration of Christ's Will, *Luke 10. 27.* Therefore such as go on in it, may expect to be damn'd eternally, *Mark 10. 16.* And for secure Sinners who are sensible of no intolerable Burden, to pretend to rest upon Christ, is Nonsense, Mockry, and damnable Delusion !

3. True resting upon Christ is *entire* ; there is a Heart-liking of the Way of Salvation through Jesus ; a Willingness to be sav'd by *Grace*, to be justified by the Redeemer's Blood alone, without any base Mixture of Works ; without so much as one Rag of their own rotten Righteousness blended with it, *Ibid. 3. 7. 8.* There is a full carrying of the Soul over to Christ for all its needs, under a Sense of its Meanness, Vileness and Poverty, *Matth. 5. 3. Psal. 37. 5. Isai. 50. 10.*

4. True

4. True resting upon Christ is very *difficult* ; it is oppos'd fiercely by the Devil, not only at its first beginnings, but ever after, in a lesser or greater Measure. Hence we read of *fighting the Fight of Faith ; wrestling with Principalities and Powers* : When convinc'd Sinners endeavour to come to Christ, and rest upon him, the Devil tells them their Sins are too great to be forgiven, and that it is a vain thing for such as they to expect Mercy : As also that they have committed the *unpardonable Sin* ; that the Day of Grace is over, and that it wou'd be Presumption in them to rest upon Christ for Salvation, tho' they have been help'd to comply with his Terms. O how great are the Fears, Conflicts and Distresses of Souls who are in this Case ! They find that they can no more rest upon Christ by their own Power, than they can move the Earth off its deep Foundations. And indeed the Heart of Man opposes Faith, as long as it can ; and when it is conquer'd by the mighty Power of God, enclined and enabled to rest upon Christ in a Promise for a little Time ; how soon is it beat from its hold by Frights, and Temptations that it is all a Delusion of Satan it has felt in it self, or a Fancy of the Brain, or the Effect of its own Power. *Secure Sinners* are not more afraid of being convinc'd of their Disease and Danger, than *convinc'd Sinners* are of resting upon the Remedy, that the blessed God has, in his boundless Grace, provided for the sick. And indeed, *gracious Persons* feel an utter Inability in themselves to exercise Faith, after the Habit is implanted, and are wont with great Bitterness to bewail its Weakness ; *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief*. Having spoken of the *Acts* of Faith,

I proceed to offer somewhat upon its principal *Properties*, which are these following ; namely,

1. Faith *pacifies the Conscience*. *Isai. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stay'd on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* Faith makes Peace *above with God*, *Rom. 5. 1. Within in our own Consciences*, *Phil. 4. 7.* and *Without* among the Creatures, *Prov. 16. 7.* Yea, the very *Stones and Walls* of the *Walls*, are in a peaceful League with the Believers. Faith soon turns
the

the most terrible Storm into a pleasant Calm ; it reconciles the Soul to the God of Peace, unites it to the Prince of Peace, and applies to it the Promises of Peace. As an Eye it beholds their Riches, and as a Conduit it conveys their Sweets.

2. Faith *purifies the Heart*, Acts 15. 9. Renews and reforms it ; so that it loves, desires after, endeavours for, and delights in Holiness : And this it doth by helping us to behold its unpeakable Excellency, and absolute Necessity ; as well as the many ingenious Obligations we are laid under to it, by redeeming Love. And by conveying Strength from Christ the Head of Influence to us, through the precious Promise, for that Purpose. O ! How extremely precious and radiant does Holiness appear to be, when it is beheld by Faith ! Admirable indeed is the transforming Power of Faith ; for, *thereby we behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. As the Countenance of *Moses* shone by conversing with God on the Mount, with such Brightness that the People of *Israel* could not behold it. So the Soul by beholding of, and having Communion with the blessed Jesus, through Faith, is transformed into the divine Image ; and derives such Beauty, from the eternal Fountain of it, that she is all glorious within : Divine Light is shed into the Mind, and divine Love and Holiness into the Heart, so that all the Powers are chang'd and turn'd in their free and general Drift towards the precious Lord Jesus as their Center.

3. Faith *softens the Heart*, by giving a View of the Love of the great God. O ! When the Child of God, through Faith, beholds the pure, precious, condescending and free Love of God in the blessed Jesus, and his Sins against it, how does his Heart melt like Wax and mourn ; it is ready to burst in Pieces with Sobs and Wailings ; and especially when he looks upon the inexpressibly dear and precious Lord Jesus, whom by his Sins he has crucify'd and slain ! With what Tenderness does his Heart relent and mourn as one for the Loss of an only Child, a first Born ! Oh ! This is like the great Mourning at

Hadadrimon

Hadadrimon in the Valley of *Megiddo*. Verily, my dear Brethren ! The Heart never melts kindly and sweetly, until a Saviour's dying Love be seen and felt by Faith ; and then it can't keep from breaking all to Pieces, and pouring out Floods of ingenious Tears before the Lord. Oh ! Sirs, have ye ever felt this ?

4. Faith *humbles* the Heart. We are naturally puff'd up with Self-conceit, full of the foolish Fancy of Wisdom, Righteousness and Strength in our selves, *Rev.* 3. 17. But when Faith comes, it strips a Man naked and bare of these Notions, and lays him flat on the Earth ; it shews him that he is a brute Beast before God, and has not the Understanding of a Man ; that he naturally lies weltring in the Blood and Gore of his Guilt and Pollution, *Ezek.* 16. And that he can't stir one Hair's breadth out of it ; that he is not able to think one good Thought, speak a good Word, or do one good Work, *2 Cor.* 3. 5. *Phil.* 2. 13. Nay so far from this, that his Heart is full of all damnable Abomination possible ; that he hates God and is unwilling to come to him for Life, *Rom.* 8. 7. *John* 5. 40. Faith shews the Sinner that in himself he is poor, blind, miserable and naked ; a filthy Leper, the basest Creature in all the Creation of God ; that his Beauty is Blackness, his Light Darkness, his Life Death, his Wisdom Folly, his Strength Weakness, his Righteousness Sin ; and that he deserves the Damnation of Hell for the Corruptions of his best Prayers, Tears, and other Acts of Obedience : Faith makes a Man look on them all as base Trash, *Phil.* 3. O *Friends*, did ever you experience these Things !

5. Faith *sublimates the Soul* ; it begets in it noble Principles of Action ; namely, a divine Nature, and divine Love from these pure and precious Fountains, the Believer's Actions generally and freely flow ; and Faith raises in the Soul generous and noble Projects, worthy of its great original exalted Nature, Dignity and Design of being : It inclines the Soul to project and aspire after the Manifestation of the divine Glory, and the Promotion of the dear and valuable Interests of his Kingdom, as its highest Scope ; and inclines it to look upon meaner
Marks

Marks in Competition therewith, with a generous Scorn ! As Unbelief degrades the Soul into the Order of Beasts, *Dan. 5. 20.* so Faith exalts it above the Order of Angels, by espousing it to Christ ; hereby it is made a Son or Daughter of God, and inclin'd to seek with Vehemence constant Communion with him here, as its sweetest Entertainment, and the full and eternal Enjoyment of him hereafter, as its only Portion.

6. Faith *overcomes the World* ; this the Apostle *John* observes, that *this is the Victory we have over the World, even our Faith.* Now Faith helps God's Children to overcome the World three Ways ;

(1.) By giving a clear View of the *Vanity, Emptiness, and transitory Nature* of all worldly Enjoyments. By Faith they see that the Fashion of this World passes away ; which affects much more than any Apprehension we can have of this Matter, by the Force of our own Reasonings, or Sense of our worldly Disappointments.

And,

(2.) By presenting to the Mind a near and realizing Scene of the *substantial Glory and Felicity* of the *next World*, which carries the Soul's Affections with a full Tide towards it, *Col. 3. 1.* O ! It is this that breaks their Heart, with Longings to be dissolv'd, and to be with *Jesus* : It is this that makes them Pilgrims in the present World ; it is this that makes them rise with Christ and set their Love upon the heavenly Paradise, and keep their Conversation there. And wonderful indeed, is the View which Faith sometimes gives of the City of the great God ! for it is *the Substance of Things not seen, and the Evidence of Things hop'd for*, *Heb. 11. 1.* It is as if the Soul was brought to the very Borders of Paradise, and beheld the orient Glories of it ; it so transports them with Wonder and with Love.

(3.) Through Faith, as a precious Pipe, is communicated *Strength to do the Duties requir'd of us*, in this Vale, with Diligence, to *encounter Dangers* with Courage, to *endure Difficulties* with Patience, and to crucify our Affections to earthly Things, *Col. 3. 1.*

7. Faith works by Love, Gal. 5. 6. It inclines God's People to holy Actions, and that from Love. It is Faith alone that enables to discern the lovely Object, our Interest in him, (for it is the Eye of the Soul) before which we cannot have a strong and ingenious Love; for *we love him because he first loved us.* By Faith we either do, or may know, that our Beloved is ours, and we his; which can't but fire our Love. Again, Faith is the appointed Mean to convey Strength to us to love, and labour, because it is the Bond of our Union to Christ, who is our Life. Indeed our Love increases according to the Degrees and Exercise of our Faith; a weak Faith causes a languid Love.

But I proceed to consider the

2d Thing propos'd, which was to shew, *How Christ is precious to Believers?* And,

1st. More generally, the Word *precious* may signify what is honourable, necessary, beautiful, pleasant, profitable or valuable; now Christ is precious to his People in all these Respects.

Through Faith they behold the Glory of God shining in his Face, and therefore they see that he is the only Fountain of Honour, and the only Way to bring Men to honourable Relations to the divine Majesty here, and to the honourable Mansions of Happiness hereafter: And therefore by Faith they are inclin'd to honour the Son as they do the Father. Through Faith they see as great a Necessity of Christ for their Justification and Salvation, as ever a starving Man did of Bread to nourish him, a parch'd Man of Water to refresh him, a condemned Man of a Pardon to clear him, a pursu'd Man of a Sanctuary to protect him, a diseased Man of a Remedy to heal him, a weary Man of a Rock to rest him. Through Faith they behold the ravishing Beauty and charming Glory of Christ, which makes them deem him the *chief among ten thousand; the Rose of Sharon, the Lillies of the Valleys.* Through Faith they sit under the Shadow of this blessed Apple Tree, and taste his pleasant Fruits. O! How infinitely amiable is the Person of Christ to the enlightned Understanding! And how incomparably sweet
are

are the the Fruits of his Death to the renewed Taste ? Oh ! His Loving-kindness is better than Life itself. By Faith the Child of God discerns Christ to be the Pearl of Price hid in the Field of the Word, which so soon as he sees, his Heart leaps in his Body, and with Joy goes and sells all to secure it. Its sparkling Beauty, and inestimable Worth, makes him justly deem all the Pleasures, Gain and Grandeur of the Earth to be as very Dung and Dross in Comparison of it. And Faith enclines the gracious Soul to build the whole Weight of its Happiness upon this chief Corner-Stone, Elect precious.

Now the Believer manifests his Esteem of Christ, by these Things following Namely,

1. By *high and honourable Thoughts* of his Person and Sufferings, his Performances, Purchase, his People, Providences, his Word, and Ordinances. The very Name of Christ is as Ointment poured forth to him and his Person exceeding amiable. O ! With what Amazement, Sorrow and Delight does the Believer behold the Spotlessness of Christ's Obedience, and the Depth of his Sufferings, with the Fruits of both ! Faith helps to discern the unerring Wisdom, and unsearchable Goodness of the Lord Jesus in his *Providence*, the Majesty and Sweetness of his *Word* and *Ordinances* ; as also the Excellency of his *People* ; and therefore enclines to entertain honourable Thoughts of them. And truly, the Believer is heartily griev'd, that his highest Thoughts fall infinitely below the Worth and Preciousness of Christ ! And,

2. The Believer manifests his Esteem of Christ, by *vehement and insatiable Desires* after him, as the Heart pants after the Water Brooks, or the thirsty Earth for the Rain, so does the believing Soul after Christ. O ! he sees such absolute Necessity of Christ, such infinite Excellency and unsearchable Al-sufficiency in him, that his Heart is ready to burst with longing after him. He either is, or wants to be sick with Desire after the precious Lord Jesus ; this was the Spouse's Language, *Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love ; set me as a Seal upon thine Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm ; for Love is strong as Death.* " O ! gracious
" God

“ God and merciful Father, Give us thy poor worthless
 “ Creatures, to experience this Frame of Soul to Day,
 “ if it be thy holy Will, for Christ’s Sake.” O! When
 the poor Believer has but the least Glimpse of that beauti-
 ful and blessed Son of God, his Soul is all in Motion,
 his Hands drop with Myrrh, and his Fingers with sweet
 smelling Myrrh, that he may open to his dearest Lord.
 And indeed Sirs, nothing can satisfy his longing Soul but
 Christ; in the greatest worldly Affluence his Soul grows
 lean, if this Lord be absent. He mourns and pines away,
 until he gets a Sight of Christ, and a Taste of his Love.
 And indeed the more he tastes, the more he thirsts after
 him.

3. The Believer expresses his Esteem of Christ’s Preci-
 ousness by his *unwearied Labours* for an Interest in, and
 the Sense of his Love, as well as Strength to walk suita-
 ble to it. Of this we have a noble Instance in the 3d
Chapter of the Song, the Spouse sought her Lord upon
 her Bed, but not finding him there, she went thro’ the
 Streets and broad Ways, enquiring after him, till she
 found him. The Believer values Christ so that he (ge-
 nerally) begrudges no Pain & Labour to obtain his Love.

4. The Believer shews his Esteem of Christ’s Precious-
 ness, by his *Willingness to suffer the Loss of any thing*, that
 is naturally dear to him, for his Sake. Hence the be-
 lieving *Hebrews* took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods;
 and the Apostles rejoiced under cruel Scourgings and
 Imprisonments, that they were counted worthy to suffer
 for his Name’s Sake; and blessed *Paul* did not count his
Life dear that he might finish his Course in the Service
 of Christ, with Joy.

5. The Believer manifests his Esteem of Christ’s Pre-
 ciousness, by his *Sorrows and Dejections in his Absence*.
 O! When his Lord his Love is gone, his Heart fails and
 is cast down within him. *Cant.* 5. 6. He mourns like the
 solitary Turtle Dove, and it is not in all the Comforts of
 the Earth to revive him. O, no! They are empty and
 insipid to his Desire and Taste: His Soul feels empty
 and restless in the Fulness of them, it wants something
 which they cannot yield.

6. The Believer shews his Esteem of Christ's Preciousness by his *great Delight in his Presence*, when his dear Lord returns to his weary wandring Soul, then it is fill'd with Marrow and Fatness; then does he sit under his Shadow with great Delight: O! He clasps his dear Lord in his Arms, and is not willing by any Means to let him go. O! How jealous is he over his own Heart, and watchful over his Thoughts, his Looks, his Speeches and Actions, and every Thing about him, lest they get between his Lord & him. And though all other Things do frown upon him, yet his Heart cannot but be glad, when his Saviour smiles.

7. The very *Fears* of weaker Believers concerning their *Interest in Christ*, shew their Esteem of his Preciousness. With what Frequency, Care and Trembling do they examine their Condition; and when they think they find themselves too light, Oh what Uneasiness and Distress of Heart does it occasion, far surpassing all other Troubles!

8. The Believer shews his Esteem of Christ's Preciousness, by his *fervent Zeal for his Glory and Kingdom*; when they are promoted he rejoices, and when they are eclips'd and oppos'd he is fill'd with Indignation and Grief.

O, my dear Brethren! Do ye esteem the holy and blessed Lord Jesus as has been now mention'd in the aforesaid eight Instances. I earnestly beseech you, Sirs, that you wou'd lay these Things to your Hearts, and see to find out your Condition by them speedily.

But more particularly, the Lord Jesus is precious to Believers in the following Respects;

1. He is *incomprehensibly precious*: Though the Believer sees enough in Christ to ravish his Soul with Amazement and Pleasure, yet he is sure that he sees not the thousand thousandth Part of his Preciousness: For who can by searching find out God, or know the Almighty to Perfection. O! the Depth, the Wedth, the Length, the Heighth of a dying Saviour's Love, which passes all Knowledge! The Believer grieves over the Narrowness and Feebleness of his Powers, and other Hindrances, that on these Accounts he cannot see more of a Saviour's
Glory

Glory and Fulness: Therefore he fixes his Eye upon this Sun of Righteousness, and spreads all his Wings, to draw nigh to this immense Ocean of boundless Fulness and Blessedness, that he may get enlarged Views of Christ: But after all, he perceives he can no more comprehend it, than a Span can grasp the great Ocean.

2. Christ is *inexpressibly precious* to Believers: The Spouse, in the 5th Chapter of the *Song*, after she had said what she could in Praise of her Lord's Excellency, by comparing him to the *most amiable Things* in Nature, perceiving the Subject of her Discourse to swell beyond all Expression, she concludes abruptly, by saying, that *he was altogether lovely*; which was as much as to say, that his Loveliness was inexpressible. And truly no Words of Men or Angels are equal to this Subject. And I must observe here, that it is a great Grief to God's People, that they can't speak high enough of their dearest Lord, when they try their highest Strains. O! They see, and that with great Grief, that they fall infinitely below his Glory and Preciousness; and that thro' their Ignorance, they do but as it were draw a Vail over Christ's Excellency, while they desire and endeavour to open and declare it.

3. Christ is *incomparably precious* to Believers; he is to them as the Sun among the lesser Stars, the Apple-Tree among the Trees of the Wood, the chief, the standard Bearer among ten thousand: All other Things are to them as the basest Rubbish, when compar'd with him.

4. Christ is *universally precious* to Believers; he is precious as to his *Godhead*; for thus he possesses all his Father's glorious Attributes, and counts it not Robbery to be equal with him. He is likewise precious to Believers in respect of his Manhood, for thus he was holy, harmless, undefil'd, and seperate from Sinners; yea, fairer than the Children of Men. He is precious also to Believers, in respect of the personal and inseperable Union of the divine and human Nature in him, whereby he became capable of suffering for the Sins of Men, and of putting an infinite Worth upon his Sufferings, that so they might answer the terrible Demands of Justice. The Lord

Jesus is also precious in the Esteem of his People, upon the Account of his *Offices* and *Relations* ; which are wonderfully suited to the Conditions of fallen Creatures, and sufficient to relieve them under all the Miseries which Sin has bro't upon the human Race. Such is our natural Ignorance, that without the Instructions of this great Prophet, we can never find the Way to Life, but shall grope even at Noon day in thick Darkness. But blessed be God, that our dear Saviour is such a Prophet, that he makes the Heart of the Rash to understand Judgment, and the Tongues of the Stammerer to speak plain. And such is our natural Slavery to the Guilt and Dominion of Sin, that it is utterly impossible for us, by all our Endeavours, to get rid of them, without the Sacrifice of Christ as a Priest for us, and the Exercise of his kingly Office over us.

And how exceeding precious is Christ to his People, under the amiable Characters of a *Friend*, *Husband*, *Advocate* ? He is such a *Friend* as is far from the Shadow of Change and Cruelty ; a Friend that has no Bounds to his Power, his Presence and his Love ! A *Husband*, who is as compassionate and bountiful, as he is immortal : O ! Happy is the Soul, that is espoused to him. Our dear Lord is an *Advocate*, as generous, condescending and continual in his Pleadings for his poor People, as he is successful.

Again, The blessed Lord Jesus is precious to Believers, in respect of the *charming Examples* of Innocence, Meekness, Piety, Patience, Zeal and Holiness ; which adorn'd his untainted Life, which have an attractive Power to enflame their Love, and excite their Wonder and Imitation.

Once more, Christ is precious to Believers, on the Account of his *Sufferings* in their Stead : O how do their Hearts beat and burn with Love, and melt with Grief, when they behold him in the Garden of *Gethsemane* sweating a Shower of blood ; treading the Wine Press of his Father's Wrath alone, and meekly suffering all other Indignities that inhuman Wretches laid upon the innocent Lamb of God. O ! how is their Admiration
rais'd,

rais'd, by seeing their dearest Lord coming from *Edom* and *Bozrah*, in stately Glory and Majesty, with Garments dip'd and dyed in his own Blood? And their Joy increas'd by considering the *Fruits* of his *Sufferings* and his *Love* in them. And how precious is our Saviour in the *Ordinance* of the *Supper*? by which he design'd to represent to his People his *Sufferings* for them. In short, dear Brethren! There is nothing in Christ but what is *precious*; and there is a perfect Concurrence of every Thing that is so in him. On the contrary, as meer Creatures possess not all Excellencies, because they are finite; so many Defects accompany those they have, because they are corrupt. O! But the *Preciousness* of Christ is without Bounds and Defect, and therefore exceeding dear and amiable! In him is an infinite Fountain of all possible Preciousness, Excellency, and Benefits! More indeed than the Mind of Man can conceive, or his Tongue express: For it hath pleased the Father that in him shou'd all Fulness dwell. In him is treasur'd up suitable Sweet and sufficient Remedy, for all the Misery of our lapsed Nature. O! There is in the blessed Jesus, Bread for the Hungry, Waters for the Thirsty, Rayment for the Naked, Eye-salve for the Blind, a Balsom for the Wounded, Liberty for the Captive, and Rest for the Weary. And as the Believer loves every Thing that is in Christ, so he values every Thing that immediately belongs to him, namely, His *Laws*, his *Cross*, his *People*; none of his *Laws* he excepts against, and the *Cross* of Christ he values as a precious Jewel; and his *People* he chuses as his Companions. And indeed he regards other Things chiefly for Christ's Sake, and as they tend to promote his Glory and Kingdom. O Brethren is it so with you?

But,

5. Christ is *eternally precious* to Believers. Oftentimes earthly Objects lessen in our Esteem the more we are acquainted with them, because of their Narrowness and Defects; but the Preciousness of Christ being an immense, infinite and eternal Ocean, uncapable of Variation, Defect or Decay; by consequence the more we are affected with him, the more we know him, our Wonder

and Love increases by new Discoveries of his adorable Excellencies, his inexhaustable, invariable and eternal *Preciousness*.

But I proceed to the

3d Thing propos'd, which was to shew, *Why Christ is precious to Believers, and to none but such.* And,

1. Believers, and none but they, see their extream Need of Christ in every Thing; Christ is all in all to them; *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* Feeling the Want of Things, leads to the Knowledge of their Worth; but the Ungodly are whole-hearted, secure and senseless of their Misery, and therefore value not the Physician; and some of them relapse into their former Security, by healing their Wounds slightly; by their Prayers, Tears, Reformatiions. But let me tell you, Friends, in the Name of Christ, that unless your Wounds be better search'd, they'll bleed to Death and Damnation, Gal. 3. 10.

2. Believers, and none but they, behold the Beauty of Christ, so as to be rightly affected therewith. Unbelievers are stone blind, 1 Cor. 2. 14. How then can they behold the blessed Jesus? It's true, dry Formalists will prattle and talk by Rote in a frothy Manner, about the *Necessity and Excellency* of Christ; Ah, but it's but just what they have learn'd like a Parrot, and there's no Savour in it; Christ's *Preciousness* has been hid from them entirely for all their light Chatt. But on the other Hand, the Child of God has Soul-ravishing Discoveries of Christ at Times by Faith; and he does feel in himself a great Difference between his present and former Views of the Redeemer: Formerly he did but hear of Christ by the hearing of the Ear, but now his Eye sees him.

3. Believers, and none but they, receive the *Communications of Christ's Love*, which very much endear Christ to the Soul. No! no! These Joys a Stranger does not intermeddle with. The Unbelievers Religion is but a Circle of dead Duties, issuing from a presumptuous Hope, and mercenary, slavish Principles: They are such Strangers to the Power of Piety, and to Communion with the divine Majesty in Duty, that some of them brand it
with

with the odious Names of *Enthusiasm*, *Melancholy*, *Phrensie*.

But I proceed to the IMPROVEMENT.

And,

1. What has been before observ'd, may inform us of the true Reason, why Christ, his Truths, and People, are treated generally with such *Indifference* and *Contempt* in the World : It is because Men believe not. Faith in Name, Pretence and Imagination is very common, every one almost is a Believer in his own Notion. Ah, but in reality, Faith is a rare Jewel, possess'd but by a very few. O ! If Men did but believe savingly, Christ, his Word, Ways, Ordinances and People, wou'd be dear to them, as our Text affirms : To you that believe, *Christ is precious*.

Well, Seeing Faith is so rare, and yet of such indispensable Necessity to Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation, this should enduce us in the

2. Place, to *examine our selves*, whether we have this Grace wrought in us, yea or not, especially, seeing the Matter may be known, and that it conduces so much to our Conviction or Consolation to know it. To this End, my dear Brethren ! Let me ask you in the Name of the great God, as you will answer it one Day at his Bar ; whether or not ye have *experienc'd in your hearts*, what has been before observ'd, concerning the *Preparatives*, *Acts*, and *Properties* of Faith ? Pray Sirs, Have ye felt your selves slain by the Law ? Have ye heard with Trembling your sad Sentence of Death and Damnation sounded from Mount *Ebal* by the legal Trumpet ? Have ye seen the crimson Crimes of your Lives, the horrible hidden hellish Wickedness of your Hearts, and the Curiedness and Damnableless of your present Condition set before your Eyes by the Glass of the Law ? Have ye ever seen your selves entirely void of the least Spark of true Wisdom, Grace, Power and Righteousness ; and particularly, Have ye seen that your lifeless Faith, which ye got and kept with such Ease and Indolence, was nothing but a historical Credit, or a Fancy and Dream of your own Brain, or a Delusion of the Devil ; and that

you wou'd have been damn'd for ever if you had rested upon it to your Death. And pray, Friends, *Have ye ever become dead to the Law, through the Law, that ye might through Faith be married to Christ ; and live to God ?* Rom. 7. 4 Gal. 2. 19. Have ye seen the detestible Filthiness of all your Prayers, Tears, Alms-giving and religious Labours ; and been brought to acknowledge feelingly, that the Lord might justly damn you to all Eternity, for the Sins of these Duties, if ye had no other to answer for ? And that they cou'd never incline the Lord to pity you, but that after you had done your best, he might justly sink your guilty wretched Souls, into the bottomless burning Lake of Fire and Brimstone : And that you understood the Nature of Faith (experimentally) no more than a blind Man Colours ; and had no more Strength to work it in your selves, or procure it from God, than a dead Man has to walk, or create a World. If you have not experienc'd these Things, I assure you, in the Name of Christ, the King of the Church, that you are Unbelievers, married to the Law, and so dead to God, estranged from Christ, and condemned both by Law and Gospel, to the everlasting Damnation of Hell, Gal. 3. 10. Rom. 3. 19. Mark 16 16.

And pray, Friends, Have ye received Christ *really*, without *Disguise* ; *readily*, without *Delay* ; *regularly*, without *Presumption* ; *resolutely*, without *Hesitation* ; *unreservedly*, without *Exception* ? And is your resting upon him sincere, orderly, entire ? And does your Faith pacify your Consciences, purify, humble, soften, and sublimate your Hearts ? Does it help you to overcome the World, and work by Love ? And are ye inclin'd to prize Christ *habitually*, by your Faith ? And to manifest this Esteem by honourable Thoughts of him, insatiable Desires after him, unwearied Labours for him ? Are ye willing to suffer the Loss of any Thing for his Sake ? Do ye mourn in his Absence, and delight in his Presence ? Are ye jealous over your Hearts, lest you should miss an Interest in his Love ? And pray, are ye zealous for his Glory & Kingdom from right Principles ?

I charitably hope, that a Number of you have experienc'd the aforeſaid Particulars, and to ſuch this Subject offers much Conſolation in all Caſes ; if ye enjoy Proſperity, it is a Pledge of the fatherly Love of God, *Pſal.* 23. If ye are expoſed to Adverſity, this alſo ſprings from the Kindneſs of *Jehovah*, and ſhall be ſurely directed ſo as to promote your Benefit. That *Jeſus* whom ye eſteem ſhall ſanctify and ſweeten all your Chaiſtnings by his Spirit and his Love, and nothing ſhall ever ſeperate you from him, *Rom.* 8. 28. 30. Faith frees you from the Guilt and Power of Sin, as well as ſecures you againſt the Terrors of Death, Judgment and Hell ; and enlightens you to eternal Glory and Bleſſedneſs, *Mark* 16. 16. You may triumph over Death, and ſay, *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* And when there be Appearances of the laſt Judgment, you may *lift up your Heads, for your Redemption draws nigh.* And let me tell you, dear Brethren, That your high Eſteem of Chriſt, proves his Love to you ; for indeed your Love is but a Fruit and Refraction of his, 1 *Job* 4 10. Now ye know that as the Love of Chriſt is moſt affectionate and transcendent in Degree, ſo it is perpetual and eternal in Duration : For whom he loves, he *loves to the End.* He will never leave or forſake his People, how much ſoever they are forſaken of and deſpis'd by others. O ! How happy then is the Condition of all true Believers ? *If ye be reproached for Chriſt's Sake, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon you.* O ! My dear Brethren, How very trifling is it, what Men think of us, and how they treat us for that little Space of Time we have to ſpend in this Valley of Sorrow : A few Moments more will conclude the weary Scene, and we ſhall get to that glorious Place of Reſt, which Faith entitles to ; that bleſſed Paradice where we ſhall behold without a Glaſs, that deareſt Lord JESUS, whom we now deſire, ſeated on his Father's Throne, encompaſs'd with the higheſt Glory and Majeſty, and ſhining in all the Charms of mediatorial Beauty.

But Sirs, I am jealous over many of you with a godly Jealouſy, that ye have not theſe *Characters* of Faith in
the

the blessed Jesus, which were before describ'd. For alas! Do ye not rest contented in that carnal Security ye were born in, without ever being rightly convinc'd of, and humbled for it? Why don't ye consider, poor Souls, that while the Goods are in Peace, the Devil keeps House? And are there not some of you who receive Christ in Word and Pretence only, while in Works ye deny him? And some who defer receiving Christ to a more convenient Season? Some who are not willing to receive Christ as a *King* to govern over them entirely, but wou'd guard some Lust against his Sword and Scepter? And some who are scar'd at his precious Cross, and will generally twist any Way to avoid it? And do not some of you pretend to rest upon Christ, before ever ye have comply'd with his Terms? Han't you always thought ye trusted in Christ sincerely, and never found one Difficulty about the Performance of this Duty? Don't ye trust with a whole, hard, and un sanctify'd Heart & Life? O miserable Hypocrites! ye do but deceive your selves to your eternal Damnation. And are not some of you utterly ignorant of having your Hearts drawn entirely out of all Duties, to Christ, and of seeing the Loathsomeness of every of them? Are ye not Strangers to that Peace of Conscience which is procur'd by the Application of a Saviour's Blood? Don't *Sin* yet rule in your *Hearts*, generally, whatever *Appearance* there may be of *Holiness* in your *Lives*? And therefore ye are but *whited Sepulchers*. Particularly, Are ye not under the Power of Pride, Worldliness, Fleshliness, Hardness of Heart? Don't ye think meanly of Christ? And is not this evident from the Smallness of your Desires after him (generally) Negligence in labouring for him, and Unwillingness to suffer for his Sake? Alas! Where is your mourning in his Absence, and delighting in his Presence, and Zeal for his Glory and Kingdom? Unhappy Sinners, are ye not Strangers to these Things? Does not the bare doing of Duty satisfy you without the Presence of Christ therein? When did ye ever pour out Tears and Groans for the Conversion of Sinners to God, and sob in Secret, over the declining Interests of poor *Zion*,
in

in many Places as at this Day? Do not these Things prove to your Faces, that ye are *Infidels*? and therefore in a most wretched and perishing Condition, *poor, blind, miserable and naked, without God, without Christ, without Hope, without Holiness, without the Covenant of Promise, Rev. 3. 17. Eph. 2. 12. possessed by Satan, and every Minute in great Danger of utter and eternal Ruin, Luke 11. 21. The great God hates your Persons, for he is angry with the Wicked every Day, Psal. 5. 5. He curses your Blessings, because you will not lay it to Heart, to give Glory to his Name, Mal. 2. 2. He loathes all your Performances, because they are without Faith, and so are Sin, Rom. 14. 23. He will blast your Hopes because they are false and groundless. While ye say, Peace, Peace, sudden Destruction shall come upon you, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and ye shall not escape. Your Confidence shall be rooted out of your Tabernacle, and it shall bring you to the King of Terrors, Job 18. 14. The Law curses you because ye have broken its Precepts, Gal. 3. 10. The Gospel condemns you to a double Damnation, because ye have not comply'd with its Terms, John 3. 18. He that believes not, is condemned already. And in the 36th Ver. He shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him. And Mark 16. 16. He that believeth not, shall be damned; yea, It shall be more toller-able for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Day of the Lord, than for you: So that ye Unbelievers are vile Lepers, under the Power of Sin; and condemned Criminals, under the Guilt of it, adjudg'd by the great God to the Burnings of *Tophet*. By your Unbelief you cast a vile Reflection upon the whole Gospel, and charge the God of Truth with a Lie; ye reproach his almighty Power, and slight his glorious Grace and Love in its brightest and richest Displays, and commit a Sin for which there is no Remedy. For, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, and affront the Author of it?* But I hasten to the last USE, which is of *Exhortation*.*

And,

1. I exhort you, *Unbelievers*, That ye wou'd seek for *Faith*; to this End, seriously consider those Miseries and
Dangers

Dangers which attend you while ye want it, and the Excellency of it, as well as the Advantages that follow upon it ; which have been before hinted. Attend upon the Means of Grace, particularly, the hearing of the Word preach'd by faithful Ministers ; seeing that *Faith comes by hearing*. And earnestly, under a Sense of your Impotency and Worthlessness, supplicate the almighty God to work it in you.

Again,

2. I exhort *Believers*,

(1.) To *praise the great God* for his pure Mercy, in working by the exceeding Greatness of his mighty Power this noble and necessary Grace in you. And pray, Sirs, endeavour to express this Gratitude, by such Thoughts, Words and Actions, as are answerable to the Obligations of so dear and valuable a Priviledge.

(2.) Seek the *Exercise, Increase and Assurance* of Faith ; hereby you will obtain much solid Comfort and Benefit to your own Souls, and be rendred more capable to serve the noble Interests of Christ's Honour and Kingdom in this World, and obtain a distinguishing Crown of Blessedness in the next. It's said of the *Thessalonians*, that their Faith grew exceedingly. Dear Brethren ! It is your Duty and Interest to exercise Faith upon Christ,

(1.) For *Justification*, from the *Guilt of Sin*, how Crimson-colour'd soever they have been, he can make them as white as Snow by his Blood, *Isai. l. 18*.

(2.) For *Sanctification*, from the *Power of Sin* ; to this End, ye have both his Prayers, Purchase and Promise to encourage your Faith, *John 17. 17. Rom. 6. 14*.

(3.) For *Support under*, and the *Sanctification* of all the *Difficulties*, outward and inward, which ye are here liable to ; and to this End, ye should fix your Faith upon those precious Promises that are suited to your various Distresses.

(4.) We shou'd exercise Faith in Christ, for Help to perform commanded *Duties*, and attend upon instituted Ordinances, fervently, faithfully, fruitfully. And for this Purpose, his gracious Promises shou'd be eyed.

Now

Now these Things following, I think are proper Means to obtain the Exercise, Increase and Assurance of Faith, viz.

1. *Solid Knowledge* of the *Nature and Terms* of the Covenant of Grace; and frequent Consideration of the *Freeneſs and Sureneſs* of the Mercies of that Covenant, and the new Way of Salvation by the Righteousneſs of another, opened, in it; as well as a frequent Surrender of our ſelves to God in Christ, according to the Tenor of that Covenant.

2. *A humble & thankful Remembrance* of your paſt *Experiences* of God's Mercy to your Souls. O remember the *Hill Mizar*; the particular Places where Christ open'd his Heart to you, and ſhew'd you your Names graven on it.

3. Ye ſhou'd *oppoſe* the *unreaſonable Suggelions* of Satan, and your own Hearts, againſt Faith, and thereby fight the Fight of Faith.

4. Beware of *over-examining* and *condemning your State* in dark Times of Deſertion and Temptation; for ye cannot ſee Things in the Dark. Condemn not your State, becauſe ye have not ſuch Comforts and high Attainments in Knowledge, Holineſs and Uſefulneſs as ſome others. There is a great Difference between a *weak* Faith and a *uſe* Faith, or *none* at all. You ſhou'd rather complain of the Weakneſs of your Faith to Christ, and beg for Help; *Lord I believe, help my Unbelief*. Neither do your bad Thoughts and Actions, at Times, when they are againſt the general Bent of your Heart, conclude that ye have no Faith. For, in many Things we offend all.

5. *Attend* upon the *Word and Ordinances* of Christ; for that which begets Faith will alſo nourish it. The Lord has not only given his Word of Promise and Oath to confirm our Faith, but he has alſo inſtituted holy Ordinances as Seals to ſtrengthen it; and with this View we ought to partake of them. In that ſacred Supper which we purpoſe through Grace to partake of, we may, in the Miniſters giving the Elements to the People, believingly, behold GOD the FATHER giving his only begotten SON with all the Purchase of his Blood to us: And in our receiving

The Preciousness of Christ.

receiving them, we shou'd labour to receive Christ with them in our Hearts. We shou'd *give Diligence*, by a sincere, regular and steady Performance of all the Duties of Religion, *to make our Calling and Election sure.*

But more particularly, I exhort those who have experienc'd the aforesaid Work of Faith in themselves, and none but such to come to the holy Table of the Lord. And that ye may come profitably, endeavour by solemn calling upon God to get your Faith in Exercise, *O let your Spikenard send forth the Smell thereof, while the King sits at his Table*; for, by this alone ye can discern your blessed Lord, and have Communion with him: O! this will make him precious in your Esteem indeed, incomprehensible, inexpressibly, incomparably, and everlastingly.

Very dear Brethren, I shall only hint at a few Things to highten your Esteem of Christ, and conclude.

And,

1. I beseech you to consider his *personal Excellency* and *Glory*, which no Tongue of Men or Angels can sufficiently declare.

2. Consider what Christ has *done* and *suffer'd* for you while he was on *Earth*. Did he not fulfil the holy Law of God perfectly on your Account; and patiently and willingly endure all that Shame and Misery in his Body and Soul, which ye deserved for your Breaches of it? The Signs whereof ye have in the holy Ordinance before you. Oh! Shou'd not this exceedingly endear the blessed Jesus to our Souls?

Pray consider, what Christ has purchased for you by his Obedience and Sufferings, and promised to you in his faithful Word, and offers to seal to you by his Blood and Spirit in this solemn Ordinance, which we have in View. Why it is no less, dear Sirs, than eternal Glory and Blessedness.

4. Consider what Christ *does* for you, now in *Heaven*; why he *intercedes* for ever in the Vertue of his Blood: His bodily Distance from you, or his Exaltation to the highest Glory over you, does not make him forget to love you; but

but he always appears in the Presence of his Father,
before the heavenly Hosts as the Lamb slain, whom
we behold as such by Faith in the Ordinance before
we shall answer the Design thereof, which may God
grant for Christ's Sake. *AMEN.*

F I N I S.

