

# SERMONS

O N

Important *SUBJECTS*;

A D A P T E D

To the PERILOUS STATE of the  
BRITISH *NATION*, lately  
preached in *Philadelphia*.

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By GILBERT TENNENT, *A. M.*  
*Minister of the GOSPEL.*

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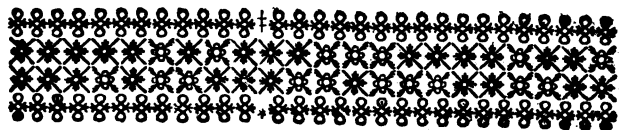
JER. V. 3. *Thou hast striken them, but they  
have not grieved.*

JER. XXXV. 15. *Amend your Doings, and  
ye shall dwell in the Land.*

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*P H I L A D E L P H I A :*

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*Jersey-Market.* 1758.



# P R E F A C E.

Candid READER,

**T**HESE SERMONS *were preached to my own Congregation, without any Design of making them public; but was induced hereto, as follows: In March last, I received a Letter from the COLLEGE of NEW-JERSEY, informing me of an extraordinary Appearance of the divine Power and Presence there, and requesting I would come and see; with this kind Motion I gladly complied, and having been there some Time, had all the Evidence of the Reality of the aforesaid Report, which*

could be in Reason desired. Of this my dear Brother WILLIAM writes thus, ' I went  
 ' the College last Monday, and saw a me-  
 ' morable Display of God's Power and Grace  
 ' in the Conviction of Sinners, the whole  
 ' House was a BOCHIM; a Sense of God's  
 ' Holiness was so impressed on the Hearts of  
 ' its Inhabitants, that all of them, excepting  
 ' two (esteemed religious) were greatly shaken  
 ' respecting the State of their Souls. This  
 ' gracious Ray reached the LATIN SCHOOL,  
 ' and much affected the MASTER, and a  
 ' Number of the SCHOLARS; nor was it con-  
 ' fined to the Students, some others were like-  
 ' wise awakened: I discoursed with all the  
 ' present Members of the College (excepting  
 ' one) who generally enquired with Sollici-  
 ' tude, what they should do to be saved;  
 ' nor did I ever see any, in that Case, who  
 ' had more clear Views of GOD and them-  
 ' selves, or in any House, more genuine Sor-  
 ' row for Sin, and Longing for JESUS; this  
 ' blessed Work of the MOST HIGH, so far  
 ' exceeded my Expectation, that I was lost in  
 ' Surprise, and constrained to say, is it so,  
 ' can it be so? Nor was my being, Eye and  
 ' Ear witness from Monday to Friday, able  
 ' to recover me from my Astonishment! I felt,  
 ' as the Apostles, when it was told them the  
 ' Lord had risen, they could not believe, through  
 ' Fear

## THE PREFACE.

Fear and great Joy! My Reverend Brethren, and Self, were like those that dream: The Lord hath done great Things for us, whereof we are glad (Pl. 126.) This religious Concern was not begun by the ordinary Mean of Preaching, or promoted by any alarming Methods, yet some were ready to sink under its Weight; it spread like the increasing Light of the Morning, a wise and gracious Providence, had brought about a Concurrence of different Incidents, which tended to engage them to Thoughtfulness about their Souls\*; these Things, viewed in Connection, manifest the Finger of God. The Freeness of whose Grace appears by considering, that a little before this merciful Visitation, some of the Youth had given a greater Loose to their Corruptions, than was common among them; a Spirit of Pride and Contention prevailed, to the great Grief, and almost Discouragement of the worthy PRESIDENT. There was little or

no

\* The Incidents (referred to by my Brother) were especially these, viz. Several Letters respecting the Necessity and Excellency of internal Religion, sent to some of the Students, with practical Books of like Tendency: The Sickness of one of the Scholars, in the College; his being awakened out of Security, at that Time, and speaking to others; together with other Students speaking to those about them concerning divine Things.



' no Motion of the Passions in the Preachers,  
 ' during their public Performances, nor any  
 ' public Discourses in the Hours allotted for  
 ' Study, only at Morning and Evening Pray-  
 ' ers, some plain and brief scriptural Exhort-  
 ' ations and Directions (proper to Persons  
 ' under spiritual Trouble) were delivered:  
 ' Before I came away, several Persons received  
 ' some Thing like the Spirit of Adoption;  
 ' being tenderly affected with a Sense of re-  
 ' deemng Love, and thereby determined to  
 ' endeavour after universal Holiness. I can-  
 ' not fully represent this glorious Work, it  
 ' will bear your most enlarged Apprehensions  
 ' of a Day of Grace; let God have all the  
 ' Glory! It was indeed to me as a Tree of  
 ' Life, yea it is still to my Soul, as though  
 ' I had seen the Face of God!

THE bearer of Prayer, excited di-  
 vers Members of that Society to vehement  
 Wrestlings, for an Effusion of sacred Influ-  
 ence on the Students, that hereby they might  
 be prepared, as polished Shafts, to promote,  
 with all the Ardor of their Souls, the truly  
 noble Interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom:  
 This believing Importunity did not continue  
 long, before Jehovah rent the Heavens, and came  
 down, and brought Salvation with him to that  
 House: This Prodigy of Grace, excited high  
 Admiration.

Admiration, grateful Love, and exceeding Joy, in those Bosoms, that had been oppressed with Concern for the COLLEGE, in its secure State! These Measures which the all-wise God used, to begin and carry on this glorious Work of his Grace, were peculiarly adapted, and therefore probably designed, to silence unreasonable Cavils against it! Divers Persons, worthy of Credit, assure us, that the aforesaid religious Concern, has been followed with such Effects, as give Ground to Hope, it has and will issue in the saving Conversion, of a considerable Number of the Scholars! Blessed be God for this Benefit, so pregnant with Mercies to the Community; for hereby Salt is cast into the Spring, that salutary Streams may flow out, to Water this Wilderness, and make it blossom as the Rose! The Truth is, a gracious God has interposed, in Favour of this Infant-Seminary, by a Series of surprizing Events!--It was begun without One Farthing of a Fund to support it, or any Probability of obtaining one;--after waiting many Years, divine Providence procured a Royal Charter, and provided valuable Benefactions, on both Sides the Atlantick (in the Midst of Contempt and Opposition) sufficient to erect, and near finish, the most spacious STRUCTURE on the Continent (a Structure grand and noble in Prospect, and peculiarly

*peculiarly adapted to answer the Use designed, and to carry on, in a good Degree, the important Purpose of the Institution †: Matters being brought this Length, not by human Policy, but by the Arm of JEHOVAH, it pleased the divine MAJESTY, to add this crowning Instance of immerited Benignity, viz. To honour and beautify, by a singular Manifestation of his Presence and Grace, the House HE had built, by an extraordinary Providence! May Almighty GOD graciously keep Possession of his own House, in all future Time, and make it by his continued Influence, a diffusive and durable Blessing to the Church and State! As this Seminary, sacred to Learning and Piety, resembles that of HALL, in SAXONY, in respect of its Rise, Progress, and Influence, may it do so likewise in respect of Duration; and of this, indeed, the aforesaid Smiles of Heaven, are encouraging Omens!--Since the Day of God's*  
*Power*

‡ Seeing a pious Ministry are exceeding necessary to preserve Foundation Principles, and promote vital Religion, and that pious Youths of a promising Genius, are often found among the poorer SORT, who are not able to give them a liberal Education, which is necessary to qualify them for public Service; it is hoped that some who have at Heart, the Prosperity of Zion, will contribute to the Support of such: A Fund of this Kind is already begun in this College, by generous Benefactions from Great Britain, but as yet unequal to the Necessities of the Churches here!

*Power at the College, my Brother's Congregation at Freehold, has been favoured with an almost equal Shower of Blessing!—Having preached a Number of the following Sermons, at the College, in the Season before mentioned, the greater Part of that Society, manifested a Desire of their Publication; which, with the Desires of others, and Hope of their being useful, induced me to publish Proposals for their Impression; I was the rather inclined hereto, by considering that when I composed and delivered them, it pleased a gracious God to Favour the meanest of his Servants, with the quickening Influences of his holy Spirit, for divers Months, in an uncommon Degree (adored be his Name) and to bless them to some of my own Congregation; previous to that memorable divine Effusion at NASSAU-HALL! And the calamitous State of our Country, and Nation, was an additional Incentive; to serve which, in Sincerity, is the noblest Ambition, and yields the highest Pleasure to a generous Mind!—I am sorry I cannot speak better for so great a MASTER, and in so good a CAUSE, but be graciously accepts sincere Endeavours: Therefore to him, I humbly Dedicte these SERMONS, and*

b

*implore*

x

The PREFACE.

*implore his Blessing on them, in the present,  
and succeeding Times.*

GILBERT TENNENT.

PHILADELPHIA,

Oct. 20, 1757.



THE

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N. B. I have added one SERMON ON  
*Original Righteousness* to the above, with  
Design to complet the Order of Subjects,  
and inforce the Argument on *Original Sin*.

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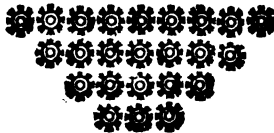
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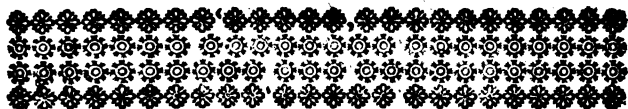


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*Original*



*Original Righteousness ;*

A

S E R M O N .

GEN. I. 27. *God created Man in his own Image.*

**H**ERE is an Account of the Creation of Man, in which three Particulars are remarkable, *viz.* The Time, Author, and Manner. And,

*1st,* As to the *Time*, it was on the Sixth Day after the other Creatures were made, then Man was formed, to be as it were the *End* and *Compend* of them; in him God designed peculiarly to manifest the Glory of his Wisdom, Mercy, and Justice: There was a Sort of a Climax or Gradation in the Works of Creation, from Things less perfect, to Things more so; Man, the noblest

blest Creature of this lower World, was made last, that the Glory of God, appearing in his other Works, might be declared by him, who was fitted for that Design: He was made when all Things were prepared for his Entertainment and Delight, that so he might be the more induced to celebrate the divine Praise, for so distinguishing a Benefit. But,

2d, THE *Author* of his Creation, was the holy *Trinity*, Three in One, and One in Three; and God said let us make Man. The Word *said*, being in the singular Number, shews the Unity of God's Essence, and the Word God†, being in the Plural, shews a Plurality of Persons in the Godhead. But,

3d, THE *Manner* of Man's Creation was, 1st, With *Council*; let us make Man. The Narrative of this is introduced, with a manifest Distinction from the Rest of the Creation Works: Hitherto only a Word of *Command* had been given for producing the other Works; and God said, let there be *Light*, and there was *Light*, &c. But now a *Council* is called, when Man is to be formed; who, under God, was the Scope of the Rest. Some pretend, that God speaks here, after the Manner of *Princes*, in the plural Number, who use to say, we will, and require, &c. But hereto it may  
 † *Elohim.* be

be replied, that this is only the Invention and Practice of latter Times, and no ways agrees with the Simplicity of the first Ages, or the Custom of the *Hebrews*. The Kings of *Israel*, used to speak of themselves in the singular Number, 2 *Sam.* 7. 28. and elsewhere, and so did the *Eastern* Monarchs too; *Ezra* 6. 8. *I, Darius, make a Decree.* *Ezra* 7. 21. *I, even I, Artaxerexes, the King, do make a Decree.* It is therefore unreasonable to thrust the Usages of modern Stile, into the sacred Scriptures: Besides the Lord doth generally speak of himself in the singular Number, some few Places excepted, which are designed to signify the Mystery of the Trinity; as particularly, *Gen.* 3. 22. *The Lord said, the Man is become as one of us*; which shews that there are more Persons than one in the Godhead. Man was to be a Creature, different from all that had been hitherto made, Flesh and Spirit, Heaven and Earth, must be united in him: He must be allied to both Worlds, and therefore the Almighty (as it were) calls a Council to the making of him; to represent to us his superior Excellency, as well as the Care of God concerning him.

AND, 2<sup>d</sup>, Man was made in God's *Image*, and after his *Likeness*; these two Words import the same Thing (*Gen.* 5. 3.) and represent

represent to us the exact Likeness to God that was in Man originally; he was certainly a nearer Resemblance, than any other of the visible Creatures, but yet there ever was, and ever will be, an infinite Distance between God and him, in respect of Dignity and Excellency, CHRIST only is the express Image of the Father's Person, being of the same Nature with him: Man is God's Image only, as the Shadow in the Glass, or the King's Impress upon the Coin. Now the Image of God in Man, was Three-fold, viz. Natural, Moral, Political. And 1st, The natural Image of God in Man, consists in the Nature and Faculties of the Soul: The Nature of the Soul was and still is Spiritual, Simple, Invisible, Immortal, which Properties, do in some Measure, resemble the Spirituality, Simplicity, &c. of the supream Being: Besides, the Faculties of the Soul, viz. Understanding, Will, and active Power, do resemble the Mind, Will, and Power of God; add to this, that a Variety of Faculties in one and the same Soul, seem to shadow forth a Plurality of Persons in the divine Essence; so that the Soul, considered in the aforesaid Faculties, is, perhaps, the brightest Looking-Glass in Nature, wherein we may, in some Sort, behold God. .

2d, The *political Image* of God consists in that *Authority* and *Power* of Government over the lower Creation which God gave to innocent Man; *und let them have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowls of the Air, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping Thing that creepeth on the Earth.* The Almighty made innocent Man his *Vice-Roy* upon Earth; he gave him *Authority* to use the inferior Creatures for his Support and Comfort, and to receive *Homage* from them: An Evidence of this was their coming to him, and receiving Names from him as their Lord. Now the Foundation of this *Dominion*, was the free Gift of God the Creator, as appears from the Words before recited, the reasonableness of which is manifest from the Supereminence of Man's Nature to the other Creatures over which he was to preside; it was fit that that which was less perfect, should submit to that which was more perfect. And the Mean by which this *Dominion* was brought to pass, was the Providence of God, by which all the Creatures had a Faculty and Inclination to obey Man: And doubtless, the End was God's Glory, that as Man had received all from God, so he should refer all the *Homage* and *Service* he got from the Creatures to him. But,

d

3d,

3d, THE *moral Image* of God consists in a *habitual Conformity* of all the *Powers* of the *Soul* to the whole *Will* of God, which *Solomon* calls *Uprightness* ; or, in those divine *Gifts* of *Knowledge*, *Righteousness*, and *Holiness*, which were possessed by them ; the *Mind* was adorned with *Wisdom*, or the *Knowledge* of Things, divine and human, which appeared in our first *Parents* giving *Names* to all the living *Creatures*, suited to their *Natures*, and in his knowing, at first *Sight*, that *Eve* was formed out of a *Rib* of his *Side* ; and indeed, without *Wisdom*, he would have been unfit to govern the *Creatures*, unfit to take *Occasion* from them, to glorify the *Creator*, and so unfit for the *Use* designed him, and consequently *Evil* : Surely therefore the *Mind* of *Adam* had a true and clear *Knowledge* of divine Things, without *Error* or *Mistake* ; his *Will* also was *pliant* to the *Will* of *God*, without the least *Reluctance* ; *Holiness* towards *God*, and *Righteousness* towards *Man*, possessed the *Will* (*Eph. 4. 24.*) by which it was disposed to desire what was good, and to receive what was true ; and thus, *Adam* not only acknowledged and loved his *Creator*, but was inclined to exercise a *Dominion* only, and not a *Tyranny*  
over

over the Creatures subjected to him: And his *Affections* were *regular*, free from inordinate Appetite, ready to obey the Conduct of his Mind; his Thoughts were free from Vanity, and easily fixed upon the best Objects; thus beautiful and harmonious was the original State of Man!

: Now, *Original Righteousness* consisted in, or sprung from all the aforesaid Particulars; it is called *Righteousness*, in a large Sense, forasmuch as it signifies the *habitual Conformity* of the whole *Man* to GOD and his *Law*; it is termed *Original*, because it was conferred on *Adam*, as a *public Person*, or upon the whole human Nature in him; from whom it would have been propagated to all his Offspring, if he had stood. It is likewise called *Original*, by Way of Distinction, from all that actual Holiness, which has been since conferred upon any of *Adam's* Offspring. *Original Righteousness* was no *Substance*, as ILLIRICUS dreamed, but a *Quality*; which was, as it were, diffused through all the Substance, and therefore it was common to Soul and Body, to the Mind, Will, and Affections; by this Man had a Capacity of Subjection to God, and of persisting in Obedience to him; so that he was not obliged by any



Necessity of Nature, to rebel against God, and ruin himself.

It is a very absurd and dangerous Opinion, which some entertain, from the Abuse of that Passage of the Apostle *Peter*, where we are said to be *Partakers of the divine Nature*; that Original Righteousness, consisted in Man's having a Part of the divine Being; for, as this supposes the Almighty to be divisible, so it makes Man equal to his Maker, both which are blasphemous; all therefore that is intended by the Phrase, is that good People do partake of holy Dispositions, resembling the moral Excellencies of *Jehovah*, but it should be still remembered, that all the Perfections of Creatures, are finite, dependant, variable;—whereas those of God, are independant, invariable, infinite.

THE Scriptures positively declare, that Man was made originally *upright*, *Ecles. 7. 29.* Yea *good, very good*, *Gen. 1. 31.* But how could this be, unless he had that habitual moral Goodness, which is proper to Man, and necessary to enable him to love and obey his Creator; surely such as the Tree is, such are its Fruits, *Mat. 7. 18.*

FARTHER, our being renewed after God (by Conversion) in Knowledge, Righteousness, and Holiness, *Coll. 3. 10. Epb. 4. 23, 24.*

24. necessarily supposes, that the Image of God consists therein, and that this was Man's original State. It is reasonable to conclude, from the Wisdom, Goodness, and Purity of God, that Man was made perfect in his Kind, as well as the Angels, *John* 8. 44. *Jud.* 6 Ver. But how could this be, if he wanted Wisdom, Righteousness, and Holiness? And indeed, seeing the Want of Holiness in a rational Creature is Sin, if Man was made so, God would be the Author of Sin.---The Disorder of the Flesh, or *Law of the Members, warring against the Law of the Mind*, the Apostle calls Sin, *Rom.* 7. 20, 23. Now if this was con-created with Man, the Almighty would be the Author of Sin, which is as absurd, as blasphemous to imagine, of infinite Pefection, and absolute Purity!

ADAM'S *being made a little lower than the Angels*, his free Access to God before his Apostacy, the Fear and Shame he discovered immediately after it, and his Expulsion from *Eden* on Account of it, evidently suppose, that he originally enjoyed God's moral Image. Farther,

WE are informed, that *Man was made Male and Female*, and this was doubtless for the Comfort of human Life, and the Propagation of the human Race. *Adam*  
was

was first formed, which shews the Pre-eminence of his Sex, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. His *Body was formed of the Dust of the Ground*, which is indeed a humbling Consideration, *Dust we are, and unto Dust we must soon return*; the *Woman was formed of a Rib of the Side of the Man*, to shew the near Relation, and tender Affection which should subsist between them, *Mat.* 19. 5. God made but one Male and Female, that all Nations being of one *Blood*, Descendants from one Stock, might thereby be endued to love each other, and likewise to shew the Unlawfulness of Divorce at Pleasure, *Mat.* 19. 4, 5. God having made our first Parents, pronounced a *Blessing* upon them, in Virtue of which, their Posterity were to extend to the utmost Corners of the Earth, and continue to the final Period of Time.

BUT before I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject, let me observe somewhat upon the two constituent Parts of the compound Man, *viz.* his *Body and Soul*; and, 1st, As to the Body, I may say, with the Psalmist, that it is *wonderfully made*, if we consider its erect Stature, Symetry, or Use; while the Beasts have a groveling Aspect. Man is so formed that he can with Ease contemplate the Heavens whence he has derived his Original, and such is the

*Symetry*

*Symetry* of the Parts of a human Body, that *Architects* refer all their Workmanship to be tried by it, as a Rule. Besides, the Parts are in their Form and Situation, not only *fitted* for *Beauty*, but for all Kinds of *Operations*, natural, moral, and spiritual: Add to this, the amazing *Variety* in human Faces, where the Compass is so small, the Parts, Figure, and Colour the same (which is necessary to preserve the Honour and Comfort of social Life, and prevent our Degenerating into a Herd of Beasts.) The *Preservation* of *natural Heat*, for so long a Time, without inflaming the tender Internals; the *Circulation* of the *Blood*, screening the noble Parts, from the Ignoble, by the Diaphragma, and from external Injuries, by a strong Inclosure.

THE Body of Man being formed, it pleased God to infuse into it an immortal Soul (*Gen. 2. 7.*) which as to its *Nature*, is an immaterial, incompleat Substance, endowed with Understanding and Will, which by its Union with the Body, is the Cause of a three-fold Life to Man. And, 1st, It is a *Substance*, not a mere *Thought*, as *Cartese* imagined, because Thought is an Action, which presupposes an Agent; it appears likewise to be a Substance, because it subsists after the Death of the Body. 2d, It is  
*immaterial,*

*immaterial*, which is evident from its Operations, it perceives immaterial Things, and that after an immaterial Manner, by comparing one Thing with another, and inferring one Thing from another. 3d, It is *incomplete*, in respect of its being ordained for, and *disposed* to a *Union* with the *Body*, as a Part of the Compound; by which, it differs from the Being of *Angels*. 4th, It is endowed with certain Faculties of Understanding and Will, by which it perceives what is true, and embraces what is good. 5th, By its *Union* with the *Body*, it is the instrumental Cause of that manifold *Life* which Man lives, *viz.* 1st, *Vegetative*; by which we are nourished, grow, and propagate our Kind. 2d, *Sensitive*; by which we discern and judge of sensible Things, by the Help of the Five outward Senses, Hearing, &c. as well as of the three inward, *viz.* Common Sense, Fancy, and Memory. 3d, *Rational*; by which we discern spiritual Objects, and are able to reason about them. On the Account of that three-fold Life mentioned, the Soul is termed the Spirit of Lives, *Gen. 2. 7.* It may be farther observed, that the compound Man was so made, as to have no direct Tendency to a Dissolution, he would have been preserved for ever from Death, had he not sinned;

finned; and therefore Death is threatened as the Reward of Sin, *Ezek.* 18. 20.

I NEED not add, that the Design of Man's Creation, was doubtless the Glory of the great God; for that was the End of all his Works, *Prov.* 6. 4. The stupendous Workmanship of GOD, throughout the vast Universe, was summed up in Man, as a Compend of the Whole! Man was fitted with a Capacity to Experience the Goodness of all the Creatures in himself, and to return to God the Glory of it. But I hasten to the Improvement. And,

1st, THE Consideration of our Creation, should invite our Gratitude to our Creator, because he has made us, whom he could have left in the State of Nothing; and especially, because he adorned us with his *Image*, hereby distinguishing us from, and advancing us above all the lower Creation, and that out of pure and unexcited Affection towards us. How holy, and how happy was the original State of Man, he was not only conformed to the divine *Nature*, but had the Enjoyment of the divine *Love*, in Consequence thereof; both Body and Soul were beautified with singular Endowments, and enriched with a Variety of Honours and Delights! O therefore let us esteem, love, and serve our great, our good Creator, let

us remember him from our early Age, *Ecle. 12. 1.* let us speak of his Goodness, subject ourselves to his Government, and refer our All to his Glory: This is just, for God has absolute Dominion over us, he is our Potter; this is grateful, for *Jehovah* is our Benefactor; this is reasonable, because he is a Being of infinite Excellency, and hereby we are like to obtain his Favour, *Pf. 103. 13.*

2d, THE Thoughts of Man's *original State*, may excite us to bewail our present apostate Condition, *The Crown is fallen from our Heads, woe is us that we have sinned:--* Our antient Conformity to God, and Communion with him, are now lost, and manifold Disorders have seized our whole Frame; the original *Crafts* of the Humours of our Bodies is broken, and now they are exposed to all Manner of Diseases and Deaths, of various Form! Darkness possesses our Minds, Obstinacy our Wills, and great Irregularity our Affections; we who were at first Lords of the inferior Creatures, are now become Slaves to them! we are deprived of the Sweets of the divine Love by Sin, and exposed to the dreadful Displeasure of our Creator! (*Eph. 2. 3.*) O therefore let us bitterly bewail our present woeful State! If *Rachael*, when banished with her Children, from

from the *Jewish* Country, and carried Captive to the *Babylonish* Borders, did so lament a small Misery, that she refused to be comforted, shall not we lament, who are banished from Paradise, disrobed of Innocence, bereaved of Happiness, and thrust into a State of the most miserable Captivity, by our own Default!

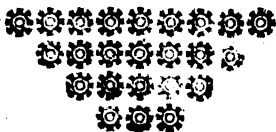
3d, THE Thoughts of our primitive Excellency and Happiness, should excite us with all Earnestness to seek the Recovery of it. Let us remember whence we are fallen, and do our first Works; it will not avail us to cry, O miserable Man! without this be added to it, who shall deliver me? If the Woman that lost the Piece of Silver, light a Candle, swept the House, and sought diligently for it till she found it; shall not we be diligent, who have lost our All at a Stroke, especially considering that there is great Hopes of our obtaining it, in the Way of humble and unwearied Labour; and surely the Good we seek, will infinitely over-balance our Pains in Quest of it! It may be recovered in Part in this Life, by Regeneration and Justification, and with Advantage in the Life to come, by eternal Glorification. But how should we seek it? 1st, By lamenting our Loss, and especially Sin, the Cause of it! 2d, By embracing the



the Redeemer by a living Faith, who is the meritorious Cause of our Restoration, that so we may be united to him, and made compleat in him. 3d, By earnest and unwearied Labours, let us seek Conformity to God, let us *work out the Work of our Salvation, knowing that we shall reap, if we faint not*: To our Labours let us add many Sighs and Groans, for Freedom from the Bondage of Corruption, that we may be brought into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, *Rom. 8. 19, 25.* And,

4th, SEEING that there be yet in fallen Man, some remains of the divine Image, not only of the Natural and Political, but even of the Moral, *viz.* Some Light in the Understanding, to distinguish between moral Good and Evil, and some Propension to moral Good; let us beware that we do not deface them more than they have been by the original Trespas, lest we be guilty of the boldest Rebellion, against the most sovereign Authority, as well as the basest Ingratitude, against the kindest Mercy! Lest we commit the greatest Cruelty against ourselves, by robbing our *Souls* of every Thing that is valuable, by exposing ourselves to the divine Judgments, and that for a Thing of Nought, *1 Cor. 3. 17.* *If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God*

*God destroy.* The Apostle *Paul* informs us, that the *Gentile* Philosophers were given up to vile Affections, because *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, Rom. 1.* Now his Image is defaced, by every Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, especially by Pride, Unbelief, Disobedience, Ingratitude, Gluttony; by these our first Parents despoiled themselves and us, of their native Dignity and Beauty, and brought us to that Misery which we daily feel.



### E R R A T A.

- P**AGE 74. Line 1. read, of one.  
 Page 149. Line 6. read, ay.  
 Page 169. Line 28. read, Place.  
 Page 211. Line ult. read, and.  
 Page 235. Line 1. read, Situation.  
 Page 248. Line 5. read, banished.  
 Page 248. Line 27. read, so.  
 Page 354. Line 7. read, turpissimus.  
 Page 407. Line 21. read, own.







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# S E R M O N I.

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ROM. v. 12. *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.*

**F**ORASMUCH as Reason and Experience teach us, that we are (in a moral Respect) diseas'd; and seeing, according to the Revelation GOD has graciously given us, a Physician is provided to heal this Disease; it must therefore be of the last Importance to know its Nature and Extent, that we may be suitably affected therewith, and apply to the great Physician in earnest for a Cure, without the least Delay; which unless we do, we are not like to obtain any Benefit by his Blood; *for the Whole need no Physician, but the Sick; and many shall seek to enter into the Kingdom of God, and not be able.*

B

Now

Now the dangerous and mortal DISEASE we labour under, is SIN; which is two-fold, *viz.* ORIGINAL and ACTUAL; it is the former of these that the Text under our present Consideration treats; to understand which, let it be considered; that the Apostle is therein comparing the First and Second *Adam*, in respect of the World's being corrupted by the one, and restored by the other.

WHEREFORE it is as if the Apostle had said, seeing Things are so in respect of the Benefits received by Christ, as I have represented in the preceding Verses, then it is evident that what was lost by *Adam*, is restored by CHRIST: This he proceeds to illustrate, by shewing particularly what the Loss was, which we sustain by our first Parents Trespass, both in respect of Integrity and Happiness; *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*; here observe, that Man is the Parent of Corruption; altho' the Devil sinned before Man, yet he did not Sin to Man, but to himself; he was indeed the Procurer of Man's Sin by his Temptations, but not the Committer of it; and therefore it was not from his Seduction, but Man's Transgression, that Sin entered into the World.

BUT

BUT who was this Man? *A.* ADAM, and EVE; though these were two in respect of Sex, yet they were but one by Nature and Mariage; *Eve* began the Sin, and *Adam* finished it; nor does it pass to Posterity till it be finished (*Gen. ii. 17.*) But why is not *Eve* named? *A.* Because the *Hebrews* do not cite Genealogies by Women, and because *Adam* was constituted the Parent and Principal of the human Race, and was one with *Eve*, not only œconomically but naturally; for she was made out of him, and depended upon him: But why is one precisely named? *A.* That it might appear the better, that of one Blood all Nations have proceeded, and especially that *Christ* the second *Adam*, might be the more conveniently opposed to the first.

SIN entered; the Word is not taken here improperly, for the Punishment of Sin, as it is in some other Places of Scripture, but properly for moral Impurity, because it is distinguished from Death, from Punishment; *Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*: Sin is spoken of in the singular Number, as it is frequently in the following Verses, to shew that one Sin of our first Parents passed to their Posterity; one Sin of *Adam* only was natural, the rest were personal: But what was that one Sin of which the Apostle



speaks? *A.* It was that actual Sin, which our first Parents committed by eating the forbidden Fruit, and the Guilt thereof which are charged upon *Adam's* Posterity, because the Prohibition did not respect him only, but them also whom he represented; this is commonly called original Sin imputed; together with the Pollution consequent thereupon, consisting in a want of original Righteousness, and Propensity to all Evil; this has stained the whole human Nature, as both Scripture and sad Experience witness, and from this fatal Fountain all actual Evils flow; this Pollution or Depravity, is commonly called Original Sin inherent.

Now the Apostle assures us, that this Sin of *Adam* has entered into the World; by the Word *World*, we are to understand all the Inhabitants of the World, or all Men, as the Apostle himself expresses it, in the following Part of the Verse: The Thing containing, is put for the Persons contained, by a usual Metonymy; but how did Sin enter into the World? I answer, not by *Imitation*, for then it would not pass upon those, that had not sinned after the Similitude of *Adam's* Transgression, which the Scriptures assure us it did: It therefore entered into the World at first by the *Treasures* of our first Parents, and is therein continually

tinually propagated by natural Generation ; as appears by the next Words of the Text, *and so Death passed upon all Men.* What Death? *A.* All that Death which was opposed, to the three-fold Life that Man enjoyed, while in a State of Innocence, *viz.* Natural, Spiritual, Eternal. This Interpretation, the Law of Contraries, and indefinite Form of Expression give Ground for.

Now surely the Punishment could not pass upon all, without the Cause thereof, the Sin together with it ; for the Judge of all the Earth must needs do right : And hence we may learn, that Original Sin is propagated after the same Manner, that Death is, *viz.* by natural Generation ; Men are begotten sinful, and so by consequence mortal, for by Sin came Death.

In the following Words of the Text, we have an Account of the reason of the Propagation of Sin and Death to all Mankind, and it is this, *for that all have sinned* ; some render the Words, *Eph 0*, in which, and so these Words are taken in many Places of Scripture, *Rom. 1. 2, 3. 8. 3. Mat. 18. 5.* and divers other Places which it is needless to mention ; and that it is to be taken so in our Text, the Apostle informs us, by that parallel Place of Scripture, *1 Cor. 15. 22. for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made*

*made alive* : This sacred Passage is a pregnant Proof, that *Adam* was a Representative of his whole Posterity, and it may be observed, that the aforesaid Words are so rendered in the Margin of our Bibles, IN WHOM : But if our Translation be retained, it is much to the same Sense, for if the Wages of Sin be Death, and such do die, as never committed actual Sin themselves, as Infants do ; then it will follow necessarily, that they sinned in this one Man, in whose Loins they were ; as *Levi*, is said to have paid Tithes in the Loins of *Abram* (*Heb. 7. 9.*) and hence it is as expressly and categorically asserted, in the following Verses (*viz. 15. and 18*) as any Thing can be, that *by the Offence of one many are Dead*, and that *by the Offence of one, Judgment came on all to Condemnation.*

THIS apostolical Conclusion, *viz. that by the Offence of one, Judgment has come upon all Men to Condemnation*, or, in other Words, that the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin is imputed to all his Offspring, is the important Point, that I would essay to evince in this Discourse, by Scripture and Reason, and to answer Objections to the contrary ; but previous thereto, give me Leave to offer some Considerations, that tend to cast Light upon the labouring Subject.

HERE

HERE let it be observed, that there are two Things considerable in Sin, *viz.* its Guilt and Pollution, the former binds us to suffer Punishment while Impenitent, by the Threatning annexed to the Violation of the Law, *viz.* that *the Soul that sinneth shall die*, which divine Justice and Truth are engaged to issue; but the latter, *viz.* the Pollution of Sin, degrades and corrupts the Soul, by making it (in its general Temper and Disposition) contrary to GOD'S Nature and Law; the first is removed by Justification, through the Righteousness of CHRIST, imputed and received by Faith; and the latter by Regeneration and Sanctification, whereby pious Principles or Habits are infused and confirmed, through the blessed Influence of the Holy Spirit, co-operating with the Means of Grace, and Dealings of Providence: Both these Graces are necessary to Salvation, the one to give a Title to it, and the other to make us meet to enjoy it; and though they are different, yet they are inseparable; all that are justified by Faith, are regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; for that Faith which justifies, purifies the Heart, and works by Love. In order to make what I have now offered easy to be understood, by those that are weak and ignorant, give me Leave to use this humble Simile, *viz.*

supposing

supposing a Leprous Person was condemn-  
ed to be burnt for some atrocious Crime;  
the Prince's Pardon would not cure the  
Leprosy, no, there must be another Sort of  
Medicine used to that Purpose.

BUT what is SIN? I answer in the Words  
of the Apostle *John*, that it is a *Transgression*  
of the Law, or a being without the Law;  
or not conformed to it; these Things the  
original Word *anomia*, signifies.

A LAW in general may be thus de-  
scribed, viz. that it is a Rule of Things to  
be done, and avoided, enacted by compe-  
tent Authority, and enforced by the Sanc-  
tion of Rewards and Punishments.

THE Law of GOD in this, differs from  
the Laws of secular Princes, that it pre-  
scribes Limits to the Temper and Acts of  
the Mind, as well as to the Speech and  
overt Actions of the Life: For the Mind  
is the Man, the internal Principles that  
Men act from, as well as their Views and  
Frames in acting, are indeed the chief  
Things that constitute the Goodness or  
Badness of Action; and they being all open  
to the Eye of God, it is but right, that  
the Father of Spirits (from whom the Law  
proceeds) the just Judge of the Universe,  
should prescribe Rules for, take Cognizance  
of, and reward or punish them according to  
their

their different Natures, and Degrees of Goodness or Malignity: But earthly Potentates having no Knowledge of the Heart, or Empire over it, are utterly disqualified for so arduous a Province; and the Intention of civil Laws being only to preserve external Order and Right in the State, if these Things be observed, its End is answered: But it is not so in Respect of the Laws of GOD, there the Spring and Scope of Action, which are concealed from, and impenetrable to human Cognizance, are principally regarded; there the least Disconformity in the Temper of the Soul, or in any of its Acts, Dispositions, and Designs, to that perfect and universal Purity the Law requires of all intelligent Beings, is a Transgression of the Limits prescribed by it, and therefore Sin.

THE original right of Power among Men, arises either from Generation in Nature, Preservation in War, or some public Service done to Society: Thus the Jurisdiction and Dominion of *Jehovah* over Mankind, is founded in his Propriety in them, and that arises from his giving to them their Beings, and all their Benefits; *Isa. 44. 21. Remember O Israel, for thou art my Servant, I have formed thee.* From hence a supreme Right of Legislation naturally issues; in a

C

Word,

Word, GOD's right to Rule over us, is founded on Justice, for *he has made us, and not we ourselves, we are the People and Sheep of his Pasture*; his absolute Property: It is also founded on Gratitude and Reason, for from him we have received innumerable and very valuable Benefits; and the infinite and transcendant Excellency of his Nature deserves the highest Esteem; and qualifies him for supream Rulé; hence it appears, that every Sin is unjust, ungrateful, and irrational, for it robs God of his Right (of the Homage and Service due to him) violates the Laws of Gratitude, and slights transcendant Excellency. Now

THE Laws of Religion are of two Kinds, *viz.* moral and positive; the former are founded in Reason and Equity, and therefore are immutable and perpetual; enjoined because they are intrinsically Good; but the latter, *viz.* positive Laws, proceed from God's sovereign Pleasure, without regard had to the intrinsic Goodness and Value of Things, and therefore are good only because they are enjoined, and alterable by the Authority that enjoined them, being in themselves indifferent: An Example of the former we have in the moral Law, and of the latter, in the Precepts to abstain from

from the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

MAN, at his first Creation, was subject to the Law of Nature; which contains these Rules or Maxims concerning moral Good and Evil, which have an intrinsic, invariable Equity in them, and are the Measure, Standard, and Scale of the Offices he owes to God, his Neighbour, and himself: This Law is Holy, as it enjoins an Imitation of those divine Attributes, which are the Source and Pattern of Purity; Just, as it requires us to give to every one his Due, and Good, as it recommends Charity and Beneficence, and is profitable to the Observer of it; for in keeping this Law, there is a great Reward, even in this Life.

To the Law of Nature, was annexed the positive Precept to abstain from eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, for important Reasons, *viz.* to manifest God's Sovereignty, and to try the Creature's Obedience.

Jehovah being the Almighty Creator, is of Consequence the absolute Proprietor, and Sovereign Lord of all; and therefore Man could have but a secondary right of Use to his Possessions, founded on the divine Beneficence, and limited by his Pleasure; for which he is obliged to render



Homage: As Princes when they give Estates to their Subjects, still retain the Royalty, and receive a small Rent, which though inconsiderable in itself, perhaps but a Barley Corn, is nevertheless an Acknowledgment of their Sovereignty, and of the Tenants Dependance on them: Thus it was in regard of the Tree of Knowledge, abstaining from the Fruit thereof, was a Token of Man's Subjection to, and Dependance on his great and glorious Sovereign; nor could any Thing be better adapted to try Obedience, than the Prohibition of what was in itself indifferent, and only became unlawful by the Creator's Pleasure: For in this View the Precept had no other Excellency to recommend it, but the Authority or Will of God, and therefore to abstain was pure Obedience to divine Sovereignty, without any Motive from the intrinsic Excellency of the Things enjoined, whereby the Creature's natural Liberty was restrained.

THIS Law of Nature being in a great Degree effaced by the Sin of Man, a new Edition was given of it upon Mount *Sinai*, on Tables of Stone, wrote by the Finger of GOD himself, which is called the moral Law, because it prescribes Rules for the Conduct of Life, or Regulation of Mens Manners, and likewise to distinguish it from  
Laws

Laws purely positive: I say, this Law of Nature, or moral Law, which is the same in Substance, in Conjunction with a positive Precept of abstaining from the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, was delivered to our first Parents in the Form of a Covenant, which was a Fruit of ineffable Wisdom and Goodness.

FOR the COVENANT being mutual between GOD and Man, as it gave an Assurance of the reward to corroborate his Faith, so it was the surest Bond to preserve his Fidelity: It is true, the Precept alone binds by the Authority that imposes it, but the Consent of the Creature increases and endears the Obligation!

THE Almighty might have demanded the Creature's Obedience to his Sovereign Pleasure, meerly by way of absolute Empire; but he was pleased to deal with Man in a more condescending, engaging Manner, by using such Arguments to enforce his Authority, as were adapted to Influence his Reason and Ingenuity, his Fear and Love!

Now the Terms of the first Covenant, my Brethren, are rational, for they establish an inseparable Connection between Sin and Ruin expressly, and between Duty and Happiness implicitly, as appears by the  
Sanction,

Sanction, *Gen. 2. 17. In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*; in that particular Species of Sin, the whole Genus was included, according to the Apostle's Exposition; *Gal. 3. 10. Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all Things, that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*: The Death designed was not only a Dissolution of the vital Union between the Soul and Body, together with all the painful Preludes which usher in this King of Terrors; but likewise a Dissolution of the mystical (or spiritual) Union between God and the Soul, whereby his moral Image, and Communion in his Love were lost; together with a final Separation from his gracious Presence for ever; under all which our apostate Nature labours: Thus the Law is interpreted by the Lawgiver, *the Soul that Sins shall die, Ezek. 18. 4.* and elsewhere the Apostle Paul declares, that *the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of GOD eternal Life, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord (Rom. 6. 23.)* Here observe, that the Apostle speaks of Sin indefinitely, without any Restriction, and therefore intends every Sin, and sets the Wages of Sin (*viz. Death*) in Contrast with, or Opposition to eternal Life, and therefore declares by the Antithesis or Opposition, that it is Eternal; and this is applied

plied in particular to the Sin of *Adam*, in the last Verse of the Chapter, from whence our Text is taken, in these memorable Words; *That as Sin reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by JESUS CHRIST our Lord*: Now inasmuch as the Miseries consequent upon our Apostacy, are in divers Verses of this Chapter, set in Opposition to the Benefits received by *Christ*, to restrict the Word *Death* to that which is Temporal only, is in Effect to deny all the Spiritual and Eternal Benefits purchased by the Second *Adam*, which is such a shocking Position, as tends to overset at once the whole Gospel, and all the Christians Hope and Joy! and elsewhere we are informed, that *the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life, (2 Cor. 3. 6.) i. e.* the Law condemns the Sinner to eternal Death, but the Gospel gives eternal Life: Was not this the Design of *Christ's* coming into the World, that *those who believe in him should not perish, but obtain eternal Life? (John 3. 16.)*

AND indeed it is highly reasonable, that eternal Death should be the Wages of Sin, considering it opposes all the immense Perfections of the Deity, and violates all the innumerable, endearing and infinite Obligations we are laid under to serve him, by  
Reason

Reason of his Eminence, and his Love: If the Threatning of eternal Punishment, has but little Influence upon the most of Men, how much less would that of Temporary? And if the Sinner who deserves Death, should enjoy Life, without Satisfaction made for his Offence, divine Wisdom would be eclipsed, the Rights of Justice infringed, the Purity of God disparaged, and his governing Authority insulted and contemned!

BUT because many have too slight Apprehensions of the Heinousness of our first Parents Trespass, it may not be improper to observe, that the following awful Ingredients are contained in it, *viz.*

1. UNBELIEF, or Distrust of GOD, who had said, that if they Eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they should surely die; the Truth of which Declaration they questioned, and so *made God a Liar*, as the Apostle *John* observes, 1 *John* 5. 16. shocking Blasphemy! As Obedience is the Fruit of Faith, so is Disobedience of Unbelief; and as the Former comes by hearing the Word of GOD, so the Latter by listning to the Devil.

2. ANOTHER Iniquity included in the Sin of *Adam*, is a BELIEF of the DEVIL, who in order to weaken the Faith of our first Parents, suggested that they should not surely

surely die: Observe, he did not directly oppose the divine Threatning, by an express Contradiction, for that might have shocked them, but laboured slyly by Degrees to weaken their Assent to it, by saying, *ye shall not surely die*, as if he had said, the Execution of the Threatning is not absolutely certain, you may possibly escape with Impunity, though you do transgress; this Suggestion of the Father of Lies, they believed, and consequently preferred a Liar, and a Murderer, before the GOD of Truth and Love!

3. THEY charged the blessed GOD with the greatest Cruelty and Meanness, as tho' he ENVIED their HAPPINESS, after all his Benignity, Indulgence and Gentleness towards them; this was representing him to be like a Devil; the Enemy suggested, that in the Day they eat thereof, they should be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil, *Gen.* 3. this they believed, and were seduced.

4. IN the Sin of *Adam*, was included amazing ARROGANCE; he who had but just started out of a State of Nothing, aspired to be a God; not content with the Image of *Jehovah*, he affected to rival him in his Attributes, and of Consequence to usurp his Throne, and grapple with him for his Crown and Scepter! Strange that a

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Worm

Worm of the Earth who was but, of Yesterday, should so soon forget his humble Original, and contend with the Deity, for his incommunicable Prerogatives!

5. ANOTHER Ingredient grasped in that many headed HYDRA, is INGRATITUDE; one of the worst of Evils, the Heinousness of which increases in Proportion to the Number and Moment of the Benefits slighted by it; the Almighty had shewn more Kindness to Man, than to all his visible Works besides; he made him last of all, as the Crown to the whole material System, adorned him with his own Image, seated him in EDEN, a Paradise of Delight; gave him Liberty to eat of the Fruit of all the Trees thereof, but of one (which he needed not) gave him Power to obey his Laws, and Communion in his Love; and in fine, advanced him to the highest Dignity, by making him Lord of the Lower Creation; now in the Midst of all this rich Profusion of the Divine Benignity, this vast Variety of the most desirable and valuable Benefits, to violate a Precept so equal and of so easy Observance, is such a Prodigy of Ingratitude, as is without compare. But,

6. ANOTHER Ingredient included in that pregnant Impiety, is REBELLION against the Authority of GOD; the Almighty expressly

pressly declared his Will, that our first Parents, *should not Eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, upon Pain of Death*: Yet they impudently set up their Will against God, and preferred their Pleasure to his; agreeable to that impious and obstinate Maxim, *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*; My Will and Pleasure shall be Law, and take the Place of Reason and Argument; in a Word, they made their Necks as an Iron Sinew, and their Brow Brags! Again,

7. SORDID DISCONTENT, Covetousness, and Robbing of GOD were contained in that original complicated Trespass: They were dissatisfied with all the Affluence of Good they enjoyed, they inordinately desired to have more than God gave them, any how; (*per fas nefasq;*) and did actually take of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which they had no right to, without Leave of the Owner, yea contrary to his express Prohibition. Farther,

8. IT included provoking IDOLATRY, and a haughty Contempt of God's Majesty, they turned from God to the Creature, loved it more than him, and desired to have it rather than the Continuance of his Favour: Yea they made an Idol of a little Fruit, set it up in the Place of God, and preferred



preferred it before him, who is the first Truth, the supream Good, GOD over all, blessed for ever; they were not awed by the Greatness of his Power, nor influenced by the Riches of his Gentleness, of his Love and Goodness; the former did not awake their Fear, nor the latter excite their Ingenuity; the Thoughts of *Jehovah's* Presence, and the Severity of his Threatnings, they insolently despised, and would transgress, even under the Eye of God; they bid Defiance to Omnipotence, and rushed upon the thick Bosses of his Bucklers; they mocked at Fear, and were not affrighted, yea, like the *Leviathan*, they laughed at the rattling of the Spear, and the Shield, as if they had an Arm like God, and could Thunder with a Voice like him; who if he but touch the Mountains they smoke, yea, the Hills tremble at his Presence. But to proceed,

9. IN the Sin of our first Parents are contained, perfidious BREACH of COVENANT, and devilish APOSTACY; they had but lately entered into Covenant with the Divine Majesty, and promised to serve him, and abstain from the forbidden Fruit; but behold in an Instant, and on a slight Occasion, they break Friendship with GOD, revolt from his Allegiance, and conspire with

with the grand Enemy, against his Crown and Dignity: O horrid Treason, O monstrous Impiety! . Once more,

10. I may add to the aforelaid malignant and crimson Ingredients, grasped in the Sin of *Adam*, stupid FOLLY, and bloody CRUELTY, to all his numerous Progeny, in selling his and their Salvation for a Thing of Nought; in Bartering away the Favour of GOD, which is better than Life, for the Pleasures of Taste and Curiosity; what but voluntary Madness, could induce him to desire that which should have been the Object of his constant Fear, *viz.* the Knowledge of Evil, seeing nothing but the Experience of this, could destroy his Happiness? Thus *Men being in Honour, abode not, but become like the Beasts that perish, (Ps. 49. 12).* *Adam* was entrusted with the inexpressibly, important, and precious Depositum of his own eternal Happiness, and that of all his Numberless Descendants, in every Clime and Nation, and through every Succession of Time, to its final Period: This immense Trust of greater Value than Millions of Worlds, though turned into the finest Gold, and richest Jewels, he knowingly and wilfully betrayed; and thus he commenced a Murderer before a Parent! Thus he disenherited all his unhappy Offspring,

spring, before they were born! and made them Slaves, before they knew the Value of Liberty! an Instance this of Perfidy, without a Parallel; an Instance this of Cruelty, which no Words, no Colours are sufficient, (adequately) to delineate or express!

AND yet, my Brethren, that Iniquity, with all its Ingredients and Aggravations, is ours, because committed by our Representative, and fœderal Head, acting in our Room and Place. *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned:* O mournful Tragedy, that deserves to be deplored with Tears and Blood! But because some instead of acknowledging this complicated Guilt, and bewailing this fatal Source of every Sin and Woe, to which both their Duty and their Interest oblige them; yet through the Ignorance, Pride, and Deceitfulness of their Hearts, they dispute or deny the Point, to their own unspeakable Prejudice; I shall therefore in the following Part of this Discourse, endeavour to prove the Charge against all the human Race, *viz.*

THAT THE GUILT OF THE SIN OF ADAM, IS IMPUTED TO ALL HIS OFFSPRING.

THIS

THIS appears from the following Places of sacred Scripture, *viz.* *Ephes. 2. 3. and were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others*; here observe, that there is a Difference between Nature and Practice; now if we be by Nature Children of Wrath, we must be by Nature guilty of some Sin that deserves it; for surely the Judge of all the Earth must needs do right; and what can this natural Evil be, but the aforesaid Sin of *Adam*, for from him we derived our Nature, *Rom. 3. 19. Whatsoever the Law says, it says to those that are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and the whole World become guilty before God*; compared with *v. 9. for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under Sin*; here observe, that the whole World are guilty before G O D; how? not all of them by actual Sin; for all of them have not committed it, Infants are incapable of it, and they are a considerable Part of the World; then surely the Sin of *Adam*, in Eating the forbidden Fruit, must be imputed or reckoned to all; see likewise, *1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. for since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead; for as in Adam all die, so in CHRIST shall all be made alive*; now if we compare with this, what the Apostle says elsewhere, *viz.*

*Rom.*

*Rom. 6. 23. for the Wages of Sin is Death:* Will it not plainly prove that we are some how guilty of *Adam's Sin*? For how else should the Wages due for it, be inflicted on us? Yea, upon those that have not sinned after the Similitude of *Adam*; that is, who have not sinned actually in their own Persons: See *Rom. 5. 13, 14, 15. for until the Law, Sin was in the World, but Sin is not imputed where there is no Law*; the Apostle is there proving, that Sin was imputed, before the moral Law was given upon *Mount Sinai*; because Man had the same for Substance written in his Heart; and adds these Words, *nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression, who is the Figure of him that was to come*; i. e. though the moral Law was not given outwardly by *Moses*, yet Death, the Wages of *Adam's Sin*, reigned over such as did not actually imitate it; the Apostle certainly points to Infants, in the aforesaid Expression, who die before the Use of Reason; Death reigns over them, though they have not sinned after the Similitude of *Adam's Transgression*; and therefore the Guilt of his Sin is imputed to them; this is indeed the Drift of the Apostle's reasoning in our Context, and therefore he calls

*Adam,*

*Adam*, a FIGURE of him that was to come; i. e. of CHRIST; now wherein is the first *Adam* a FIGURE of the Second, but in these Things following, viz.

1. IN his being a Covenant Representative, or fœderal Head of his natural Offspring, as Christ is of his Spiritual. And,

2. THAT as by the Sin of the First, Guilt and Death were imputed to, and inflicted on his natural Offspring; so by the Obedience of the Second, Righteousness and Life are imputed to, and conferred upon his spiritual Offspring.

It appears with the clearest Light and Evidence, from the following Verses, that what I have said is the Apostle's Scope and Meaning; see Verses 16, 18, 19. *For the Judgment was by one to Condemnation, but the free Gift is of many Offences to Justification; therefore as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all to Justification of Life; for as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made Righteous; what can be expressed in plainer and stronger Terms than this Truth in these Verses, viz. that we are after the same Manner condemned by the Sin of Adam, as we are justified by*

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the Righteousness of CHRIST? and this the sacred Scriptures assert to be by Imputation, *Rom. 4. 6. even as David describeth the Blessedness of the Man, unto whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works.*

THE Antithesis between CHRIST and *Adam* will not hold, if *Adam's* Sin be not imputed to us; for as the Righteousness of Christ is so imputed to Believers, that every one of them may say truly it is his own; and hence Christ is called by the Prophet, *the Lord our Righteousness*; and is said by the Apostle, to be *made of God to us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*; so every Child of *Adam* may sorrowfully say, respecting his Transgression, that Iniquity is mine, and I am righteously punished for it.

NEITHER is there any Thing unreasonable in the Doctrine of the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin to his Posterity, if it be considered, that he had a Capacity to keep the Covenant made with him; and that the Consequences of his doing so, which were equal to the Loss that he and his Offspring suffered by his Fall, would have been as certainly conferred upon them, as if they were personally obedient.

NAY, we may safely say, that *Adam's* being constituted the federal Representative

tive of his Posterity, had a more probable Tendency to promote their Interest, than if every one of them had stood for himself personally and particularly; the Reason is this, *Adam* had not only as great a Capacity to stand, and was under as great Obligations to do so upon his own Account, as any other could for himself; even in this respect, the Cases were equal, the Chances parallel, but besides this, he had a very important Excitement to Obedience, as he was a public Representative, which private Persons could not have, *viz.* that of securing the Salvation of his whole Offspring by his Standing, and on the Contrary, involving them in unspeakable Ruin and Misery, by his Fall.

THIS Argument must be in reason supposed to have considerable Influence upon a pious and generous Mind, a good Parent is full of Bowels towards his Offspring, and is apt to be tenderly moved with the Prospect of their Happiness or Misery, and this Concern is like to be proportioned, to the Nature and Duration of them, as well as to the Number or Extent of his Descendants, who are deeply interested in, and whose Fate is determined by those different and contrary Events; the Consideration of which tends to affect him in a great Degree,



unless his Mind be ignorant, and his Affections irregular, which cannot be supposed to be the Case of our first Parents, before the abuse of their Liberty, without contradicting the express Testimony of Scripture, respecting their original Integrity, and asserting, in Effect, that GOD himself is the Author of Sin; Consequences absurd and blasphemous! Most certainly, upon the Hypothesis of a Covenant Transaction with *Adam*, the first Man, the Father of the human Species, for his whole Posterity, his Conduct must be big with the most important Consequences, towards all the human Race! this Consideration vastly turns the Balance in Favour of *Adam's* Headship.

WHAT the Apostle says of LEVI, *Heb.* 7. 9, 10. serves to illustrate the Point of Truth, which I am discoursing upon; it is said in these Verses, *that Levi paid Tithes in, or by Abram, when Melchizedeck met him; while he was yet in the Loins of his Father;* and so, much more, may the Posterity of *Adam* be reckoned to have sinned in him, seeing they were not only included in him, as Branches in the Root, and Members in the Head naturally, but were represented by him fœderally, or in a Covenant Way.

IT

It should be also observed, that when the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin is denied, the principal Foundation of the Propagation of Sin is taken away, nor can any sufficient Reason be given for the Propagation of *Adam's* Sin to his Posterity; I mean the Pollution of it, or, in other Words, Original Sin inherent, if the Case be so: For surely it is not only a Sin, but a Punishment, to want Original Righteousness; now Punishment necessarily supposes Sin, for the Guilt of which, divine Justice inflicts it only; but all have not sinned actually in their own Persons, as is evident from the Case of Infants, and yet all are punished with the Loss of God's Image; and therefore the Sin of *Adam* must be imputed to all his Posterity; otherwise there is no accounting for the Justice of God, in suffering this Propagation, which he could easily prevent; it will not remove the Difficulty to say, that God only suffers one corrupt Creature to beget another, according to the Law of Nature, as a Lepper begets a Lepper, seeing that the Almighty could hinder this Propagation of *Adam's* Sin, by creating them immediately as the Angels, and many other Ways which we know not; we have no reason to think that a righteous and good GOD would suffer it, to the Punishment of Creatures,

tures, who are supposed to be intirely innocent.

If the Guilt of *Adam's Sin* be not imputed, whence is it that Pollution should be from thence transmitted to his Posterity, rather than from the particular Sins of private Parents to their immediate Offspring? And seeing the Souls of Men are not generated, but immediately created by God, whence is it that they are disrobed of the Ornaments of Original Righteousness at their Creation, if Original Sin be not imputed?

Now that we are polluted from our Birth, with the Stain of Sin, the sacred Scriptures positively declare, by asserting, that *the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth*, (Gen. 8. 21.) that *Man is born like a wild Asses Colt* (Job 11. 12.) that *none can bring a clean Thing, out of an unclean, not one* (Job 14. 4.) that *he cannot be clean, who is born of a Woman* (Job 25. 4.) that *we are shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin* (Ps. 51. 5.) that *he that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh* (John 3. 6.) and that *the fleshly Mind is Enmity against God*; that before Conversion, all are spiritually blind and dead (1 Cor. 2. 14. Ephes. 2. 1.) that there is a Necessity of being born again (John 3. 3.) which supposes

a Corruption in the first Birth, without which a Second would be needless; and that this new Birth is a *Quickning of the Dead* (*Ephes. 2. 1.*) and farther, that while we are in a State of Nature, we are without spiritual Strength, and without a Will to spiritual Good (*Rom. 5. 6. Job 5. 40.*) and indeed universal Experience proves this Point, the whole World is corrupt without so much as one Exception (*Rom. 3. 10, 11, 12.*) *nemo sine crimine vivit.*

THE Philosophers acknowledged this Corruption in human Nature, *nitimur in vetitum semper Cupimusq; negatum*, We strive for what is forbidden us, and desire what is denied us; but knew not how to account for the Cause. Some accused Nature or Providence because of that, and called her a Stepmother; and others ascribed it to a fabulous Original, *viz.* the Opening of the Box of *Pandor*; in short, though there evidently appears to be in all an early Bias to Vice, even from Childhood, for one bad Example, influences more than many good ones; yet no rational, consistent Account has ever been given of this hereditary Contagion but in the Bible; and methinks such as do not like that, should give a better, before they reject it with sovereign Contempt; which I believe will puzzle them for

for all their Pride, as it did their more modest, candid, and sensible Forefathers, the *Pagan Masters*!

FARTHER, how can the Death of Infants be reasonably reconciled to the Justice of God, without acknowledging the Imputation of *Adam's* Guilt to them; especially if it be considered, that Death is represented by God himself, to be the Wages of Sin, and that it puts a Period to the Creature's Duration here.

To suppose that the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin, is only propagated by Imitation, is to confront the express Testimony of sacred Scripture, which assures us that *Death*, and therefore the Sin that procured it, *reigned over those that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression, (Rom. 5. 14.) who was the Figure of him that was to come.*

If Original Sin was only propagated by Imitation, then the Apostle *Paul* would never have said, that Sin entered the World by *Adam*, but by Satan, for he set the first Example of Sinning.

MOREOVER it cannot, with any Appearance of reason, be thought that Baptism is administered to Infants, to blot out Sins of Imitation, for they have them not, and yet the Apostle calls it the *Leavour of Regeneration,*

tion, *Tit.* 3. 5. † Surely if there was no Stain, there would be no need of a Laver to wash in; and here you may observe, that Infant Baptism is a standing Testimony to the important Doctrine of Original Sin, and therefore of great Use in the Church of G O D.

BUT it is objected against what has been said, that *the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father*, *Ezek.* 18. 4, 20.

A. THIS Passage of Scripture relates to the personal Sins of private Parents, which should not be imputed to their Offspring, unless they followed their Footsteps, and not to the Sin of Nature, which all have sinned in *Adam*, as our Text asserts.

IT is likewise objected, that Children in Covenant are said to be *Holy, Humble*, and that *of such is the Kingdom of God*.

A. WHATEVER good Properties any Children have, they have them not by Nature, but by Grace; for *by Nature we are all Children of Wrath, even as others*, *Eph.* 2. 1, 3.

ANOTHER Objection is drawn from these Places, *viz. Rom.* 5. 18. *as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one,*  
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† *Dea hinc oritur palinogenesis, per lavacrum Regenerationis, Pastor.*

*the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life; and elsewhere, CHRIST is said to take away the Sin of the World (1 Cor. 15. 22.) and we are farther assured, that as in Adam all die, so in CHRIST all shall be made alive.*

A. THE first Place of Scripture, is explained by the following Verse, thus, *viz.* that *as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made Righteous;* observe, the Condemnation is here represented as a past Fact, but the Justification as future, *shall be made Righteous, i. e.* when they believe, *Rom. 4. 20, 22, 23, 24.* it is said of *Abram,* that *he staggerd not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God; and therefore it was imputed to him for Righteousness; now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him.* The Apostle draws a Parallel between the first and second *Adam,* which holds good not only as to the Manner of conveying Death and Life to those they represented, *viz.* by Imputation, but also as to the Extent of the Loss and Benefit to their different Offsprings: The seeming Difficulty is removed, by considering that *Adam* was a natural Head

Head of a natural Offspring, and Christ a spiritual Head of a spiritual Offspring; and hence the first *Adam* is said to be of the *Earth earthly*, and the second *Adam*, the *Lord from Heaven*; now as *Adam's Sin* reached all his natural Offspring (i. e. all Mankind) so Christ's Righteousness extends to all his spiritual Seed, *viz.* all that believe in him (or are regenerated) and we are assured by express Testimony of Scripture, that the Righteousness of Christ extends to the Justification of none else, *John. 3. 18.* *for he that believes not, is condemned already.*

As to *Christ's taking away the Sin of the World*, we can understand that Place of Scripture, in Consistency with other Places, and with the Dictates of right Reason, in no other Sense but this, *viz.* that Christ takes away the Guilt of all Sin of every Kind, upon our believing in him, but not before: To suppose the Guilt of Original Sin is taken away, and that in the mean Time the Guilt of Actual remains, or that the Guilt of any Sin is removed without Faith, is antiscriptural, absurd, and ever-sive of the whole Gospel; for this signifies that Persons receive saving Benefits by Christ, without a vital Union to him; and likewise that they are both justified and condemned at the same Time; the former of which is



false, and the latter impossible in the Nature of Things, see *Job.* 15. 6. *Job.* 31. 36.

AND pray observe, that the Words referred to, *John* 1. 29. are in the present Tense, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World, (ho airoon)* JESUS CHRIST as the paschal Lamb, a Type of him, to which this Passage alludes, expiates all the Sins of all that believe in him, of every Nation, whether *Jewish* or *Gentile*, by the Sacrifice of himself, or by transferring their Guilt upon him, and sustaining the Punishment due for them; which are here called Sin, in the singular Number, by an Analogy of Number, or Synecdoche of a Part, to signify the Body of Sin and Death, containing all Kinds of Impiety; to atone for which the Lamb of God was slain (*Rom.* 6. 12. 7. 24. 1 *Job.* 1. 7.) the dear Redeemer takes away the Guilt of Sin, by the Merit of his Blood, and the Dominion of it, by the Power of his Spirit: *He taketh away*, observe it is a present Thing, a continued Act, which will never be completed till the End of Time; he is constantly taking away the Guilt and Power of every Sin from those that believe, by the Intercession of his Blood in Heaven, and the Influence of his Grace on Earth.

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ONCE more, seeing the Place of Scripture in the Objection, refers to the whole Efficacy of the Sacrifice of Christ, in relation to Sin, it will follow, that if it is restricted to Original Sin only, then Christ's Satisfaction for Actual is denied, and if so, then Sinners must satisfy for them themselves or perish; but how they will pay an infinite Debt, who are but finite and imperfect Creatures, I cannot conceive; they had best see to it that are immediately concerned, in the absurd Hypothesis I oppose, before it be too late! But to proceed,

As to that Place of Scripture in the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, viz. *That as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive*, it evidently respects the Resurrection of the Body at the last Day; it speaks not of the Time present, nor says that they are made alive, but of the Time to come, and signifies that they shall be made alive; the Apostle in that Chapter, proves the Resurrection of the Dead, by the Argument of Christ's Resurrection (this is the Scope of the Place) and shews particularly the Order in which the Dead shall be raised, v. 22. *First those that belong to Christ, then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father* (i. e. in its present Form of Administration) and indeed to suppose

suppose that all are spiritually alive, is to oppose the express Testimony of Scripture, which declares the Unconverted to be dead in Sins and Trespases, and it likewise renders Conversion needless, because on this Plan Men would be born converted, for what is Conversion but a Quickning of the Dead (as before observed) or the Infusion of a Principle of spiritual Life into them? Surely if the first Birth was good, there would be no need of a Second, and thus the Wisdom of God would have missed the Matter, in inculcating that important Doctrine to the *Jewish* Master, who to the reproach of himself and his Order, was grossly Ignorant of its Nature and Necessity! But I proceed,

ANOTHER Objection is this, *viz.* that our Lord told his Disciples, *That neither the blind Man, or his Parents, had sinned, but that the Works of God should be made manifest in him (Job. 9. 23.)*

A. THE Meaning of the Place, is no more than this, that the Almighty did not inflict that Disorder of Blindness upon the Man, as a Punishment of any particular Evil committed by him, or his private Parents; but chiefly with design to manifest his own Power in the Cure of it.

BUT

BUT it is farther objected, that the Imputation of Original Sin, is contrary to the Justice and Truth of GOD.

A. IT is contrary to Justice, to punish him that has sinned in no respect, either actually or virtually, but it is not unjust to punish those that have sinned virtually only, or in their Cause, as we have in *Adam*; the Case is certainly so, that GOD does punish for that Evil now; and from Fact we may argue to Right, respecting the Almighty; for surely he does nothing but what he has a Right to do; add to this, what has been said before, concerning the reasonableness of *Adam's* being made a Representative of his Posterity, and the Objection vanishes.

FARTHER, the Charge of Injustice may be with Advantage retorted upon our Opponents, who according to their Hypothesis, are obliged to acknowledge, that the Wages of Sin, *viz.* Death, are inflicted upon such as are entirely innocent (*viz.* Infants) neither guilty of Original or Actual Sin; a Sentiment very harsh and severe, and manifestly contrary to the Dictates of Reason and Maxims of Justice: Pray is it not more equitable to believe, that God punishes for some Sin, though it be Original, than for none at all? Whether it be modest and consistent, for these Gentlemen to raise a  
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Hu-and-cry of Injustice, against their Neighbours Opinion, while they are so deep in the Dirt themselves, is left to others to determine.

NEITHER is it contrary to the Omniscience and Truth of GOD, to reckon him to have sinned virtually, or interpretatively in his Cause, who has not sinned actually in his own Person.

IT is again objected, that the Sin of *Adam* does not exist, and therefore that it cannot be imputed.

*A.* ALTHOUGH it does not exist Physically; yet it does exist Morally; though the Act of Sin be transient, yet the Guilt it contracts is permanent, and cannot be removed but by the Application of Christ's Righteousness to the Soul.

NEITHER is the following Objection of any Validity, *viz.* that it is unreasonable that the Sin which was pardoned in *Adam*, should be imputed to his Posterity.

*A.* THOUGH *Adam* personated us in sinning, he did not do so in repenting and believing, by which he obtained Remission; for the State from which he fell, was natural, and therefore involved all, but the State to which he was restored was gracious, and supernatural, and therefore concerned his own Person only, and not his Posterity; for

for though *Adam* was constituted the Head or Representative of his Posterity, in the Covenant of Nature or of Works; yet he was made no Head or Representative of the Covenant of Grace, by which he was restored: No; this was the Place of the second *Adam*.

ANOTHER Objection against the labouring Point is this, that it is not agreeable to the divine Perfections, for the Almighty to appoint *Adam* to be the Representative of his Posterity, without their Consent.

A. SEEING the Plan of the first Covenant was in itself reasonable, and more to our Advantage, than if every Man had stood for himself personally, as was observed before; there is no Foundation for the Objection, unless our Opponents say, that it is unjust for God to confer Benefits upon any without their Consent, which is ridiculous and absurd. So proper a Person as *Adam*, the common Father of all, and consequently the most honourable (in the ordinary Way of Generation) of all the human Race, could not be found to represent his Posterity, and therefore had all Mankind existed, it would have been both their Interest and Duty, to have chose him for their Representative.

BESIDES it should be considered, that the Benefit proposed to *Adam* in the Cove-

nant of Nature, *viz.* a Confirmation of his present State of Happiness, was what he had no natural Right to, antecedent to the divine Will and Pleasure; and therefore JEHOVAH might without the Charge of Injustice suspend the Grant of it, upon a Condition to be performed by him, his Failure in which, might cause a Forfeiture of the Benefit proposed, both to him and his Descendants, who cannot be with reason supposed to have a greater Right to it than he.

AND although when our first Parents sinned, we did not exist and consent actually, yet we existed and consented virtually in our Cause, Progenitor and fœderal Head, in one *Adam*, as our Text asserts; *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned:* But our Opponents modestly give the Lye to the Apostle, and the Spirit with which he was inspired, and say that all have not sinned.

I might add, that the Covenant of Nature, or of Works, was not INTER PARES, AMONG EQUALS, but between the Almighty Creator, absolute Proprietor and Sovereign Lord of all, and poor Worms of the Earth, who are but of Yesterday, crushed before the Moth, and have no abiding; Creatures whose Goodness extends not to Immensity  
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and Self-sufficiency; and therefore it is the highest Insolence for such insignificant Creature, who are as Nothing; and less than Nothing, and Vanity, to prescribe to their Sovereign, and insist upon the usual Formalities of human Covenants (among Equals) in transacting with the supream Being, who has absolute Empire over them, and whose Beck they are bound by the strongest Obligations instantly to obey; and therefore, instead of disputing, they should admire and revere the divine Condescension, in treating with such Criminals, Inferiors, and Dependants, in a Way that resembles a Covenant Transaction in any Thing, which is in very Deed, a prodigious Stoop of glorious Sovereignty; and condescending Majesty!

It is not contrary, my Brethren, to the Law of Nature, or of Nations, for the Children of Traitors to suffer for their Crimes; or for the Iniquity of some public Persons, to be punished in many others; whole Cities and Countries have suffered on their Account: Was not the Sin of the *Amalekites* punished in their Children, by the express Order of God, some Hundreds of Years after it was committed? (1 Sam. 15. 2, 3.) for this a War was to be commenced against them, from Generation to Generation



neration (*Ex. 17. 16.*) The Instance of *Achan* is also remarkable, for his coveting the Wedge of Gold, he suffered not alone, but his Sons and Daughters were stoned and burned with Fire, together with himself (*Jos. 7. 24, 25.*) to what has been said, many Examples might be added, *viz.* of the Sons of *Saul* (*2 Sam. 21.*) of *Jereboam* (*1 Kings 4. 9, 10.*) of *Abab* (*1 Kings 21. 21, 23*) and others, and hence the Church mourns, *Lam. 5. 7. our Fathers have sinned, and we have born their Iniquities;* and our Lord himself threatens the *Jews*, *Mat. 23. 35.* that upon them should come all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth, from *Abel* to *Zecharias*, and does not Almighty God threaten in the second Commandment of the moral Law, that *he will visit the Sins of the Fathers, upon the third and fourth Generation of those that hate him?*

THOUGH none but the Guilty are punished for their Parents Sins, yet inasmuch as the Almighty takes *Occasion* from their Sins to punish their Posterity (in temporal respects) it plainly shews; that they are in some Sort imputed to them; and no wonder, seeing the Child is but as it were a Part of the Parent, clothed in another Skin; and therefore the Almighty being the original Proprietor, and Lord of all,

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may afflict the Transgressor in what Part of him he pleases.

NOR is that Passage in *Ezekiel* 18. 20. to be understood absolutely, that the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, for so it would contradict the moral Law; but it ought to be understood :

1. OF adult Children, who forsake their Parents Sins, as appears from the 19th Verse of the Chapter.

2. IT respects personal and particular Sins, as was observed before, and not common and general, in respect of the Character or Influence of the Criminals.

3. IT is not laid down as a general Rule of God's Providence and Justice, to which the Almighty did always conform his Proceedings in Time past, and was determined to do so constantly with all People in Time to come, no; we find it otherwise in the Sanction of the Law, and the Examples before mentioned; the Words therefore intend a special Favour to the *Jewish* Church and Nation, *viz.* that the Almighty would not deal with them according to the rigour of his Justice, which he might do; but in order to silence their Cavils against his Government, he would only in Time coming punish them for their personal Iniquities; this seems to be the Series and Scope of the Context.

BUT

BUT it is Time to proceed to the Improvement of what has been said.

Is the Sin of *Adam* imputed to us, let us then acknowledge God's Justice in this Matter, and humble ourselves before him; how awful is the State we are born in, who are condemned as soon as born! (*Rom.* 3. 19.) you that are unconverted, know that you are under the Law, and therefore under the Curse, for breaking of it: *For cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*; your Mouths are stopped, your Pleas are silenced, and you cannot get clear of this Sentence, any other Way but by Faith in Christ.

O Sinners! labour to be sensible of the awful Entail from our first Parents, and flee for Refuge to the Hope set before you, without the least Delay, for ye know not what a Day may bring forth.

THE sure Way to get our Wounds not just skinned over, but effectually healed, is to have them searched and probed to the Bottom; the only Method to have the Balm of *Gilead* savingly applied, is to know and feel the Depth of our Disease, and that speedily, without which, we will not be suitably humbled before God, nor with due Engagedness,

Engagedness, Importunity, and Vehemence seek relief.

IT is an awful Proof of the Degeneracy of human Nature; a Confirmation of the Doctrine I have been discoursing upon; that many are so proud and vain as to deny it; they hereby imitate the wicked Example of our first Parents, who after their Apostacy, laboured to lessen and excuse their Impiety, by casting the Blame upon others, and if that would not do, even upon God himself; *The Serpent beguiled me, said the Woman; the Woman that thou gavest me, gave me, and I did eat, said the Man;* as if he had said, it is the Woman's Fault; not mine; but if that is not a sufficient Apology, God gave me this Woman, and therefore he is the Author of my Sin and Misery. O horrid, ungrateful Blasphemy! Yea such follow the Suggestions of Satan himself to our first Parents, in lessening their Danger, *ye shall not surely die;* and act over again their fatal Folly, in listening to, and believing him: *But though thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Soap, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God: How canst thou say, I am not polluted?* (*Jer. 2. 22, 23.*)

IT is much to be lamented that Men are curious to know every Thing but themselves,

selves, which is nevertheless the most necessary and important Branch of Knowledge; *gnosthe Seauton, know thy self*, was said by the Pagans, to be an Oracle somehow dropt from *Jupiter*; but waving the fabulous, or poetical Part of their Story, the Moral is an indubitable Axiom: It is certain, from the united Testimony of Reason and Revelation, that the Knowledge of our selves, is necessary to humble the Pride of our Hearts, to excite us to prize the blessed Redeemer, and seek after an Interest in him, with unfainting Importunity and Vehemence, for *the Whole need no Physician, but the Sick.*

SUCH therefore who labour to hide our hereditary Pravity from our View (which is at least the Practice of many in this Day of Darkness and Degeneracy, in our unhappy Nation; may a gracious God pity and pardon them) such who represent human Nature, in its apostate Circumstances, in an amiable Dress, as having Light within, sufficient to direct their Conduct in religious Matters, and Strength to do what is pleasing to God, may probably have a good Design (at least some of them) to promote a Reformation; which in its Place, is doubtless necessary, amiable, valuable, and useful to Society; but in the mean Time, they

they certainly act an unfriendly Part to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the best Interests of Mankind: For these Measures tend to puff up graceless Creatures with Pride and Vanity; tend to make every one that believes the Figment, a *Pope*, or a *Pharisee*, or both; tend to fix them on the Bottom of their own selfish, mercenary, superficial Righteousness, and keep them from Christ and vital Holiness: Sirs, without the Knowledge of ourselves, and of Christ, we cannot obtain the Foundation of real evangelical Goodness, without which an outward dead Form of Virtue and Piety, or the irregular Wilds of enthusiastic Fancy and Mechanism, will not stand us in any Stead in the Day of CHRIST'S Appearance and Kingdom: For we are assured by divine Authority, that *neither Circumcision or Uncircumcision availeth any Thing, but a new Creature*; and that *except our Righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of God.*

It is certainly best, my Brethren, to begin at the Foundation of Religion; according to our Lord's Direction we should *make the Tree good, and then the Fruit will be good* (spontaneously:.) It is as natural as fatal to Mankind, because made under a Covenant of Works, to *seek Righteousness as it*

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were by the Works of the Law; and with a Zeal, but not according to Knowledge, to go about to establish their own Righteousness (though some of them falsely call it the Righteousness of Christ) and thus they refuse to submit to the Mediators Righteousness, who is the Truth, the Life, and the only Way to the Father.

OF Consequence, therefore, all such as commend human Nature, in its lapsed State, as before observed, either plainly or mystically, and inconsistently, while they pretend the Contrary, *daub with untempered Mortar, heal the Wounds of the Daughter of Zion slightly, cry Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace, sew Pillows to all Arm-holes, with Lies they make the Hearts of the Righteous sad; whom God would not have made sad, and strengthen the Hands of the Wicked, that he should not return from his wicked Way, by promising him Life* (see Ezek. 13.) with *Abab's* flattering and false Prophets, they speak comfortably to the wicked, and prophesy Peace, in Opposition to, and some times Contempt of, faithful, honest hearted *Micaiahs*, who in Obedience to their Masters Command, and in Compassion to the perishing Souls of their fellow Creatures, *cry aloud, and do not spare; but shew to Judah their Transgressions, and to the House of Jacob*

Jacob *their Sins*; and labour to *perswade them, by the Terrors of God*, to forsake them, and fly for refuge to the Hope set before them.

How good soever the Intention of the aforesaid DAUBERS may be; yet notwithstanding, they do, in Fact, oppose the mediatorial Scheme of Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and deceive the Souls of Men; by such flattering of ignorant, conceited Mortals, conducted either with much shew of Wisdom and great Address, or with much Appearance of Devotion, real Christianity, and even Virtue itself are ready to expire, and take their final Farewel of our sinful and unhappy Land and Nation, and we are returning fast to Popery and Paganism; but under the pleasing, tho' groundless Umbrage of Inspiration, or of Wisdom superior to all that have gone before us (which Compliment will probably and justly be returned by our wiser Successors) for which the righteous Judgments of God, have been inflicted upon us in divers awful Instances, and his Hand is stretched out still. O may the Almighty bless them to our Repentance and Reformation, in Principle and Practice; that not only our own Souls may be saved, but the Ruin of our Land and Nation prevented!



SIRS, How should we admire the Riches of divine Grace, which has provided a Way by the second *Adam's* Satisfaction, to justify those that are condemned by the Sin of the First? O therefore let us hasten to him, by believing, accept of his Righteousness, and depend entirely upon it, for the Remission of our Sins, and the Salvation of our Souls! and let us not rest, my Brethren, till we get the satisfactory Evidences thereof, and having obtained this great Priviledge, let us labour to walk worthy of it, striving to grow in Grace and Usefulness, for hereby is our Father glorified, that we bring forth much Fruit. •

AND especially let us walk humbly, which we should be excited to, by thinking often upon the unhappy Portion left to us by our Progenitor, as well as the horrid Ingredients grasped in that monstrous Iniquity which he committed, in violating the Covenant of Works, and we in him; we should also be watchful and afraid of Sin, when we consider what infinite Mischief has sprung from one Trespas of our first Parent, to himself and all his unhappy Progeny!

HAS *Adam* propagated Death to his Posterity! O that Parents would be entreated on the Contrary to endeavour to propagate  
Life

Life to their Posterity, by their Instructions, Prayers, and Practice; to this, they are obliged by the strongest Ties and tenderest Endearments. I add no more.

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# S E R M O N II.

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I COR. I. 23, 24. *But we preach CHRIST crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling Block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST the Power of GOD, and the WISDOM of GOD.*

SIRS,

**T**HE Apostle observes in the preceding Verses, with great Beauty and Propriety, that *in the Wisdom of GOD, the World by Wisdom knew not GOD*: The gentle Sages by the meer dint of Reason and Philosophy, could not Form consistent Notions of the Supream Being, or how to obtain his Favour.

A Deluge of the most absurd Politheism and gross Prophaness, overspread the greatest Part of the Infidel Tribes, before the Light  
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of the Gospel shone among them; no Object was so despicable, as not to be thought worthy of divine Honours; no Vice so detestable, as not only to obtain in common Conversation, but even to be admitted into their religious Rights, and most solemn Acts of Worship; yea, to give Sanction to the most brutish and crimson Iniquities, they ascribed them to the Gods they adored, as learned ARNOBIUS observes, with equal Justice and Elegance.

It is true, the Corruption was not so universal, but that some noble Souls raised themselves above the common Level, they bewailed, and contemned the Stupidity and Credulity of the Multitude, yet their Number was small, and the Efficacy of their singular Sentiments even upon themselves but little; the Effect of their Discernment was but a State of perpetual SCEPTICISM, a floating in doubtful Uncertainty between all Opinions, discarding what was manifestly Wrong, but not fixing their Minds in what was Good and Right.

YEA, in Matters of moral Good and Evil, though some of the Rules they have left us are truly excellent, yet in many important Things they are very deficient; there is a deep Silence in their Writings of the Nature and Obliquity of several Vices; such

such as Pride, Revenge, and Self-murder, they are likewise silent about the right Principle of Action, Love to God; the right End of Action, the Glory of God; the right Mode of Action, Humility, and a Dependance upon God, for Light, Strength, and Acceptance.

THEY were also at a Loss respecting the Method of regaining the Friendship of the Almighty when offended, the Certainty of a future State, and the strict Account they must render of all their Actions to the sovereign Lord and Judge of the Universe; and are not these Things of inexpressible Importance, the very governing Principles of a Christian's Conduct? This melancholy Ignorance of the *Pagan* Masters, was doubtless the Source of that Uncertainty they bewray in their Discourses, and such Inconsistency in their Lives, concerning which, one of the greatest and best Judges among them, *viz.* TULLY, speaks thus, "Do you think, says he, that these Things; meaning the Precepts of Morality, had any Influence upon those Men (excepting only a very few) that thought, and wrote, and disputed about them, no; who is there of all the Philosophers, whose Mind and Manners were comfortable to right Reason, who ever made  
his

“ his Philosophy the Law and Rule of his  
“ Life, and not a meer Boast and Shew of  
“ his Wit and Parts? Who observed his  
“ own Instructions, and lived in Obedience to  
“ his own Precepts? On the contrary many  
“ of them were Slaves to filthy Lusts.”

NAY even the Things which they themselves knew, they had not Authority enough to inculcate upon Mens Minds; with such Impression as to Influence and govern their Conduct; the Truths they proved by a Train of speculative Reasonings; were destitute of more sensible Authority to enforce them with Energy in Practice; the Precepts they proposed wanted Weight, and evidently appeared to be no more than the Precepts of Men; this was doubtless the Reason that none of the Philosophers were ever able to work any remarkable Change in the Minds and Lives of their Hearers; nor does it appear in History that any of the Followers of SOCRATES, were ever so convinced by his Instructions of the Excellency of Virtue, and the Certainty and Value of its final Reward, as to be willing to lay down their Lives for its Sake, as innumerable Disciples of the Lord JESUS CHRIST have done, with the greatest Gladness and heroic Fortitude.

THE Truth is, the Philosophers themselves were sensible of the Defect of their own Rules in this particular, and therefore confess, that human Nature was strangely corrupted, and that this Corruption was a Disease whose Cause they knew not, and for which they could not find a sufficient Remedy : So that the great Duties of Religion and Virtue, were proposed by them as Matters of *Speculation*, rather than Rules of *Practice* ; not so much urged upon Mens Hearts and Lives, as proposed to their Admiration.

THIS was apparently the Condition of Mankind without a Revelation ; to recover them out of which Degeneracy, into a State suitable to the original Excellency of their Nature, a supernatural Discovery of their Duty was plainly necessary ; for if, as has been observed, the Generality of the World were so ignorant and corrupt, so over-run with Idolatry and Licentiousness ; if the best of the Philosophers were not exempt from the general Infection, and far from Certainty respecting the Doctrines they pretended to advance ; if the Points wherein they were certain, they were not able to prove clearly to vulgar Understandings, and those they were able to prove, they had not sufficient Authority to enforce ;

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in a Word, if there was so much Inconsistency in themselves, as to give Scandal to others, and so much Depravity in others, as to make them despair of reforming them, then was there plainly a want of some Revelation to supply these Defects, and to discover in what Manner and with what Kind of external Service the blessed God might be acceptably worshipped; a Revelation to discover what Expiation he would be pleased to accept of for Sin, by which his Honour is affronted and his Authority opposed; a Revelation to give intelligent Beings an Assurance of the great Motives of Religion, the Rewards and Punishments of a future State.

In fine, some particular Revelation was necessary, to make the whole System of Christian Doctrine clear and obvious to all Capacities, to add Weight and Authority to the plainest Precepts, and to furnish Men with extraordinary Assistance, to enable them to overcome the Corruptions of their Nature; and indeed without the Assistance of such a Revelation, the wisest of Men were always of Opinion, that the World could never be reformed; 'Ye may even give over, says *Socrates*, all Hopes of amending Mens Manners for the future, unless God be pleased to send some other Person



to instruct you! For whatsoever is set right, says *Plato*, in the present ill State of the World, can only be done by the Interposition of **GOD**.

THIS condescending and gracious Interposure, appears evidently in the Christian System, the Plan of Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, which though it be despised by the Ignorant, Inconsiderate, and Prejudiced, is by those that are awakened out of their Security, and divinely illuminated, experienced to be indeed and in Truth a glorious Display of the *Power* of God, and the **WISDOM** of **GOD**; the latter of which let us for a little Space fix our Meditations upon at present.

THE blessed God, my Brethren, foreseeing Man's Fall, and the Misery consequent upon it, determined his Recovery in a Way worthy of himself, and suited to the Circumstances of the apostate Creature, in which his **Wisdom** is eminently conspicuous.

THIS will appear by considering the **END** that God proposed, and the **MEANS** he concerted to compass it; all intelligent Agents first propose an **End**, and then choose the **Means** that tend to obtain it; now the more perfect the Understanding is, the more noble

ble is the End it designs, and the more apt the Means it prescribes to acquire it.

THE END proposed by the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST is most excellent, viz. the GLORY of God, and the Happiness of Mankind, or their Restoration to his Image and Favour.

THE GLORY of GOD, or the Manifestation of his Attributes, by their Exercise to the moral World, was his supream Scope; as God is the best of Beings, of Consequence his Glory must be the best End, and therefore it is but reasonable he should aim at it in all his Works; and hence he is said to have made all Things for himself, and that of him, and through him, and to him are all Things; seeing he is the Creator and Lord of all, it is but just and right that he should be the End of all; nothing can be more natural than that what was borrowed from him, should be directed to him, or his Honour; *the Heavens* are therefore said to declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament to shew forth his Hand Work; on this Account the Revelation of the Way to future Happiness, by the dear, dear Lord JESUS CHRIST, is called; *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God*; because it is the clearest Manifestation, the richest Display of the transcendant Excellency of his adorable Attributes,

butes, which was ever given to the Children of Men; and hence *Jehovah* is said to *magnify his Word* (i. e. the Word of his Grace) *above all his Name*: The Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, assures us, that *the Ministration of Righteousness exceeds in Glory*; and that under this Dispensation, *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 the Gospel we behold the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the harmonious Manifestation of the divine Attributes in the Scheme of Salvation; through him, not under the dark Vail of Types, Shadows, and Prophecies, as the *Jewish Church*, but with open Face as in a Glass, and are thereby gradually transformed into his Image, through the Holy Spirit's concurring Influence.

To the aforesaid Manifestation of the divine Attributes, which the Almighty proposed as his supream End, we must add the Praise and Thanksgiving of reasonable Creatures on Account thereof; when intelligent Beings acknowledge the Displays of God's Excellencies with adoring Reverence, and ardent Affections, they glorify him; *be that offereth praise, glorifieth me, saith the Almighty* by the Psalmist; and this undoubtedly the blessed

blessed God had likewise in View as his supream End.

BUT the subordinate End in Redemption, is the Restoration of Man; and this indeed is inseparably connected with the former, as appears from the Angels Anthem, *Glory to God on High, on Earth Peace, and good Will towards Men*: Sin had broke the sacred Alliance between God and Man, and exposed him to the divine Displeasure, an inexpressible and incomprehensible Misery; now what is more becoming the Father of Mercies, the God of Love, than to compassionate and relieve the Miserable; than to raise from the Depth of ruin many Monuments in which his Kindness and Benignity might for ever triumph!

To compass these truly valuable ENDS, divine Wisdom projected the aptest MEANS possible; which appears in the following easy Light.

THE Misery of apostate Man consisted in the Deprivation of his whole Nature by Sin, and in his Exposedness to the divine Displeasure on the Account of it, which was a just and natural Consequent of his crimson Apostacy; and his Happiness consisted in restoring him to his original Purity and Fellowship with God, and to the full Enjoyment of him; but the Way to effect this,

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in Consistency with the divine Justice, Law, and Government, was a Depth which no human Understanding could fathom.

THAT God, whose being is LOVE, should shew Kindness to the Angels, who never swerved from his Statutes, is easy to imagine; for though they cannot merit his Favour, yet they never incurred his Displeasure by Maleconduct; and it must needs be natural to *Jehovah*, to Love the Image of his Purity wherever it appears.

NOR is it hard to conceive, that the Almighty would be inclined to succour an innocent Creature in Misery; for in this Case, there would be nothing to obstruct the free Efluxes of his unexhausted Goodness; but how to save a Creature that is as guilty as miserable by its own criminal Choice, is a Difficulty too hard to be solved by the Wisdom of Men or Angels. Heaven itself seemed to be divided on this Occasion. MERCY inclined to save, but JUSTICE interposed for Satisfaction.

MERCY regarded Man with respect to his Misery, and its Pleas were such as these, shall the most excellent Creature in the lower World perish, the Fault not being entirely his? perish for ever, without any Favour! Shall no Compassion be shewn to miserable Mankind, who in their original State,

State, were the Beauty and Crown of all the numerous Ranks of Being in this inferior System; shall the malignant Enemy for ever Triumph in the fatal Success of his Perfidy, and reduce the whole human Race to the most deplorable and remediless Ruin? On the other Hand, JUSTICE, the Nature of which is, to give to every one his Due, considered Man as guilty of a most ungrateful, murderous, and pregnant Iniquity; the Wages of which, agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, and the Law of God, is DEATH; this divine Attribute remonstrates against shewing any Favour to the unhappy Delinquents; and queries, *shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* All the other Attributes seemed to be Attendants on Justice.

THE WISDOM of GOD enforced its Plea; it being most indecent, that Sin, which deserves the Execution, should procure the Abrogation of the Law; which would encourage the Commission of it, without Fear.

THE MAJESTY of GOD was likewise concerned; for it was not becoming excellent Greatness and absolute Sovereignty, to treat in this humble Manner with Inferiors and Delinquents, and to offer Pardon to presumptuous, ungrateful Rebels, before they

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bow at his Foot-stool, and *make Supplication to their Judge.*

THE HOLINESS of GOD confirms and corroborates the Plea of incensed, lesed Majesty, and urges Justice to execute the Threatning annexed to the Violation of the Law; for *Jehovah is of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity*: As Purity is the essential Object of his complacential Will, which he Loves immutably where ever it is, so by the Law of Contraries, Sin is the eternal Object of his Hatred; and consequently such as are (with their full Consent) under its habitual Rule and Government, because of their Connection with it, *he will not, saith Job, take the wicked by the Hand, or at all acquit them*, as the Prophet *Nabum* expresses it: Purity and Pollution, by reason of their contrary Natures, cannot mix or coalesce, but must maintain a perpetual Jar and Discord, till one or other is destroyed. Farther, SIRs,

THE TRUTH of GOD being plighted in the Covenant of Works, stands engaged to see to the Execution of the Penalty denounced in Case of Trespas; and if it is not, the Matter so requiring, divine Truth fails; but that is impossible, and therefore this Attribute joins issue in the Contest with divine Justice, Wisdom, Majesty, and Purity, and

and requires the Execution of the threatned Punishment upon the Offender himself, or if extraordinarily dispensed with (in this respect) it must be on such Terms, as the Honour of God's Truth may be preserved inviolate.

THIS seeming Conflict among the divine Attributes, no created Understanding could adjust, and find out a Way to reconcile infinite Mercy with inflexible Justice; a Way to satisfy the Demands of the one, and grant the Requests of the other: In this Exigency divine WISDOM interposed, and in its unsearchable Depths devised an EXPEDIENT, to save Man without any Prejudice to the Perfections of the Deity, without any Injury to his Government over the moral World, by constituting a Mediator between the guilty Creature and himself, that by transferring the Punishment on the Surety, Sin might be punished, and the Sinner saved; here MERCY and JUSTICE *salute each other*, and shine with equal Glory and Lustre; the latter is fully satisfied, and the former exceedingly magnified! These amiable Attributes in this mediatorial Plan, join in friendly Harmony, to promote and secure the penitent and believing Sinners perpetual Happiness!



NOR is it unbecoming the MAJESTY of God, to accept a returning Sinner, when a Mediator of infinite Dignity interceeds for him.

THE PURITY of the Almighty, is not in the least Degree disparaged by his Clemency to Transgressors, seeing the blessed Mediator is a Principle and Pattern of Holiness, to all that believe in him, and the TRUTH of God engaged to issue the Threatnings of the broken Law, is by the Sufferings of the Sinners Surety preserved inviolate: So that all the divine Perfections concur herein, and express, to the eternal Astonishment and Delight of Men and Angels, inexpressible Charms, Beauty, and Magnificence!

HERE we may see the Glory of the blessed God, shining in the Face of the venerable and dear Lord JESUS CHRIST, who can Fathom the unsearchable Depths of this amazing Wisdom? who can unfold the boundless Riches and Treasures of this mysterious Prodigy and Miracle of Mercy! this inexpressible, transcendant, incomprehensible, and glorious Grace and Love? Surely no Understanding either human or angelical, is equal to this Province; it is only the same infinite Mind that concerted this illustrious

rious Scheme of Salvation by a Redeemer that can comprehend it!

THE ANGELS, those great Ministers that attend the Throne of God, stoop down with the deepest Attention, the strongest Desire, and noblest Pleasure, to behold the rich and unsearchable Variety of manifold Wisdom and glorious Grace that is herein contained! But though we cannot comprehend the Depths of redeeming Goodness, yet we may apprehend so much as to be thereby powerfully influenced to Admiration, Love, and Obedience! so much as to be thereby excited to cry out in the Apostle's Language, *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Knowledge and Wisdom of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* Surely the Love of Christ passeth Knowledge! But more particularly, dear SIRs,

THE WISDOM of God appears eminently, in taking Occasion from the Sin of our Progenitor, to bring a greater Tribute of Honour to God; and greater Benefit to Man, than if he had never transgressed; Sin naturally tends to God's Dishonour, and to the Creature's Ruin; but contrary to its natural Tendency, it is over ruled by a wise Providence, to be the Occasion of the greatest glory to God, and good to Man; so that *out of the Eater, comes forth Meat,*  
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*and out of the Strong, Sweetness*; as a Medicine is extracted out of Poison by the Alembick; or, as the black Ground in a Picture, though in itself it contuminate, yet when fixed, with Judgment, in its proper Place as a Shade, heightens the Lustre of the brighter Colours, and adds to the Beauty of the whole Piece!

DEAR SIRS, the Glory of God, is more illustriously apparent, in the recovery of fallen Man, than if he had never sinned; had *Adam* persevered inviolably in his Duty and Allegiance to his great Creator and Sovereign, he could only have been the Subject of divine Goodness, but not in its highest and most endearing Acts, which are to pity and succour the Guilty and Miserable; had he transgressed, and Redemption not have taken Place, Justice it is true would have been honoured with a solemn Sacrifice, a solemn Triumph! But Mercy, that amiable, benign, and indulgent Attribute, would have been veiled with a total Eclipse! But now the Wisdom of *Jehovah* in the Redemption of Man appears, by according these Attributes, and making them shine with rival Charms! The Honour of *Jehovah* appears as much in preserving the Authority of his Law, by punishing our Surety in our

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room and Place, as by the Exercise of his Mercy in pardoning the Transgressor!

NOR is it less honourable, my Brethren, to the divine Wisdom, to restore fallen Man with infinite Advantage; though innocent Man was holy, yet sad Experience verifies, that he was mutably so; but Holiness in the redeemed shall be perpetual, eternal: *Adam's* Stock was in his own Hand, and hence he became a Bankrupt, but ours is in the Hands of an Almighty Surety, who has undertaken for us, and will be faithful to his Trust: Justice itself being satisfied, becomes our Friend, and ascertains our Possession of Paradise: I might add, that there are Graces to be acted by us in our fallen State; for which there were no Objects or Occasions in Innocence; such as Compassion to the Miserable, Forgiveness of Injuries, and Patience; all which being Emblems of the divine Perfections, must of Consequence be ornamental to, and perfective of our immortal Souls, in conforming them to the great Pattern and Original of Beauty and Excellency.

AGAIN, the Wisdom of God appears, in appointing such a MEDIATOR as is suitably qualified to reconcile God to Man, and Man to God: A Mediator that is God and Man in one Person, and therefore capable of the Affections

Affections and Sentiments of both the Parties to be reconciled: The Wisdom of the divine Constitution in appointing a Person to mediate, who is possessed of the divine and human Natures, appears more particularly from the three Offices he exercises in that Character, *viz.* Prophetical, Priestly, and Kingly.

CONSIDERED as a PROPHET, it was necessary that the MEDIATOR should be GOD, that he might deliver Instructions with more Authority and Efficacy; it is God alone that can enlighten the Mind, convince the Conscience, teach and change the Heart.

AND it was likewise necessary, *Sirs*, that he should be MAN, that he might converse with us, and convey his Instructions to us, in such a familiar Way as we could receive; such is the Weakness of our present Frame, that the Majesty of God's Appearance, occasions a distressing Panic, and hence, when *Israel* had seen some Glimpses of God's Glory and Majesty, at the giving of the Law, they besought the Lord to speak no more to them in such a Manner, lest they died: And, no Doubt, Guilt increases our Dread at the Approach of God, and therefore renders us unfit to attend with due Calmness to his immediate Instructions: An Instance of which we have in the Prophet,

phet, who when he heard the Seraphs shout, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the Heavens and Earth are full of the Majesty of his Glory*, lamented in this mournful Language, *wo is me, I am undone, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!* Infinite Furity, attended with awful Majesty, so alarms our Fears, as to render us unfit for Instruction; but the Son of God appearing in our Nature to make Attonement for Transgressors, the Brightness of his divine Majesty being veiled with the Mantle of his Humanity, is thereby allayed, and so more accommodated to our present State of Weakness; hereby we are encouraged to draw near to him, and to hear with Composure his gentle Instructions, which drop as the Rain, and distil as the Dew upon the tender Herb.

NOR was the UNION of the divine and human Natures, in the Person of the Mediator, less necessary, my Brethren, in respect of his PRIESTLY OFFICE; he must be Man, that the sinning Nature might suffer, and thereby acquire a right to the Satisfaction made; for our Title to the Benefits of Christ's Sufferings depends upon our Union to him, which is not only spiritual by Faith, but natural also; for as the Apostle observes, *he who sanctifies, and they who are sanctified,*  
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*are all one*; i. e. they have Communion in the same Nature: Inasmuch as Suffering according to the divine Declaration was necessary to atone for Sin, of which the Deity is incapable, it behoved our High-Priest to be MAN, that he might have a Capacity for it; and that those Sufferings might be of sufficient Dignity and Value, and the human Nature supported under them, it was as necessary he should be GOD:

NOR was it less needful, Sirs, that the MEDIATOR should partake of both Natures, in order to interceed for us as a PRIEST; that so he might have a sufficient Interest in his Father's Affection, to prevail in his Suits for us, and at the same Time, be possessed of tender Affections towards us; being the Son of God, *him the Father always bears*, and being the Son of Man, *he is touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities*; we have therefore Encouragement to come with Boldness to the Throne of his Grace, to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need!

AND is it not also requisite, that the MEDIATOR should be GOD and MAN, in regard of his KINGLY OFFICE? For unless he be God, how can he apply the Fruits of his Death to us, disposess the strong Man armed, and subdue us to the Obedience of Faith?

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AND if he had not been Man, how could he have led us into the Way of universal Holiness, by the Influence of his own Example, which is doubtless an excellent Method to reform Mankind? It is not only necessary to enact Rules of Virtue by a kingly Authority, but likewise by Example to make Precepts practicable and honourable; when brave Generals, though of the noblest Lineage, design to animate their Armies to heroic Achievements, they voluntarily submit their Persons to all the humble Offices and Hardships of a State of War; courageously lead their Troops into the high Places of the Field of Battle, and expose their Lives to the greatest Perils! This our Lord has done for us; the *Captain of our Salvation*, the King of the Church, and Lord of the Universe, *has been made perfect through Sufferings.*

ANOTHER Instance, Sirs, of divine Wisdom in the Redemption of Man, by the Lord Jesus Christ, is in making the Remedy to have some Analogy and Proportion to the Cause of our Ruin, i. e. as we fell in the first *Adam*, considered as our Representative, so we are raised by the Second, considered in the same Character; as by the *Disobedience of one, many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one, many are made*

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*Righteous;*



*Righteous*; as Guilt and Death came by the first, through IMPUTATION to all his natural Offspring, that are united to him naturally by Existence, so Righteousness and Life come by the second *Adam*, through IMPUTATION, to all his spiritual Offspring, that are united to him spiritually by Faith.

MOREOVER, my Brethren, divine WISDOM is conspicuous in the MANNER whereby our Redemption is accomplished, *viz.* by the HUMILIATION of the SON of GOD; by this *Jehovah* as it were counter works the Sin of Angels and Men. PRIDE is the Malignity of every Sin, for by it the Sinner sets up his Will above God; now that our dear Redeemer might cure the Disease (we labour under) in its original Source, by the Nature of the Remedy, applied to our Arrogance Humility: Man who is but a Worm, and crushed before the Moth, was vainly and wickedly guilty of High-Treason, in affecting to be like God; and thus he fell from the State of Happiness in which he was at first created! And the eternal Son of God, who was in the Form of God, and counted it not robbery to be equal with him, stooped to assume the humble Form of a Servant, that by his Sufferings he might restore fallen Man to his primitive Purity and Bliss; and by his Example correct that Arrogance,

rogance, which was the Fountain of his fatal Apostacy, and all its unhappy Consequences! *The Word was made Flesh*; to banish the Distance between God and it; O stupendous Abasement! the Condescension of divine Majesty herein, is equal to the Contrivance of divine Wisdom; both are indeed incomprehensible, both inexpressible! So dreadful was the Malignity of our native Arrogance, that such unparalleled, astonishing Abasement, even of God himself, was necessary to its Cure; by this our Lord destroyed the first Work of our grand Enemy!

FARTHER, Sirs, the WISDOM of God (in Connection with Almightyness) appears, in appointing such contemptible, and to Appearance contrary MEANS, to accomplish such great and glorious Effects; the Way is as wonderful as the Work; that Christ by dying on the Cross a reputed Malefactor, should be made our eternal Righteousness; that by Death he should destroy him that had the Power of Death, and purchase our Life; that by descending into the Grave, he should purchase our Resurrection from it, and immortal Blessedness, is truly amazing, and plainly shews that the Thoughts and Ways of God are far above ours, as the Heavens are above the Earth; strange that immortal Life should spring from Death,

Death, Honour from Ignominy, Healing from Stripes, Blessedness from a Curse! this is so Contrary to the usual Course of Things, that to render it credible, it was typified by many Symbols, and foretold by many Prophets before it came to pass, that when it came, it might be esteemed an Effect of God's eternal Council, almighty Power, and unsearchable Wisdom: Though *Christ crucified be to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness, yet to those that are called, he is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God!* Surely, great is the *Mystery of Godliness, God made manifest in the Flesh;* whatever our modern Exalters of carnal Reason, and Monopolizers of Wisdom, mutter to the Contrary notwithstanding; these Men say they are Christians, and yet with a Shew of Wisdom, and Pretext of Friendship to Jesus Christ, they presume to confront the express Testimony of his inspired Apostles, they labour with Art and Address to rob his Religion of its GRAND PECULIARS, and to substitute polished PAGANISM in its Place, and would have us to believe the JEST, the JUGGLE, that there is no material Difference between them; but God forbid, we have not so learned Christ; while they profess themselves to be wise, they commence Fools, they become vain in their

their Imaginations; and their foolish Hearts are darkned; for in the *Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save those that believe,* i. e. the great Sovereign and Lord of all, who has a right to do with his own as he pleases, has of his meer Motion, so ordered the Matter, that by the humble Preaching of the Cross of Christ, or in other Words, the MEDIATORIAL PLAN of Salvation, by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God. (which some stumble at, and reckon inconsistent and foolish) those that believe shall obtain eternal Happiness. Such who reckon the grand Peculiars of the Religion of Jesus foolish and absurd, would act a more candid and consistent Part, if they renounced the Name of Christianity altogether (for what signifies the Name without the Thing) and openly declared, that they reject the Bible, as a sure and sufficient Guide to Heaven, and betake themselves to their DAGONS, viz. their CARNAL REASON, and GRACELESS VIRTUE, to a Dependance on the former as their supreme and sufficient Guide, in the Matters of Religion; and on the latter as their only Saviour! *my Soul come not into their Secret, mine Honour be shew not united!* Let Jewish, Grecian, and British INFIDELS or PAGANS (the

{the most inexcusable of all the rest, who in the Midst of Light and Day grope in *Egyptian* Darkness) who in the Pride and Stoutness of their Hearts, deride and burlesque the mysterious and humble Doctrines of Christ crucified, as a non-sensical Scheme; yet they never will be able by all their Art, their Eloquence, and sovereign Contempt, to drive those that have experienced a gracious Change (a divine Birth) from the Foundation of their Hope; no, such have an inward Witness, that *Christ crucified is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*; and in every successive Period, till Time concludes its Drama, there will be such, who shall not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but glory in his Cross, as a Badge of Honour; for *the Foundation of God stands sure*, JEHOVAH has graciously promised, *that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church, and that no Weapon formed against her shall prosper!*

BUT to proceed; the divine WISDOM, my Brethren, appears gloriously in forming the PLAN of the GOSPEL; in such a Manner as at once to provide for the COMFORT of Mens SOULS, and promote the PURITY of their MANNERS; and this indeed is an inseparable Character of divine Doctrines, that they equally tend to promote God's  
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Glory and our Benefit; thus as the Way to Blessedness by a Mediator, effectually secures God's Honour, so it powerfully incites the Sinner's Hope, Love, and Joy; by representing the blessed God as amiable, benign, and gracious, by providing a compleat Satisfaction to injured Justice, that thus a Way might be opened, for a liberal, consistent, and honourable Effusion of divine Goodness, in all its innumerable Instances, in all its various and valuable Effects, adapted to every changing Scene of Life, adapted to every Circumstance of the Indigent and Distressed; and sufficient to support, relieve, yea, refresh and content them, in the Midst of Miseries and Woes; and under a Train and Complication of the greatest Calamities, which this Bockim, this State of Exile affords! These primitive and faithful Servants of Christ, the Apostles, though they were by many reckoned *Deceivers*, yet they were *true*, though they had *Nothing*, yet they possessed *all Things*, though they were *Sorrowing*, yet they were *always Rejoicing*! the MEDIATORIAL PLAN shews us how GOD *may be JUST*, and yet the JUSTIFIER of HIM *THAT BELIEVES IN JESUS*, because of his PROPITIATION. This opens to our View, the unspeakable Gift of the Son of GOD, and assures us of the Gift of all Things

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with him in Case we believe ; in particular, this fixes our final Perseverance in Goodness, a crowning Mercy, upon the impregnable BASIS of the immutable PURPOSE, the Almighty POWER, and faithful PROMISE of GOD ; upon the sacred SURETYSHIP, the compleat SATISFACTION, and perpetual INTERCESSION of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and therefore this Gospel Scheme of Grace and Salvation, opens an unfailling Spring of Joy, and lays a firm Foundation for our Hope and Trust ; this calms the guilty, restless Mind, and makes it *rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory !*

AND as the Gospel of Christ provides for our SOLACE, so it incites to universal PURITY ; do not the Sufferings of the Son of GOD for Sin, give us a dreadful Representation of its Malignity and Danger ; seeing nothing less could make Satisfaction for it, and therefore serve to deter us from it ? We may judge of the Danger of a Disease, by the Difficulty of its Cure ; nothing less could heal our mortal Malady than the Blood of God ; and seeing Christ has expressed such amazing Love to us, does not this tend to beget Love in us to him, and so constrain us to a voluntary, sincere, and uniform

uniform Obedience, from that truly noble Principle?

Now if the Gospel of Christ be such as has been described, with what Ardour should we celebrate the divine Praises, for this Revelation, so worthy of God, so suited to the Case of fallen Man? The Apostacy of our first Parents was so fatal to us, that nothing less than infinite Wisdom could find out a sufficient Remedy!

THERE is no Discovery of this in the Works of Creation, the Heavens and Earth do indeed prove the Existence of a Supream Being, by pointing to some of his adorable Attributes; but cannot represent the Design of Redemption, which has no Connection with the Existence of Creatures, but hangs altogether upon the Sovereign Pleasure of God; the Doctrine of the Trinity, which is the Foundation of the Mediatorial Plan of Salvation, cannot be known by the Frame of the Universe.

NON can natural REASON by its utmost Force, attain to the Knowledge of redeeming Grace and Love; it is true there are some remains of the Law of Nature in the Heart of Man, some common Notices (*ruder Vestigia*) of the Differences between moral Good and Evil, otherwise the World would soon disband and turn into the wildest



Anarchy, the rudest Chaos, and become an ACBLDEMA; though Misery when felt, excites to look out for a Remedy, yet here Reason is at a Loss, at a Plunge, and quite non-pluss'd: How could the *Israelites* imagine, that by looking to the Brazen Serpent, those that were stung should be healed? and how can a poor Creature discover, by the meer Dint of his own Genius, or Light within, the Satisfaction of divine Justice by Jesus Christ? No, they cannot! and hence it is called a *Mystery hid from Ages and Generations*; nay, though the human Mind had never been corrupted, it could not by the Force of its Reasonings find it out; for this the very ANGELS could not discover, till it was made known to them by the CHURCH; by the first coming of Christ, and the Conversion of many to Him, the Depths of divine Wisdom were unveiled.

THE Apostle informs us, that the State of the *Gentiles* was extremely dark, *their Understandings were darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts*: The Apostle Paul declares, that the *Ephesians* were formerly *Darkness*, i. e. while *Pagans*, and elsewhere he assures us, that *the natural Man does not understand*

understand the Things of the Spirit of God, that they are Foolishness to him, and he cannot discern them, because they are spiritually discerned; and this was not only the Case of the ruder Sort, but of the more polite and learned; for, as has been before observed, *the World by Wisdom knew not God*: Natural Reason cannot inform us, whether God will pardon any Transgressors at all, or not, or upon what Terms; it is true the modern Deists, do now trump up a plausible Scheme of natural Religion, with Design to overset revealed, but are not so candid as to inform us, that they borrowed their Succours from the BIBLE; without the Assistance of which, notwithstanding their PRIDE, and Pretence to PENETRATION (or superior acumen) they would speak as darkly, doubtfully, and confusedly, as their more ingenious and ingenious Forefathers, the Pagan Philosophers, long since.

WHAT a horrid Confusion of Sentiments, what a rude, wild, and dark Chaos overwhelmed the Pagan World before Christ's coming, in respect of the most important Points of Religion? *Varro* declares, there were among them no less than *three Hundred* different Opinions about the **SHIEF GOOD**, nor did they inculcate **INTERNAL PURITY**, and the Necessity of **FORGIVING**

GIVING INJURIES; and the best of them offered but uncertain Conjectures about the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL; a View of their Miseries may justly heighten our Value for the Mercies we enjoy; while many Nations dwell in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, *the Day-spring from on High has visited us, and the Sun of Righteousness arisen with Healing under his Wings upon us:* This distinguishing, important, and unmerited Benefit, should fire our Souls with Love and Gratitude, and stir us up to the most affectionate Thanksgiving: It is the Prerogative of God to reveal the Secrets of his Kingdom to whom he pleases; how then can we reflect upon the divine Goodness towards us, without the warmest Emotion, the most admiring, grateful Sentiments? Surely, by Nature we are as blind, corrupt, and perverse as any other Nation, what are we then, that God should be so gracious to us? If the Publication of the Law to the People of *Israel*, was justly reckoned their peculiar Treasure, what then is the Revelation of the Gospel by the Son of God, which alone discovers our Remedies, and of which there is no innate Notice to human Nature, nor any given otherwise universally?

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CAN this Principle be easily justified, that there is Something in all Mankind which, if attended to, is sufficient to direct Men to Salvation without the Scriptures? It is no Matter what this Something be called, whether REASON, CONSCIENCE, or the LIGHT WITHIN, seeing the Substance intended is the same.

Do not the Scriptures positively declare, that there is no Name given under Heaven, by which Salvation can be obtained, but the Name of Jesus; that Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, that we cannot hear without a Preacher, that the Heathens are Darknefs, without the Covenants of Promise, without God, that they perish for Lack of Vision, and that all the Unregenerate before Conviction are blind, dead, possessed with Satan, that the Light in some is Darknefs, and that all Men have not Faith; how can the aforesaid Principle agree with those Declarations?

And do not Millions of Facts (which are stubborn Things) in the Pagan World, in the present and past Ages, and in various Nations, confirm the aforesaid Testimony of Scripture? That the PAGANS, whatever Pains they take in their different Ways of Religion (unless they obtain some Informa-  
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tion from the sacred Scriptures) remain ignorant of the Way of Salvation by Christ.

IF the PAGANS had this Knowledge, is it reasonable to think that they would be brought to the Profession of what they believe with great Difficulty, in Places where this Profession is not attended with any Danger? and yet this has often been the Case, and is so still; and why have so many opposed with great Vehemence, and without any Sense of Guilt, the Profession of Christianity (with *Saul* before his Conversion) if it be so universally known as is supposed? And why do none, among such vast Multitudes, and during so many Ages, give any Account of this Matter?

FARTHER, is not one *Design* of the sacred Scriptures, for *Doctrine* and Instruction, to make the Man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good Work; now what need is there of this, if there be sufficient Light in every Man to direct him without it? is it not absurd to say, we need more than what is sufficient, or that we need more than we need! is not the BIBLE therefore needless and superfluous, according to this Principle, and is this Principle safe, that in its Consequences deprives us of our BIBLE?

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PRAY is it not the Business of *Pastors* after *God's Heart*, to feed the People with Knowledge and Understanding? and is it not the Design of their Office to turn Sinners from Darkness to Light? But what need is there of this Institution at all, what need of any Labours to instruct Mankind, if Men have sufficient Light without it in themselves? Is not Preaching at any Time or Place, on this Plan, an Absurdity, a meer Farce? And why did the Apostles take so much Pains in traveling and preaching? why did they run such Risques, and endure such Hardships? was it to do a superfluous Business, to teach People what they knew already, or might know without their Assistance? if so, was this prudent in them (seeing they carried on no Business of Merchandize or Traffick in their Travels to enrich themselves) or a good Argument that they had the full Exercise of their Reason? pray did they suffer Stripes, Imprisonment, or Death, like wise Men, or Fools, for doing what was needless, judge ye.

UPON this Hypothesis, is it probable, that we shall be duly sensible of the Value of our religious Privileges, sincerely thankful for them, tenderly concerned for those that want them, and use Diligence to pro-

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selite them to Christianity, when we judge that they are unnecessary.

BUT to proceed, is not the incomprehensible Mystery of redeeming Wisdom and Grace, well worthy of our serious Thoughts and Study; seeing it excels all other Sciences in the Sublimity of its Object, the Certainty of its Principle, the Efficacy of its Influence, and the Value of its End?

IT is a Doctrine that affects the Soul, with the highest Admiration of the divine Wisdom, Grace, and Love; and makes us speak in the Psalmist's Language, *how wonderful are thy Thoughts to us-ward?* when the Almighty hereby *turns our Captivity, we are as those that dream*; this opens before us the grandest Theme, that was ever exposed to mortal Eye, or Ear; a Complication of Wonders, the chief of all the Ways of God; strange that he who fills Heaven and Earth, should be confined in a Virgin's Womb, that Life should die, and being dead, revive! that Mercy should triumph, without infringing on the Rights of Justice!

THE Principle of this mysterious Doctrine is immutable, like God the Author and Object of it; whereas philosophical Sciences are frequently shifting, almost every one, through Pride and excessive Self-love, is disposed

disposed to despise and pull down what another with much Labour builds up.

AND how precious and powerful is the Influence of this Doctrine, upon those that believingly receive it? *while they behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, they are transformed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory; this is eternal Life to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent: O let us cry earnestly to God, that Christ crucified, may be more and more the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God to us. Amen, Amen; dear Lord JESUS CHRIST, say, AMEN.*

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## S E R M O N III.

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PROV. 8. 17. *I Love them that Love me,  
and those that Seek me early shall find me.*

**S**OME, by divine WISDOM, in this Chapter, understand that Attribute of the divine Nature so called, whereby God perfectly knoweth all Things, and maketh known to Men, what he judgeth necessary or expedient for them to know; others understand it of the second Person of the God-head, who is called the Wisdom of God, because of the Displays of this Attribute in the Method of Salvation through his Blood: And indeed some Passages agree better to the former, and some to the latter Opinion; probably both may be joined together, and the Chapter may be understood of Christ, considered partly in respect of his Deity, and partly in regard of his prophetic Office,

Office, by which he was to impart the Mind and Will of God to Mankind, and actually did so.

1. By revealing it to, and inscribing it on the Mind of Man at his first Creation, and after his Apostacy; by renewing the effaced and erased Characters of the divine Image, in some at their Conversion, by the Finger of his Holy Spirit, who are hence called *his Epistle, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshy Tables of the Heart,* 2 Cor. 3. 3. And,

2. By publishing it to the Prophets and Patriarchs, in the Time of the old Testament, at sundry Times and in divers Manners, *Heb. 11.* And,

3. By declaring it in his own personal Ministry, and by his Apostles, and others of his Servants, under the Gospel Dispensation.

*I Love them that Love me, i. e. though their Affection be a small and inconsiderable Thing to me, I kindly accept it, and will recompense it with Love and Favour; and those that seek me early, shall find me, i. e. those who in their young Years more especially, from a Principle of Faith unfeigned, and supream Respect, endeavour sincerely, and steadily to obey my Laws, before and*  
above

above all other Persons and Things, shall find an Interest in my Favour and Friendship.

IT is only the first Part of the Text, that I purpose now to discourse upon, *I love them that love me*: Here let us enquire, what LOVE to the Lord JESUS CHRIST supposes and implies, and how the blessed JESUS loves such, who love him?

Now *Love* to the Lord Jesus Christ, *supposes*;

1. THE KNOWLEDGE of our want of Love to him, our *Enmity* against him, and *Inability* to love him? For the Disease must be known and felt, before it be cured.

2. An affecting *Discovery* of his *Amiability* and *Excellency*, which are the proper Objects and Incentives of rational Love. And,

3. IT supposes FAITH in him, for Love is the Fruit of Faith, by which it works (*Gal. 5. 6.*) Now FAITH is the sensible, Sin-sick Sinners, deliberate and unreserved Consent to embrace Christ, as the free Gift of God to perishing Mankind, as its Prophet, Priest, and King, under an Impression of its absolute Need of him in those Offices, and with an entire Dependence upon him for all needful Relief by them; together with a full and firm Purpose of Heart to cleave to him, to deny itself, to take up  
his

his Cross and follow him (*Job. 1. 12. Acts 20. 22, 23, 24.*) And,

4. It supposes some Sense and Persuasion of his *Love* to us, without which the Soul will not go forth with free, grateful, and vehement Sallies towards him: *We love him*, saith the Apostle *John*, *because he loved us first* (1 *Job. 4. 19.*) *whom having not seen*, i. e. by an Eye of Sense, *ye Love*; yet believing *ye rejoice*, with *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory* (1 *Pet. 1. 8.*)

FARTHER, *Love* to the Lord Jesus Christ; implies, *Esteem, Desire, Delight*, and *Sorrow*.

To such as love him, he is *the Chief among Ten Thousand*, as *the Rose of Sharon, the Lilly of the Vallies, fairer than the Children of Men, fairer than the Sons of God, the holy Angels, his Garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes, and Casia.* Farther,

SUCH as love the blessed Jesus, earnestly and insatiably, desire after Communion in his Love, and Conformity to his Laws; as the *Hart*, when chased, *panteth after the cooling Brooks of Water*, so *their Hearts pant after God*, yea *their Heart and Flesh cry after the living God*; as the Psalmists speaks.

AGAIN, sincere Love implies DELIGHT; *I sat down under his Shadow*, says the Spouse, *with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet*

to

to my Taste, as a Bundle of Myrrh was my Beloved unto me, he lay all Night betwixt my Breasts.

AND, Sirs, the Sorrow of the loving Soul in the Absence of his Lord, is equal to his Delight in his Presence: *My Soul*, says the Spouse, *failed when he spake, I sought him but I could not find him!* O nothing can supply, to Satisfaction, Christ's room in the Soul! when he is gone, it languishes and moans, in the Midst of all the Honours, the Pleasures, and Affluence this Earth affords, as the poor *Turtle Dove*, when bereaved of its Mate.

As to the *Consequents* of Love to the Lord Jesus Christ, I may observe, that such Persons have *admiring Thoughts* of the *Freeness* and *Glory* of the *Grace* of GOD to them in particular, being humbled by near Views of his great Majesty, and unstained Purity, which in Whiteness out-veighs the driven Snow; and seeing themselves to be the Chief of Sinners, they are justly amazed, that so glorious a Sovereign, should take such gracious, such distinguishing Notice of such mean and vile Creatures as they are, when many of better Accomplishments are passed by! and are ready to say, in the Psalmists Language, *what am I, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*

therto? and as *Jacob*, I am not worthy of the *least* of all the Mercies, and of all the Truths, which thou hast shewn to thy Servant! (Gen. 32. 10.)

A Sense of this inspires their Souls with Sentiments of the most ardent GRATITUDE; which they are at a Loss how to express; and therefore, say, *what shall I render to the Lord, for all his Benefits towards me?* under this Impression, they invite the animate and inanimate Creation, to assist their grateful Song; and celebrate the divine Honours (Ps. 148.)

FARTHER, such as love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity, make Conscience of *keeping God's Commands* without Exception, in Heart, Speech, and Behaviour to the Death (1 Job. 5. 3.) *for this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous; then shall we not be ashamed, when we have an unfailing Respect to all the divine Precepts.*

I may add, that such as love Jesus, are heartily concerned for the Honour of his Name, and Interests of his Kingdom; and have an unfeigned Love to the Brethren: *The Reproaches of those that reproach him, fall upon them; nor can they be easy when the Ways of Zion mourn; but on the contrary, when her Captivity is restored, when poor*

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Sinners

Sinners are convinced and converted, they are as those that dream, *their Hearts are filled with Gladness, and their Lips with Laughter*; while others either lessen, dispute or deny religious Appearances, and seem to be a afraid of some Mischief coming upon the Churches by them; but are easy when Religion has sunk into a dead Form, and is ready to Breath its last! Sirs, *if we do not love our Brother whom we have seen, with a pure Heart fervently, how can we think that we love God, whom we have not seen!*

Now the *Love of Christ* to such is *unexcited* and entirely immerited, he pitied us when in our Blood, when there was nothing to invite his Respect, when we were Objects of Loathing and Abhorrence; then he loved us; spread the Skirt of his Garment over us, and hid us live! O the incomprehensible Glories of his *Grace and Goodness!* O the inexpressible Riches, and Freeness of his dear condescending and amazing *Love!*

FARTHER, the *Love of JESUS* is *strong and affectionate* to his People; they are his *Jewels, his Treasure*, as the *Apple of his Eye*, he accosts them in Terms of the greatest Endearment, *my Love, my Sister, my Dove*; they are written on the *Palms of his Hands, and graven as a Seal upon his Heart*, for their sakes he assumed human Nature

Nature in its most humble Circumstances, hid down his Life, and *trod the Wine Press of his Father's Wrath alone*; he commendeth his Love to us, in that while we were yet Sinners, he died for us; yea, he sympathizes with us in all our Sorrows!

AGAIN, the Love of Christ is *effectual*, it disposes him to Guide us with his Eye in our Perplexities, to support us with his Arm under all our Pressures, and to sanctify and sweeten every of them to us, by his Spirit and his Love! As he has purchased our Salvation by the Price of his Blood, so he applies it, and prepares us for the full Enjoyment of it, by his constant *Intercession*.

ONCE more, the Love of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, is *invariable and eternal*; both a *parte ante*, and a *parte post*, as he loved us from everlasting, so he will love to it; and hence, it is said, that *he loved us with an everlasting Love, and therefore with loving Kindness has he drawn us*, i. e. in Time; and that *whom he loves, he loves to the End*; he bears with many Weaknesses in his People, and though he sometimes *chastises their Iniquities with Rods, and their Transgressions with Stripes*, yet he will not utterly take away his loving Kindness from them, or suffer his Faithfulness to fail; though he *hides his Face for a Moment*, to try our Faith, or humble



our Pride, yet *he will return with everlasting loving Kindness*: In this the Love of Christ differs from, and is much superiour to all human Love, which often varies, and is at longest but of short Duration.

FROM this Subject, we may learn the unhappy and dangerous State of such who love not the blessed Lord Jesus, such who have not experienced what has been before said concerning it; for all those are liable to that dreadful Sentence (1 Cor. 16. 22.) *if any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema maranatha.*

I humbly and earnestly entreat all, but especially *young People and Children* (with whom I hope to meet with most Success) to *Love the Lord Jesus Christ.*

REASON invites you, for he is *amiable* and excellent in himself; is not Loveliness the proper Object of Love? now our dear Lord *Jesus Christ*, is infinitely, inexpressibly *Lovely*; *he is white and ruddy, the Chiefest among Ten Thousand*, his Loveliness is best near, whereas that of Creatures, in the present State of Imperfection, appears best at a Distance, like a *Picture* coarsely drawn; The Redeemer's *Beauty* does neither insnare or fade; for his Excellency, and our Obligations to him are infinite! But the *Beauty of Creatures fades as the Grass*, it is derived, dependent,

dependent, and limited, and therefore may be over-valued, to the Neglect of the great Original, from which all created Excellency proceeds; and compared with which, it is but as a *Drop* to the immense *Ocean*, or a little *Dust* in the *Ballance*, to the whole *Globe* of the Earth! In him there is a Concurrency of all Kinds of Excellency, both created and uncreated, in the highest Degree of Eminence, without any Beginning, Wane, or Period: Some Creatures excel in one Grace, and some in others, for which they deserve our Esteem and Respect, but he excels in all at once and for ever, he is the ALPHA and OMEGA, Time or Eternity will never mar his Beauty, or wear and wrinkle in his Brow. And, dear Sirs,

GRATITUDE should likewise constrain you, on Account of his LOVE to poor Sinners; should not Love incite Love, if not, where is your Ingenuity? are ye not worse than PUBLICANS, in Neglect of this; for they love those that love them; worse than PAGANS, for divers of them had noble Sentiments of Gratitude to Benefactors, and acted accordingly; yea, worse than BEASTS, for *the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib?*

BUT not only Reason and Gratitude conspire to invite you, but *Interest*, your grand,  
your

your eternal Interest calls aloud for your *Love* to the dear *Redeemer*; in case you love him, he will love you in return; and if the everlasting God, who has made all Nature with a *Word*, and manages the vast Creation by his *BECK*, is for you, it is no Matter who is against you; he will direct your Steps in every *Maze* of Life, and make you sweet and safe in his *Arms*, and under his *Wing*; among all its shifting *Scenes*, its numberless *Sorrows* and *Calamities*; and in due Time bring you to a *City that bath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*; a City built-upon a firm Basis, entirely freed from all the Vicissitudes of the present State?

DEAR *young People* and *Children*, give me Leave to commend my *Master* to your Esteem and Acceptance, O he is infinitely great, he is inexpressibly good! never was there a *Master*, a *Father*, a *Friend*, a *Husband* like him! what Labours of Love did he perform, and Sufferings in Name, Body, and Soul did he endure for us. He who is the eternal GOD, a self-sufficient, independent and glorious MAJESTY, whom all the ANGELS Worship, and before whose Feet they cast their *Crowns*, a BEING to whom our *Goodness* does not extend; that he should be so concerned for our Salvation, as though his Happiness depended upon ours, that

that he who is *Lord* of all, should assume the Form of a *Servant*, that we might be made the *Sons* of *God*? that the *Majesty* of *Heaven* should come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his *Life* a *Ransom* for many; that he who is from *Eternity*, and dwells in the *Bosom* of ineffable *Delight*, should become a *Man* of *Sorrows*, and acquainted with *Grief*, that we might drink of the *River* of *Pleasures* that is at his right *Hand*; that he who was *RICH* should become *POOR*, that we through his *Poverty* might be made *Rich*: That the *Sword* of *God's Wrath* should awake against the *Man* that was his *Fellow*, that the *Chastisement* of our *Peace* should be laid upon him, that through his *Stripes* we might be healed: That the infinite *GOD* should become *MAN*, yea, a *Worm*, a *reproach* of *Men*, exposed to unjust *Scandal* and *Contempt*, by those he came to seek and save; that he should *Weep*, and *Groan*, and *Bleed*, and *Die* for us! that he should be deserted by his *Father*, which occasioned his *bloody Agony*, and *doleful Outcry* on the *Cross*, *Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabacthani*; that he should be *sad and sore amazed*, yea, *sorrowful even to Death*, and hang on the *accursed Tree*, between *Criminals* of the most enormous *Kind*, as a *Spectacle* to *Heaven* and *Earth*, who had made both;

as

as if he was fit to be entertained by neither; and there insulted and derided, in the *Middle* of his inutterable Anguish; there pierced in his Hands and Feet with *Nails*, and his *Heart* wounded with a *Spear*, from whence came Blood and Water, to heal the Nations; his Body having been before furrowed with Scourges, and his Head pierced with *Thorns*; so that he was all over of a *bloody Gore*! O sad, striking Spectacle! to see the Saviour of the World thus expiring; no Wonder the *Earth* shook at its *Center*, the *Heavens* gathered *Blackness*, the *Rocks* rent, and the *Dead* awoke at this extraordinary PHENOMENON, when their CREATOR resigned his *Breath*, and *Life* itself died! and surely, we must be more stupid than inanimate Nature, harder than *Rocks*, than *Adamants*, if we are not moved with the View of such a mournful TRAGEDY, to which there never was, or ever will be any *Parallel*! O how astonishing is the Love and Goodness of JESUS, that he should endure such Sufferings for us, who are utterly unworthy of his Regard, and unable to requite it, yea, not so much as desirous of it, till excited by his gracious Influence; that he should endure for such worthless Creatures, such Rebels, Wretches, Enemies; who are by Nature possessed of Enmity  
against

against him, his Law, his Gospel, his Government, and covered with the basest Deformity and Pollution, an inexpressible, yea, incomprehensible WEIGHT of WOE, with unbroken PATIENCE, strong DESIRE, and kind INTENTION, to purchase for them a HAPPINESS as immerited, as inutterable and immortal, a Happiness suited to the original DIGNITY of a SOUL, and equal to its vast DESIRES, and endless DURATION!

AND does this adorable Lord *Jesus*, use the greatest Earnestness, the humblest Condescension, the most endearing Importunity, by a Variety of Means, *viz.* his Word, Ordinances, Providences, and by the Influences of his Holy Spirit, to allure us to accept of our own Life and Happiness, to accept of the invaluable Purchase of his Blood and Death, and does the compassionate Redeemer weep and groan over us, as over impenitent, unhappy *Jerusalem*; *O that thou had'st known in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace, you will not come unto me, that ye might have Life*; does he cry aloud to us, as in the great Day of the Feast, *if any Man is a-thirst, let him come unto me and drink; come unto me all ye that Labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; does the amiable Majesty of Heaven, knock at the Door of our Hearts, and say, *if any Man*  
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*will bear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me; does he wait till his Head is wet with the Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night? O ineffable Prodigy of amazing Godlike dear Goodness! and will we dare to shut our Ears, against this Charmer's Voice, will we harden our cruel Hearts, against all the astonishing Stoops of a dying God and Saviour, against all the Yearnings of his tender Bowels, against all the Cries of his Sufferings, his Tears, his Groans, his Blood, against the Voice of Reason, of Justice, of Interest, of Ingenuity, and Gratitude, against the eternal Salvation of our Souls! then is not our Blood upon our own Heads, are we not self, Soul-Murderers, the greatest Monsters of Ingratitude and Barbarity, the vilest, basest Wretches upon the Creation, worse than Jews, who lived under a dark Dispensation, worse than Pagans, who have not the Light we enjoy, yea, worse than Devils, who never had an Offer of Mercy since their Apostacy! our Iniquity has no Parallel, no Cloak, no Apology; if I had not come and told them, says our Saviour, they would not have had Sin, but now their Sin remains; what Damnation does such Wretches deserve? this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than*

*than Light, because their Deeds are Evil; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a Salvation? Surely, it shall be more tollerable for Sodom and Gomorrha, in the Day of the Lord, than for us?*

My blessed *Master* is not only *Good* and *Gracious* beyond all Expression, but his *Work* is *Rational, Honourable, Noble*; *Holiness* is the *Beauty* of God, the *Ornament* of human Nature, and *Blessing* of Society; his *Wages* are likewise great; O! his *Love* is ravishing, it makes the Soul *serene* and *glad* in every Situation, it turns the thickest *Darkness* into *Day*, and makes the *meanest Morsel* *sweet*; by this we feel secure in all *Dangers* and *Vicissitudes*, and intrepid in the *Midst* of the most formidable *Enemies*; by this the darkest *Glooms* of Providence are enlivened, and a *Smile* put upon the *Face* of *Death*; and if it be so here, what will it be hereafter? for *Eye* hath not seen, nor *Ear* heard, neither hath it entered into the *Heart* of *Man* to conceive, what *God* hath laid up for those that love him.

WHAT a *Father* is *GOD*, how tender, indulgent, and rich; surely, his *Children* may expect from him infallible *Instruction* in *Doubts*, impregnable *Defence* in *Dangers*, and an everlasting *Inheritance*, that outweighs in *Value* Millions of *Worlds*! O



how desirable is the Lord *Jefus Chrift*, as a *Friend*, he is *All-wife*, knows all the Sorrows of his People, and how to relieve them out of them all: He is *Almighty*, able to execute the Defigns of his Wisdom againft all Oppofition from Earth and Hell; he is *Affectionate*, willing to exert his Wisdom and Almightynefs in Favour of thofe who love him: He is *every where prefent*, if we *take the Wings of the Morning*, and flee to the *utmoft Ends of the Earth*, afcend the Summit of *Carmel*, or dive the *Ocean's Depths*, he is there; his *Eye* fees us, and his *Arm* can help us; whither we are at Home, or Abroad, upon the Sea or Land, in the City or the Wildernefs, we may have his Prefence, if it be not our own Fault! he is *Immutable* and *Immortal*, far from the Shadow of Change, the ALPHA and OMEGA, the Beginning and Ending: Whereas *earthly Friends*, on the Contrary, are *weak* fighted, have *fhort Arms*, and are fometimes *unkind*; either at Times they miftake our Difafe, or are unable to help us, or unwilling if able; befides they are confined to a Place, very variable and but of fhort Continuance.

IF you defire to love the Lord JESUS CHRIST, *depart from the Foolifh and live*, and *walk in the Ways of Understanding*; beware of finning againft Light, encourage God's  
gracious

gracious Motions, attend with Constancy and Seriousness upon the Means of Grace, bewail your Want of Love, and often meditate upon the Miseries of that State; Pray earnestly and frequently for this Grace, and O! consider that *Youth* is the best *Season* for *Religion*, the moulding Age, in which the opening Mind, and (comparatively) tender Heart, are more ready to receive worthy *Sentiments* and pious *Impressions*, and more like to retain them.

*Objection.* MY Friends will be *Angry*.  
*Answer,* It's better they should be so, than the great GOD; *we must forsake Father and Mother*, for Christ's Sake, when called thereto, *otherwise we cannot be his Disciples*.

*Object.* 2. I shall suffer *Reproach*. *A.* What then? it is without Cause, the Almighty will bear you up under it, and graciously reward your patient and chearful Enduring of it; we must go *without the Camp to Christ*, bearing his *Reproach*; and is it not better to be reproached, than damned?

*Object.* 3. ALMOST all of my *Age neglect Religion*. *A.* More is the Pity! but we must not follow a *Multitude to do Evil*, if so, we shall be damned with the Crowd; no, we should imitate the noble and manly Resolution of *Joshua*, who in a Time of great Degeneracy, openly declared in the Presence

fence of the Tribes of Israel, if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this Day whom you will serve, but as for me and my House we will serve the Lord (Jof. 24. 15.)

*Object. 4.* I shall lose all my Pleasure.  
*A.* You will lose no Pleasure that deserves the Name; as for the Pleasures of Sin, they are brutish, of short Duration, and followed even in this Life with more Anguish than they yield Delight! what then will be their Consequences in the Life to come? but in the Service of God, you will find solid, substantial and satisfactory Comfort, for *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.*

*Object. 5.* SOME that are Religious have little Pleasure. *A.* That is their own Fault, it is not owing to their Religion, that they are at any Time sad and dejected but to their Wandring from the *Laws* of it, or to their melancholy Constitution of Body, which is a natural Disease, that does not concern Religion at all, and therefore should not be cast upon it: So far as any are religious, they have Ground of Comfort, for *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart*; and all Joy without this is mere Madness.

*Object. 6.* I am now hurried with other Things, I may find a better Season afterwards.

wards. *A.* No it will be worse, your Inclinations to Good will lessen, and your Obstacles encrease; besides you are not certain of a future Season, the Almighty may say to thee, as to the rich Fool, *this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee*; and if you should have Time, you may have no Heart to improve it, *he that is often reprov'd, and hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy*; pray remember these awful Words of God (*Prov. 1. 24, 25, 28.*) *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretch'd out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof, I will also laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh.*

*Object. 7.* I shall be called a *Fool*, a *Hypocrite*, an *Enthusiast*. *A.* We must not lose Credit with God, to get Credit among Men, for this will hurt both our Credit and Usefulness; it is better to be called a *Fool*, than to be one; our greatest WISDOM is to secure our HAPPINESS, by the Use of proper Means in their due Season: As to the Charge of *Hypocrisy*, when levelled against early and sincere *Religion*, it is unjust, and we shall meet with a gracious Reward for our patient enduring of it, in this and a future World: If all are Hypocrites, who are  
heartly

heartly and serious in Religion, then where is true and vital Piety to be found? surely not among *Galeos, Demases, Formalists,* and the *Herd* of the *Prophane* (*Mat. 5. 20.*) then it must be among those that are in *Earnest*, or no where upon Earth; and if no where, then it will follow, that Christ has no Church Militant, which is absurd and false; he himself has assured us, *that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church*: As to the Charge of *Enthusiasm*, it is but a Gingle of Words without a Meaning; it is indeed *Enthusiasm*, to make *Fancy, Passion, or Impulse*, our *GUIDE* in *religions Matters*; but to take the *Word* of *GOD* for our *Rule*, and exercise our Reason in the *Use* of all appointed Means to understand it, to have our *Minds* first *informed*, and then our *Passions engaged* in Proportion to the Importance of Things, cannot be justly liable to that odious Charge, for without these, our Passions would be given us in vain, and Religion be but a *dead Carcass*, which Christ will reject with Abhorrence! \*

AND NOW *dear young Ones*, what have you against *early Religion*? can ye be too soon safe and happy? would it do you any harm to have God to be your Friend and

Father,

Rev. 3. 16,

Father, and Heaven your everlasting Home? wherefore do you spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which profiteth not? what shall a Person give in Exchange for his Soul, if he should gain the World and lose the same? why stand ye all the Day idle in the Market Place? why do ye delay in a Matter of Life and Death? are ye in Suspence which is the best Master, God or the Devil, which the best Work, Sin or Holiness, which the best Reward, Heaven or Hell, a Place of the greatest Glory and Blessedness, or of the most exquisite Torment and Misery? why halt ye between two Opinions, if God be God serve him, or if Baal be God, then follow him? resolve with the returning Prodigal, that you will arise and go to your Father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and am no more worthy to be called thy Child, O make me as one of thy hired Servants: There would be JOY in HEAVEN at your Conversion, and JOY upon EARTH; O! so blessed, so important an Event would gladden your Parent's Hearts, if pious, in which Delight I should share; will you Comfort my Heart, by loving my dear Master speedily, sincerely and supremely? O if you will shew Kindness to my Master, tell me, and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the Right Hand or to the Left!

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O that

O that I knew how to persuade you, alas, will no Argument have any Influence? then you are the Causes of your own *Ruin*: I am loth to leave you without prevailing with you; what Answer shall I return to my dear Lord that has sent me to woo you? shall I tell him that some of you are willing to be espoused to him for ever? O may the Lord grant, for JESUS Sake, that this may be the Case of you all!

AND you, dear *Children*, I beseech you with *Love* and Bowels of *Tenderness*, as upon my *bended Knees*, to love the Lord JESUS CHRIST, to pray earnestly for the Pardon of your Sins, and that God would make you *good* in your *Hearts*, by his Holy Spirit; without which you cannot go to Heaven when you die; it is not, dear Creatures, too soon for you to be good; no, the sooner the better; if you think on Christ and love him, you will find more Sweetness than in your *Play*, than in your *Victuals*, yea, more Comfort than in your *fine Clothes*: You may see in that good little Book, Mr. JANEWAY'S *Token for Children* (which I beseech your Parents to procure you) several *Children* as young as you, that loved the Lord, and there are several little Ones, as well as young People, that are now earnestly seeking God in this Country, and why should not you

as well as others? your Souls are as precious as theirs, God has been as good to you; Heaven would be as sweet, and Hell will be as bitter if you neglect; why then won't you try to seek God in Earnest? is it not a Shame for you to be hard-hearted, thoughtless, and slothful about your Souls, while *other little Ones* are *weeping* over their SINS, and *praying* to GOD for MERCY? won't it be dreadful for you to be left behind them, and to be cast off, while GOD is *embracing others* in his *Arms*, and giving them the *Kisses* of his *Love*? you are exceeding bad and naughty in your Hearts, and your Lives are full of Sin, you cannot go to HEAVEN as you are, till you be made *good*, and you cannot make your selves good, it is the Lord only that can make you good, and you have no reason to hope that he will do so, unless you *pray earnestly* to him for it, and strive to be good! you must know, *dear little Ones*, that you do not deserve this Favour from him, and that you cannot deserve it by any Thing that you can do; for you yourselves, and all ye do, are filthy and polluted by Sin, and therefore you must ask free Mercy, for Christ's Sake!

O consider, that you may never live till you grow *big*, for the *most*, by far, *die* when they are *little*, and this may be your Case



in a few *Days*, in a few *Hours* ; ha'n't you seen *Coffins* as short as your *selves*, carried to the *Grave* ? and would not it be terrible for you to die *unconverted*, and to *burn* in *Hell for ever* ? your being young and little won't keep you from that bad Place, and from the bad Man, unless you be good your selves before you die.

THE LORD JESUS calls every one of you, *dear little Ones*, as though he mentioned you all by your Names, to forsake your Sins and come to him, in these sweet Words, *suffer little Children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven ; I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me ?* O how glad would your poor PARENTS be to see you good ? their Hearts are sad and troubled when they find you do not mind your Book, when you neglect your *Prayers*, speak *bad Words*, break the *Sabbath*, and keep Company with *naughty Children* ; O try to be good, and Christ will love you, and all good People will love you ; out of *the Mouths* even of such *Babes* as you, *God will ordain Praise* ; his Power and Grace in making you good in your Hearts, will appear glorious ; by your early Concern about your Souls, older People would be ashamed of their Security and Sloth ; and you do not know what Good it would do to your poor  
*Relations ;*

*Relations*; your *Brothers*, or *Sisters*, and others, might be hereby turned to GOD, and saved from Hell; would it do you any Harm, *dear little Ones*, to have God to be your Friend and Father, and Portion for ever? O may a gracious God bless you, *dear Children*, and help you to love JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.

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S E R-

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# S E R M O N I V.

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PROV. 8. 17. *And those that seek me early shall find me.*

**B**Y *seeking* CHRIST, we are doubtless to understand, our using all appointed Means to obtain an Interest in his Favour, and Conformity to his Image: The Expression *supposes*;

I. OUR *Distance* from GOD, not LOCAL, in regard of PLACE, for the Almighty is immense, and every where present by his ESSENCE, but MORAL in respect of *Disposition*; the Unregenerate are far from GOD, in respect of *Knowledge, Union, Interest, Communion, and Conformity*: They have no such experimental and influential *Knowledge* of GOD, and divine Things, as makes the general *Frame* of their Minds *humble, spiritual,*

*tual, heavenly*, and reforms the *Tenor* of their *Conduct*; their *Light* is generally *cold*, or but luke-warm, or if there be Heat with it, it is proud, wild, irregular, and transient, having no abiding good *Effect* upon the *Heart* and *Life*; this *natural Knowledge* puffs up *silly Souls*, with groundless *Conceits* of their *Attainments*, and makes some of them so overbearing and pragmatical, that they are the *Bane* and *Pests* of *Society*, not fit to be touched with a *Pair of Tongues*; they often *meddle with Things too high for them*, to their *Disgrace*, and go out of their proper *Spheres*, as *busy Bodies* (who are justly set in *Rank and File* with *Thieves* and *Murderers*) (1 *Pet.* 4. 15.) making *Mischief* in the *Church* and *State*, and turning all to *FLAME* and *Fury*: Farther, the *Unregenerate* are far from *God*, in respect of vital *UNION*, for they have no *Faith* of a saving *Kind*, otherwise they could not be *unconverted*: And without a *Union* by *Faith*, the *Friendship* of *GOD*, *Communion* in his *Love*, and *Conformity* to his *Image*, cannot be attained, for *he that believes not, is condemned already*, *Faith* is by divine *Appointment* the *Medium* of *Fellowship* with *GOD*, and the *Means* of *Conformity* to him (2 *Cor.* 3. 18.)

## 2. SEEKING

2. **SEEKING** *Christ supposes* our *lost State* by Nature; till we find the dear Redeemer as our Friend and Husband, we our selves are lost, our Time, our Talents are lost, lost for ever; we are like a *Traveller* that has lost his *Road*, when on an *Errand* that concerns his *LIFE*; like a *Sheep* wandering in a *Desart*, amidst *Wolves* and other *Beasts* of *Prey*; like a *Ship* adrift before a *Tempest*, without a *Helm*, or *Compass*, in a *dark Night*, towards a *rocky Shore*!

**BUT**, *how should Christ be sought in young Years* in order to *find him*, and *why*? I answer; he should be sought in the following Manner,

1. **BEFORE** *all other Things*; this is the divine Command, *seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all other Things shall be added unto you*, as *this Concern* has a *Priority of Dignity* and *Importance* to all others, it consequently deserves a *Priority of Order* and *Time* in our *Labours* and *Pursuits*.

2. **WITH** *Importunity*, it is our *Duty* to endeavour to *take the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence and Force*; our Lord enjoins us to *strive to enter in at the streight Gate*, the original Word is *Agonize*, and this Precept is enforced by the following Reason, *for many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able: SALVATION, my Brethren, above all other Things,*

Things, deserves our most anxious *Inquiries*, and earnest *Labours*; O! if we were wounded in Heart, with the Apostle *Peter's* Hearers; we would enquire as they did, *what shall we do to be saved?* And

3. **HUMBLY**; a *Blessing* is pronounced by our Lord (*Mat. 5.*) upon such as are *poor in Spirit*; and that for this Reason, because *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; to this Man will I look, saith the Almighty by the Prophet, *who is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembles at my Word.*

4. **PENITENTLY** bewailing our Offences, and forsaking of them; *let the wicked Man forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him turn unto God, and he will have Mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; and except ye repent, saith the Lord Jesus Christ, ye shall all likewise perish.*

5. **BELIEVINGLY**; he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that unfeignedly seek him: None will make God their Refuge, unless they believe he exists and is gracious; and hence the Enemy, to prevent the Flight of awakened Sinners to God in Christ, endeavours to persuade some of them, that there is no GOD, no CHRIST, or that he is severe

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and unwilling to help and save them; *Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

6. YOUNG Persons should *seek perseveringly*; they ought to continue seeking till they obtain, else all their Labour is lost, and their Souls to boot; some seem to run for a while, but are by-and-by hindered; they *begin in the Spirit, but end in the Flesh*: The Almighty complains of the People of *Israel*, in moving Language, upon this Account; *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for thy Goodness is as the Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew, that soon passeth away*: It is the End that crowns the Scene; if any Man draw back, says the Almighty, *my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him*; O then let us run so that we may obtain!

7. REGULARLY; pray begin at the right End, and try to lay the Foundation of Conversion first, before ye pretend to build the Superstructure of Holiness in Life; the Building will stand the firmer, when the Foundation is well laid; ye should search your Wounds by the Law, before ye attempt to get them healed by the Balm of Gilead; ye should first use proper Means to get the Tree planted in Christ, before ye expect

‡ *Stabit opus melius, si bene fixa Basis.*

pect. it will bring forth Fruit to God; nor dream that a Thorn will bring forth Grapes, or a Thistle Figs; seeing that a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, be entreated therefore,

1. To examine your State towards God, and that speedily, impartially, and thoroughly, in order to find out whether ye are justified by the Blood of Christ, and regenerated by his Spirit; it will signify nothing to Salvation, to reform the Life, to cleanse the Outside of the Cup and Platter, while the Inside is overlooked, the Foundation neglected, or supposed to be good without sufficient Grounds; for all that is built upon a bad Bottom, will come down one Time or other; see to it therefore, that the Foundation be good, or ye do nothing to Purpose in Religion: For our LORD positively declares, that except our Righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Mat. 5. 20.) and we are elsewhere enjoined to examine ourselves particularly as to the State of our SOULS, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves; know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates.

2. JUDGE your selves, that ye be not judged, i. e. in order to prevent the Condemnation



of God, condemn your selves so far as there is Ground for it; and that not only in respect of your Thoughts, Words, and Actions, but of your *State*; this is the *Root* of the *Tree*, to which the *Ax* must be laid; this must be hewn down before another Foundation be formed, which will not fail you in Extremity; what will it avail to suffer a deceived Heart to turn you aside, to *seed upon Ashes*, and go to ruin with a *Lie* in your *Right Hand*? it is foolish and vain to say, *you are rich, and increased in Goods, while you are poor and miserable, and blind and naked*; and yet this, alas for it, is a common Case: For as SOLOMON observes, *there is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their Filthiness; there is a Way that seems right to a Man, the End whereof is the Ways of Death.*

HOWEVER you may flatter your selves, the great GOD will judge according to Truth; pray is it not better to know the worst of your Condition, while there is an Opportunity to get it remedied? it is not enough to acknowledge you are Sinners, or to *fear* you are *unconverted*, but you must *know it*, and *feel its Miseries*, before you are *healed*.

If I ask you, pray how is it between God and your Souls; are you *justified* or not?

not? are you *converted* or not? perhaps you will answer with an Air of Indifference, I do not know; how, not know what is of the greatest Consequence for you, to know of any Thing else? without this you do not know whether you should be comforted or terrified, or how to pray or praise, or do any other Duty of Religion; for you know not what to pray for, or what to be thankful for: If your State is good, you need the Comfort of it in a World of Change and Misery, and if bad, to be affected with a View of the Dangers of it, that so you may prize the Redeemer, and seek him in earnest; for *the Whole need no Physician, but the Sick*; the Want of this Knowledge, makes all your religious Labours, a kind of *Chance-medley*, a *By-business*, a Matter of mere *Form and Compliment*, that are never like to answer a valuable End; no! by these ignorant, luke-warm, random Performances, you are like to fix your selves on a false *Bottom*, to your utter *Ruin*!

If your *State* could not be known by you, you would have some *APOLOGY*; but the Case is not so, It may be known; the Almighty has inserted many *Characters* of a *Work of Grace* in his *Word*, by which he commands you to try your selves; but you are either so *lazy*, that you do not care to be

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at the Pains to enquire, or *afraid* that if you did, you would be uneasy ; well, what if you was uneasy for a little Time, in order to your obtaining true rest, is not this better than to be eternally tormented in Hell? your Reason must say yes, why then do you act the Contrary? you take it for granted, either before *Trial*, or after a very partial, superficial one, that your *Foundation* is right, nor do you desire Assistance in your *Inquiries*, no you think because you are *Fools* and *blind*, that you have Knowledge enough your selves, to determine that important Point, upon which your eternal ALL turns ; but if you were awakened out of your Sleep, and saw your Ignorance, Vileness, and the Worth of your Souls, as *Peter's* Hearers, and the *Jaylor* did, you would enquire of others, who could direct you, what you should do to be saved, and that with great Anxiety ! as to your *Bodies* when in Danger, you will consult a *Physician*, and a *Lawyer* about your Estates, and why so, but because you love and value them ? but the *Salvation* of your poor SOULS, is a mere *Trifle* in your Esteem, and therefore you can take that upon Trust any how ! a Proof of which is, your being without any considerable Uneasiness about them, for Weeks, Months, nay Years ; though you do not know whether you

you are *justified* or *condemned*, *cursed* or *blessed*, *Children* of *God*, or of the *Devil*, bound for *Heaven* or *Hell*: This, without any other Evidence, proves to your Faces, that you are in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity, because you are *Flesh*; but to bring the Matter to a Point, you may certainly conclude your State is *damnable*. If

1. You build your *Hopes* of Happiness upon the *uncovenanted Mercies* of *God*, you cannot with Reason expect Salvation merely because of *God's MERCY*, without complying with the *Terms* upon which it is proposed; for if so, the *Truth* of *God* would fail, which is impossible; the *God* of *Mercy* has positively declared, that *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; that *he that believes not; shall be damned*, and that *except ye be born again, ye cannot see the Kingdom of God*; or upon the *Death* of *Christ* unapplied, unless ye receive *Christ* and his Benefits, by that *Faith* which purifies the Heart, works by Love to *God* and *Man*, and overcomes the *World*, i. e. makes us victorious over the Pleasures, and Enjoyments of the *World*, he will no more save us, than Bread uneaten will nourish a human Body. It is equally vain and destructive to build your *Hopes* of Happiness upon the good *Opinion* of others, or upon outward religious *Priviledges*, for many who  
have

have a Name to live, are dead, and neither Circumcision or Uncircumcision will avail any Thing, but the new Creature: Nor is it to any good Purpose, to depend on such Stirrings of Affection, or Resolutions, as are not followed with an inward Change of the Temper of the Heart, and a holy Life. (Job. 3. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 7. Cant. 8. 5. Heb. 12. 14.) it is equally perilous to build your Hopes of Happiness upon your own Righteousness, viz. that you neither mean or do any Body any Harm, that you are better than you have been, better than many others, and do as God enables you, these are the Pharisees Grounds (Luke 18. 11. 15.) nor is it true, that you do all that God enables you, you might pray more, and strive more many Ways than you do, and therefore you build your Hopes upon Falshood, O awful! and pray remember, that such as are of the Works of the Law, as ye are, are under the Curse (Gal. 3. 10.)

WELL, but perhaps you will acknowledge that, such as have no evangelical Repentance, no saving Faith, shall perish; and that you yourselves want them, and yet if I immediately ask you again, what if you die this very Day, in the same State you acknowledge yourselves to be in without a Change, where will your Souls go? you will tell me in the same Breath, you do not know;

know ; (this answer I have had from many, and therefore I may well speak it) what don't you know that CHRIST *speaks* the *Truth*, when he *says*, you shall be *damned*? But I *hope* for *Mercy*; how, against the *Truth* of GOD, then you hope he will prove a *Liar* to save you, that is, cease to be GOD, for he cannot be a GOD unless he be true to his Word? see what *Nonsense* and *Blasphemy* you build your *Hopes* of *Heaven* upon; alas, for a miserable, infatuated World!

2. You may conclude your *State* to be *bad*, if you ha'n't been *slain* by the *Law*, to all Dependance upon your Obedience to it, for Justification' before GOD; *I through the Law*, says the Apostle, *am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.*

3. If the *Gospel* of Christ has not been *opened* and *applied* to you by the Holy Spirit, so as to approve cordially of this PLAN of Salvation, *thirst* after the *Mediator*, *consent* to *embrace* him in all his *Offices*, as the Gift of GOD, and *depend* upon him entirely for Salvation.

4. IF, in Consequence of this, you have not been brought to *Fellowship* with GOD in the Duties of Religion, i. e. to receive Light, and Life, and Sweetness from him, and in return to yield yourselves and your All to his Service, with *Admiration*, *Love*, *Gratitude*,

and Resolution, to cleave to him and his Ways to the Death.

5. If you are not spiritual and holy in the *Bent* and general *Frame* of your *Hearts* and *Spirits* (*John. 3. 6.*)

6. If you *Love* not *God* for his *Holiness*, the *Beauty* of his *Nature* (as the *Seraphims* do, *Is. 6.*) and his *Law*, and *People*, for the same Reason.

7. If you do not honestly Labour to forsake your Constitution Sins, and to be holy in all Manner of Conversation (*Mat. 18. 8. 9.*)

8. If you are not fully determined to forsake Father and Mother, and lose Name, Estate, and Life for Christ's Sake, and much more to forsake your wicked Companions (*Mat. 10. 37, 38. Prov. 13. 20.*)

Now such as find their State to be bad, by these Things I have mentioned, and yet are secure, I advise and entreat them to meditate upon their *Disease* and *Danger*, a View of which, is most likely to awake and affect them. O consider, Sirs, you are under the *Guilt* of the Sin of *Adam*, in breaking the first Covenant, and hence it is said, that *we are by Nature Children of Wrath* (*Eph. 2.*) and that *in him all have sinned* (*Rom. 5. 12.*) ye are exceedingly corrupted in Heart there are in your Nature an *Enmity* against God,  
and

and continual *Contrariety* to all the Precepts of the moral Law, which being constantly in you, are a Breach of the whole moral Law every Moment; O shocking Thought! being *corrupted Trees*, all your *Thoughts*, *Words*, and *Actions*, natural, civil, and sacred, are more or less *sinful*, all of them in respect of *Form*, and many of them in respect both of *Matter* and *Form*; how vast then must the Number of your Transgressions be? you are guilty of innumerable Neglects of Duty to God, to Man, and to yourselves? you are accessory to many Sins of others, either by Neglect of Instruction and Counsel, or by bad Example, or by both, your SINS are heightened by the *Light* and *Love* you have opposed; for hereby God's Authority and Grace are in a greater Degree contemned. You have in some respect brought the Guilt of Christ's Blood upon you, crucified him afresh, by behaving unbecoming your Profession of him, and by slighting his dying Love; now if he that despised Moses's Law died without Mercy, of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God (Heb. 10. 28, 29.) how shall ye escape; if ye neglect so great Salvation? this is the Condemnation, that Light is come



*into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are Evil.*

As to your *Danger* it is inexpressible and amazing, you are condemned by the *Law*, becauſe you have broke it, and by the *Gospel* becauſe you have not complied with its *Terms*: *Becauſe you ſay you ſhall have Peace, though you add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt, therefore all the Curſes of the Book of God are upon you (Deut. 29. 19, 20.) becauſe you ſpeak Peace, Peace to yourſelves, without Foundation, therefore ſudden Deſtruction ſhall come upon you, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and ye ſhall not eſcape; if you perſiſt in your Impiety, the Almighty will meet you as a Lion or a Bear bereaved of her Whelps, and rent the Caul from your Hearts!* Jehovah pronounces a *Woe* upon you that are ſettled on your *Lees*, and declares, that he will puniſh you, while the Goods are in Peace, the ſtrong Man armed poſſeſſes you, you are poor, blind, miſerable and naked, without God, without Hope, without the *Covenants of Promise*, and upon the very Brink of Ruin! O think frequently and cloſely upon Death, Judgment, and the *Torments of Hell*: How will ye be able to bear the *Sting of Death*, and ye know not how ſoon ye may be expoſed thereto (for in the *Midſt of Life* you are in Death)

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O! it is dreadful to have no God to go to, when you turn your *Faces* to the *Wall*, and bid adieu to all your *Friends* and *Enjoyments* here; how can ye endure the *Terrors* of the last *Judgment*, when universal Nature shall dissolve in *Flames* and *Agonies*, and be reduced to a *Funeral Pile*! when you will have no *Friend* in *Heaven*, or *Earth*, to help you in your *Distress*, how will ye be able to look the great *Judge* in the *Face*, whose *Eyes* will be as *Flames of Fire*, and his *Voice* as the *Sound of many Waters*; when the *Heavens* and *Earth* shall flee from him, and the *Great* shall cry to the *Rocks* and *Mountains* to cover them from the *Lamb* that sits on the *Throne*! what inutterable *Anguish* will the pronouncing of your final Sentence produce in your guilty *Bosoms*, which are now stupid and senseless as *Stones*, as *Adamants*? go ye accursed into everlasting *Burnings* prepared for the *Devil* and his *Angels*; remember, that *Tophet* is prepared of old for you, and that the *Wrath of God* as a *Stream of Brimstone* doth kindle it; how can ye endure that *devouring Fire*, these everlasting *Burnings*? O consider that all your past Time, as well as your present is lost, the *Word of God* is a *Savour of Death* unto *Death*, yea all your *Blessings* are accursed, and be entreated to pray earnestly to God to awaken you: But if awakened,

kened, flee to JESUS who is a *Tree of Life* from the Wind, and a *Covenant from the Heavens*, as *Rivers of Waters in a dry Place*, and a *Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land*.

BUT why should Persons seek for God in Youth? I answer,

1. God commands it; remember thy Covenant in the Days of thy Youth, before the evil Days come, in which thou wilt say thou hast no Covenant; and indeed he has a Right to command it, in Point of Equity, Reason, and Gratitude; for he has made us, and we are ourselves, we are the People and Sheep of his Pasture, his absolute Property; and he will not be served by the Works of his Hands; shall a Man plant a Vineyard, and not eat the Fruit of the Vineyard? Besides he is the highest Excellency, and therefore, if we are reasonable, he should be first loved, and served; and indeed Gratitude confirms the former claims; we are bound by the innumerable and invaluable Benefits he is serving, providing, and redeeming Good to give to God the first of our Love and Service, which if we decline, we are guilty of the greatest Injustice, Madness and Ingratitude possible.

2. The Almighty graciously invites us to serve him in young Years; whose Blessings we early, shall find me; find me to be

*Father, Friend, and Portion, their everlasting All in All! I will be a Sun to enlighten them in Darkness, a Shield to protect them in Dangers, and their exceeding great Reward: In this Argument, your greatest and highest Interest is deeply concerned, which should have Weight with you, as you profess yourselves to be rational Creatures, and have the Shape of such.*

3. THE more *early ye seek God*, the more *Glory* you will bring to his *Name*, the more *Service* you are like to do to his *Kingdom* among Men, and the clearer *Evidence* you will have of your own *Sincerity*, by turning from Sin in its Strength: And what greater *Motives of Action* is it possible to suggest to intelligent Beings? what can be more noble, than to manifest the *Honour* of the most excellent MAJESTY? (the Scope at which he himself aims in all his Works) what more amiable and benevolent, than to promote the endless *Happiness* of *immortal Spirits*, and that, not only by Words, but by Actions, which have greater Energy? for the Proverb is just, and verified by innumerable Instances, that Precepts instruct, but Examples constrain\*, and what can be more comfortable to us, than a Conciou-  
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\* *Precepta Docent, exempla cogunt.*

ness of our Interest in the invaluable and perpetual *Friendship* of the *Deity*? if these grand Incentives have no Influence on our Minds, we are lost to all Sense of *Honour*, *Benevolence*, and *Interest*; we are sunk beneath our *Species*, into the most stupid Sort of BRUTES, and have nothing Human left but the Form!

4. As *early Religion* is *amiable* and *con-  
decent*, like *Blossoms* in the *Spring* Season; so the blessed God is best able to Reward your early Services, in this and a future World, and will certainly do it: The Degrees of our Happiness after this Life expires, will be *Commensurate* to the Degrees and Duration of our Services and Sufferings in it; and indeed you never will have true Comfort, till you give your Hearts to God: For he is the *Fountain of living Waters*, and Creatures are but *broken Cisterns*; he is the *Substance*, and they but *fleeting Shadows*, that deceive our Hopes, and fly from our Embraces.

5. THERE is great *Danger* in *Delays*, you may for what you know hereby lose your Souls for ever, and pray what can Balance this Loss? by *Delays* your *Hearts* which are at present hard enough, will be every Day more *hardened*, the Holy Spirit more *grieved*, and Satan's Temptations *strengthened*;

strengthened; and of Consequence there will be less and less Probability of your ever turning to God; affecting *Thought!* if you wilfully persist in Sin, in Opposition to all the Warnings and Entreaties you enjoy, the blessed Spirit may soon be provoked to leave you; and then you are undone for ever! *he will not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh:* Sunk in Sensuality and Sin (Gen. 6. 3.) O think frequently and seriously upon these dreadful Words of God (Hos. 4. 17.) *Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone* (Rev. 22. 11.) *he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; (Ezek. 24. 13.) in thy Filthiness is Lewdness; because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy Filthiness any more, till I have caused my Fury to rest upon thee.* Your Lives are extremely uncertain, you may be slain by some Accident, or berieved of your Reason in Sickness, if not, you may want Time, and a Heart to seek God in your expiring Moments; but if you were sure of both, it would be disingenuous to delay; *we beseech you therefore, that ye would not receive the Grace of God in vain, for behold now is the accepted Time; behold now is the Day of Salvation; O call upon God while he is near; and seek him while he may be found; lest,*

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with *Eſau*, ye ſeek with Tears, when it is too late to obtain the Bleſſing; *to Day*, if ye will bear his Voice, harden not your Hearts, leſt the righteous GOD ſwear in his Wrath, that ye ſhall not enter into his Reſt: How diſmal was the Caſe of *Saul*, when the *Phi-liſtine-Hoſt* came upon him, and God had forſaken him, and would answer him no more, either by *Urim* or by *Thummim*; and is not the dreadful PARALLEL of this, like to be the FATE of DELAYING SINNERS, in a ſhort Season?

DEAR young People and Children! I entreat you in the Name and Bowels of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, to ſeek GOD early, if you deſire to find him, or be found of him: Others have, witneſs *Jofias* and *Timothy*, and why ſhould not you? your Souls are as precious, and you are at leaſt under equal Engagements, what Harm would it do you to be ſoon ſafe and happy? to have God for your Friend and Father; the little Difficulties you might be expoſed to on a religious Account, would be infinitely over-balanced by the Love of God, and eternal Life! O then *taste and ſee that God is good!* O be perſuaded to ſeek him in earneſt, without delay; there would be Joy in Heaven, at your *Conversion* to the divine Ma-jeſty, and Joy among the People of GOD

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on *Earth*: O how would your poor *Parents Hearts* (if pious) *rejoice*, on this blessed Occasion; and indeed, this would make *my Heart*, even mine, *glad*! I earnestly beseech you therefore, in the Name of my dear Master, that you would awake out of your Sleep, haste ye, escape for your Lives to the dear *Redeemer*, lest divine Vengeance overtake you, and ye perish for ever! I intreat you by all the *Sufferings* of the SON of GOD, by all the *Happiness* of HEAVEN, and by all the inutterable and eternal *Torments* of *Tophet*, that burning fiery Furnace, that you would not put me off with a Denial or Delay, which is the same in Effect: O! is there not one *Youth*, one *Child* among you all, who is ready to say with the *Prodigal*, *I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Child, make me as one of thine hired Servants?* If any of you are not yet convinced, or but superficially convinced, O *awake and arise from the Dead*, that *Christ* may give you *Life*; what meanest thou, O *Sleeper*, arise, call upon thy God, if so he will pity thee, that thou perish not? Labour to get your *Convictions* deeply fixed in your *Minds*, by frequent and serious *Meditation* upon the manifold and awful



*Miseries* of your present *State*; you should be often pondering wherever you are, Night and Day, O what shall become of my poor Soul? if I die in my present Condition, I shall certainly be undone for ever; alas, I am unconverted, under the *Condemnation*, the *Curse*, and *Wrath* of God! all my Time and Talents hitherto have been lost, and in vain; what are all the Honours, Profits, and Pleasures of the World to me, if I lose my Soul? O! I had better never have been born; others take pains about Salvation, and why should not I? how do I know but I may die this Day, this Hour, and if I do (as I am), all is over with me for ever! O Lord, have Mercy upon me, open my Eyes, forgive my Sins, and change my Heart, for Christ's Sake; O how dreadful is it to be *eternally damned*! O! Sirs, consider how dismal the Consequences of Conviction expiring before Conversion will be, this is like Blossoms being nipt before the Fruit are set, *it would be better for such that they had not known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to depart from the Holy Commandment, and with the Sow that was washed, to return to wallowing in the Mire; the latter End with those, is worse than the Beginning* (2. Pet. 2) such as relapse after Conviction, Sin against greater Light and Mercy, and therefore their

their Impieties are much heightened, *their Consciences seared as with a hot Iron*, and the Spirit of God quenched, there is therefore much less Hopes of their Conversion than before they were awakened, for now *they are possessed with Seven Devils* (Mat. 12. 44, 45.)

To prevent APOSTACY, before you make any *Profession of Religion*, pray count the *Cost* upon the one Hand, and the *Reasonableness* and *Advantages* of it upon the other; and remember that our Lord himself has told you, that if *you will be his Disciples*, *you must bear his Cross*, i. e. not only resolve to endure it when it comes in the *Way of Duty*, with *Patience*, *Fortitude*, and *Cheerfulness*, but actually do so, without meanly shrinking on Account of any *Danger whatsoever*; you must *go without the Camp to Christ*, *bearing his Reproach*, forsake the dearest Relations, if they unreasonably oppose your pious Progress, and *not count even your Lives dear to yourselves*, that you may *finish your Course with Joy*, and not with *Grief*; upon *lower Terms* you cannot, in very Deed, be the *Disciples* of the holy JESUS.

AND, O let such as are wounded with a Sense of Sin, be intreated to *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and they shall be saved:  
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However great and many your Iniquities be, *believe* that Jesus is the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal, with his Father, *able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by him, and that such as do come to him, he will in no wise cast out: Reject* immediately all other *Refuges, renounce* all other *Lords and Lovers, and believe* that *JESUS of Nazareth, is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, every way qualified to relieve you; commit* your weary, wounded SOULS into his *Hands, submit* to the *Terms* of his *Gospel* (*viz. Self-denial, taking up the Cross, and following of him*) be *willing* to be *instructed, ruled, and saved* by him; *depend* entirely on his *Mediation*, and *give* him all the *Glory* of your *Salvation*; in this *Way* you may *humbly hope*, that he that has *wounded you, will heal you, and that he who has smitten you, will bind you up.* AMEN.

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# S E R M O N V.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from  
your evil Ways.*

**T**H E S E Words contain an important *Intreaty*, in which the following Particulars are contained, *viz.* the **AUTHOR**, the **OBJECT**, the **MATTER**, and **MODE**. The **AUTHOR** of this *Intreaty*, is the ever blessed **GOD**; he it is who invites Sinners to turn from the Evil of their *Ways*, his Authority over us is absolute and unquestionable, having made us by his Power, and to him we are under infinite Obligations, in Point of Reason and Gratitude, because of his supream Eminence and Perfection, and the innumerable, invaluable, and immerited Benefits we have received from him; among which this **INTREATY** is one, which is calculated to promote

promote not his, but our Benefit, for our Goodness does not extend to him, nor is it any Gain to God that we are righteous. The OBJECT of the Intreaty, is more immediately and expressly the House of Israel, but indirectly and virtually all unregenerate Persons of every Age and Nation; for *what was written before Time, was written for our Learning, upon whom the Ends of the World are come*; though the People of Israel professed God's Name, and were outwardly devoted to his Service; yet many of them had a Temper and Conduct very unsuitable thereto, and alas, this is the woeful Case of many among us. The MATTER of this Intreaty, is that they would *turn from their evil Ways*: The Term is metaphorical, and alludes to the Posture of Bodies, when it is the very reverse of what it should be; and therefore serves to represent our Apostacy from God, as well as the Necessity of our Endeavours after a Change, and the Usefulness of those Endeavours to obtain it. By our Revolt from the Allegiance due to our Creator and Sovereign, we have contracted such a Degeneracy, that while unconverted, we are,

I. DESTITUTE of all *spiritual Good*, there is no Principle of it in us; *in my Flesh, says the Apostle, there dwells no good Thing*;  
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now Christ assures us, that *he that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh*; that is corrupted, for there our Lord opposes Flesh to Spirit: Farther, the God of Truth declares, that the natural Man is not sick and weak, as the *Arminians* tell us, but *dead*; and hence Conversion is said to be a *Quickning* or *Resurrection* of the *Dead*; *us hath he quickned*, saith the Apostle to the *Ephesians*, *even when we were dead in Sins*; and elsewhere this blessed Change is compared to the *Creation* of the *World*; *we are created in Christ Jesus to good Works*; now in a dead Man there is not the least Spark of Life, and before the Creation there was no Matter.

2. **IGNORANT** of *spiritual Good*; for we are born *stone blind*, as well as *stark dead* (*Rev. 3. 17.*) *because thou sayest I am rich, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and poor, and blind* (*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.* Natural Persons are *the blind People that have Eyes, who call Good, Evil, and Evil, Good*; *the Light that is in them is Darkness*; and hence they are called *Darkness* in the very Abstract, as if they were wholly made up of it (*Eph. 5. 8.*) *for ye were sometime Darkness*: In this thick

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*Egyptian Darknes*; they know not what they are doing, or where they are going, and are every Moment in Danger of stumbling into Death and Ruin before they are aware; and yet poor miserable Souls, they imagine they are Something, when indeed they are Nothing; and that they know Something, whereas they know Nothing as they ought, and as they must, if ever they be saved; their Haughtiness must be pulled down, and they made to know to their Sorrow that they are Fools, else they never will be *wise*.

3. NATURAL Men are utterly *impotent*, or unable to do any spiritual Good, or in other Words, what is pleasing to God; *without Faith*, the Apostle Paul assures us, *we cannot please God*, but this natural Men have not; *without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing*; now this is the Case of all the Unregenerate, they have no vital Union to Christ by Faith, otherwise their State and Temper would be changed; the same Point of Truth the Apostle farther confirms, *Rom. 5. 6. for when we were yet without Strength, in due Time Christ died for the Ungodly*; see all the Unconverted are ungodly Persons, and *without Strength*; again seeing, Conversion is a Quickning of the Dead, a new Creation, then it unavoidably follows,

follows, that natural Men and Women can no more do *spiritual Good*, than a *dead Man* can break open his *Coffin* and *walk*, or than Nothing can create a *World*: Give me Leave to add the Words of our Saviour, *Mat. 7. 18. neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit*, and *Luke 6. 44, 45. for off Thorns Men do not gather Figs, nor off a Bramble Bush gather ye Grapes*: What Christ speaks in these Verses, evidently relates to the *State* of the Person; a Person is a *good Tree*, in the Sense of our Saviour, when he is *justified* and *converted*, for then he is reconciled to God, and has a good Principle of Action communicated, and being thus made a Friend of God, and having a holy Principle, whatever he does agreeable to the divine Law, is pleasing to God, through Christ; but before this, every Man is an *Enemy* to God, a *dead Man*, a *corrupt Tree*, a *Thorn*, a *Bramble-bush*, a *Thistle*, and therefore cannot bring forth good Fruits, no more than these can bring forth Grapes and Figs; and yet natural People are *puffed up* with a Conceit of their *Power*, as well as of their *Wisdom*, they think they can do great Matters, and upon this false Notion; they Sleep in their Sins, they secretly imagine that they can do Something at any **T**ime, that shall make their Salvation cer-



tain, and therefore they are easy about the Matter; they think the ALMIGHTY would be very *severe*, if he would reject such *good Sort of People* as they are, and such *pious Works* as they do; but, pray remember, *that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*, but of God that sheweth Mercy; that we are saved by Grace, not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God, and that before Conversion, your *Works* are *dead Works*, your *Grapes wild Grapes*, ye are *Enemies* to God, *dead People, wicked*; and therefore all you do, even your very *Prayers*, are Abomination; you deserve Damnation for the very best Thing ever you did in your whole Life: There is dreadful *Blasphemy* in all your Doings, for you do nothing for God's Sake, but your own, and thus you make yourselves your *last End*, and *chief Good*, and of Consequence *your God*; O horrible *Blasphemy*! and yet upon these dead, filthy, and blasphemous Works, you venture your eternal All, O shocking! pray be not offended, I speak nothing but the very *Truth* in *Love*, with design to drive you from a *Foundation* that will infallibly ruin you, if you abide by it, and to shut you up to Christ, who is the only Door of Hope: But I know it is a tender Point I speak upon, graceless Sinners are as fond of *dead Works*, and make God's  
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of them, as much as the poor Man did of his *Images*, and therefore when they are taken away (in respect of Dependance) they are apt to complain, as he did, *they have taken away my Gods, and what have I more;* ah! that may be, that you have no more to trust to, you have no experimental Religion, no Application of the *Law* or *Gospel*, no *Faith* in the dear Redeemer, *that purifies the Heart, and works by Love;* nothing but *do, do,* in your blind, dry, dead Manner; and yet it is a Kindness to you to take away that false Prop, that *Egyptian Reed*, which if you continue to depend upon, will mortally Stab you to the Heart; it is this which keeps you from being rightly humbled, and from believing in *JESUS*, just like the wicked *Jews*, who had a Zeal, but not according to Knowledge, *for going about to establish their own Righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God,* (Rom. 10. 3.)

WHY Sinners do you thus go to the *Law* for relief? it is a *Ministration of Death*, a *Letter that killeth*, it condemns to eternal Death, all that do not fulfil it perfectly, and yet depend upon Obedience to it for Justification, in Whole; or in Part, *be that offends in one Point, is guilty of all; he that continueth not in all Things is cursed; by the Deeds*

*Deeds of the Law therefore, no Flesh living can be justified in the Sight of God: The Law which was ordained to Life, in case of perfect Obedience, i. e. was designed to procure eternal Life upon that Condition, sentences him that breaks it, to Death; for if Righteousness had come by the Law, i. e. if it might be obtained by Obedience to the Law, then Christ had died in vain, for if the Case was so, there would have been no need of his Death; but the Law was weak through the Flesh, i. e. unable to Justify us by reason of our Corruption, the proper Use of the Law therefore, in our fallen State, is to be a School-Master, to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by Faith in him; to awake us to a feeling of our Sin, Misery, and Impotency, by its Precepts, and the Scourge of its Curses, that so we may be constrained to fly to a MEDIATOR, and rely only on his Merits for this Purpose; it is added to the Promise, and hence when it is applied by the Spirit, it convinces of Sin, causes it to revive in our View, and all our false Hopes by it to die, it works Wrath, fills the awakned Transgressor with reasonable Terror and Dread of the Wrath of God, for it shuts him up under Sin, and binds him over to eternal Condemnation. But perhaps it may be objected, that I speak against the Law of*

**GOD.**

**GOD.** *A.* No; I only speak against the *Abuse* of the *Law*; the *Law* is good, if a *Man* use it lawfully, only as a *Rule* of *Life*, and as a *School-Master* to bring him to *Christ*; but if it be used as a *Covenant of Works*, it opposes *Christ*, and kills the *Soul*. You preach *Despair*. *A.* True; but not of the *Mercy* of *God*, through a *Redeemer* by *Faith*, but of *Justification* by the *Works* of the *Law*, this is necessary in order to *Faith* in *Christ*; we must through the *Law*, become dead to the *Law*, in that *Respect*, divorced from the *Law* as a *Husband*, before we be married to *Christ*; till we are slain by the *Law*, we will not wholly depend upon the *Mediator*, and yet without this there is no *Salvation*; we cannot have *Mercy* through a *Mediator*, unless we buy without *Money*, No, this is impossible, while we depend upon the *Law* in any *Degree*; you cannot build a *House* partly upon *Sand*, and partly upon a *Rock*; the *Apostle* speaks fully to this, *Gal. 5. 4.* *Christ* is become of no *Effect* to you, whosoever of you are justified by the *Law*, ye are fallen from *Grace*: See those who do depend in the least *Degree* upon *Obedience* to the *Law*, turn their *Backs* upon *Christ*, and his *Grace*, are *Debtors* to the whole *Law*, and therefore *Christ* shall profit them nothing: Such self-righteous *Pharisees*, of which there  
are

are Multitudes under the Gospel, stand upon their own wretched *Bottom*, and must answer for their Millions of Treipasses in their own Persons. It is again objected, that I disparage good Works, and discourage People from doing them. *A.* It is a Mistake; *those that believe, should be careful to maintain good Works, for they are good and profitable unto Men*; but Works done before Faith and Justification, are not good (properly speaking) and it is of such, I have been discouraging: *Works* may be of manifold use, though they do not *justify*; *Gold* is good, though it cannot be *eaten*; nor do I discourage from doing them, but only from depending upon them, which is fatal to the Souls of Men: We should Labour as though we could be justified by Works, and yet depend no more upon them, than if we did nothing. Well, but God has promised that if we seek, we shall find. *A.* It is a Seeking with Faith, which you have not, which that Promise is made to; you have no Interest in any one Promise in the Bible, for *all the Promises are yea and amen in Christ*; i. e. firm to those who are united to him, but this is not your Case, ye are *without God, without the Covenants of Promise*; how can ye have an Interest in the special and saving Privileges of a Covenant, when ye have not complied with

with the Terms on which they are suspended, this is your Case? But to proceed,

4. NATURAL Men are not only destitute of Good, ignorant of it, and *impotent*, but they have a fixed implacable SPITE against it, and its AUTHOR, *Rom. 8, 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*; our Lord says, that *he that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh*; and here the Apostle assures us, that *the fleshly Mind is Enmity to God*; both the Terms are indefinite, and therefore universal; they plainly declare, in their Connection, that the Mind of every Man who has only a fleshly Birth is *Enmity*, i. e. is possessed of a high Degree of fixed Spite and Malice; for abstract Terms, express a high Degree of the Thing spoken of: But against whom have they this *Malice*? The Apostle assures us it is the *glorious God*, the Author of their Beings, and all their Benefits; it is no Wonder then our Saviour asserted that the wicked JEWS *bated him, and his Father also*, and called them *Serpents*, and a *Generation of Vipers*, and told them to their Faces, that they were of *their Father the Devil, for his Works they would do*: What worse can you say of the Devil himself, than that he is *Enmity* against God! what is it but this *Enmity* that prejudices

the Unregenerate against the *Holiness* of God and his *Laws*? they seem to be pleased with *Mercy*, but they have a *Grudge* against his *Holiness*, and fain would have the *Law* relaxed; nor do they like the *Strictness* of the *Gospel* Precepts and Discipline; they will not have the *Man Jesus* to rule over them; and say, as those *Rebels* of old; *let us break their Bands afunder, and cast their Cords from us*. It is this *Enmity* that inclines them to oppose the *Work* of God's Spirit in themselves and others, instead of rejoicing in the *Conviction* and *Conversion* of Sinners, they try to ridicule, slander, and blacken it; to such the *Words* of faithful *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 51. may be justly applied, *ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in Heart and Ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: As your Fathers did, so do ye*. It is this also that inclines them to oppose the *People* of God for their *Zéal* and *Holiness*; so *Gain* persecuted *Abel*, because his own *Works* were evil, and his *Brother's* righteous; and indeed in all Ages, he that is born after the *Flesh*, persecutes him that is born after the *Spirit*; if any *Man* will live godly in *Christ Jesus*, he shall suffer *Persecution*; the *World* shall hate you, says *CHRIST*, because ye are not of it: But the *Wicked* will not own this, that they oppose any for their *Goodness*, O no! it is for some *Thing* bad, they

they hypocritically and falsely pretend, but why then? are not they angry with their own Crew! O no; they are too near a-kin! *Appologies* must be made for them, and *Bear-skins* put on others: If you will believe *Persecutors* in every Age, there never was any such Thing as *Persecution* upon Earth; and yet it is certain, that the more holy and useful any Person is, the more he will be hated! and the more he comes into the Spirit of the World, the more he will be liked (*John* 15. 19.) but if the Unregenerate have no Spite against those that are good, why do they watch so much for their Halting, and why are they pleased at it secretly, and spread it among their own Company, and why do they charge the whole, with the Faults of some? but besides this Malice against the glorious God, with which the Unregenerate are as full as a Snake of Poison. They are,

5. PRONE to all *Evil*; the Seed and Root of which is in them; as *Solomon* observes, *Foolishness is bound in the Heart of a Child*; it is true there is not an equal Prone-ness in all to every Sin; for some by reason of their natural Temper, Manner of Education, or Custom, are inclined to one Sin, and others to other Sins, yet all Men are by Nature virtually disposed to all Kinds of Sin;



Sin; we are prone to Evil, as the Sparks fly upward; every Sin is formed in our corrupt Nature, and hence it is called the *old Man*, the *Body of Death*, to shew not only its Subtilty and Strength, but that it is compleat in its Parts; they only want Time, Opportunity, Temptation, and the Removal of restraining Grace, to bring those frozen Snakes to Life and active Fury, and then the Sinner rushes into the most dreadful Evils ever the Creation saw, with brutish Violence, as the Horse to the Battle; and if any of us think we would not commit them in such a Situation, we are like *Hazael*, ignorant of ourselves; when the Prophet told him what *Barbarity* he would commit when made King, he replied with Indignation, *is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do this Thing*; but he did it for all, when advanced: The Blamelesness of some of the Unregenerate, is (in Comparison) but a sorry *Husk*, a *selfish Skin*; like that of a *Rattle-Snake*, proceeding not from Love to God, or Regard to his Authority, no; but from low, selfish Considerations, such as to procure and preserve Credit among Men, to make their own Consciencés easy, and to Purchase, in a Hackney-way, the Favour of God, by such *Trick*; and likewise from the want of Opportunity, Temptation, and the

the like, otherwise they would run to all Excess of Riot: Verily, the best of them are but *whited Sepulchres, beautiful outwardly, but within, full of dead Mens Bones, Rotteness and all Uncleanness.*

BUT the Matter of the *Intreaty*, in our Text, *turn ye*, not only serves to represent our Apostacy and Corruption, which I have discoursed of: But,

2. THE *Necessity* of our *Endeavours* after a Change; the Almighty Addresses us as intelligent Creatures, though we have no spiritual *Life* while unconverted, yet we have natural *Reason*, and this should be used in the Matters of Religion; though we cannot do what is spiritually good, yet we may do what is morally so; though we cannot change our Hearts, yet we may lament our want of a Change, we may with Seriousness and Frequency ask it of God, ponder upon the Miseries of such a State, attend upon public Worship, and other outward Duties. And,

3. THESE Endeavours, when we do not trust in them, are useful; for hereby we obey God's positive Command, *strive to enter in at the straight Gate*, and hereby we put ourselves in the Way in which he ordinarily communicates Mercy to Mankind, *If. 55. 7. let the wicked Man forsake his Way:*

*Way:* Though we cannot merit God's Favour by them, or entitle ourselves to any Promise of it, or any way ascertain our future Happiness by any Goodness of ours, which while unregenerate (especially) is as filthy Rags, yet in this way there is a Par- adventure of Mercy, *Acts 8. 22. Repent therefore of this thy Wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps, the Thought of thine Heart may be forgiven thee?* But how is this Duty to be done? *Answer,*

1. WE should turn to GOD universally, young and old, Male and Female, White and Black, Bond and Free, Learned and Un-learned, Rich and Poor, *Jer. 25. 5. Turn ye again, every one from his evil Way, and dwell in the Land.*

2. SINCERELY, affectionately, and thoroughly, with the whole Heart, with deep Sorrow for our Sins, in the mean Time, forsaking all our Iniquities, in Affection and Practice, and turning to all commanded Duty, and to God in Duty; *Joel 2. 11, 12, 13. Turn ye even to me, with all your Heart, and with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning.* The Term from which we are to turn, is our evil Ways, i. e. such Iniquities as we have made ours by evil Custom, all our evil Ways without excepting any, no not our Constitution Sin, that  
*Achan*

*Achan* must be slain, that right Eye must be plucked out, or we ruined; nor is it enough to forsake the outward Practice of Sin, while it is loved and indulged in our Hearts, no all such are base *Pharisees* and Hypocrites, whose Righteousness we must exceed on Pain of Damnation (*Mat. 5. 20.*) we cannot turn to God with all our Hearts, without supream *Love* to him; and surely *such as love the Lord, hate Evil*; the Term to which we come in this Motion, is God himself, and all *Duty* enjoined only as the Way to him; he is the supream *Scope* of our Motions, and the *Rest* of our Souls.

3. WE should turn to the Lord *speedily*, without a Moment's Delay, *Jer. 18.* from the 7th, to the 12th Verse; *at what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, to pluck up, pull down, and destroy it; if that Nation turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil I thought to do unto them; behold I frame Evil against you, and devise a Device against you, return ye now every one from his evil Way, and make your Ways and your Doings good.* But the

4. PARTICULAR in the Intreaty is the *MODE* whereby it is enforced and urged, and that is an *Ingemination* or Repetition, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways.* To affect the Souls of stupid Sinners, the Almighty

mighty swears, intreats, and expostulates. O! such Condescension and Importunity, is enough to melt a Rock; strange to see the God of infinite Majesty, make such humble Court to rebellious, ungrateful, and worthless Creatures, and stranger still if possible, to behold with what Indifference and Slight, they treat all the amazing, endearing Condescensions of this majestick Grace and Love, in which their own everlasting Interest is infinitely concerned! *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways.* This Ingemination is doubtless used to signify the absolute CERTAINTY, and inexpressible MOMENT of the DUTY here recommended, as well as the Sincerity and Vehemence of God's DESIRE after Sinners Compliance, and the consequent HAPPINESS here and for ever! it also represents the astonishing Stupidity of Sinners, who want so much Importunity to induce them to take Pains about, and accept of their own eternal, as well as temporal Happiness. O mournful Infatuation!

SIRS, are we corrupted, as was before observed, then how unreasonable are *Pride* and *Self-dependance* for such ignorant and impotent Creatures, who are, while unregenerate, not only destitute of all Good, but greatly prejudiced against it, and the glorious

of it, and prone to every Evil!  
 It is extremely Necessary is it to prevent  
 and our *Nation's Ruin*, to turn to  
 universally, sincerely, affectionately,  
 thoughtfully, and speedily, without a Mo-  
 ment's Delay, from all our evil Ways, and  
 make our Ways and Doings good. To  
 do this, pray consider, that *Time* is a  
 precious *Gift*: you are enjoined to *Redeem*  
 it, in the best Authority, and that because  
*your Days are Evil*, for every Moment  
 you are accountable, and pray  
 you be able to do this with Ho-  
 nor and Comfort, if ye continue to squan-  
 der it upon TRIFLES! have ye not  
 spent too much, in the Service of Sin  
 and will ye notwithstanding  
 O is it not high Time to awake?  
 The present Time the best adapted to  
 the most easy and noble Purposes of Reli-  
 gion, Salvation, not only because our  
 Conversion of it is an Act of Obedience to  
 Authority, but likewise it is the only  
 Time, and that which with Propriety  
 is only called ours; the Time passed  
 is gone, and cannot be recalled, and fu-  
 ture we may never possess! the longer  
 we continue in Sin, in case we should be  
 afterwards converted, which is not proba-  
 ble, our future *Recompense* will be lessened

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in Proportion ; for thus we have less Time to improve ourselves, or profit others, and the Reward will be accordingly ; but such as do refer the Business of Conversion and Salvation to a future Time, should, methinks, be sure of that Time, otherwise they run a great *Risque*, for a small *Reward*, and *fish* with a *Hook* of *Gold* ; but that they cannot be certain of, because of the Frailty of our present State : Why then do they *boast* of *To-morrow*, seeing they *know not what a Day may bring forth* ? The Observation of *Solomon* is just, *because to every Purpose there is a Time and Judgment, therefore the Misery of Man is great upon him, for Man knoweth not his Time ; as Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil Time, when it comes suddenly upon them* ! If we turn early and speedily to God, it will be a Fund of Comfort, by Reflection in after Time, and riper Years ; this good *Hezekiah* experienced in his Sickness, when other Comforts failed him, he could appeal to *Jehovah*, respecting the Integrity of his Conduct. This Consciousness of Integrity, likewise supported the *Apostles* under a crowd of causeless and cruel CALUMNIES, *This is our Comfort, even the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the*  
*Grace*

Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World; of this even a Pagan could say, *Nil conscire sibi nullave pallere culpa murus abeneus esto.*

BUT on the Contrary, Continuance in Sin, not only *treasures up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*, but makes this Life uncomfortable, and that not only to the Impenitent, whose Souls are troubled like the Ocean, vexed with a Tempest, and sometimes sweat with Horror, as the Poet justly observes, *Tacita sudant precordia culpa*; but even in the Regenerate, a remembrance of former Impieties, causes Shame, Confusion, and Self-abhorrence (*Ezek. 16. 61.*) very disagreeable and distressing Sensations! can we fix upon any Point of future Time, better suited to obtain Conversion to God than the present, no! for the same, or equal Hindrances that now obstruct us, will continue, and have greater Influence, being more indulged; he therefore that defers Endeavours to reform his Life, in Expectation of a more convenient Season afterward, is, as *Horace* justly observes, like the Country Man that waited by the River's Side, till it would have done running, that he might go over dry Shod! *qui recte vivendi porogat horam, rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis.* Is not the Business we have to do for God,



ourselves, and others, great and difficult? and is it not therefore reasonable to begin it speedily, especially considering that the more we honour God, promote his Kingdom among Men, and the greater Progress we make in Holiness ourselves, the more God will honour us, and give us not only more of his Presence in this Life, but also a more distinguished Crown in the next! the *Causes* of deferring Conversion to GOD, such as Ignorance, Inattention, Cowardice, and Negligence, are a reproach to human Nature, and the Consequences thereof are always distressing, and often ruining to the Souls of Men! *Alexander's* Motto is justly applicable to this Point, which is of the last Importance; *Meden anabolominos*, Defer nothing. O SIRs! why will ye continue doing that which you know you must repent of one Time or other, or be lost for ever? is this wise and rational, judge ye! is not Turning from Sin even now difficult enough, why then will ye increase the Difficulty by Delays? Sin, by its low Gratifications, and fair Promises, gradually seduces the Passions, and they being seduced, darken the Understanding in its *Views* of divine Things, hereby a corrupt *Bias* undiscernably seizes the leading Faculty of the Soul, which soon commences Advocate for Error

and

and Vice, and by its sophistical Reasonings and false Colourings, infeebls the religious Resolutions of the WILL, and weakens the Influence of CONSCIENCE and natural MODESTY, the Guards of Virtue, and Monitors to Duty, and thus the unarmed Soul is exposed as an easy Prey to every Enemy, and at last, by a Course of Sinning, contracts such an Insensibility, that it sits in the Chair of the Scorners, glories in its *Shame*, and refuses to *blush*.

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# S E R M O N VI.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from  
your evil Ways.*

**C**ONVERSION being the *Founda-  
tion* of all practical *Holiness*, it  
is therefore of the last Importance  
and Necessity to the Children of  
Men; and Sin having darkened our Views  
of its Nature, and rendered us insensible of  
its Necessity, it is therefore proper to bor-  
row all the *Light* that *Revelation* gives con-  
cerning both, and to this End to attend  
with Seriousness to the various instructive  
Representations, whether metaphorical or  
proper, contained therein, respecting this  
Change, among which this of *Turning* to  
God deserves special Notice; but having  
considered the Import of this Phrase in the  
preceding Discourse, to prevent an Expence  
of

of your Time, I shall, not resume what has been before observed, but proceed to shew,

1. *What Persons may attain to without Conversion.*

2. *Speak of what is ordinarily preparatory to this Change.*

3. *Explain its Nature.* And,

4. *Represent its Necessity, to escape eternal Death.*

I return to the first proposed, which was, to shew *what Persons may attain to without Conversion*; this should be attended to with the greatest Earnestness and Care, for if our Attainments in Religion, do not exceed what I shall now mention, we are certainly in a damnable State, and must assuredly perish if we die so. And,

1. PERSONS without Conversion may *profess Christianity*; the *foolish Virgins* had *Lamps*, but no *Oil* in them, *Mat. 25.* i. e. they made a specious Profession of Piety, but had no Grace in their Hearts; it is no very difficult Matter for Persons of a religious Education, to profess CHRIST in a Christian Country.

2. PERSONS may be *sound and orthodox* in their doctrinal *Sentiments*, and yet remain Strangers to the Power of converting Grace. *Judas* had undoubtedly this Attainment, *otherwise* our Saviour would not have sent him

him to instruct others, and his standing continued. This is his own Place: No doubt, if they are in their Place, necessary to them, but unless they suitably improve them, and Life, they are insufficient to them: it is therefore vain, to depend upon *the Knowledge, and of the Truth*, while the Heart remains unrenovated. (2. 20.)

3. PERSONS may have great Prospect of *Knowledge* and *Utters*, and be unconverted, i. Cor. 13. 1. *I speak with the Tongues of Men, and of Angels, and have not Charity; I sound like sounding Brass, and like tinkling Cymbals, though I have the Gift of Prophecy, I understand all Mysteries, and all Sciences, I have no Charity, I am not edified, nor attended, with such Gifts, nor are they and useful, but without Charity, they are like Drums, without the Power of the Holy Spirit, and without Knowledge, and without Love, like the SUN upon the Earth, but without the Light of the Moon, which is directed to what is Good, and from which is Evil: This Sort of Knowledge, is given to foolish Sinners with Self-conceit, and is like against the Gospel of Christ.*

it is said, *that not many wise are called, and that Christ crucified, was to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness, for in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God.*

4. THE Unconverted may enjoy many outward Privileges, which though necessary and valuable in their Place, are insufficient to Salvation, such as *Baptism, the Lord's Supper, hearing the Word of God, a Name among the Living and pious Ancestors*: It is said of *Simon Magus, the Sorcerer, Acts 8. 13, 23.* that he *believed, and was baptized, and yet remained in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity; Luke 13. 26, 27.* It is natural to graceless People to depend upon Externals and exceeding fatal; the Jews did so of old, their Cry was, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these*; this the Prophet *Jeremiab* faithfully opposed, and told them, *they trusted in lying Words, for saith he, if ye thoroughly amend your Ways and your Doings, if ye thoroughly execute Judgment between a Man and his Neighbour, if ye oppress not the Fatherless and the Widow, and shed not innocent Blood, neither walk after other Gods to your Hurt, then will I cause you to dwell in this Place, Jer. 7. 4, 8.* and elsewhere, he excites them to that *inward Purity*, which was signified by

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outward

outward Ordinances, and which it was indeed their Design to promote, *Jer.* 4. 4. and in the 9th Chapter of his Book, and 25th Verse; he puts the circumcised *Jews*, who had not what was signified by Circumcision, and did not act up to the Obligations of it, upon a Par with the uncircumcised *Gentiles*. The Apostle *Paul* speaks the same Language, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, 6th Chapter, and 15th Verse, and shews the Insufficiency of Externals, without an inward RENOVATION, for in *Christ Jesus*, saith he, *neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature*; and yet the same Apostle speaks honourably of Circumcision elsewhere, see *Rom.* 3. 1, 2, 3. Though natural Men are inclined to abuse Externals, by depending upon them, while they in the mean Time want an inward Renovation, yet it is observable, that the Method the Prophets, *Christ*, and his Apostles took in this Case, was not to oppose outward Ordinances absolutely, and to tear them up by the Roots; but only to oppose a sinful Dependence on them, and Contentment with them, in want of what they signify, and oblige to; which indeed is very unreasonable, dangerous, and destructive, a notorious Perversion of the Design of those

Institutions,

Institutions, which was to represent by outward Symbols, spiritual and special Benefits, and to engage Persons by solemn covenant Transactions, to seek after those Benefits, and to live up to them. The Institutions themselves, have an Aptness and Tendency to promote the Good of Mankind when suitably used; and is not every Thing valuable abused by some, must they therefore be rejected? then we must do no good Works at all, either of Justice or Mercy, for many rest upon them in the Room of Christ; nor must we eat and drink any more, for certainly both Food and Drink are abused by many: The great Pains that some *modern Enthusiasts* take to abolish the Observation of some outward Ordinances entirely, is *not agreeable* to the *Practice* of the *Prophets*, of CHRIST, and his *Apostles*, who were surely as much in Earnest to promote inward Holiness as any of them, and knew better what Methods to take to compass that End: Their *Zeal* is without Knowledge, and disproportioned in Degree to the Importance of Things; for if the Ordinances they oppose were Mistakes, which they will not easily prove, yet the bare Observance of them, in case they are not depended on, will not ruin any. It is, no Doubt, a precious PRIVILEGE, and what



we have great Reason to be thankful for to God, when we descend from *pious Progenitors*, for oftentimes a Blessing comes upon the Offspring of such, to the third and fourth Generation, yet when Persons depend upon this, without imitating their good Examples, yea, when they go on in a contrary Courte of Impiety, it is very abominable, as our Saviour observes; agreeable to which, is the following excellent Saying of a *Pagan*, What our *Ancestors* have nobly done, I cannot call ours †.

5. THE UNCONVERTED may be RESTRAINED from GROSS IMPIETIES, ABIMELECH, a HEATHEN, was restrained from committing Wickedness with *Abraham's Wife*, *Gen. 20. 6.* as a DOG abstains from a BONE he loves, while the WHIP is held over his Head, so FEAR of REPROACH among Men, FEAR of the Cognizance of the CIVIL LAW, or of DISTRESS of CONSCIENCE here, and of ETERNAL PUNISHMENT hereafter, or a MERCENARY VIEW of recommending themselves to the divine Favour, and not LOVE to GOD, or GOODNESS, keep the Unregenerate from open and scandalous Impieties; whereas saving  
Grace

† *Quæ nobis et patribus, et quæ non fecimus ipsis, vix ea nostra  
sunt.*

Grace in the Regenerate, subdues Sin at the ROOT, and excites an implacable HATRED in their Souls against it, 2 Cor. 7. 11. agreeable to what has been said, is the following Distich; *Odent pecare mali formidine pæne odent pecare boni virtutis amore.*

6. THE UNCONVERTED may attain to strict OUTWARD CONFORMITY to the LAW of GOD, accompanied with a moral Seriousness; they may with Order and Exactness, for a long Course of Time, perform the Duties of *Prayer, bearing the Word, and keeping the Sabbath*; they may be *faithful to their Word, and just in their Dealings* with Mankind, and yet be Strangers to a Change of Heart; in a Word, they may possess the whole *Form and Carcass of Piety*, without the Life and Spirit of it: The Apostle *Paul*, while a *Pharisee*, was, *as to the Law, blameless*, Philip. 3. 6. and the *young Man in the Gospel*, treated our *Lord* with Civility and *Respect*, was *solicitous* about the *Salvation* of his *Soul*, as well as desirous to know the Way how to obtain it, he was modest and diffident of his own Knowledge respecting this, and desirous of Information from one who could give it, and though he had taken a great deal of *Pains* to obtain eternal Life, yet he was willing to take more; an amiable,

ble, an extraordinary *Character*, and yet he wanted *the one Thing needful*, converting *Grace*; his Heart was too much attached to the present World, to be a sincere Follower of the Lord Jesus, and therefore *he left him sorrowing*, *Mark* 10. 17, 22.

7. THE UNCONVERTED may Experience a considerable Change in the *several Powers and Passions of their Souls*, and yet remain in *the Gall of Bitterness*: The MIND may be in a Degree *enlightened* by the common Operations of the holy Spirit, *Heb.* 6. 4, 6. the CONSCIENCE *awakened* by the *Terrors* of the LORD, *Gen.* 4. 13, 14. *Acts* 24. 25. the WILL *almost perswaded to embrace true Religion*; *Acts* 26. 28, 29. the AFFECTIONS *moved towards divine Objects*, e. g. they may DESIRE *after Christ, Grace and Glory*, *John* 6. 33, 36. *Mat.* 25. 8. *Numb.* 23. 10. DELIGHT in *Christ*, and in the *Duties of Religion*, *Mal.* 3. 19. *Mat.* 13. 20, 21. *If.* 58. 2. they may have some LOVE to God, to his *Ministers*, and *People*, *Jer.* 22. 1, 13. *Mat.* 10. 37. *Mark* 6. 20. *Mat.* 25. 8. some HATED against *Sin*, *Rom.* 2. 22. great SORROW for *Sin*; *1 Kings* 21. 25, 27. *Mat.* 27. 3, 5. some RESOLUTION to *forsake Sin*, and to *serve God*, *Numb.* 22. 18. *Deut.* 5. 27. some FAITH in, and *Dependance upon God*, and confident *PERSWASION* of his *Favour* towards them ;

them; *John* 2. 23, 24. *Micah* 3. 11. *John* 8. 54, 55. some FEAR of GOD, *Jonah* 1. 5. and some ZEAL for God, *2 Kings* 10. 16. *Philip* 3. 6.

SIRS, if the Case be so, as has been represented in this Discourse, then CONVERSION is not so slight a Matter, so easy a Business as many imagine; no, *straight is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leads to Life, and few there be that find it*: Though the Number of Professors, especially in quiet and peaceable Times, when Profession costs them little or nothing, be as the Sand of the Sea, yet but a Remnant will be saved: Christ's *Flock* is indeed but a *little Flock*; *there is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their Filthiness!* O what a Multitude of poor Sinners feed upon Ashes, and know not that there is a Lie in their Right Hand, the End whereof is the Ways of Death; surely, the Hope of the Hypocrite shall perish, and be as one that giveth up the Ghost; his Confidence shall be rooted out of his Tabernacle, and he shall be brought before the King of Terrors! unless our Experiences in Religion exceed the Attainments of Hypocrites before mentioned, we are corrupt Trees, in the Gall of Bitterness, and (so continuing) shall die eternally! but instead of exceeding them, how

how many among us fall far short of them!

MAY HYPOCRITES PROFESS CHRISTIANITY STRICTLY, as the FOOLISH VIRGINS did? what then shall become of those who even decline this, and treat the very Name of SAINT with *Sneer* and *Redicule*; the King of the Church expressly determines their Fate, *Mark. 8. 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, or of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

MAY Persons be SOUND in the DOCTRINES of RELIGION, and yet remain Strangers to converting Grace! how far then are those from it, who not only slight the Knowledge, and belief of Christian Principles, but are themselves unsound in them? *Judas*, the Traitor, exceeds such; remember that we are commanded to *contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, to be valiant for the Truth upon the Earth, and to reject Hereticks after the first and second Admonition: Pray remember, in particular, these awful Words of the GOD of Truth, 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12. For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie, that they all*  
might

*might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness!*

MAY Persons have great GIFTS in respect of KNOWLEDGE, and yet remain unconverted! then what will become of those who are grossly, and some of them *willingly ignorant*, in the Midst of the Means of *Light*, of those Things that are of the greatest Importance to them to know; such as the *State* of their *Souls*, the main Principles of Christianity, the Nature of Faith, Repentance and Conversion? how far are such from Conversion, which begins in Light and Knowledge, 2 Cor. 4, 6? See the final Doom of such, denounced by God himself! *Is. 27. 11. For it is a People of no Understanding, therefore he that made them, will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour; and 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power!*

MAY PERSONS who are UNCONVERTED, enjoy many outward valuable PRIVILEGES, such as *Baptism*, the *Lord's Supper*, bearing the *Word of God*, &c. Then how sinful and dangerous is the Practice of such who

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neglect

neglect them? if we are Christians, why do not we take the *Badge* of his *Disciples* upon us, and profess our Relation to him before Men? are we ashamed of our *Master*? I am sure we have no Reason; should we not *walk in all the Ordinances of God blameless*? when *Peter's* Hearers were pricked in their Heart by his Sermon, and inquired what they should do, he advised them to repent and be baptized, every one of them, *Acts* 2. and even those that had received the Holy Ghost, were baptized by the Apostle *Peter*, and he plainly signifies, that no Body can, with Reason, oppose this Practice; *Acts* 10. 47. and as to those that are baptized, it is a Sin and a Shame for them to neglect renewing their Covenant with God at the Table of the Lord; this looks somewhat like retracting, such are guilty of *Rebellion*, in disobeying the *Command* of Christ, to his visible Disciples, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, and of *Ingratitude* against the dearest Love, in that they *shew not forth the Lord's Death*; and indeed such are cruel to themselves, in omitting a Mean well adapted to promote their Benefit; and seeing *Faith cometh by bearing*, the Unkindness, the Folly, and Cruelty of such, who trifle with Opportunities of this Kind, cannot easily be expressed!

shall have all the Punishment due for  
that he endures for this, among other  
things, the righteous God now  
take away, all our Privileges  
again.

PERSONS BE RESTRAINED from gross  
SIN, and yet be UNCONVERTED, what  
will become of those who go on in a  
course of gross INIQUITIES? Sinners hear  
of this from God himself, 1 Cor.  
*Know ye not, that the Unrighteous,  
shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, be not  
Fornicators, nor Idolaters,  
Whore-mongers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of  
the Word, which Mankind, nor Thieves, nor  
Ravens, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor  
the like, shall inherit the Kingdom of*

God. Can UNREGENERATE attain a strict  
observance of EVERY, and yet be a mixture of the  
works, alas then, what will become of  
those who have neither Form or Power,  
consequently neglect Prayer, in their Clo-  
sets, and Families, who neglect the Instruction  
of Children and Servants, in Religion,  
and who continually break the Sabbath by  
their idle and unprofitable Sports, and yet  
think themselves safe, such come far  
short of the *Barren*, and *Hypocrites*, and yet  
they assure us, that we must exceed  
them in the Pain of Damnation, *Mat. 5. 20.*



MAY the *Unconverted* be *enlightened*, alas then, how sad is thy Case, O Sinner, who art in total *Darkness*, and has never had one *Glimpse* of *Light* or *Day* shining into thy benighted Soul? whilst thou art in this horrible *Darkness*, thou knowest not whither thou goest, and may stumble into *Death* before thou art aware; remember, to thy *Sorrow*, that thou comes short of many *Hypocrites*!

MAY the *Consciences* of graceless Sinners be awakened by the *Terrors* of God, and they remain still in a State of *Death*, what then will become of thee, stupid, secure *Transgressor*, who has never been roused out of thy *Sleep*, by all the *Thunders* of *Sinai*, or *Allarms* of *Providence*! *CAIN* and *FELIX* may make thee blush and tremble, for wicked as they were, they bid fairer for *Heaven* than thee!

MAY the *Wills* of the *Ungodly* be in some Measure *bowed*, how dismal then is the State, and inexcusable the Course of those hardened Wretches, whose *Necks* are an *Iron Sinnew*, and their *Brow* *Brass*! will not *Agrippa* rile up in Judgment against them, and condemn them, and may not the Lord *Jesus* complain over them, as of the *Jews* of old (*John* 5. 40.) *ye will not come unto me, that ye may have Life?*

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Do some of the *Unconverted* desire after *Christ*, and *delight* in him, how far then are you *Galeos* from Conversion, who are *neither cold, nor hot*? surely, *the Lord Jesus will spew you out of his Mouth!*

Do some of the *Unregenerate* esteem and honour *pious Ministers*, who deal faithfully with them, and *associate* with such as are truly Religious; how far then are those from Conversion, and how unlikely to obtain it, who ungratefully *hate*, and falsely asperse *honest Ministers*, for their *Love*, and *plain Dealing*, which deserves *Esteem*, and is indeed the *Duty* of their *Office*? In this they imitate wicked *Abab's* unjust Treatment of venerable *Elijah*, because he did not prophesy Good of him, which he could not do without being false to his God, and likewise such who industriously shun the Society of those that retain the Spirit and Savour of Religion, and treat them with Abuse and ridicule! *Herod*, and the *foolish Virgins*, will rise up against those Pests of Society, and condemn them! Farther,

Do some of the *Unregenerate* hate some *Sins*, resolve to forsake them, and sorrow for them, then how far from Conversion are such *Wretches*, who glory in their *Shame*, and refuse to blush; whose Breasts are Iron, and their Bowels Adamant? *Balaam*, the Con-  
jurer,

jurer, *Judas*, the Traitor, and *Felix*, the *Pagan*, reproach such *Monsters* in human Shape, who are a Scandal to their Species, and as much out-do *Devils* in *Stupidity*, as they come short of *Brutes* in *Gratitude*! the *Infernals* tremble at what they deride, the *Ox* and *Ass*, though destitute of the Direction of *Reason*, gratefully know their *Owner*, and *Master's Crib*!

HAVE some *graceless Persons*, a Sort of *Faith*, *Dependance*, and *Confidence*, then let us take Care we be not deceived, with an Appearance of those Things, that does not Produce right FRUITS!

DID the *Pagan Mariners*, the *Pagan Ninevites*, fear God, and cry to him in a Storm for Deliverance, and (the Latter of them) reform their Ways! then woe to us, who pretend to Christianity, if we come short of them in those Duties, in this *Tempest*, which is now gathering upon our Land and Nation, yea, and upon the whole *Protestant Body*; are we *LEVIATHANS*, made without Fear, who count Darts as Stubble, and laugh at the Shaking of the Spear? or are we like the Horse, who mocketh at Fear, and is not afrightrned, though the Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear, and the Shield? but sooner or later, God will  
make

make us know, that we have an Adversary we are not able to grapple with, and that it is vain to boast just when we put on the Harness.

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**S E R**

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# S E R M O N

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EZEK. 33.

**I**N a preceding Sermon, a glorious Text, was divided to four Heads, which were these; 1. *They shew what Persons may attain Religion without Conversion.* 2. *The course of what is ordinarily preparatory to this Change.* 3. *To explain its Nature.* 4. *Represent its Necessity.* In the first of these that has been enquired, we proceed to the

2. **HEAD** of Discourse, *viz.* to shew what is ordinarily **PREPARATORY** to a **CHANGE**; and that is a **Work of Grace**, *by the holy Spirit, through the Law, to the Sinner is made to see the utter Impotence of Justification, by Obedience to the*

*shut up to Christ, as the only Door of Hope; I through the Law am dead to the Law, says the Apostle Paul, that I might live unto God; and elsewhere the Law is said to be our School-Master, to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by Faith (Gal. 3. 24.) this is effected in the following Manner, viz.*

I. THE *Law* being applied by the holy Spirit to the Soul, convinces of Sin, and hence it is said, that *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, and the Apostle Paul declares of himself, that *he had not known Sin but by the Law (Rom. 7. 7.) without the Law*, says he, *Sin was dead*, i. e. in my Apprehension, for *I was alive without the Law once*, e. g. had a false Hope of the Safety of my State, *was alive to the Law*, expected Justification by it; but *when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died*; when the Law was applied to my Conscience by the Spirit, I had an affecting View of my Sins, and lost my false Hope of Righteousness by the Law, and that groundless Cheerfulness that flowed from it! that the holy Spirit concurs with the Law to this Purpose, appears from *John 16. 7, 8. and when he is come, he will reprove or convince (Elenchei) the World of Sin*; the Law being the Rule of Action, and Sin being a Transgression of this Law, it is therefore a fit Mean to convince of Sin,

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yet

yet it is but a Mean, and therefore does it not to Purpose, till the *holy Spirit* opens it by his Influence, in its spiritual Extent to the Mind, and sets it Home upon the Heart. Here observe, that the *holy Spirit* (1.) *Convinces* of Sin in the *Life*, thus it was with *Peter's* Hearers, while he boldly and faithfully charged upon them, the Crucifixion of Christ, they *were pricked in their Heart* (*Acts* 2. 36, 37.) the Guilt of this Sin was fastened upon them, but tho' *Conviction* begins with one Sin, yet it soon discovers many more, which appear, as tho' ranged in *Battalia*, against the Sinner; thus it was with the Woman of *Samaria*, *John* 4. 29. *come see a Man, that told me all Things that ever I did.* (2.) The *holy Spirit* *convinces* of Sin in the *Heart*, after a Discovery of Sins in the *Life*, he leads the Sinner to behold the corrupt *Fountain*, from which they flow; and indeed the Wickedness of the Heart is astonishing and inexpressible, it exceeds that of the *Life*, as much as a *Fountain*, the Streams that proceed from it; *the Heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked, who can know it? from it come Murders, Adulteries, and False-witness*: Now the awakened Sinner may see, that there is not the least Grain of Goodness in his Heart, that he is quite dead in Sin, an Enemy to

to God and his Law, *shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin*; whatever Sinners dream, the Testimony of God is true, that *the fleshly Mind is Enmity against God* (Rom. 8. 7.) natural Men that are regular in Life, are pleased with a Notion of their own Goodness, but when their Eyes are opened by the Law and Spirit of God, to see their Inside, they are frightned at the Sight; for they plainly find that they are full of implacable Spite against the blessed God, full of brutish, mean and immoderately selfish Dispositions, mere *Monsters in Iniquity*, Mysteries of Sin, and Masses of Abomination! in a Word, awakened Sinners find, that their selfish, sorry Sort of Goodness, of which they boasted, and on which they depended, is but like the specious *Skin of a Serpent*; and here give me Leave to say, that such as oppose a strong Representation of the Corruption of human Nature, act the Part of Enemies to Christ, and the Souls of Men; for till Sinners see their Depravity, they will not be humble, and flee to the Mediator,

(3.) The *holy Spirit*, by the *Law*, convinces the Sinner of a *State of Sin*; he clearly sees that he is unjustified and unconverted, and cannot be saved in his present State; the *Prodigal* saw he was *perishing*, before he arose and came to his Father, he felt him-



self lost and dead, before he was found and made alive (Luke 15.) *The Commandment which was ordained to Life, I found to be unto Death; for Sin taking Occasion by the Commandment deceived me, and by it slew me,* says the Apostle; when the Law came with Power and Authority to his Conscience, he was convinced he was a dead Man, in Law and Fact, i. e. sentenced to eternal Death, and void of spiritual Life, and therefore was slain to all present and future Dependance upon Obedience to the *Law* for Righteousness, or for the Remission of Sins, and a Right to Salvation, see *Rom. 7. 10, 11.* This lays the Ax to the Root of the Tree; the *Law* is called *the Letter that killeth, a Ministration of Death, a Ministration of Condemnation* (1 Cor. 3. 6. 1 Cor. 3. 7.) because being applied, it kills the secure Sinners false *Hopes* of Righteousness, by any Thing that he can do, and sensibly condemns him in his present State to eternal DEATH; he now sees that all the Threatnings in the Book of God belong to him, and therefore he applies them particularly to himself; as the *Prophet*, his *Parable* to DAVID; *I am the Man*, that these Curses are directed against! he hears his Condemnation frequently sounded from Mount *Ebal!*

2. AFTER

2. AFTER convincing of Sin in Life, in Heart, and State, as has been observed, the holy Spirit convinces of the Misery consequent upon it; what Misery? I answer, the Curse of God, the Wrath of God, and eternal Death; Gal. 3. 9, 10. *He that is of the Works of the Law, is under the Curse; for cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them: We are by Nature, Children of Wrath; Eph. 2. 1: Why? Because we are born in Sin; Wrath is our Inheritance by Law, for our Violation of the Law; the Soul that Sins shall die, temporarily, spiritually, and eternally, according to Law! now the convinced Sinner sees clearly and demonstratively, as the original Word (John 16. 8.) imports, the Misery he is exposed to for Sin, which is (1.) Real, no melancholy Fancy, but an awful Reality, he knows by the Reflections of his guilty Conscience, that his Sins have been real, numerous, or rather numberless, and highly aggravated; and is induced, by a Consciousness of the Demerit of Sin, and a Belief of the Word of God, to a full Perswasion that the Wrath of God, and Pains of Damnation, due for Sin, are real, and not to be trifled with! (2.) He sees this Misery to be great and inexpressible! O how terrible is it to be cursed and*

and condemned by that God who only can bless! cursed by him who is infinite in Wisdom and Strength, and can execute the Import of the Curse, against the combined Force of the whole Creation! how dreadful is his Vengeance in HELL! there is avenging Justice, without the least Mixture of Mercy; Pain without Ease, and Torment without Rest; an unmixed Cup of Wrath, continual Suffering, without any Intermision, Allay, or End; the damned drink large Draughts of the Wine of the Wrath of God, and yet their Cup is always full, because the Vengeance of God, incensed by Sin, is infinite! But (3.) The convinced Sinner sees his *Misery* to be *certain*, while in a State of Blindness and Security, he used to flatter himself with the vain and false Hopes of Heaven, though he went on in his old Course, and kept his old Heart (*Deut. 29. 19.*) he spoke Peace, Peace to himself, contrary to the express Declarations of God's Word, but now he sees that God is holy, just, righteous, and true, and that he will not be mocked, and cannot be deceived, and therefore that all the Curses of the Book of God are upon him, and that sudden Destruction will surely seize him, and he cannot, shall not escape in his present State! (4.) Convinced Transgressors

Transgressors see their *Misery* to be *just* and *everlasting*, they see that it is but the bitter Fruit of their own sinful Doings, it is what they have brought themselves into: 'Can I blame any so much as myself, did Satan tempt me, did Sinners intice me, well, but why did I yield? they could not Force me; it is true, I was born in Sin, but why have I contentedly continued in that State, and neglected the earnest Use of proper Means to obtain a Change? yea, strengthened my evil, natural Inclinations, by wicked Practices; my Mouth is stopped, my Pleas are silenced, and I am guilty before God; woe unto my Soul, I have rewarded Evil to myself, it shall be ill with me, for the Reward of my Hands shall be given me; eternal Punishment is no more than a just Reward for offending in innumerable Instances an infinite God, to whom I am under inexpressible Obligations, and for rejecting a Remedy of infinite Value, freely offered, and urged with much Condescension and Importunity!' (5.) The convinced Sinner sees his *Misery* to be *eternal*, and *near*, very near; he sees himself upon the very Verge of Ruin, and knows not but the next Moment he may be past all Hope; he sees with Concern, that the great and holy God

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is angry with him, and his terrible Vengeance ready to be poured upon him continually, he sees that Heaven is shut against him, that the Earth groans under the Burden of such a Catiff, and that *Hell is ready to meet him at his coming*; he has nothing to depend upon but the abused *Patience of God*, and the slender *Thread of his Life*; and how soon these may come to a Period he knows not; if the Thread of his Life, which is exposed to Ten Thousand Accidents, be once cut while he is in this State, he knows that all is over with him for ever! But the

3d, PARTICULAR included in CONVICTION, is DISTRESS of HEART, of Compunction; the holy Spirit having convinced the Sinner by the Law, of Sin and Misery, as before observed, he must needs be deeply affected and distressed with such a View of Things, which are of so great Moment and Duration, in which his eternal All is involved; and hence it is said of the Apostle Peter's Hearers (*Acts 2. 37.*) *That they were pricked in their Hearts*, they had such acute Pains, as if a Spear or Dagger was thrust into their Hearts, this distressing Anguish is elsewhere termed, *a breaking up the fallow Ground of the Heart* (*Jer. 4. 3.*) *a circumcising of the Heart* (*Jer. 4. 4.*) *a renting of the Heart*; all which Expressions do evidently

dently import great *Grief* and *Anguish*: I may add that remarkable Passage of Scripture, *Rom. 8. 15.* which casts more Light upon the labouring Point, and gives farther Confirmation to it; *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father*: Here observe, that before the holy Spirit gives a Sense of Adoption, he works in the Hearts of Sinners, by the Ministry of the Law, a distressing *Dread* of divine Vengeance, of Death, Judgment, and Hell, by opening their Eyes to see the Bondage and Slavery, under which they have brought themselves by their Apostacy, to *Sin, Satan,* and the *Wrath* of GOD: It is true, this Distress is various in different Persons, in respect of Degree and Duration, the Almighty exercises a glorious Sovereignty herein; but in the General, it may be said, that the greatest Consolations, and strongest Assurances, of the divine Favour, follow the deepest Distresses, and that such as are to be improved in uncommon Services, or exposed to singular Trials, frequently undergo greater *Anguish* and *Trouble* of Mind, than many others, as preparatory thereto; witness the Apostle *Paul, Luther,* and *Bolton*; but if our Distress by the Law be such, that we die to

it (in respect of Dependance) and consent to embrace the Redeemer, as the Gospel offers him, it is enough, the End is answered, whether the Distress be more or less!

4. SINNERS being convinced of Sin and Misery, and distressed with a View of both, are inclined to *enquire* of GOD and Man, what they should do; convinced *Saul*, immediately applied to Christ for Direction, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* and the Apostle *Peter's* awakened *Hearers* addressed him, and the Rest of the Apostles, with this Query, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* the *Jaylor* likewise when convinced, came in *trembling*, and *enquired* of Paul and Silas, *what he should do to be saved*; convinced Sinners enquire with the utmost *Anxiety* and *Solicitude*, as a Man mortally *wounded* for a *Physician*, or as a condemned Man for a *Pardon*; such Enquiries shew, that they fully believe that Something is to be done, that they are willing, and determined to do any Thing within the Compass of their Power, which they may be directed to, without the least Delay, and that they are at a loss what to do; blind and secure Transgressors are very wise in their own Eyes, and having no just Value for their Souls, nor any clear View of their Disease

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and Danger, see no need of *Counsel* in such Matters, nor do they desire it; but the Convinced see so much of their Folly and Treachery, that they do not care to trust their own Judgment, without *Advice*, in a Matter of such inexpressible Consequence, and therefore they ask it, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And,

5. HAVING enquired, *they strive to press into the Kingdom of God*, whatever Crowds of Opposition and Temptation lie in their Way; like the Hearers of *John the Baptist*, they Labour to take Salvation by the Violence of Importunity, and to storm Heaven with Tears and Groans.

6. UPON the utmost TRIAL they can make, they are *convinced* of the *Insufficiency* of all their *Endeavours*; their Tears and Prayers are polluted with Sin, all their Works are bad, for they are corrupted, evil Trees; hence they *Despair* of Salvation, by their own *Wisdom, Power, and Righteousness*, they see their Wisdom is Folly, their Strength Weakness, and their Righteousness Sin: They now begin to be FOOLS in their own esteem, in order to be *wise*; *weak*, that they may be made *strong*, and feel their *Unrighteousness*, preparatory to their being made *righteous*, through a *Redeemer*! the graceless Sinner cannot ob-



tain Deliverance by any Works of Righteousness that he can do, because nothing short of sinless Perfection will entitle him to Life, and it is too late for this, because he has sinned already, and so is a lost Creature, nor is there any Hopes on Account of any Thing he can do, for he is continually running deeper into Debt by his Iniquities, he has no right to Mercy of any Kind, temporal or spiritual, he can claim nothing by the Law, unless he had fulfilled the Law, and he can claim nothing by Christ, unless he were in Christ, and thus having no Claim by Law or Gospel, he has no Right to any Thing he enjoys, his very Life and Soul are forfeited; it is true he is *reprieved*, but this is of meer *Sovereignty*, and may last but for a few Moments; Hell is his present Due, and he can claim no better, no Forbearance, no Mercy, no not for one Moment; he lies entirely at the Feet of a sovereign GOD! and yet in the mean Time, he heartily approves of the Law, by which he is *condemned*, as *Holy*, *Just*, and *Good*, both in respect of its *Precepts* and *Penalty*. The Children of *Israel*, before they took Possession of *Canaan*, a Type of *Heaven*, heard the Law repeated by *MOSES*, in the Plains of *Moab*, and signified their hearty Approbation of it, in its utmost

atmost Rigar, by answering *Amen*, twelve Times successively, as the *Levites* denounced the *Curse*; and thus, before a Sinner truly comes to Christ, and is by him entitled to the heavenly *Canaan*, he must from his Heart approve of the *Law*, by which he is condemned, as strictly *just*; and now having endeavoured to open the *Nature* of *Conviction*, give me leave to offer some Considerations, tending to shew its *Necessity*. And,

1. IT appears NECESSARY from the positive DECLARATION of CHRIST, that *the Whole need no Physician, but the Sick* (*Mat. 9. 12.*) If it be considered, that this Speech of our Saviour, was designed, as the Context shews, as a Reproof and Alarm to the *Pharisees*, a secure and self-righteous Generation; his Meaning therein, will appear to be this, *viz.* That self-righteous Sinners, that have never been alarmed and slain by the *Law*, applied through the holy Spirit, have no clear and affecting Views of their absolute Need of the great Physician of Souls, the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and therefore do not earnestly desire after, or labour for an Interest in him.

2. THE Necessity of a Work of Conviction, appears from the *Invitations* of *Christ*, which are with great Tenderness, directed

directed to Persons in this Condition, *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest. Jobn 7. 37. In that great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, Saying if any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;* now why does the blessed Jesus put such Honour upon, and give such particular Encouragement to those that are under this preparatory Distress, if he did not require it, and approve of it?

3. *THE Benedictions of Christ*, farther confirm the Point I am discoursing upon, *Mat. 5. 3, 4, 6. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled;* now will any be poor in Spirit, humbled and emptied of a Dependance upon their own Righteousness, mourn from the Heart over Sin, and earnestly long after CHRIST'S Righteousness, before they be beaten and bruised by the *Hammer* of the *Law*, and see their Filthiness and Abominations in the *Glass* of it? no, never!

4. *THE Necessity of Conviction*, may be learned from the *Curses* of CHRIST, against the secure, *Luke 6. 25. Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger; woe unto you that*  
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*that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep : The Almighty fills the Hungry with good Things ; that is, the humble, Sin-sick Soul, that has strong Desires after Christ ; but the Rich, the Self-righteous, Self-sufficient, secure Sinner, who is full of the Conceit of his own Wisdom, Power, Righteousness, and false Hope, shall be sent empty away ;* (5.) The same may be infered, from the Tenor of Christ's *Commission*, which is to *preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the Broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn, to give them Beauty for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praise, for a Spirit of Heaviness* (*Is. 61.*) you see Christ has no *Commission* to preach good Tidings to the Proud, but to the Meek and Humble ; no *Commission* to heal the Whole-hearted, or comfort jolly Companions ; no, but to bind up the bleeding Wounds of the Broken-hearted ; (6.) The *Office* of the *holy Spirit*, gives farther Light to this Argument, who first *convinces* of Sin, before he *comforts* (*John 16. 8, 9.*) and first, is a *Spirit of Bondage to Fear*, before he is a *Spirit of Adoption*. (7.) The same may be gathered from the positive *Command* of God, to *rent the Heart, to circumcise it, to plow up the fallow Ground of it, to awake out of Sleep, to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, and let their*

*their Laughter be turned into Mourning, and their Joy into Heaviness* :- All which can imply no less, than that the Secure should use proper Means to affect themselves with a Sense of Sin and Misery. - Of the same Tendency, is the following Precept, *Mark* 1. 15. *The Kingdom of God is at Hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel*; that is, the gracious Dispensation of God towards Mankind, in the Gospel, approaches near; lament your Wickedness, reform your Ways, and comply with Gospel Terms. There is a legal Repentance proceeding from Fear, that goes before saving Faith, and an Evangelical, proceeding from Love, which follows after it! (8.) The same may be inferred from the *Nature of Faith*, which is a flying for Refuge to the Hope set before us, *Heb.* 6. 18. plainly alluding to the Manslayer, who fled from the Avenger of Blood, to one of the Cities of Refuge. Again, (9.) The proper *Use of the Law*, proves the Point under Consideration, *Gal.* 3. 19. *Wherefore then serveth the Law, it was added because of Transgression*, i. e. added to the Covenant of Grace, by way of Appendix, to convince Sinners of their Transgressions, and thus constrain them to comply with the Terms of the new Covenant, *Rom.* 7. 6. *But now we are delivered from the Law,*  
*that*

*that being dead (or being dead to that) wherein we were held, we should serve in Newness of Spirit, and not in the Oldness of the Letter ; before we become dead to the Law, through the Law, and embrace the Mediator by Faith, it fastens us under its Curse, and binds to Damnation, for the Law is not of Faith, but the Man that doth them, i. e. perfectly, shall live in them: The Law and Faith open different Ways to Heaven, the first by perfect Works, but in case of the least Failure condemns, the other by Faith in a Mediator, through his Righteousness imputed ; now when we see the first Way shut up by our Sins, we are constrained to fly to the second for Relief.*

*THE Necessity of Preparation for Christ must be granted, or the whole Jewish Dispensation denied, which was designed by the Almighty for this very Purpose ; the whole LAW of MOSES, and the History interspersed of GOD'S Dealings with the People of Israel in the Wilderness, is admirably suited to represent the Being and Perfections of God, particularly his Sovereignty and Purity. I am the Lord, this Jehovah speaks with the Majesty of a God, he shews an infinite Regard to his Honour, and requires all to love, fear, and obey him, on Pain of Death ; if his Anger waxes hot, the Earth opens, or*

the Plague rages, and destroys Multitudes; or if he is pleased to have Mercy, it is as an absolute Sovereign over Criminals, that have no Claim; *I will have Mercy, on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compassion, on whom I will have Compassion!* The Law teaches that no Mortal can be approved by God, on Account of his own Goodness, unless he is perfectly holy in Heart and Life, and that the least Defect exposes to eternal Damnation, and yet at the same Time, obliges to a hearty Approbation of it; without this, the Jew could not consistently lay his Hands on the Head of the Sacrifice, and present it to die in his Room; and yet this was the only Remedy for Transgressors, for *without the Shedding of Blood, there was no Remission*; all which was exactly suited to alarm the Jews out of their Security, to affect them with Views of God's Purity, Sovereignty, and Glory, as well as with Apprehensions of their Pollution, by Nature and Practice, their Expofedness on Account of both, to the divine Vengeance, their utter Inability to help themselves out of this State, and therefore their absolute Need of the Blood of *Attonement!* and indeed unbiassed Reason gives its Suffrage to what has been said; for is it fit that a Sinner should be pardoned by God,  
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the Law-giver, before he clearly sees he deserves to be punished, and approves of the Law, by which he is condemned, as holy, just, and good? till a Sinner is brought to this, he cannot see an absolute Necessity of an *Attonement* for *Sin*, or of his *Interest* in it, or any *Beauty* in the *Way* of *Salvation* by it, and therefore cannot come sincerely into this *Plan*, or in other Words, he cannot believe in *Christ*, which is nevertheless, of absolute Necessity to *Salvation* (*Mark* 16. 16.) the Sinner must see that *Sin* has infinite *Malignity* and *Baseness* in it, as it contradicts and affronts all the *Perfections* of the infinite *God*, and breaks through the infinite *Obligations* of *Reason*, *Justice*, and *Gratitude*, which we are under to his *Love* and *Service*, because of his *supream* and *incommunicable Excellency*, and by the innumerable and *invaluable Benefits* we have received from him, by *Creation*, *Providence*, and *Redemption*; and therefore that it is highly *reasonable*, and of infinite *Importance*, that the great *God* should be *honoured*, his *Purity* made manifest, and the *Rights* of his *Throne* vindicated, by punishing *Sin* as the *Law* threatens †: But

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† See this more fully opened, in a late excellent *SERMON*, of the Reverend and ingenious *Mr. BELAMY*, upon the *LAW*, as a *SCHOOL-MASTER*; to which I acknowledge myself indebted, in this Argument.



the Words of the Apostle, *Gal. 3. 25.* may be objected, *For after Faith is come, we are no longer under a School-Master.* A. The Meaning of the Apostle is undoubtedly this, That under the Gospel, we are no longer under the ceremonial Law, as a School-Master; Christ the Substance being come, there is no more Need of the *Jewish* Shadows that pointed to him; we have now no need to offer the Blood of Bulls and Goats: But in the mean Time, the Law of Nature requiring *sinless* Perfection, on Pain of eternal Death, which was the chief Part of the Law given at Mount Sinai; was in Force before the *Jewish* Dispensation commenced, and will be so to the End of Time, which is a perpetual *School-Master* to all the human Race; this Law being built upon the Nature and Reason of Things, must of Consequence be immutable and perpetual, and hence the Author of our Religion assures us, that he *came not to destroy the Law, and that till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or Tittle shall in no wise pass from it (Mat. 5. 17, 18.)* (10.) I may add, That the Necessity of Conviction, is necessarily supposed by the *Tenor* of the Gospel, which is to offer a Remedy, and that freely, *Is. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and be that bath*

*both no Money, come ye buy and eat; yea, buy Wine and Milk, without Money, and without Price.* Reason teaches that a Remedy supposes a Disease, and that the Latter must be felt, before the Former be valued and sought in Earnest, and likewise that before this Remedy be accepted as an Alms, their Pride and Stoutness must be brought down, by seeing they cannot cure themselves, and that their Disease is mortal and ruining; our Esteem of the Value of Benefits, and Gratitude for them, rises in Proportion to the View we have of our Need, and Unworthiness of them, nor are any, but those who are acquainted with their own Vileness, disposed to compassionate, and fit to direct others in like Circumstances. But it is Time to proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And,

I. FROM it we may learn the *perilous State* of the *Secure* and *Unconvinced*; such are (1.) *blind*, and hence we are informed, that it is the great Design of the Gospel Ministry, to open *Sinners Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light*; if you saw your Sin and Danger, you could no more rest than a Man in a burning Fire. (2.) You are *dead*, void of divine Life, wholly dead, otherwise you would hear the awful *Thunders of Sinai*, with some *Dread of Gods*

God's *Vengeance*, with some *Feeling* of your woeful Case you would *mourn*, when the *Sword* of God's *Law* is stabbed into your *Hearts*, but alas, not one *Sigh*, not one *Groan*! (3.) You are *mad*, *Luke* 15, 17. As soon as the *PRODIGAL* came to himself, he felt he was perishing, and resolved to go to his Father; and whenever you come to yourselves, to your Senses, you will have the same Feeling, the same Purpose, but alas, it is far from it; you are as blind as Moles, and as stupid as Stones; like Madmen, you wound yourselves mortally in Sport, and sell your precious Souls to Satan and Damnation, for a Thing of Nought! (4.) You are condemned and guilty Creatures, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already, by the great God, to Damnation!* *Mark* 16. 16. for breaking the *LAW*, and rejecting the *REMEDY* offered by the *GOSPEL*: On these Accounts, you are guilty before *GOD*, who has said, *be will by no Means clear the Guilty!* *Numb.* 14. 18. (5.) You are *curst* of the *God* that made you, which none can revoke but himself, and which he has declared he will not, except ye repent, *Gal.* 3. 10. *Luke* 13. 3. *Amos* 6. 1. *Deut.* 29. 19, 20, 21. (6.) You are *possessed* of the *DEVIL*, and under his *Power* and *Government*; his *Slaves*,  
*Vassals,*

Vassals, and Children; *Luke* 11. 21. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *John* 8. 44: You are like the Man in the Country of the *Gadareens*, possessed with a *Legion* of *Devils*, who had his Dwelling among the *Tombs*, whom no Man could bind with *Chains* or *Fetters*, who was constantly cutting himself! O shocking Sight! nor will any *Bonds* bind you to your *Duty* to *God*, and your *Souls*! no, you violently break them all, and are *Day* and *Night* wounding your *Souls* to *Death*! (7.) You are quite *out* of the *Way* of *Mercy*, and shall certainly be for ever *darned*, if ye continue so: It is a mere *Jest* for you to expect to be *converted* while you are *asleep*; in this *State*, your *Hopes* of *Happiness* are a *Delusion* of the *Devil*, your very *Blessings* *accursed*, the *Word* a *Savour* of *Death* unto *Death*, and the *Sacraments* *Seals* of *Damnation*! The *God* of *Truth* has said, he will find you out, who are settled on your *Lees*, and *punish* you? *While* you say *Peace*, *Peace*, *sudden Destruction* shall come upon you, as *Travail* upon a *Woman* with *Child*, and ye shall not *escape*! Why sleep ye *Sinners* on the *Top* of a *Mast*, in the *Midst* of the *Sea*? why are ye thus *secure*, on the *Brink* of *Death* and *Hell*? For *God's* Sake *awake*, before it be too late, before *G O D* forsakes you, before *Death*

*Death* grasps you in its Iron Arms, before the DEVIL drags you to the infernal Furnace; before ye hear the Groans of the Damned, and the Fire of Hell flashes in your Faces: What meanest thou, O Sleeper, arise, call upon thy God, if so be he will pity thee, that thou perish not! Pray to God to awaken thee, and think often on Death, Judgment, and Hell! But,

2. FROM this Subject we may learn, the encouraging Situation of the Convinced; there is now Hope of your Conversion and Salvation; I know you are apt to be discouraged, and to think it was never so bad with you as now, and that there never was any Body like you; you are very much mistaken, it is better with you now than ever, for you are in the Way to Mercy, and Millions have been in this Case before you: See Christ takes particular Notice of you, he invites and encourages you, *Mat. 11. 28.* Repent and believe the Gospel; God's Mercy is high, above your Thoughts, the Grace of Christ is inexpressibly rich and free; do not be kept from believing, by the Greatness and Number of your Sins, or because you have not had such deep Distress as some others; remember, that tho' your Iniquities be as Crimson and Scarlet, he will make them white as Snow, as soon as ye believe. AMEN. S E R-

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# S E R M O N VIII.

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EZEK. 33. II. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways.*

**T**HE two Heads that I am now to discourse upon, according to the Order before proposed, are these, *viz.* 1. To explain the *Nature* of *Conversion*: And, 2. To represent its *Necessity*. And;

I. THE NATURE OF CONVERSION, may be thus described, *viz.* that it is a gracious *Renewing* of fallen Man, for Christ's Sake, after the *moral Image* of God, whereby the several *Powers* and *Passions* of the *Soul*, have new *Qualities* infused, and free and general *Tendencies* towards God and divine Things, as their *Element* and *Center*; the Effect of which is, a *Conversation* agreeable to the Gospel of CHRIST. Our first Parents

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were made after the *Image* of God, which consists in Knowledge, Righteousness, and Holiness (*Gen. 1. 27. Eccl. 7. 29.*) a universal Rectitude possessed the whole Soul, with all its Powers and Passions, the *Mind* with Ease and Certainty, apprehended what God required; the *Will* complied with the Directions of the Mind without Reluctance, and the lower *Passions* were obedient to both; thus harmonious was Man in his first State. But the *Apostacy* of our first Parents, in violating the Covenant of Works, broke the aforesaid *Harmony*, and introduced such a Depravity into the human Soul, as has both corrupted and misplaced all its Faculties; the *Mind* is blinded, the *Will* obstinate, and the *Affections* confused, either fixed upon sinful Objects, or carried towards lawful ones immoderately: The Will, a blind Power, usurps the Understanding's Place, to direct and rule the Soul, and enforces its arbitrary Dictates by a tyrannical Authority, which is very perilous. The Vessel must certainly be in great Danger, when a blind and furious Man has the Direction of the Helm in a Tempest.

Now *Conversion* is a *Renewing* us after the *Image* of God, not the *Physical*, consisting in the *Spiritual Nature* of the Soul, for that we never lost, else our Souls must be

be annihilated; not the *Political*, consisting in Dominion over the lower Creation; Power over other Creatures, is no Doubt a valuable Privilege, but in the mean Time, no Part of a gracious Change, which may and often does Subsist without it; it is therefore the *moral Image* of God, we are renewed after by *Conversion*, consisting in a *Resemblance* of God's moral and communicable *Perfections*, which are represented in, and recommended by the *moral Law*, the invariable *Scale* of Action. *Conversion* brings back the several *Powers* of the Soul from the *Ruins* of our *Apostacy*, and restores them in some Measure, to their primitive *Beauty*, *Order*, and *Harmony*, for hereby the *Mind* is enlightned and enthroned, the *Will* made pliant, and the *Affections* rectified. The first moving Cause of this blessed Change, is the mere *Mercy* of God; *We are born not of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God? it is not by Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Tit. 3. 5.) the deserving Cause, is the Blood of Christ, Tit. 3. 6.* The Apostle speaking of Regeneration, in the preceding Verse, says, *Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour;* and



hence we are said to be *washed from our Sins in his Blood*; had he not laid down his Life for Sinners, they never would be renewed. The *instrumental Cause*, is the *Word of God*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of Incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*; and hence we are informed, that *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*. The *efficient Cause*, is the *holy Spirit*, and therefore it is called *the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*; because by his Influence, he convinces and converts the Sinner from the Evil of his Ways, to the Wisdom of the Just; without his Operation, neither Law nor Gospel, however faithfully dispensed, will have any saving Effect upon the Souls of Men, the dry Bones will never shake: *Come therefore from the four Winds, O Breath, and breathe upon the Slain, that they may live*. The *final Cause* subordinate, is *Holiness of Life*; *We are created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, that we may walk in them*; before we are converted, we cannot do any good Works, we are therefore created anew for this very End, that we may do them: But the *final Cause* supream, is the *Glory of God's Grace*, Eph. 1. 3, 6. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with*

with all spiritual Blessings in Christ, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace; he pitied and loved us in our Blood, when we were Objects of Loathing and Abhorrence, and bid us live; O glorious, O amazing, pure, rich, and sovereign Grace! But in order to open the important Point under Consideration, more particularly and fully, let us take a transient View of the several Qualities infused into the different Powers of the Soul, and the consequent Change upon them, or good Tendencies thereby produced. I call them Qualities, to signify that the Essence of the Soul still remains the same, both before and after Conversion; the Almighty by this Change, does not Form a new Soul, as to Substance, but only infuses new and different Qualities or Dispositions, by which the Soul's Powers generally and freely incline to different Objects, from what they did before: These Qualities are that Principle of spiritual LIFE, that is instantaneously communicated at Conversion, which the sacred Scriptures inform us, is a *Quickning of the Dead*: As natural Life to which this alludes, is a fixed, abiding Principle of Action, and spreads its Influence through the whole Frame, this does so likewise, and hence our Saviour observes, that he that drinks of this Water, shall never thirst

*thirst again; i. e. so as before, after the Things of this Life, but they shall be in him as a Well of Waters, springing up to eternal Life. Not like a Land Flood, which is soon dried up by the Summer Heat, or frozen by the Winter Cold, but like a living Fountain, whose Waters do not fail, but are both free and permanent: To the same Purpose, the Converted are said to be Partakers of the divine Nature (1 Pet. 1. 4.) i. e. of holy Dispositions, resembling the divine Nature, in regard both of Purity and Permanency; their good Dispositions are not a transient Flash, but an abiding, pious Temper of Soul, as it were another Nature: To the same Purpose, are these Words of the Apostle (John 1. Eph. 3. 9.) *Whoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin* (does not go on in a Course of Sin) *for his Seed remaineth in him.* Now the good Qualities infused at Conversion are, especially these following, viz. (1.) *Light in the Mind,* as natural *Light* was one of the first Things produced in the old Creation (Gen. 1. 3.) so *spiritual Light* is one of the first in the New, 2 Cor. 4. 6. (2.) *Pliability in the Will,* to follow the Guidance of the enlightened Mind; *the Necks of Sinners,* by Nature are an *Iron Sinnew,* and their *Brow, Brass;* but the Almighty makes his People a willing*

*willing People, in the Day of his Power.* (3.) *Order and Harmony* among the Affections, in following the Leadings of the Mind and Will, on which Account the Spouse is said to be all glorious within. (4.) *Tenderness in the Conscience*, when it is purged from dead Works (*Heb. 9. 14.*) it rebukes for small Offences; *David's Heart smote him*, because he had cut off *Saul's Skirt*, *1 Sam. 24. 5.* and excites to beware of small Sins, as well as great, yea, to beware of Temptations to Evil, and the very Appearance of it; the burnt Child dreads the Fire; it stirs up those that have it, to exert their utmost Labour and Vigilance, to keep clear of Offence towards God and Man, *Acts 24. 16.* whereas the Consciences of the Unconverted in general, are large, secure, and mostly silent, unless when they commit gross and notorious Crimes; *for to them that are undefiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their Mind and Conscience is defiled.* (5.) *Retention of divine Things in the Memory*; the converted Person loves the Sayings of *JESUS*, more than formerly, and therefore Endeavours more to lay them up in the Cabinet of his Memory; *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart*, says the Psalmist, *That I might not Sin against thee*, *Pf. 119. 11.* It is true, the Grace of *GOD* does not change

change the natural, but moral Weakness of human Nature, for its Design is not to heal the Body, but the Soul; and therefore a Person may be much advanced in Holiness, and yet have but a weak Memory; yet as the Grace of God assists our Apprehension of Foundation Truths, and fixes our Love upon them, it must of Consequence, make us desirous to retain them, and grieved when we do not, so that we are like to remember more of them than of any Thing else. I now proceed to consider the *Change* in the principal Powers of the Soul, *viz.* The *Understanding*, *Will*, and *Affections*, which is the consequent of, and promoted by the gracious Principles of spiritual Life, infused at Conversion. And,

I. THE UNDERSTANDING is changed in its *Views* of Things, *Assent* to them, and *Estimate* concerning them; now he sees the loathsome and abominable Nature of Sin, so as to bewail it with Bitterness as for a Firstborn, and groan for Deliverance from it, with the Apostle, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death!* He sees with Affection the transcendent Excellency and peerless Beauty of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is now to him, *as the Apple Tree among the Trees of the Wood, as the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly*

*Lilly of the Vallies; his Name is as Ointment poured forth, and his Garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes; and Cassia!* He sees in a strong Point of Light, the *Beauty of Holiness*; that inward Purity, and outward Circumspection, which he before imagined, to be needless Preciseness, he now looks upon to be necessary and lovely; he perceives striking Charms in *Humility*, and honest *Zeal* for God; which he never saw before! (2.) The Mind yields a new Assent to them, not grounded upon Conjecture, Opinion, or historical Credit; but upon the Application of divine Truths to the Soul, by the holy Spirit, whereby such pious Impressions are made, as convince him of their divine Original; thus the natural *Atheism* of his Heart is healed, and he induced to yield a full and firm Assent to the absolute Certainty of revealed Religion; he has a Witness within himself, that it is *no cunningly devised Fable*, but true, as God is Truth; his Views of Things, and Assent to them, being altered, it naturally follows; (3.) That the *Estimate* will be altered likewise, for that is formed according to the Apprehension we have of the Nature, Moment, and Certainty of Things, and the Temper and Character of Persons: Formerly he used to think that *Conversion* was but a

were *Whim* of some melancholly, enthusiastical People, but now he sees it to be of absolute *Necessity*, and that notwithstanding of all his good Meanings, Words, and Works, which he used to think would do great Matters, he must perish without it: Communion with God he now values, as the Life and Soul of *Religion*, which before he used to think was either needless, or enthusiastical, and dangerous: That noble *Zeal* for God, that is ready to run any *Risque* for his Honour and Kingdom, which he formerly reckoned imprudent *Rashness*, now he judges to be amiable and heroic! and on the Contrary, *trimming* according to the Customs of Times and Places, in Matters of Religion, with design to get Credit among the Ungodly, and sleep in a whole Skin, which he was wont to call *Prudence*, he now judges to be sneaking *Cowardice*, and selfish *Craft*! Formerly he verily believed that Happiness consisted in Abundance, and therefore he faithfully sought it, for that End; but now he finds his Faith to be a *Fatality*, and that Persons may be perfectly miserable, in the Midst of Affluence! which can no more satisfy the Mind, than Wind and Gravel the Stomach; he therefore, with *Moses*, esteems *Reproach for Christ, to be greater Riches than the Treasures of*

of Egypt, the Treasures of the Universe (*Heb.* 11. 26.) the truly Pious, whom he used to reckon, at best, but a silly Sort of People, if not Enthusiasts and Hypocrites, and therefore despised them; now he values as the most wise and excellent in the Earth. Farther, the Mercy and Goodness of God, from whence he encouraged himself in Sin and Security, he now sees and feels to be the greatest Incentive to Holiness! But to proceed,

2. THE WILL is changed in the following Respects, *viz.* (1.) In its Inclinations and Tendencies, these bend towards God, in Christ, freely and generally, as a Center, from an inward and powerful Principle of Life (*John* 4. 14.) his Will has an unconstrained and constant Motion, even when outward Enforcements are taken away; because it acts from an inward and vital Cause (*Pf.* 119. 112.) but the pious Tendencies of the Unconverted are constrained, and therefore inconstant, some of them under the Views of Eternity, or some other Affliction, have weak Motions of the Will towards God (*Pf.* 78. 34.) but when the Prospect of Danger is removed, the Motions cease, like that of a Clock when the Spring is taken away. (2.) The Will is changed in its Choice, its principal Acts



are Assent or Dissent, these are the Hinges upon which it exerts its receptive or exclusive Powers, according to its Love or Dislike to the Object proposed; now before Conversion, the Sinner thinks the *Terms* upon which Christ is offered too *severe*, and therefore dislikes them, and rejects him; they will not come to him, that they might have Life; yea, they keep him without the Door of their Hearts, till his Head is wet with the Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night! but the regenerate Person, after having deliberately considered the Terms upon which Christ and his Benefits are offered to him, freely and fully consents to them with his Will, and so receives the Son of God as his *Prophet, Priest, and King*, yea as his everlasting All in All; and is hereby actually instated in all the precious Purchase of his Blood, *John 1: 12.*

(3.) It is changed in its *Designs* and *Aims*, which are now very different from what they were before: While in a State of Security, his *Designs* and *Purposes* were for Sin and Self, but now they are for God and his Soul; now he labours as much to get his Affections dead'ned to the World, as he did before to get great Possessions in it; now with a single Eye he aims at the *Glory of God*, as his *chief Mark* in all his *Pursuits*,

*Pursuits*, and with an anxious Heart, often contrives what Measures he shall take to honour him, and promote the despised, but truly noble Interests of his Kingdom! The Purposes of the Unregenerate respecting Religion, are weak, partial, and future; they do but half resolve to serve God, and that not at present, but in some future Point of Time; nor do they resolve to forsake all Sin, and perform all Duty, but only some, such as are consistent with their Credit, Ease, and Interest: But the resolves of the Converted are strong, impartial, and present; his Determination is full and firm to forsake all Sin immediately, without a Moment's Delay, and to perform every Duty required, by divine Help, though it should cost him his Life!

3. THE AFFECTIONS of the *Soul* are changed, viz. Love, Desire, Delight, Sorrow, Fear, and Hatred, in respect of their Objects and Tendencies; and (1.) The blessed God, his People, Laws, Image, and Ordinances, are the Objects of his *Love*; the supream Affection of the Converted is fixed on God, in Christ, as their highest Good and last End, as their compleat satisfying, and everlasting Portion! *Lam. 3. 24.* This *Love is strong as Death*, which all the *Waters* of Affliction, Reproach and Opposition,

sition, *can never quench*, but are rather as Oil, which makes its dormant Fire break forth into a stronger Flame! they love the Persons they once despised, and pity those they once *admired*; nor do they relish their Company when they are near God; but the Saints appear to them amiable, vastly preferable to all others, however low and mean they are in outward Respects, and how much soever they are despised. (2.) The *Desires* of the Regenerate run for the most Part, and in the highest Degree, in a spiritual *Channel*. They

Frequently long after Communion with, and Conformity to God, in Christ, here, and the full Enjoyment of him hereafter, from a Sight of his Beauty and Excellency; to this Purpose, the Psalmist speaks in the following affectionate Language, *My Soul followeth hard after thee, my Heart and Flesh cry out for the living God!* (3.) Their chief *Delight* is in Christ, *a Bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved unto me, I sat under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my Taste*: Whereas before Conversion, their Desires were chiefly and generally fixed either upon the Honours, Profits, or Pleasures of the present World; and consequently their chief *Delight* placed in them. (4.) Their

*Sorrow*

*Sorrow* is also changed, as to its Objects; they were wont in their carnal and secure State, to mourn about worldly Losses and Disappointments, that either they could not acquire or keep such a Quantity of worldly Substance, as their greedy Desires longed for; or their Sorrow principally terminated upon the Loss of their Credit, Relations, or Friends; but now they chiefly mourn over their own and others Sins, the Absence of God, their Unfruitfulness in Religion, and the low State of it in the World; for *he that is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*, saith our Saviour, i. e. he is spiritual in the Governing Frame and Temper of his Soul, and in the general Course of his Affections and Passions. The Affections are indeed the *Pulse* of the Soul, by which we may know some Thing of its Temper and State, as we may of the Body by the Pulse. (5.) The Converted fear to offend God, even in the least Things, they are *afraid of the very Appearance of Evil* (1 *Thes.* 5. 22.) when tempted they are apt to speak in *Joseph's* Language; *how shall I do this Wickedness and Sin against God*; they see the Baseness, and feel the Bitterness of Sin, and therefore fear it; and (6.) As they fear, so they hate it universally and implacably, and cannot at any Time fall in Love with it as formerly; *I hate*

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the Psalmist, *I kept myself from mine Iniquity!* Ps. 18. 23. I now proceed to the

2. GENERAL HEAD proposed, which was to represent the NECESSITY of CONVERSION, in order to Salvation: This Necessity appears to be absolute, with the strongest *Glare of Light*, from the united Testimony of *Reason* and *Revelation*. And,

1. REASON informs us, that *Harmony* and *Pleasure* spring from the *Suitableness* between the *Object* and *Faculty*, and *Discord* and *Pain* from the *Contrary*; now what *Harmony* and *Pleasure* can be expected by the Unconverted, even in HEAVEN itself, if they had the Misfortune to be brought there in their present State, seeing the *Happiness* thereof is *Spiritual*, and they in their present State *Carnal*; the Contrariety between which, is as great as between *Fire* and *Water*, *Light* and *Darkness*, *Life* and *Death*: But that this melancholly *Contrast* may be more distinctly discerned, and more sensibly felt, let us take a transient Survey of future *Happiness*, in its several Parts, viz. its *Objects*, *Subjects*, *Enjoyments*, *Business*, and *Duration*. The OBJECT, viz. the blessed God, you that are unconverted, have a fixed *Enmity* against, and that because of his *Holiness*, the Beauty of his Attributes, and the Glory of his Nature,

Rom. 8. 7. The SUBJECTS of it, the *Saints*, you hate for the same Reason, an *Enmity is fixed between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent* (Gen. 3. 15.) now what Comfort can you have in Nearnets to, and Converse with such? The ENJOYMENTS of Heaven, viz. the *Vision of God, Communion with him, and Conformity to him*, you have a Temper of Heart directly contrary to, the near and constant View of your almighty Enemy, when all Hope of obtaining his Friendship expires, would create a great Disgust, and insupportable Terror! and having no Principle of spiritual Life, you can have no *relish* for the proper *Food* thereof, the *Love of God*; and as for Holiness, it is the Object of your Indignation (as was before observed) and in this you imitate the Nature of *Devils*! Nor is the *Business of Heaven*, viz. to *praise God*, and converse with *Angels and Saints*, more agreeable to your Taste; for what Pleasure can there be in Praise without Love? and what Delight in conversing with those you hate, and that upon the disagreeable Subject of *Religion, Religion!* and indeed the perpetual *Duration of this Happiness*, is the most dreadful and distressing Ingredient in it to the Unregenerate; if it lasted but for a Day or so, it might be born with, though with a good deal

deal of Difficulty and Uneasiness; but that it should last for ever, without any Hope of Relief, is a shocking Thought! to be obliged to behold an almighty incensed Enemy for ever, without so much as Liberty to fly from his Presence, for the least Space of Time, is dreadful! to converse with the despised Saints, a little now and then, about divine Things, even in this World, especially if they have much of the Spirit and Savour of Piety, and deal faithfully with you; is a Burden which most of you dread, and therefore shun as much as you can; and when you can get handsomely clear of them, and come among your own Company, you are in your own *Element*, you breath freely and rejoice! how then could you endure to be among them for ever in Heaven, when they are made much more, disagreeable to you, I mean holy and zealous, and converse almost continually of that *Religion*, which you are so frequently sick of now; and together therewith praise God, without a Moment's Intermision, throughout a vast Eternity, without the least Liberty to get among those of your own *Kindred*, and talk about your Beloved, the *World*, even for one Moment? how intolerable would this be? just like the Invention of the Tyrant *Mezentius*, to tie a dead



Man to a Living! As to *Communion* with *God*, you do not understand it, and therefore do not really desire it now (whatever you may pretend) because according to the Proverb (*Ignoti nulla Cupido*) Of an unknown Thing there is no Desire; and how then should you desire it in Heaven? nay, many of the Unconverted are strongly prejudiced against it, and therefore give it bad Names, such as *Enthusiasm*, Disorder, Distraction, and what not that is bad: The dry *Form* of Religion, you may possibly make a Shift to endure, but the *Power* and Spirit of it you cannot away with, it is an Abomination (to you.) Now what comfort can you have in the Thoughts either of being made an eternal *Phanatic*, against your Wills, or the *Companion* of such for ever, whom some of you sincerely contemn! That which still bears harder upon you, if possible, is the *Employment* of Heaven, viz. *praising God*. As to *public Worship* in *this Life*, though Education, Custom, and a historical Faith, may make some of you bear with a little of it tollerably, in case the Weather and Ways be good, and the precise Minute be duly observed, but if the usual Minute be a little transgressed, then all is out of Joint; there is great Uneasiness, great Longing for the *last Word*, which is reckoned by far the best that

that was spoken, and great Gladness after the Dismission of the Assembly, that you have once more got happily clear of this Bondage, this *Confinement* of worshipping God, and have returned to a Business you like better! but pray are *regular Folks*, of such *puney Stomachs*, fit to go to Heaven? or do you think to go there, and have any comfort? if so, it is amazing; if you grow tired of a few Hours Worship in this Life, how will you bear to be tied to it, for Millions of Millions of Ages, and not have one spare Moment for the Business you love? O pitious Case! in Heaven there is nothing at all suited to your present Temper, no *worldly Riches* to please your *earthly Inclinations*, no wanton Dalliances to gratify your brutish Desires, no Parrasites, to flatter your Vanity, none of the Seed of the Serpent to feed your Envy against God and his People, nothing but spiritual and holy Exercises and Entertainments, in which, for the want of a pious Principle, you can have no more relish, than the Blind in Pictures, the Deaf in Musick, or Brutes in the Mathematicks! you would be grated with its Harmony, sad and sorrowful in the Midst of all its Joys, and perfectly tired with its incessant Devotions, as well as terrified with the Prospect of their perpetual Continuance! in  
this

this disagreeable and distressing Situation, where you have nothing to your liking, you would long to be out from among a Company, and from Employments you never liked, and get into your own Element, and among your own Company ! that you might have a little Liberty, and not be continually plagued with *Religion*; and seeing you could not get them any where else but in Hell, you would try to fly there for some Shelter, for some Comfort, after so much Sorrow and Trouble ! and though HELL be a Place of terrible *Torment*, yet even there you would find some Mixture of comparative Comfort, for there you would be entirely delivered from conversing with those you hate, and from the disagreeable *Exercises of Holiness* ; there you would find *Spirits* of your own *Complexion*, and there you may without controul, in consort with them, give free and full *Vent* to all your *Resentments* against *God*, his *Ways*, and *People* for ever ! thus it appears plainly, that *Happiness* for you, in your *present State*, even in *Heaven itself*, is *impossible*, from the very *Nature* of Things, according to the Dictates of *Reason*, and *common Sense* ; and that either *GOD*, or you, must have your *Natures* changed, or you cannot agree together, and  
of

of Consequence cannot be happy in the Enjoyment of each other. But,

2. To the Testimony of Reason, *Revelation* gives its *Suffrage*; by informing us that we are by Nature in a corrupted State, *John* 3. 6. and likewise that we are condemned both by the Law, and by the Gospel, for violating the one, and refusing the Offers of the other (*Gal.* 3. 10. *Mark* 16. 16.) it cannot be that any unconverted Person has Faith of a saving Kind, for that would Change his Heart and Practice, *Gal.* 5. 6. Now there never was any Way opened to Heaven, but these two, *viz.* by the Works of the Law, and by the Gospel, both which are shut up to the Unregenerate: That God, who is absolute Lord of his own Treasures, and can dispense them to his Creatures, upon what Terms he pleases, has by positive Constitution made Conversion, or Holiness, which are but different Words for the same Thing, of absolute Necessity to Salvation, *John* 3. 3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* *Heb.* 12. 14. *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord; without this, neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, will avail any Thing to Salvation.* (*Gal.* 6. 15.) and indeed, it may

may be with Justice asserted, that Conversion has such a Relation to, and Connection with future Happiness, that it is but a Part, or Beginning of it, differing only in *Degree* and *Duration*, from the Happiness of Heaven; for what is that, but the Perfection of the Graces, formed and infused in this Life, and the Continuance and Perfection of that Communion with God, and religious Worship which is here begun, some Circumstances excepted? The good Man most certainly begins his Heaven upon Earth, and finishes there what is imperfect here.

BUT it is Time to proceed to some brief IMPROVEMENT of this very important Subject; seeing the Matter is of so great Moment and Necessity, upon which our Comfort and Safety, in both World's depend; it is therefore highly Necessary, to examine with Speed, Care, and Impartiality, the present State of our Souls, by comparing our Experiences in Religion with what has been already said in this Discourse, concerning the Nature of a gracious Change, upon the several Powers and Passions of the Soul, together with the consequent Reformation upon the outward Conduct. It is true, in the preceeding Sermon, I shewed that there may be some Alteration made upon

upon some, or all the Faculties of the Unregenerate; but that is very defective, and very different from the Change which I have been now discoursing of, as may appear to every Eye, by the following Hints (which I offer, to prevent truly pious Persons from being distressed, without just Cause, respecting the State of their Souls) e. g. the Light in their *Minds* puffs up, and is attended with Sloth, whereas the other habitually humbles the Soul, and excites to practical Holiness. The Resolutions of the *Wills* of the Unregenerate, are not humble, present, fixed, and thorough; they are not fully determined to forsake every Sin, and to do every Duty; No! they except *Constitution Sins*, and such *Duties* as are *unfashionable, difficult, and dangerous to Flesh and Blood*; but it is the very reverse with the Regenerate: The *Will* of the *Unconverted*, not being *thoroughly turned* from Sin and Self-righteousness to God, in Jesus Christ, makes a Flaw in the Marriage Contract, and so ruins all! But the *Regenerate* being slain by the Law, are *honest*, and have no reserve in their *Closure* with the *Redeemer*, but gladly accept of him, as the Gift of God, in all his Offices, under a deep Sense of their absolute Need of him in them all; with a full and firm Purpose, by his gracious Influence,

fluence, to cleave to him and his Ways to the *Death*; though it should cost them never so dear. As to the *Change* in the *Affections* before expressed, this is observable, that they do not *alter* the *governing Frame* and habitual *Temper* of the *Soul*, and make it holy, humble, heavenly; whereas the other really does so, *he that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and he that is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*, saith our dear Lord. The *Regenerate* make *Conscience* of their *Thoughts*, they likewise labour to preserve the *Savour* of Religion in their Hearts, and to live by *leaning on Christ*; Sin is their chief *Burden* and *Progress* in *Holiness* and *Usefulness*, their *chief Desire* in general, really and truly; but it is not so with the *Unconverted*, their *Thoughts* are suffered to run at random, nor do they mind the *Savour* of *Piety*, if they can but keep up the *Form*, they are likewise *Strangers* to daily living on the *Offices* of *Christ*, nor are they truly *burdened* with their *Heart-Corruption*, their *Unprofitableness*, and little *Growth* in *Goodness*; for their Religion is principally *calculated* for the *Meridian* of this *World*: The *inward Part* with them is a sorry *Thing*, a mere *Flash*! let such who have *experienced* this *gracious Change* described in this *Sermon*, *rejoice in God*, whatever your *outward*

ward Situation is, because being by Conversion made his *Children*, in a saving Sense, they may with Certainty expect all the *Bowels* and *Assistance*, which a *Father* should shew to his *Children* in this *Life*, and an *Inheritance* of *immense Value* in the *Life* to come! Your *Father* has *Wisdom*, *Power*, and *Tenderness* enough to confer upon you all that you do, and may need in *Time* and *Eternity*, and his *Truth* is in *Pawn*, that he will do it.

DEAR BRETHREN, let us therefore live *Lives* of *Thanksgiving* and *Praise* to the *Glory* of *God*, for this *Work* of his *Grace* in us, and all other *Benefits* we have and do receive from his *bounteous Hands*; in particular, let us glorify *God*, by a *Life* of *Faith* in his dear *Son*, and faithful *Word*; not *staggering at the Promise*; by a *Life* of *Love* to his *Majesty*, our heavenly *Father*, and to his *Children*; our *Brethren*; by a *Life* of *Humility* and *Holiness*, *Learning of Jesus*, to be *mEEK* and *lowly in Heart*; let us be *Followers of God*, as dear *Children*, and walk in *Love*, imitating the imitable *Examples* of our great and gracious *Father*, labouring to be *holy*, as he is *holy*, and *merciful*, as he is *merciful*: And as to the *Unconverted*, I beseech you, by the *Mercies of God*, to pity your poor *Souls*, and



to turn from your evil Ways to *Jehovah* speedily; remember while you delay this, you are *Murderers*, Self-Murderers, Soul-Murderers, Self-Soul-Murderers, your *Blood* is upon your own *Heads*, your Destruction is the Fruit of your own Wickedness and Obstinacy, in rejecting, against your own Souls, God's repeated Warnings and Invitations, and therefore it is but just that you should perish, and this you will be obliged to own at last, to God's Honour, and your own Shame; what unspeakable Anguish will a Reflection upon this, cause in your Consciences another Day, unless you speedily repent and reform, before it be too late, too late? O! think often upon the inexpressible Dangers and Miseries of your present Condition, cry to God earnestly and frequently for converting Grace, attend with Seriousness upon the Means appointed for that End; and, in particular, O hear now the gracious Call of God; in our Text, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways.*—  
**AMEN. AMEN.**

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 S E R-

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# S E R M O N IX.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of ISRAEL?*

**I**N the preceding Verses, we are told; that when a *Watchman* sees the *Sword* come upon a *Land*, it is his *Duty* to blow the *Trumpet*, and warn the *People*; he must hear the *Word* at *God's Mouth*, and warn them from him; and then whatsoever beareth the *Sound* of the *Trumpet*, and taketh not *Warning*, if the *Sword* come and take him away; his *Blood* shall be upon his own *Head*; but he that taketh *Warning* shall deliver his *Soul*; but if the *Watchman* see the *Sword* come, and blow not the *Trumpet*, and the *People* be not warned, their *Blood* will be required at the *Watchman's Hand*; nevertheless, if the *Watchman* warn the *Wicked* of his *Way*, to  
turn

turn from it, if he do not turn from his Way, he shall die in his Iniquity, but the Watchman has delivered his Soul! The People of Israel, instead of being humbled by the Judgments of God, and accusing themselves as the Causes thereof, murmured against God, and accused him of Unkindness and Injustice; they acknowledged that he had set Life before them, but in the mean Time alledged, that he had put it out of their Reach, had determined their Destruction, and therefore did but mock them by his Proposals; they also plead that God's Ways were not equal, that he was partial in his Providences, and too severe! In answer to which unjust Cavils, the Prophet was ordered to assure them, in the most solemn Manner, that the Almighty had no Pleasure in the Destruction of Sinners, but would rather they should turn and live; and that in case they repented and reformed, he would readily accept of them, and prevent their ruin; but if they persisted in their Impiety, after all the Warnings given them, their ruin must be ascribed to themselves: Death is your own Choice, not mine, so long as you go on in the Way that leads to it, for *whoso sinneth against me, wrongeth his own Soul*; he that wilfully chooseth Sin, and continues in the Practice of it, does inter-  
pretatively

pretatively chose Death, which is its Wages and Consequence: It is therefore owing to your own wicked Will, and not my Resolution, that ye die; *for why will ye die, O House of Israel?* These Words contain God's Lamentation over the People of Israel, and Expostulation with them; and (1.) The Almighty laments the unhappy Case of that sinful People, who refused to be reclaimed, by all the Measures he took with them for that Purpose, both by his Prophets, and Providences; he, as it were, groans over them, in the most mournful Accents, *O House of Israel!* as if he had said, it grieves me to see thy approaching Ruin, *O that thou hadst known in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace, before they are hid from thine Eyes: How shall I give thee up Ephraim, how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim; my Heart is turned within me, my Relentings are kindled together!* Speaking after the Manner of Men, the Almighty feels a strong and tender Reluctance in his Bowels, when he is about to give up with a sinful People, who profess his Name, and whose Predecessors have been eminent in his Love and Service: Is it not affecting to hear the glorious God himself thus addressing, thus lamenting over ungrateful, worthless Impenitents? *O House of Israel! Woe to us,*  
 we

we are harder than Iron, than Adamant, if  
 the *Groans*, and repeated Intreaties of a  
 God, do not pierce and persuade our very  
 Souls! (2.) **JEHOVAH** *expostulates* with  
 Transgressors, *why will ye die?* q. d. why  
 do ye chose your own Ruin, ' By walking  
 ' in the Way of Impiety, that leads to, and  
 ' issues in it? are not Sin and Punishment  
 ' bound together, by such Chains as no-  
 ' thing but Repentance and Reformation  
 ' can break? is there any Thing in Sin that  
 ' will Ballance the Loss you are like to  
 ' sustain by it? why then do you court  
 ' Destruction, without a Covering? why  
 ' are you bent upon your own Ruin? what  
 ' Apology can you form for your Impen-  
 ' tence? will you be your own Murderers,  
 ' and imbrue your Hands in your own  
 ' Blood, after so much Pains have been  
 ' taken with you? what mean you poor  
 ' Creatures, by your present Conduct? why  
 ' are you so infatuated, will you defy Om-  
 ' nipotence, and slight all the Riches and  
 ' Condescensions of my Patience and Good-  
 ' ness? have you made a Covenant with  
 ' Death, an Agreement with Hell? who  
 ' can screen you from my Indignation, or  
 ' are you quite *Regardless* of it? have you  
 ' seriously considered the Terrors of a tem-  
 ' poral and eternal Death, that you seem  
 ' so

‘ so fond of them, so determined to obtain  
‘ them, by your unkind, unreasonable, and  
‘ cruel Conduct, in giving a deaf Ear to all  
‘ the Allurements and Alarms of my Word  
‘ and Providence; whatever your deceitful  
‘ Hearts suggest to the Contrary, you shall  
‘ die if you persist in your Iniquities; your  
‘ Dependencies, Projects, and Attempts,  
‘ however promising, will fail you? you  
‘ shall be distressed and ruined, as a *Nation*  
‘ plucked up by the very *Roots*; for *I am*  
‘ *forming Evil against you, and devising a*  
‘ *Device against you?* you shall be divorced  
‘ as a *Church*, I will not own you any more  
‘ in that Relation, because you have be-  
‘ haved unworthy of it, backsliden with a  
‘ perpetual Backsliding, and refuse to re-  
‘ turn; unless you repent and reform, you  
‘ shall be utterly deprived of your present  
‘ *Plenty and Liberty*, both civil and reli-  
‘ gious, which you have ungratefully abu-  
‘ sed, to Pride and Luxury, to Lukewarm-  
‘ ness and Profaneness, and be subject, you  
‘ and your Descendants, to a foreign *Yoke*;  
‘ there you shall groan under Poverty and  
‘ Oppression, during the wretched remains  
‘ of a Life that is worse than Death; or if  
‘ faithful to your Religion, in Exile, suffer  
‘ for it; there you will hang your silent  
‘ Harps upon the Willows, and deplore  
‘ your

' your Loss of the Solemnities you now de-  
 ' spise and neglect!' O Sirs, have ye no re-  
 gard to your *Religion* and *Liberty*, no re-  
 gard to the *Church* and *Nation*, no regard  
 to your *Honours*, *Estates*, *Lives*, and to the  
 Lives of your dear *Descendants* and *Rela-*  
*tives*? if you have, shew it, by turning to  
 the God from whom ye have strayed, sin-  
 cerely and speedily, otherwise your specious  
 Declarations are but Hypocrisy and Mockery;  
 but God will not be mocked, he that sows  
 to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Cor-  
 ruption; *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?*  
 O Protestants, O Britons, O Inhabitants of  
*Philadelphia*! God is certainly angry with  
 our poor sinful *Nation*, see how our Coun-  
 sels are turned backwards, see the dreadful  
*Scandal* which the righteous God has  
 poured upon our *Arms*, by Sea and Land;  
*Arms* by *Sea*, which we have as vainly as  
 wickedly boasted of, and trusted in, as  
 though they could screen us from the Ven-  
 geance of God himself; blasphemous Van-  
 nity! see our important *Fortresses*, basely  
 betrayed, partly by Cowardice, and partly  
 by Indolence and Treachery, into the Hands  
 of our cruel Enemies, who laugh at us,  
 and insult over our divided State, our weak  
 Measures, or our sluggish and cowardly Ex-  
 ecution of good ones; you see the *Sword* is  
 drawn

drawn and bathed in the *Blood* of our Countrymen, how awfully is the little Skirt or *Peninsula* we possess, along the Sea Shore, upon this Continent, begirt by a bold, vigilant and active Enemy, who are determined, with the prodigious Tribe of their Confederates, united as one Man, under an absolute Government, to drive us entirely out of this Country, or subject us to their *Papal Yoke*? And have they not made large Strides to compass their Design? If different Measures be not taken by us, and differently executed before long, is not our Case in a Manner desperate? And Sirs, our Danger is increased, by the late unnatural and awful Combination formed against divers Protestant Powers in *Europe*, to which they are no Match; and yet notwithstanding of this gathering *Storm*, though our Land and Nation tremble, and total Ruin hastens towards us, many are secure and stupid! what are our Fleets and Armies, except we repent and reform, but a mere Bubble? Let us then turn to God, if we have any Regard to him, or to ourselves; any Regard to our *King*, our *Country*, our *Relations*, *Friends*, *Estates*, *Liberty*, or to our *Lives*, and our *Souls*; and then we may expect Deliverance and Mercy: He will direct to proper Measures, and bless them; but without this, a



Curse and Blast will attend our Enterprizes !  
O therefore, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?*

BUT though the Words of our Text, primarily respect temporal and national Miseries, yet they likewise intend spiritual and eternal ; it is *Sin* that exposes good Men to Deadness, and many other Miseries in their Minds in this Life, and this exposes the Impenitent to eternal Death in the next ! *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways, for why will ye die ?* From the Words I may observe this Proposition, *that persisting in Sin, is unreasonable and ruining ;* now, in order to expose the Evil and Danger of this Practice, and perswade to the Contrary, I shall, agreeable to the Form of the Text, propose some *expostulatory Queries*, which I beseech you to give an attentive Ear to, as you will answer it at the Bar of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in the Day of his appearing. And now most gracious GOD, and most merciful Father, assist me, thy unworthy Servant, to speak as under thine Eye, and in thy Presence, with a sincere and strong Desire, that poor Sinners may come from their Wandrings to thy Majesty ! O ! for Help to speak as though I were never to speak any more ! blessed and dear Lord *Jesus Christ* ; send, O send thy holy Spirit,

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to set home, by almighty Influence, upon the Hearts of these thy People, what has been and may be delivered upon this Subject, that they may indeed turn from their evil Ways unto God, and be delivered from Ruin! And,

1. DOES not the Text I am discoursing on, plainly declare, that such as do not turn to God, from the Evil of their Ways, *shall die*, i. e. not only be exposed to innumerable Miseries of Mind and Body in this Life, but to *eternal Death* in the next? For such *Tophet is prepared of old, the Fuel thereof is Fire and much Wood, the Breath of the Lord as a Stream of Brimstone does kindle it*; the Unregenerate *shall not see God*, but dwell for ever in a *Furnace of Fire*, where our Lord assures us, *are weeping, and gnashing of Teeth!* The Damned will then with Bitterness lament their Loss of the Opportunities, and Abuse of the Means of Salvation! a remembrance of the solemn Warnings, and earnest Invitations they have had from the faithful Ministers of Christ, will extort Tears from their Eyes, and Groans from their Hearts! when they consider how they have rejected them! it will fill them with perpetual Indignation against themselves, when they review the Pains they have taken to damn their Souls, against the repeated Remonstrances

Remonstrances of God and Man, as well as of their own Consciences, and that they have sold their Salvation for a Thing of Nought! if Men took as much Pains to be saved, as they do to be damned, they would probably succeed; if they *set their Faces towards Zion now, and sowed in Tears, they would reap in Joy*; but in Hell their Sorrows are to no Purpose, they will be without Hope, and without End; O what would the Damned give for the Opportunities they once had, for the Seasons you now have, and but lightly esteem? O with what Vehemence would they improve them? hear how DIVES roars and groans, *Luke 16. In Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment, and cried, and said, Father Abram, 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.* That Wrath which the Damned feel, is infinite, continual, eternal; the Smoke of their Torments ascends up for ever and ever, nor have they any rest in the Night or Day; a Gulph is fixed between that awful Place, and the heavenly Paradise, which they can never pass; after Millions of Ages are elapsed, their Misery is but beginning; O Eternity, Eternity! how dreadful art thou? Here unregenerate People have

have many *carnal Comforts*, and please themselves with a *false Hope*; but there they will be berieved of them all at once, and sink in eternal Despair! O shocking Thought! is it not worth while, my Friends, to take the utmost Pains, and that without the least Delay, to escape this Place of Torment?

2. WILL not eternal Life fully recompence all your Pains in quest of it? Yes, surely; *for Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things which God hath prepared for those that Love him.* In the heavenly Paradise, the Glorified see *Jehovah as he is*, are perfectly conformed to his *Nature*, fully enjoy his *Love*; and for ever celebrate his *Praise*; there they are eternally ravished with a naked View of the *Beauty* of the divine *Attributes*; before the transcendant Lustre of this supream Excellency, the Sun, that glorious Orb of Light, is turned into Darkness, and the Moon into Blood; the Stars forget their Shining, the Beauty of Men and Angels fades as the Grass, and appears as mere Deformity! Oh the *Glory* of the blessed God is unparralleled; incomprehensible, overcoming, eternal! a transient Glimpse of it even in this Life, though through an obscuring Medlum, transports and transforms the Soul, and turns Earth  
into

into Heaven; what Effects then must the immediate and uninterrupted Vision of this produce in a future State, where Sin and all the Sorrows it has introduced into this lower Globe, are for ever vanished! the little we now perceive of the Wonders of Creation, Redemption, and Providence, affects our Minds with a pleasing Admiration; but when all their Beauties will be at once and for ever opened to our View, with what Extasies of Pleasure, of the noblest Kind, shall our Souls be for ever entertained and satisfied? here much of the Wisdom of *Jebovab's* Works is hid from the most curious Enquirer; here God *covers with Darknes his Pavillion, and bides the Face of his Throne; his Foot-steps are often in the great Deep, and we cannot discern them; we see but a small Sketch of the Plan of Providence, and therefore cannot discover the Connection of its various Parts, their secret Movements, perfect Harmony, and mutual Subserviency to promote the grand Design of the whole System, notwithstanding of their apparent Contrariety! an obscure Emblem of which, we have in the Wheels of a Watch! here we are so wedded to the Law, and our Faith so weak, that our Apprehensions of the inexpressible Freeness, Riches, and Glories of redeeming Grace, are at best but faint*

faint and obscure; but in Heaven we shall see its amazing Immenceness, its Charms and Endearments, and be eternally ravished by the Sight! This, O this! will be the sweet Subject of everlasting Songs of Praise to God, and the Lamb that sits upon the Throne! The social Worship, and social Converse of the Church of the First-born, being freed from all Defects, both natural and moral, must needs yield a Delight to us, in our present State of Darkness, inconceivable; but that which Crowns the Scene, is that it is *eternal, eternal*; never will there be any Period to those Enjoyments, or any Fear of it!

3. Is it not then exceeding Abominable, to *delay* your *Conversion* to GOD, whereby you are freed from dying eternally; and made meet for the Enjoyment of that *great Salvation*? a Salvation not only great beyond compare, beyond the utmost Force and Fire of Words, but vastly beyond the utmost Reach of a Creature's Thoughts; a great Salvation, not only in respect of the Suitableness and Value of the *Benefits* thereby possessed, but likewise on Account of the invaluable *Price* whereby they were purchased, the absolute *Freeness* of their *Communication* to us, and immortal *Duration*! To *Delay* in a Matter of such vast

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Moment,

Moment, is *dishonourable to God, hurtful to others, and prejudicial to yourselves?* Hereby you are guilty of *Rebelling* against his awful and rightful *Authority*, who has made and preserves you, and is the great Original of your Beings, and all your Benefits; he it is who *holds the floating Breath in your Nostrils, and in him you live and move*; all the Good you have in Hand or Hope, entirely hangs on his sovereign Pleasure; this great God commands you to turn to him speedily, without the least Delay; *To Day if ye will bear his Voice, harden not your Hearts; behold now is the accepted Time, behold now is the Day of Salvation?* and will you confront his Authority, even when it is exerted to promote your best Interest? will you *contemn the Majesty of God*, by preferring the Devil, the World, and your Lusts, before him, by observing their Commands first, and by giving them the Prime of your Strength and Years, what can be more base and degenerate? what to prefer the vilest Evil, before the greatest Good! to prefer the basest Slave, the most cruel Tyrant, and malicious Murderer, before the great, the rightful Lord of the Universe! before the best, the most indulgent, and beneficent *Master, Father, and Sovereign!* You are also guilty of the most monstrous and ungrateful *Ingratitude,*

*gratitude*, against the *Mercy* of God, in that instead of improving the *Morning* of Life, in the *Service* of its Author, you abuse it to his *Dishonour*, by acting the Part of *Slaves*, and *Drudges* to his and your implacable *Enemy*. Miserable Souls, is this the *Way* you requite the good God, for all the innumerable, invaluable, and immerited *Kindnesses*, he has without *Intermission* showered down upon you, from your infant *Age*, till now? *has he been a barren Wilderness, or a Land of Drought to you?* No! he has graciously made you a *Sharon*, a *Sorek*! for which of all his *Kindnesses* do you thus treat him! O! has not *Jehovah* reason to complain of you, as of *Israel* of old, *I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me?* Will ye thus forsake the *Fountain* of living Waters, and hew to yourselves broken *Cisterns* that can hold no *Water*! Give *Ear*, O ye *Heavens*, and I will speak, and bear, O *Earth*, the *Words* of my Mouth; do ye thus requite the *Lord*, O foolish *People*, and unwise? *is he not thy Father that hath bought thee, hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Farther,

DELAYING in a Matter of such inexpresible Moment, is *hurtful* to *Mankind*, round about you, for what has a more pernicious and ensnaring *Influence*, than bad *Example*?



ple? by this you induce others to Sin, encourage them, and harden them in it, and thereby are like to bring them, and yourselves with them to Destruction? in this State of Things, *your House inclines to Death, and your Paths to the Dead! the Companions of such Fools shall be destroyed!* Supposing you yourselves should be turned to God afterwards, which indeed is improbable, how could you persuade those you have debauched by your wicked Example, and perhaps Counsel added to it, to embrace that Piety, which they through your criminal Influence, have an inveterate Prejudice against? O! if you had any Love to the Souls of others, and particularly to those of your dear Relations, would ye thus conspire with the grand Enemy of Mankind, in procuring their eternal Damnation? what signifies your low, brutish Love to their Bodies, while you not only basely neglect their noble Souls, but by your irreligious Example, cruelly corrupt and ruin them! O horrid Impiety! O murderous Madness and Cruelty! I add no more at present.

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# S E R M O N · X.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of ISRAEL?*

**I**N the preceding Sermon, after representing the indispensable Necessity of a general Reformation of Manners, to save our Country and Nation from impending Ruin: I proposed some *expostulatory Queries*, respecting the Unreasonableness of persisting in Sin, and in particular laboured to shew the Baseness of *delaying Conversion*, by observing that it is *dishonourable to God, hurtful to others, and prejudicial to yourselves*; the two former Particulars have been already spoken to.

I now proceed to say, that *Delays* in the grand Business of *Conversion*, are peculiarly *prejudicial to yourselves*, for they are  
 contrary

contrary to the *Practice* of good People, *inconsistent, disingenous, foolish*, and exceeding *perilous*. The Psalmist's *Practice* was of a very different Kind, *I made haste, and delayed not*, said he, *to keep thy Commandments*. Farther,

A *Purpose* of *deferring* Conversion and Repentance, is *inconsistent* with a Purpose to repent; because it implies a Resolution to continue in Sin for a Time, which is notorious *Rebellion* and *Hypocrisy*; and yet upon this Foundation, do many make their Consciences easy, and hope for Happiness; the Language of which Practice is, *I will turn to God, when I have finished Business of greater Consequence, i. e. gratified my Lusts, or made an Estate; I'll serve God when I have got nothing else to do, or when I can hardly turn upon my Bed; shameful Speech!* But the Apostle *Peter* informs us, that the primitive Penitents were not of this Cast, *no, the Time past of our Life, say they, may suffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles; when we walked in Laciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revelings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries*: It seems the Pagans had some such Sort of *Frollicks* as our *Dancing Assemblies*; ay, but not in a Time of public Danger and Calamity; no, such they abhorred, they were so far from encouraging them,

them, that they disapproved of a gay Dress, in a Time of public Mourning. *Non est conveniens* (saith one of them) *Luctibus; ille color*; But when they became Christians, they quit them altogether, at all Times, and followed a very different Rule, *viz.* *When they were merry they sung Psalms, and when sorrowful they prayed!* How very unworthy then are those of the Christian Name, nay how much are they sunk below the Pagans, who in a Time of general Calamity, not only put on the gayest Dress, but even shamelessly go to dancing Frolicks, when a general Ruin seems to hasten towards their Country and Nation!

BUT deferring Conversion, is not only hypocritical, but *disingenuous*; supposing you could be certain of obtaining it at last, it would be base and disingenuous to treat the Almighty so, as it is not lawful to treat our fellow Creatures, and so as we would not have God to treat us, as the wise Man observes, *we must not say to our Neighbour, go and come again, and To-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* Our Desire of God, is that he would hear us immediately, *Pf. 102. 2. Incline thine Ear unto me in the Day when I call, answer me speedily;* and shall we use Delays with our Sovereign, in a Matter of Life and Death? But if ye wil-  
fully

fully defer Conversion to the last, you are so far from a Certainty or Probability of obtaining Mercy, that there is great Hazard of being denied; consider what God himself says upon this Head, *Prov. 1. 24.*—28.  
Farther,

DELAYS in Matters of eternal Consequence, are the Height of *Folly* and *Madness*; would he not act like a distracted Man, who was bit with a Rattle-Snake, and would tarry some considerable Time, before he sent for a Physician? is not such a Person a Self-Murderer, as well as a Madman? and if he dies by this Delay, is not his Blood upon his own Head? The melancholly Case easily applies itself, if you will not shut your Eyes, your Ears, your Hearts, which if you do, it is against your own Life! Again,

DELAYS in the Business of Salvation, are exceeding *perilous*, and that on many Accounts; hereby the *Number* of our *Iniquities* is *increased*, for one Sin naturally leads to, and disposes for the Commission of another; thus an awful Increase of Guilt is brought upon our miserable Souls, as if we had not enough already, whose Iniquities rival the Stars for Multitude, and are red as Crimson in their Aggravations! hereby the *Heart*

is

is *hardened*, a sinful Custom introduced, and vicious Habits strengthened; whereby we are rendered more averse to God and all Goodness, more prone to every Iniquity, and, of Consequence, Conversion rendered more hard and difficult. (*Jer. 13. 23.*) *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots, then may ye also learn to do Good, who are accustomed to do Evil!* Hereby the Spirit of God is grieved and quenched, by whose Influence Sinners are convinced of Sin, and converted from it; and the Saints, sealed to the Day of Redemption (*Pf. 95. 78, 11.*) *To-Day if you will hear his Voice, harden, not your Hearts, as in the Provocation* (i. e. by Delays and Continuance in Sin) *to whom I swear in my Wrath, that they should not enter into my Rest.* O shocking Sentence! tremble at it you delaying Impenitents, for it may be soon your own dismal Case! pray observe, that *late Repentance is seldom genuine*, there is but one Example of this in the holy Scriptures, *viz.* that of the *Thief* upon the Cross; but one that none should presume, and yet there is one that none should despair; nor can it be proved, that he was acquainted with the Christian Religion long before, and deferred his Repentance, with the View of obtaining

Mercy at last\*. O! let delaying Sinners read, and consider that awful Scripture, *Mat. 24. 48. ad finem.* *But if that evil Servant shall say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow Servants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken, the Lord of that Servant, shall come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth!* Once more,

DELAYS are extremely perilous, because of a three-fold Uncertainty, *viz.* of *Life*, of the *Means of Grace*, and of a *divine Blessing* upon those *Means!* What is your *Life*, but a *Vapour*, as the Apostle *James* with equal *Truth* and *Beauty* observes, *which appears for a little Time, and then vanisheth away;* and therefore *we should work while the Day lasts, for the Night comes, wherein no Man can work?* This solemn Messenger will soon wrap us in its sable *Shades*, and bury us in *Darkness*, *Inactivity*, and *Oblivion;* and therefore *what our Hands find to do, especially of a religious Kind, let us do it with all our Might, seeing*  
- *there*

\* Besides in the Time of Christ's *Abasement*, miraculous Works were wrought to demonstrate his *Divinity*, among which this may be called one.

*there is no Work, Device, or Invention, in the Grave, whither we are all hastening; every Moment we are upon the Verge of a vast Eternity, and know not what a Day, an Hour, a Minute may bring forth; we may never live to see the next Morning's Light, do not therefore depend on your young Years, heat of Blood, and Strength of Nature; what are these to withstand the Force of Sickness and Death? Do you not see divers of your Years removed to Eternity, who were as likely to live as you, and probably expected to live to advanced Age as much as you do? But they were disappointed of their Hopes, and may not you also? And will not the Disappointment be fatal and dreadful, if you continue to delay? Do not some die in the Bitterness of their Souls, some when their Breasts are full of Milk, and their Bones moistened with Marrow; some, though few, in the Wane of Life, when Age has snowed upon them; and by far the greater Number in the opening Dawn, or full Bloom of Life, when their Souls are big with secular Expectations and Desires, which the Foot of Death crushes in an Instant! And though Life gradually wastes away in some, by chronical Distempers, like a Candle expiring in the Socket, yet are not many snatched off the Stage of Time,*



into the invisible World, suddenly and unexpectedly, both to themselves and others, either by acute Diseases, or surprizing Accidents, with which we are all continually environed, and from which none can with Certainty, promise themselves an Exemption! Now, is it wise and discreet, my young Friends, to venture your eternal All, upon such a dreadful Uncertainty? O! for God's Sake, think seriously upon this before it be too late! But to proceed,

ARE not the *Means of Grace uncertain* also, in respect of their Continuance with us? And does not this Truth appear in a striking and awful Light at this Time, when the holy and dreadful God is threatening by his Providence, to take them entirely away from us for ever, for our ungrateful Slighting of them, and to leave us under the *Curse of Papal or Pagan Darknes!* O therefore, *while we have the Light, let us walk in it: We the Ambassadors of Christ, beseech you also, that you would not receive the Grace of God in vain.* And is not a *Blessing on the Means* equally uncertain, in case we delay? Conversion is God's Gift (*Ezek. 36. 26.*) which he confers in his own appointed Time and Way, not according to our Pleasure; and therefore we should improve every Opportunity, and gracious Motion we are favoured

voured with ; for if we will not with Earnestness perform the outward Duties of Religion while we can, it is just that we shall not when we would ; and indeed this is what you delaying Sinners have Reason to fear, for *God's Spirit will not always strive with Man ; call therefore upon God while he is near, and seek him while he may be found, lest he say to you as to Ephraim, Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone.* If God takes away his holy Spirit from you, which you are in Danger of every Hour while you delay, your Case is most miserable and hopeless, it had been better for you, that you had never been born.

YOUR *Delaying* looks like a *Suspence* of Mind which Master to choose. *Why Halt ye between two Opinions?* Are ye at a Loss to determine which is the best Master, God or the Devil, which the best Work, Sin or Holiness, which the best Wages, Heaven or Hell ? If not, what mean ye by your Delays ? Can that which is of absolute *Necessity* be done too soon ? Are you ever like to have easier Terms ? Is not God as amiable now as ever he will be, Holiness as necessary and excellent, your Souls as precious, the Love of Christ as sweet, and Heaven as valuable ? If therefore you do ever intend to turn to God, do not play the *Hypocrite* :  
Turn

Turn now, or give up Salvation for ever! *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes, take thy Swing, and follow thy vicious Inclinations, but know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment!* But to proceed,

MAY not the *Necessity of Conversion*, excite you to seek after it? Ye can neither behold God here, by an Eye of Faith, or enjoy him hereafter without it, as our Lord positively assures us; it is of absolute Necessity to future Happiness, both from the Constitution of God, and the Nature of Things; *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12. 14.)* This is the one Thing needful, which whosoever chooseth, possesseth not only the best, but the most necessary Part; it is certain God is holy, otherwise he could not be absolutely perfect, and so no God; and it is as certain, that we must be like him in Holiness, else we can have no Complacence in him, or he in us; for between Contraries, instead of Harmony, there is Discord and Opposition; without this therefore, we must give up all Hopes of Happiness for ever. May I not Address you, in the Language of CHRIST to Martha, *Luke 10. 41, 42. Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled*

*troubled about many Things, but one Thing is needful.* And, SIRs,

MAY not the *Excellency of Conversion*, excite our Esteem of it, and Desire after it; this restores the defaced *Image of God* in us, which is the *Beauty of our reasonable Nature*, to some Degree of its primitive Lustre, and thereby capacitates us to answer the Design of our Being, which is to serve and enjoy our Creator and Redeemer, without this we must be unprofitable here, and miserable hereafter: If Holiness be the Beauty of God himself, it must of Consequence be ours, seeing it is our highest Excellency to imitate him; but that it is so, appears from the Precept, to *Worship him in the Beauties of Holiness*, and his Title, *glorious in Holiness*. Add to this, the *Profitableness of Conversion*, which should be a sufficient Motive to labour for it; this advances us to the highest *Honours*, and institutes us in the most lasting *Benefits*; for hereby *Jehovah*, who is the Fountain of Honour, becomes our Father, the Lord JESUS CHRIST our Husband, the Cherubims and Seraphims, our Attendants and Guard, and the Church triumphant and militant, our Brethren; is it a Matter of no Moment, for poor polluted Dust, Heirs of Hell and Wrath, to be cleansed from their Deformity, and made the  
Sons

Sons of a King, nay to be made Kings and Priests to God? Does not the Apostle *John*, speak with just Surprize, of this Privilege! *1 John 5. 1. Behold what Manner of Love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!*

ANOTHER Excitement to seek *Conversion*, is the *Safety* it brings Persons to; all such have God to be their Shield and Sanctuary, their sure *Refuge*, and exceeding great *Reward*; and who then can hurt them, or make them afraid? How secure and pleasant must their repose be? But before this Change, you are in Danger of utter Destruction every Minute, and have no Shelter to cover you from the Vengeance of an angry God. In fine, the *Pleasure* consequent upon *Conversion*, should invite Sinners to labour for it; as the regenerated Person's Life is the safest, so it is the sweetest Life! (*Prov. 3. 17.*) *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, Christ's Yoke is easy, and his Burden light.* It is true, Difficulty and Pain are endured before Conversion, but when the *Bias* of the Heart is turned towards God and Holiness, and it feels the Power of a Saviour's Love, he goes on his Way rejoicing, for it must needs be agreeable to act according to the settled Bent of the Soul; and their Joy is *rational, spiritual, peaceful,*

*Peaceful, perpetual!* It is *rational* and *solid*, arising from and confirmed by Consideration and Reflection, and therefore suitable to the Soul, which is the Seat and Fountain of Reason; whereas the Pleasures of Sin are but a *Flash*, the result of a cruel *Rape* upon the Understanding by Sense; which according to the Order of God and Nature, should be its Subject. This *Joy* is also *spiritual*, proceeding from the Father of Spirits, and so adapted to the Soul, which is of an immaterial Nature; but the Pleasures of Sin are gross and sensual, only suited to gratify the lower Passions and Appetites, which Beasts possess in common with Men. Farther,

It is *peaceful*; the *Paths of Wisdom are Peace*, as well as *Pleasure*; whereas those of Sin, though they gratify a brutal Passion, do produce Pain and Disorder, and hence it is truly said, that *the Way of Transgressors is hard, they are like the troubled Sea, that casteth forth Mire and Dirt!* Once more,

THIS *Joy* is *perpetual*, at least in State and Habit; *Light is sown for the Righteous*, whereas the stolen Pleasures of Sin, cannot be reflected on without Shame and Horror, unless by Men of reprobate Minds, and feared Consciences. (*Rom. 6. 11.*) *What Profit had ye in those Things, of which ye are*

now ashamed, for the End of these Things is Death.

THE *Joys of Religion* are peculiar and noble, in this, that they antidote all our *Fears*, and equal our vast *Desires* and *Hopes*; being fully perswaded, upon a good Foundation, that the *Creator* and *Lord* of the Universe, is our cordial, immutable, and immortal *Friend*, and that he has undertaken to over-rule all for our Good in Time, and to introduce us into his glorious Presence at last, where is Fulness of Delight for ever; of whom, or of what should we be afraid, having such Security? shall we fear *Man*, whose *Breath* is in his *Nostrils*, whose *Foundation* is in the *Dust*, and who is crushed before the *Moth*? No! we need not fear, though *Ten Thousand* rise up against us; shall we be slavishly afraid of awful *Phenomenons*, in any Parts of inanimate Nature, or at any *Presages*, or actual Beginnings of *Revolutions* in *Kingdoms* and *Nations*? No! *God* is our *Refuge* and *Strength*, a very present *Help* in *Trouble*; therefore we will not fear, though the *Earth* be removed, and the *Mountains* be carried into the *Midst* of the *Sea*, yea though the *Waters* thereof roar and be troubled.

S E R-

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# S E R M O N XI.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die.*

**I**N the two preceding Discourses, I first considered this Text in its primary View, as relating to temporal Miseries, and afterwards in its Secondary, as respecting Eternal; and in order to excite Sinners to seek Conversion, I endeavoured to expostulate with them, by the following Arguments, *viz. eternal Death, eternal Life, the Necessity, the Excellency of Conversion, the Advantages, Safety, and Sweetness* consequent upon it, together with the great Unreasonableness, and manifold Dangers of *Delays*, in a Matter of such vast Moment! What I farther purpose upon this Subject, is to offer more Arguments and Directions,

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both



both to Sinners and Saints : Here observe, that before Conversion, Sinners are,

1. UNPROFITABLE and *lost Creatures*, *Philem. I. II. which in Time past was unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me :* Here it is evident, that the Unregenerate are unprofitable, they answer not the great End of their Being and Relations ; they are in a Manner good for Nothing, Cumberers of the Ground, the very Lumber of the Creation ; *Luke 15. 24. This my Son was lost.* Ye are *lost to God*, he has not that Honour and Service from you, which is due ; but in Place thereof, Disobedience and Reproach ! You are *lost to the Church of Christ*, whose best Interest you have not at Heart, and cannot suitably promote, nor has the Church any Ground for Joy in you while such, but of Grief and Sorrow ! You are *lost to yourselves*, and that in many Respects ; your *Time is lost*, it runs all to waste, not one Moment of it is rightly improved, to secure your eternal Salvation. Your *State is lost*, you must certainly and eternally perish, if you continue in it till Death ; your *Talents are lost*, prostituted to mean Pursuits, in Place of substantial Happiness, which as it adds to your Guilt, will increase your future Misery ! Your *Schemes and Pursuits are lost*, you spend your Money for that which

*which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfieth not; your Enjoyments are lost, your Prosperity being abused to Pride and Luxury, is a Snare to your Souls, and fattens you for the Slaughter of divine Vengeance: (Prov. 1. 32.) Adversity awakes your Envy, or makes you despond, and thus your Hearts are hardned like Pharaoh's under divine Judgments; O lamentable Case! The Word and Ordinances are lost upon you, and through your Abuse, become a Savour of Death to you. The Operations of the holy Spirit being quenched by your wilful Iniquities are lost. The Benefit of private Instructions and Intreaties, by the Ministers and People of God are lost, they have no abiding Impression on your Hearts! The Benefit of a pious Education is lost! The Advantage of Converse with, and the holy Examples of good Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance are lost; how will you endure to see them in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves shut out? and to hear a Blessing pronounced on them, and a Curse upon yourselves? And in a Word, your Souls and Bodies will be for ever lost, unless you turn from your evil Ways to God!*

2. You are exceeding *sinful Creatures*, much more so than you are aware of, your Hearts are deceitful, and desperately wicked,

as deceitful as wicked ; grand Cheats, by their Juggling they hide their Wickedness from your View ; from them come Murders, Adulteries, and false Witnesses, and in them is a fixed Prejudice against God himself ; *Rom. 8. 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be :* The Apostle does not say it is an *Enemy*, but in the Abstract, it is *Enmity* ; which heightens the Sense ; an Enemy may be reconciled, as *Esau* was to *Jacob*, but *Enmity* never can ; as Black may be made White, but Blackness cannot ; those that are at *Enmity*, cross each others Wills, and won't submit to each other ; the fleshly Mind is rebellious in the highest Degree against the Will of God, till it be changed, and it is impossible it should be otherwise, there is in it a moral Impotency to Obedience. ' *Enmity*, says Mr. *Henry*, speaks the Sinner to be a Devil of a Man, it is not only the Alienation of the Soul from God, but the Opposition of the Soul against God, it rebels against his Authority, thwarts his Designs, opposes his Interest, spits in his Face, and spurns against his Bowels ! The Mind of the Unregenerate not being subject to the Law of God, must needs be Contrary, and being Contrary, and that continually, to the

the whole Law, of Consequence breaks it every Moment; for what is Contrary to it, must needs be a Violation of it; hence it appears, that the Unregenerate break the whole Law of God every Minute, by the evil Frame of their Hearts; for the governing Power of their natural Enmity to God is never broken, till they are converted: Before this Change, there is no contrary Principle infused, by which its Dominion should be crushed; it is true, this Enmity may be for a Time restrained, by a good natural Temper, and hope of Pardon, or politically concealed to answer some low End; but when these Restraints are removed, it rages against God himself; as the *Snake* when frozen with the Winter Cold, is tame and gentle, but when warmed, and provoked, will soon shew its native *Spite* against Mankind, and spit its *Poison*! But besides this constant Violation of the whole Law of God, in the *Frame* of your Spirits, all your *Thoughts*, *Words*, and *Actions*, natural, civil, and sacred, are Violations of the Law, because you are *corrupt Trees*, i. e. unjustified, unconverted Persons; for such, if we believe our Saviour, cannot bring forth good Fruit; hence it is, that every *Imagination of the Thoughts of your Hearts is only Evil continually*; and that you yourselves

selves being Evil, cannot speak good Things; for the same Reason, your *Plowing and Prayers are Sin*; how innumerable then must your Iniquities be, and how exceeding heinous? Indeed, your whole Life is but one continued *Trespass*! O what a dismal Scene does this open, and yet it is necessary it should be seen and felt, in order to cure!

3. WHILE unconverted, you are *miserable Creatures, poor, blind, and naked*, without real durable and satisfactory Riches, without a clear and affecting View of the Things that belong to your Peace and Salvation, without Ornament, without Defence; continually exposed to all the Artillery of Heaven! *without God*; you have no Interest in his Friendship, no Communion in his Love; without the Former you cannot be safe, or without the Latter truly comfortable: As this World is but a melancholly Dungeon, without the natural Sun, so is the Soul, without God: You are also *without Hope* †, i. e. a true well grounded Hope; you have indeed a Hope, but it is worse than none, for it will fail you in Extremity, as a Spider's Web the Person that lays hold of it, when falling into a Precipice; *the Hope of the Hypocrite shall surely perish*, and such are all the Unconverted:

† *Eph. 2. 12.*

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You are *without the Covenants of Promise*, and hence *the Promises are said to be Yea and Amen in Christ*, i. e. *firm and stedfast to those that are united to him vitally by Faith*, which is not your Case; for *he that hath this purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure*; you have therefore no Interest in any one Promise in the whole Bible, No! but in the Threatnings and Curses; every one of which is directed like a Thunder-Bolt against you! Yea, the glorious God is your *Adversary*, an almighty and dreadful One indeed! whom if you do not agree with speedily, while you are in the Way of Means with him, he will cast you into Prison, from whence you cannot come, till you pay the utmost Farthing! The *Perfections* of his *Nature* are against you, his *Purity* abhors you, his *Justice* demands Satisfaction for your numberless and crimson Iniquities, his *Truth* and *Power* stand engaged to execute the Threatnings of his Word upon you; so that if you persist in Impiety, God's *Truth* must fail, and *Omnipotence* be overcome, if you be not for ever *ruined*! Now seeing God is against you, who is able to save you from his *Resentments*? Seeing all *Creatures* are under his controul; and indeed all the *Creation* is against you, the *Earth* groans under you, and *Hell* gapes for you! you  
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are every Moment upon the Brink of Ruin, hanging over the infernal *Furnace* by the slender Thread of Life, if that be cut, which it is continually liable to, by innumerable Accidents, you will instantly drop down among Devils, and be past all Hope for ever! and can you be easy in such a terrible Situation, O detestable Stupidity! may a gracious God awake you by his Word and Spirit!

4. Is not God the *Center of the Soul*, to bring to which, Conversion is a necessary Preparative; while the Soul seeks for rest among Creatures, it meets with innumerable Disappointments, and yet repeats the vain Chace, hoping to find Satisfaction in some new Object, which it has not tried before; but this is as wild an Attempt, as to labour with Seriousness to grasp an Armful of our own Shadow: But when God enlightens the Minds of his People, they turn their Backs upon Creatures, and fly to him for Satisfaction, wearied with their vain Pursuits, and speaking in the Language of the Psalmist, *return to thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* See how every Thing in the great *Machine* of this lower *Globe*, inclines to its Center; the *Rivers* in their meandrine Courses, run with resistless Eagerness towards the great Ocean,

Ocean, the Original of Waters: See with what Swiftneſs light Things fly upwards, and heavy Bodies ſink downwards to their Center; then ſhould not the unregenerate Sinner ſay, ' Is God thy Center, O my Soul! and ſhall theſe inanimate Creatures, which are deſtitute of the Direction of Reaſon, exceed thee in their Motion, who art endowed with it; ſhall every Thing haſten to its reſting Place but thee?' Did *Naomi* accoſt her Daughter-in-Law, the *Moabiteſs*, in the following pious and humane Language, *My Daughter, ſhall I not ſeek reſt for thee, that it may be well with thee?* And are we not under greater Obligations to be careful for the Comfort of our Souls, and to addreſs them in the ſame Strains? Shall I not ſeek reſt for thee, O my Soul, under the Wing, and in the Boſom of the divine Majeſty, by Conversion to *Jehovah*, that it may be well with thee for ever?

5. Is it not *your own Buſineſs*, to uſe proper Means in due Seafon, to ſecure future Bleſſedneſs? Many are indolent about others Buſineſs, that would not be ſo about their own; ſurely this is your own Buſineſs, if any Thing is or can be ſo; this is what you came into the World to negotiate: The proper Uſe of other Labours, is only to ſup-



port you in the Pursuit of this, whatever you get here goes into your own Treasury, *If you are wise in this, you are wise for yourselves, but if you scorn Advice and Instruction, you alone shall bear it*; it is equally the Folly and Unhappiness of degenerate Mankind, that they pervert the Order and Use of Things, they enjoy Things that are only to be used to obtain a higher End, and use Things that are to be enjoyed as the End: They set their supream Love upon the Things of this World, while in the mean Time, the Pursuit of God and Religion is either wholly neglected, or at least made but a By-Business! Is it not the highest Madness, to suppose that an infinitely wise Being, would indow us with noble Souls, Substances of a spiritual Nature, vast Capacity, and immortal Duration, Substances big with the Hopes, or perplexed with the Fears of Futurity, for no higher Business, than that of the Emperor *Domitian*, to catch Flies, or merely to enable us with greater Art to act the *Master Beast*, upon the present Theater, in purveigbing sensual Gratifications?

6. Is it not a *Business* of the greatest Moment, that deeply and tenderly affects your whole Eternity? For does not *Conversion* make Men meet for a Kingdom that is not shaken,

shaken, a Crown that will never fade? Worldly Things are valued according to their Duration, and why should not this, compared with which, they are *Shadows that have no abiding? What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul, saith our dear Lord, or what is he profited, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* The whole World is not a sufficient Compensation for the Loss of it; how much less a small Part of the World, for which many sell them to Satan, and seem pleased with the *Bargain!* but the Time hastens, when they will be sick of it, and bewail their murderous Madness, with never ending Groans and Lamentations! O do not therefore any longer trifle in a Business of such inexpressible Importance, lest the dreadful Doom of the Sluggard be executed upon you, which is mentioned, *Mat. 25. 26, 30. Cast the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* Though Man is taught more than the Beasts of the Earth, and made wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, yet such is his present Degeneracy, that he may learn Instruction of the meanest Insect, and be made ashamed by their Diligence and Sagacity; the *Ant*, without a Monitor, by seasonable Labour in the Summer and Harvest, provides

vides Food for the approaching Winter, and wilt thou an intelligent Creature, under so many Advantages, neglect to prepare for the distressing Time, that will soon come upon thee, I mean that of Sickness and Death! *How long wilt thou Sleep, O Sluggard, when wilt thou arise out of thy Sleep?*

7. WOULD it not be your highest *Wisdom* to seek converting Grace? Are not those judged wise by Wisdom itself, who consider their latter End? *Deut. 32. 28, 29, 30. For they are a Nation void of Counsel, O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End!* Now can this be considered to Purpose, without Conversion to God? no surely! How affecting is it to hear the Almighty lamenting over an ungrateful and foolish People, *O that they were wise!* Woe to those stupid Wretches, who refuse to be allured by such condescending Compassions! The want of this Wisdom makes Men like to the *Beasts* that perish, and worse than they; because it is worse for one of a higher Order, to be like a Beast, than to be one originally; the latter is innocent and unavoidable, but the former is the Fruit of obstinate Impiety: Is it not a *Fool's Property to want a Heart, when he has a Price to get Wisdom* (*Prov. 17. 16.*) Now as it is worse to be like

like a *Brute*, than to be one, so it is for the same Reason, worse to be a *spiritual Fool*, than a natural one.

8. THE blessed God gives great Encouragement to those that seek Conversion in earnest, as appears by the following Places of Scripture, *Let the wicked Man forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him turn unto God, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon; come and let us Reason together, for though your Iniquities be as Crimson, and as Scarlet, I will make them white as Snow!* The Parable of the *Prodigal*, is enough to perswade the most Obstinate, and to excite the most Discouraged to turn to God: No sooner did he begin to turn to his Father, but immediately he spied him a great Way off, his Bowels were moved with Compassion towards him, and he hastened to his Relief; not a Word of his former Miscarriages is mentioned against him, but on the Contrary, he is treated with the most compassionate Respect, he came Home between Hope and Fear, Fear of being rejected, and Hope of being received, but his Father was not only better to him than his Fears, but better than his Hopes; he was cloathed with the best Robe (the Righteousness of Christ) had a Ring put on his  
Hand

Hand (the Earnest of the Spirit given him) and Shoes put on his Feet (a Resolution to follow Christ through all Difficulties.)

9. **THY** Conversion, O Sinner, would cause Joy in Heaven, as appears from the Parable of the lost Sheep, *Luke 15. 4,—8.* God the Father rejoices in the Accomplishment of his Love-Designs towards Mankind; God the Son is satisfied with seeing the Travel of his Soul, and God the Holy Ghost rejoices in beholding the blessed Issue of his gracious Operations, pursuant to the Purpose of the Father, and Purchase of the Son! The good Angels are likewise glad, though those of their Order that sinned, are for ever abandoned, and though those Sinners that repent are of an inferior Nature, and some of them have been openly vile, who on their Conversion are made equal to them, and in some Respects preferred before them (inasmuch as the Redeemer assumed their Nature, and not that of the Angels, and likewise, in that they are made the Bride of Christ) yet notwithstanding, the Angels being free from all Envy, and swallowed up in their Master's Pleasure, rejoice on this Occasion, and gladly become ministring Spirits to those of the human Race, who are the Heirs of Salvation; as the Birth of the Redeemer excited those generous and amiable

amiable Beings to a Song of Praise, so the Fruits of his Mediation cannot but be an Addition to their Joy, which signifieth, the full and dispassionate Satisfaction of the Will, in a Good obtained. But not only the blessed God, and the Church triumphant, will rejoice on this Occasion, but likewise the sincere Members of the *Church militant*; to them, there is no Sight so agreeable on Earth, as to behold poor Sinners awakened out of their Security, *setting their Faces towards Zion, and weeping as they go*; it makes their very Hearts rejoice, to hear them enquire seriously what they shall do to be saved?—Because they know by Experience, that this is the only Way to obtain Conversion to God; and likewise because he is hereby glorified, and the Stakes of his Tabernacle with Men strengthened: When after living Religion has been for a long Time in a declining State, it pleases *Jehovah* to revive his Work, and give Efficacy to his Word, then the upright in Heart are glad, their Mouths are filled with Laughter, and their Tongues with Singing, then do they acknowledge, even among the *Heathen*, that *the Lord hath done great Things for them!* (*Psf.* 126. 1, 2, 3.) But when a *Work of Conversion* is at a stand, *the Ways of Zion mourn*, and her cordial Friends lament,

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ment, because should this Scene continue, vital Holiness would forsake the Earth entirely! It is true, there is a Generation, who treat such glorious Events with an Air of Indifference, or Invective, they look on the Instruments of them as *pestilent Fellows*, and are therefore sorry when such come among them (as the *Jews* of *Thessalonica* were respecting *Paul*, *Acts* 17. 6.) and ready to say, *away with such Fellows from the Earth* (*Acts* 22. 22.) some that have a *Form of Godliness*, hate the Power thereof, and if it comes among them, they are either scared or enraged, like the *Pharisees* of old, they do not know what these Things will come to; when a great Door and effectual is opened, there are generally many *Adversaries*! But what then, seeing God and his Friends are pleased, it is enough! The Almighty will support his Servants and People under such unreasonable Censures, and turn them to their great Advantage in the Issue! But on this happy Occasion, your own Souls, even yours, will be glad; and not the less, because you are opposed, but the more, for the Spirit of Glory and of God will rest upon you; then does *Christ* speak to you, as to the Man sick of the Palsy (*Mat.* 9. 12.) *Son be of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee.* Whatever outward Distresses any are in,

in, yet if their Sins be forgiven, they have reason to be of good cheer, pleasant, courageous, and confident in their God; for all is well, and will be well with them for ever: The great and glorious *Jehovah*, is their Father, their Friend, their sure Heritage! But before this, there is no rational Ground for Cheerfulness, but the Contrary; and therefore the Merriment of the Unregenerate, is but the *Laughter of Fools*, and when they take Time to reflect, even in the Midst of it, their Hearts are sad! What Ground can any Man have for Joy, while God is his Enemy, and Hell his Portion? surely none at all! But the Time is elapsed, I add no more at present,

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## S E R M O N XII.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of ISRAEL.*

**I**N the Forenoon's Sermon, I laboured to persuade Sinners to turn to God, by shewing that the Unregenerate are lost, sinful, and miserable Creatures; that God is the Center of the Soul, that seeking Conversion to him, is your own Business, a Business of the greatest Moment, a Business which it is your greatest Wisdom to negotiate; that the Almighty gives great Encouragement to those that are sincerely engaged therein, and that your Conversion would cause Joy in Heaven, and on Earth. I now proceed to other Excitements. And,

I. THE glorious *Jehovah* calls you to turn to him, in particular *God the Father,*  
*Jer.*

*Jer. 18. 11. Behold I frame Evil against you, return ye now every one from his evil Ways, and make your Ways and your Doings good.*

Our Text is one of the most moving Intreaties in the whole Bible, which is the Reason I have dwelt so long upon it, being sincerely desirous to succeed in my Errand. *God the Son* also calls, by encouraging Invitations, see *Mat. 11. 28. John 6. 37. Rev. 3. 20.* The sovereign Majesty of Heaven, stands without the Door of thy Heart, O Sinner, till *his Head is wet with the Dew*; and bewails thy Unkindness to him, and Cruelty to thy own Soul. (*John 5. 40.*) *God the Spirit* likewise calls you, by his gracious Operations, which if you continue to oppose, he will forsake you for ever, *Ezek. 24. Because I have purged them, and they were not purged, therefore will I not purge them any more, till I cause my Fury to rest upon them: The Spirit says come, and will you be so cruel and barbarous as to resist, to your own Damnation, the compassionate Calls of the God that made you, the Saviour that bought you, and of the holy Spirit that offers to sanctify you?*

2. DOES not the *Word of God*, in all its Parts, invite you to turn from your evil Ways to him? There you may see the Beauty of that Goodness to which you are  
allured,

allured, opened in all its Charms, and the dismal Consequences of rejecting it displayed, in all its Horrors! There you may see a *System* of sacred Truths, sublime, self-consistent, and harmonious, a *System* strongly connected in all its Parts, and of the noblest Tendency, to form you to that Purity it enjoins and recommends. There are just and striking Representations of the Glory and Grandeur of a God, and all his adorable Attributes, as well as of the Equity of that *Law* which he has given, to direct our Sentiments, Dispositions, and Conduct; a *Law* that tends as much to support the primitive Dignity of human Nature, as it does to promote personal and social Happiness! There is a candid, rational Account of the *Apostacy* of our first Parents, from that State of Rectitude and Bliss in which they were created, and of that pregnant *Ruin*, which in Consequence of it, came on them and their unhappy Descendants! And there a Method of Recovery to the divine Purity and Love, through a Mediator, is proposed, every Way consistent with the Claims of God's Justice, the Dignity of his Law and Government; a *Plan*, which while it harmonizes with his Purity and Veracity, does at the same Time, the highest Honour to his Wisdom and Grace, in giving them  
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the brightest and richest Displays! For hereby *God is just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus*: Hereby Occasion is taken from the Sin of Man, to render divine Justice and Grace the more illustrious; the Former in the Redeemer's Sufferings, and the Latter in the Sinner's Forgiveness: Hereby the Believer's Happiness is secured upon a firmer *Basis*, than while Man remained in a State of Innocence (by putting his Stock into the Hands of an almighty Surety) and the Sinner at the same Time, laid under more endearing *Obligations*, to grateful Love and universal Holiness, than ever before! This is a Device worthy of a God, and adapted to the Case of fallen Man! There are Instances of righteous, but terrible *Severity* against enormous Impenitents, to alarm our Fear, and Examples of the mildest *Lenity*, and richest Mercy towards returning Prodigals, to allure our Love, and incite our Hope! In a Word, every Line in the sacred Pages, bespeaks thee for God, and calls thee to turn to him; and will ye withstand, to your own Ruin, all these amiable and moving Incentives, of Beauty and Majesty, Severity and Grace! Alas, have you no Ingenuity, and are ye lost to Fear? will ye *shut your Ears, with the deaf Adder, against the blessed Charmer's*

*mer's Voice, let him charm never so wisely?*  
Well Sinners, if ye will not hear God calling now, there will shortly come a Time, when ye will wish you had, a Time when you will call yourselves, and not be heard?

3. THE *Providence* of GOD, loudly calls you to seek converting Grace; should not God's Mercies lead you to Repentance, and his *Judgments* upon yourselves, or others, deter you from Sin, which produces such bitter Effects, even in this Life, a small Presage of what must be indured in the next: When Sinners slight the *Word* of God, he lifts up his awful *Rod* to awake, and constrain them to give more earnest Heed to the Instructions and Reproofs of his Word; for as *Solomon* observes, *the Rod and Reproof give Wisdom* (i. e. when attended by divine Influence) *the Rod is for the Back of Fools, and he that spares it, when it is needed, bates the Child.* Some Times the Almighty uses a wicked Nation as a Rod in his Hand, to chastise his own People for their Degeneracy, and turns it to their Advantage in the Issue, contrary to the Designs and Expectations of their Enemies, yea, to their Confusion and Ruin! see *Is.* 10. 5, 6, 7, 12, 25. The Almighty informs us, by the Prophet *Micah* (6. 9.) that *the Rod of God cries to the City, and that the Men of Wisdom*

*Wisdom will see God's Name* ; and he enjoins all to hear it, and him that appointed it : There is certainly a loud Voice in every *Rod* of God, and especially in that which deeply affects a whole *Nation* and Country, in their dearest and most important Interests ! And the *Name* of God, his Wisdom, Sovereignty, and Purity are wrote upon it, in legible Characters ; which good Men see, and learn what God is and requires from what he does, and act accordingly ! But alas, a stupid World see it not, because they do not consider ; *God speaks once, yea twice, and they perceive it not ; when God's Hand is lifted up, they do not see his Controversy with them ;* but in the mean Time, it is the Duty, the Wisdom, and Interest of all, to hear God's *Rod*, when it is approaching towards us, before we feel it, and to *awake* out of Sleep, *to meet the Lord in the Way of his Judgments* ; we should consider seriously, that it is the Lord that hath appointed it ; whoever be the Instrument, and however unjust, yet he is *God's Sword*, his *Rod*, and it is just, as it comes from him ; to him therefore we must look, above all Instruments, him we must hear, and before him we must bow ; otherwise the *Rod* will be turned into Iron, and break us to Pieces.

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THIS Day is the most gloomy, in respect of our Church and Nation, that ever we have seen; nor does the Darkness lessen, but increase, and yet alas, there seems to be no general Sense of this Danger, or of the Sins that procured it; nor suitable Methods taken in earnest to get them removed: Hear the Prophet's Direction, upon a parallel Occasion (*Joel, 2 Chap.*) *The Day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, who can abide it; therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me, with all your Heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning; for the Lord is gracious and merciful, who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a Blessing behind him. See also, Jer. 3. 12, 13. Go and proclaim these Words towards the North, and say, return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, and will not keep Anger for ever, only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.*

4. THE faithful Servants of GOD, call upon you to turn to him, and in this Society you have had the Opportunity of hearing many such, who have with Wisdom and Warmth wooed you to your Duty, and warned you of your Danger, in case of neglect, as they are commanded; *Is. 58. 1.*

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As Ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in his Stead, to be reconciled to God; we beseech you also, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain. You cannot give the faithful Ministers of Christ so much Pleasure any other Way, as by turning to God, for this they study, pray, groan and weep; your Conversion would make their Hearts glad, in all their Labours and Sorrows; nor can you grieve their Spirits so much any other Way, as by your Obstinacy in Sin: *Insuccesfulness* makes them some Times lament, in the Language of the Prophet, *Woe is me, I am as those that gather the Grape Gleanings of the Vintage, the good Man is perished out of the Earth, there is none upright among Men!* And will ye have no Compassion upon those that Travel in Birth, till Christ be formed in you, or upon your own Souls? O what will become of you in this Congregation, who have heard, and alas, withstood the pungent Intreaties of so many pious Ministers! see Zac. 7. 11, 12.

5. YOUR pious Relations, cry after you in the most tender Language of Tears and Sighs, to turn speedily to God! O did you but know their secret *Wrestlings* for your Conversion, their *Sobs* and Lamentations over you, the *Damps* they feel in their Hearts, and the Turning of their *Bowels*,



when they think of parting with you for ever, when they think of the *Curse* they will hear denounced upon you, by the great Judge of Quick and Dead, before the vast Assembly of the Universe (except ye repent) it makes their *Blood chill* in their *Veins*, and their Hearts shudder in their Bodies! O did you but know the *Agonies* of their Souls, when they think of the everlasting Torments you must indure among Devils, you would pity them, and yourselves, and try to turn to God! O if you knew and considered the secret *Pleasure* they feel, when they see any Appearances of your turning to God, you would seriously and speedily labour to give them the greatest *Joy* they can have, next to that of the Salvation of their own Souls!

6. YOUR *pious Friends* and Acquaintance, invite you to seek converting Grace, *Jer. 50. 4, 5. They shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward; saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant.* The Grace of God cures the immoderate Selfishness of the Soul, and makes Persons of a public and noble Spirit, sincerely concerned for the Honour of God, and Interests of his Kingdom among Men, having a View of the Sinfulness and Danger of Sin, and of the Value of their own Souls, they are hereby

hereby excited to pity, from the Heart, the Souls of others, who are in a State of Sin, and earnestly to desire after their Conversion, that *Jehovah* may be thereby glorified, and they eternally saved from Wrath and Ruin! No sooner was the *Woman of Samaria* converted, but she wanted her Friends and Acquaintances to be converted too; and therefore she invited them to *come and see a Man that told her all that ever she did.* The Grace of God is generous and diffusive, and increases by Communication, for *he that waters others, shall be watered also himself:* Such as have tasted the Sweetness of a Saviour's Love, want that the whole World should partake of the same, and have such a clear View of the Certainty, Glory, and Importance of Religion, that they think, with young *Melancton*, Sinners will not be able to withstand their Arguments and Intreaties; but upon Trial, they soon, with him, find their Mistake; alas, others have not the same View of Things, and therefore hear them with Indifference, which grieves, and almost discourages them to attempt any more. But Sirs, we should not desist from endeavouring to do Good to Mankind, though some treat us, and what we speak sincerely for God, with a stupid ungrateful Neglect, or proud Disdain; yet  
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our dear Lord will accept of, and graciously Reward our honest Endeavours, and probably bless them to others: O then *let our Speech be seasoned with Salt, ministring Grace to the Hearers*; let us not shut Christ and Religion out of our Conversation, agreeable to the wicked Fashion of the present Times; but out of the *good Treasure of our Hearts, let us bring forth good Things*, that are edifying; this was the Practice of God's People of old, a Practice which the Almighty highly approves of, see *Mal. 3. 16, 17*. Abhor therefore the Sentiments and Conduct of the Unregenerate, whose highest View is themselves, their secular Affairs are the Sum total of their Religion; when prosperous, they are easy, whether Sinners are converted or not; like the *Snail*, they sneak into their *Shell*, and confine their narrow, groveling Designs to it.

7. YOUR Consciences, these Witnesses for God, in your Bosoms, call you to turn to *Jehovah*, and tell you that it is now high Time, they set before you a Map of those Miseries, which you shall quickly feel, if ye continue in your present State; and will ye be deaf to the Warnings of your own Minds? Do not you know that *if your Heart condemns you, God is greater than your Heart, and knoweth all Things?* 1 *John 3. 20*. Will  
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not your holding the Truth in Unrighteousness, or in other Words, suppressing and counteracting the Impressions and Directions of it, prepare Matter for the most tormenting Reflections in the coming World, when Conscience, however diverted or suppressed now, will have full Liberty to speak out, and that for ever, and no worldly Business, Amusement, or Comforts, to divert its Censures; or any false *Hope* to allay for one Moment, the Bitterness thereby occasioned through Eternity! *Conscience* is either the greatest Friend, or the most formidable Foe, just as it is obeyed or opposed; a good Conscience will make one bold as a *Lion*, even in the greatest Dangers, but a bad one will make Men tremble at the shaking of a *Leaf*, and fly when none pursues: In Case of *Hypocrisy*, Conscience is as a Thousand Witnesses to condemn us, and hence is that memorable Saying of a *Pagan* Philosopher, *Turpe quod astutus, et sine teste time*: In this doubtful State of Things, the groundless Applause of the whole Creation, is an insipid *Trifle*, that rather reproaches and distresses, than contents the Mind, when we know it is a mere Fallacy: But on the other Hand, when we walk uprightly before God, and earnestly labour to promote the everlasting Good of Mankind, if in return (which

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is often the Case) we meet with Abuse and Slander, the Consciousness of our *Integrity* will Support us, as it did the Apostles, whose *Comfort was the Testimony of their Consciences, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshy Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, they had their Conversation in the World*; it is little Matter to us, what Mankind think or say of us, if we have but the Approbation of God, and our own Minds; and truly the greater Part of People, are bad Judges of Things, for they have but little Leisure or Capacity to form a right Judgment, and are generally so much biassed by Favour or Prejudice, that they pass Sentence before Trial: So that it is Unreasonable for any wise Man, to be either lifted up, or cast down, with their Applause or Censure; for both are generally the Issue, rather of Affection and Prejudice, than of impartial Judgment: O! then let us labour to get our Consciences rightly informed by the Word of God, sprinkled with the Blood of Christ, and washed by the holy Spirit, and act up to them, then we may with Certainty expect a continual Feast from them! Again,

8. REASON calls you to turn from Sin to *Jehovah*, by shewing the Necessity and Equity of this Change; the Enjoyment of a holy

holy God, without *Holiness*, is absurd and impossible, in the Nature of Things; it is likewise just that the divine *Goodness* be acknowledged, and the Powers you have received from God, directed to him, and employed in his Service; it is also rational, to accept of Gospel *Liberty*; in your present State you are disrobed of the Ornaments of Innocence, confined in the darkest Dungeon, in Bondage to Sin and Satan; but now *the Day-spring from on High visits you, the Sun of Righteousness shines upon you*; now the Gospel proclaims *Liberty* to the *Captive*; and will you not accept the Offer of this everlasting *Liberty*, purchased by the *Blood of God*? When *Liberty* was proclaimed among the *Greeks*, after a State of Servitude, they received it with Transports of Gratitude to their *Deliverer*, crying aloud, *Soter, Soter, a Saviour, a Saviour*, and will you reject a much more valuable and costly *Liberty*? then you deserve no *Pity*, from God or Man!

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# S E R M O N XIII.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die?*

**I**N the last Sermon upon this Subject, I propos'd the following Arguments, to excite Sinners to turn to GOD, *viz.* the Call of God the Father, Son, and Spirit; the Call of the Word, Providence, and Ministers of God; the Call of Relations, Friends, Conscience, and Reason: In Addition to which, give me Leave to offer the following MOTIVES, *viz.*

I. THE *Pains* the dear Lord *Jesus Christ* took to purchase *Salvation* for you; for this End, he willingly assumed human Nature, while covered with the Ruins of its Apostacy, he came in the Likeness of sinful Flesh; the most high God took upon him the Form of a Servant, the Consolation of *Israel,*

*Israel*, became a Man of Sorrows, though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his Poverty might be rich; the Chastisement of our Peace was laid upon him, that through his Stripes we might be healed; his Life was full of Labour, Sorrow, and Suffering, his Name was treated with Scandal, and himself with great Ingratitude, Cruelty, and Contempt, by those he came to seek and save; and in the mean Time, he bore all with Patience, that he might purchase Salvation for you, and excited himself to Speed in performing the mediatorial Work, by the Shortness of the Time he had to do it in; *I must*, saith he, *work the Work of him that sent me while it is Day, for the Night cometh wherein no Man can work*: Now did the Lord *Jesus Christ* labour so hard, and suffer so much from God and Man, did he sweat great Drops of Blood, through Anguish of Soul, and cry out on the Cross, *Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabbathani*, that he might procure Salvation for us, and shall we be indolent and careless in applying it to ourselves? O unaccountable Infatuation! can we look upon the Agonies and Labours of the Son of God for us, with Indifference and Neglect?

2. THE Pains the DEVIL takes to damn your Souls; should affect you; he goes about

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like



like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; some Times he appears as a Lion, to terrify us from Duty, and some Times as an Angel, to allure us to Sin; O how innumerable are his fiery Darts, and deep Devices, if he fails in a Hundred Attempts, yet he will not desist; but watch for an Opportunity, and try other Measures; shall Satan take more Pains to damn your Souls, than you to save them?

3. SEE the Pains, the Generality of Mankind take, about Things of infinitely lesser Moment; the Merchant spreads his Carrivals Wings, and flies across the boisterous Deep, to the Extremities of the Earth, incómpassed with Miseries and Dangers of various Form; Farmers and Tradesmen rise up early, sit up late, and eat the Bread of Care and Sorrow; and will not ye be perswaded to take as much Pains about your Souls, as others about their Bodies and Estates, about an eternal, as they about a temporal Good? how astonishing is your Madness!

4. SEE the Care and Pains that many take to obtain Salvation, who want your Advantages, and be ashamed of your Negligence! The *Muslimians* pray five Times a Day, are true to their Word, honest in their Dealings, and keep one Month every Year

Year as a Fast; but many Christians have no regard to their Word, are dishonest, do not pray so much as once a Day stately, nor have kept one Day of *Fasting* in their whole Lives. And some of the *Pagans* have excelled in moral Virtue, e. g. *Seneca, Cato, Socrates*; yea, many in divers Parts of the World, have taken great Pains in Pilgrimages and bodily Austerities; e. g. the People of *Narsinga*, resort to an Idol in Pilgrimage, in great Numbers, with Ropes about their Necks, and Knives sticking in their Legs and Arms, and when the Idol is carried about in Procession, the Pilgrims strive to be crushed to Death under the Chariot Wheels; a Multitude of Lives have been sacrificed by the *Pagans*, in divers Places, to pacify their *Deities*; yea, even Parents, contrary to the strong and tender Ties of Nature, have made their beloved Children pass through the Fire to *Moloch*. Now, though the *Pagans* were misguided in their Severities, yet their Concern for future Happiness, and Labour to obtain it, may justly put to shame the Secure and Indolent, who by the Gospel have Life and Immortality brought to Light! Some of the *Pharisees*, were also eminent in Virtue and Devotion, e. g. *Saul* before Conversion, and the young  
Man

Man in the Gospel (*Philip. 3. 6. Mat. 19. 20.*) and yet our Righteousness must exceed theirs, on Pain of Death, *Mat. 5. 20.*

5. SEE how all *inanimate Creatures*, with the greatest Readiness and Constancy obey their Creator, *Pf. 19. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Hand Work*, by their Beauty, Order, and Observance of the Law of their Creation; as immortal and universal Preachers, they objectively declare the Reality of the divine Existence, and the Glory of his Government; so exact and regular are the Motions of the heavenly Bodies, that the precise Minute of *Eclipses*, may be foretold long before they happen; the *Sea* also obeys his Voice, the *Hail, Snow, Vapour, and stormy Wind* fulfil his Word (*Pf. 148. Mark 4. 39.*) while you insolently controul his Authority! The *Trees and Plants* bring forth *Flowers and Fruit*, according to their Kind, and attain the End of their Creation, while you are barren, and live in Opposition to the Design of your Existence; and therefore every *Pile of Grass, Flower, and Fruit* you behold, may be an awakening Monitor to you!

6. SEE how *irrational Creatures*, by a natural Instinct, seek after their Safety, the sick Dog seeks a purgative Herb to cure himself,

himself, the wounded Hart after Dittany to heal her ; but alas, few poor Sinners repair to the great Physician, for a Leaf from the Tree of Life, to cure their mortal Maladies ! O ! should not the Care of those poor Creatures, who are destitute of the Direction of Reason, excite you, who are endowed with it, to hasten to Christ for converting Grace, without which you must die in your Wounds ? *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me ; the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider, Is. 1. 2, 3.*

7. HAVE not many in former Times, and do not some even now, who enjoy no better Advantages than you, press into the Kingdom of God, full of Fear and Distress about their Souls, crying Night and Day for Mercy ! and why should not you do likewise ? Have not you reason to be troubled for your Sins, as well as others, are not your Souls as precious as theirs ? Have you not the same Encouragement to seek God, and are you not under equal Obligations ? What then do you mean by this horrid Cruelty against your own Souls, in neglecting to secure their Salvation, by a  
faithful

faithful Improvement of the Seasons of  
 God's Grace? *Jer. 8. 20. The Harvest is  
 past, the Summer is ended, and we are not  
 saved; we have had in this Land, blessed  
 be Jehovah for it, a glorious Harvest some  
 Years since, wherein many were converted,  
 O! then poor Souls flocked to Christ, as  
 Doves to their Windows; Multitudes were  
 awak'ned out of Sleep, and sought Jesus sor-  
 rowing; how much was the Word preach-  
 ed, prized, and with what Eagerness and  
 Delight attended, as often as Opportunities  
 of this Kind presented, and that not only  
 on the Sabbath, but upon Week Days? Small  
 Matters would not keep People from  
 hearing, as they do now, nor were they  
 soon tired, though the Discourse was a lit-  
 tle longer then usual; no, they were all  
 Attention, all Desire, all Delight! But alas,  
 this harvest Season is past and over, and yet  
 many of you are not saved; *the Bellows are  
 burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the  
 Founder melteth in vain; all Means used to  
 reform you are to no Purpose, though the  
 Instruments are wasted in their Work; and  
 is there no Reason to fear the awful Judg-  
 ment, threatened in the latter Part of the  
 Words referred to, Jer. 6. 29, 30. Reprobate  
 Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord  
 hath rejected them!* If you continue to slight  
 all*

all the Warnings and Invitations given, you are worse in some Respects than *Jews*, *Sodomites*, and *Devils*; for the *Jews* and *Sodomites* had not such Light as ye enjoy, and the *Devils* never had an Offer of Mercy after their Apostacy, which you have repeatedly been favoured with, but to no Purpose; *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *He that despised Moses's Law died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses, of how much sorer Punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God; Mat.* 11. 23, 24. *And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell.*

8. WHAT would you lose by turning to God, is it *Disshonourable* to be related to the divine Majesty, to the Church of the First-born, and to *Jesus* the Mediator of the everlasting Covenant? *Heb.* 12. Is it *Disshonourable* to be adorned with the Beauties of Holiness? *Pf.* 110. 3. Is it *Uncomfortable* to partake of the Clusters of *Canaan*, in Communion with a God of infinite All-sufficiency, Goodness, and Glory? Is it *Disadvantageous* to be intitled to an unalienable and everlasting *Inheritance*, extending infinitely beyond the narrow Circle of the Creation, and to be enriched with a Jewel of immense Value? Is it a *Loss* to enjoy

the Friendship and Protection of a God of infinite Power, or to forsake that which is the Dishonour of your reasonable Nature, and Poison of your immortal Souls? O Sinners, what hinders your Compliance with the Invitations of Heaven? Sin is pleasant; true some Sins do please the Senses, but their Fruits here, and in Hell are bitter, besides these Pleasures are transitory, mean, and brutish, but those of Religion noble and permanent. I shall be censured by my Relations and Neighbours, what then, these groundless Reproaches will turn to your Honour and Benefit, *Philip. 1. 29. Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12.*

THE Sufferings of this present Life are light, and but for a Moment, not worthy to be compared with the exceeding great and eternal Weight of Glory in the Heavens, which is reserved for those that sincerely Love and serve God. I shall lose some worldly Advantage by the Profession and Practice of Religion. *A.* And what if you do, it will be infinitely more than made up to you, by the Love and Favour of God here and hereafter! Why then do not you Endeavour, poor Sinners, to turn to God? Why will you prefer any temporal Enjoyment, before the Safety of your Souls? Did it not argue a vile Temper in *Esau*, to prefer

fer a Morfel of Bread, before his Birth-right, which contained both sacred and civil Privileges? The World is to you as *Jael's* Milk to *Sifera*, as *Delilah* to *Sampson*: Is it not a pity that Men should be such Enemies to themselves, as to prefer the disguised Vanities of a fading World, to eternal Riches? To seek for rest among temporal Enjoyments, is as vain as if *Israel* had endeavoured to fix his Abode in the Wilderness among Serpents and Enemies, or as if *Noah* had made the Ark his Home, when the Waters were fallen? Why stand ye so careless and indolent on the Shore of a vast Eternity, not knowing but the next Tide will sweep you off, beyond all Hopes of a Remedy, and sink you in the dark Retreats of Death? Have ye nothing to do for the immortal God, and your deathless Souls? O speak in the Language of the poor starving Leppers, who sat at the Gate of *Samaria*. (2 Kings, 7. 3, 4.) *Why sit we here till we die, if we say we will enter into the City, the Famine is in the City, and we shall die there, and if we sit still here we die also; now therefore come and let us fall unto the Host of the Syrians, if they will save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.* If we return to a Course of Sin, we shall surely perish, if we abide in our present Security



and Sloth, we shall perish; come then let us go to God, in Christ, for converting Grace, he can but deny us, we can but perish: But if he has Mercy upon us, we shall live, live eternally. Up then Sinners, awake, arise, and hasten, O hasten to Christ for Life; behold the Treasures of Heaven are opened, resolve with Queen *Esther*, to go to the King, and if you perish, you perish; she resolved to interceed for the Safety of her Nation, though it should cost her her Life; and should not you for the Salvation of your Souls? She met with a favourable Reception from an imperious Man (*Est.* 5.) and may not you expect this, much more from the God of Love? Sinners are ye past Feeling? When we represent God's Majesty armed with Vengeance, and casting with his unbarred Arm Thunder-Bolts of Death, ye are not moved; and when we represent *Jehovah* enthroned on Grace, and with importunate, endearing Condescension, alluring Rebels to accept of Liberty and Life, not only with Arguments, but with Tears, Groans, and Blood, and yet you are unaffected, be astonished, ye Heavens, and mourn, O Earth, at this!

S E R.

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# S E R M O N XIV.

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EZEK. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel?*

**I** PROCEED to offer some Directions to Sinners and Saints, agreeable to the Order before proposed, O be intreated to seek Conversion, in the following Manner.

I. EARLY, *Ecles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, in which thou wilt say, I have no Pleasure;* endeavour to fear, love, and serve GOD, with all thy Heart, in young Years, for he is the Author of thy Life and Being, and of all thy Benefits; to him thou art under the strongest Obligations, and upon him thou hast a continual Dependence: As Youth is  
 most

most susceptible of religious Impressions, so it is best fitted for the Performance of religious Offices; and as thou owest the best of thy Time and Strength to God, the Giver of both, the Improvement thereof in his Service, will be most acceptable to him, and most comfortable to thee: This is the best Provision for old Age, one of the greatest Comforts of which, is the Remembrance of a well spent Youth: Age has enough to do with itself, these are Years in which we have no Pleasure, then with *Barfilai*, we cannot relish the Delights of Sense, and in the mean Time, are loaded with bodily Infirmities; our Strength becomes Labour and Sorrow, and we feel ourselves die by Inches. It is ungrateful to give the Flower of our Days to the Devil, and reserve the Bran for God, this is to offer the Torn, the Lamé, and the Sick in Sacrifice, for which a Curse is denounced, *Mal.* 1. 14.

2. You should seek Conversion to God earnestly, as the poor Woman the lost Piece of Silver, the Lord JESUS CHRIST could not Purchase our Happiness without great Labour and Agony, and why should we think to get an Interest in it without Pains? We are enjoined to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, or to agonize into it, and informed, that *many shall seek to enter, and shall*

shall not be able; i. e. doubtless because they do not take Pains enough! The *Gate of Conversion*, by which we enter into the Way of true Holiness, is *streight*, it is hard to find, and therefore few find it, because it is above Nature, and only revealed to some, by God the Father: (*Mat. 13. 11.*) It is likewise hard to be entered into, for this is contrary to Nature; the *Way of Holiness is narrow*, both in respect of Sin and Punishment, so narrow that it will not hold a Man and unmortified Sin together; unless we pluck out our *Right-Eye*, and cut off our *Right-Arm*, we must be lost for ever: It is also an afflicted Way, *through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God*; and indeed the Travellers in this Way are few (*Luke 12. 32.*) *Though the Number of Israel be as the Sand of the Sea, but a Remnant is saved.* (*Rom. 11. 7.*) *Many are called, but few chosen.* Add to this, that many and powerful Enemies, endeavour to hinder us in this Work, *viz.* the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, which must be contended with; and indeed the Salvation which Conversion makes us meet for, is of so great Moment, and of such absolute Necessity, that it deserves the greatest Care and Pains.

3. **HUMBLY** be perswaded, that notwithstanding of any Thing you have done, or  
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can do, ye are unprofitable Servants, and that the Lord may justly cast you off for ever; till you be brought to this, you are not proper Objects of Mercy, you have no suitable Esteem of it, nor are you disposed to give to God due Glory for it: *The Hungry shall be filled with good Things, but the Rich, the Full in their own Eyes, shall be sent empty away.*

4. You should seek converting Grace constantly, until you obtain it (*Luke 15. 8.*) a Person starving with Hunger would not be contented with asking for Bread, unless he got what he asked; bare Begging would not satisfy the Cravings of his hungry Stomach: So neither should ye be satisfied with praying for Conversion, till you get what ye pray for, nor should you be discouraged because you obtain not the Answer of your Prayers, so soon as you expected, or do desire, for the Almighty acts as a Sovereign, in dispensing his Grace to the Children of Men, to some he gives it sooner, and to others later, just as he pleases; his Time we ought to wait for with Diligence, Patience, and Hope, for it is certainly the best Time, and his Mercy, when obtained, will sufficiently recompence our Pains and Patience in quest of it, and waiting for it! Do not give over striving and hoping, because

cause Things seem to grow worse with you than before Conviction; for this is owing partly to that new Light of God's Spirit, through his Law, now given you, which discovers that Heart-Wickedness which you were ignorant of before; the more this increases, the more you see of your own Vileness, from whence you are induced, though without Foundation, to conclude it grows in you, when it is only your View of it; see *Rom. 5. 20. The Law entered, that the Offence might abound.*

BESIDES, *Satan* with a malicious Design to discourage you, tries by the Law to engage inward Corruption, and to bring it into Act more than ever before, see *Rom. 7. 8. Sin taking Occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all Manner of Concupiscence, for without the Law, Sin was dead.* While Sinners remain in a State of Blindness and Security, and please themselves with Dreams of their present Goodness, and future Happiness, he lets them alone politically, for he knows while they remain so, he is sure of them, and that if he tempted them, as he does those that are convinced, they would be probably frightened out of their Sleep, and he in Danger of losing them; he therefore encourages their false Hopes, and if they get Half awakened, he labours with

all his Might to lull them a-sleep again, by high Encomiums upon their Goodness, such as these, that they *mean well, never wronged any of a Penny in their Lives, are much better than many of their Neighbours,* and such like; and that there is no need of such Soul *Distress*, that if they give way to it, it will perhaps hurt their *Credit*, their *Senses*, their worldly *Interest*, and it may be, bring them to an untimely *End*: But if they get so wounded, that he cannot bring them back to their former *Security*, then he tries all the Arts he is Master of, to drive them to *Despair*, some of which are such as these, he suggests, 1st, That it is now worse than ever, that God is more provoked. *A.* It is false, you are now in the Way to *Mercy*, and never were before; see *Mat. 11. 28.* 2d, He says, that no Body ever had such a wicked Heart, since the Foundation of the World, as you; never any Body sinned so in Life, nor was ever any in such strange Circumstances. *A.* This is the Testimony of the Father of Lies, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, *as, Face answers Face in a Glass, so does the Heart of one Man another.* The Almighty has graciously left upon Record in his Word, divers Instances of glorious Grace, vouchsafed to the vilest of Sinners, on purpose to confute this cruel  
 Stratagem

Stratagem of the Enemy of Souls, and to manifest and magnify the exceeding Riches of his Grace. e. g. *Manasses*, a Murderer, a Conjuror, who slighted God in Prosperity, obtained Mercy; and so did *Saul*, a Persecutor, *Mary Magdalen*, a Harlot, the unclean, unrighteous *Corinthians*, the idolatrous *Ephesians*, yea, and even those that actually embued their Hands in the Blood of our dear Lord, were washed by the Blood they shed, from their Guilt in shedding of it! But supposing your Sins were greater in reality than the Sins of any other, there is no reason to despair of God's Mercy, in case you endeavour to repent and believe; because *it is not according to Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy that he saves us*: The Blood of Christ is of infinite Value, and cleanses from all Sin, and surely Sin cannot be of more than infinite Guilt: The greater our Iniquities are, the more the Riches of God's Grace will be magnified in pardoning them, and this indeed is the great Design of the Gospel Method of Salvation, *Eph. 1, 5, 6. 3d*, He injects blasphemous Thoughts into their Minds, in a thick Succession, which they try to get rid of, but cannot; now Satan artfully and falsely labours to father these Brats of his malicious Brood upon the Convinced, with



design to drive them to Dispair or Distrac-  
tion; and they, poor Things, are too apt,  
through Ignorance, to give Way to the  
Charge, to their own great Prejudice: But  
Friends, *put on the Shield of Faith, whereby*  
*ye may be able to quench the fiery Darts of the*  
*Wicked*; they are called Darts, because of  
their sudden Injection; and fiery Ones, be-  
cause of the Pain they occasion; both which  
are plain Proofs, that they are not the Pro-  
duct of your own Nature, for if so, they  
would be gradual and agreeable; do not  
therefore charge upon yourselves, the Sins  
of the Devil, or be frightned or troubled  
about them, let him answer for his own  
Sins himself; Temptations that come from  
without, not consented to by our Wills, are  
not our Sins, for thus our Saviour was  
tempted, and yet without Sin. 4th, He  
represents God to be all *Anger* and Revenge  
against them, inexorable to their Cries, and  
that he is only waiting for an Opportunity to  
destroy them; while they were in *Security*,  
he represented God in too favourable a  
Dress, as if he was all Mercy, and no Ju-  
stice; and now in too severe a one, as all  
Justice, and no Mercy: But how can it be,  
that the Almighty should spare you, when  
you were going on with a high Hand against  
him in Sin, and take this Opportunity to  
destroy

destroy you, when you are mourning for your Iniquities, and endeavouring to turn from them to him: No it can never be, for he himself has by his Spirit stirred you up to this, he that with Compassion heard *Ephraim's* Moans, hears yours also, and will help you in due Time. 5th, Satan suggests that the Day of Grace is past, for, saith he, God takes no Notice of your Prayers, and you are judicially hardened. *A.* It is no Proof that God takes no Notice of your Prayers, because you are not immediately answered; the Church complained, that God had *shut out her Prayers*, but without Cause; he is not bound to our Times, *the Visitation is for an appointed Time*, which we must wait for; while you bewail your Hardness of Heart, it is not judicial; the spiritual, rational, and best Part of Contrition, consists in the Pliableness of the Will, and not in the soft Flow of the Affections, which though agreeable, is not essential to Contrition, but accidental and separable; while you are with Seriousness endeavouring to mourn over Sin, and turn from it to God, the Day of Grace is so far from being over with you, that this is the special Season of it; now God is working by his Word and Spirit upon you, and graciously calling you to his Arms. 6th, Satan knowing that so soon

soon as ever the poor Sinner embraces Christ, and depends upon him entirely by Faith, the Match is made, which will endure for ever, and that then the Sinner will get out of his Clutches; he tries with all his Might to keep them from Faith, he advises them as a Friend to beware of presuming, and of being deceived, and to cover this Device, he tells them the Soul is precious, it would be a great pity to be mistaken, and likewise that they have been great Sinners, and have not yet been sufficiently humbled and reformed, to prepare them for believing; without which, it would be rash and dangerous. *A.* But for such as feel their Disease, to receive the Gift of God, and lean upon him for Salvation, is so far from being presumptuous, that it is a Duty; *this is the Commandment, that ye believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,* and to the Performance of this, the dear Redeemer earnestly invites the Wounded (*John 6. 37.*) this is therefore the Way to be saved and healed, instead of being deceived; nor does the sacred Scriptures prescribe any particular *Degree of Humiliation* and Reformation, as absolutely necessary, previous to Faith, only this in general, that we be so sensible of the Danger of Sin, that we are willing to forsake it, and embrace the Redeemer, as he

is offered to us in the Gospel: It is therefore exceeding dangerous to defer any longer, a Closure with Christ, on Account of these, or any other Pretences whatsoever; let us then come to him as we are, as Sinners, without any *Price* in our Hands, and give ourselves up to him for ever, in order to be made righteous and holy by his Blood and Spirit! 7th, Once more, Satan some Times tempts the Convinced, to believe that they have committed the *unpardonable Sin*, and therefore that it is *too late* for them to strive; by this Means, through implacable Malice against God, and the Souls of Men, he labours to drive them to Madness, Despair, or Self-Murder, and to keep them from Christ: But pray, how should you be guilty of the unpardonable Sin? Before you were convinced, you could not commit it, for want of *Light*, and since you could not, for want of *Will*; since you have been awakened, you have been trying to bewail your Offences, and come to Christ, which are inconsistent with that Sin, and plainly shew you are not guilty of it; but I have sinned against Light and Mercy, and quenched God's holy Spirit. *A.* So have all of adult Age, more or less, and even many of those that are now in Heaven; witness *David*, *Solomon*, *Peter*, *Manasses*, yea *Paul* himself acknowledges,

acknowledges, *that what he would not, that he did*, even after he was converted; this Objection concludes too much, and therefore nothing at all: But I have Enmity against the Father, and the Son. *A.* What then, this is no more than all Mankind have naturally, and therefore it proves nothing against you; pray consider, that the *Pharisees*, who are charged with this Sin, were convinced by the miraculous Works which Christ wrought, that he was the Messias, and yet contrary to their Consciences, they rejected him, and the Way of Salvation by him, and from a Habit of Malice, ascribed (openly in Words) his miraculous Works to the Devil, charged him with divers Crimes, and persecuted him, and his Servants, to the Death. These Things you cannot with Justice and Truth ascribe to yourselves, and therefore the Enemy's Charge is false; and indeed you shew little Judgment in giving heed to it, *resist the Devil, and he will flee from you*; be the more frequent and earnest in Prayer, and Satan will soon be tired, for he does not like to excite you to Devotion; the darkest Time of the Night, preceeds the Break of Day; in the Mount, God is seen; our Extremity, is his Opportunity to shew Favour; believe

believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and ye shall be saved. *Amen.*

BUT I proceed to offer a *Word of Advice* to such as are *converted*. *Labour* to love your heavenly *Father*, bless him for his distinguishing *Mercy* to you, and endeavour to live a *Life of Thanksgiving and Praise*, which as it is the most pleasant, so it is the most profitable *Life*; *Gratitude* for past *Mercies*, is the best *Method* to obtain more: *Seek* your *Father's Honour*, by bringing forth much *Fruit* to him, for hereby he is glorified; *John* 15. 8. *Imitate* his *Example*, by endeavouring to be *Holy*, as he is *Holy*; and *Merciful*, as he is *Merciful*; this will be the best *Evidence* of your *Sonship*; obey his *Laws* with *Sincerity* and *Steadiness*, and then shall ye have no *Reason* to be ashamed (*Pf.* 119.) *Submit* with *Silence* and *Reverence* to his fatherly *Chastnings*, as knowing they proceed from *Love*, and will issue in your *Benefit* (*Heb.* 12. 9, 10.) *Depend* with *Firmness* on your *Father's Promise*, as knowing it will never fail (*2 Cor.* 1, 20.) *Maintain honourable Sentiments* of your *Father's Care* and *Love* (*Pf.* 103. 13.) Let *Zion* lie near your *Heart*, and engross a *Part* of your *Thoughts* and *Cares* (*Pf.* 137. 5.) *Grow in Grace*, and in the *Knowledge* of our *Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; in fine,

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add

322. *A Word of Advice to the Converted.*

*add to your Faith, Virtue ; and to Virtue, Knowledge ; and to Knowledge, Temperance ; and to Temperance, Patience ; and to Patience, Godliness ; and to Godliness, Brotherly-Kindness ; and to Brotherly-Kindness, Charity.*  
**AMEN, AMEN.**

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**S E R.**

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# S E R M O N X V.

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REV. 22. 17. *And the Spirit and the Bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is a-thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.*

**I**N these Words is contained a gracious Invitation, in which four Things are remarkable, *viz.* the *Persons inviting*, the *Persons invited*, the *Duty invited to*, and the *Mode of the Invitation*; each of which, I would discourse upon in their Order.

I. **THE** *Persons inviting*, are the *Spirit*, the *Bride*, and *him that heareth*; and, 1<sup>st</sup>, The *Spirit* invites poor Sinners to hasten to the Mediator, by his gracious Influences, through the Word, Ordinances, and Providences of God; by shewing the Reason-



ableness, Necessity, and Advantages thereof, in a clear and strong Light to the Mind, and disposing the Soul hereto; without his Operations all Means are like the *Staff of Elijab*, and the *Pool of Siloam*, before the Angel descended and troubled the Waters, unable to awake the Dead, or heal the Wounded! 2d, The *Bride*, i. e. such as are really espoused to Christ, sincerely and earnestly long after the Conversion of others: They have found by Experience, the Danger of Sin, and the Sweetness of a Saviour's Love; and therefore bid awakened Sinners, heartily welcome to the dear Redemer. And, 3d, *Him that beareth, sayeth come*; this Phrase may intend some that wish well to the Redeemer's Kingdom, but are kept by unbelieving Fears, about the State of their Souls, from joining with the Church, in sealing Ordinances; even such are pleased, when they see Sinners flocking to the great *Emmanuel*, as Doves to their Windows! And bid them God Speed, at least by the silent, but expressive Language, of their Looks and Behaviour. But the

2. PARTICULAR contained in the Invitation, is the *Persons invited*; 1st, *Him that is a-thirst*; this Character supposes a Sight and Sense of Sin and Misery, and implies earnest and insatiable Desires after Relief, which

which are usually attended with Restlessness and Pain, and followed with vehement and unwearied Endeavours to obtain Mercy, such pray with Importunity, like convinced *Saul*, and press with determined Resolution, into the Kingdom of God, though it be some Times, through a Crowd of Opposition and Temptation. And, 2d, *Whosoever will*, i. e. is willing to forsake all Sin, all Self-Dependance, and accept a whole Saviour, with his Law and Cross, as well as depend entirely on his Blood, and live to him; every such Person is invited by the blessed God, to come and take the Water of Life freely; let his outward State be never so poor and mean, his Sins ever so many, or so great; and his Troubles for them, in his Apprehension, ever so small? All these are no Hindrances to Remission and Salvation, in case you believe. The

3. PARTICULAR in the Invitation, is the *Duties invited to*, which are these, 1st, *To come to Christ*, and his Benefits, which are doubtless intended by the *Water of Life*, in this Text: Now *coming to Christ*, most certainly signifies, our *believing* in him; he therefore that believes that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, *able and willing to save all that come to the Father by him*; he that seriously considers upon the

Terms

Terms of Self-Denial, taking up the Cross, and following Christ, that the Gospel offers him, and his Benefits upon, and fully Consents to them; he that relies upon his Mediation entirely, for a Right to Happiness, under a Sense of Guilt and Impotency, and commits the Concerns of his Salvation into his Hands, with Freedom, Desire, and Hope, and in Consequence hereof, brings forth the Fruits of the Spirit, comes to Christ, *John* 1. 12. *Cant.* 8. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. 2d, The other Duty here recommended, is to *take the Water of Life freely*, i. e. to accept of Christ, his Spirit, and Grace, as the Gift of God's unexcited Mercy, which you do not, nor can deserve, by any, or all of your Performances, past, present, or future, and which he is under no Obligation to vouchsafe, either by his Nature or Promise, but may absolutely deny in Consistency with both, after you have done your utmost: This is intended by the divine Injunction, of *buying Wine and Milk, without Money, and without Price; the Poor in Spirit are blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven: JEHOVAH bears the Cries of the Poor and Needy, nor does he despise the Prayers of the Destitute; in him the Fatherless find Mercy; i. e. such as feel themselves to be worthless, helpless, forlorn Orphans, and* flee

flee to him for Relief, shall be graciously received by him. The grand Qualification, is to be sensible we have none, and come to the blessed *Jesus*, as condemned *Criminals*, for the free Remission of all our Guilt by his Blood; as polluted *Lepers*, for cleansing from all our Filthiness by his Spirit; as *Orphans*, for shelter from all our Enemies, under his Wing; as *Beggars*, for an Alms of mere Mercy; as *little Children*, to be instructed in all we should believe and do: Unless we have this Temper of Mind, we cannot depend upon the Mediator entirely, nor are we disposed to value suitably, and seek intensely, the important Benefits of his Purchase, or to render to God, the Honour due for them\*.

The Lord JESUS CHRIST, and his Grace, are in our Text, called WATER OF LIFE, or compared to a Fountain of Waters, because of some Analogy between them, which appears in the following Instances; as Water cools in the sultry Heat, so the Blood of JESUS pacifies the Conscience; as Water quenches the Thirst of the Body, so does the Grace of Christ that of the Soul; *he that drinks of this living Water shall never Thirst, but it shall be in him as a Well of Water;*

\* See Rom. 9. 15, 32. Eph. 1. 3, 62, 3. 9. Rom. 3. 23, 28. James 1. 18. Job 1. 13. 2 Tim. 19. 24. 3. 5.

*Water*; (*John* 4. 10, 13, 14.) As Streams of Water are not only beautiful in themselves, but beautify the Bodies they are applied to, so the dear JESUS is not only in himself lovely, but he makes his People so, with his *Comeliness*; as Water runs freely and steadily from a Fountain, when Land-Floods are either dried up with the Summer Heat, or frozen with the Winter Cold; so the Grace of Christ, is in the Souls of his People, as a *Fountain of Waters, springing up to eternal Life*: Christ, and his Grace, may be truly called Water of Life, because through this, he gives a Right to eternal Life, purchased by his Blood, as well as implants and preserves to the End, a Principle of divine Life, by his Spirit and Intercession; which makes meet for Eternal! But the

4. PARTICULAR in the Invitation, is the MODE of it. The Invitation is pressed three Times, in our Text, to shew, 1<sup>st</sup>, The absolute Certainty, and great MOMENT of the Duty enjoined; our eternal All depends upon it; without *Union* to Christ, we can have no *Title* to his precious Benefits; now FAITH is the *Band* of this *Union*; as Bread, if it be not eaten, will not nourish us, as Raiment not put on, will not cloath us, as a Medicine unapplied, will not heal us, so  
Christ,

Christ, and his Benefits, will be of no saving Service to us, unless they be received by FAITH; by this we feed on the *Bread of Life*, put on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and are healed by the *Balm of Gilead*. Nothing is more frequently enjoined, and strongly recommended in the sacred Oracles, than this Grace of *Faith*; by this we are justified from the Guilt of Sin (*Acts* 13. 39.) sanctified from its Stain (*2 Cor.* 3. 18.) adopted into the Family of God (*John* 1. 12.) and admitted into Heaven (*John* 3. 16.) by this we are comforted in all our Sorrows (*Rom.* 5. 2.) in this we should pray (*James* 1. 6.) by this we should live (*Gal.* 2. 20.) and in this we should die (*Heb.* 11. 13.) the total Want of this Christ absolutely condemns (*John* 8. 24.) Aversion to this he passionately bewails (*John* 5. 40.) Weakness in this he sharply reproves (*Luke* 24. 25.) a great Degree of this he highly commends (*Mat.* 15. 22, 29.) *Behold, a Woman of Canaan cried unto him, saying, have Mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil; but he answered her not a Word: And his Disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away, for she crieth after us: But he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel; then came she and worshipped him,*

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him, saying, *Lord help me: But he answered and said, it is not meet to take the Childrens Bread and cast it to Dogs; and she said truth Lord: Yet the Dogs eat of the Crumbs which fall from their Master's Table; then Jesus answered and said unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Here observe, the Petitioner was a *Pagan*, the Errand she came upon, was the *Cure* of her *Daughter*, who was under some distressing bodily Distemper, in which Satan had a Hand; this humane and amiable Parent, sympathized with her poor Child, and came to the Mediator on her Account, for Help. O! may not the noble Example of this virtuous and devout *Pagan*, make those *PARENTS*, falsely called *CHRISTIAN*, ashamed, whose *Children* are under the *Tyranny* of the *Devil*, posting fast to *Ruin*, and yet neglect to bring them to *Jesus* to be *bealed*, as this *Canaanite* did her *Daughter*, who petitioned with *Modesty* and *Vehe- mence* for *Mercy* in her *Behalf*, and looked on it as *Mercy* to herself! *she cried unto him, saying, have Mercy on me, O Lord, and waited with Patience and Perseverance in the Way of Duty, for the Answer of her Suit, till she was three Times repulsed! At first Christ was silent, he answered her not a Word, which was a dark Symptom! and when*

when his Disciples interposed, perhaps more to befriend themselves than her, being wearied with her Importunity; he repeats the Repulse, by saying, *I am not sent but to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel:* The Door of Mercy seemed to be now quite shut, yet this poor Woman, the Honour of her Sex, was neither offended nor discouraged, but renews her *Importunity*, with increasing Reverence and Vehemence, *then came she and worshipped, saying, Lord help me;* a short, but substantial and humble Prayer: Upon this our Lord gave her a third Repulse, accompanied with a Reproach, saying, *It is not meet to take the Children's Bread, and cast it to Dogs;* this brought her Calamity to the highest *Crisis*, for it seemed to be a final Rejection, and that with an Appearance of *Contempt*; for our Saviour hereby implicitly called her and her Daughter *Dogs*: Surprizing that the compassionate REDEEMER, *whose Speech distills as the Rain and Dew upon the tender Herb*, should speak thus roughly to a humble, importunate Suppliant! but it was with a kind Intention, to try and manifest her Faith, and render the Mercy implored, the more agreeable and affecting, when vouchsafed! as well as to magnify his own Power and Grace in the Issue! But let us



attend the Petitioner's Answer, to the *third Repulse*; here let us be all Ear, all Astonishment! and *she the Syrophœnician said, truth Lord, yet the Dogs eat of the Crumbs which fall from their Master's Table*; It is, as if she had said, 'Lord, I confess, the *Jews* are 'Children, and I and my Daughter are 'DOGS, poor HEATHENS, no Members of 'God's visible Kingdom; and that it is un- 'reasonable, that we who are Dogs, should 'be served before all the Children are sa- 'tisfied; but Lord, I do not presume to 'ask a full Manifestation of thy Power and 'Goodness to the *Gentiles*, till an Offer of 'Mercy is made to the *lost Sheep* of the 'House of *Israel*; I only beg a CRUMB of 'Mercy for myself and my poor Child, and 'Lord, though it is not customary, to 'give whole Loaves prepared for Children 'to Dogs, yet they are permitted to pick up 'the Crumbs that fall from their Master's 'Table, O let us have the same Privilege; 'I believe Lord thou hast a sufficient Full- 'ness of Grace and Blessing, to satisfy the 'Children, and spare us a few *Crumbs!*' What Humility appears in this Answer, in acknowledging herself to be a *Dog*? What *Modesty*, in begging no more but a *Crumb*? What *Faith*, *Fervency*, and *Ingenuity*, in bearing up under so many Repulses, in continuing

tinuing her Suit notwithstanding of them, and in forming a *Plea* from a *Refusal* to inforce it! The Issue of this Struggle was honourable and comfortable, and *Jesus said unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*: Hitherto, the dear Redeemer put on a stern Aspect, but now he looks serene, and speaks like himself, as *Joseph*, when he made himself known to his Brethren, saying, *I am Joseph!* Though divers Graces shone with uncommon Lustre, in this amiable Lady's heroine and exemplary Conduct; yet the greatest Honour is put upon her Faith (because this honours God more than any other Grace) the Greatness of which, appears in her importunate persisting, after so many Discouragements and Refusals; as *Jacob*, who wrestled with his God, and prevailed; she as a Princess, succeeded in her Suit, and obtained the Blessing she desired! And truly Brethren, the Way to get our *Will*, is to *believe in Jesus!*

ANOTHER Instance of our Saviour's commending a great Degree of FAITH, is the *Centurion*, who waited upon our Saviour, for the Cure of his sick Servant; to whom our Lord said, *be would come and heal him*; but this *Roman CAPTAIN* answered and said, *Lord I am not worthy, that thou shouldst come*

come under my Roof, but speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed; when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said, verily I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel; see *Mat.* 8. 8, 10. The Answer of this Gentleman, was truly admirable, full of singular Humility, Reverence, and *Faith*: He was loth that our Lord, should put himself to the Trouble of going to his House, a Favour which he reckoned himself unworthy of, nor did he think there was the least Necessity of his personal Presence to effect the Cure: *Only speak the Word*, said he, *and my Servant shall be healed*; he nobly believed, that our Lord, had as absolute controul over Diseases, as he over his Soldiers: An Example of Piety and Humanity this, worthy the Admiration, and Imitation of all, and especially of such, who are of the military Order! Once more,

FOR Eminence in this glorious Grace of *Faith*, an honourable Title and Encomium, were given to *Abraham*, and are transmitted to all Generations, as a Motive and Pattern, to all his spiritual, as well as natural Offspring, *Rom.* 4. 17, 22. *I have made thee a Father of many Nations; who against Hope* (or the outward Appearance, and general Course of Things) *believed in Hope: He staggered not at the Promise through Unbelief, but*

but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully perswaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform. After the Promise of a numerous Posterity, he had no Issue by Sarah, till they were both so advanced in Years, that it was utterly improbable, according to the Course of Nature: Twenty Years elapsed, before Isaac was born, this SON of his aged Years, this Son of his pregnant Hopes, this Son of the Promise, the Staff of his Age, the Darling of his Heart, his only Son, the Son whom he loved, he is commanded peremptorily, without any Reason assigned, to SLAY, and that with his own HAND; O amazing Trial! what unsurmountable Difficulties attended his Compliance? How could it consist with the moral Law, which is of invariable Equity? How with Reason, with Humanity, with natural Affection, with the Promise of God to him, the Peace of his own Mind, the Peace of his Family? How with his Honour, and the Credit of Religion, that he should slay his Son? But Abram being fully convinced of a divine Warrant, notwithstanding of all that has been said, prepares for a Compliance, and with an unparalleled, invincible Firmness of Resolution, begins it; though the Child put an additional Remora in his Way, by his tender Appellation,

lation, and innocent Query; *Father here is the Wood, but where is the Lamb, for a Burnt-Offering?* This Address, in such Circumstances, must pierce an affectionate Parent's *Heart*, and make his *Bowels* turn within him! Yet this extraordinary Man stood the *Shock*, and remained immovable; *built the Altar, bound his Son, laid him on it, took the awful Knife, and stretched forth his Hand, to give the fatal Stroke, at the very Throat of his Isaac!* 'Be astonished, 'O Heavens, at this, and wonder, O Earth! 'here is an act of Faith and Obedience, 'which deserves to be a Spectacle to God, 'Angels, and Men! *Abram's Darling, Sarah's* Laughter, the Churches Hope, the 'Heir of Promise, lies ready to bleed and 'die, by his own Father's Hand!' Here is an Instance of HEROIC FAITH, that merits everlasting Admiration and Renown, an *Example*, that our *Duty, our Honour, our Comfort, our Usefulness, our immortal Interest*, conspire to incite us (who profess a Relation to him) to *imitate*, with an inviolate, unfainting *Firmness*, to our *dying Breath!*

BUT the *Mode* of the Invitation, in our Text, is not only designed to signify the Certainty, and great Moment of the Duty enjoined, of coming to Christ, or believing in  
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in him : But, 2d, The Almighty's *Earnestness*, to obtain our Compliance ; to this End, *Christ Jesus stands at the Door and knocks, saying, if any Man will hear my Voice; and open the Door, I will come in and Sup with him, and be with me : Rev. 3. 20.* With what Terms of Endearment does the blessed Jesus accost his worthless Bride, to excite her to perform this important Duty ? *Cant. 4. 8. Come with me from Lebanon, my Spouse, look from the Top of Amana, from the Top of Shenir and Hermon : Cant. 5. 2. Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undeified, for my Head is filled with the Dew, and my Locks with the Drops of the Night,* waiting for Admission, into the Heart I have formed, and which I only can satisfy ! To this Purpose, God commands, threatens, invites, encourages, 1 *John 3. 23. This is the Commandment, that ye believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, he that believes not is condemned already, he shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him ; John 3. 18, 36. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest.*

BUT the MODE of *Invitation*, speaks the convinced Sinners great *Backwardness* to believe ; it is as difficult to perswade a convinced Sinner to believe, as the Secure

to awake : The Secure have many Excuses, e. g. God is merciful, I am not so bad as many others, nor so bad as I have formerly been myself ; I have a good Heart, thank God, and many good Thoughts, and mean no Harm to any ; I have never wronged a Man of a Penny in my Life, and am no Hypocrite, as many are : On the Contrary, the Convinced have many Excuses against believing, which is owing to the following Causes, *viz.* 1st, To our being born under a *Covenant of Works*, the Vessels retain a Tang of the Liquor first put into it ; *the Law is not of Faith, but he that doth the Things written therein, shall live by them ;* i. e. he who personally, perfectly, and perpetually obeys the Law, shall obtain eternal Life, by his Obedience, without FAITH in a MEDIATOR : But we have broken the Law, in our first Parents, and therefore Salvation by it, is now rendered impossible, for we are all condemned for Original Sin, and cursed for the least Actual, *Gal. 3. 9, 10.* Yet, though this Way be shut up, our natural Desire after Salvation by it continues. 2d, Another Cause of our Backwardness to Believe, is our *Ignorance* of the *Gospel Method* of Salvation, by Grace ; *the natural Man does not understand the Things of the Spirit of God,* and in particular, he does

does not clearly perceive the Difference, between Salvation by the *Law*, or by *Grace*; but still dreams contrary to God's express Declaration, that *it is of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God that sheweth Mercy*. Mere speculative Knowledge, will not divorce us from the Law, as a Husband; let Men hear ever so much of the new Covenant Way of Salvation by Grace, they have not a distinct, affecting View of it, till it be opened to them, by the Word and Spirit of God, and therefore even when they are awakened, they try to cure themselves by a more strict and earnest Performance of Duty, and are amazed and nonplussed, when they find this Method does not answer their Design! They labour to join the Righteousness of Christ, and their own, and make a patched, Cloak to screen them from the divine Vengeance; but they may as easily make a Rope of Sand, or unite Light and Darkness, see *Rom. 11. 5, 6. Gal. 5. 4.* 3d, *Pride* opposes Faith, it goes against the Grain to be beholden to Christ for a free Cure, haughty Sinners scorn to stoop to the humble State of *Beggars*, and therefore try to *barter* and truck for Salvation with Almighty God, as if they could keep even Scores with him, or bring Immensity in Debt; they love the *Spider's*



proud Motto, *I am Debtor to myself alone ;* and hence it is said of the *Jews*, *Rom. 10. 3. That being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own, they did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of God.* This is the Reason why natural Men spurn with such Indignation against the *Sovereignty of God*, and grapple with him for his Throne ; they cannot endure to think of being under his Controul : No, instead of that, they will have their Creator dependant on their Wills forsooth ; and obliged to lacky after their insolent and precarious Nod ! and tell smooth Stories, to palliate their blasphemous Arrogance ; as if it was right and reasonable, that they should take the Reins of Empire, and occupy *Jehovah's* Place : But Sinners must bow, or be broken in Pieces, humbled or damned ! *If. 28. 18, 20. Gal. 2. 16.* 4th, Another Cause of Men's Backwardness to believe, is FEAR of PRESUMPTION ; presuming of Mercy out of God's Way, was their Sin before, and the Fear of presuming in the Way of Duty, is their Sin now : It is, no Doubt, Presumption to expect Mercy, in the Way of Impiety and Unbelief ; but it cannot be Presumption to obey God's positive Command, and kind Invitation, in believing his faithful Word, and accepting his gracious Offers :

fers : The Devil is as busy to keep the Convinced from Faith, as the Secure from Conviction ; and this he does as an Angel of Light, under a Cloak of Friendship ; to the Secure he says, take care you do not Despair, and to the Convinced, take care you do not presume, by believing over hastily, before you are sufficiently prepared for it ; and alas, the Misfortune is, he is sooner believed than the God of Truth ! 5th, Another Cause is, EASE IN DUTIES WITHOUT CHRIST ; they mourn, pray, resolve, reform, and these Things give them Ease ; but alas, Friends, this is a false Cure : Though these Duties are good in their Places, as necessary Means to obtain the Favour of God, yet they are not the End, they are not Christ ; we must be acquainted with him, or perish for ever : The *stung Israelites* must look on the *brazen Serpent*, or die in their Wounds ; now, as *Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness*, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life, *John 3. 14. 15.* If Duties would heal without Christ, then there was no need of his being sent into the World.

FROM what has been said, we may learn, the Goodness and Love of God, in providing such a suitable and sufficient Redeemer, for fallen

fallen Mankind, and in using such humble Importunity, to persuade them to accept of him, and Salvation through him! *There is a Balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there, a Fountain is opened for Sin and Uncleanness, the Man Christ Jesus is a hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of Waters in a dry Place, as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land (Is. 32.)* *him the Lord hath anointed, to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the Broken-hearted, and proclaim Liberty to the Captives, Is. 61.* Poor, miserable, blind, and naked Sinners, are expressly counselled by Christ himself, *to buy of him Gold tried in the Fire, that they may be rich, white Raiment that they may be clothed, and to anoint their Eyes with Eye-Salve, that they may see, Rev. 3. 17, 18.* In his immense, unwasted Fullness, every Blessing is contained, which guilty and indigent Sinners need, for *it has pleased the Father, that in him all Fullness should dwell.* Come then, my guilty Friends, and welcome to an all-sufficient and compassionate Saviour, and consent to be entertained, with the best Blessings Heaven can afford, a Soul receive, or a God can give, upon *free Cost!* When we consider, *my Brethren and Sisters,* the Value and Duration of this *Provision,* the infinite *Price* whereby it was procured, the

the *Freeness* of the Offer thereof to all, yea the very worst of Mankind, the independent *Majesty*, and yet condescending *Importunity* of the *Inviter*, together with the *Meanness* and *Vileness* of the *Guests*; it is enough to transport and ravish us; be astonished, O Heavens, at this *Prodigy* of *Love* and *Grace*, which is infinitely too big for the Thoughts or Words of Men and Angels, in Heaven and Earth, for ever to conceive or express! *Behold what Manner of Love is this, that we should be called the Sons of God! herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only begotten Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins! 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! O the Breadth, the Length, the Depth, the Height, of the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge! And what Gratitude, dear Sirs, does this matchless, gracious Love, deserve from us, for ever? What a Monster then of Iniquity, must Unbelief be, that casts a Slight upon all this Love and Grace, thwarts the Design both of the Law and Gospel, opposes the gracious Purpose of God towards his Elect, opposes the Purchase of Christ, the Agency of his holy Spirit, opposes all the Invitations and Promises of the whole Book of God, opposes*  
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all the Dispensations of divine *Providence*, and makes them, where it habitually governs, of no effect! O horrid! This, this then is the *Sin of Sins*, worse than any other, yea than all the Rest; and hence, when the holy Spirit convinces the World of Sin, the Iniquity that is only mentioned, is Unbelief, as if there was no other, to signify that it is the worst of all; as *Faith* is the *cardinal Grace*, so is *Unbelief* the *cardinal Sin*; the GENERALISSIMO of all Satan's *Troops*, that leads them on to Battle, and ranges them in *Battalia*, *John* 16. 8, 9. In this Monster are grasped these malignant Ingredients, *viz.* Rebellion against the highest Authority, *I John* 3. 23. *Ingratitude* against the richest Grace and Mercy, *Is.* 1. 2, 3. *Blasphemy* against supream Majesty, in charging Falshood upon the God of Truth, *I John* 5. 10. *Madness* in contending with Omnipotence, *Murder* in fastning the Guilt of all other Sins, and entailing God's Wrath and Curse upon us for ever, *John* 3. 36. *Treason* against God, and *Confederacy* with the *Devil*; hereby Men enlist under the Colours of the Prince of Darkness, gratify his Spite, and obey his Orders, in fighting against the Being, Honour, and Government of God, spitting in his Face, the Seat of Beauty and Majesty, and despising his  
Grace

Grace and Love †! I therefore earnestly beseech you to comply with the Invitation, in our Text ; to excite hereto, O consider, the gracious *Nature* of GOD (*Ex.* 34. 6.) the *dying Love* of God (*Rom.* 5. 8.) his *Purpose* (*Eph.* 1. 6.) *Promise* (*John* 6. 37.) *Power* (*Heb.* 7. 25.) *Grace* (*Is.* 43. 21, 26.) and *Invitations* to the Chief of Sinners, the Wretched, Poor, Blind, and Naked (*Rev.* 3. 17, 18.) to all that labour and are heavy laden (*Mat.* 11. 28.) to all that are a-thirst, and are willing to come, as our Text assures us. Once more, consider that the *Offers of Mercy*, are not by proper SALE, but by free sovereign GIFT, without any Righteousness of ours as a Price of Purchase ; it is called indeed a *buying*, to shew the poor Sinners Willingness to give all he has, but then that he is sensible his All is nothing to God, no Price, and therefore he buys as a *Beggar without Money, and takes the Water of Life freely.* AMEN.

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† And yet this *Hydra* is quite overlooked, by the *Pagan Schemes of pretended Christianity*, which our unhappy Nation abounds with, in this Day of Degeneracy and Blasphemy!

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# S E R M O N X V I .

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JEREMIAH 3. 22. *Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING all the Goodness of GOD, the People of *Israel* treacherously departed from him, as an adulterous Wife, from an affectionate Husband; for which, divers Calamities were sent upon them, with which, the holy Spirit graciously co-operating, many had an affecting View, both of their Sin and Punishment; so that *a Voice of Weeping and Supplication was heard in the Places* of public Convention, they affectionately acknowledged their Iniquities, and earnestly implored Mercy: O! that as we have imitated them in their Sin and Punishment, we may be enabled to imitate them in their Weeping, Devotion,

tion, and Disposition, to return to the God from whom we strayed. Verily, Brethren, there is as great Necessity, that our Places of public Worship should be BOCHIMS; for our Sins are more heinous, being committed against greater Light and Love; and divine Justice is certainly disposed to proportion Calamities, to the Crimes of Offenders, nor is there any Reason to expect a national Deliverance in Mercy, from the Distresses we feel or fear, without a general Repentance, and Reformation of Manners: But these, would open a Door of Hope, and diffuse a Gleam of Light upon our benighted Nation, as on the People of *Israel*; for behold, while they bemoan themselves, a gracious God addresses them in the loving Language of our Text; *Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings*: The Words contain a *gracious Invitation*, in which four Things are observable, *viz.* The *Inviter*, the blessed God; the *Persons invited*, the People of *Israel*; the *Duty invited to*, *returning to God*, a *Motive* to this proposed, and *I will heal your Backslidings*. And,

1. THE *Inviter* is the *glorious God*, to whose Service, they had bound themselves by Covenant Engagements; a Being who deserved their supream Love, and humblest



Homage; because of his supream Eminence, and communicative Goodness, in innumerable, immerited, and important Instances!

2. *THE Persons invited*, more immediately the People of *Israel* (and mediately all in their unhappy Circumstances in after Time) here called *Children*, which they were in several Respects, *viz.* by *Creation*, thus all the human Race are Children of God, for he has made of one Blood all Nations; by *Covenant Dedication*, in this Sense all the Nation of *Israel* are called God's Son, *Ex. 4. 22.* and some of them were Children, in a special and saving Sense, by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*, the former of which communicates the Disposition of Children, and the latter enstates in their Privileges! Farther,

*THE People of Israel*, are here called *backsliding Children*; the Almighty does not cast them off, on Account of their Declinings in Religion, though they perhaps cast off themselves, and are cast off by others, yet the gracious God owns them to be his Children still, in their lowest State; O amazing, glorious Goodness! This is Language becoming the God of Love and Grace, for none but a God would do thus! O poor Backsliders, when you hear the great *Jehovah* accost you in this endearing Manner, after all your Wandrings, it is enough to  
revive

revive your discouraged Hearts, and dissolve them into the tenderest Contrition; who would not love and serve so gracious a God, and hope for great and good Things, from Goodness and Love itself? Here give me Leave to speak of the NATURE, KINDS, CAUSES, and CONSEQUENCES, of *Backsliding* in Religion.

I. *We decline in Sentiment*, when through the Corruption of our own Nature, together with the Stratagems of Satan, and artful Colourings of his Instruments, we depart, in any Degree, from the Simplicity of the Truth, as it is in Christ, and embrace those Doctrines, which flatter the Pride of Nature, and tend to fix foolish Sinners, upon the sandy Bottom of their own Wisdom, Power, and Righteousness, to the Disparagement of Christ, and his Gospel, and the Ruin of many Souls: Of this Stamp, are Doctrines of a *Light in all Mankind*, sufficient to Salvation, without the sacred Scriptures; a *free Will*, in the Unregenerate, to do spiritual Good; and of *Justification*, partly, or wholly, by *Works*; add to these, the *Arian, Socinian, and Deistical Schemes*, whereby many have with some shew of Wisdom, endeavoured to banish the grand Peculiar of Christianity from the Earth; but *his Church is built upon a Rock, against*

*against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail: Wisdom will, in every Age, be justified by her Children.* Corruption in Foundation Principles, when long continued in, under Advantages of Instruction, is no Doubt, an awful Symptom, of unhumbléd Pride, Self-Ignorance, and Hypocrisy; and hence the Apostle observed, that *some went from them, because they were not of them:* Yet it is certain, that truly pious Persons, may not only err in lesser Points of Truth, which is a common Case; but may for a Time be dangerously corrupted, in Matters of great Importance, as appears from the Case of the *Galatians*, who by the Industry and Stratagems of false Teachers, were induced, in some Degree, as it would seem, by the Epistle inscribed to them, to warp in the great Doctrine of *Justification*, and to slight the Apostle *Paul*, who was, under God, a mean of their Conversion to him; and here it may be observed, that as false Doctrines favour Decays in Religion, so do the Latter the Former; they are indeed frequently mutual Causes of each other. Among the other Wickednesses of the present Age, this is one, that divers Pretenders to a Monopoly of Wisdom, have with all their Art and Eloquence, laboured to represent the Doctrines of Religion to be of little

little or no Consequence, though our *Saviour declares*, that we are *sanctified* by them, and *Reason itself teaches*, that *Sentiments have a Tendency to influence the Mind and Practice*; nor is it easy to vindicate the Conduct of divine Wisdom, in giving us so large a *System of Doctrines* in the BIBLE, if they are of no Importance: These Philosophers, by their laboured Harangues, upon a *graceless, christless Morality*, have almost banished, not only Christianity, but even moral *Virtue* (which they pretend a Veneration for) out of the Church, and World: May God deliver his People from such *Pagan Preachers*. There is an easy and natural Gradation, from Arminianism, to Arianism, and from that to Socinianism, and Deism; and this is the Path that many have trod in the present Age; let us therefore be afraid of false Doctrine (especially in important Points) *Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, and be valiant for the Truth upon the Earth*; in the mean Time, taking care to *speake the Truth in Love*, and to proportion our Zeal for it, to the various Degrees of Importance, of the different Truths that compose the Christian Scheme; lest the righteous God *send strong Delusions, and ye believe a Lie, and be damned*, 2 *Thes.* 2. 11, 12. But,

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2. WE *Backslide* in *Disposition* and *Practice*, when we forget our first Love, and fall from our first Works; i. e. when our Views of divine Things are darkned, our Love to God and Man abates, and our Labours for God's Kingdom, as well as for our own Souls are relaxed, either at Times wholly neglected, or superficially performed; when the Savour of Religion languishes in our Souls, and we have no *Appetite* for spiritual *Food*, but are indifferent whether we attend upon our Meals or not; and are more ready to *carp* at the *Cookery*, than to eat for our Nourishment, when no generous and pious Projects fire our Bosoms, and *the Reproach of Zion does not trouble us*, when we want to feather our Nests, and sleep in a whole Skin, more than to grow in Holiness, or do *Good*; when Credit with blind Folks is a great Matter with us, and we fear the precious Cross of Christ, when the World looks big in our Eyes, and its People wise and amiable, while in the mean Time, we neglect and slight the Saints of God, that are either poor in outward Estate, or through Backsliding, lean in their Souls, and instead of praying for them, and covering their Faults with a Mantle of Love, we aggravate their Blunders, and quite forgetful of our

our own, unmercifully condemn the State of their Souls.

THE *Causes of Backsliding*, are either General, or Particular; the general Causes are the *Body of Death* within us, and the numberless Devices of *Satan*, in concurrence therewith, which for the Sake of Brevity, I shall wave, and proceed to speak upon the particular Causes, which are principally these following, *viz.* 1st, *Neglect of the Heart*; when Persons take chief Care about the Outside, and seem easy if that is regular, how wretched soever it is within, and are rather desirous to have Praise of Man, than of God; this is the Beginning of Sorrows, for the Heart is the Parent of Action, and when that is not attended to, every Thing goes wrong; in this Situation, the Soul is like a Watch, when the Main-Spring is not well set; we are therefore enjoined to keep the Heart with all Diligence, because out of it are the Issues of Life, *Prov.* 4. 23. 2d, Another Cause is *Sloth*, in respect of the secret Duties of Religion, such as frequent ejaculatory Prayer, and stated Prayer, and Meditation in the Closet, or a superficial Performance of them: When the Spouse made Excuses about rising to open to her Lord, he presently withdrew, *Cant.* 5. 3, 6. When

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we are negligent, God is grieved, our relish of Religion abates, and we are gradually carried farther into the Spirit and Practice of the World: This detestable Iniquity, is at the Root of all Backslidings and Apostacies in Religion, for the Proverb is true, *That nemo repente fit turpissimus*; A Man does not sit in the Scorners Chair at first, no, he first stands in the Way of Sinners, and walks in the Council of the Ungodly: O! it is no easy Matter to persevere to the End, in a Course of religious Diligence; and yet the *Savour of Piety* cannot be preserved without it: It is easy to begin well to Appearance, but to continue (*hic Labor, hoc opus*) is the grand Difficulty, and yet this is necessary to crown the Scene; for it is such only, that *persevere to the End, who shall be saved*. But, 3d, Another Cause is *Unwatchfulness*; when we do not watch against Temptations to Sin, or for Opportunities of doing and receiving Good; this makes us an easy prey to our vigilant and cruel Enemies, who are strong and numerous, and we but weak and corrupt: Our Honour and Safety, as well as the Credit of Religion, do much depend upon our keeping a good Look-out; unless we are constantly on our Guard, we shall be soon ensnared and taken by Surprise, to our own

own Reproach and Loss, and to the Shame and Grief of those that fear God, who will be wounded through our Sides: This Consideration, justly moved the Psalmist, to pray earnestly to his God, that *none that sought him should be ashamed on his Account*; a very necessary Petition for us all; for we are in the Body, in great and constant Danger. And, dear Sirs, it would be much better for us to be hid in the Dust, than to live to the Dishonour of God: O then let us strictly and steadily observe the important Counsel of our Lord, to *watch and pray, lest we enter into Temptation*: While others are only watching to divert the Company, we should watch for an Opportunity to put in a Word for God, this would be as Apples of Gold, in Pictures of Silver. 4th, Another Cause is, *Trifling with Opportunities of public Worship*; staying at Home some Times without sufficient Reason, and when they do come, do it not after earnest Endeavours to get their Hearts in a right Frame, and with serious Desires to profit; nor do they attend with Engagedness, and afterwards labour to digest what they have heard, by Meditation and Prayer: In such a Course, nothing can be reasonably expected but Decays; for as the natural Life cannot be sustained without *Food*, and that digested,



so neither can the Spiritual: The Word preached, is not only designed to form, but to finish Faith, and perfect the Body of Christ, *Rom. 10. 17. 1 Pet. 22. Eph. 4. 11, 12.* We should therefore, *as new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby, and with Meekness receive it;* for unless it be mixed with Faith, it will not profit us: We should attend, *my Brethren,* from a Principle of Obedience to God's Authority, with an Eye to his Glory, and our own eternal Happiness; for he commands us *not to forget the Assembling of ourselves together, as the Manner of some is, Heb. 10. 25.* and graciously promises, that *where two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the Midst of them, Mat. 18. 20.* and that *in all Places where he records his Name, he will come unto his People, and will bless them, Ex. 20. 24.* But to proceed, 5th, *Neglect* of the frequent *Exercise of Repentance and Faith,* is doubtless a Cause of *Backsliding;* when Persons do not often mourn over their Sins, and oppose their Constitution Iniquity, they can have no Consciousness of Integrity, or reasonably expect divine Influence, *Mat. 5. 29. Rom. 8. 13.* Nor is it less prejudicial to our Growth in Goodness, to neglect a frequent renewing of our Consent to the Terms  
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of the New-Covenant; and a reallizing by Faith, the Perfections and Friendship of GOD, and a State of future Glory: We should frequently exercise Faith, upon divine Objects, and in particular, on the All-sufficiency of God; he is infinitely more than sufficient to satisfy our Souls in any Situation, and without him there is none to be had in any, that deserves the Name; his Love will give Content in Rags, and make Bread and Water sweet: Faith being the Conduit, whereby all divine Influence is communicated from Christ to us; it is therefore vain to expect Growth in Goodness, without the frequent Exercise thereof.

6th, *Neglect of living upon the Promises*, is another Cause of *Backsliding*; the *Words of God are not Yea, and Nay*, uncertain like those of Creatures; *but Yea, and Amen*, of infallible Certainty: The Promises are designed for the Support of our Faith, that thereby Holiness and Comfort may be promoted in us, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Now when we either do not consider, or stagger at the Promises; it is no Wonder our Comfort and Progress in Holiness are mar'd: The Promises are admirably suited to all the Difficulties of this present Life; consider in Perplexity, *Pf.* 32. 8. in Danger, *Pf.* 32. 7. *Pf.* 91. 4. in Want, *Philip.* 4. 19. *Is.* 33. 16.

### 358 *Unthankfulness a Cause of Backsliding.*

33. 16. in Sickness, *Pf.* 41. 3. in outward Distresses, *Pf.* 46. 1. *Deut.* 33. 27. *Rom.* 8. 28. *If.* 27. 9. *Heb.* 12. 10. under the Power and Guilt of Sin, *Röm.* 6. 14. *Hof.* 14. 2, 4. *If.* 1. 8, 19. *If.* 43. 25. if tempted by Satan, *Rom.* 16. 20. under Fears respecting Perseverance, *Jer.* 32. 40. if dejected, *John* 16. 22. if deserted, *If.* 54. 7, 8. under Fears respecting Salvation, *John* 10. 28.

UNTHANKFULNESS to God, for his innumerable Benefits, and neglect of *rejoicing* in *Christ Jesus*, is another Cause of Decays; when we take every Thing by the worst Handle, are always complaining, and crowd Thanksgiving into a Corner, how can we grow? Should we not *in all Things give Thanks*? There is not one Difficulty that we ever met with, that we could spare without Injury; they are all suited by infinite Wisdom, in respect of their Kind, Measure, Duration, and Time of Infliction, to our spiritual Advantage; and what would we have more? Should we not therefore heartily bless God for them all, seeing they are Fruits of his fatherly Care and Love, which is not a feminine Fondness, but a masculine Affection, that prosecutes the properest Measures to compass the Good of its Object! But how shall I be thankful for Afflictions, seeing I have found no Good by

by them. *A.* Have not you, under them been at Times humbled, as well as stirred up to pour out Prayers before God, with unusual Importunity, and resolved to be holy? And are not these Benefits? But if you should reject this Reply, God's *Promise* is a sufficient Answer, *viz.* that *they shall work together for your Good*, in his Time, and Way; though *no Affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous, nevertheless it afterwards yields the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness, to those that are exercised therewith*; God's Government over the World is holy and good, *he is wise in Counsel, and wonderful in Working*? But how can I rejoice, who am so full of Sin, and of no Use in the World? *A.* If Sin be your principal Burden, it does not reign, and therefore you will not be condemned for it; and if you sincerely desire to be of Use to Mankind, it is an Argument of true Goodness: It should also be observed, that there are different Kinds of Service, because of the different Stations in Life we sustain, and the different Talents we possess; some more eminent, direct, and discernable, and some less so; yet all acceptable to God, through Christ, and all useful: Though the *Foot* has not the Place, or Use of the *Eye*, yet it is Necessary, and of Service in the Body. The Kind, Degree, and Times of

of our Usefulness, are fixed by the divine Purpose, to which Providence exactly corresponds; *Eph. 1. 11.* with which we should be satisfied; Duty is ours, but Success is God's, and therefore should be left to him; we may be of more Service by our Prayers, and the silent Influence of good Examples, than we know of; nor will our future Recompence be commensurate to our Success, but to our Fidelity in our Master's Service; *though Israel be not gathered, yet if sincere and laborious, we shall be precious in the Eyes of the Lord:* But supposing we are in a great Degree useless, will Murmuring and Unbelief mend the Matter? No! but make it worse! for hereby we offend God, and break our Constitutions: Let us therefore be pleased with God's Providence, and go on in the Way of Duty rejoicing! But my State is bad, how can I rejoice? *A.* If you have been slain by the Law, and embraced the Mediator without reserve, in all his Offices, and in the general Course of your Lives, are endeavouring to come out of this World, leaning upon him, if the Temper of your Hearts, is for the most Part spiritual; and you make Conscience of your Thoughts, Words, and Actions; if you Love all pious People for Christ's Sake cordially, and are solicitous to preserve the

Saviour

Savour of Religion in your Hearts, and to grow in Goodness in *Life*; notwithstanding of your Weaknesses, you are vitally united to Christ, he is your Head and Husband, and therefore whatever Cause you have of Humiliation and Sorrow upon your own Account, you have Cause to Rejoice in him, for he is your Righteousness and your Strength, and will be your Song at last.

LET us therefore labour to get more into the *Spirit* and *Liberty* of the *Gospel*, by avoiding judging of our State in a Time of Desertion, for Objects cannot be discerned in the Dark, and in that Situation we are in Danger of passing too severe a Judgment against ourselves, which is very prejudicial both to our Comfort and Growth, *If. 50. 10.* Let us beware of condemning the State of our Souls, because we have not had such a great Degree of Distress as some others, or such Comforts, Sealings, and Progress in Religion; if we have but the Root of the Matter, *let us go on towards Perfection, Heb. 6. 4.* to be every now and then digging up the *Foundations* of our Hope, and poring *too much* upon the *Law*, tends to damp our Spirits, discourage us in Religion, and keep us always in a State of Infancy; no, when the Law has done its Work, in Slaying us, it is of no farther Use

but to Guide our Conduct, and humble our Spirits, for our Violations of it; having felt the Spirit of Bondage to Fear, let us believe in JESUS, in this we cannot be wrong, for *Christ is the End of the Law, for Righteousness to every one that believeth* (Rom. 10. 4.) *this is the Commandment* (1 John 3. 23.) if we were before wrong, this is the Way to be right, and if right, to know it: O then let us learn to *live by Faith*, and not by Sense; hereby we shall Evidence ourselves to be the genuine *Children of Abram*, who *staggered not at the Promise, through Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God.*

ANOTHER Cause of *Backsliding*, is *Cowardice* in the Cause of GOD, which is as offensive to him, as prejudicial to us, *Mark 8. 38.* O let us resign our Names, Estates, Liberty, and Lives, into the Hands of God, and rejoice in the Hope of his Glory, bearing with Fortitude and Chearfulness, Sufferings for his Sake, from Sinners, or Saints, or from both; in this honest, resolute, and faithful Course, which is not like to suit well with an ungodly World, or even with backsliding, degenerate Christians, who have got too much into the Spirit of it, we may expect that *the Spirit of Glory, and of God, will rest upon us.*

NEEDLESS

NEEDLESS *associating with graceless People*, is doubtless, one Cause of the present prevailing DEADNESS; *depart from the Foolish, and live, and walk in the Way of Understanding.* When we make Companions of the Ungodly, by frequent and unnecessary Converse, they by their plausible, but selfish shew of Moderation and Prudence, draw away our Hearts from God, and by Degrees bring us into their Spirit; and indeed the farther we get from God, we like them the better, and no wonder, for we are like them ourselves: I do not hereby insinuate any Thing against conversing with them about necessary Business, or in order to their Cure, for that is commendable.

COVETOUSNESS is also a Cause of the present Degeneracy, *Is. 57. 17. For the Iniquity of his Covetousness, I was wroth and smote him, I hid me, and was wroth.* The Bulk of Mankind are fully of Opinion, that Happiness is to be had in *Wealth*, if we may judge of their Sentiments, by their Conduct; and therefore they set their Hearts and Souls upon it, and try to get it with the utmost Vehemence (*per fas nefasq*) by Hook and Crook, as the one Thing needful, and they make the Business of Religion vail to it; now pious People, in Desertion, are apt to be influenced by their Example, and for



a while to run in the same *Goose-Chase*, to their Shame and Loss; it is true, when Persons are first converted, having near Views of God, and divine Things, the World looks so mean and contemptible in their Eyes, that they are apt to run to an extream in neglecting it, which the Ungodly take good Notice of, and cry out with great Resentment, *they are Idle, they are Idle!* Scandalum Magnatum! *Great is Dianab of the Ephefians*, the People will be ruined by hearing so many Sermons: But afterwards, when pious People are at a Distance from their God, their Minds are so blinded, that they regard the World too much, and entertain foolish Expectations from it, which they find baffled by repeated Experience.-- I may add,

THAT *Pride* is a great *Cause of Backsliding*; when Persons go out of the Places Providence has put them in, and meddle with Things too high for them, *Pf. 133. 1.* When they refuse that Honour to others which is due, are Masterly and Censorious, this *Iniquity God abhors, and punishes, James 3. 1. and 4. 6. Is. 65. 5. James 2. 13.*

ANOTHER *Cause of Backsliding*, is *sinning against Light*; hereby the Heart is hardened, and the holy Spirit grieved, who in order to punish this Heaven-daring Iniquity, with-  
draws

draws his sealing Influences, *Eph. 4. 30.*  
Farther,

NEGLECT of the *Communion of Saints*, keeping shy of those that fear God, not speaking at proper Seasons, in a humble Manner, of our Christian Experiences, contrary to the Psalmist's Practice, *Pf. 66. 16.* and not associating for Prayer, and religious Discourse, *Mal. 3. 16, 17.* Again,

NEGLECT of *private Fasting*, and *extraordinary Prayer*, in secret; under Temptations, is a Cause of declining in Religion; extraordinary Circumstances, require extraordinary Measures, and are not like to be answered without them, *Mat. 9. 15. When the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast*; when a Messenger of Satan was sent to buffet Paul, he besought the Lord thrice, *2 Cor. 7. 8.* I may add,

THE Neglect of *frequent and attentive Reading* of the *holy Scriptures*, an Evil, pregnant with Sin, and Danger, and yet alas, too general among us! Once more,

A *glorious Work* of God's *holy Spirit*, in this Land (some Years since) in the *Conviction* and *Conversion* of many Sinners, has been unjustly *slandered*, and ungratefully *opposed*, by which great Injury has been done to the Souls of Men: Probably one Reason of the *Leanness* of Soul, that so much

much obtains, is that, that Iniquity has not been sufficiently laid to Heart!

Now the CONSEQUENCES of BACKSLIDING, are DREADFUL, for it makes Life uncomfortable, unprofitable, and dangerous; without the Sun, this World would be a melancholly Place, and so it is with those that fear God, when they enjoy not the Shining of the Sun of Righteousness? What Heart have such to do, or endure any Thing for God, no! many of them have enough to do, to keep their Heads above the Water, and are in continual Danger of making Religion, and its Friends, stink in the Nostrils of the Inhabitants of the Land, by the grossest Impieties!

To what *Degree* and *Duration*, BACKSLIDING may extend, in such who have the *Root of the Matter* in them, the Scripture is silent, only thus far we are informed, by the Instances of the Churches of *Ephesus*, and *Sardis*; that pious People may for a Time, forget their first Love, and fall from their first Works; and that the Things that remain, may be ready to die. (*Rev. 2. 3.*) that they may fall into gross Crimes, witness *LOT's Incest* and *Drunkenness*, *DAVID's Adultery* and *Murder*, *SOLOMON's Sensuality*, and *Worshipping false God's*; such as *ASTORETH*, and *MILCOM*; and *PETER's Denial* of

of his *Master*, with *Curses*, after all his Confidence; dreadful Instances, yet encouraging to the Wounded, for which Purpose I now mention them! It is probable, that DAVID continued stupid, after his Impiety, till NATHAN reprov'd him, which was *Nine Months* at least; but how long *Solomon* continued in his Wickedness, the Scripture saith not, which Silence, is doubtless designed, to leave a Door of Hope to those, who have wandred very far, and very long, from God, and to encourage their return to him! In this dismal Case, many try to tear up their Hopes by the Roots, and are sorry when they cannot get it effected! By this Method, they are discouraged, and made to roar, *their Moisture is turned into the Drought of Summer, their Bones broken,* and with HEMAN they are almost *distracted!*

SOME deserted Persons are like a Tree in the Winter, on which you can see neither Leaves nor Fruit, they get to such a Length of Impiety, that they are condemned by themselves, and all around them? Was it not strange in pious King ASSA, who instead of receiving the Prophet's Warning with Meekness, imprisoned him; and still more strange in JONAH, that he impudently, caviled with God himself about a Trifle, and  
told

told him to his Face, he *did well to be angry*.  
 O the awful Power of Temptation and De-  
 sertion ! What Feathers are the best of Men  
 before their Force ? For God's Sake then,  
*let those that stand, take heed lest they fall.*---  
 But the.

3. PARTICULAR in the Invitation, is the  
*Duty invited to ; Return,* ' That is, bewail  
 ' and abhor your Offences, and yourselves  
 ' for them ; reform from them speedily and  
 ' sincerely, and believe that I am willing  
 ' and able to help you ; believe that my  
 ' Grace is not only free at first, but ever  
 ' after ; the Top-Stone of this spiritual  
 ' Building, is brought forth not by human  
 ' Might and Power, but by the Spirit of  
 ' the Lord of Hosts, with *Shoutings, crying*  
 ' *Grace, Grace unto it* (Zac. 4. 6, 7.) raise  
 ' and enlarge your Thoughts of my Good-  
 ' ness, and my Grace, and Hope in my  
 ' Mercy, which endures for ever?'---  
 But the

\*4. PARTICULAR in our Text, is the  
 ENCOURAGEMENT PROPOSED, *and I will*  
*heal your Backslidings.* This gracious Pro-  
 mise includes Remission of the Guilt of Sin,  
 Subduction of its Power, and the Comforts  
 of the Holy Spirit ; *I, for my own Name's*  
*Sake, will blot out your Iniquities, and for-*  
 give

give your Sins, saith Jehovah. He giveth Power to the Faint, and to those that have no Might, he encreases Strength: He likewise comforts those that are cast down. Very memorable are the Words of God by the Prophet *Isaiab*, I will not contend for ever, for the Spirit should fail before me; for the Iniquities of his Covetousness, I was wroth and smote him, and he went on frowardly in the Way of his Heart: But what follows for such a perverse Behaviour? Wrath and Vengeance; no! be astonished, O my Soul, at the gracious Declaration of God! I have seen his Ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore Comfort unto him, and to his Mourners. The dear Redeemer makes the Bones that are broken to rejoice, his poor People are as glad as if they had never backslidden: *Where Iniquity has abounded, Grace does sometimes much more abound.* Shall we sin that Grace may abound? The Damnation of such is just.

FROM this Subject we may learn,

I. THE deep *Corruption* of the best of Men in their Bent to backslide from the blessed God; *Jer. 2. 11, 12, 13. Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods, but my People have changed their Glory, for that which doth not profit.* O this should excite the deepest Abasement, and strictest

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Watch over ourselves, and the greatest Tenderness over such as *have fallen, whom we should restore with the Spirit of Meekness, considering that we ourselves are also in the Body* ; and that it is by meer Mercy that we have been preserv'd from the greatest Crimes.

2. WE may learn the glorious Grace of God, inviting such Backsliders to return in the endearing Manner here expressed ; *Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslings. O the Breadth, the Length, the Depth, the Height of the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge ! O the Wonders of his Grace !* Let us therefore who have backslidden, imitate the Example of the Penitents in our Text, and say, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* The penal Consequences of our Departure from God, are parallel to those of the People of *Israel*, and our Obligations to return, more than parallel, because of the superior Privileges we enjoy. Hark, poor deserted Believers, your compassionate Father invites you to come to him, and promises to heal your Backslidings ; O godlike, glorious Grace ! Alas he does not invite me, for I am not his. *A.* You sometimes thought  
he

he lov'd you, and felt Love to him, you should remember the Hill MIZAR, the Days of God's right Hand, the Word on which he caus'd you to hope; for he is the same still, and loves to the End; he does not disdain to call you Children for all your Wanderings, and why should you disown your relation to him; no! you should call him, Abba Father, and plead your relation! It cannot be that I should be a Child of his and backslide so far. *A.* You speak without Book; the Almighty has not told you in his Word how far a Child of his may backslide, and therefore the rule you go by is a Fancy or Delusion; why will you gratify Satan in rejecting the Wisdom and Goodness of God against your own Souls? You would honour God, and act more like a Child of *Abraham*, if you hop'd against Hope. I grow worse and worse, there's no Body like me. *A.* What signify these *Glooms*? We should walk by Faith, and not by Sense. You do not know others Hearts, else you would think them as bad; but if the Case was really so, there is no reason for Discouragement, because God's Grace is free; *he will heal your Backslidings, and love you freely*: Whether they be more

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or



or less ; where he has not limited, you should not. *Believe, and be established.*

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**SER.**

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## SERMON . XVII.

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**HOSEA 2. 6, 7.** *Therefore behold I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that she shall not find her Paths : And she shall follow after her Lovers, but she shall not overtake them ; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them : Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now.*

**T** H O S E that feared God among the People of *Israel* are, in the preceding Verses, enjoined to say to their Brethren, *Ammi*, and to their Sisters *Rubama* : *i. e.* Tell them they are my People, and have obtained Mercy ; which was indeed the Case of all of them in respect to external Dedication, and of some in a saving Sense. In the mean  
Time

Time they must plead earnestly with their Mother the *Jewish* Church and Nation concerning their Idolatries, here justly termed *Whoredoms* and *Adulteries*, because they were Breaches of their Marriage Covenant with God, and to let them know how displeasing they were to him; that they had hereby forfeited their right to the Privileges of that relation, and deserved a Divorce; and that if they did not repent and reform, the Almighty would sue it out against them. *Plead with your Mother, plead, remonstrate plainly and pungently against the Church to which you are so nearly related, for she is not my Wife; she is not de jure, by right; she deserves not this Honour, having forfeited it by Male-conduct, and she shall not belong so de facto, in Fact, if she persists in violating her Faith, and abusing my Patience by her Lewdness, I will strip her naked, make her as a Wilderness, and slay her with Thirst: I will not have Mercy upon her Children, for they be the Children of Whoredoms, i. e. I will deprive her entirely of all her Comfort, Defence and Ornament, and expose her and her spurious Descendants to the most distressing and destructive Calamities! The reasons of this Severity are mention'd in the 5th Verse; For their Mother hath done shamefully; she said I will go after*  
*my*

*my Lovers, that give me my Wool and my Flax.* She was impudent and resolute in her Impiety ; *I will go after my Lovers ;* and with the greatest Unkindness and Injustice ascrib'd to their Influence the Benefits she receiv'd from God : But observe what she proudly calls *her Wool and her Flax,* as if they were hers more than in Fee-simple, the Almighty justly calls his, and threatens to recover out of her Hands ; thereby intimating that the *Right* of Creatures is only a right of Use (as Tenants at Will) which is by Male-conduct forfeited, and reverts to the Original Owner, who is by Creation absolute Lord over all Nature. *I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that she shall not find her Paths :* q. d. ' Because this People are so shameless, ' impetuous and boundless in their Lusts, I ' will deal with them as Men do with unruly and rambling Beasts, viz. *Set a Hedge of Thorns about them,* i. e. Encompass them with Wars and other Calamities which shall wound and pierce them, that if they will follow their evil Courses, they shall have but little Pleasure in them ; but if these are insufficient to restrain them, and they impiously attempt to force their Way through the Hedge of Thorns : *I will make a Wall ;* i. e. Increase

' crease the Number, and heighten the De-  
 ' gree of their Distresses, and make them  
 ' insurmountable, that *though they follow*  
 ' *after their Lovers they shall not overtake*  
 ' *them* ; they shall be so environ'd and im-  
 ' mur'd with a Train of great and growing  
 ' Calamities, that even though they attempt  
 ' to gratify their corrupt Inclinations, they  
 ' shall not be able to effect the Design against  
 ' my Honour and their own Happiness, no  
 ' more than they can by a sudden Sally  
 ' break through or leap over a strong and  
 ' high Wall.' Such indeed was the *Assyri-*  
*an Army under Salmanezar to the Jews* ; it  
 coop'd them up in the City of *Samaria* du-  
 ring the Space of three Years, and at last  
 stripp'd them to the Skin, and carry'd them  
 captive to a strange Country : And such was  
*Sennacherib*, who took all the fenced Cities  
 of *Judab* (2 Kings 18.) In the mean Time  
 Encouragement is imply'd in the Word  
 LEAST, that in case they abandon'd their  
 Impieties, the threatned Judgments would  
 be averted. *Then shall she say, I will go and*  
*return to my first Husband* : First, both in re-  
 spect of Time, of Dignity and Right ; *for*  
*then was it better with me than now* : Being  
 wearied in the Greatness of their Way with  
 fruitless Labour and vain Pursuit, and being  
 asham'd of their Hopes, like the Troops of  
*Tema,*

**Tema**, and dispairing of Help and Satisfaction from their Idols in Time coming, and likewise remembering the Comfort they formerly had in God, as a Husband; they now resolve to return to him in earnest, and without Delay. From the Text, I may observe these Propositions; 1st, That some who are pious, do at Times, greatly decline in Religion. And, 2d, That to reduce them, the Almighty sends many and great Afflictions. And, 3d, That when these are sanctified, they dispose them to return to their first Husband, because it was better with them then, than now. Having spoken upon the Subject of Backsliding, in the preceding Discourse, I shall wave the first Proposition entirely, and proceed to the two remaining: The first of which is,

**THAT** to reduce pious People from their Wanderings, the Almighty sends many and great Afflictions upon them, he *hedges up their Way with Thorns, and makes a Wall.* He embarrasses the Councils, crosses the Measures, and disappoints the Expectations of his backsliding People; he at first, lays lesser Sorrows upon them, in respect of their Names, Bodies, Estates, or Relations, to keep them from their IDOLS; but if this Method fails of Success, JEHOVAH sends heavier Calamities, and raises such Barriers

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in their Way, as they cannot surmount, to gratify their perverse Inclinations ; which through the dreadful Influence of long Desertion, and violent Temptation, they are in a Manner bent upon ; *if his People Sin against him, he will chastise their Iniquities with Rods, and their Transgressions with Stripes ; if they walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to them, and punish them seven Times for their Iniquities.* And indeed no other Method will promote their Interest ; for a Series of easy Honour and Prosperity, in this Situation, would but increase their Pride, Sensuality, and Ingratitude : The fatter they grow, the more with *Jeshurun*, they kick against the tender Bowels of their Benefactor ; and therefore he multiplies Distresses upon them, until they come to their Senses, humble themselves before him, and stop in their wicked Career : And some Times they are so sensual and stupid, that one or two Distresses do not answer the End ; but *Deep must call unto Deep*, before they awake to purpose, and turn to their God ! Well if the Case be so, that the Design of the Almighty in afflicting us, is to reduce us from our Wanderings to his Bosom, that he may impart sublimer Sweets, than this Earth affords ; *if he chastens us, that we may*  
*not*

not be condemned with the World? What Reason then have we to bleis him for his fatherly Love and Care, and submit without Murmuring to his Rod? *We have had Father's of our Flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them Reverence, shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? Heb. 12. Why should a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins?* Let us then humble ourselves under the mighty Hand of God, stretched out in personal, domestic, or national Calamities, that in due Time he may lift us up. I proceed to the

2. PROPOSITION, *viz.* That when Afflictions are sanctified, they dispose pious Persons to return to their first Husband, because it was better with them then, than now. The Truth of this Proposition, is sufficiently evident from the Text. Here let us enquire, 1st, When Afflictions are sanctified? 2d, What Sort of a Husband Christ is? 3d, What it is to return to him? And, 4th, Open the Force of the Spouses Enducement, by shewing in Contrast, wherein it appears better to be near Christ, than to be far from him. I return to the

1. PROPOSED, *viz.* to shew when Afflictions are sanctified. Now this is, 1st, When we discern GOD to be their AUTHOR; is



there any Evil in the City, and I have not done it, saith the Lord. (*Amos* 3. 6.) That is, EVIL of PUNISHMENT; for moral Evil, the Almighty cannot be accessary to, because of his infinite Purity: We are apt to pore too much upon the immediate Instruments of our Sorrows, while in the mean Time, we overlook the supream Director of all Events, who justly punishes us by them; this foolish Conduct tends to leaven our Minds with Revenge against our Fellow-Creatures, to our own Prejudice; but when we look above them all to God, and consider that he uses them, as a *Rod* in his Hand, to chastise us for our Offences against him, and that however unreasonable the Instrument is, God is righteous; this Method calms the Soul. And, 2d, When we discern our *Sins* to be their *procuring Cause*, surely against me is he turned, saith the Church. 3d, When we discern *Reformation* to be their *Design*; and that they come from fatherly Love; *whom God loveth he chastens, and scourges every Son he receiveth*, *Heb.* 12. And, 4th, When we endeavour sincerely to comply with this Design, by *bumbling* ourselves under *God's Hand*, confessing our Sins, and bewailing them, confessing the Righteousness of God's Judgments, and our Inability to deliver ourselves

ourselves from them, *praying frequently and earnestly for Forgiveness, Is. 26. 16. by beseeching and endeavouring to reform from the Causes of God's Displeasure, without Delay, and with full Purpose of Heart; in his Way, we may Hope for Relief, upon an infallible Foundation, 2 Chron. 7. 14. If my People which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my Face, and turn from their wicked Ways, then will I hear from Heaven, and forgive their Sin, and heal their Land.* When *Abah* humbled himself, though a bad Man, the Almighty took Notice of it, and would not inflict the Judgments threatned in his Day; and of the *Ninivites*, it is said, *Jon. 3. 10. God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Way, and repented of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and did it not:* Now if the Almighty takes such favourable Notice of the Humiliation and Reformation of unregenerate Persons, will he not much more of his own People? Yes surely; but without this, our Miseries will be continued, *Hos. 5. 15.* I proceed to the

2. PROPOSED, which was to enquire, *what Sort of a Husband Christ is?* The dear Redeemer is a *Husband honourably descended, the Son of God, by Nature, he is amiable in all*

all Respects, as *God*, he possesses all his Father's Excellencies; as *Man*, he is holy, harmless, undefiled; as *Mediator*, the hypostatical *Union* of the human and divine Natures in his sacred Person, his *Offices*, his *Sufferings* for poor Sinners, and *Obedience* in their Room and Place, render him wonderful and amiable; especially when we consider the Fullness and Suitableness of the one, and the Depth and Design of the other, together with the Majesty of his Person, and the Meanness and Vileness of those he came to seek and save; he is inexpressibly *rich*, besides the Riches of his Godhead, which are immense and incomprehensible; *all Fullness dwells in him as Mediator*; he is Lord of the Universe, and King of the Church; all *Nature* and *Grace* are under his Check, and at his Disposal; *he is the Resurrection and the Life*, and carries the Keys of Hell and Death; *the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*; his spiritual *Riches* are sublime, satisfactory, eternal! He is an *affectionate Husband*, who loved us with an everlasting Love, and therefore with loving Kindness has drawn us; his Regard to us before Time, is the Source of all the special Kindnesses he shews us in it: He loved us in our *Blood*. and bid us live; and has

has given the most substantial Expressions of Affection, by assuming an inferior Nature for us, and enduring therein an accursed Death, by bearing with innumerable Unkindnesses in us, and after repeated Breaches of Covenant, by inviting us to his Embraces, *how hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return to me, saith the Lord*; O glorious Grace and Love!—As he is the *Wisdom of God*, so he is the *Power of God*, able to break the Bars of Death, and conquer the Powers of Darkness, able to do abundantly above what we can ask or think.—He is a *generous Husband*, he makes his *Bride* comely, through his Comeliness, and though she brings nothing with her but Deformity and Guilt, he bequeaths upon her a Dowry of more Value than Millions of Worlds! He is an *everlasting Husband*, he Alpha and Omega, Death that dissolves the tender Ties of other Relations, ratifies his; which much commends its Worth. Now to be *married* to him, supposes a Divorce from the governing Love, and habitual Practice of *Sin* (*Psa.* 97. 10. *1 John* 5. 18.) as well as from the *Law*, in respect of Dependance (*Phil.* 3. 7.) and such a Discovery of his Excellency, Ability, and Love, as excites earnest Desires after him (*Philip.* 3. 8. *Mat.* 5. 6. *Acts* 11. 23.) and implies

implies a deliberate, unreserved *Consent*, to accept of him as a Husband, with a fixed Resolve to perform the Duties of a Wife, viz. Love, Reverence, Obedience, and an inviolate Adherence to the Marriage-Covenant; the Consequences of which, are Fellowship in his Love, and a conscientious Endeavour to perform the Duties of Marriage, 1 *John*, 1. 3. *Acts* 24. 16.—  
But I proceed to the

3. PROPOSED, which was to enquire, what it is to return to him. This includes a clear and distressing Discovery of the Miseries of his Absence, compared with the *Comforts* of his Presence; serious Deliberation thereupon, together with an affectionate Bewailing over our Sins, the Causes of his Departure from us. In this Case, the awakened Penitent, with *Ephraim*, bemoans himself, pours out Floods of Tears, and fills the Air with Sighs and Groans; he determines to forsake all his Sins in general, and his Constitution Sin in particular, and to perform all the Duties required of him, at all Adventures; his Soul goes out after the dear Redeemer, with vehement Sallies, and renews with Freedom its Consent to the Articles of the Marriage Covenant, and is laborious in performing the other Duties enjoined, to obtain an Assurance of his Love, and to  
walk

alk worthy of it; now this Duty should  
done without the least Delay, and with  
e most determined Purpose of Heart, and  
ly that is the Case, when the holy Spirit  
scends from on High. The

4. PROPOSED, comes next to be confi-  
red, which was *to open the Force of the*  
*ouse's Enducement to return to her Lord;*  
*shewing in Contrast the Benefits of his*  
*esence, and Miseries of his Absence: Or,*  
*other Words, wherein it is better to be*  
*ar him, than far from him. In his Pre-*  
*ice, we have the following valuable Bene-*  
*s, viz. 1st, Rest; those that do believe,*  
*is the Apostle, enter into Rest; they have*  
*ot only a Right to, and Prospect of Rest*  
*another World, but possess a Degree of*  
*amidst the Sorrows and Labours of this;*  
*turn to thy Rest, O my Soul, said the*  
*almist, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully*  
*ith thee; he had wandered from his God,*  
*id sought for Rest among Creatures; but*  
*ing disappointed of his fond Hopes, and*  
*ed with his vain Pursuits, he returns*  
*hamed of his Sin and Folly to his God,*  
*id having obtained the Light of his Coun-*  
*nance, rests under the Shadow of his*  
*ving, and in the Embraces of his Bosom.*  
*l, Delight; I sat down under his Shadow*  
*ith great Delight, says the Spouse, and his Fruit*  
D d d was

was sweet to my Taste. There is some Thing in the Love of Christ, which is exactly suited to the relish of a renewed Soul; their principle Desires are after Pardon of Sin, Peace with God, Holiness in Heart and Life, and a well grounded Hope of future Blessedness; all which, the Love of Christ gives Assurance of, and therefore must needs yield Delight; other Things flatter, but deceive our Hopes, and can no more satisfy the *Mind*, than Gravel the *Stomach*; but this being spiritual and immense, gives solid and satisfactory Nourishment to the Soul, as Marrow and Fatness to the Body. 3d, *Wonder*; such as have a just View of the Majesty and Purity of God, and of their own Meanness and Vileness, must needs be astonished at the Love of Christ, which pulls them back from the Brink of Ruin, and will not suffer them to destroy themselves! 4th, *Praise*; the Soul is hereby inclined to return the most affectionate Gratitude for the divine Goodness, *Pf. 103. 1. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.* 5th, *Joy*; having obtained the Smiles of God, they rejoice in the Hope of his Glory, in the Purity of his Law, and in the Wisdom, Goodness, and Firmness, of that gracious *Plan*, on which their Salvation is secured; by be-  
holding

olding the *Beauty* of the divine Perfections; their Hearts are enlarged to run in the path of his Precepts with Pleasure, *they mount up with Wings as Eagles, they run and are not weary, they walk and do not faint*; now their Bowels bleed with compassionate tenderness over a perishing World, and their Hearts are big with generous Desires after their Happiness, and pious Projects now to promote it; which yield the most sublime and noble Pleasure, are worthy the Dignity of a human Soul, and become the Design of its Existence. Now they are fearless of Evil to come, feeling themselves immured in the impregnable Fortrefs of the divine Attributes, they are intrepid amidst the Wrecks of Nature, and the Crush of Worlds: The Strength of the whole Creation, compared with the divine Immensity, is contemptible, as nothing, yea less than Nothing, and Vanity.

BUT on the Contrary, the *People of God*, in his *Absence*, are exposed to the following *Miseries*; 1st, They are *distressed*, like a disjoined Bone, and can find no true Ease any where, or in any Condition; their Souls pine and languish in the Midst of Honour and Affluence: What are these Trifles, seeing they cannot see the King's Face?



The Praise of Creatures, is a lean Thing, while God frowns, and Conscience reproaches; nor can pious People take that brutish Comfort in worldly Enjoyments which graceless Persons do; though they sleep, their Hearts wake, and often put them in Mind, how it has been with them, and how it should be, and what are like to be the dismal Consequences of their living in such a base Manner; all which mix Wormwood and Gall with their forbidden Sweets? But the Unregenerate having never had the Experience of Communion with God, and using little Reflection about their Souls, make a sorry Shift, to acquire in some Degree, the *Happiness* of a *Brute* 1<sup>st</sup>, Pious Persons, when Christ is far off, have *little or no Delight* in God, or in his Word and Ways; nay, some wander so far, that the *Thoughts of God are a Terror to them*, they either for a Time neglect secret Duties, and some of them Public also, or else perform them slightly, and soon grow weary in God's Service; they gad about changing their Way, seeking Comfort here and there in poor Creatures, or at least some Mitigation of their Grief; while in the mean Time they neglect God, and keep aloof from him and their own Hearts; but the Rest they seek in this  
 criminal

criminal Course, flees as a Shadow from their Embraces. 3d, Their Eyes being blinded, they are not affected with the Freeness of God's Grace, nor are they disposed to praise him, or rejoice in him: No! By their Sloth, and other Iniquities, they have blotted their Evidences for Heaven, and fear they are deceived about the State of their Souls: This mixes Vinegar and Nitre with their Comforts, and encreases the Weight of their Woes, fearing they come from the Wrath of God, and are designed to promote their Destruction; this View of Things, magnifies their Miseries, and casts a Gloom over the whole Creation. 4th, Having their Evidences for Heaven mar'd by their Iniquities, they are consequently full of distressing *Fears*, which not only hurt their Usefulness, but destroy their Comfort; they are afraid of the Judgments of God in this Life, and of Damnation after it expires; afraid of evil Tidings, and of falling into Sin, to the Scandal of Religion; afraid of being quite useless, of Poverty, of Sickness, and *Death*; and yet weary of Life, being neither fit to live or die; yea when the Power of Melancholly prevails, they tremble at the Shaking of a Leaf, and antedate their Miseries, by a distrustful Fear of Futurity; hereby they make imaginary Evils,

Evils real Ones ; as if the Evils of the present Day were not sufficient, without this Addition, and yet complain of the Greatness of them : These anxious and distrustful Fears, eat out the Comfort of their Lives, and bring them, in some Degree, in Bondage to the Law, to Death, and to the Wrath of God ; which shuts their Lips, that they dare not speak for God, when Necessity requires, and are indeed afraid of speaking to him ; this freezes their very Souls with Melancholly and Dejection ; O dark, O dismal State ! Thus Backsliders are snared in the Work of their own Hands, and find the Way of Transgressors hard : But in this unhappy Situation, they are not only distressed by *Fear*, as has been observed, but some Times with *Anger* against such as do them real or supposed Injuries, whose Prosperity they ignobly envy ; for a Series of Affliction and Sorrow, naturally tend to sower the Mind, and whet the Passions, which grow ungovernable : While they overlook divine Providence, and fix their Thoughts upon the immediate Instruments of their Miseries, they are carried into extravagant Sallies of Revenge, to their own equal Torment and Prejudice ; like Dogs who bite the Stone, but do not Eye the Hand

Hand that cast it. But the *Psalmist's Practice*, in the Case of *Shimei*, was very different, and is an Example worthy of our Imitation: When that ungrateful Man curd his King, in extream Distress, he kept Possession of his Soul in this Tempest, and would not suffer his Servant *Abishai* to slay him; *let him curse*, saith he, *because the Lord hath said unto him curse David*; 2 *Sam.* 16. o. i. e. God has righteously suffered this, as a Punishment of my Sins. Our Passions are blind and furious Powers, dangerous and ensnaring, if not kept under a strict Vatch, and tight Rein; the good Government of them is as difficult, as it is comfortable, advantageous, and honourable; *that is slow to anger*, saith SOLOMON, *is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a City*: Such as learn of Christ, to be meek and lowly in heart, shall find Rest to their Souls. 5th, When far from Christ, our *Blindness, Sensuality, Love to the World, and Fear of the Cross of CHRIST, increase*; the holy Spirit is grieved, and withdraws his Influence; and all which, we are in Danger of coming to carnal Compliances, and of falling into the grossest Impieties, whereby the Name of God will be more scandalized than we have

have ever honoured it, which is very distressing!

WHEN the People of God are quickened by him, and, with Attention, view these two different Conditions in *Contrast*, it is no Wonder they resolve to return to their first Husband; for by a just Comparison, they find it was infinitely *better with them then, than now*. Then they had their *Peniels, Boobims, and Pisgas*; then they could wrestle with their God, and prevail; *then* they could with Joy and Pleasure, behold the promised *Canaan*, as their sure Heritage, and long to be there with God: But now they are involved in Darkness, Guilt, and Misery, have little Disposition to do Good, and are full of the perplexing Fears of penal Evil; *now* their Lives are in a Manner useless to others, and a Burden to themselves; and this Uneasiness is heighthened, by reflecting on the Comforts of their former State: Those Things they have in Remembrance, and therefore their Soul is humbled in them; they put their Mouths in the Dust, if so be there may be Hope, and mourn in such Language as this, *O that it were with me as in Time past, when his Candle shone upon my Head! O that I knew where I could find him, that I might come even to his Seat!*

FROM

FROM what has been said, let us be excited to inquire, 1st, Whether Afflictions of a personal, or public Kind, have been sanctified to us, in the Manner before expressed? e. g. Have we discerned God to be their Author, our Sins to be their procuring Cause, and Reformation their Design? And have we endeavoured to comply with this Design, by humbling ourselves under God's Hand, by praying to him, by resolving to reform, and by executing this Resolve? If the Judgments of God upon us, have not hitherto had these salutary Effects, for God's Sake let us bewail our Sin and Misery, and pray and strive for the Sanctification of our Sorrows; if we regard either our own Comfort, or Safety, the Honour of God, the Weal of his Kingdom, or the Deliverance of our Nation from threatened Ruin! 2d, Let us enquire whether we are married to Christ, or not? To give Light to this important Inquiry, it is necessary to ask our Souls the following Questions? Have I been divorced from the governing Love of every Sin? And from the Law as a Covenant of Works? Have I had such a Discovery of the Excellency, Ability, and Willingness of Christ to save, as has excited insatiable Desires after Union to him, as a Husband; Communion in his

E e e

Love,

Love, and Conformity to his Life? Have I pondered upon the Terms of Marriage, and consented without reserve to deny myself, take up the Cross of Christ, and follow him; consented to embrace him in all his Offices, and Relations, with a fixed Purpose to perform faithfully and constantly to him the Duties of a Wife? And in Consequence of the aforesaid Closure, have I Fellowship in his Love, and do I make Conscience of performing the Duties of Marriage? It is with the utmost Seriousness and Impartiality, we should examine this Point, my Brethren, because upon the Decision of it, depends our eternal All. 3d. Let us enquire, if there be not some among us (who are married to the Lord JESUS CHRIST) that have backslidden from him, in the Manner before represented? Those I would earnestly invite and urge to imitate the noble Example mentioned in our Text; say from the Heart, *I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me, than now*: Thou knowest by sweet and sad Experience, the Truth and Force of this Argument; which, methinks, might be sufficient, without the Addition of any other, to reduce thee from thy Strayings to thy God, thy Duty, thy Honour, thy Interest, and thy Happiness! I charge thee therefore,

therefore, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou go no farther in those Paths of Rebellion, Darknes, and Death; return to thy Husband, thy Lord, thy Life, thy Rest; hearken, he calls, invites, and encourages thee; *thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return to me, saith the Lord, for I am married to thee; and elsewhere, Return unto me ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings, and love you freely!* Why then do you not return? His Arms are open to embrace you, *he is waiting to be gracious to you, and wanting to be exalted, that he may have Mercy upon you!* I cannot return? But can't you cry after him, and bewail your Inability, as well as the Causes of his Absence? Has he not promised to meet those, that wait upon him in his Way? And is not the Text I am discoursing upon, a gracious Promise? Do therefore honestly, what you can, and see if he will not help? It is your immediate Duty to mourn over your Sins, and believe in JESUS; in this Way you cannot be mistaken? The Promise in our Text, is not limited to this or that Degree of Backsliding: What Warrant then have you to limit it? But my Sins are so great that I am ashamed to ask Pardon, and afraid to come near to God. *A. Your Shame is*



396 *Returning to our first Husband urged.*

an encouraging Sign, hear how Christ speaks to such, *O my Dove, let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comly!* Consider for your Encouragement, the following Places of Scripture, *If. 1. 18. If. 35. If. 41. 10. If. 43. 21, 26. Jer. 31. 9, 17, 20. Hof. 11. 8, 9. Luke 15. 24.* and say, without lingering one Moment, in the Language of our Text, *I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me, than now.* Amen, Amen, dear Lord JESUS CHRIST, O say, AMEN.

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# SERMON XVIII.

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**MAT. 5. 46, 47.** *For if ye love them which love you, what Reward have ye ? Do not even the Publicans the same ? And if you salute your Brethren only, WHAT DO YOU MORE THAN OTHERS ? Do not even the Publicans so ?*

**T**HE PHARISEES were a Sect of People among the Jews, who were very strict in observing the Ceremonies of that Institution, such as washing before Meat, making broad their Philacteries, tything Mint, Annis and Cummin ; nevertheless divers of them were lax in Morals, and cover'd their Wickedness with a religious Mask ; *they neglected the weigh-*

*weightier Matters of the Law*, such as *Judgment, Mercy and Faith* (*i. e.* Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness) and were unmerciful and fraudulent in their Dealings with Mankind, *made long Prayers* to get a Fame for religion, and thereby have the Estates of Widows and Orphans committed to their Management, and so devour them : They were also very proud and censorious, *sought Honour of Men* immoderately, were industrious in pulling MOATS out of others Eyes, while there was a BEAM in their own ; they boasted of their own Goodness, and despised those who excel'd them in some respects ; *I fast twice a Week, I am not as this Publican !* And in order to screen their Wickedness the better from public Observance, they labour'd to *corrupt the Law* by their false *Glosses*, and make it a Nose of Wax, an Instance of which we have in our Context, Verse 43. *You have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy ; these Words, and hate thine Enemy,* are not in the Law refer'd to. (*Levit. 19. 18.*) they are either their Addition to the Law, or false Interpretation of it : In Opposition hereto, our Saviour enjoins his Disciples *to love their Enemies*,--and offers several reasons to enforce this Command, among which this is one

one

one mention'd in our Text, *viz.* that they should go beyond the Publicans ; *do not even the Publicans the same ?* But who were these PUBLICANS ? I answer ; they were civil Officers appointed by the *Romans* who at that Time had sovereign Dominion over the *Jewish State*) to gather the public revenues, the chief Commissioners were Knights and Gentlemen of *Rome*, who either farm'd out these revenues to others, or employed others under them in collecting of them : Some that were thus employed were *Jews*, witness *Matthew* and *Zaccheus*, and some *Romans* ; many of these civil Officers were too severe in their Exactions, which procur'd an Odium upon the whole Order, and hence they are commonly join'd in Scripture with Sinners and Harlots. From the Words of our Text we may observe this Proposition, *viz.* That *the Disciples of Christ should go beyond Publicans or unregenerate Persons.* In opening this important Point, I purpose to speak to these two Heads, *viz.* 1. *Shew in what Instances we should exceed them ;* and 2. *Why ?* pious Persons should not be meanly blended with the Crowd ; there should be a visible Distinction between them and others. And,

1. We should go beyond them in LOVE to our ENEMIES [Verse 44 of this Chap.]

*But*

But I say unto you, love your Enemies, by which is intended a Love of Benevolence, viz. 1. That we esteem what is valuable in them. 2. That we bless them that curse us; i. e. Treat them with Courtesy, commend what is Praise-worthy in them, and do not return reviling for reviling; a mean and vulgar Practice, which every generous Mind should disdain and avoid, in Imitation of *Michael* the Archangel, who when contending with Satan about the Body of *Moses*, would not offer against him a railing Accusation; for he knew that degenerate and malignant Spirit had a better Knack at scolding than himself. 3. That we do good to those that hate us; i. e. Perform the common Offices of Kindness and Humanity, by relieving them in their pressing Necessities, as far as we can consistently with the Duty we owe to ourselves and others, to whom we are under stronger Ties. *Rom. 12. 20. If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him Drink.*— 4. That we pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us. This Precept not only enjoins that we be tender of their Names and Bodies, but likewise of their Souls; and pray earnestly for the Forgiveness of their Sins. This is no Counsel of Perfection, as the *Papists* imagine, nor any new Precept, as the *Socinians* dream;

dream ; for it is expressly commanded under the Jewish Dispensation ; *Prov. 25. 21. If thine Enemy be hungry, give him Bread to eat ; and if he be thirsty, give him Water to drink* : In the mean Time we are not obliged to have a *Love of Complacence* towards Enemies ; for that would be impious, inasmuch as it implies a regard to Iniquity ; nor should we love them in an equal Degree with our Friends, for that would be ungrateful ; nor should we take them into former Intimacy, and make them the Men of our Council, and thereby give them an Opportunity to mislead us, for that would be imprudent. Nor are we obliged by this Law always to use such Silence and Softness as not to express resentment of Injuries at any Time ; for, if so, how did our *Saviour* observe it when he call'd *Herod a Fox* ? and the Apostle *Paul*, when he call'd *Elimas a Child of the Devil, an Enemy of all Righteousness* ? The Passion of Anger is not in itself sinful, for it is implanted in our Nature for valuable Purposes, *viz.* The Defence of our Persons and Properties, and we are commanded *to be angry, and not to sin* ; now the Way to be so, is to be only angry at Sin, or on Account of it, and in Proportion to its Heinousness ; *nor should the Sun go down upon our Wrath.* i. e. If our Anger

ger be excessive, as the Word *Wrath* signifies, it should not be lasting: Anger or resentment about private Affairs is much more difficult to manage than Anger about public Matters: Nor does the Precept I am speaking upon oppose our hating God's Enemies as such; no, in Proportion to our Love is our Zeal (*Qui non zelat, non amat*) *Do not I hate them that hate thee?* said the Psalmist (*Pf. 139. 21, 22.*) We may seek a due Revenge of God's Honour upon such, though private revenge is forbidden, because we are not our own Judges; as Members of Society we have committed that Matter to the Determination of others; and though we should bear smaller and tolerable Injuries for the Sake of Peace, yet we are not prohibited by this Precept from going to *Law*, and seeking Satisfaction in a Way of public Justice, but with a Mixture of Charity, else we are unjust to ourselves. Two Arguments are proposed in our Text and Context by our Saviour to enforce this Precept of Love to our Enemies, *viz.* 1. That we may resemble God our Father; as he has a common Love which is extended to all Mankind, in supplying their Necessities with the Light and Warmth of the Sun and with the Rain, as well as a special Love and Favour, which he exercises only towards

towards those that are good ; so should we, in Imitation of him : Though we are not obliged to take Enemies into the same Familiarity with others, yet we should love them in their order ; as our Heavenly Father, though he will one Day have a Satisfaction from Sinners for the Wrongs done to his Majesty, except they repent, yet in the mean Time he confers upon them the good Things of common Providence, and on some the Means of Grace : Thus, though we are bound to seek some Satisfaction for public Injuries to the divine Honour from flagitious Sinners, and likewise the reparation of private important Injuries against ourselves in an orderly Way, yet we should love them in Consistency herewith, that so we may imitate our heavenly Father, and prove ourselves to be his Children. And, 2. That we may do more than others, *For if ye love them that love you, what Reward have you ? Do not even the Publicans the same ? And if ye salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others ?* q. d. Reason obligeth you who expect a reward from God for what you do, to do something more than others who know of no such reward, or at least live in no Expectation of it ; and you who condemn others as great Sinners, should do something to exceed them,



both in Offices of Piety towards God, and Charity towards Men: But if you only shew Kindness to your Relations and Countrymen, you do no more than those you look upon as Heathens. By *loving* in our Text is doubtless meant doing good Offices to the Souls and Bodies of others; and by *saluting*, common Offices of Kindness, such as enquiring about our Neighbours Health, wishing them well, &c. The *Publicans* were grateful and courteous to those that shew'd them Kindness, to those they had a Dependance on, and shall we be no better than they? In doing this we serve our secular Interest, and what reward can we expect for that, unless a regard to God, and Sense of Duty, carry us farther than our natural light and secular Advantage! While others only render Good for Good, we should render Good for Evil; which will speak a nobler Principle than the most of Men act from: While others carress those of their own *Party* and Opinion only, we should not confine our regard to them, but *Love* our *Enemies*; for how can we expect the reward of *Christians*, if we rise no higher than the Virtue of *Publicans* and *Pagans*? But to proceed. A

2d INSTANCE wherein pious People should exceed others, is, that they be *willing*

ling to endure any Kind of Suffering, in Name, Body, Estate, Relations, yea, and in Respect even of Life itself, rather than sin against GOD; and that they be not only deliberately and habitually determined to do this, but actually comply, when called thereto by divine Providence; this is included in the *Cross of Christ*, without taking up which, we cannot be his *Disciples*: When we might either escape Suffering, or get a Deliverance from it, by sinning against God, and we refuse; this goes beyond the Reach of *Publicans, Pharisees, and Hypocrites*; for such will judge it *prudent* to sin, rather than suffer, but the true Disciple of Christ, is of the brave Spirit of those Worthies mentioned, *Heb. 11. 33, 36. Who, through Faith, were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection!* No, They nobly scorned to obtain Deliverance in a mean and sinful Way, they would rather suffer all the Torment that the Wit and Malice of Men could invent and inflict.

3d, That they do Duties that are like to bring Suffering upon them. Duties that may be easily misconstrued, Duties that are generally neglected, and perhaps despised in the Times and Places they live in: To do these, in such a Situation, when they plainly

ly appear to be required of us, from regard to God's commanding *Authority*, and a Principle of *Love* to his Majesty, *without consulting with Flesh and Blood*, is truly noble, and goes beyond the Reach of the whole Tribe of Hypocrites; they are only for Duties that are fashionable, cheap, and of easy Performance; such as will either gain them Credit, or at least consist with it, as well as with their Ease and Interest; they think they can manage Matters with such PRUDENCE, as to get to Heaven without the Cross of Christ, which is a new Way that he and his Apostles never trod; but pious Men, with DAVID, will resolutely obey the Commands of GOD, though they know they will be reckoned more vile upon this Account, and stand up for the Truths of God, with ATHANASIUS, and LUTHER, though Thousands oppose them. And,

4th, WE should rejoice in the Prospect of *Sufferings* for Righteousness Sake, and under them; esteeming it a great Honour and Privilege. This was the Temper of MOSES, he preferred the *Reproach of Christ*, before all the *Treasures of Egypt*. This was the SPIRIT of the APOSTLES, and PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS, they took Pleasure in *Tribulations*, when publicly whipt (a Punishment

nishment scandalous when for Sin, but glorious when for Christ) *they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for Christ's Name's Sake*; when they were in Stocks and Prisons, they sung the Praises of their God, witness PAUL and SILAS; *though they were sorrowing, i. e. had some afflictive Sense of their outward Miseries, yet they were always rejoicing*: The believing HEBREWS, *took joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods, as knowing that they had in Heaven, a far better and enduring Substance!* But contrariwise *Hypocrites* want to suffer as little as possible for Christ, and are glad when by their sneaking Compliances, they can escape his precious Cross!

5th, WE should be *merciful to others Failings, and severe against our own*. While we aggravate highly, and censure freely, our own Iniquities (and indeed this is but right, for we know more of our own Perverseness, than of any Body's else) we should at the same Time excuse, as far as we justly can, the Blunders of our Brethren; for *Charity covers a Multitude of Sins, thinks no Evil, is kind, and does not rejoice in Iniquity, but in the Truth*; takes not up readily, or with Pleasure, an evil Report of our Neighbour, far less spreads it; this is amiable and truly excellent. This is beyond the Line of *Hypocrites,*

*pocrites*, for such have the Eyes of ARGUS abroad to spy *Moats* in others Eyes, but are as blind as *Moles* at Home, and do not discern their own *Beams* ! Such are unreasonably jealous, and cruelly censorious, in respect of others, but very favourable to their own Iniquities ; these they hide as a sweet *Morsel* under their Tongues, and spare, as *Saul*, the Fattest of the Cattle : But the sincere Man honestly endeavours to *pluck out his Right-Eye, cut of his Right-Arm, and to keep himself from his Iniquity* ; this is to be honest indeed, and to go beyond the whole Herd of Hypocrites.

6th, WE should make *Conscience* of our *Thoughts* and secret Behaviour, which are hid from the View of our Fellow-Creatures ; we should endeavour to keep the Heart with all Diligence, which is the Parent of Action ; suppressing bad *Thoughts*, and corrupt Workings ; and encouraging good ones, taking Care and Pains about our *Passions* and *Aims*, that they be regular and sincere ; and striving by the Practice of secret Duties, to preserve the *Savour* of Religion in our Souls. This is to do more than *Hypocrites* ; for their chief Care is to *cleanse the Outside of the Cup and Platter* ; if they have but the Form of Piety, they mind not the Spirit of it, their *Hearts* are like the *Sluggard's Field*.

7th,

7th, WE should receive *Reproof* with *Meekness* and *Love*; *Let the Righteous smite me*, said DAVID, *it shall be a Kindness*: This is a lovely and profitable Temper of Mind, but Hypocrites are of the proud and stubborn Spirit of wicked AHAB, who hated MICA-JAH, because he never prophesied Good of him, but Evil, 1 Kings, 22. 8.

8th, WE should not allow ourselves in the *Neglect of the least Duty*, but in the mean Time, most careful of, and concerned for the *Greatest*; this is but rational, to Proportion the Degree of our *Zeal* to the Importance of Things, and far less should we allow ourselves in the Neglect of a whole *Table of the Law*, no! we should render to *Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's*, and to *God the Things that are God's*: This is to do more than others, to this the Practice of the *Pharisees* was opposed, *They tythed Mint, Annis and Cummin, but neglected the weightier Matters of the Law*; they seemed diligent in observing some Duties of the first Table, but were at the same Time negligent of those of the Second.

9th, WE ought to be afraid of the *least Evil*, yea of the *Appearance of Evil*, and yet in the mean Time, most afraid of the *greatest Evil*; this is highly reasonable, for the greater the Sin is, it involves us in a

higher Degree of Guilt, and exposes to more awful Punishments: But the Hypocrite, either knowingly connives at little Sins, or while he pretends to scruple them, wilfully commits Great; thus the *Pbarisees strained at a Gnat, and swallowed a Cammel*; scrupled eating with unwashen Hands, and plucking Ears of Corn on the Sabbaoth-Day, in a Case of Necessity, but did not scruple the Neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.

10th, WE should be *humble in Prosperity, and chearful in Adversity*; this is to do more than others, when Prosperity humbles us, and inclines us to speak in *David's Language, What am I, that thou hast brought me bitberto?* And when, with the Prophet *Habackuk, we rejoice though there be no Fruit in the Vine!* But Hypocrites, in Prosperity, kick with the Heel of Disdain against God and Man, *They say they are Lords, they'll come no more to God, their Tongues are their own, and who is Lord over them?* They scorn to be bound by the Rules of Religion and Decency, and say with those *Rebels of old, in the Spirit of KORAH, Let us break their Bands asunder, and cast their Cords from us?* In Adversity they fret and murmur, and are excessively dejected, like the Man  
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berieved of his Images, *They have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?—*  
Again,

WE should make *God's Glory the chief End of all our Actions*, his Service the chief Business and Delight of our Lives, and all our secular Concerns buckle thereto; this, in some Degree, is the Attainment of every good Man, *his Eye is single*, RELIGION is his ELEMENT, and therefore he cannot but Delight in it, it has the Throne of his Soul, all other Things vail to it; he does not only aim at God's Honour in sacred Actions, but even in natural and civil; e. g. he Eats, and Drinks out of Obedience to God's Command, and that he may have Strength to serve him; this is to do more than *Hypocrites*, they aim at themselves chiefly, they pray and *fast to themselves*, and not to God, because Self is the principal Motive thereof; their chief Delight is in some earthly Thing, though they falsely pretend otherwise; the World is their main Business, *great is Dianab of the Ephesians*; and therefore Religion must stoop to it, secret Prayer, Family Prayer, reading the Scriptures, secret Meditation, and Self-examination, must be turned out of Doors, either wholly, or in part; and that frequently, through the Hurries of *Worshipping this Godefs*, they

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have no Time to do that for which all their Time was given them; they are of *the Earth, earthly*; they are born only of the Flesh, and therefore are Flesh; there is this or that Business of *Importance* (as it is termed) to be done, and the *Trifle* of Religion and Salvation, must be laid aside, to make Way for it: But *what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul, if he should gain the World, and lose the same? Wherefore do you spend your Money, for that which is not Bread?* Farther,

•WE should own and *associate with pious People*, even when they are *despised and persecuted*, and appear for God's *Truths and Cause*, when they are at the lowest Ebb, generally opposed and contemned; *Heb. 11. 24, 25. By Faith, Moses refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season?* And though Christianity was every where spoken against, yet the Apostles, and primitive Christians, openly professed it, and even after they were beaten, they did not go to the Great and Wicked to curry-favour of them, but to their own poor afflicted Company; will Hypocrites do this? No! When Distresses and Persecutions come, they fall off like the Leaves in Autumn, they are  
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offended at this and that, and go where they may sleep in a whole Skin; their fair Blossoms are now withered, *when a Time of Temptation comes, not having a good Root in them, they fall away?* They go from God's People, because they were not of them; *Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present World?* Demas no doubt told another Story, and gave a plausible Apology why he left them; but the Truth is, his Heart was naught! But to proceed,

WE should likewise be *cool in our own Cause, and warm in God's*; thus was Moses, he was one of the meekest Men upon Earth, in his own Matters, his Spirit kept calm (for the most Part) under the insolent, ungrateful Treatment, he met with from Korah, and his Companions, so far as the Affronts concerned himself; but yet the Indignation of this meek Man was inflamed at the Sight of the Calf, so that *he broke the Tables of Stone*. And though the Apostle PAUL, was very patient in enduring personal Injuries, yet when ELIMAS endeavoured to keep the Deputy from the Faith, he addressed the Impostor with the most pointed, flaming Language, *O full of all Subtilty, thou Child of the Devil, thou Enemy of all Righteousness, wilt thou not cease to per-*  
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*vert the right Ways of the Lord? Acts 13.*

10. But *Hypocrites* are the very reverse, cool in God's Cause, and fire-hot in their own; they can hear God's Name, People, and Work, blasphemed and ridiculed, without any Resentment; but when their Names are reproached; or their Interest affected, they are mere FURIES.

WE should likewise perform *extraordinary Duties in extraordinary Cases*; e. g. When such as have the Root of the Matter in them, have greatly declined in Religion, so that the Things that remain, are ready to die; or in Case of violent Temptations, private or public Dangers, some Thing more than usual should be done, to remove these Diseases and Distresses; such as *Fasting*, and *extraordinary Prayer*, otherwise the Mean is not suited to the Case, and so not like to answer the End; these Duties are positively enjoined by the Almighty, *Mark 2. 20. But the Days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they Fast?* In Times of public Calamity, the Almighty enjoins his People to turn to him, with all their Hearts, and with Weeping, Fasting, and Mourning. In this Way we may expect that the Lord will be jealous for his Land, and pity his People, *Joel 2. 13, 18.* But *Hypocrites* and *Enthusiasts,*

*fasts*, love their *Ease* and their *Bellies too well*, to perform with due Attention and Seriousness, these difficult and self-denying Duties, and therefore frame sorry, senseless Excuses to evade them, such as *Fasting from Sin, being enjoined under this Dispensation*, which supposes that *Sin* is the proper *Food* of the *Soul*, and that it was lawful to live upon it, under the *old Testament*? Ay, it is glorious *Spirituality*, to fast with a *full Belly*! and despise *Dominion*, even when exerted for the public Weal. Farther,

WE should be *humble in Heart, Speech, Dress, and Behaviour*; looking upon ourselves to be *the Least of all Saints*, and being willing that others should think so too, and be preferred before us; a *Garb* not suited to our *Station* in *Life*, is no *Ornament*, but a *Reproach*, a *Badge* of our *Pride* and *Folly*, which should make us ashamed; it is like a *Jewel in a Swine's Snout*. *Humility*, my Brethren, is the most amiable *Ornament*, this will keep us from *meddling with Things too high for us*, and dispose us to mind our own *Business*, not judging another *Man's Servant*; this is doing more than others: If such a *Temper* and *Behaviour* generally obtained, what a comfortable *World* would this be, how sweet, how profitable *Society*! but when the *Contrary*, *viz.* a proud, censorious,

forious, domineering Spirit prevails, no Comfort or Benefit is to be expected; when Persons of a lower Sphere assume the *Officers Place*, and refuse to be subject to *Order* and *Regimen*, in the STATE; or ARMY, nothing but Confusion insues, and Ruin at the Heels of it.

PRIDE was doubtless the Cause of the *Rebellion* of KORAH, and his Accomplices, against MOSES and AARON; whose leveling Scheme was artfully introduced, *Ye take too much upon you*, said they, *wherefore lift you up yourselves above the Congregation of the Lord!* Numb. 16th Chap. Without Peace, there can be no Comfort in SOCIETY, and without *Order*, there can be no Peace; now without *Officers*, and a *Subjection* to their reasonable Determinations, how can Order be maintained? Almighty GOD has therefore appointed Rulers in the State; and in the Church, and positively enjoined the People to honour and obey them; such therefore who fear God, should beware of opposing the Order he has prescribed, and endeavour *to keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace?* No Doubt, both Rulers and Ruled, are liable to Mistakes in Sentiment and Conduct; now in Case of Complaint, there is no other equitable Way to issue it, but by submitting the Matter  
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of Difference to the Decission of proper Judges, for it is unreasonable in Society for Parties to be Judges in their own Cause; this tends to overthrow entirely the *Foundations* of all Order and Government, and make Disputes perpetual. Nor is there any Thing in the Principles of *Liberty* rightly understood, that opposes a regular Government in the Church or State; no, it is so far from this, that it is a necessary Mean to promote and preserve it, and is founded upon the Principles of it; e. g. If it be right and just, that one Man should think for himself, it is at least equally so, for a Body of Men as such; to say that the Number of Men, or Authority wherewith they are vested, should lessen their Privileges, is to oppose not only the express Declarations of the sacred Scriptures, but the plainest Dictates of Reason and common Sense.

WE should be also *singular* in Goodness, in a *Time* of prevailing *Degeneracy*; the dead Fish swims with the Stream, but the Living against it: JOSHUA was singular in a very corrupt Age, in a resolute Observance of *Family Worship*, and so should we; *If ye think it Evil to serve the Lord, said he, choose ye whom ye will serve; but as for me, and my House, we will serve the Lord, Jos. 24.* How will Parents and Masters, that neglect read-

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ing the holy Scriptures daily to their poor Children and Servants, and praying with them and for them, as well as instructing them, get clear at last of the Charge of *Blood*, the *Blood* of their Childrens and Servants Souls? Do they not barbarously betray their Charge into the Hands of Satan, and therefore may be called Murderers, and Haters of their own Offspring! What will become of this miserable Town and Country, if Families continue to be thus neglected? Are we not, in a Course of Time, like to degenerate into *Libertines*, and mere *Pagans*, if *Popery* be not crammed down our Throats by the *French*? ABRAHAM took care of the Instruction of his Children, and was commended for it by JEHOVAH; now, if we desire to Evidence ourselves to be his Children, and to partake of his Blessing and Commendation, let us imitate his Example: NEHEMIAH was also singular, in labouring with great Pains and Magnanimity, to promote the *Sanctification* of the *Sabbath* in his Day; let us endeavour, *my Brethren*, thus far to imitate his Example, as to be strict in the Observation of the *Sabbath* ourselves, and use our Influence with those under our Care, that they also may keep it holy; if we avoid, as we ought, *speaking our own Words, and seeking our own Pleasure*

*That holy Day*, we shall certainly go beyond many others, and find the Comfort and Benefit of doing so; how notoriously the Sabbath is prophaned among us by worldly Discourse and otherwise, you all know, and therefore its no Wonder the Judgments of God have come upon us. Be not conformed to this World, abhor false and flattering Compliments, and spending much Time in trifling Discourse, without any serious Attempt to make those wiser and better ye converse with, which is the wicked Custom of the present Age; and why should we decline all Discourse about experimental Religion? Do you think this Silence and Shyness is like to promote Christ's Kingdom among us? No, by no Means! *Come*, said the PSALMIST, *and I'll tell you what the Lord has done for my Soul?* O may a gracious God revive those that fear him among us, and encline them to *Speak often one to another*, humbly, freely, and favourily, about divine Things, and to meet together to pray to God, and praise him: It is an Argument of our Leanness, that such Meetings are so poorly attended, and that in a Time of so great Danger, *Publicans* shew more Zeal for their *shameless Frolicks*, than some Professors among us

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for the Worship of God; this is Matter of equal Reproach and Lamentation! Once more,

We should be deeply and tenderly concerned, for our *poor graceless Relations*, for the CHURCH and NATION; should we not, with *Abraham*, cry to God, that *Ishmael* may live before him? If our Souls were suitably affected with a View of the Glory of God, the Worth of Souls, and the Vastness of Eternity, would we suffer our Relations to go on securely, from Year to Year, in their *Bliss*, towards everlasting Ruin, without one faithful Warning? Alas! for our Unbelief, Stupidity, and Cruelty! How dwells the Love of God in us, who are no more concerned for his Glory? How Love to our dear Relations, who so trifle with their everlasting Happiness or Misery? Do we verily believe the Religion we profess, if so, why do not we act like it? If we sincerely, humbly, and repeatedly endeavoured after vehement Cries to God, who knows but we might be the Means of bringing some of our dear Relations to him? O how blessed would this be! Simple Words, honestly, humbly, and seasonably spoken, have been the Means of bringing many Souls to God; surely every pious Person should try to bring at least one with him.

him to Heaven: You should not leave all this Work to Ministers, for you have a Charge, as well as they; faithful Endeavours of this Kind, would yield us the noblest Delight, which Success would increase! As to the Church in its present low State, should not our Hearts be tenderly concerned? Many in the *British* Dominions have forsaken the principal Doctrines of Christianity, the Power of Piety languishes; the Ministry of the Word, is generally like a miscarrying Womb, and dry Breasts; divers pious People removed, and but few converted of late, and all this in a Time of awful Judgments! O should not these Considerations excite us to speak in the Prophet's Language, *For Jerusalem's Sake, I will not hold my Peace, and for Zion's Sake, I will not be silent, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth?* And in regard of the Nation, how do our Enemies triumph over us? God is certainly angry with us, and threatens to take away our civil and religious Liberties at a Stroke, and yet we remain generally stupid and unreformed, do not regard the Operation of his Hand, or turn to him that smites us. O let us cry *between the Porch and the Altar, that God would spare* *his*  
*and*

220 *Pious and magnanimous Singularity.*

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proach!* I proceed to the

2d PROPOSED, which was to give the REASONS of this POINT; here observe, that GOD REQUIRES IT OF US, *What do ye more than others?* He also EXPECTS IT, and that reasonably; for *what could he have done more for his Vineyard than he has done?* And he comes Year after Year seeking Fruit; which if he does not find, what can such CUMBERERS of the GROUND expect, but to be CUT DOWN? Is it not just and reasonable, that Fruit be proportioned to the Means of Fruitfulness? Hereby *God's Name will be honoured; John 15. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit:* And hereby *God's Kingdom will be promoted.* Such a Life will incline us hereto, and give Weight and Authority to our Words. In this Way, we ourselves shall FIND REST to our SOULS, and enjoy a Heaven upon Earth. The Reason why we have so little Comfort in Religion, is because we are no more religious. Weak Grace is difficult to be discerned by ourselves and others, and the Evidences of it are easily darkened, but it is not so when Grace is strong: Besides the Lord will not be behind-hand with us in this Life, he will graciously Reward his Peoples Painfulness and Fidelity in his Service;

vice; he will give them more frequent Views of that immortal Blessedness, to which they are hastening, and in which they shall be for ever instated, after a few Moments are elapsed.

*WE Profess more, and have promised more than others, and therefore it is but reasonable and decent, that we do more.---WE expect more, and therefore should do more, if not, our Expectations are irrational.---WE know more than others, and therefore should exceed them in Practice; without this our superior Intelligence answers no valuable End, but is a Loss, instead of a Benefit: For he that knows his Master's Will, and does it not, shall be beaten with double Stripes.---OTHERS expect more of us, who if they are disappointed, are prejudiced against Religion, and induced to believe that there is nothing in it, but Words and Pretences. In fine, hereby our future Happiness will be increased, the Degrees of which will be proportioned to our Advances in Holiness here, Luke 19. 16. 17.*

FROM what has been said, we should be excited to propose this solemn Question to ourselves, What do we more than others? Do we exceed them in the Instances before mentioned, or not? Wherein do we live  
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above the Rate of the Children of this World? Alas, is there not Cause of Mourning and Complaint? Are we not *carnal*, and do we not *walk as Men*? Below the Character of Christians? Our *Leanness*, our *Leanness*, *testifies against us*; the gracious God has taken much Pains with us, by his Word, Ordinances, Providences, and Spirit, but to how little Purpose? Where is our Growth in Grace, our abundant Life, our much Fruit? What have we done for God, and his Kingdom, in all the Space that he has given us? What Ignorance, Pride, Peevishness, rash Judging, Selfishness? What Backbitings, Swellings, and Tumults do abound? How little Love to God and Man? How little Faith, Holiness, Humility, Heavenliness, Mercy, Meekness, Forbearance? O that my Head was Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night, for my own Sins, Weakness, Unfruitfulness, and for the Sins of others! Alas, our Time and Talents, have been in a Manner lost, and the Almighty has been watering an almost *dry Stick*; except we speedily repent and reform, there is Reason to fear, that the righteous God *will take away the Hedge of this Vineyard, and let it be eaten up; and break the Wall thereof, and let it be trodden*

*den down.* O let us remember and apply the Threatning of the King of the Church, the faithful and true Witness against the Churches of EPHEBUS and SARDIS, *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what Hour I will come upon thee.* (Rev. 2. 4, 5. and 3 Chap. 3 Ver.) We are now loudly called upon, by the JUDGMENTS of GOD, to humble ourselves before him, and reform what is amiss in our Conduct. In one Word, SIRs, Heaven and Earth, God and Man, our own Interest, and that of the Church and Nation, concur to invite and urge us to grow in Grace, and do more than others. Which may GOD of his Mercy, help us to comply with. AMEN, and AMEN.

*F I N I S.*