

SERMONS

ON

Several *important* SUBJECTS.. -

Viz.

PREJUDICES rectified.

The RAIN imbibed, in Emblem of GRACE.

The SHORTNESS of Time, a Motive to MODERATION.

The GRAVE, without any ORDER.

The IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

The GREAT DAY.

The Effects of Divine FURY.

The Necessity of PRACTICE.

SOLOMON'S Caution against the CUP.

The Character and Employment of good ANGELS.

By *Josiah Smith, A.M.*

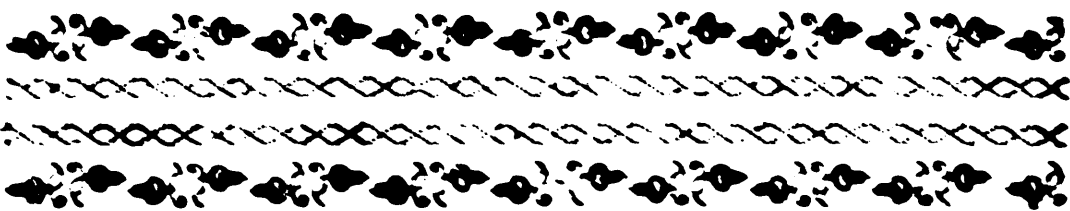
Minister of the Gospel, in *Charlestown, S. CAROLINA.*



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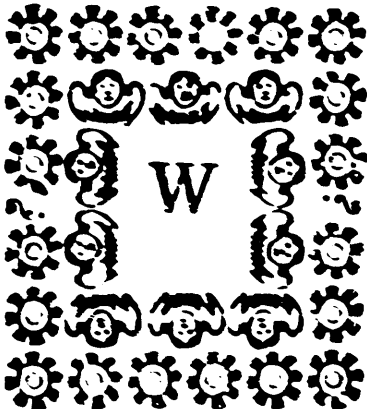
M.D.C.C.LVII.



T H E

P R E F A C E .



 E have not the Vanity to imagine, that our Recommendation can be of much Service to the ensuing Discourses ; nor should we ever have attempted to write a Preface to them, had it not been the particular Request of our *Rev. Brother*, who is, at present, *unable* to do it himself ; tho' (as is well known) once so excellently qualified to address the most *judicious* Auditory, or *critical* Reader.

His

ii *The* P R E F A C E.

His Case is, generally, so well known, in our Part of the World, that we presume it is almost needless to acquaint the Publick, that the *Incapacity* hinted at, is owing to a *Paralytick* Disorder; under which He has been labouring for some Time past.--- And surely, that in the Strength of his Life and Health, and at a Time when his Service and Usefulness was so much wanted, He should be silenc'd by a *sudden* Stroke; and be disabled so many Years for publick Work, when faithful Labourers are but few, is one of those *Depths* of Providence, which we ought rather respectfully to *adore*, than pretend to *fathom*.

The Publication of these Sermons was occasioned by the Request of many of the Author's Hearers; who were desirous to read in the *Closet*, what they formerly had heard, with so much Pleasure, from the *Pulpit*; hoping,

hoping, at the same Time, that they may be of *general* Use, to promote *real* and *practical* Religion, in the Hearts and Lives of those into whose Hands Providence may send them. Mr. SMITH was the more ready to comply with the affectionate Request of his Friends, as it gives him an Opportunity once more to address, publickly, a People among whom He formerly spent so many happy Years; to his and their mutual Satisfaction; and as it is the only Method in which He can, at present, speak for God to precious Souls. His *Heart*, we are persuaded, is still set on the Good of *Zion*; and He thus endeavours to testify, and warn every Man, from the *Press*, now He can no longer do it from the *Pulpit*.

We hope, the pious and candid Reader will esteem the following Discourses not unworthy the *Press*, tho' they

they are sent abroad in the World under this *considerable* Disadvantage, that they want the finishing Pen of the ingenious Author.---The last Sermons He ever preached, were those upon the NECESSITY OF PRACTICE : And we heartily join with him in recommending the Practice of *every* moral and religious Duty.--But we think it necessary to remark, that whereas some *Expressions* in *that* Sett of Discourses may *seem* to ascribe *too much* to Works of our own, we hope, the ingenuous Reader will take them in a *consistent* Sense, and interpret them in a Manner agreeable to the *Author's* known and avowed Principles, and to the *general* Tenor of this whole *Collection*; ascribing *all* the *Glory* of our Salvation to *Christ*, and leading us to fix *all our Hopes* of Acceptance and Happiness, in both Worlds, on the *sole Merits* of our blessed Mediator.

Those

Those that have had the Advantage of sitting under the Author's Ministry, will, we hope, call to Memory the Things which they have *heard* and *received*. They have, indeed, been a People *highly* favoured, in a *Succession* of faithful and able Ministers of the New-Testament; who have spent Life and Strength among them.---It shou'd be remembered by them, that where MUCH is *given*, MUCH will be *required*. Surely a People, that have been so eminently blest in Point of Gospel-Means, for a long Course of Years, and have in the Word preached been entertain'd with *such* Sermons as the ensuing, may well be afraid of the Doom of the barren *Fig-tree*, if they make no Improvement of the Days and Years of their Visitation.--- We heartily wish, that those who have suffer'd the Word to pass by their Ears, like an empty Sound, *unbeeded* when it was *preached*, may give it an *atten-*
tive

tive Perusal now 'tis exhibited to their Eyes in *Print*; and that they may consider most *seriously*, how dreadful it would be, if so many Sermons, neglected by them, should arise in Judgment against them at the last Day.

We would not conclude without *particularly* recommending to every one the very *serious* Perusal of those awakening and solemn Discourses on the great and universal *Judgment-Day*.---We cannot but lament, that *Death, Judgment, and Eternity*, should have so lost their Weight with the Children of Men; and that such *faithful Warnings* are so frequently thrown away upon a *thoughtless* Sort of People. It is truly *grieving*, that while we preach the *Terror* of the Lord, to *persuade* Men, and the Promises of the Gospel, to *allure* them, we must still be Spectators of their *Obstinacy* in the Paths of Destruction;
and

and *unwilling Witnesses* against them, that they do *not believe our Report*.--- We would fain hope, that the *affectionate* Addresses of One who is grown *old* among us in the Service of Christ, may meet with *better* Treatment ; and do, in the most humble and ardent Manner, commend them to the divine Blessing.

May the *blessed Spirit of Grace* accompany the reading of them with *his* mighty Power, to the *awakening* of the secure and careless, and to the abundant *Establishment* of the Children of God !

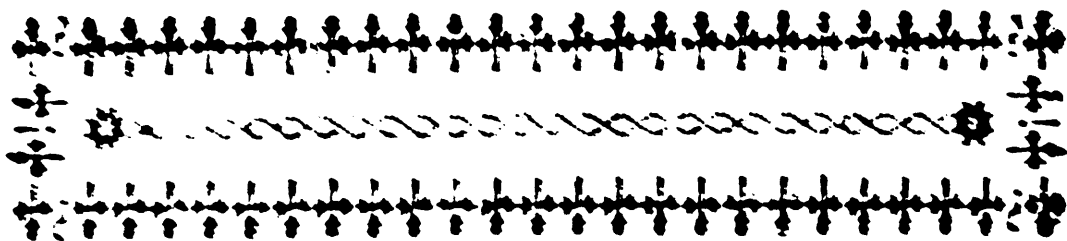
If it be the divine Will, may the Author be *restored* to his former Usefulness ! Or may He be still *resigned* to the Disposals of Providence ; and patiently bear his afflictive Trial, till He is received to that blissful State, where the Servants of God shall be
loosed

loosed from all their Infirmities, and
rest not Day nor Night from setting
him in his Temple.

And now, Reader, we beg your
Prayers for *us*, that we may have
Grace diligently to improve *our* Day
of Life and Liberty, and to approve
ourselves *Faithful unto Death*, in the
Service of Jesus Christ.

Charlestown,
June 15. 1756.

W^m: Hutson,
J. Zubly,
J^s. Edmonds.



T H E

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[An occasional Sermon this, in Commemoration of a very memorable FIRE in *Charlestown*, which broke out on Nov. 18. 1740. and soon laid the fairest and richest Part of that flourishing Town in Ashes.—See Mr. SMITH'S Sermon on *The Burning of SODOM*, from *Gen. xix. 23.* With a Preface by the late Rev. Dr. COLMAN and Mr. COOPER.]

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[This Sermon was in Print before: And by a Mistake is
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The Character and Employment of good
ANGELS.

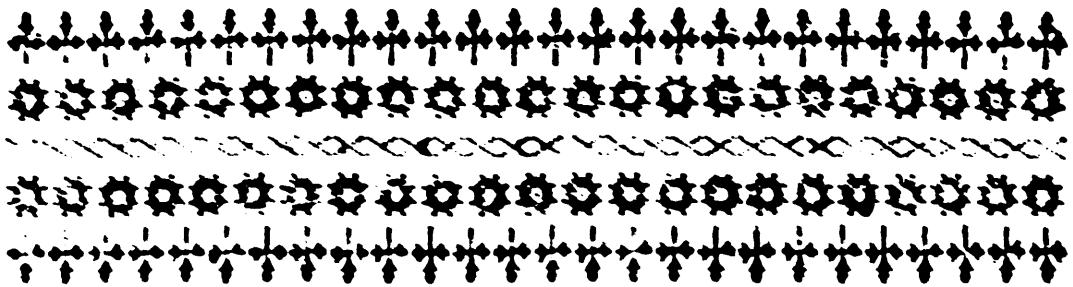
*Psalm. CIII. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels,
that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments,
hearing unto the Voice of his Word.*

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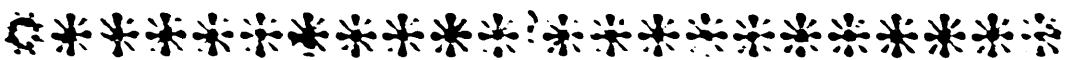
THRO' the Inconveniences of the Copy, and Hurry of the Press, some material *Mistakes* have happen'd in this Work: Which (leaving lesser Escapes to the Candour of intelligent Readers) are here pointed out and rectify'd.

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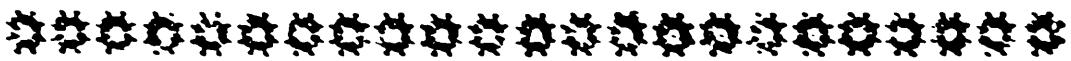
S E R M O N



S E R M O N I.



Prejudices rectified.



L U K E 14 Chap. 18th Verse.

And they all with one Consent began to make Excuse.

IT is one of the strangest Things in the World, that there should be such a natural Aptitude in Man, to excuse himself, not only from his *Duty*, but from his own *Happiness* : that Man should have such a mean Opinion of the Provision God has made for his future Happiness, as to prefer the most trifling Things to it ; and to think it not worth his Attention and Acceptance. Alas ! how is the *Blood* of

the everlasting Covenant, and of *Jesus* the Mediator of it, despised and trampled under Foot! How much have *Heaven* and *Eternity* lost their Sound in the Ears of Sinners! what Contempt is poured upon the Grace of the Gospel! and how shamefully is the great *Salvation* neglected! How much, and what vast Expence has God been at, to save and bring Home the Sons of *Adam*! How many Messengers has He sent to call them, and with what little Success! We find out, or we meditate some Excuse or other, and will not obey the Calls! We have no where, perhaps, in all the Scripture, a more natural Illustration of this, than in the *Parable* before us. *A certain Man made a great Supper and bade many, and sent his Servants at Supper-time to say to them that were bidden, come; for all Things are now ready*—God the Father had made ample Provision for our Salvation, and sent his Ministers to publish it to the World, and to make an Offer of it to them; but see how generally 'tis despised, and refused. *They all, with one Consent, began to make Excuse.* They might have many Differences among themselves touching other Things, but, with one Consent they all agreed in *this*, to excuse themselves from coming to the Gospel Supper. But why? What's the Matter? What are the Excuses they can make or the Reasons they can urge against it? Why it seems, the first said *I have bought a Piece of Ground and*

I must needs go and see it ; I pray thee have me excused ; the next said, *I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them : I pray thee have me excused ;* and the third pleads, *I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* The whole Amount of which is plainly this, that some are so intent upon their worldly Bargains and Purchases ; and others so immers'd in the Cares and Pleasures of this Life, that they think it a very sufficient Excuse, for their not attending to the Offers of Life and Salvation. I have therefore chosen the Text before us, that we might consider the many Excuses that Men make against a Life of Religion, and see, whether there be any *sufficient* Weight in them, to justify their Neglect and Contempt of it.

1st. Some are apt to object, that they have not that *Evidence* they wish for, of the *Truth* of Christianity, and of those Motives with which a Life of Religion is enforced. They are ready to acknowledge, that the Practice of Christianity, under such Motives, wou'd be infinitely *reasonable*, if they were but *true*, and beyond all Doubt—But they insist upon *better* Evidence for the *Certainty* of Things. And I must acknowledge there is some considerable Weight in this Objection, if it be founded in Truth, for no Man is obliged to embrace a Religion, that has not its proper Credentials.

But I have a strong Suspicion this is *mere* Pretence, purely to excuse themselves from the *Practice* of that which they have no *Indication* to. I suspect there is some *Insincerity* here; or, at least, that these Persons have not given that *attention* to the *Proof* of Christianity, which the *Importance* of it requires. I can't help fearing, that their *Lusts* have put a *Restraint* upon their *Enquiries* into the Arguments on which our Religion is *established*: for if these were examined without carnal Prejudices, I believe the strongest Advocates for Infidelity, must acknowledge, there are so many Proofs alledged in Favour of Christianity, that for ought they know it *might* be true, yea that tis even *probable*. Now, if there was but a *mere Probability* for it, tis a Thing of so much Consequence, that it ought to determine us to practise it. Any who have Leisure to peruse Mr. *Ditton* upon the *Resurrection of Christ*, may see this argued, I think, to a *Demonstration*. But, I hope, we need not rest the Matter upon a *bare Probability*: for, if the *Proofs* which many learned Men have *collected*, do not conclude the *Certainty* of the Christian Faith, we must cashier *all* moral Evidences; and shall find we can be certain of scarce any Thing in the World. What Evidence can a *rational* Man desire, which may not be found in *Christianity*?

Christianity? Does it imply any *Repugnancy*, nay is it not every Way *consistent* with the Perfections of God, to suppose He should make *some Revelation* of his Will to Mankind, to teach them how He will be worshipped by us, and how we may regain his Favour? And is not that *particular Revelation*, which pretends to a divine Original, worthy of it? Is there any Scheme of Religion so rational as the Christian Scheme? Does it not exhibit the moral Attributes of God, in the *best Light* imaginable? Does it not preserve a perfect *Harmony* and Balance of Power among them? Could any Plan more unite the *Justice*, the *Holiness*, the *Truth*, and the *Mercy* of God, than that of our Redemption by *Christ*, and our Recovery to a new Nature by his *Spirit*? Has not the Christian Revelation every divine Signature and *intrinsic Evidence*? Is there not a glorious Perfection in the Scripture? Is it not profitable for *Doctrine*, for *Reproof*, for *Correction*, for *Instruction* in all Righteousness; that the *Man of God* might be perfect, and *thoroughly* furnished? Can the Bible be *fairly* charged with any Deficiencies? Can we conceive of any Thing further as necessary to our *Behaviour* in this World, or *Felicity* in the next? Are not the very *Mysteries* of the Christian Religion, which have been made an *Objection* to it, a plain *Proof*, that it must proceed from a *Being* of very superior Capacity

city to us? Since none but God could speak so well of his own Nature, or reveal such sublime Doctrines as those of the *Trinity*, the *Incarnation*, and the *Union* of Believers in Christ? Is there not a certain simple *Sublime*, in the Writings of the *old and new Testament*, natural to them; and which scorns all *Imitations* of an human and uninspired Pen? Is there not the greatest *Consistency* of Parts written by different *Pen-men*, and in very different *Periods*. As great a *Variety* as the Bible contains in it, do not all the several Matters of it conspire to *one* and the same End? Do the *Writers* of the *Canonical Books*, seek their own *Glory* in them? or rather, is not every Thing referred to the *Honour* of *God*, and *Man* humbled to the *Dust*? Examine the Pages of your Bible, and see what a pious, holy and devout *Tendency* they have. Could any *Sett* of wicked and *artful* Men, could *Satan* himself, convert and promote such a Scheme of Doctrine, which directly tends to the *Ruin* of *Vice*, and the *Encouragement* of *true* *Vertue*? And, if neither *Satan*, nor his *Emisseries*, were the Authors of this Book, who should be? not good Men, or good Angels, for they would act quite out of *Character*, and be guilty of the *biggest* *Impiety*, to father that upon the *Almighty*, which He commanded not, neither came it into his Heart. It follows therefore that *God* must be the *great* *Au-ther*; for the Bible could not make itself.

Is it not a clear *Proof* of the divine Authority of the Scripture, that Events have been *predicted*, such a Number of Years, and exactly *answered* the Prediction? And as to *external* Evidence, what greater can we ask for? Has not Christianity been recommended and asserted by a great Number, and Variety of *Miracles*? Things quite *beside*, if not absolutely *above*, created Power to produce. Do you not remember the *five Thousand*, and the *two Loaves*, and how many *Baskets* they took up? Did not our *Saviour* tell the *Disciples of John*, to tell their Master what Things they had seen and heard? that *the Lepers were cleansed*, the *Blind received their Sight*, and *the Dead were raised*? Were these Things done, or were *Devils* cast out by *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the *Devils*; or was it the *Finger of God*? What shall we say to *Christ's own Resurrection*, when He built that Temple which the *Jews* destroyed, in *three Days*; and this according to his *own Prediction*? Did He not hereby declare himself to be the *Son of God with Power*? Was it not a *stupendous* Miracle that the *Apostles*, *illiterate Men*, should speak, at once, in so many different *Languages*, as the Spirit gave them Utterance? And was not their Mission attended with Gifts and Miracles of the *Holy Ghost*? And were not these Miracles wrought, to give Sanction to a Doctrine of the *greatest Purity*, and every Way worthy of God

to Seal as his *own*? Supposing it were possible any created Power could be equal to such great Effects, Can we think that God would not interpose a *superior* Power, and prevent their imposing Things upon us under *his Name*? Who can look upon the wide and *just* Progression of the *Christian* Faith in so little a Time, without the *greatest* Amazement? To see a Doctrine so *opposite* to all carnal Maxims, and the corrupt Appetites of Men, make its Way thro' ten Thousand Oppositions of the *Princes* of this World; and so easily triumph over the Eloquence of *Philosophers*, and Powers that were engaged against it. And did not the Advocates for Christianity seal it with *their own Blood*, and make their very Persecutors weary? which, at least, is an Argument of their *Sincerity*; that they believed what they could *die* for—and their Writings confute the Charge of a *blind* and impetuous *Enthusiasm*; and shew them to be Men of *Reason*, who understood an Argument, and were capable of a sober and strict Enquiry into Things; not to say that the very Nature of *some* of their Sufferings, and the *Hercism* with which they endured, seems not to be accounted for, upon the Principles of *Nature*, but to argue an immediate Support from *Heaven*.

Look into the Works of Doctor *Clarke*, Mr. *Ditten*, *Baxter*, *Jenkins*, *Leland*, Dr. *Bates*; or
only

only into some of the *Bishop of London's* Pastoral Letters, upon this Head: and see if it be possible to resist the *Light* and *Force* of Reasoning, without wilfully shutting your Eyes. And, as for the *Truth* of the Facts, upon which we build, they are handed down to us under all the Testimonies and Obligations of *verbal* and *traditional* Evidences, so that we must believe them, or believe nothing but what we see with our Eyes. And besides all these, there is the *Internal* Evidence of Religion, in those divine Impressions which Christians *feel* the Gospel making upon their Hearts, and of which it is not in their Power to doubt. They *know* the Gospel is *True* from the *transforming* divine Efficacy it has had upon them, from the *Change* they experience in their own Hearts, from their own sacred *Sensations*. You may see this Argument in its best Advantage, and in the most easy Light, in *Dr. Watts's* *Inward Witness*. I confess this is not an Argument to them who are not yet Christians, as it is *felt*; but it is a very good Argument, as it *produces* Virtue and Holiness in the Lives of those, who declare they have *felt* it; and in Consequence thereof have *steadily maintained* the Character of sedate and honest Men.

Upon the whole, Let any Man consider whether there be the *least* Probability in the World, that *God* should ever permit a *false* Religion to pass current

current under so many Marks of *Divinity*, and not leave it in the Power of the wisest and most penetrating Men to discover the *Cheat*. If a Religion, so well attested, and which has so many and such *strong Marks of Truth* in it, may yet be called in Question, how can we ever expect a *Criterion* to distinguish Truth from Falshood? And I would seriously ask those who make this Objection against a *Life of Religion*, Whether they do not believe and act upon Principles in *common Life*, which are of infinitely *less* Concernment to them than *Christianity*; and yet have not half its Evidence and Proofs? This, I believe, can't be denied; and if it can't be denied, what an *Absurdity*, what a *Contradiction* is it to their own Conduct, to refuse a *Christian Life* upon Pretence that they have not *Evidence* enough for the *Proof* of it; when a tenth Part of the Evidence and Certainty, would put them upon the *warmest* Pursuits of a *temporal Estate*. Besides, what Evidence would be satisfactory to such Men? Do they expect that God should be always making an *immediate Revelation* to themselves *personally*? In this Case, they could never be safe from the Imposition of an enthusiastick Imagination. Do they expect that one should be sent from the Dead to testify to them? There is Reason to think that if they hear not *Moses and the Prophets*, neither would they be *persuaded* though one should rise from the Dead; for how would they
 certainly

certainly know that *Satan* might not *personate* a dead Friend, and be a *lying Spirit* in his Mouth?— Would they have those Miracles which were *first* wrought in Attestation of divine Truth, repeated in every Age; and in the Sight of every Person? This tis not only *unreasonable* to demand; but these very *Miracles*, would cease to be such, in the Eyes of Mankind; because they would be so *common* that they would at last look upon them, as the *stated* Law of Nature. Or will not these *Objectors* believe what the Scripture *saitb* of a future State, because they do not *see* it with their Eyes. This would be quite inconsistent with that probationary Condition Providence has placed us in; and in which we are to walk by *Faith*, and not by *Sight*. I hope therefore, what I have said in Answer to this Excuse, is enough to remove the Foundation of it, and if we have no better, we shall make a poor *Plea* in the Day of Judgment.

But to proceed,

2dly. To another, others are ready to make, who will allow the *Certainty* of the *Christian Religion*, but object against the *Vanity* of *Sects* and *Opinions* in it.

They say, they would willingly become Christians, if they could find *where* true Christianity is; but the Professors of it have been so split and
divided,

divided, into so many Sects, Parties and Denominations, that they know not which to fall in with, and therefore will embrace none, but think this will sufficiently excuse them. This *Objection* will admit of several Answers.

In the first Place; Professors are not *divided* about Christianity, as the *Objectors* may think. There are indeed Sects and Parties, and it were a great Happiness if there were none. But, if we *seriously* enquire, we shall find, that these Sects and Parties, however distinguished from each other, by particular *Forms* of Church Government, or some *little* Differences of Opinion, in Points *extra-essential*, are yet well agreed, in the *general* Notion of Christianity, in all the *great* and *capital* Points of Religion. They worship the *same* God, by the *same* Mediator, under the Influences of the *same* Spirit. They also *write* in the Scriptures, as the Standard of *Truth*, and appeal to them in all their Controversies; and you may with as much Sense and Propriety say, there can be no *Philosophers*, because *many* who profess Philosophy, differ in *some* Particulars, as to say we cannot be *Christians*, because there are *different* Sects under that *general* Denomination. And supposing the Differences were *much* greater, in Respect of *some* Principles, than is pretended; yet, I believe, all the Sects of Christianity, pretty readily unite, in the *practical*

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Parts of it. These are so reasonable in themselves; so agreeable to the natural Relation of Things; and are laid down in so many Places, and with so much Perspicuity, in the *Bible*, that *He that runs may read* and learn his *Duty*, and his *Obligations*, without any laboured *Casistry*, or learned *Councils*. And why will not Men practise these, at least? Especially, since the *practising* of what we *know* is one of the best Methods to *learn*, what we *know not*; For if any Man do his *Will*, he shall know of the *Doctrine* whether it be of *God*.

Again; We must consider, that the various Sects of *Christianity* do not spring up so much from the *Obscurity* of the *Scriptures*, as from their own *Fault*, and their own *Corruptions*. Some Men go on in Error for want of *Application* and *Attention*. They are of an *indolent* Temper; they will not give themselves the *Trouble* to search the *Scriptures*—they chuse an *implicit* Faith, because 'tis the *easiest* Way, and most indulges a *lazy* Temper. Some chuse a particular Mode of Worship, under the Influence of *Reputation*; they embrace the most *fashionable* Religion; they conform to it because it is the Religion of the Country, or to *ingratiate* themselves with Men of *superior* Life, and great *Character*: while others study their *Convenience* and worldly *Interest*: and from many *other* Springs, different Sects arise. Whereas, if these

these Prejudices were removed, they would easily discover on which Side the Truth most lies.

Again, Different *Opinions* in Religion can't excuse us from *Religion* itself, because we are not to build our Faith upon any *human* Authority, but upon the *Scripture* itself. God has given us his own Word for our *Rule*, and we are to be of no Sect or Party, any further than we discover their *distinguishing* Tenets to agree with the *divine* Standard. We are not to concern ourselves, what *this*, or *that* Sect believes and practices; but we must seek for *Christianity* in the *Scriptures* themselves; to the *Law* and to the *Testimony*. We cannot say that we *must* be led into *unavoidable* Errors, from the *different* Parties of professed Christians, while the *Bible* stands before us, and we have Liberty to *try* every Doctrine, and to see with our *own* Eyes. The *Objection* can have *no Plea* unless we were to take our Measures from the *Profession and Practice of others*, and so found our Faith upon *human Authority*; but this is not the Case. *Christianity* is taught in the *Bible*, thence we are to learn what to believe, and how to behave ourselves. And as *God* himself has given us this *Rule* to conduct our selves by, we may be assured 'tis a *safe*, a *sufficient* and an *easy* Rule, that every Thing *necessary* to make us think and act as Christians, is there laid down with the *greatest* Perspicuity. In short, what

is here alledged, should only be an Argument with us to *study* the Scripture more closely and assiduously, and to *ask* the divine Illumination. The grand Question is, Whether the *Practice* of Religion, and a *Compliance* with the Offers of Grace be *necessary*. If it be *not*, there is no Occasion of making this or any other Excuse: but if it be *necessary*, the *Difficulties* that attend it from the *various* Opinions and Denominations of Christians, can *never* excuse us; but ought to excite our *greater* Diligence. Suppose I was obliged to take a *Tour* thro' the Wilderness to a certain Country; suppose I had a true, and an exact Map of the Road in my Hands, and the Way *distinctly* mark'd out; must I sit down easy, and never set out upon my Journey, because some have misapplied this Map, and taken different Roads? By no Means; and yet how easy is it to apply this unto *Christianity*. We know whither we are going, and the Way we know. God has shewn us the *Path of Life*: He has pointed out *Faith* and *Holiness* as the sure Road to *Happiness*—He has given us his Word as a Compass to steer our Course by; and if *others* will not make a right Use of it, what is that to *us*, or how can we plead this to excuse ourselves. If we are so far influenced by this Objection, as not to pursue the Way of our Duty and Happiness, can we think it will be a just *Plea* in the *Day of Judgment*, when God shall ask us what *Reason* we can give for not having been

been *religious* ? Shall we not be ashamed to argue thus and say, Lord ! *Christianity* was so divided into *Parties*, that we knew not which was the *right* ; and therefore we chose to be of *none* ? Will not the great Judge reply ; You had the *Directions* of my *Gospel* in your Hands, why did you not obey them ? And what shall we be able to answer ? 'Tis plain, this is only a *Pretence* to cover our own Sloth—Let us *sincerely* endeavour to govern ourselves by the *divine Oracles*, and whatever *lesser* Errors may be incident to us, we may be sure that we shall know enough to bring us to *Heaven*. But I hope I have said enough to answer this *Objection*, and pass to another.

3dly. Some are apt to excuse themselves from what they observe amiss in others ; particularly those that *preach* the Gospel ; and thus argue against the *Office* from the *Practice*. They pretend that they don't see greater Degrees of *Purity* in Ministers, than others ; that some by no Means live up to the *Dignity* of their Office ; that they are *haughty* and *impious*, *avaritious* and *close*, and sometimes run into *all* the Immoralities they reprove in their Sermons.

I am heartily sorry any Occasion should ever be given for an *Objection* of this Sort ; it would certainly be a great Happiness to the Christian Church,

if

if the Preachers of the Gospel recommended it by their *own* Practice and Example; and I freely own, this very Objection should be of great Weight with every *Minister*, to take *Heed* to himself, as well as his *Doctrine*; and by Purity of Conversation, to give a *Sanction*, and *Testimony*, to the Divinity and Influence of what he preaches; but then, I cannot see that the Misbehaviour of any Minister can fairly acquit us of the Obligations of Religion, and I have several *good* Reasons to offer for it.

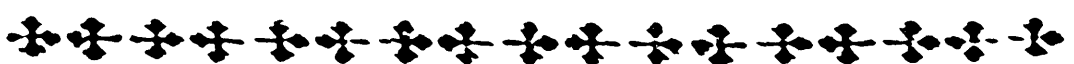
In the *first* Place; we need not be surprized at it, because our *Saviour*, who is the *Head* of the Christian Institution, has fairly forewarn'd us of such Things. He has plainly cautioned us, to *beware of Wolves, in Sheep's Cloathing*—And *St. Paul* tells his Hearers, *that after his Departure, he knew that Wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the Flock*. Our blessed *Lord* taxes many of the *Jewish* Teachers with their Vices and Hypocrisy: He denounces heavy *Woes* against *them*; but then, he does not allow it to be an *Excuse* to their Hearers; No, saith he, *the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Chair, whatsoever they say, do ye; but not after their Works*. Christianity could not be firm if these Things were not to be sometimes observed; though it is very unhappy for the Men who furnish such a Proof.—

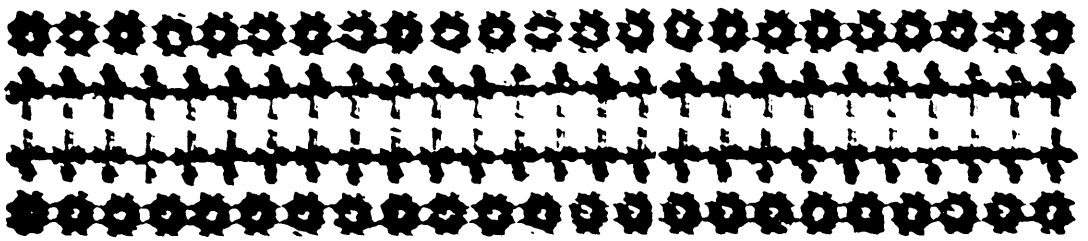
Again ; Though I would be the last Man that should *palliate* Vices, in any of the ministerial Order ; yet, I doubt their Faults are often *exaggerated*, and view'd thro' a *magnifying* Glass. People are so intent upon the *Purity* of their *Office*, that they don't make sufficient Allowances for the *Frailty* of *their Natures* ; they think upon the *Minister*, and they forget the *Man*—We also, my Brethren, are *Men of like Passions with you* ; and we shew we are *but Men* at the best. The *Man* runs thro' all our *Ministrations*, and the *Man* must appear thro' our *Lives and Conversation*. We also are *compassed about with Infirmities, tho' we serve at the Altar*.—And if on the one Hand, our *Office* gives us some peculiar *Advantages* for, and lays us under some peculiar *Obligations* to a holy Life ; yet, on the other, besides the *Foibles common* to Men, we are exposed to peculiar *Temptations* ; and the *Devil*, in a special Manner, aims his fiery Darts at us. And if these Things were *impartially* considered, we should find a great deal less to accuse Ministers of. But again, if *some* Ministers are not so *circumspect*, as they ought to be, in their Lives ; yet, we can't deny that there are *many*, who are true Patterns and shining Examples of Piety. Many, who, tho' they are not *absolutely* perfect, yet press toward the Mark ; are holy and humble, and full of *Faith* and the *holy Ghost* ; preach Piety and Vertue every Day in the Week by a good Conversation, and
are

are the same Men in and out of the *Doct.* And, if we pretend to make the vicious Lives of *some* an Excuse, why do we not upon the very same Principles, imitate all that is Vertuous, and Praise-worthy, and of good Report in others? Why should we not be Followers of them who are Followers of *Christ*—and be won by their good Conversation, to walk as they also walk? How can we excuse ourselves to *God. Man,* or to our own *Consciences,* if we imitate the Conduct of *bad* Ministers, and will not practice the *Doctrines,* nor follow the *Steps* of good and vertuous Preachers? But that I may strike Home at once, and reach the very *Root* of the Objection, let me observe to you, that neither the Example of one Minister, nor another, ought to have any Influence upon our Practice, consider'd in itself, or, any further than it agrees with that divine Rule of Conduct, that sure Word of Prophecy, *the Bible.* Sure I am, *St. Paul* himself, did not desire any Man to follow him, one Step further than he followed *Christ.* God never told us, that the *Example* of *Ministers,* was to be our *Rule.* The Example of the best of Men is far short of *Perfection,* which is *essential* to a *Rule* of Conduct, and is peculiar to the holy Scripture. If there are any of the sacred Function, who disparage their *Office,* by an *immoral* Conduct, they shall bear their *own* Punishment, whoever they be. But how will that excuse us? In his Word God has

shewn us what is good ; and *what doth the Lord our God require of us ?* Why, He hath told us plainly in that Revelation He has given us—He has set an Hedge there about our Conduct ; He has pointed out all the Branches of our Duty, in every Relation we are plac'd in. And dare we rebel against *God ?* Dare we cast his Word behind our Backs, meerly, because *some* who pretend to be *Teachers* of the Law, contradict their own Doctrines in their *Lives ?* This will never bear a Scrutiny ; it is cast at the Bar of *common Sense*. *Reason* will scarce give it a Hearing, and I am sure it cannot bear the Test of the *great Tribunal*. When therefore we find any Prejudices arise in our Minds from this Quarter, against a religious Life, before we dare to indulge them, let us *seriously* ask ourselves, whether we think in our Conscience, such Excuses will pass the severe Trial of the *great Tribunal* ; before one, who *cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked*. If it won't pass *there*, why should it pass *now* ? If we can't trifle *with God*, why shou'd we trifle *with ourselves* ? This Answer may also serve to disarm those Pleas, which are fetched from the Lives of some *Professors*. 'Tis a melancholy Truth, hat many who *name the Name of Christ, will not depart from Iniquity* ; that many have the *Form* of Godliness, who deny the *Power* of it ; and tho' they profess to *know God*, yet in *Works* deny him. They only make their Pro-
fession

fession subservient to their worldly *Interest*, or use Religion as a *Sutrap* to worldly *Preferences*. They cry the *Temple of the Lord*, the *Temple of the Lord*; but give themselves such *Liberties* as the *Gospel* does not admit of. All this is too true of some Professors; but what Consequence will you draw from it? that there are *none* sincere, because some are *Hypocrites*? Or, if even that Consequence could hold, will it further follow, that you may be excused both from the *Practice* and *Profession* of Religion? No, *this* Reasoning will never do; for it is *one* Thing what others *practice*, and *another* Thing what you *ought* to practice—you are to walk by *Rule*, and not by *Example*. If others will bring the *Curse* upon themselves, that surely is no *Encouragement* for you to follow them. You are not to follow even a *Multitude* to do *Evil*—You are to be Followers of that which is good; to *try* all Things, and to *approve* of the Things that are excellent—Whatever others do therefore, if there be any *Virtue*, if there be any *Praise*, think on *these* Things; and remember this; that the more *bad* Examples the World affords, there is the *greater* Need of some *good* Examples to ballance them; and the greater Call to add *yours* to their Force and Number.





S E R M O N II.



Prejudices rectified.



L U K E 14 Chap. 18th Verse.

*And they all with one Consent began
to make Excuse.*

♦♦♦♦ Have already taken Occasion from this
♦ I ♦ Text, to consider, and have endeavoured
♦♦♦♦ to obviate three of the Objections which
many are apt to make, in order to excuse them-
selves from complying with the *Calls, and Rules* of
the Gospel.

I proceed now to another Objection ;

4thly. Some think it a *sufficient* Objection against
their being *religions*, and embracing *Christianity* ;
that, generally speaking, Men of the most superior
Parts,

Parts, and greater *Distinction*, are not religious. They say, if Religion was so reasonable a Thing, and so well attended, and at the same Time of such great Importance; surely Persons whom Nature has distinguished with the best Talents and Capacity, would become the first Profelytes to it:—and we must needs be safe in following those who are so much superior to us. I doubt not, this has had a very unhappy Influence upon a great many the best Persons. Indeed, there is too much Truth in the Facts themselves, upon which this Objection is founded; but then, I deny that these Facts are a sufficient Foundation to support the Objection.

'Tis true, 'tis a Scripture Truth, that *not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many noble, are called; but God has chosen the foolish Things of this World*. Christianity has been too generally despised in all Ages, by Men of Fame, Learning, and pregnant Parts; by Men of distinguish'd *Parts* too, and *Wealth*—But is this a sufficient Reason that I should therefore despise it? By no Means—The Objection proceeds from an Ignorance of the Nature of Christianity; the natural Man knoweth not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned: And therefore it is, that the Cross of Christ is not only a Stumbling-Block to the Jews, but Foolishness to the Greeks. Knowledge when

it is not *sanctified*, puffeth up—Men of pregnant Parts are apt to deify themselves too much, to *submit* to God's Revelation and Method. They naturally affect to be *wise above what is written*—The *Philosopher* does not know how to *stoop* to the *Bible*—as *St. Austin* before his Conversion, look'd upon *that* Book with Contempt, because he could not find *Tully* in it. The Christian Revelation is a very *humbling* Scheme ; it casts down high Thoughts and Imaginations ; these exalt themselves against *Christ* ; and the *more refined* a Man's Genius is in Literature, and polite Science, the *more indisposed* he *naturally* is to receive the *Gospel*—For which Reason, our Saviour tells us, the *Poor* are *gospelliz'd*. And it was the common People, who were of a more humble, docible Temper, that heard him *gladly*, while none scarce of the *Rulers* and *Pharisees* believed in him—Men of Reason think of no *other* Guide, but their *Reason* ; and are apt to employ their *keenest* Talents against a Scheme of Doctrines, for which they have no Relish. I confess, by their Parts and Learning, they may be more qualified than others, to understand the *literal* and *grammatical* Meaning of Scripture, and may in this Sense, more easily comprehend the whole Scheme of Christianity in their Heads. But what signifies this, if the *Spirit of God* has not opened the *Beauty* and *Spirituality* of the divine Life to them ! So that this ought to be no Objection with us. Christianity

stianity is of such a *spiritual* Frame, that ingenious Men may *not* discover the *Wisdom* of it. And as for Persons of superior *Stations* and *Estates*, we may give a very easy and natural Reason, why so few of them, comparatively, do heartily embrace *Christianity*. Men of high Stations, are apt to look upon themselves as too high and great, to *step* to the condescending Offices which *Religion* requires: and besides that, their very *Station* and *Dignities*, are apt to engage them, both in the *Pleasures* and *Incumbrances* of Life, and to *alienate* their Minds from *God*, and the Religion of a *crucified Jesus*. The Doctrine of the *Cross*, the Doctrine of *Self-Denial*, has a harsh Sound in the Ears of those, whom Providence has *distinguished* in Wealth; and they can't hear of the *Vanity* of that World, in which they are so *deeply* interested. In a Word, their Hearts are apt to be *overcharged* with the *Cares* of the World, and the *Deceitfulness* of Riches. Since therefore so *rational* an Account can be given, why Men of *great Learning*, *great Power*, and *great Wealth*, neglect Religion, why should we be surprized to see it, or how can we form an Objection upon it?

However, since we give some *Weight* to their Influences, let me add yet further, that *Christianity* has in no Age wanted Men of the *best Parts*, and the *greatest Power* and *Wealth*. It can't be denied

ried, that there have been *eminent* Christians found in all the *learned* Professions. It would be very hard indeed, if we could find no *serious* Men, among the *great* Divines, who have adorned the Ages that produced them—Yes doubtless, there have been many such, and among the *Laiety* too, of the *first* Rank and Capacity;—and so far, the *very* *Ground* of your Objection is *removed*.

But the *plain* Truth is, and 'tis a very short Way of *refuting* the Objection; God never intended that the Practice of the *Great* and *Rich*, and *learned* Men, I mean the *wise* Men after the *Flesh*, should be the *Rule* of ours. We are no where commanded to imitate the *Wise*, the *Scribe*, the *Disputer* of of this World; but to sit at the Feet of *Jesus*, and learn our Duty from *Him*, and those who wrote under the *Dictates* of his *blessed* Spirit; remembering, the *Wisdom* of this World is *Foolishness* with God. The great and *decisive* Question is, Whether the Scriptures are *divine* and *true*, whether they give us a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Practice? If we confess this, 'tis in vain to make Men's Practice, of whatever *Figure* and *Fame*, a Pattern for our Vices; or to think it will excuse our *Irreligion*, because Men, otherwise superior to us, have not submitted to the Rules of *Christianity*. God will reckon with *them*, and we must answer for *ourselves*. As it is criminal in them to
give.

give, 'tis no less so in us to follow, *bad* Examples. So that I believe I may now proceed to the next Objection.

5thly. Some object the *Perfection* of the Christian Morals. They say, that *Christianity* requires us to be *perfect*; that it is not content with some *general* Regulations of the *outward* Behaviour; but gives Law to the *inward* Man; comprehends all the Motions of the Heart, and requires *Purity* in the utmost Extent, and most rigorous *Perfection*.

But this Objection really does Honour to *Christianity*. 'Tis it's Glory, that it contains such a perfect *System* of Duties, and insists upon the Regulation of our *Thoughts*, as well as *Actions*. This is the Way to *exalt* our Natures, which we are naturally very fond of; the Way to honour *God*, and secure Order and Government among *Men*—And is it not ten Thousand Furies, that the *Excellency* of Religion should be urged as an *Objection* against it?

Yes saith the *Objector*, but it insists upon that *Perfection*, which no Man living, the Author of it excepted, ever *did*, or ever *can* attain; and what signifies my entering upon a Life which I can't maintain? Better not learn the *Alpha* of *Christianity*, if I must despair of reaching the *Omega*. Here then is the whole Strength of the Objection, which

which it seems does not lie against the *Perfection* of *Christianity* in itself, but against the *Impossibility* of our reaching to that Perfection.

But if this be the *Objection*, it is founded in pure *Mistake*; 'tis supposing Religion requires that, which it does no where *require*. For we must distinguish between our *aiming* at absolute Perfection, and our *actual Attainment* of it; the one, *Christianity* *does* require, the other it *does not*. No Man can be a *Christian*, who is willing to acquiesce in his past Attainments. We are required to forget the Things behind, and to press forward towards the Mark. We must be as *perfectly* holy as we can; and the *more* holy we are, so much the *more* happy and useful. But where does the *Bible* say, we can't be *Christians* (truly so denominated) except we are *absolutely* perfect? If this were the Case, I acknowledge the *Objection* would be quite insuperable. I must lay down my Pen at once; for there is not *a just Man upon Earth that doeth good and sinneth not*. But is there any Reason why I should not be as perfect as I *can*, because I can't be as perfect as I *would*? Not the *Shadow* of a Reason, and therefore no *Shadow* of *Objection*.

The whole of the Matter is; *Christianity* is *itself* a perfect Scheme of Holiness and Vertue; and *Christian Perfection*, with Respect to us, is our diligent

diligent and *sincere* Endeavours to come as near the *Rules* of it, as our State of present *Imperfection* will admit of. And tho' when we have done all, we shall have much for God to *forgive*, and for us to *repent* in ourselves; yet this is our Comfort, that there is a happy World of *triumphant* Spirits, where that which is in Part shall be done away, and a *sinless* Perfection shall be actually attain'd. Let not this then discourage any of us, from commencing Christians, or setting out upon the Race that is set before us. Nor let us admit of an *Excuse*, that has so little, indeed nothing at all to support it.

6thly. Some are offended with Christianity, because of some *incomprehensible* and *sublime* Doctrines *peculiar* to it. They say, they can't be the Matters of their *Faith*, because they exceed their *Comprehension*. They have no Idea of *three Persons* in *one Godhead*; they can't understand a *God incarnate*. Tell them of Christ's *Union* with Believers, or of the Doctrines of *imputed Sin* and *Righteousness*, and they are ready to *fly out* into Expressions of Wrath and Passion. But why should the *Mysteries* of Christianity be thought an *Objection* against it, when all Nature is full of *Mysteries*; and we acknowledge a thousand Things that we really can never pretend to *comprehend*? Vain Men! *that would be wise, though they are of Yesterday, and*

know nothing! Who can hardly dissect a Fly, and dare to comprehend a God? Give me Leave to ask you, Whether the Idea of *Incomprehensibility* is not *essential* to the Deity? If he were not *incomprehensible*, he could not be God? And if he be *incomprehensible*, it can be no Reason for *not* submitting to the Doctrines of the *Trinity*, and the *Incarnation*, that we do *not* comprehend them. Surely, we must own, that the *great God* understands himself best, and that he may reveal Things, relating to his own *infinite* Essence, which no *meral* Eye can take in: And since these very Doctrines are a Part of that Revelation, which has all the Marks of *divine* Original, Why should we not confess our own Ignorance, and be strong in Faith, giving Glory to God? What is there in these Doctrines more incomprehensible, and mysterious, than the *Omnipresence*, than the *Eternity* of the divine Existence? And yet, these we believe without any Difficulty; yea, are forced to believe them, or profess *Atheism*.

And as for the Doctrine of *Imputation*, why should it seem a Thing incredible with us, that *Adam* and *Christ* should be appointed our *Representatives*? We understand *this* among Men, and in our own Constitution, and why won't we admit it in the *divine* Government? Since God has a much greater *Right* to dispose of us, and to choose

a *Representative* for us, than we have to *dispose* of ourselves. And this divine Transaction with Men, must appear the more *reasonable*, because we had been entitled to all the Benefits of *Adam's* Obedience, if He had stood firm in his Allegiance. And as much as we now *object* against it, because we think ourselves Loosers by it; yet, I make no Doubt of it, had we been all upon the Stage, we ourselves had chosen our natural, and common Father, to be our *federal* Head; who was the more likely to stand, when the dearest Interest of all his *Posterity* depended on it.

But after all, supposing we could not get over all the *sublime* Mysteries of Christianity, why should *that* be a Reason for our neglecting those important Parts and Duties of it, which we *can* comprehend, and own, that we understand?

7thly. Some object Nothing against the Reasonableness and Necessity of a *religious* Life; but only would excuse themselves by saying, They think it is Time *enough* to engage in it; there may be a Necessity of being Christians, but there is no Necessity of being so *now*. We are yet in our Youth, and the Gravity of a religious Life will better become us; it will set better about us, when we have made more Advances in Life and Manhood.

But

But let no Person dare to make this *Excuse*, till he has taken a serious Walk in the *Church-yards*, and taken the Size and Dimension of the *Graves*, that he often walks over. *Look, my Friends*, look into the Congregation of the *Dead*; and see, if you can find none of your own Age, or Stature, or many, very many, *younger* and *shorter* than yourselves. If these young Persons trifled, and deluded themselves, with the same *Excuse* that you now offer, how wretched must their Condition be? And could they come and testify to you; how would they warn you, not to neglect *Religion* and *Piety*, lest you come into the same *Condemnation* and Place of *Torment*? Did you never read, that they die in *Youth*, and their Lives are among the *Unclean*? And should not this urge you to flee *youthful* Lusts, and to follow after Righteousness? What, too *young* to be religious! too *young* to obey your God! to *remember your Creator*! to glorify him in whose Hand is your *Breath*! Who took you out of your Mother's Womb; Who blest'd the *Breasts* that you have suck'd, and guarded you in your *infant* and *helpless* Days! *Shall He nourish and bring up Children, and shall they rebel against him*? Will you give your *Prime*, will you sacrifice your *first Fruits* of Life to the *Devil* and your *Lusts*; and think to put God off with their *Leavings*, to serve him with a *wasted* Constitution,

Constitution, and the few *Remnants* of Nature that old Age shews? Religion exceedingly adorns Youth; God loves them that seek him early: If you set out in *Youth*, you will make a *Figure* in the *Church*, you will seem to be *Pillars*; you will lay in a *large Stock* of Grace; you will do much Service; make Christianity more easy and sweet; alleviate *old Age*, and turn *the Shadow of Death* into *the Light of the Morning*.

8thly. 'Tis no small Prejudice against the open Profession and Practice of Christianity, with a great many Persons, that they think they are hereby exposed to the *Reflection* and *Scoff* of the *lesser Part* of Mankind.

This Fear of Man bringeth a Snare; many a one is deterred from his Duty for Fear of *Reproach* and *Injustice*: “ I would fain be a Christian, if
 “ I could be one without exposing my Reputation;
 “ but if I make a Profession, and live a religious
 “ Life, I must expect to stand as a Mark for the
 “ *Archer*, and to hear the *defaming* of many:
 “ They will think it strange, that I do not run
 “ with them into the same Excess of Riot, *speaking*
 “ *evil* of Men. I shall, to be sure, be *pointed*
 “ at, and call'd a *precise* Fool, a *Pietist*, and *Pu-*
 “ *ritan*: I must renounce my *old* Companions, or
 “ forever endure their *poignant* Wit and Sarcasms;

“ and who can bear to be thus lampoon’d ; to be
 “ a *By-word*, and a *Proverb*, and to have *Scoffers*
 “ of *Invectives* from the *Seat of the Scorners* ?”
 Alas ; how many have thus stumbled at the
Threshold of Christianity ? How many have kept
 their *Backs* turn’d upon Christ, because they would
 hide their *Face* from *Shame* and *Spitting* ? This
tender Thing, this *fine* Name, this *Reputation*,
 what an *Influence* it has upon our *Minds* ? It must
 certainly be a *Piece of Charity*, to relieve Persons
 who labour under this *Objection*, and steel them to
 reproach.

In *Answer* to it then, consider, that the only
 Way to maintain a *fair* Reputation, is to be a *real*
 Christian. If you profess Christianity, and contra-
 dict your Profession in your Practice, I confess,
 you *expose* your Character to the greatest *Insult* ;
 the *Scoffer* does you Justice in railing at you for
 an Hypocrite. But if you profess to be Christians,
 and are *really* what you profess to be ; you give
 them no *just* Reason to reproach you ; and must
 be sensible that their *Tongues* are no *Slander*. It
 would perhaps hurt your Character, if it had their
Approbation, and all their *Invectives* should be
 look’d upon, as so many *undesigned* Panegyrics
 upon you. For what have the *Christians* done to
 deserve their *Censure* ? What *Matter of Reproach*
 can it be, to devote ourselves to the *Worship* of
 that

God, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve, by ten thousand Engagements? Will they call you *Pietist*? Will they call you *Puritan*? Study to deserve the Names, they carry their own Praise; they are *Names* that do not belong to them. Turn the *Irony* into *Truth*, and you may glory in the *Characters*; they are very *secret*, they are Characters of *Duty*, Characters of *true Honour*; and the *opposite* Names are *Terms* of Infamy. Is it not better to be called *Puritans*, and *Pietists*, than by renouncing Religion, and adding yourselves to Vices, to deserve the Name of *Debauchees*, *Gluttons*, *Drunkards*, and other *Appellations*, to the eternal Reproach of *human Nature*?

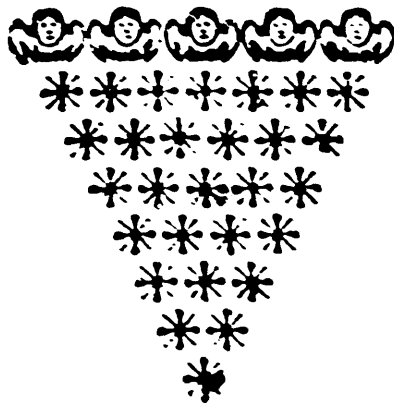
But if this Way of Reasoning can't fortify, and arm you with *Courage* enough, to enter seriously upon the Life of a Christian; let me tell you this for your *Comfort*, if it be indeed a *Comfort*, that you will soon be rid of *such* Company, and be out of the hearing of such *Lampsons*: for if they once see, you are firmly resolv'd to be serious, grave, and pious, they will care as little for your Company, as you will for *theirs*; and then, let them shoot their *Bolts*, they cannot reach you; or if they should, 'tis your own Fault if they wound you. For what is a little *guilty* Breath, from such Mouths? What *Impression* can it make upon you? And then again, consider, who, and what Sort of

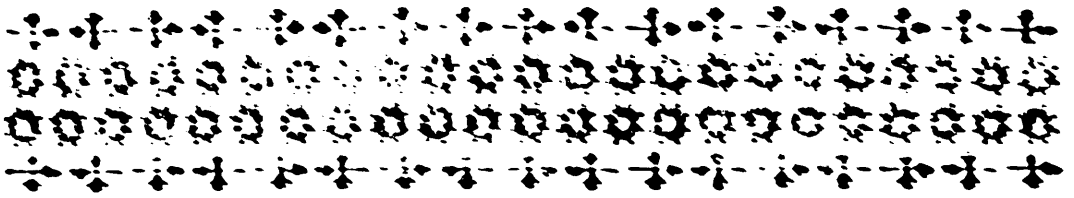
Persons they are, who thus revile you, and aim at *Christianity* thro' your Sides. They come up, neither to the Character of *Christians*, nor *Gentlemen*: they are a set of dissolute abandon'd Wretches; Enemies to *God*; Enemies to *Virtue*; a Reproach to *Society*; and the very *Scum* of the Earth. And will you resign your Hope, and your Salvation; your *God*, and your Happiness, for them? Is the Favour, and good Word, of a scoffing, *Atteistical* Crew, of so much Consequence with you, that you would purchase it at the Expence of your Souls? Must you pay such a Compliment to a reviling World, as to sacrifice your Peace, and all your Expectation, to them? You will not be *singular* in being thus reproach'd; 'tis the *common Lot* of Christians, and you are sure of the Applause of all *wise* and *thoughtful* Men.

But if these *Considerations* be insufficient, and you will not suffer them to have their proper Weight; yet methinks, you should tremble to hear these Words of our Saviour; *Whosoever is ashamed of Me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the Glory of his Father, and his holy Angels.* Can you stand before the *Terror* of such a *Text* as this? Can't you bear a few *Taunts*, and *Reproaches* from Men, now,
 And

and will you be able to bear that *immortal* Reproach, which shall never be wiped away, when you shall be *ashamed*, in the Face of that great Assembly of *Angels*, and *Men*? When *Christ* himself shall be *ashamed* to own you, and shall upbraid you with your Folly, in preferring the *Praise* of Men, and such Men too, to the Praise of God? How will you be confounded, when you see *Christ*, and *Christians*, in their perfect Righteousness and Glory, to reflect upon the *Excuse* that you now make; to think, you should even have been allowed to practise so glorious a Religion, intitled to so many Honours, and to follow such a *glorious* Leader as the *Son of God*; who will then appear the *Brightness* of his Father's Glory, and the express *Image* of his Person, and capable of conferring such Honours upon you? How will you be able then, to lift up your Face, when you see the noble *Army* of *triumphant* Saints, whose Company, and Profession, you were once ashamed of? And how, do you think, these *Scoffers* themselves will look, whose Words are now so stout, and who are so free, and liberal of their opprobrious Names, when *Christ* comes to convince them of their *ungodly* Words? Won't you then be ashamed, that such Men should have such an Influence over you, as to shame you out of your Rewards, and Crowns, that the once despised *Pietists*, and *Puritans* shall wear? And must not

eternal Confusion cover you, when *Christ* himself shall tell you of the *Shame* that he once despised for your Sakes, when he had all *Manner* of Evil spoken against him? This therefore, at the best, is a most *shameful* Excuse.





S E R M O N III.



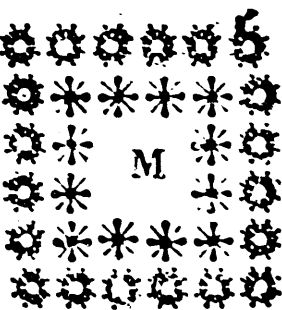
Prejudices rectified.



L U K E 14 Chap. 18th Verse.

And they all with one Consent began to make Excuse.

To proceed with the Objections :

9thly.  ANY excuse themselves from being Religious, because, they say, they are too much *incumbred* with their *worldly* Affairs.

They are so deeply engaged in other *Matters*, that they can't fix their Thoughts upon *Religion*, which requires a *sedate, sober* Frame of Spirit, free from

worldly *Perplexities*. One is apt to plead, that he is engaged in State-Affairs; another, that the *Circumstances* of his Family involve him in many worldly Cares; and to make the Pleas the more plausible, assert it to be their *Duty*.

Now, there is too much Truth in it, that so far as the World gains the *Ascendency*, Religion proportionably loses Ground in the *Heart*. When a Man's Thoughts are taken up with a thousand worldly Schemes and much Sollicitudes, what he shall eat, what he shall drink, or wherewithal he shall be clothed, he is not like to seek *first* the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness: All this is very true; and 'tis farther true, that it may be our Duty to follow *some* worldly Business, that we may provide Things honest in the Sight of all Men. But this is not the Point; no; the *Question* is, Why we will suffer ourselves so far to be engaged in the World, as to take off our *Hearts* from Religion? You remember, what our blessed *Lord* said upon this Occasion, to *Martha*, when she was taken up with much serving; *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about many Things, but one Thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the good Part, which cannot be taken from her*: One Thing is needful, absolutely needful; other Things are but comparatively necessary; neither doth a Man's Life consist in the Abundance of Things that he possesses; but there

is

is an *absolute* Necessity of making our Calling and Election sure ; an *absolute* Necessity of laying up Treasures in Heaven. *What shall it profit a Man, to gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul ?* If we kept within the Limits of *Necessity*, we might spare much of that Time, and Pains, we bestow upon the World : We often cover the Gratification of our Pride, our Lusts, Excess, and Luxury, with the Cloak of *Duty*, and *Necessity*. If we kept within due Bounds in our Expences, we might find a great deal more Time and Spirit for Religion : But, when we thus give the World the Ascendency in our Affections, how little do we consider, *what* the World is ? How soon the Fashion of it is passing away ? Did we seriously consider, that a dreadful Conflagration will, we know not how soon, burn up *this Earth*, and the Things that are in it ; what *Manner of Persons* should we be in all holy Conversation and Godliness ? What can this World do for us, that we sacrifice so much of our Time, and Study to it ? What will the *richest* Men do, when they find, that *Riches* cannot profit in the Day of *Wrath*, nor deliver their *Souls* from going down to the Pit ; when their *Gold* and their *Silver* is canker'd, and the Rust thereof shall be a *Witness* against them ? How fain would a *dying* Worldling redeem his Time, when he has none left to redeem, wishing to live his Years over again, that he might do more for Religion, and less for the World ?

What

What a dreadful Thought is it for a dying Man!
 “ I have lived a large Share of Time, and I have
 “ raised a large Estate in it, for myself, and my
 “ Heirs; I have provided for every Thing, but
 “ my Soul; and secured every Thing, but *that*,
 “ which it was my greatest Concern to secure.”
 Methinks the *Parable* of the rich Fool, should for
 ever silence this *Objection* from the World. And
 what can be more *absurd*, than to be intent upon
 Trifles, to the Neglect of greater and more sub-
 stantial Things? *The Children of this World are*
much wiser in their Generation, than this comes to;
 they have always Affairs in View of different Con-
 sequences, and they proportion their Cares, and
 Schemes, and Diligence, to the Consequence of
 them. But this it seems, has no Weight with many;
 they forget the Rule of *Proportion*, betwixt a
perishing, and an *eternal* World; or we should
 never hear one say, *I have bought a Piece of*
Ground, and I must needs go and see it; and ano-
ther, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to
prove them, pray have me excused.

10thly. I proceed to obviate another *Excuse* of
 some *Alliance* with this, but much more specious,
 and therefore by *no Means* to be omitted. This
 is taken from the *Poverty*, and *Exigencies*, of many
 People in the World, who tell us, they have nothing
 to object against being religious, and performing the
 Offices

Offices of Piety; but *this*, that they really have no *Time to spare* for it. Their Circumstances in the World are very low; they are under the Incumbrance of Families; some have many Children to provide for, and must either cast them, as a Burden upon the Charity of the *Parish*, or lay out all their Time to subsist, and keep them from Starving. And how can they think of *Religion*, which has many Branches belonging to it, and requires more Time than they have to spare, from their necessary *Employments*?

I can't say, but at first Sight, this is the most *specious* Objection I have met with; but, yet it has not Weight enough to excuse them, who make it; for,

In the first Place, If you consider the *Essence* of Christianity, tho' it richly *deserves* all our Time; yet, it does not always, and absolutely require so much Time from our *necessary* Affairs, as some may think. Does it take up such a deal of Time, to reflect upon our *natural* State, and upon the *Method of Salvation* by Christ? What great Matter of Time does it require, to put up that Prayer of the *Publican*; *God be merciful to me a Sinner*? What *great* Part of our Time can it take up, to accept of *Jesus Christ* by Faith, and to give up our *Hearts*, and all our Concerns to God? A Man must be *greatly* pinch'd indeed, who can't find

Time

Time enough for the *Essentials* of Religion. Or, supposing our *Circumstances* oblige us to labour hard and diligently all the Week; yet the *Sabbath*, I hope, may be devoted to God and Religion; and the less we have of the Week, the more should we redeem that *precious Opportunity*.

Again, Let the *poorest* Man ask himself, whether he never *trifles* away more of his Time, than *Christianity* has of it? If this be the *Excuse*, he is without all *Excuse*.

Again, The *Poor* should remember, that *Religion* is a Thing, to which every Thing else must give Place: and if they seek *first* the Kingdom of God, they have this *Promise*, that all other Things *necessary*, shall be added to it.

11thly. Many are *inveterately* prejudiced against *Religion*, from the *great Restraint* it lays upon what they call their *Pleasures*. They seem to have imbibed a Notion, that Man was not born to Trouble, but sent into the World to play, like the *Leviathan* in the Ocean, and to hunt after *Pleasures*, without Limits, and without Restraint; and they think, that *Religion* too much curbs them, and gives a *Negative* to their Career in Sin, which is the only Pleasure of an *unsanctified Heart*.

But

But this *Objection*, however close it sticks, has not the least Foundation in *Reason*. For;

In the *first Place*, 'tis a formidable Mistake, that Man was design'd, and calculated only for *Pleasure*. God never intended that we should *live* in Pleasure; but to his *Glory*, in a Life of Service and Usefulness. A *probationary State* is *essentially* inconsistent with *unrestrained Pleasures*. 'Tis also a great Mistake, on the *other Hand*, to suppose that Christianity *absolutely* excludes all Sorts of *Delight*, which Nature around us affords. Even in the State of Innocence, Man had not his *sensitive Power* in vain; he had sufficient about him for the *innocent Gratification* of every Sense, and every Passion; and it was a Part of the Happiness, which compos'd the Garden of Eden. And even now, Nature affords the same *sensitive Satisfaction*, which Religion does *not* take away. As bad as the World is, there is enough to please our *Eyes*, and *Ears*, and other *Senses*, without any Guilt. Religion does indeed give *Law* to our *Senses*, but does not *destroy* them; it only sets *proper Limits* about them; restrains Excesses, and determines them to a *proper End*.

Again, Whatever Pleasures Christianity forbids, are *not* for our Advantage, but to our great Prejudice: For Instance; *excessive Drinking, Gluttony, all Kinds of Intemperance, and Luxury, all Sorts of*

of Debauchery, &c. are prejudicial to our Lives, our Health, our Understandings, our Families, our Friends, and our Country. Is it not then for the Credit of Religion, that it *reproves* such Things in us ? And should it not even *recommend* Christianity to us, which lays down Rules, and Precepts, that carry their own Reward with them ?

Again, You should take particular Notice of this, that 'tis for want of being *really* religious, that you think other Things your Pleasure. While you have a *carnal* Temper in you, these Things are suited to it ; but if you would comply with the *Calls of Christ*, and have your Nature *renewed*, and *sanctified*, you would naturally renounce these Pleasures, *falsly* so called ; discover the *Cheat* they have put upon you ; and if *God* had left all open, make an *Enclosure* yourselves. For a Christian will look upon all *criminal* Delights, as the very Shame of *human* Nature.

Again, Supposing Christianity robs you of these carnal, and guilty Pleasures, it makes you a very rich Compensation, by giving you *superior* Pleasures, in the Room of them. What is there in this World, but the *Lust of the Eye*, the *Lust of the Flesh*, and the *Pride of Life* ? These are called the *World's Trinity* ; and what do they afford, but a *brutual, sensual, and unsatisfactory* Gratification ?

tion? Sinners themselves confess, that they find no solid Satisfaction in any *particular* Pleasure; for if they did, they would not so often change their Pursuit, and leave *one* Delight for the Acquisition of *another*. The best of *sinful* Pleasures have an Allay; in the Midst of Laughter, the Heart is often *serious*; and we are forc'd to say of *Mirth*, *What doth it?* Our *greatest* Preparations for any *Frelick*, and *Recreation*, generally end in Disappointment and Fatigue: or if not, we know that the Pleasures of Sin are but *for a Season*; and the evil Days, whether you will be religious or not, are hastening on, when you shall say, *we have no Pleasure in them*. And besides this, these *low*, these *bodily*, these *short-lived* Pleasures, unless a Man be deaf to Reason and Conscience, are sure to beget *Pain* in the End, and leave a *Sting* behind them; and *you will mourn at the last, when they sting like an Adder, and bite like a Serpent*. And are such Pleasures to be compared with those *rational*, those *refined*, those *spiritual*, and *sublime* Pleasures, which are the *natural* Entertainment of a Mind, attemper'd to the Exercise of *Religion*? Can any of them be compared with that *Peace of Conscience*, and *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, in which the Kingdom of God consists? Can Men possibly have more Reason to be of good Cheer, than when the *Spirit of God* gives a *Witness in our own Consciences*, that *our Sins are forgiven*; that *all Things shall work together*

gether for *our* Good; that God is our *Shield*, and our *Reward*; and that *Death* itself cannot hurt us; but is turn'd into the Shape of a glorious *Deliverer*?

Or *admit*, that *Religion* could substitute no Pleasures in the Room of those it takes away; yet, can you once pretend, that your *filial* Pleasures can bear any *Proportion* to the Joys of *Immortality*: to the *Presence* of God in Heaven, where there is a *Fulness of Joy*, and at whose *Right Hand* are *Pleasures for evermore*? Which are the sure *Reward* God will give to all that *diligently seek him*.

To finish this Head, Seriously consider, that if you make your *Pleasures* an Objection against your *commencing* Christians, they will be dearly bought: you purchase them at a dear Rate. Men often pay severely for their *soft Indulgences*, even in this *Life*. The *Pleasures of Youth*, usually lay a Foundation, where they don't cut off *Life* in the middle of its Course, for a very *decrepid*, and *uneasy* old Age. *Distempers* and *acute Pains*, *Rattherness*, and *tedious Confinements*, tho' they may sometimes attend *Temperance* itself, yet very *rarely* do so; but seldom fail of being the *inseparable* Attendants, and Consequences, of an *intemperate*, vicious *Life*. But this is nothing to the Consequences of the *Life to come*: For by your *guilty* Pleasures, you not only sell the *Blood* of your Saviour, at a shameful Price,

Price, and forfeit the Kingdom of Heaven; but lay up *Treasures of Wrath*, against the Day of Wrath, and the righteous Judgment of God. And is it not infinitely better, to enter into Life maimed, by cutting away your right-Eye-Pleasures, than to be cast into Hell for them, where the Fire is not quenched, and where the Worm dieth not; being fed by a Reflection upon those very Pleasures, which you now lay so close to your Hearts, and which you are so afraid Religion will rob you of? But this *Objection* will not bear a *serious* Refutation, Let us try the *Strength of the next*;

12. Which is taken from the Doctrine of the Cross, and from those Sufferings, to which an Adherence to our Christian Profession, may subject us. This sticks with a great many; they like the Rewards, but cannot bear the Terms of Christianity; 'tis a hard Saying, *Who can bear it? If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* If I be a Christian, I must follow one, who was a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with Grief. The Road to Heaven has many *stony* Tracts, and I cannot think of suffering *Persecution* for the Sake of the Gospel; the *Cloud of Witnesses*, instead of animating, cast a Cloud over me; for I think back at the *History* of their Sufferings.

If we find ourselves incumber'd with this *Objection*, these *Considerations* may relieve us under it, and remove it out of the Way.

First, You must remember that every Christian is not *actually* called forth to suffer to *Death*, or to resist unto *Blood*. If ever this *Objection* had any Weight and Terror in it, it was in the *primitive*, and *bloody* Times of a national Persecution; but now, that thro' the good Providence of God, we enjoy Liberty of Conscience, Freedom of Sentiments, and are even protected, by a *Protestant*, and mild Government, one would think, the Force of such an *Excuse* should be taken off.

Again, tho' it be very true, that *Christians* must all be Martyrs in *Rebellion*, and we know not what Change we may see upon the Face of the *Christian Church*; yet remember, if God calls us to suffer for *his Name's* Sake, we may expect that we shall have *suffering* Grace. Why should he not enable us to *triumph* over our Persecutors, and to seal his Word with our *Blood*, as well as the first *Martyrs*? He is the *same God*, and they were *Men of like Passions* with us; they overcame by the Blood of the *Lamb*; and why should we fear any of those Things which we shall suffer? Nay, in all these Things, we shall be more than *Conquerors*.

Again,

Again, Let us consider the Apostle, and High-Priest of our Profession, who suffered greater Things before us: Let us look to him, who endured the Cross, despising the Shame; and we shall not be weary, nor faint, in our Minds.——

And what, if we should suffer a while? *Our light Afflictions, which will be but for a Moment, shall work out for us, an exceeding, and an eternal Weight of Glory.* And do you think, the Sufferings of this present Life, are worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us? If we *suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him; and having overcome, eat of the Tree of Life.* But on the other Hand, remember, that the fearful and the unbelieving, the cowardly Apostates, shall have their Part in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone. And if you have run with Footmen, and they have wearied you, how shall you contend with Horses? If you can't lay down your Life now for Christ, how will you bear the second, the eternal Death? If you shrink back from a few Fagots, and cannot stand a few Minutes at a Stake, how will you dwell with devouring Fire, how will you inhabit everlasting Burnings? Better lay down a thousand Lives for Christ, than be punished with an everlasting Destruction, from his Presence; and hear that terrible Reproach from him, *I could spill my Blood for you; but you would not spill yours*

for me; you were more afraid of them who kill the *Body*, than of him, who can destroy *Soul and Body* in Hell: *Depart from me therefore, ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And how trifling will this *Excuse* then look? The *Lashes* of your *own Consciences* will give you *keener Torments*, than all that you could see here upon Earth, in the Cause of *God and Religion.*

And now, what have you more to say, to *excuse* yourselves from a Compliance with *Christianity*? Will you pretend that you are not able to make yourselves *Christians*? Would to God, you had a real *Sense* of this upon your *Hearts*; it would be a fair *Step* to your *Happiness*. But, tho' you can't work *Grace* in your own *Hearts*, do you do what you can do of *yourselves* towards it? Do you lie in the *Way* of God? Do you make all the *Improvement* you can of *his Word*, and his *Ordinances*? Do you strive to avoid *Occasions* of Sin, and do you complain to God of your *Weakness*, and beg his *Grace* to do that, which you find you cannot do, by the *meer Power* of Nature? 'Till then, you have *no Plea* from this *Quarter.*

Will you make your own *Unworthiness*, your great *Wickedness*, an *Objection* against being religious? Is this the *Language* of your *Heart*? "I
" would

“ would fain have an Interest in the *Privileges*
 “ of the Gospel, but I dare not cherish such an
 “ Hope. I have so long grieved the *Spirit* of God;
 “ I have so long rejected the *Counsel* of God a-
 “ gainst myself; I have so long *crucified* the Son
 “ of God afresh; I have rioted, and play’d the
 “ *Prodigal*, and the *Wanton*, for such a long Course
 “ of Years, and not been *attentive* to the Dictates
 “ of my *own Conscience*, or the Voice of my *Prea-*
 “ *chers*, that I am afraid it is too late! When I
 “ was in my *Youth*, I thought it was *too soon* to be
 “ religious, and I doubt now, I am so far advanc’d
 “ in Years, it is to no Purpose to *attempt* it. *Reli-*
 “ *gion* should have been the Business of my *whole*
 “ *Life*; and what can I do, now *Life* is so near it’s
 “ *Period* with me? I doubt much, whether the
 “ Door of Mercy be not quite *shut*, and *shut*
 “ *forever*.”

I say, Is this the Language of *your Heart*? It is
good Language; it is a *hopeful Symptom*, that you
 have a Sense upon your Heart, of your *for-*
mer Carelessness; and this very *Sense* of it, that you
 make an *Objection*, should be an *Encouragement*:
 I am sure of it, this should be a very *great* Argu-
 ment, if so much of your Time be already run out
 to waste, you should not lose *one Moment* more
 of it: If your Sins have been of so many Year’s
Growth, and *Aggravation*, why should you still add

more to them? You think you have but *little* Time? I am sure you have a *great* Work—*Up* therefore, and be doing; the Day is *far spent*, 'tis high Time to *awake* out of *Sleep*; at least, *the Time past of your Lives should more than suffice you, in which you have walk'd after the Course of this World.*

Neither be discouraged, if you are now but *willing*: though it be late in the Day, 'tis yet *Day* with you: the *Shadow of the Evening* may be upon you, but you are not yet in the *Shadow of Death*. Even *now*, is the *accepted Time*, *now*, is the *Day of Salvation*. While therefore it is called to *Day*, bear *God's Voice, and live*. He is so *condescending* a God, that he will not remember the *Unkindness of your Youth*. Only return, and behold! *Your Father's Arms are open to you.*



S E R M O N





SERMON IV.



The Rain imbib'd,---

A N

Emblem of Grace.



H E B. Vith. 7, 8.

FOR the Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh est upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth Blessing from God: But that which beareth Thorns and Briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing; whose End is to be burned.

✠✠✠✠✠✠ HERE is a great Analogy in the
✠✠✠✠✠✠ Works of Nature, Providence and
✠✠ T ✠✠ Grace: And this lays a Founda-
✠✠✠✠✠✠ tion for those frequent Allusions,
✠✠✠✠✠✠ which the Scripture abounds in, to
Nature, when it wou'd give us the most sensible

Ideas of Grace ; expressing spiritual Things by those which fall under Sense, and are more familiar to us. One of this Sort of Allusions we have now before us ; wherein the Apostle represents the Condition of different Sorts of People, under the same Preaching, and in the Profession of the same Faith—He opens the Chapter with an Exhortation to the *Hebrews*, not to fall back from the Faith, but to go on to Perfection—At the 4th Verse, He enforces his Exhortation with a most tremendous Motive ; which, tho' misconstrued by many *dejected Christians*, yet carries the last Degree of Terror to every *real Backslider*. I think indeed, the Sound of them is like the Sound of *Thunder* ; and these Verses have more of the *Fire* and *Terror* of Mount *Sinai*, than any perhaps in the whole Gospel. “ *For it is impossible for those who were*
“ *once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly*
“ *Gift, and were made Partakers of the holy Ghost,*
“ *and have tasted the good Word of God, and the*
“ *Powers of the World to come ; if they shall fall*
“ *away, to renew them again to Repentance : seeing*
“ *they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,*
“ *and put Him to open Shame.*” Upon which the Words of my Text follow, as a very natural, but most awful Illustration—*For the Earth which drinketh in the Rain which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them, by, or for, whom it is dressed, receiveth Blessing from God.*

But that which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing; whose End is to be barren. The *Earth* here represents those who enjoy the Gospel, and the Means of Grace: the *Earth* that is often *rained upon*, signifies the frequency of Preaching the Gospel: the *Earth* that *bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed*, signifies them who improve under the Gospel: the *Earth* that *bringeth forth nothing but Briars and Thorns, and is nigh unto Cursing*; signifies those who *misimprove* the frequent Advantages they have; and the *terrible Issue* of that Misimprovement.—I shall therefore in a very brief Manner, touch upon the Doctrinal Notes that arise out of these Words; and proceed to an Application of them.

OBSERVATION 1st. We here see the Necessity and Usefulness of the Means of Grace, to our spiritual Growth and Nourishment. They are needful as the Rain, even as the *former and latter Rain upon the Earth*. Indeed, every Land that is rained upon doth not spring up with Herbs, doth not bear good Fruits: some Ground is barren under the most plentiful Showers. But yet, *where* there is *no Rain* or Moisture, nothing can be expected to grow. Thus, tho' all that enjoy the Means of Grace are not converted to God, or made fruitful; yet without these Means, there is ordinarily, no
Hope

Hope of Conversion at all. For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Rom. 10. 14. And as the Rains are needful for the first Springing up of the Seed, and its after Growth, and Ripening to Perfection: So are the Means of Grace useful, thro' the Blessing of God, for the full gathering of our Souls. (God ordinarily working by Means) and also for the Increase and perfecting of Grace in us, till we be risen to the Glory.—The Gospel Ministry was appointed for the perfecting of the Saints—till we all come unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. Eph. 4. 12, 13.—

Oss. ed. Here is that Temper and Disposition, with which the Word and Means of Grace should be received and used.

The Apostle does not say, the Earth that is often *rained* upon, but the Earth which *drinketh* in the Rain that cometh oft upon it. If it were to rain forty Days and forty Nights without Intermision; if all the Bottles of Heaven were unstopp'd and emptied upon it; the Rain of our Land would be but Powder and Dust, unless it were *drunk* and drank in.—This is necessary to fructify the Ground, and to impregnate the Principles of Vegetation—Neither would it be of any Service to a People, to have all the Means in the
World—

World - to have all the Labour, and cultivating Hand of the spiritual Husbandman, unless they drink in the Word. The Sound of the Gospel, its greatest Accents, will be but a Sound, if it only strikes the Drum of the Ear, and goes no deeper; or if it floats upon the Surface of the Soul, and has no Root in the Heart. Such were the stony Ground Hearers, who heard the Word, and received it with Joy too, but having no Root in themselves, their fair and blooming Leaves withered away. 'Tis the *ingrafting Word* that saves the Soul. We must desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. We are to hunger and thirst after Righteousness. We must give close Attention; and receive the Truth in the Love of it. It must be mix'd with Faith, that Faith which will reach and purify the Heart; and till we *drink in* the Word, 'tis preach'd to us in vain, and *more* than in vain; as I shall shew afterwards.—Tis the *Sword of Death unto Death*.—

Obs. 3d. I wou'd further observe here; that some People are favour'd with the Means of Grace in a very *plentiful*, and *distinguish'd* Measure.

Tho' God sends his Rain upon the Just and the Unjust, yet all Parts of the Earth are not equally watered. There is a Mixture of Sovereignty & Goodness here; to answer the Views of d^{iv} Providence.

Providence—sometimes you will see a Field languishing with Drought, and the Beauty of Nature effaced with a scorching Sun, while in other Places, God leaves not himself without sending down Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons to fill our Hearts with Food and Gladness. The Earth drinks in the Rain that cometh *oft* upon it, and 'tis a great Blessing of Nature and Providence, to have Plenty of Rain; the former and the latter Part in its *Season*. The Harvest is then great, and we bring Home our Sheaves rejoicing. But is it a Blessing; is it not a *greater* Blessing, to have a *Frequent* of the Word, and a *Plenty* of the Means of Grace; that Dew of Heaven, that Rain that fills the Pools, in our Way to Zion? Is it not a terrible Curse, to have a Famine not of Bread or of Water, but a *Famine of the Word of God*? And is it not to be thankfully received as an unspeakable Mercy, when the Doctrine of the Word *distils like the Dew*; when it comes down as the Rain upon the mown Grass, and on the tender Herb? 'Tis surely pleasant to stand in the Courts of the Lord's House, like Trees planted by the Rivers of Water. And this is the peculiar Felicity of many a Church; the Rain comes *oft* upon them: when other Places are dry around them, the Dew is upon *their Fleece*, and about their Camps—the Word is nigh them; they have Christ read and preached every Sabbath; they have the Gospel open'd, the Promises unfolded,

God

God shows them the Path of Life, and they have the warmest Exhortations to walk in it. They enjoy their Bibles, they enjoy Ministers, they enjoy Ordinances; so that Christ may say of them, what could I do more for my Vineyard that I have not done in it? and yet alas! I am obliged to make this further Observation upon the Text.

Oss. 4th. That some who have great Plenty of the Means of Grace, do not improve and grow under them; but remain as unfruitful as if they were never water'd.

The Rain comes oft upon *this* Earth, but it doth not *drink it in*: It is fruitful indeed; but is fruitful in *that*, in which Barrenness would be a Blessing. It *beareth*, but it beareth *Thorns and Briers*—This was the first Curse; *Thorns and Thistles shall it bring forth to thee*. The Fault lies not in the Want of Culture, nor in the Want of Water, but in the sterility and natural Barrenness of the Soil.—Such Land is only fit to be thrown up, for it deceives the Hope of the Husbandmen.

This is a melancholy Emblem of a People who enjoy a Plenty of the Means of Grace, but their profiting doth not appear—they have not their *Fruit unto Holiness*; they are barren and unfruitful in the Knowledge of Christ—They return from
Sermons

Sermons as they went to them : their Consciences are not *awaken'd*, nor their Lives *reformed* : God bears with them Year after Year : He sends Shower after Shower upon them ; but when He seeks Grapes, they bring forth *wild Grapes*—Thorns, Thistles, and Briars, are all the Produce and Harvest ; tho' they were God's Husbandry, and God's Vineyard. *They* have nothing to shew but the *unfruitful Works of Darkness* ; while the Land that *drinketh in the Rain*, bringeth forth Herbs *meet* for him by whom it is dressed. What then shall the Lord of the Vineyard do ? What will be the End of them that hear, but obey not the Gospel ? You have the Answer to this in our next, and last Observation.

Obs. 5th. People that are barren and unfruitful under the Showers of the Gospel, and its Ordinances, will be rejected of God : *They are ripe unto Cursing ; and their End is to be burned.*

They will be rejected of God ; He may take the Kingdom of Heaven from them, and give it to a People who will bring forth the Fruits thereof. He may restrain his Rain, and shower down the same Blessings upon a better Soil. Because *they are a People of no Understanding, he that made them will have no Mercy on them.* All their vain Pleas shall be rejected with an, " *I know you not,*
depart

depart from me ;" And not only rejected, but they are *nigh unto Cursing*: yea, they are already cursed with spiritual Barrenness, given up to a *reprobate Mind*. They are under all the Curses of the Law, because they despise the Gospel, their only Remedy: and they will e're long hear the *eternal Curse* pronounced—*the Judge is at the Door*. They are nigh to that awful Day, in which He shall say to them, *Depart ye Cursed*. And being both rejected, and cursed of God, their End is to be *burned*; yea, to be cast into *everlasting Burnings*. For in the End of the World, the Reapers shall gather these Briars and Thorns into Bundles, and they shall be burnt with *unquenchable Fire*: So that it were better for them that they never had been born, that they had never heard the Gospel, nor had the Offer of a Saviour, than to have it brought to this Issue—the Remembrance of those Means they have had, will heat the Furnace seven Times hotter, and kindle an immortal Flame in their Consciences; that Tormentor, *that Worm that never dies*. Their Punishment will be greater than they can bear; but will not exceed their Deserts. This is emphatically the *Condemnation*, that Light is come into the World, but Men love Darkness rather than Light. So that the Rain which came down often from Heaven, will be like the Rain of *Sodom*, kindled into *Fire and Brimstone*; which will be more terrible than if it had been *Powder*
and

and *Dust*, tho' that be terrible enough. Which brings me to the Application of my Subject.

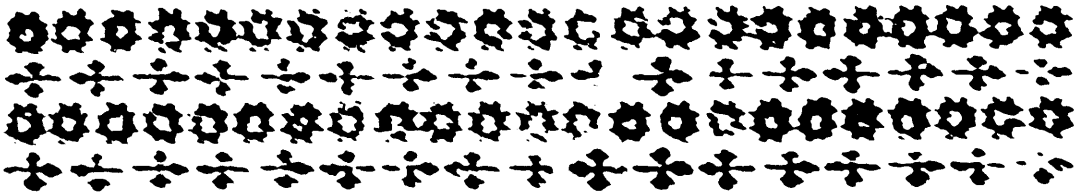
You are not ignorant, and you need not be told, that we have been a People highly distinguish'd in the Means of Grace. Some of you have been born and train'd up under a Succession of Ministers in this Church. And we have lately, in a more especial Manner, been as a well water'd Garden; the Rain, the Showers of the Word, have fallen *plentifully* upon this Spot of Ground. Besides our Sabbaths, and the Days of stated Worship, how many *occasional* Opportunities has God graciously given us? This Pulpit is Witness to many loud and fervent Admonitions. We have had a great Share in the abundant Labours of that able Minister of the New-Testament, who has but just taken his Leave of us. And shall He leave us barren and unfruitful? Shall He have no Fruit of His Labours? Shall we be content to admire his Oratory and Address? Shall we satisfy ourselves that we have every Day attended his Lectures? that we have been gratified and pleas'd with his amiable Manner of opening the Scriptures to us? Shall we think it enough that we have been instructed in any Point in which we were ignorant before? that we have been charm'd with the graceful Turns of his Voice; that He has been unto us as one that hath a pleasant Voice, and that could play well on

an Instrument of Musick : and that we have express'd our Esteem by shewing Kindness to his Person ? This indeed is just ; this is laudable : but if we content ourselves with this, we shall put a terrible Cheat upon our Souls. If we have had greater Advantages than others, God expects we shou'd do more than others ; and that our profiting should appear.—Every Time we think of him, methinks, we can't avoid reflecting upon my Text ; and learn that 'tis our Duty to *drink in the Rain* that has come *so oft* upon us. We have, perhaps, on every Opportunity drank in the sweet and musical Accents of his Voice. But have we drank his Subjects *into our Hearts* ? Has He spoke to us as one having Authority ? Has the Word, arm'd with a divine Power, reach'd our Consciences ? Indeed, my Friends, it will not do to applaud the Preacher, and forget the Exhortations that have spoken to us. *Practice* is the Design of Preaching ; and without this, we have heard, but have not understood. God expects some great and good Fruits under the Hand of such an Husbandman : And every Sermon He has deliver'd, all his Zeal and Fire, all the Efforts He has made to come at the Springs of our Passions, to turn us from those Idols to which too many have been joined, and to form our Minds, our Wills and Affections to a holy and divine Temper ; as well as to lead us to the great Propitiation : I say, *all these Things* stand now recorded in the Book of

God's Remembrance; and when that Book is open'd, even the admired *H*———*s* will appear as a *Witness* against us, if we do not frame our Lives agreeable to his Doctrines, and that Form of sound Words which he has taught us. And you that now *delight* to hear him, will *tremble* to see his Face in the Judgment.—Better, ten thousand Times better were it, that such a *Boanerges* had never been raised up in the Church: Better were it, this Angel of the Church had never brought the everlasting Gospel to us; if we do not obey it. 'Tis not the *Man*, but the *Gospel*, that must save us; nor is it the Gospel preach'd, but the *Gospel received with Faith*, that is the Power of God, to Salvation. If any of us are so unhappy as to miss of that common Salvation, which He has with so much sacred Art and Importunity enforced upon us; tho' his loud Calls may not awaken us *now*, they will make us *tremble* in the Judgment. Let us therefore remember and hold fast what we have heard, lest that come upon us which is written in my Text, and we *mourn at the last*; and say. How have we hated Instruction, and been deaf to the Charmer!—Fain would I hope better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation,—that some of you have *drank in* the Rain that hath come *so oft* upon you and that you will bring forth, not *Thorns and Briers*, but *Herbs meet* for him by whom you are crucified:—and 'tis then your Duty
to

to look *beyond* Man; to look up to *Heaven*, from whence the Rain comes down, and to remember; that tho' *Paul* plants, and *Appollos* bathes water'd, yet *God* has given the *Increase*.





SERMON V.



THE

Shortness of Time,

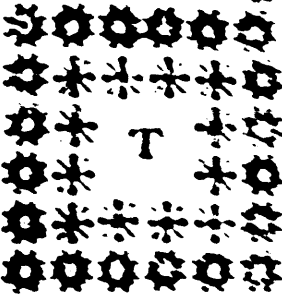
A

Motive to Moderation.



I COR. VII. 29.

*BUT this I say, Brethren, The Time
is short.---*

 THE true Wisdom of a Christian consists in the Moderation of his Affections to the Enjoyments of this Life, and in the Moderation of his Grief for the Loss and Privation of them. And I know not any Argument which so naturally produces this Moderation,

Moderation, as *the Shortness of our Time*: An Argument the Apostle Paul has here laid before us, and which the Providence of God very frequently calls upon us to make use of.—He lays down this for the Proposition; *The Time is short*: From which Proposition he draws the following Inferences; *It remaineth, that both they that have Weeps, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they weep not; and they that rejoice, as tho' they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as tho' they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: For the Fashion of this World passeth away. The Word signifies the Scheme of the World: Life is but a Stage, upon which several interchangeably act their Part; and when that is done, 'tis all over as to the present Time.*

I shall tread exactly in the Apostle's Steps; first, shewing that the Time is short: and then improving it to the End of that Moderation he prescribes to them.

The Time is short; 'tis so in a comparative, and so in an absolute Sense.

1. Time is short, compar'd with that *Eternity*, which succeeds it.—With Respect to Eternity, *a thousand Years are as one Day, and one Day is as a thousand Years.* What Proportion can be ascer-

rain'd betwixt Time and Eternity : that which *quickly* ends, and that which *never* ends ? Eternity is, as it were, *always* but beginning : when Millions of Years have roll'd over us, we are as far from an End, as when we began. The longest Life, tho' *long*, compar'd with a short one, is *short*, compar'd with eternal Ages. The Years of Eternity are beyond the Powers of Number, and even the Grasp of Imagination. In our Conception of Eternity, we can't help fixing upon some particular Point, further, or nearer, in Proportion to our Capacity ; but it is only a mere *imaginary* Period, that we thus fix, and not a *real* one ; and there is a whole Eternity yet to come, beyond that Period. How short then must Time be, if view'd in this comparative Light ?

But,

2. Time is short consider'd in *itself*. When we speak of many Years, and of a great Age, we call them so with a particular Respect to a *short* Life, as Infancy and Youth ; for strictly speaking, *no* Time is long. Let the Computation of Years commence from the very first Creation of the World, and terminate upon its last Dissolution ; it can't be call'd a *long* Time. But this is not what the Apostle means. In his Sense, Time is yet much shorter.

For,

For,

1. The *Time of Life* is short. Even the *longest Patres*, our ancient Fathers, who number'd their Years by Hundreds, Where are they? How many Generations have been gather'd to their Fathers since the Death of the Patriarchs? Good old *Jacob* himself could say, *Few*, and evil, have the Days of the Years of my Life been; and I have not attained to the Years of my Fathers. And what must we say, who have not attained to the Years of *Jacob*? What is our Life? 'Tis even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. We spend our Years as a Tale that is told:—the Days of our Years, are threescore Years and ten; and if by Reason of Strength they be fourscore Years, yet is their Strength Labour and Sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Many there are who are cut off far short of the general Term, they die even in Youth: And there are Graves open'd for the *Infant*, as well as for the *ancient* of Days. So that when we reflect upon the Measure of our Days, and consider how *short* we are; we have all of us Reason to say, in the Words of the Apostle, That we must *soberly* put off these our Tabernacles. What is more fleeting and precarious than human Life? And if the Time of Life be short; this lays a Basis for all that follows: And we must say,

2. The Time of our *Prosperity* and *Pleasure* is a *short Time*.—The Time of Life is short; but the Time of our Pleasures is yet shorter. We spend a considerable Part of our Life, before we come into a Taste of Pleasure, and then we have *but a Taste* of it; for 'tis the young Man whose Heart cheers him in the Days of his Youth: But how short is the Time? and the *evil* Days come, in which we shall say, we have no Pleasure in them. Suppose we arrive to old Age, we *out-live* our Youth and our Pleasures; but how often do our Youth and our Pleasures *out-live* us? How many are snatch'd away in the full Bloom of Life, with all the Blossoms of Youth upon them? Death makes no Ceremony, but comes often *before* Nature seems to call for it.—It often finds us in our youthful Vigour, and our Glory fresh in us. We sometimes die in our full Strength, wholly at Ease and Quiet, with our Bones full of Marrow; having Moisture enough to feed the Lamp of Life; but 'tis put out in *silence*: Obscurity. This is a hard Lesson for young People to learn, who are for turning Death over to the aged, and put the evil Day far from them: But they have many Instances to condemn them, and to shew them that *this* *their Way is their Folly*. And thus how short is the Taste, the Vigor, the Prosperity, and the Sweetness of Life!

3. The

3. The Time is short, with Regard to all those *Relations of Life*, which we now sustain, one to another.

Man is a social Creature, and his Constitution and Condition lead him to contract a Diversity of Relations: We have the Relations of Rulers and Subjects, Masters and Servants, Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives; but these Relations are of a very short Continuance: They all depend upon the Uncertainty, at least, of *two Lives*, and die and perish with them. Death soon comes and dissolves all *political* and *domestic* Union: The Graves are ready for the Prince and the Peasant, for the Rich and the Poor, for the Master and the Servant; and the dearer Union of Parents and Children, and all *conjugal* Relations, are circumscrib'd by the narrow Limits of this short Life, and can't subsist beyond them:—for after Death we no more know them after the Fleth.—The Apostolic seems to have this particularly in View, when he says, *The Time is short.*

4. The Time is short with Respect to all our *Spiritual* Opportunities and Advantages, either for *doing* or *receiving* any Good.

He that has the Spirit of a Benefactor, and the richest Advantages of expressing his beneficent Intentions

tentions to Mankind, has but a short Time for it: His Opportunities *lie* with him, and in that very Day all his kind Thoughts perish in a Moment. Short also are all our Opportunities of receiving any spiritual Advantages from the Means of Grace. Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation: Now the Spirit of God is striving with the Disobedient: Now Ministers publish the glad Tidings of Salvation: Now Heaven is offered to us: Now the gracious Redeemer stands at the Door of the Heart, and knocks; and we have now an Opportunity of pressing into the Kingdom of God, and of securing an Eternity of Happiness. But who knows when these *glorious* Seasons of Mercy, when these *important Opportunities* will come to a Period? For ought we know, we shall never hear another Sermon, or see another Sabbath; or have another Offer of Mercy: This very Day may close our Life and Opportunities together: For in the *Grace* whither thou goest, there is no Work, Wisdom nor Device. They are glorious, but they are *short Opportunities*.

5. 'Tis a Satisfaction that I can add, with Respect to this World, the Time of *Affliction* is short.

Man is born to Trouble; and many are the Afflictions even of the Righteous: Thro' much Tribulation they must enter into the Kingdom of Hea-

ven. Nothing can appear in a greater Variety of Shapes, from every Point of the Compass, than the Calamities of human Life. Tho' some drink deeper in the Cup than others; and it must be confess'd too, that the Time of our Troubles is usually, and necessarily, *larger* than the Time of our Diversions and Pleasures can be; for our Troubles come into the World with us; they never leave us, they cleave fast to us, they pursue us thro' every shifting Scene; and they sometimes follow in so quick a Succession, like Wave upon Wave, that the Sluices of Sorrow are scarcely shut before they must be open'd again: But yet, blessed be God, the evil Days are also few. Present Troubles come to a Period with Life; and that very Stroke of Death, which fills the Eyes of our Friends with Tears, wipes them forever from our own.

In all these Respects, the Time is short: In some of them, *very short*. I have said the less upon it, because I suppose every Body understands it: 'Tis a Proposition *uncontroverted*; it shines with it's own Light. Every Man you meet, will allow, that *the Time is short*. A due Improvement of so plain a Truth, is of great Consequence to all, and particularly to them *who mourn in Zion*: and what should this Improvement be, but that which St. Paul himself points out to us? But this I say, Brethren, the Time is short: It *remaineth*; it is a necessary, and

as it were, the only, and most natural Conclusion, we can draw from it; that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it. All these Particulars are very natural and deducible from that Proposition, *The Time is short.*

1. Is the Time short? Then those that have *Wives*, should be as though they had *none*.

Tho' the Apostle here only mentions *Wives*, yet under *that* He includes and comprehends all the near Relations of Life: not only Wives themselves, but Children, Husbands, Brothers, Sisters, Lover, Friend and Acquaintance. These are all Names of much Endearment, and very binding to Nature; yet a serious Consideration of the Shortness of Time, shou'd very much moderate our Affections to them, while living; and our Grief for them, when dead. For the Affections shou'd not exceed their Objects and Cause; and 'tis certain the short Duration of these dear Objects, must very much disparage and contract them in the Eye of Reason. "It is but a Point of Time we have to live, saith Mr. *Burkitt*, and shortly it will not be a Pin to choose, whether we had Wives or not, Children or not; before the expected Fruits of
the

the Comforts be ripe, we ourselves may be rotten." Not that the Apostle would urge the Shortness of Time against the *Duty* of the Relation : No ; but only against the *Excess* of our Affection. Alas ! we do not look enough upon the weak and mortal Side of the Creature : when we have Children growing up under our Wing, we are too apt to think them safe ; and to say of this Son or Daughter, *This same shall comfort us.* When shall we judge aright of these Things ! when shall we look upon our dearest Children with an Eye of greater Indifference ! If we wou'd consider them in this View, we must often look into the Frame of Man, who in his *best Estate is altogether Vanity.* We shou'd look upon our Children as Flowers of the Spring, liable to the Blast of a *March,* before they can open—Surely *Rachel* forgot the Time was short, when she mourned for her Children, and wou'd not be comforted because they were not. So did that good Man, and excellent Prince King *David,* when He cry'd out, *O Absalom. my Son, my Son !* but I believe holy *Job* remember'd it, when with a submissive and resigned Spirit He cry'd out, *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* And *Abraham* also, when He cheerfully stretched out his Hand to slay his Son ; whose Faith and Conquest over Nature is a good Pattern, for every Son and Daughter of *Abraham.*

2. Is the Time short? then they that *weep*, should be as tho' they *weep not*. By the Order in which these Words are placed, we may suppose the Apostle had a particular Eye to those mournful Scenes, which open themselves to us, in the Remembrance of our earthly Relations. Upon such an Occasion it may be lawful to indulge Nature a little, and let her discharge the Heart thro' the Eyes. To weep is a natural Passion, an essential Affection: and it ever indig'd, surely it may be when Lover and Friend is put far from us, and our Acquaintance into Darknets. We have the best Authority for this in the Example of our blessed Lord himself; who being found in Fashion as a Man, was a Man of Sorrow, and acquainted with Grief. And He particularly shew'd the Affections that belong to our Nature, when He came to the Grave of *Lazarus*; for when He saw the Relations and the *Jews* mourning, He groan'd in Spirit; yea, *Jesus wept!* Weep then we may, but in this as well as in other Things, our Moderation must be known unto all Men. Why should we run into any wild Excesses of mourning for the Dead, when we knew before-hand the Time was short, and that they were such precarious Comforts? Has any strange Thing happened to us? Did we not know before-hand, that these Comforts were *lent* us but for a *short* Time? And if we did, now they are dead, wherefore shou'd we *much* mourn? We may weep,

but

but shou'd weep as tho' we wept not; especially if we mourn not as those which have no Hope.

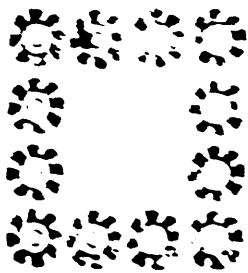
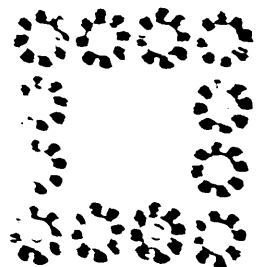
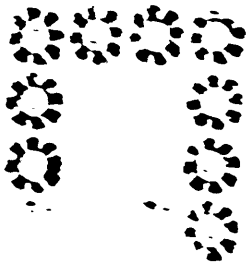
3. Is the Time short? Then they that *rejoice*, should be as tho' they *rejoiced not*. There is the precise Reason to be drawn from the Shortness of Time, for the Moderation both of our Joys and our Sorrows. Why should we set our Hearts upon that which is *not*? on Man who is Vanity, and on the Son of Man who is a Lie? When a few Year, are come, where will all these Objects be, which now lay Siege to our Hearts, and powerfully court our tender Passions?— In a short Time, they will be as if they had never been: And therefore I am sure we should rejoice in them, as tho' we rejoiced not; we should *rejoice with trembling*, expecting a putting Hour.

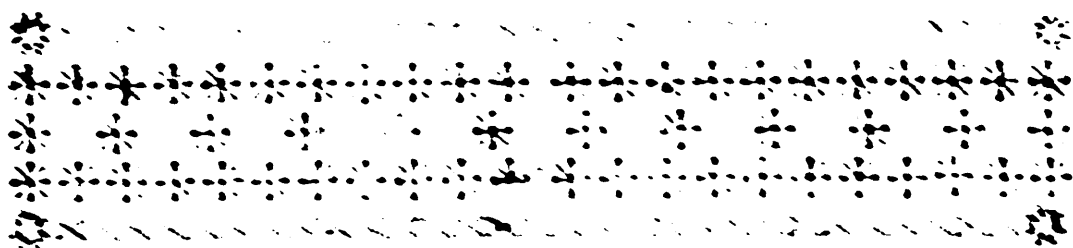
4. Is the Time short? Then they that *buy*, should be as tho' they *possessed not*. Though the Shortness of our Time is no Argument against Trade or Commerce, Buying or Selling: these Exchanges being necessary for the Support and Conveniencies of Life. 'Tis yet a very good Argument against *Anxiety*, and that Spirit of *Covetousness* which reigns in the World.—Go to now ye that say, we will go into such a City, and buy and sell, and get Gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the Morrow: For what is your Life? Surely, if

the Time be short, it must be an Argument of the greatest Folly to build our Happiness upon the Produce and Revenues of our Trade and Purchases; since we know not but *this very Night* our Souls may be required of us. We must be *Fools*, in the full Sense of the Word, to say to our Soul; *Soul, take thine Ease, eat drink and be merry, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years.* The very Language of Stupidity! Like the Folly of those who liv'd before the Flood; they were marrying and giving in Marriage, buying and selling; till the Flood *swept them all away.* You, my Friends, who are deep in Trade, let not the *Run* of Business and plentiful Gain, take your Eyes off from this Text; but write it upon the Doors of your Shops, and on your Merchandize: *The Time is short.*

5. Is the Time short? Let them who *use* this World, not *abuse* it. While we are in the World, we must use the World. God gives us many Things for our own Use, and the Use of our Families; and we must take a particular Care to use the World to the Honour and for the Service of Him that made it. But the Time is short, and therefore we shou'd not abuse the World. We are not to alienate that from *God* and *Religion*, which belongs to Him: Nor from *Cæsar*, the Things that are *Cæsar's*. We abuse the World to the highest Degree, if we turn the Grace of God into

Wantonness; if we spend our good Things upon our Lusts; if we feed our Pride and our Vanity; and nothing will more effectually guard us against abusing the World, than to remember *the Fugitivity of it is passing away.* And now, what can I say more, or who shall come after the *Apottle?*





SERMON VI.

THE GRAVE, without any Order.

J O B X. 22.

---Without any Order.---



ORDER is the Beauty of the World, but Death effaces this Beauty, destroys this Order, and turns the World upside down. The Grave is a Place of *no Order*, but all is Confusion and Silence. This is one Character *Job* gives of Death, tho' his Calamities made him ardently wish for it; *the Land of Darkness,*
and

and the Shadow of Death, “without any Order”—for what Order can be expected amidst so much *Darings*? 'Tis true, God is a God of Order, and observes it in all his Works; and the very Disorder and Confusion that Death introduces, are wisely order'd by Heaven to attain some good Purposes—Neither must we extend the Words beyond Death, nor suffer them to lead us into the future World, which is a World of Order and Regularity; where every one is in his proper Place, and is assign'd that Station which suits his Character: But as far as *appears to us*, with Respect to the present State of Things, Death is “without any Order.”

1st. There is no *natural* Order seemingly observed, in the *Time* of Man's Death.

The Order of Nature seems to be this, that the Infant should grow up to a State of natural Perfection, and then decline gradually, and die in old Age. And according to this Order, the Aged shou'd die first. But how often is it inverted! How many Youths, and even Infants, do the old and grey-headed bury out of their Sight? Yea, the very first Appearance Death made in the World was *without any Order*—It broke thro' the Order of Nature, and slew the Son, while it pass'd over the Father; and without Order it has reigned from *Adam to Moses*, even over them who have not sinned after the Si-

multitude of *Adam's* Transgression. Young harmless Babes, but just able to open their Mouths to cry, have their Breath stop'd by a premature Death; while our aged Fathers are groaning under the Weight of their Tabernacle—We must not promise ourselves Length of Days because we are young—the Flower and Glory of Life may fall in an unexpected Moment—We know not the Day nor the Hour—whether our Lord will come at *Midnight, Cock-crowing, or the Morning*. Nor is it fit we should; God has determined our Days, and the Number of our Months is *with him*, but 'tis wisely hid *from us*. He has hid it from some, that they might *hear* to live; from others that they might not *put Death from them*. For how often are the Sons of Men caught like Fishes in the Net, like the Bird in the Snare, in an evil Time, when it falleth suddenly upon them? It should seem to be the Order of Nature that the strong, the athletic, and robust should live longest; but where is this Order observed in the Time of dying? How many *meer Shadows* of Men, Persons of weak, infirm, wasting and consumptive Constitutions, follow the strong, sanguine, and corpulent, to the Grave?

2dly. Death may be said to be without any Order, as it spares no *Ranks* nor *Characters*; nor makes any Difference between wise and foolish, good or bad, great or small. We

We are ready to think, here shou'd be an Order and Decorum observed; that if Death shou'd invade the lower Class of Mankind, and cut down the more useless and cumbrous Part of the Species, it shou'd yet spare Characters of a superior Rank, Influence and Usefulness. And 'tis certain, we might better spare some Men, out of all Societies, than others, and are ready to think, these shou'd be taken, and the others shou'd be left. But this Order is not observed by Death. We see that *wise* Men die, likewise the *Fool*, the Poor and the Rich, High and Low together. A Man may be flourishing in the midst of worldly Affluence, and capable of laying very great and extensive Schemes to increase his Fortune, yet he is as liable to be cut down, and to leave his Wealth behind him, as his poorest Neighbours; and sometimes goes before them. A Man may stand in some high Post of Civil Authority, and have a wide Command, and yet bow down to Death before the meanest Subject—A Person may be of great Use and Advantage, serve his Generation with much Honour, and be in a Capacity of contributing to the Glory and Defence of his Country, and yet may be removed from it when others are spared, who seem to be a dead Weight and Incumbrance, if not a direct Nuisance to it. Moreover, not only *civil*, but *sacred* Characters, are mingled by Death, *without any Order*. The Preacher is sometimes taken from

the Pulpit, while the Hearers are left to fill their Seats. Yea the very Physician cannot cure himself, nor is there Power in all his Receipts and Medicines to secure Him. Does not this make Death appear to us, *without any Order*? Were it left to us, who shou'd die and who shou'd live, at least who shou'd die *first*, we shou'd be ready to say, the wise, the vertuous, the great, the religious, the publick-spirited, and the useful Man, shou'd live *for ever*, or die *last*; but Death enters a Negative, and saith, No.

3. Death observes no particular Order in the *Manner* of its coming upon us.

Sometimes it shews itself at a great Distance; it come with a slow Pace upon us, it gives many slight Wounds, it kills gradually, by easy Degrees, in wasting consumptive Sickness; it gives such long Warning, that if we are wise, we may prepare for it. Sometimes it comes *full Speed*, with an awful Surprize; it gives no Warning at all, it falls suddenly upon us, it seizes us in our Security, in the midst of our Pleasures, our Schemes and our Business; we wither like *Jonah's Gourd* in a Night—our Thoughts perish in a *Day*. Death does not always shoot at us publickly, nor with the same Arrow,—the Variety of Distempers is almost infinite: Some fall by the Sword; some perish with
Famine

Famine; some are swallowed up in the Deep; some are snatch'd away with an Apoplectick Fit; some *feel* themselves die, and take a solemn Leave of their Friends, with their Physicians and weeping Relations about their Beds. So little stated Order does Death observe, in the Manner of it's Approach; and 'tis wisely done, to make us look out the more warily, and get ready for it, in every Shape it can put on.

4. Death introduces the greatest *Disorder* and Confusion in the human Body.

This is so evident, that we often express the slightest Sickneſs under the Term *Disorder*; and 'tis certain, in every Distemper, the Frame and œconomy of human Nature is disturbed. Nature does not move regularly; the very Pulse flatters, and indicates a Breach of Order. Some of the Channels of Health must be obstructed, or the very Fountain of it must have received some Injury; whence else should Pains and Weakneſs, and want of Appetite arise?—But the greatest Disorder is visible in the dead Body itself. When our Days are extinct; when the Soul is fled; and the Body let down into the Pit of Corruption; the whole Fabrick is broken in Pieces; every Particle of Dust quits its appointed Place; every Part falls out of its Station; like a well disciplin'd Army put to *Rout* and

G 4

Confusion.

Confusion. What possible Order can there be in Corruption, when the Bones are disjointed, and the Sinews broken?—*Solomon* elegantly represents this Breach of Order in the Body; *the Silver Cord is loosed, the Golden Bowl is broken, the Pitcher is broken at the Fountain, and the Wheel at the Cistern.* When the Dust returns to the Dust, 'tis all blended in a disorderly Heap. We are under the Dominion of Worms, which are not like the Ants, a wise People, for *they observe no Order.*

5. If we look into the Temper and Disposition of the Dying, for the most Part, 'tis *disorderly* and confused.

How frequently is this the Case of them who die in a strong Fever—the Brain is so heated, the Blood and Spirits in such a ferment, that they frequently lose the Exercise of Reason, and are all *Confusion* and *Delirium*; at best they cannot command a Chain of Thought, or any regular Train of Ideas. Besides, how many are then alarm'd with the Apprehension of dying, and appearing before their great Judge, with all their Guilt upon them? And what Struggles does Nature then feel! What Confusion of Ideas! What Suspense of Thought! How fearful and distracted! They are not in Possession of themselves, nor their own Masters.

6. If we look into the *Congregation* of the Dead; if we take a solitary Walk where they sleep in their Graves; what Order shall we find there?

We may perhaps turn our Eye to some famous Monument: The Inscription may launch out into The Praises of the Dead—The silent Tomb may tell us, that some virtuous and wise, some useful and religious, some great and good Man is lying under it—It may shew us, that this is the Grave of some great Personage; that the dead once liv'd in such and such Reputation; was famous for such and such Dignities; or performed *these*, or *those*, Exploits. But what Need of being told these Things by a *Stupid* Stone, if we could observe any Order in Death? or if there were the least Traces left of their Merit and Distinction, upon the rotten Carcass, or the putrifying Dust? Does the Dust of a Prince *there*, outshine the Dust of a Subject? Who wears a Crown, or holds a Sceptre in the Grave? Who calls his Servant, and who answers? Who commands, and who obeys? Who are the Masters, and who are the Scholars? Who reads Lectures, and who is there to hear them? Has the *Man of Letters* any Thing to discriminate him from the *Dunce*, or the Idiot? Has the Preacher any Mark, by which he may be distinguished from the Hearer? Take away the Grave Stone, and all are alike as to any visible Difference the Grave can show. *Job*
spake

spake of this Disorder in Death; tho' we need not *Job* to tell us of it: Now, saith he, should I have been still—with Kings and Counsellors of the Earth, which build desolate Places for themselves; or with Princes that had Gold, who filled their Houses with Silver: or as an hidden untimely Birth, as Infants which never saw the Light. There the wicked cease from Troubling; and there the weary are at Rest. There the Prisoners rest together; they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor. The Small and Great are there; and the Servant is free from his Master. Thus doth *Job*, as it were, blend and *huddle* Characters together; and seems to bury all Distinctions in one common Grave, which he could not justly describe without it. I might here take Notice, as an Addition to the Disorder Death introduces, of the Confusions that are apt to arise in the Families or Affairs of the Deceased: But I choose to omit any Enlargement upon this; and proceed to apply the Subject.

Inference 1. We may hence learn, that *Sin* is the Cause of all Disorder. For by one Man *Sin* entred into the World, and *Death* by *Sin*; and so it has past upon all Men, *in that all have sinned*. Paradise was a Place of the exactest Proportion, Symmetry and Order; but how much Confusion has *Adam's* Rebellion let into our World, to his latest Posterity? Who can sufficiently lament that *Breach*

of Order it has made in the Faculties of our Souls, where all Order is *inverted*! And it calls for *Tears of Blood*, when we look upon the Havock and Disorder Death makes upon Society: upon the Body natural; and the Body politick—We may lay it all at the Door of Sin—We must impute it not to God the great *Languisher*; but to Man the *Transgressor*: and Sin hereby appears exceeding sinful.

Inf. 2. How should they be ashamed to look upon my Text, who are the willing Authors of any Disorders in the World? Their Name may be called *Death*—they act like it; they follow it's Example; they execute it's Purposes; they are fellow Helpers with Death. Where we see Disorder prevail in any Society, so far *Death* prevails; and such as excite Confusions and make them their Sport, seem to *play with Death itself*, and are so far *Death themselves* to the Community they belong to. Disorders in Government are the Death of it, and tend to its Dissolution. Men of Disorder in their Behaviour, deserve no better Character than my Text gives to the Grave, *Without any Order*. And an equal Glory it reflects on them who study the Arts of Peace; and to keep Order and Regularity alive.

Inf. 3. Is Death without any Order? Then let Men of *every Order* expect to die. From the
lowest

lowest to the highest, from the poorest to the richest, from the Sinner to the Saint, we are all subject to the common Law of Mortality : we are all *tending* to the Grave. 'Tis an imaginary Immortality we give ourselves, if we are flatter'd into the Thought, that Death will have any Respect of Persons—Order, and Ceremony, are Things of no Consequence with the *King of Terrors*. Let not the strong Man glory in his Strength, nor the rich Man in his Wealth. Let us not expect to bribe Death with our Gold and our Silver ; nor that the most publick Stations we sustain in sacred, or civil Life, will be a Security to us—We that minister and serve at the Altar, must not think to lay hold on the Horns thereof—nor may the highest and most useful Post of civil Authority, be deem'd a Protection : Such Distinctions perish soon, and will be buried without any Order—I said ye are *Gods*, but ye shall *die like Men*.

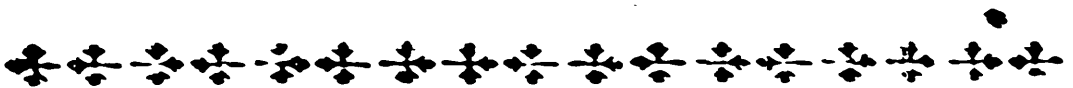
Lastly, What a glorious Thing is the *Resurrection* of the Dead, when *Death and Confusion* shall be swallowed up in *Victory* ! Whatever Disorder Death had introduced upon the Body, it shall then arise in perfect Order and Beauty—Bone shall come to its Bone, every Part be restor'd to it's proper Place ; and it shall be *like* unto *Christ's glorious Body*—And then comes the Day of Judgment, to rectify all moral Disorders, and to restore to the best Situation.—

ation.—Let us therefore comfort ourselves with this, that the *upper* World is a World of *Rule* and *Order*—for it is a World of *Light*, which stands opposed to the Shadow and Disorder of Death—Every Character shall have its proper Assignment ; and in all the different Degrees of Glory, there will be no Confusion ; no Room for Complaint ; but *Peace, Order, and Harmony* forever.—





SERMON VII.



THE

Immortality of the Soul.



THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY,

CHAP. I. Verse 10th.

AND hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel.

SWEET and pleasant Words to the Believer, after he has been in the Regions of the Shadow of Death, and look'd upon the Grave as a Land of Darkness, where the Light is as Darkness: verily, to them that sat in Darkness, in the Region

gions of the Shadow of Death, a great Light is risen. My Text seems to unvail Death, and to strip it of all its Terrors ; and therefore could never more naturally come in, than after I have dwelt upon the dark Side of Death. The Words were spoken of our Lord Jesus, who by dying destroyed Death ; or as my Text phrases it, abolish'd Death. This he has done principally by bringing Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Gospel.

1st. *Life.*

Christ has shewn us, that *tho' a Man die, he shall live again.* Death is not the last Period of Being ; it kills the *Body*, but has no more that it can do ; has no Power over the *Spirit* ; *the Dust returns to its Dust, and the Spirit to God that gave it.* There is a future State of Existence ; something in Man independent of Matter and which survives Death ; there is a Life to come, something that deserves the Name of *Life*, better than our present State. For,

2dly. 'Tis not only Life, but *Immortality* ; yea, by a common Figure, *immortal Life.* Life, without *Immortality*, had left us still in the *dark* ; but *Immortality* gives a strong and glorious *Emphasis* to it. If *Immortality* had not been mentioned, who could have said, how short the *Limits* of

of Life might be, or how soon God might annihilate the *Soul*, and make the *Spirit* to fail before him? But 'tis a *Life* without End; not only *Life*, but with it *Immortality* too, are brought to Light.

3dly. *Through the Gospel.*

Which must not be so interpreted, as if we had no Proofs of the *Soul's* Immortality from *Reason* and *Philosophy*; but it shews, that there is a much brighter, and more glorious *Discovery* of it, by the *Gospel*. I shall therefore,

I. Consider what *Proofs* we have for a State of Immortality, from *Reason*, and *Nature*, and the *Constitution* of Man's Soul.

II. Shew, wherein Reason is defective in it's *Conclusions*, or in what *particular Instances* the *Gospel* has made a brighter *Discovery* than *Nature*.

I. We shall consider, what *Evidence* we have from *Nature* and *Reason* of the *Soul's* Immortality, and a State of *future Existence*. And we shall find, that tho' the Evidence of *meer Reason*, be much fainter, than that of *Scripture*; yet, it has *Force* enough in it, to determine every reasonable Man, tho' there were no *Gospel* in Being, to help him.

I. I may fetch my *first Argument* for the *Immortality* of the Soul, from its *Immateriality*.

When we see the *Body* die, and crumble to *Dust*, we don't so much wonder at it, we are at no great Stand for the *physical* and *natural* Causes of it's Dissolution; we know it is composed of *Matter*, made up of *different Elements*, and therefore it may be resolv'd into them again; being originally *Dust* it may be so again, without the least Violence offer'd to our Reason in the *Supposition*: but if we allow the Soul to be an *immaterial Substance*, we in that *Concession*, place it above all the Laws of the *material* World; and 'tis impossible to conceive of Corruption, or a Dissolution of Parts, in an *inextended Substance*, such as the *Soul* must be, if we allow it to be an *immaterial one*: for how can that be divided into *Parts*, which has no Parts included, in it's *proper* and *essential Ideas*? It will be said perhaps, that tho' the Soul being *immaterial*, can't be divided into *Parts*; yet, as it was a *Substance* of God's creating, he can with the *same Power* annihilate it, and destroy it's *Existence*. So that, tho' in it's own *abstract* Nature, it be capable of *Immortality*; yet, it depends upon the *arbitrary Will* of God, either to continue or destroy it. This is very true, and here 'tis indeed, that Reason is *defective*, and all the Arguments from the Nature of the Soul *inconclusive* of it's *Immortality*. God

no doubt can annihilate the *biggest* Rank of Spirits; he can speak *biggest* into Nothing, and leave Nothing but himself in a State of *Existence*; all this he can do, if he will: but then if we consider, that he form'd the Soul in it's own Nature capable of Immortality; it seems to give a *fair Intimation* of his Will, and Determination, not to destroy it: And the *natural Notion* we have of his Wisdom, leads us into this *Conclusion*. So that upon the whole, the *Immortality* of the Soul is, at least, an Argument of *strong Presumption* for it's Immortality. The next Thing therefore, that we have to do, is to prove the Soul to be *immaterial*; and this must be done from such *Properties*, as are above all the *Attainments* of Matter, however *scap'd*, and *modified*. For tho' it be difficult to say *positively*, what the *Substance* of the Soul is, 'tis not so difficult to prove that it is not *Matter*, from it's high and noble Faculties and Operations: We can't look into the *inward Essence* of Things, and must therefore reason upon their visible and known Properties.

I. The noble Operations of the *Understanding*, are a Property of the *human Soul*, far above the *highest* Attainment of *Matter*.

Is any meer *Matter* under any *Modification* whatever, capable of those *Ideas*, and of that *Enquiry*

Enquiry after Truth, which is so visible in the Soul of Man? Can a *Brick*, or a *Beard*, shape any *Notion* to itself, of all the numerous *Objects* of human Knowledge? Have they any *Ideas* rais'd in them, from any *Object*, without them? Can they *perceive*, or *contemplate*; can they *digest* and *extend* Things; can they *join* Ideas together, and judge of their *Fitness*? Can they form *natural Syllogisms*; lay down *Premises*, and draw *Conclusions*? Can they *dispose* and *methodise Arguments*, and *rightly digest* them, and form a *Chain of Reasonings*? Are they *proper Judges* of Truth and Falshood, and able to discover *Fallacies*, and distinguish *good* *Reasonings* from them? Can Matter *adjust* Things, or consider the *several Relations* they have to each other? Can it *reflect* upon itself? Is this *Deck* *capable* of the Force, or can it see the *Defect* of the Arguments, I am now using? Can we even persuade ourselves, that all our great Matters of *Reason*, *Eligence*, and *Philosophy*, had no Principles in them *Superior* to dead *inert* Matter? Had *Lucr* a *material Soul*, in all that *Train* of *deep* and *ingenious Reasonings*, he has left behind him? Had *Newton* ever carried his *Speculations* so high, and his *Enquiries* so deep, or *Cicero* wrote with such Strength of *Eligence*, and *Argument*, without some Principle *within*, of a *higher Origin*, and *diviner Nature* than Matter? And when *Solomon* reason'd, and spoke of every

Thing, from the *Hyllep* in the Wall, to the *Cedar* in *Lebanon* ; was that only the *Result* and *Force* of meer *Matter* ? Could *Matter* ever reach so high as that ? We find, we can send up our *Thoughts* in a *Moment* to the *highest Star*, and convert upon *Objects* of an *immense Distance* from us, with as *much Ease*, and as *little Space* of *Time*, as *Objects* that are *near* us, and within our very *Touch* ; but can *Matter* do this ? In a *Word*, What have *Tangibility*, *Divisibility*, and *local Extension*, the known *Properties* of *Matter*, to do with *Thought* and *Judgment* ? Or what *Connection* can we find in the *Ideas* of them, that we should make them one and the *same Thing* ? In short, I don't see, how we can make the *Soul* of *Man* *material*, from any of it's *Properties*, unless we make *God* so too ; for tho' his *Thoughts* are far above ours ; yet, *Thought* is still *Thought*, and will be some *Analogy* betwixt *God's Understanding* and *Man's*, whom he made in his own *Image*, after his own *Likeness*.

2. The *Power* of *Willing*, or *Principle* of *Self-determination*, is another *Property* of the *Soul*, that can never be reconciled to the *Nature* of *meer Matter*.

Whatever *Disputes* may have risen upon the *moral Freedom* of the *Will*, I know of none that
can

can deny it's *natural* Freedom. We find by *Experience*, a Power, or Principle in ourselves, of *determining* our Choice and Pursuits this Way or that, according to the *different* Lights Things appear in to the *Understanding*; and this *Principle* is naturally so free, and self-determining, that it is exceeding quick in changing it's *Determinations* and *Will*, after it's Resolutions, sometimes upon the *smallest* and *most distant* Occasions. But I challenge all the *World* to shew, how *meer Matter* can do this? Or how a Stone can first *compare* Things one with another, and upon that *Comparison*, choose one Thing and refuse another? Let all the *Materialists* lay their Heads together, and resolve this into any Law or Power of *Mechanism*, if they can. According to our *Ideas* of Matter, 'tis in it's own Nature indifferent to *Motion*, or *Rest*; when 'tis *moved*, it is by another, and must keep a *right Line* of Motion, 'till stopt, or justled aside by the *Motion* of another; so that all it's Motions are plainly *necessary*, and not *arbitrary*, like those of a Man's Will. 'Tis true indeed, that our *Power of Willing* does not consist in such an *absolute Indifference*, but it may and must be determin'd by the *Light of Understanding*, and we can't help choosing what upon the whole *appears* best to us, whether really so or not; but this is nothing like a *Mechanical Necessity*; 'tis acting still with Freedom, under the *Conduct* of

Perception, and Knowledge, and Comparison of Things together, which is the only Freedom we can ascribe to the *Deity* itself, a *pure Spirit*; for God is under such an *happy Necessity*, from the eternal Rectitude of his *own Nature*, and the Perfection of his *Understanding*, that he must refuse *Evil*, and can't but choose what is *Good*.

3. Meer *Matter* is utterly incapable of putting on the Variety of *human Passions*, which appear upon, and arise from the *Soul* of Man, and therefore it must be *immaterial*.

A Stone has no *Passions*, or *Resentment* of *Injuries* and *Pain*: 'tis a true *Stoick*; you may strike it, and even *crush* it to Pieces, and it will not *retort* upon you, or *expostulate* with you; 'tis purely *passive*, *indolent*, and *insensible*; it knows nothing of *Anger*, *Wrath*, *Hatred*, *Envy*, *Jealousy*, or any of the *irascible* Passions, which boil in the Heart of Man, and torment the *human Soul*; it can't *love*, or *desire*; it has neither *Hopes* nor *Fears* implanted in it's Nature; it has no Kind of *Perceptions*, or *Taste*; but is *indifferent* to all Passion, *insensible* of all Forms; but *sensible* and *conscious* of none. What cannot think and feel, has no *Passions* in it; and therefore, if the Soul be a *thinking Substance*; if it has a *self-determining Principle*, and is endow'd with the several Passions

cf

of *human Nature*, it must be an *immaterial Substance*.

I might further argue it's *Immateriality*, from it's *Superiority* to Matter in it's Sense of moral *Vertue*; it's *Capacity* of *religious Worship*; it's *Sentiments* of a *Deity*, and the *Notions* it has of *divine Homage*, and *Adoration*; but I have said enough, and perhaps far too much, upon a *Subject* so obvious, and level to the *lowest Capacities*, had it not been a *Point* of *great Importance*; and the *contrary Opinion*, *absurd* and *ridiculous* as this is, found *five Abettors*.

I shall *conclude* this *Discourse* with *one Reflection*, upon the *Head* of *Immortality*.

If the *Soul* be *immaterial*, then it's *true* and *final Happiness* can't depend upon the *Enjoyment*, or *Relish* of *material Things*. Indeed in a *State* of *Union* with the *Body*, it might draw a *sensitive Pleasure* from the *Ministry*, and *Organs* of it; but it can't *subsist* upon such *crude* and *gross Food*: *sensitive Pleasures* may be the *highest Satisfaction* the *Brutes* know, but they can't make a *Man* happy; they are too *coarse*, too *low*, too much *mix'd*, and *adulterated* with *Sense* to gratify a *rational, immaterial, and immortal Mind*. Our *Souls* *originated* from *Heaven*, and thence must

derive their Happiness. True Pleasure is the Result of *Harmony* ; the *Nature* and *Object* must agree to produce it. The Mind being *immaterial*, must derive Happiness from *immaterial Objects* ; and the nearer to *God*, who is a *pure Spirit*, the nearer we are to a *Completion* of our Happiness. We ought therefore to *speak* in the Language of the *Psalms* ; *Whom have I in Heaven but God? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Him. God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion forever !* They that forsake *God*, forsake their *own Mercies* ; but 'tis good for us to *draw near to Him* ; and we can never be *fully satisfied*, till we awake in his *Likeness*, and are introduced in his *Presence*, where there is *Fulness of Joy forever*.

I should now immediately proceed to my *next Argument*, were it not for an *Objection* against the Soul's *Immateriality*, which looks something *specious*, and therefore ought to be remov'd.

Obj. Some Man will say, if the Soul be a *Substance* different from *meer Matter*, and *independent* of the Body ; whence arise the *natural Decays* of one with the other ? How comes *old Age*, and *Sickness*, to impair the *Memory*, weaken the *Understanding*, and the *Affections* of the Soul ? Or what becomes of the Soul, when the Body falls into a *Swoon*, or takes its *natural Sleep* ? This

is the *Objection*, and the *Strength* of it all lies upon the *Surface* of Things, and will not bear a *strict Examination*.

How comes it to pass, that the *Operations* of the Soul flag, and decay with the Body? I answer, it arises from the *intimate Union* betwixt them; what this *Union* is, is difficult so much as to conceive. If Matter and Spirit can't act upon *one another*, 'tis possible, they may act by a *Law of Harmony*; 'tis possible, such a Law may be established in *Nature*, by the great Creator, that upon *such Impressions* made, upon *such Parts* of the Body, the Mind, or Soul, shall feel such *Emotions*, and have such and *such Ideas* excited in it: And that on the *other Hand*, when the Soul has some *particular Ideas*, the Body shall feel such and such *corporeal Impressions*. However, 'tis not doubted, but there may be a *close Union*, some Way or another, betwixt Soul and Body, a *material and spiritual Substance*: And while the Soul is *united* to the Body, it acts in *many Things*, by the *Ministry* of its *Organs*, and so may depend upon the *Body*, and the *right Disposition* of its *Parts*, for, *such Operations*, as are *peculiar* to a State of *Union*; while at the same Time, it has *no Dependance* upon it for its *Existence*, but can exist, yea, and *act separate* from the Body, tho' not after the same *precise Manner*, as when in *Union* with it. Thus a *Musician*

Musician exists, and is able to act as a *Man*; but at the same Time he can't act as a *Musician*, unless he has a proper *musical Instrument*; while the *Strings* of his Instrument hold, and are *in Tune*, he can act as a *Musician*, and produce such and such *Notes*; but if the *Strings* be broke, and the *Instrument* untuned, he ceases to act, indeed as a *Musician*, but not as a *Man*; he retains his *musical Skill*, and only wants an *Instrument* to put his Art into *Practice*.

Thus, as some Way near *a-hin* to this, we may conceive of ourselves, that while the *Organs* of the *Body* are well adjusted, & *regular*, the *Soul* can make its *proper Use* of them; but, if the *Order* of Nature be disturbed by *Sickness*, or impaired by *Age*, the *Soul* cannot act as it did before; but still, it is a *Soul*, and if once *disencumbered* from the *Flesh*, might act more freely, tho' after a *different Manner*, than in a State of *present Union*.

Let us suppose for a further *Illustration* of this Point, that a *Man* be born blind; in this Case *his Soul* receives all the *Ideas*, and performs all the *Operations* of *Hearing* and *Smelling*; these give him the *same Sensations*, and excite the *same Sentiments* in his *Mind*, as in the *Minds* of others; yet he has no Manner of *Ideas* of *any Colours*, because
these

these Ideas depend upon a *proper Disposition* of the Organs of Seeing, which he wants: but will any say, that he ceases to be a *Man*, or has no *Subsistence*, because he cannot see, and distinguish *Colours*? Certainly no: We must therefore *distinguish* betwixt the *Nature* of the Soul, *in itself* considered, and its *Power* of Acting, *in Conjunction* with the Body, to which it is *united*: the *present Defect* of its Operations, does not arise from a Defect in the *Soul itself*, but from a Defect in the *Organs of the Body*.

As to the Soul being *quiescent*, when the Body *sleeps*, and falls into a *Stupor*—'tis rather an Argument *for*, than against its *Immateriality*; for tho' it acts not, (which yet *some Philosophers* deny) while the Body *sleeps*, or *fades away*; yet, as soon as the Body *awakes*, and *recovers out of the Stupor*, we find there is still a *Soul* to act; we must either therefore *suppose*, that there is a new Soul created, or that the *same Soul* may continue to exist, when its *present Actions* are suspended by Sleep.

I was willing to speak to this *Objection*, because I have formerly struggled with it in my *own Mind*; and I would remove all the *Impediments*, and *Doubts* I can, in an Argument of so *great Importance*, as the *Immateriality* of the Soul, from which I have taken the *first Proofs* of its *Immortality*.

SERMON VIII.

T H E

Immortality of the Soul.

THE SECOND TO TIMOTHY,

CHAP. I. Verse 10th.

AND hath brought Life, and Immortality to Light, thro' the Gospel.

WITHOUT any Introduction, I shall pursue the Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul.

1st. The

1st. The *Soul* of Man has an *immortal Capacity*, and therefore seems plainly designed for a *future Existence*, or a *State of Immortality*.

The Powers of Reason, *Willing* and *Loving*, not only prove its *Immateriality*, which was the Use of them I made under the *former Head*, and in another *Dissertation* at large; but they give it a *Capacity* for the *Business*, and *Enjoyment* of an *eternal* Life. Did our Existence *terminate* with the Death of the Body, were we circumscrib'd within the *narrow Limits* of Time, that short Round of *fifty* or *sixty Years*, we might have *just Reason* to complain, or expostulate with the Psalmist; *if therefore, O Lord! hast thou made all Men in vain?* Let a Man look into his *own Soul*, and consider the *vast Improvements* the human Mind is capable of, and he will see *Immortality* instamp'd upon it, in the most lively and *legible Characters*. We find a *Capacity* in ourselves to *know* God, to embrace him with our *Wills*, to *love*, and *enjoy* him forever; in this Knowledge, and in those Powers, consists our true Happiness.

And though our Faculties at first be *very young*, *limited*, and *narrow*; yet, they are every Day *growing*, and would naturally go on in an *easy Progress* forever. We are *capable* of knowing more and more of God, the longer we continue *in Being*; and

and our *Love* and *Affection* for him, would always *keep Pace* with it, and bear an *eternal Proportion* to it. Now might *Reason* say, is it possible to believe, that God has so form'd, and constituted the *Soul* of Man, that he has given *so vast*, and *ample Capacity* to it, only to spend a *few Days* upon Earth, and then vanish *to nothing*? Is this conformable to his *Wisdom*, or to his *Providence* and *Design* in the other Works of Nature, which are all adapted to their *proper Ends*; and answer their respective *Natures* and *Capacities*? No verily: And why can we think less of the *human Soul*, which has a *Capacity* for a future *immortal Existence*?

2d. Man has *natural Desires* of Immortality *implanted* in his Nature; but verily in vain, if the Soul be not *immortal*; but should *die*, and *perish* with the Body.

So shocking is the Thought of *Annihilation*, that *some* think it better to be always miserable, rather than not to be at all. An *extravagant* Opinion this, yet it shews how *natural* it is to the Mind of Man to desire *Immortality*.

These *Desires* are evident in the Care some have taken, to *perpetuate* and keep up their *Memories* and *Actions*, after their Death. Hence the Rise of that *Ambition* in some, to have *Monuments*
erected

erected over their *Remains*, and publick *Honours* paid to their *Memories*, after they quit the World; it proceeds from a Supposition that they shall exist in some invisible State and Place or another—None of us but may find this *natural Appetite* in our own Souls. But to what End these *Desires*, that are never to be satisfied, if the Soul be mortal and perishing, like the Body? As they are wholly *in vain* as to good Purposes, so must they prove the *Instrument* of continual *Torment* and *Vexation* to us, and render us more miserable than the Beasts that perish.—*They* terminate their Desires below, and are *satisfied*; but *Man* desires what he can never attain, or arrive at; which must be a Kind of *Deception* (if I may so call it) to human Nature, and a constant *Spring* of Uneasiness within us.—For what Satisfaction could we have in any *present* Enjoyments of Life, when we know *they* must soon finish, and come to a final Period. Certainly had not God designed us for *Immortality*, He would never have made the *Desires* of it so *inseparable* from our Nature. He would never thus baulk and *tantalyze* his Creatures. These are the *natural* Suggestions of *Reason*, and certainly afford us an *Argument* of strong *Prejudgment* for the Soul's *Immortality*.

4. As Man has an *immortal Capacity*, and *Desires* of *Immortality* implanted in his Nature, so may

we argue it from the *Impressions*, and *Effects* of his natural *Conscience*. The Apostle, speaking of those who had no *written Law*, tells us, that they were a *Law to themselves*; and that according to the *Nature* of their *Actions*, their *Thoughts* either *excused*, or *accused* them.—When they were conscious to themselves of any *virtuous* and *moral* *Actions* they had done, it spread a *Calm* in their *Breasts*; natural *Conscience* acquitted them, and they had secret *Hopes* of a suitable *Reward* after *Death*: On the other *Hand*, when conscious of any *wicked Practice*, whereby they transgress'd the *Law of Nature*, *Conscience* flew in their *Face*; they felt an *Uneasiness* within them; powerful *Fears* in their *Breasts* alarm'd them with some dreadful *Prefages* of *future Punishment*. Such *Impressions* as these, in some *Degree* or other, have been so universally among *Men*, that we must either believe them to be *innate Ideas*, born with them, and springing up with their *Souls*; or else, that they were so infinitely agreeable to *Reason*, that the *meanest Capacity* could not *miss* them. If these *Hopes* and *Fears* are *innate*, or *connatural* to the *Mind*, 'tis *God* that imprinted them; which can't be accounted for, without supposing a *proper Foundation* for them, even a *future State* of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. If we go upon the *latter* *Supposition*, we therein acknowledge the *Reasonableness* of such a *Belief*. So that, in short, if *Man's Capacity*, if
his

his *Desires*, if his *Hopes* and *Fears* of a future State be any *Argument* ^c - the *Reality* of it, it is infinitely *reasonable*.

5. Without the Supposition of a *future Existence*, how shall we vindicate the *Wisdom*, *Justice* and *Goodness* of God's Government?—

We all know, that Man has Reason enough to make him a *moral Agent*—that God has given him a *Capacity* to understand the *Laws of Nature*; and therefore made him a *proper Subject* of Rewards and Punishments. Admitting these Things, the *Wisdom*, *Justice* and *Goodness* of *God*, must incline us all to believe, that he must sooner or later, put a *Difference* betwixt the Man of *Virtue*, and the Man of *Vice*—that Characters, so different as these, must be differently rewarded by Heaven. We can't conceive that a Man who *affronts* his Maker to his Face, who *swears* by his Name, and *renounces* all that natural Homage that is due to it, should find as much Favour with him, as the Man of *moral Virtue*, that *fears God*, and walks *uprightly* before him; and makes it his Study to please him. Certainly such a different *Conduct*, deserves a different *Regard*. But does this appear in the *present State of Existence*? Is *this* the general Course of Providence? or not rather often the *Reverse*? Is not the Rod of God's Anger of-

ten upon the Lot of the *Righteous*, while the Tabernacles of *Robbers* prosper, and the *Wicked* have more than Heart can wish? How then can we pretend to justify God's *moral Government* of the World? How shall we vindicate his *Justice*? or how does the Judge of all the Earth do *right*? Certainly, no other Way than by supposing and believing some *future State*, when Things shall be adjusted, and that God will *then* judge the World in *Righteousness*, and put a *Difference* betwixt the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*; him that *sweareth*, and him that *seareth an Oath*—all which infers a State of *Immortality*.

And thus we have seen how far *Reason* and *Philosophy* alone, will lead us into the Belief of the Soul's *Immortality*—From the *Immateriality* of its *Nature*, from its *immortal Capacity*, from its natural *Desires* of *Immortality*, from the Impressions and Presages of *natural Conscience*, and from the *Necessity* of it, to vindicate the *Justice* of God's Government. I shall close the Argument with one short Reflection, which is this: That the *Deist* who rejects *Revelation*, is yet very culpable in his sinful Practices. He has one that condemns him, even the *Law of Nature*. Every Sin is committed against the Remonstrances of a Man's own Reason. And tho' the *Immortality* of the Soul is not so clearly discovered by Reason *alone*, as by the *Scriptures*;

Scriptures ; yet *Reason* gives such *Proof* of it, as leaves every *Sinner without Excuse*. There is such a *Probability* of it, as ought to determine *moral Agents*, to the *Practice of Vertue*, and the *Abhorrence* of *Vice*. And therefore when we see a *Deist* indulge himself in the *Liberties* of *Sense*, and throwing off all the *Restraints* of natural *Religion*, we can't help suspecting, that his *Disease* lies more in his *Heart* than in his *Head* ; and that he is no *Friend* to *Revelation*, for no other *Reason*, but that *Revelation* is no *Friend* to him, and his enormous and licentious *Practices*—or in other *Words*, that he stumbles more at the *Morals*, than at the *Evidences* of *Christianity*.——

And thus, having shewn how far *Reason* and *Philosophy* go in the *Proof* of the *Soul's Immortality*, and a *future State* of *Existence* ; I shall in the next *Place* shew wherein they *fail*, and are indebted to *divine Revelation*.

1. I might look back to the *Original* of the *Soul*, which is a great *Secret* to *Nature*, but plainly enough revealed in the *Scripture*.

Reason might argue from the great and *distinguishing* *Faculties* of the *Soul*, that it must be *immaterial*, and being a *Substance* quite distinct from *Matter*, of a different and *nobler* *Original* than the

Body. *Reason* might also tell us, that *God*, the supreme Cause, must be the Author of all Things, and consequently of the *Soul of Man*—But *how* He was the Author, and the glorious and peculiar *Manner* in which we received it from him, must have been for ever a *Secret* to us, and the *wisest* of the Philosophers, left to bewildered and precarious *Conjectures*, had not *God* Himself revealed it to us by *Moses*; and repeated or confirmed it in the Gospel of his *Son*, by whom He hath spoken to us in these last Days—The History of *Moses* acquaints us with the *grand* Solemnity and Deliberation with which Man was created; that tho' *God* formed his *Body*, with exquisite Art, of the *Dust*, He breathed into his Nostrils the *Breath of Life*, and made him a *living Soul*; that the *Inspiration of the Almighty* gave him *Understanding*, and *God* made *Man* in his own *Image*, after his own *Likeness*.

Now, this noble *Original* of the Soul, the *immediate* Breath of *God*, the glorious Effect of his *Inspiration*, discovers the peculiar *Excellency* of its Nature—shews it to be a Substance vastly superior to the other Parts of *God's* Creation, and is of itself a very strong Argument of its *immortal Capacity*, and being design'd for an *immortal Existence*—for how can we think *God* would breathe into *Man* a Soul, to remain a few Years in the *Body*, and then

to be breathed out into *nothing*—how would it consist with its being made in the *Image of God*, after the Likeness of him whose Glory it is to have *Life and Immortality* in himself: the King eternal and immortal? Verily, we read the *Immortality* of our Souls in their divine and heavenly Original. And 'tis an Argument peculiar to the *Scriptures*, hidden from Ages and Generations, and which no Penetration of the *wise Men*, or *Disputers* of the World, had or could ever reach.

2. It is to the *Gospel* we owe the Discovery, how Man first lost his *Immortality*, how the Body became subject to *Death*, and the present State of Union broken betwixt that and the Soul. Here *Reason* is blind, and must forever grope in Darkness. The most that it could do, was to resolve the *Dissolution* of the *Parts* of the Body into its *first Materials*. What was *compounded* might be *dissolved*; but then must it not be a *Mystery* to the Eye of *Reason* that such a noble Piece of divine Workmanship, with such glorious Signatures of infinite Art and Wisdom, in it's Formation and Use, should be demolish'd, and that so *very soon*? Or suppose *Reason* itself could assign, the *moral Cause* of this Death, from the Experience it had of Sin, this could only lead a *Philosopher* into a greater *difficulty*, and he could never answer this Question, how came Sin into the World? This *unde*

Misery has ever puzzled the *Wits* of Man; even the most refined Sages among the Heathen. It was such a *Difficulty*, that it carried them into the *grossest* Extreams. It made them create another *God* in their Imaginations, and renounce the *Unity* of the God-head, tho' one of the first Dictates of Reason. They saw Good and Evil in the World. They could not conceive how *both* should proceed from *one* Author, and therefore absurdly supposed *two* Principles, or first Causes, one the *Origin of Good*, the other of all *Evil*. But these Things, as to the Fact itself, lie plain before us in *Scripture*; here we are told, that some of the *Angels* kept not their first Habitation—that Sin turned them into *Devils*—that *Satan* put on, and acted the Serpent, and seduced our first Parents into Rebellion. It is in the *Scripture* that the Knowledge of the Tree of Good and Evil grows. There we find the Restraint upon *Adam*, a strict Injunction upon him not to eat of *that Tree*—a terrible Threatning of *Death* if he did. There we find him actually eating the Fruit, and read his terrible Doom, that he shou'd return again to the Earth, whence he was taken. And the Writings of the *new Testament* in a peculiar Manner stiled the *Gospel*, shew us how Sin and Death were propagated from *Adam* to us, even to them that die in *Infancy*, and go from the *Womb* to the *grave*. What Words can be plainer than those
of

of the *Apollis*? By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and Death has pass'd upon all Men, for that all have sinned. For Death reign'd from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression. So that as the Scripture opens the Original of Man's Immortality; in like Manner it opens the Door by which Death enter'd and robb'd him at once of that glorious Privilege. By the first Sin Man actually lost the Immortality of his Body; and by the same Sentence forfeited the Immortality of his Soul, and became subject, in Point of Desert, either to Annihilation, or a miserable Existence forever. The Discovery of all this, we owe to the sacred Scriptures in general, and the New-Testament in particular; and it was such an Original of Death, as no Man's Reason ever stumbled upon.

But you will say perhaps, we are little obliged to the Gospel for the Discovery how we *lost* our Immortality, unless it could shew us, how we have regain'd it, and may attain to the Possession of it.

3. This therefore is the *third* Instance wherein Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel. As it shews us the first Rise of Immortality, and how we once *lost* it, so has it given us all possible Assurance, that it is *regain'd* and

may be *possessed*; and this with Respect both to Soul and Body.

1. The *Gospel* gives a much clearer Discovery of the *Soul's Immortality* than can be argued from *human Reason*, or the best Topics of *Philosophy*.

I confess, and have largely shewn in a *former Discourse*, that we may easily infer the *Immateriality* of the Soul from it's noble *Faculties*; from such Operations and Properties as are not only *superior* to, but indeed *inconsistent* and *irreconcilable* with the known Properties of *mere Matter*.— From hence *Reason* very justly argues that the Soul is, in its own abstract Nature, *immortal* and not subject to any *Dissolution*. But, you may remember, I at that Time observed that this Argument could not be *conclusive* in itself, because it still left the Soul at the Mercy of God, who if he pleased could *annihilate* and reduce it to a State of *Non-existence*, by the same Power which created and bro't it upon the Stage of *Existence*. But now, in the *Scripture* we have an absolute *Affurance* of the Immortality of the Soul: As we know by *Reason* that the Soul is not naturally subject to Death, so by the *Gospel* God has signified to us, that He will not *annihilate* and *destroy* its Existence. *Reason* says tis *possible*; yea very *probable* that the Soul is *immortal*—the *Gospel* says tis *affirmably* so. Our blessed *Saviour* tells

us, not to fear them who kill the Body, upon this Assurance, that they have no more that they can do—No, when the Body returns to Dust, the Spirit returns to God that gave it. The Apostle has plainly told us by a Warrant from Heaven, *That if we are stedfast and immovable, and seek for Immortality, we shall obtain eternal Life; which God who cannot lie hath promised*—and He himself was looking at the Things which are not seen, but are *eternal*.—

The Parable of the rich Man and Lazarus is full of this Doctrine, and abounds with Evidences of the Soul's *Immortality*, or Man's existing in a future State. The Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel centre in this Point, and would be so many *Cyphers* without the *Immortality* of the Soul, which gives them their Life, Force and Significancy. If the Soul be not immortal, we quench the Fire of Hell; we demerit Heaven, and make the *Joys* of the one, and the *Terrors* of the other, altogether vain, and of none Effect. *Everlasting Rewards* and *everlasting Punishments*, so frequently mentioned in the Gospel, must be for ever *intelligible*, if there be no *immortal* Subject for them. Yea, *Christ's* Death is in vain without it; and the glorious Designs of his Sufferings, with the Songs of the redeemed, are all lost, if the Soul is not *immortal*. In short, it is this that supports the
Christian

Christian Religion gives a *Sanction* to *Virtue*, and puts the strongest *Restraint* upon *Vice*.

2. The *Gospel* discovers the *Resurrection* and *Immortality* of the *Body*, in a much clearer *Light*, than *natural Reason* can pretend to.

I confess *Reason* may argue the *Possibility* of a *Resurrection*, from the infinite *Power* of the *Creator*, which is *sufficient* to produce any *Effect* that implies not a *Contradiction* in its own *Nature*; and appears consistent with his *moral Perfections*. *Reason* may also suggest some *moral Considerations*, that might incline a *reasonable Man* to believe it. But after all its *strongest Efforts* and *highest Pretensions*, it reaches no further, than *Presumption* and *Instability*. Or if it could infallibly *prove* the *Fact* itself, that there will be a *Resurrection* of the *Body*, yet it can say nothing of the *Manner*, or *Means* of it; nothing of the *Qualities*, or with what *Body* the *Dead* shall rise again. It could never tell us, that *the Lord himself* should descend from *Heaven* with a *Shout*, with the *Voice* of the *Arch-angel*, and the *Trump* of *God*; that all that are in their *Graves* shall hear the *Voice* of the *Son* of *God*, and come forth—that the *Dead* in *Christ* shall arise first; and they which remain and are alive, shall be caught up to meet the *Lord* in the *Air*: That this *Mortal* shall put on *Immortality*,
and

and this *Corruptible, Incorruption*—that the *Body of the Saint* shall be raised in *Incorruption and Power*, become a *Spiritual Body*, and be made like unto *Christ's glorious Body*.—It can say nothing of the *World's Dissolution*, the *Conflagration of the Elements*, and the grand *Process of the last Judgment*, that ensues the *Resurrection*. We that are acquainted with the *Scriptures*, and enjoy the *Light of the Gospel*, are no *Strangers* to these glorious *Discoveries and Expressions*. But they are *hid* from the *wise and prudent* of this *World*; and no *Stretch of Thought*, by the *Aid of mere Philosophy*, could ever arrive at such a *Discovery*.—So that it is the *peculiar Glory of the Gospel*, that *Life and Immortality* are brought to *Light* by it, which will appear yet further, if we consider

4thly. That it is only the *Gospel* which reveals the *Way* to a blessed *Immortality*, and shews how it is to be attained.

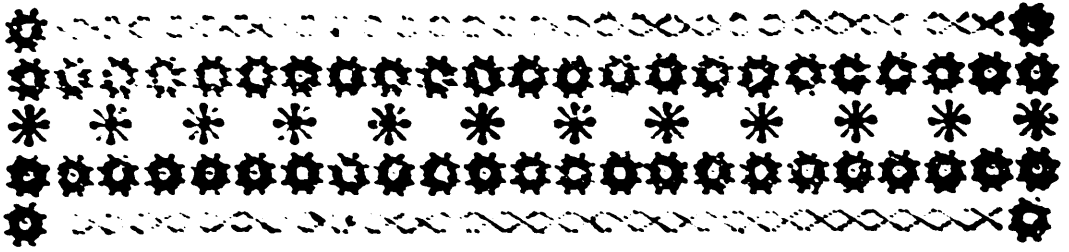
I. The *Gospel*, and that only, discovers the *Purchase of it*.

Here it is we are informed of the *Expiation* of that *Guilt*, which brought *Death* upon the *Body*, and forfeited the *Life of the Soul*— Here it is we are told, that *Glory, Honor and Immortality* are the *Price of a Saviour's Blood*; the glorious *Purchase*

chase of *Christ*. Here his *Godhead* and *Union* with our Nature, and all the Steps of his *Incarnation* and *Sufferings*, his *Cross*, his *Grave*, his *Resurrection*, his *Ascension* as our Head, and prevailing *Intercession* for us, are plainly exhibited. These Things run thro' the very Body, and make a great Part of the Writings of the *New-Testament*. And, without Controversy, great is the *Mystery of Godliness*, and it is not given to the heathen World, to know these *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*; no not in Types or Parables.

2. Only the *Gospel* can acquaint us *how* we shall acquire an Interest in the *Purchase*, and be qualified for the *Possession* of this *Immortality*.

As Nature can't shew an *adequate* Sacrifice for Sin; neither is it able to point out the Way of Faith in the Blood of *Christ*—The Doctrine of the *Cross*, and the Doctrine of *Faith* and *Repentance*, are the *Peculiar*s of *Christianity*; and it is by the *Gospel*, we know there is an *Holy Ghost*, to sanctify and make us meet for the Inheritance of the *Saints* in *Light*.



SERMON IX.



THE

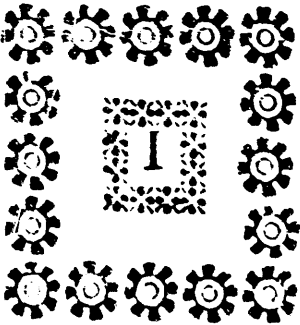
Immortality of the Soul.



THE SECOND TO TIMOTHY,

CHAP. I. *Verse 10th.*

AND hath brought Life, and Immortality to Light, thro' the Gospel.

 SHALL now proceed to shew, that the Gospel has given us much clearer and more consistent Notions of the *Nature* of Life and *Immortality*, than Reason itself, without the Aid of Revelation, had ever done.

Reason

Reason may readily assent to it, now it is revealed, as a *rational* and *consistent* Scheme of Things; but could never have *discovered* it without Revelation, or 'till the *Gospel* brought it to *Light*.

Let us consider here, the Representation the *Gospel* gives of the *last Judgment*, the State of the *Damned*, and the Happiness of the *Saints*; and we shall plainly see how far it exceeds the Notions which the Heathen had of them.

1. The *Gospel* gives a much fairer and more *rational* Account of the *future Judgment*, than we find in the fabulous Opinions which prevailed among the Heathen.—

It can't be deny'd, that they had some general Ideas of a Judgment, previous to Men's fixed and determinate State: and that as *Virtue* was the Way to *Happiness*, so *Vice* was chastised with *Misery*; and thus far they made the Rule of *Equity* the Rule of *Judgment*. Thus *Virgil* represents *Radamanthus* one of the Judges of Hell, as enquiring into the past Actions of Men, that stood at his Bar, and bringing to Light and punishing the most *secret* Crimes—But then we must remember, that this was only an *imaginary* Judge and Tribunal; and had no Existence but in the Fancy of a *Poet*, or the uncertain Conjecture of a *Philosopher*—neither

ther does it carry that *grand, august, and solemn* Air with it, nor so well comport with the Rule of *strict Justice*, as the Representation the *Scripture* gives of it.

The *Gospel* has told us in express Language that God will judge the World in *Righteousness*, by that Man whom he hath appointed, and that this Judgment was committed to the Son, because he was the *Son of Man*, as a proper Reward for the Sufferings he bore, when found in Fashion as a Man, that he might wipe off the *Reproach* of his Cross, and that Men might *honour the Son* even as they honour the *Father*; and that being Man he might make a visible Appearance to Men, who cannot see God and live. And further, to shew the *Equity* of the whole Procedure, in giving us our *last* and dreadful Tryal, at the Bar of one who assumed our Flesh, who was tempted like us we are—who knew the *Feebles* and Weakness of Flesh and Blood, is touched with the *Feeling* of our Infirmities, and must therefore be supposed to make all *reasonable* Allowance, and to pass the most *favourable* Sentence upon us that our Case can bear; and so leave us no Ground of Complaint, or Appeal from him. At the same Time the *Scriptures* have taken Care to acquaint us with his real *essential* and *Divinity*, and by that Meant raised our Ideas of his Person and Knowledge,

and

and shewn how vain an Attempt it would be, to evade, or escape his Notice. And thus, by representing our great Judge, as God and Man in one Person, they have temper'd *Justice* with *Clemency*, and mingled *Terror* with *Pity*; or in other Words, made *Mercy and Truth meet together*, not only in *Man's Redemption*, but in his *Judgment* too. Again, in what a *solemn* Manner do the *Scriptures* represent this *great Judge*, when they cloath him with the *Glory* of his *Father*, when he rides upon the *Clouds* in *Majesty* and *great Glory*, when he is revealed from *Heaven* with his mighty *Angels* in *Flames of Fire*; when *Hills* and *Mountains* are conscious of his *Presence*, and retire from his *Sight*; and when *Men* of the *highest Rank* are afraid to look their *Judge* in the *Face*, and cannot stand in the *great Day* of his *Wrath*; and when he cometh with *ten Thousand* of his *Saints* to execute *Vengeance* upon the *Ungodly*! What more terrible *Scene* and joyful *Day*! when *Saints* and *Sinners* stand divided like *Sheep* and *Goats* at the *right* and *left Hand* of *Christ*, and receive the most *important* and *irreversible* *Sentence* that ever did, or can proceed from the *Mouth* of a *Judge*! How grand must the *Day* be! when *Angels*, the *Apostates*, shall tremble before the *Saints* and their *mighty Redeemer*. When the whole *World* in all its *Nations*, *Sexes* and *Conditions*, shall stand upon *one Level*! and when no *Considerations* of human *Greatness*

Greatness or Power, shall bribe the *Justice* or bias the *Judgment* of the *Impartial* Records; who shall bring every *secret* Thing into Judgment, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil, and reward every one according to his Works: For when the *Divine* small and great stand before God, we read that the Books were opened—the Book of *God's Remembrance*, the Book of *Conscience*, and the Book of *Scripture*, Law and Gospel; as the Apostle speaks. *God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.* Here then I might borrow *Doctor Tillotson's* Reflection; and appeal to any Man, whether this be not a Representation of Things very proper and suitable to that *great Day*, wherein He who made the World, shall come to judge it? and whether the Wit of Man ever devised any Thing so *awful*, and so agreeable to the *Majesty of God* and the *solemn Judgment* of the *whole World*. The Description which *Virgil* gives of the *Elysian Fields* and the *infernal Regions*, how infinitely do they fall short of the *Majesty of the holy Scriptures*, and the Description there made of *Heaven and Hell*, and of the *great and terrible Day of the Lord*! so that *in Comparison*, they are childish and trifling, and yet, perhaps, he had the most *regular* and *refined* Imagination of any Man that ever liv'd, and observed the greatest *Decorum* in his *Characters* and *Descriptions*. But who can declare the *great*

Things of *God*, but he to whom *God* shall reveal them.—Or, (which is equivalent to let how could *Life* and *Immortality* be brought to Light, but thro' the *Gospel*. Surely, we may with great Justice repeat the *Apostles* Words upon it, we have not follow'd cunningly devis'd Fables, when we have known unto you the *Power* and *Coming* of the *Lord Jesus*.

2. The *Gospel* has given a much more rational and terrible Description of *Immortality* in the *Discourses* of the *Wicked*, than we can find in any other Writings.

The Description *Virgil* gives of the several Kinds and Degrees of the infernal Pains and Torments, doubtless expresses, the common Sentiments, at least, of the *Bulk* of the *Heathens*, set off and embellish'd with all that Strength and Life of *Imagination*, and all the *Ornaments* of *Poetry*, he was *Master* of. But how insipid and barren, not to say ridiculous, is it compar'd with the terrible Description the *Gospel* has given?

'Tis true the *Heathens* appear, by *Virgil's* Account of Things, to have a general Notion of a two-fold State after *Death*, one of *Punishment*, another of *Rewards*; and to assign different Degrees

great and *Awful* of Punishment, to Crimes of a different *Size* and *Nature*. But how *low* and *grovelling* do their Conceptions of them appear, when he represents the *Turies* of Hell, with their *Whips* and *Scourges*. *Hydra* or the *Monster* with *fifty Heads*.—Their *Bellies* everlastingly employ'd in filling a *Barrel* full of *Holes* with *Water*.—*Cerberus*, a *Dog* with *three Heads* which he flutions at the *Gate* of Hell—*Titan* tied fast to a *Wheel*, with a *continual Rotation*—*Sisyphus* with *immortal Labour* rolling a *great Stone* to the *Top* of a *Hill*, which suddenly runs down, and renews his endless *Fatigue*.—*Tantalus* set in *Water* to the *Chin*, and *Apples* on the *Top* of his *Lip*, without *Power* to stoop to the one, to quench his *Thirst*, or to reach to the other to satisfy his *Hunger* and *Curiosity*.—*Tityus*, with a *Vulture* feeding upon his *Liver*, which grew up again as fast as it was eaten, to keep him in *continual Pain*. These, and innumerable other *dark* and *fantastic* Conceits had the *Heathen*, of the future *State* of Punishment; so gross and drossy, so weak and childish, that they will hardly bear a *Mention*, or consist with the *Gravity* of the *Pulpit*, did not the *Nature* of my *Subject* require it, the better to *illustrate* and set off the *Description* of the *Gospel*, which is full of *Terror*, and introduces the *strongest* Images and *Metaphors* to represent the *emphatical* and *complex* Miseries of the *Damned*. What is there in all

our Poets Description, taking in all the Branches and Terrors of it, equal to that last and dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVER-LASTING FIRE, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Words big with *Emphasis*, and enough to make the very *Devils* tremble. The Wicked are so cursed in the Christian Scheme of the Damned, that they must depart from *Christ*, be banish'd from *Heaven*, excluded the Fellowship of *Angels*, and never taste the *Joy* and *Pleasures* of *God's right Hand*. They must depart into *Fire*, which is either a *literal Fire*, or a *Metaphor* from it, to express the most excruciating Pains, that can enter into the Heart of Man; into EVER-LASTING FIRE, two Words of the *strongest Sound* and *Terror* joined together. For who can dwell with *devouring Fire*, who can inhabit *everlasting Burnings*?—A Stream of Fire, the *Fire of God's Jealousy*, mingled with *Brimstone*, kindled by the Breath of the Almighty; where the Worm, the Reflection of Conscience, that exquisite and immortal Tormentor of the guilty Soul, *dieth not*, and the Fire is *not quenched*, prepared for the *Devil and his Angels*—the *Punishment* of the most *superior Beings* and *highest Ranks* of the first Apostates, who in all their Rage and Malice, and ugly Forms, are at once, the *Tormentors* and *Companions* of the Damned; and can produce nothing but Weeping and Wailing and gnashing of

of Teeth forever. I need not recite the other dreadful Passages of future and endless Misery contained in the *Gospel*, this one Text infinitely transcends all the *childish* Figments and Conceits of the *blind* Heathen World.

And, should we now turn the Scales, we shall find as great, not to say greater *Disproportion* betwixt the *Heathen Notions* and the *Gospel Revelation* of a *happy* Immortality, which was the last Instance I proposed to illustrate my Text.

In the Description of the *Elysian Field* Pagan Heaven, *Virgil* seems to *materialize* all his Ideas, and to represent nothing but *sensual* and *earthly* Pleasures; forgetting, that Man's *chief* Excellency consists in the Exercise of his *intellectual* Powers, and that the Pleasure of *Immortality* should be suited chiefly to the *spiritual* Part. He describes the Mansions of the *Good* and *Virtuous* by pleasant green Fields and Forests, with a free and chearful Air. Here some exercise themselves upon the green Grass. Some Play and Wrestle. Some are taken up in Singing, while others divert themselves with Dancing; and in short, every one indulges his *own Genius* after *Death* in the *same Things*, and after the *same Manner*, as when alive here upon Earth. But what a low Idea must such Writers have of
 K 3 Heaven,

Heaven, and the immortal *Employments* and *Pleasures* of the Saints above? 'Tis, indeed, a Kind of Mahometan Paradise, below the *Paradise* that we had once upon Earth, much more unworthy of the Name of *that Paradise above*; whither the *Apostle Paul* was caught up, and saw and heard what he had neither *Leave* nor *Power* to communicate to others.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the *Gospel* has accommodated it's *Differences* and *Revelations* sometimes to our weak Capacities and low Way of Thinking; and represented the Happiness of Heaven, by some Things analogous to it upon Earth. God is pleas'd thus to *incarnate* spiritual Things, and to liken the *Kingdom of Heaven* to *earthly Crowns*, and to represent our *Honours* by sitting upon *Thrones*, and our *Happiness* and *Possessions* by magnificent *Buildings*, and eating *Bread* in the Kingdom of God. *St. John* has given us such *Revelations* and *Visions* in Abundance. But then *other Parts* of the *Gospel* refine our Ideas of *Heaven*, and are a clear Comment upon the *foregoing* Metaphors. They lead us into a more *spiritual Employment*. They fill us with Adorations, and put a *new Song* in our Mouths. They shew us the Redeemer *slain* and *crucified* for us, and the thankful Saint ascribing *Glory* and *Praise* to *Him*. This, of it self, is a

Mystery

Mystery to the Heathen World. They know nothing of a *Saviour* to sing of, or to sing to, the Master and Object of Praise to the whole World of happy Spirits. *They* know nothing of the *Choir* or *Fellowship* of *Angels*, our Fellow-Servants and Citizens—nor have they so much as *heard* what God has laid up for them that love him. For we ourselves, shall not fully conceive it, till we come into our Masters Joy, and actually *feel* and *see*, what we now firmly *believe* of the *Life* and *Immortality*, that are brought to Light by the *Gospel*, and will be the happy Portion of such as obey it's *Precepts*, and patiently continue in the Ways of Well-doing.

I shall now pass into a particular *Improvement* of this great Subject.

Inference 1. Are *Life* and *Immortality* brought to so clear a Light thro' the *Gospel*? Then the free Enjoyment of the *Gospel* must be a most *invaluable* Privilege.

Truly Light is sweet, all Light is so, but especially *Spiritual* Light; and we can't help crying out, *Blessed* are our *Eyes* for they *see*. We see what our *wise Men* among the *Heathen* saw not, and what *our* Discoveries from the Light of *Revelation* of a Life to come; but we have seen how

dim it was, compared with the *Gospel*; what imperfect as well as uncertain Notions they had of those Things, of which we have a perfect *Assurance* and *Understanding* by the *Gospel*—yea we see farther than the *Jewish Prophets* themselves, and he that is the *least* in the *Kingdom of Heaven* is greater than *John*—for he was not that *Light* which was to come, but testified of it; even the *Light of the World*, that has brought *Life* and *Immortality* to Light through the *Gospel*.—

It was the *Top*, and chief *Blessing* of the *Jews*, that unto them were committed the *Oracles of God*; they had *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and much fairer *Intimations* of a *Life* to come, than the *Heathen Sages* and *Philosophers* could pretend. But their *Light* is but *Darkness* almost, compar'd with the *Light* of the *New-Testament*, and the *Glory* of the *Christian Dispensation*. The *Gospel* indeed was preached unto *them*, as well as unto *us*; but it was wrapt up in *Types* and *Figures*, and darkned with the *Smoke* and *Shadow* of that *Oeconomy*. The *Law* was given by *Moses*, but *Grace* and *Truth* came by *Jesus Christ*, especially the *Truth* of *immortal Life* and *Happiness*. *God* spake to our *Fathers* by the *Prophets*; but to *us* by his *Son*. *Christianity* is grafted upon *Judaism*—it does not *refuse*, but has wonderfully *improv'd* its *Light*; and represents its *Faith* and *Religion* in a
new

new and fairer Edition—for, as the Apostle argues in Favour of the *Gospel*, even that which was made glorious, had no Glory in this Respect, by Reason of the *Glory that excelleth*. *Moses* put a Vail over his Face, that the Children of *Israel* could not steadfastly look unto the End. But we *all*, with open Face, behold as in a Glass the *Glory* of the Lord—and the chief *Glory* of the *Gospel* is this—that it has brought *Life* and *Immortality* to Light.—And, if the *Gospel* itself be so great a Privilege, certainly the *Ministry*, and that order of Men which Christ has constituted to explain and enforce it, ought to be treated with more Respect and Veneration than they generally are—for, to use the Words of the ingenious *Addison*, who, by the Way, was no *Clergyman*: “If to *inform* the Understanding, and to *regulate* the Will, is of the most lasting and diffusive Benefit, there will not be found so useful and excellent an Institution as that of the *Christian Priesthood*, which is now become the Scorn of Fools.” That a numerous Order of Men should be consecrated to the Study of the most sublime and beneficent Truths, to inform their fellow Creatures of the *Being* and Attributes of the Deity, to possess their Minds with a Sense of a *future State*, is a Thing so excellent and necessary to the Well-being of the World, that no Body but modern *Free-Thinkers*, could have the Forehead or Folly to

turn

turn it into *Ridicule*. The Light in which these Points should be exposed to the View of one, who is prejudiced against the Name of *Religion*, *Church* and *Priest*, is to consider the *Clergy* as so many *Philosophers*; the *Churches* as *Schools*; and their *Sermons* as *Lectures*; for the *Information* and *Improvement* of the *Audience*. How would the Heart of *Socrates* or *Tully*, have rejoiced, had they liv'd in a Nation, where the *Law* had made *Provision* for *Philosophers*, to read *Lectures* of *Theology* and *Morality* every seventh Day, in several *Thousands* of *Schools*, thro' the whole *Country*; and what wicked *Wretches* would they think those *Men*, who should endeavour to defeat the *Purpose* of so divine an *Institution*."

But this Reflections of *his* bring me to another that naturally results from my *Text*, *viz.*

Inf. 2. That we can't help looking upon the *Deist*, who renounces the *Christian Revelation*, as our *Enemy* in some of our *greatest* Concerns—*Life* and *Immortality* are brought to *Light* through the *Gospel*.—But the *Principles* of every *Deist* spreads a *Cloud* upon our *Hopes*; extinguishes our best *Light*, and would *wrest* the most *darling* *Privilege* out of our *Hands*. What is *Man* without *Relation* to a *future* *State* of *Happiness*; and what *Evidence* can the *Deist* give us of *such* a *State*;

State ; or what Notions of immortal Bliss comparable to those *Evidences* and *Discoveries* we have thro' the *Gospel* ? If we give up the *Bible* in Compliance with *his* Principles, and acquiesce in the *Dictates of Nature*—what an uncomfortable Exchange should we make ? of an *absolute Certainty* for a *Probability* at best, or an Argument of *Presumption*—a *rational Scheme* of Happiness, for one that is crowded with *wild Absurdities*, and the Follies of *mere Imagination*.—I confess, our *modern Deists*, have *juster* Notions of a Life to come than the *Antients* among the Heathen.—But, if I am not greatly mistaken, they are indebted to the *Gospel* for it ; and have drawn their *Knowledge* from the *very Books* and *Fountains* of *Truth*, which they pretend to rob of all Claim to *divine Inspiration*. We can't therefore consider them in any other Light, than *Enemies* to our Souls, in their immortal Concerns, and we should therefore guard ourselves against all their *sceptical* and *pernicious* Arguments—which brings me to infer,

3. That we should examine into the *Ground* and *Authority* of the *Gospel*, which has brought to Light such *Truths*, and of such *Importance* to us.

These are Matters of too great Weight, and too nearly affect us to be swallow'd down *implicitly*; or to

to be credited only because embraced by others before us. In a Point of this *Consequence*, we ought to see as far as possible with our own Eyes, and procure the most *rational* Satisfaction we can to our Minds from our own Inquiries : For what signifies the pompous Representation of *Heaven*, or the terrible Description of *Hell*, and both of them *immortal*, unless we are assured of the *Truth* of them, and that they are no *fancy Tales*, or *cunningly devised Fables*. And how shall we arrive at such an *Assurance*, unless we be persuaded of the *divine Authority* of the Scriptures, which have brought this *Life and Immortality* to Light. We ought therefore calmly and humbly to enquire into the *Evidence and Truth* of the Christian Revelation, with which our swelling Hopes of eternal Happiness must stand or fall. And, blessed be God, that so many excellent Pens have been drawn in *Defence* of the Scriptures, and have so fairly demolish'd *Deism*, and triumphed over all the *little Arts*, Cavils and Insinuations of *Infidelity*. I only wish Christianity could as well be defended in *Practice*, as it has been in *Theory* ; and that there were not so many of those that profess it, who walk contrary to the Cross of Christ, and suppose that Gain is Godliness.

Inf. 4. How should we *pity* and *pray* for them that *want* or *reject* the Gospel.—

They

They are really Objects of Pity—they are *blind* in the most important Sense. They sit in *Darkness*, and in the very Region of the *Shadow of Death*—And Oh! how great is this *Darkness*! How great a Part of the World is overspread with Ignorance, Delusion and Error. The *Pagan World* know nothing of the *Gospel*. The *Mahometans* prefer their *Alcoran* to it. The *Jews* know it, but to this Day reject it—there is a Vail upon their Hearts, when *Moses* is read, and their invincible Prejudice and Antipathy to a crucified Saviour will not let them see that *Moses* wrote of him—and that he is the *Messiah*: Hence they reject the whole New-Testament Writings, and preclude themselves all the Advantages of Gospel Light. The *Papists* have it lock'd up in an *unknown Tongue*, and their Priests have taken away the Key of Knowledge. All these are Objects of our Pity and Prayers. We ought to pray that the *Gospel* may be spread over the whole Earth, and that the Light of it may shine not only before the Eyes, but into the Hearts of them that believe not; and it ought to give great Light to our Concern and Prayer, that *Life* and *Immortality* are brought to Light by it.

Inf. 5. This glorious Character of the *Gospel* disarms *Death*, removes the *Gloom* of the *Grave*, and turns the Land of *Darkness* into *Light* and
Joy

Joy to the Christian. Now may the Saint sing and say, *tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil*—When his Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, the *Gospel* is a Lamp to them. and shews him the Path of *Life and Immortality*—This should inspire us with *Courage*, when we die ourselves ; yea, fill us with unspeakable *Joy*, to think we are only exchanging a short mortal *Life*, for one that is immortal ; and are going to our Friends and Brethren in *Christ*, who have gone before us, to a State of *Immortality*. Even *Tully* could not help breaking out in a Kind of *Extasy*, *O preclarum Diem !* &c. “ O happy
 “ Day, when I shall escape from this *Croud*, this
 “ *Heap of Pollution*, and be admitted into that
 “ *Divine Assembly of exalted Spirits !* I am transferr’d
 “ ported with the Hope of seeing those whom I
 “ have honoured and loved, those whom I have
 “ known, and of whom I have heard, and read and
 “ written—nor would I be detained from so pleasant
 “ a Journey, where I shall go to my *Cato*, my
 “ Son ; than whom a better Man was never born,
 “ and whose Funeral Rites I myself performed.”
 What *heroick* Expressions were there in the Mouth of a *Philosopher !* How much more becoming a *Christian*, who has *Life and Immortality* brought to Light by the *Gospel*, and is sure of going from a World of *Pollution*, and the Body of *Sin and Sorrow*, to the Spirits of just Men made perfect
 above ;

above, and should say with the Apostle, *I am ready to be offered—willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*; who will one Day, he is certain, command the Grave to resign his Dust and make it appear *glorious*.

Inf. 6. What shall the *End* of them be that obey not the *Gospel*!

How shall they escape who neglect so *great Salvation*! How great must be their *Condemnation*, who have Light come into the World, even *Life and Immortality* brought to Light, and yet love Darkness, because their Deeds are Evil. These are they that hold the Truth in *Unrighteousness*, against whom the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven*. These are the very Persons, upon whom Christ will take Vengeance, when he is revealed in *Flames of Fire*; and their Condition shall be more intollerable in the Day of Judgment, than that of *Sodom and Gomorrah*.

Our *Saviour* has expressly told us, and the Laws of *natural Equity* second and confirm it, that *he who knew his Lord's Will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes*. The *Gospel* is an inestimable Privilege, if we improve it.—'Tis the Power of God to Salvation: But Wo to them that despise and reject it; they will have a most dreadful Account

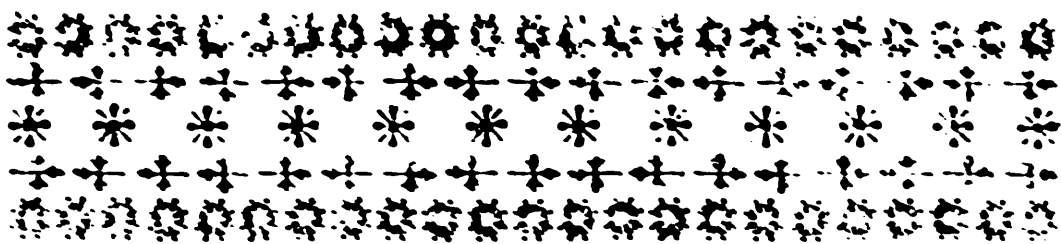
to give of *themselves*, and I had rather appear at the Great Day, in the Person of a *Turk, Heathen or Jew*, or any *other* Character, than that of a *Christian*, if I have abus'd the Privilege of the *Gospel*.

Lastly, How vastly different is the *Practice* of most Christians (nominally such) from their *Faith* or *Belief*.

How much below themselves and the Character of *immortal* Beings do they act, *who labour more for the Meat that perisheth, than for that which endureth to everlasting Life*.—To use the Words of the Author already cited : “ However right we are in
 “ *Theory*, it is plain that in *Practice* we adhere
 “ to the *wrong* Side—We make *Provision* for *this*
 “ *Life*, as tho' it were never to have an *End* ;
 “ and for the *other Life*, as tho' it were never to
 “ have a *Beginning*—Should a Spirit of a superior
 “ Rank, who is a Stranger to human Nature, acci-
 “ dentally alight upon the Earth, and take a Sur-
 “ vey of its Inhabitants, What would his Notion of
 “ us be ? Would not he think that we are a Spe-
 “ cies of Beings made for quite different Ends and
 “ Purposes, than what we *really* are ? Must not
 “ he imagine that we were placed in this World
 “ to get *Riches* and *Honours*—Would not he think
 “ that it was our Duty to toil after *Wealth*, and
 “ *Station* and *Title* ? Nay, would not he believe

“ we

“ we were forbidden *Poverty* by Threats of *eter-*
 “ *nal Punishment*, and enjoin’d to *purſue* our
 “ *Pleasures* under Pain of *eternal Damnation* ?
 “ And, truly, according to ſuch an Imagination, he
 “ muſt conclude that we keep a ſteady Eye on
 “ the *End* for which we were ſent hither. But
 “ how great would be his *Aſtoniſhment*, when he
 “ learnt, that we were Beings, not deſigned to
 “ exiſt in this World, above three Score and ten
 “ Years ? and that the greateſt Part of this buſy
 “ Species fall ſhort even of *that* Age. How
 “ would he be loſt in *Horror* and *Admiration*,
 “ when he ſhould learn that this Set of Crea-
 “ tures, who lay out all their Endeavours for
 “ *this Life*, which ſcarce deſerves the *Name* of
 “ Exiſtence, are to exiſt to all Eternity in *another*
 “ *Life*, for which they make *no Preparation* ?”
 O then that we were wiſe, that we underſtood
 this, that we would conſider our latter *End* !—

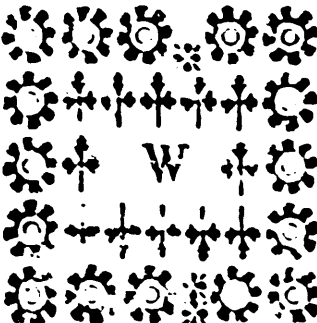


SERMON X.

THE Great Day.

R E V. XX. 12.

AND I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books according to their Works.

 A S St. Paul to reason from these Words, it would make even a *Felix* tremble. Could we see what St. *John* did upon this Occasion, how would Sinners in *Zion* be afraid! What Fearfulness would surprize the Hypocrites! 'Tis a *secret Unbelief* of a future State

State and Judgment, or the Want of applying our Minds closer to the Consideration of it's Greatness and Terrors, must be the Reason of our general Behaviour in the World.— If the last Tribunal were more in our View, how would it weaken the Force of Temptations? How wou'd it keep us awake, and our Lamps always Burning! It would so greaten and magnify the future State in our Eyes, that the present Scenes of Life would contract to Nothing; the Glories of the World which now sparkle upon our Imagination, would lose all their Lustre; and the Pleasures of Sin their present Relish and Sweetness. The Gaities and Adornments of Life, the Care and Sollicitudes of Dress, Things that now engage our warmest Pursuits and Affections, would be but Shadow and Emptiness: while *Religion* and *Virtue*, now so much banish'd and ridicul'd, would be thought the *only Things* worth our Consideration. And if by these *Terrors* of the Lord, I could *persuade* you into a Reformation of Life and Manners, happy shou'd I be!

In the Verse immediately preceeding, we have the Judge himself represented, in this, the Persons to be judged; in all, the Variety of the last Proceſs—*I saw a great white Throne, and Him that sat on it.* This can be no other Person than Christ—for we know, that “ the Father hath
“ committed all Judgment unto the Son, that all

“ Men should honour the Son as they honour the Father.” St. *John* saw this divine Person in Vision, but not as he was seen once at *Pilate's Bar*, or suffering upon the *curst Tree*.— He now appears in a *judicial Capacity*; he saw him “ on a Throne *high and lifted up*,” in a Place of Judicature, ready to receive the Pleas of Sinners, and to pass upon them the decisive Sentence. It was a *great Throne*; a Throne of much Grandeur, a Throne becoaming him that sat upon it; earthly Thrones were little in Comparison of it; never such a Judge before, and never such a Throne; a Throne of so much *Glory*! not only a great, but a *white Throne*—Christ was not only *redly* in his Sufferings, but *white* in his Innocence; and he *sits* on a *white Throne*—a Throne that has no Fellowship with Iniquity; *pure* and white; for he that sits upon it shall do right; he shall judge the World in Righteousness, and the People with Equity. But tho' a righteous, yet a *terrible Throne*, and a terrible Judge; “ from whose Face, 'tis added, the Earth and the Heavens fled away, and there was found no Place for them.—His Countenance was as the Sun shining in its Strength”—Nature cou'd not look him in the Face, nor stand before him; it was all *convuls'd* and confess'd its Fears in it's Dissolution.—As St. *Peter* describes it “ The Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat,

“ the

“ the Earth also, and the Works therein shall be
 “ burnt up”—they shall all be dissolved—what-
 ever the Scoffers of these last Days may say and
 think, the Heavens and Earth that are now, are
 referred unto Fire and the Perdition of ungodly
 Men—what will the Men of the World do then,
 whose Portion is in this Life ! Where shall the
 Ungodly appear ! what will the immense Treas-
 ures of the Earth avail them, for which they sold
 the *Blood of a Saviour*,—when the last Fire shall
 melt down their Gold and their Silver, and the
 Rust thereof shall be a Witness against them, and
 shall eat their Flesh, and *scorch* their Consciences
in Fire ! How does my Soul pity the *distracted*
 Worldling, that shall then be *at his Wits End* ;
 who instead of securing the Favour of his Judge,
 was busied about heaping up Treasures upon Earth,
 which he must now see, *all in a Blaze*, and like
 the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, *reduced to*
Ashes ! But happy Men, who have laid up Treas-
 ures in Heaven ; where Moth and Rust can’t
 corrupt, and where the Fire of the Conflagration
 can’t burn.—

But I pass to my Text itself ; in which, before
 I consider the several Particulars therein described,
 I would observe two general Things implied ;
 First, *That there is a future State of Existence to*
be expected : And secondly, *That there is a*

general Judgment and Determination, to be past upon Men after this Life.

1. 'Tis evident from the Words, *that there is a future State of Existence.* The Credit of the whole Vision is founded upon the Supposition of this great Truth. For whom did St. *John* see here standing before God? Were they only *Devil's*, or *Angels*? This can't be, for neither of these ever died in the Sense we generally understand Death. Were they a Species of Creatures newly made, or Inhabitants of some of the Planetary Worlds? No, for he is revealing Things that belong to *our System.* Or was it only those of our Race who shall be found alive at Christ's Coming? No, for he saw the *Dead*, small and great, *once dead*, but then alive, and summon'd before the Judge of Quick and Dead. The Dead know not any Thing, and are not capable of giving up any Account of their past Actions, and therefore *these dead*, must be *new* Persons; and consequently Death is not the Period of Man's Existence. It can in *no* Sense whatever be so to the *Souls* of Men. God breathed into us *living* Souls, as he is called the *living* God, by Way of Eminence.—The Dust we know returns to its Dust, but the Soul returns to God: It *changes* its Manner of Operations indeed, but does not *lose* its Existence: It acts no longer by the Ministry of
our

our Bodily Organs in the present Constitution, but still it acts; still it lives. Philosophers themselves could carry this Argument to a glorious Length by the bare Reason of Things--they found the Idea of the Soul or Spirit of Man, so vastly superior to all the Ideas of mere Matter, that they concluded very rationally, at least with a good Degree of Probability, that it cou'd not be subject to the Laws and Dissolution of material Things; that it had fair Pretensions to Immortality in its own Nature; and that eternal Existence, except it should please the Creator to annihilate it, by an immediate Exertion of his own Power, was imprinted upon the very Idea of a Spirit, as soon as it is conceived in the Mind of Man. But then my *Text*, we must remember, speaks not of bare Spirits, but of human Persons, and consequently implies the Resurrection of the Body, as well as the Immortality of the Soul. Yea, it chiefly refers to this, since it speaks of Men under the Notion of dead Men, which must mean the Bodies of Men revived, and animated by a Re-union with their Souls; and that this was his Meaning, appears from the very next Verse; where he tells us, that

“ the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it, and
 “ Death and Hell delivered up the Dead which
 “ were in them, so that they stood up, an exceed-
 “ ing great Army, small and great, before God.”

All that were in their Graves arose when they

heard the Voice and the Trump of the Archangel. And why should it be thought a Thing incredible with us, that God should raise the Dead! The Sadduces err'd in this great Point of Doctrine, saying, there is no Resurrection, because they knew not the Scriptures, nor the Power of God. For here are but these two Questions, our Unbelief can suggest—*First*, is God able to raise the Dead? And *secondly*, is He resolved to do it? And here is an Answer to both—the Probability of it is resolved into God's Power—his Resolution to do it appears in the Declarations of his Will in the Scriptures. The Infinity of his Power, answers all Objections from the Difficulty of the Thing, from its supposed Impossibilities. For what if the Particles of the human Body, be scatter'd by the four Winds of the Earth, mixed with all the Elements, and incorporated with the Bodies of ten Thousand other Creatures: Is it more difficult, in the Idea of our Minds, to separate and collect these Particles of Matter, than it was first to create them out of Nothing, and then to dispose them in such a beautiful Order, in the first Formation of a human Body—Were our Members all written in God's Book, when as yet there were none of them in Being, could his Eye trace and survey them all when we were made in secret; and can't the same Wisdom find them, when they are separated by Death, and the same Power which made the first

first Union, reunite them: at least so many of them, as are necessary to indentify the Person, and denominate the raised Body, numerically the same, clothed with such new and adventitious Qualities, as the future State shall require? Can God make Man out of the Clay, and that out of Nothing, and can't he raise him from a Grave, where the Parts are actually in Being? Is there any Contradiction implied in the Notion of a Resurrection? Who can pretend it, without at the same Time, giving up his Pretensions to sound Reason? God is therefore able to raise the Dead, and the Dead therefore shall be raised, because He has expressly declared in his Word, that He will exert this his Power to raise them.—When God declared himself the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*; that very Covenant-Relation was sufficiently declarative of his Intention to raise their Bodies; for He is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living, for all live to Him, i. e. tho' they have been long dead, and buried, and their Sepulchres are with us to this Day.—Tho' it be not within the Compass of any created Power to raise them, yet they are alive in the Covenant, and with Respect to the Power of God. For his Covenant-Relation to the Patriarchs included their whole Persons, of which the Body is an essential Constituent: and were there no Resurrection of the Body, God cou'd not be the God of *Abraham's Person*, but

but only of his *Spirit* : But since the Covenant reach'd the whole Person, tis the compleat Person must live, and so the Resurrection is insur'd—*Job* thought it no reasonable Objection, against this great Doctrine of the Resurrection, that Worms shou'd destroy his Body, that his very Reins were to be consumed within him, and that Corruption was his Father ; but was assured notwithstanding all this, that he should see God in his *Flesh*—*Daniel* prophesied of a Time, when many that now sleep in the Dust shall awake, some to Life everlasting, and some to eternal Shame and Contempt. And another of the *Prophets* in his holy Vision, saw the dried Bones come together, after a great shaking, Bone to his Bone, and clothed with Flesh and Skin, inspired with a new Breath, and standing up in a great Army ; which Passage must either directly assert the Resurrection, or allude to it, as a Thing taken for granted. Our *Saviour* pronounces himself the Resurrection and the Life, and by raising of *Lazarus*, convinc'd Mankind, how easily he could raise them up again at the last Day ; and that an Hour was coming, when all that were in their Graves should hear the Voice of the *Son of God*, and come forth ; some to the Resurrection of Life, and some to the Resurrection of Damnation. And we find it a very important Doctrine with *St. Paul*, who always preached *Jesus* and the *Resurrection*, who always had this Hope
towards

towards God, and suffer'd a Thousand Afflictions, under the Supports and Influence of it.—And indeed, he makes it a very fundamental Point of the Christian Faith, without which, the Resurrection of *Christ* himself must be cashier'd, as all over fabulous and chimerical, and Christians of all Men in the World most miserable. If *Christ*, says he, be preached, that he rose from the Dead, how say some among you, that there is no Resurrection of the Dead? But if there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then is not *Christ* risen; and if *Christ* be not risen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false Witnesses of *God*, because we have testified of *God*, that He raised up *Christ*; whom He raised not up, if so be that the Dead rise not. Then they also who are fallen asleep in *Christ*, are perished. But now is *Christ* risen from the Dead, and become the first Fruits of them that sleep; for since by *Man* came Death, by *Man* came also the Resurrection of the Dead; for as in *Adam* all die, even so in *Christ*, shall all be made alive." 'Tis in vain to cavil and ask, how the Dead are raised up, and with what Bodies they come? 'Tis enough for us that *God* can raise them, that he will actually do it—that the Doctrine is so plain and strong in the Scriptures, and indeed is itself a most pleasing Doctrine. It must needs be agreeable to us to hear, that Death doth only dissolve the Parts of this mortal Body,

not

not put a Period to its Existence ; to hear that this Mortal shall put on Immortality—Tis especially pleasing to them that sleep in *Jesus*, to meditate upon the glorious Consequence of the Resurrection, which perfects and compleats their everlasting Happiness ; to think, they shall not only receive the Bodies they put off into a second Union, but put them on immortal, strong, spiritual and glorious, no longer to groan and be burthened in them.—But the impenitently wicked indeed, have no Reason to rejoice at the Thought of Immortality, or the Resurrection of the Body ; it wou'd be infinitely better for them, to lose all their Existence, than to have it everlastingly miserable : No doubt was it in their Power, they would be glad to sleep in Quiet in their Graves for ever, and had rather dwell with Worms of Corruption, than feel the Worm of Conscience that shall never die—They must look upon the Resurrection of their Bodies, as the Beginning of their Sorrows ; for as after Death comes the particular Judgment, so after the Resurrection comes the general one, which is the second great Thing in my Text. I saw the Dead small and great stand before God, and the Books were opened, &c. We have here the general Judgment represented to us, in a very awful Light, and I shall consider the Particulars in my Text, exactly in the Order they are here ranged.

1. We have here the *Universality* of the last Judgment pointed out in these Words, *Small and Great*; which shew, that none are too Great, nor any too Small, to escape the Cognizance of the last Tribunal, or shun the Citation and Appearance. The Expression runs without any Restriction, exceptive of nothing, therefore inclusive of all—We must *all* appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; Small and Great must stand before God—the little Infant, which just saw the Light, and shut its Eyes; as well as the hoary Head, that stooped for Age, and had reached the furthest Term of human Life—'Tis true, some Divines of no small Name and Learning, have question'd the Appearance of them, who departed this Life in the State of Infancy, and had never acted in the Capacity of Probationers and Candidates; and they give some Countenance to this Singularity of Opinion, from this, that the End of our Appearance to Judgment, is to give an Account of the Deeds done in the *Body*, whether Good or Evil; and since Infants are incapable of moral Actions, of knowing Good and Evil; to what Purpose should they be cited before Christ's Tribunal? But, I think it may be answered; that Infants are Children of Wrath by Nature, and involv'd in *Adam's* Guilt; and Guilt in every Respect, is a Reason, why the Subjects of it should be brought to Judgment: And in this Sense, even Infants may be said to have done Evil, in the very
Body,

Body, because they were considered as in the Body, in *Adam's* Representation of them—And as he was in the *Body* when he committed the first Transgression, as their federal Head; they likewise might be interpreted to have sinned in the *Body*, and so are accountable to the Judge of all the Earth.—

But, what if the Substitution of Christ's Sacrifice and Obedience, should remove the Guilt contracted in *Adam*, from all that die in Infancy, as it is not improbable it may; would there in this Case be any Necessity of their appearing to Judgment? I answer Yes; to shew the World that they were once guilty, and to demonstrate the Riches of God's Goodness in Christ, by whose Merits apply'd to Infants, ample Satisfaction was made to divine Justice—These are sufficient Reasons, why even Infants should be summon'd before the Bar of Christ; especially, since the Scripture has no where excus'd them—But whether they shall appear Infants, and be carried in their Mother's Arms; or whether the Resurrection which makes us, in many Respects like Angels, shall place them at once in a State of Manhood, and in the Fulness of the Structure of perfect Men, is a Speculation we shall know best, when the Day itself shall come; and 'tis in vain to enquire after it now. When St. *John* says, he saw the Dead, Small and Great— I apprehend he means, not as Men will then appear,

but

but as they really were when they died, whether we dy'd in Infancy, in Childhood or Youth, in the Prime of Life, or in it's last Shade and Decline. Both *Zaccheus* and *Saul*, the humble and the tall of Nature, must all appear before God.

The Words, *Small and Great*, express and comprehend Persons of all Ranks and Degrees, of civil, moral and sacred Distinctions, as well as Age and Stature in natural Life.—We find the Grave makes no Distinction among them; why must the future Citation to Judgment? If Death and the Resurrection be universal, Judgment must be so too. We must stand before that Tribunal, with Kings and Counsellors of the Earth, who built desolate Places for themselves; and with Princes that had Gold, who filled their Houses with Silver. There the Prisoners must stand together; the Small and the Great are there, the Servant and his Master—each to give an Account for themselves.—Ministers must be there, to answer for their Fidelity to the Souls of Men, and every individual of their Hearers must be there, to give an Account how they have treated their Ministrations, and what Regard they have paid to their awful Message.—Happy Ministers then, that have watched as those that remembered this Account, and are ready to give it up with Joy. And thrice happy! If they have been successful, as well

well as faithful, and can look upon a Number of their People, as their Joy and Glory, their Crown of Rejoycing in the Day of the Lord! In short, we can think of no Station or Rank, no Degree or Distinction, but what must then appear; for *Christ* shall gather *all* Nations before him. Before him shall stand, tho' they cannot stand long, the *Monarchs*, and *Cæsars*, the *Kings*, and *Sultans*, the *Emperors* and *Heroes* of the Earth—the great Men, and the rich Men, the mighty Men, and the chief Captains, and every Bond Man, and every Free Man, *Barbarian* and *Scythian*, *Turk* and *Christian*, *Saint* and *Sinner*, there's no Exception. The Ties of Blood and Nature may sometimes prevail, or the Riches and Grandeur of the Wealthy and the Great may sometimes exempt Men from an earthly Tribunal: But there's no such Respect or Difference at the Bar of *Christ*. There will indeed be a very great Separation, betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked; *Christ* will place his Favourites at his right Hand, and his proudest Enemies at his left; but still they must all stand before him; the whole World must be there, which makes this Day very solemn and great! What an Appearance must it be, when all that are in their Graves shall be there, when our great Father *Adam* shall look upon all his Race, and the many Hundred Generations of his unhappy Descendants—What a great Army must this be, which no Man
can

can number! What Admiration does it excite in our Minds, when we hear of an Army of an hundred Thousand Men led forth to Battle at once, in one single Fight? But what is the Number of the living, to the Congregation of the dead; some of whom have lain in their Grave thousands of Years! How many are daily swallow'd up by it! And what an illustrious Appearance must it be, when the Earth and the Sea shall vomit up all their dead, and not a single Body left in its dark Mansions—when every Tomb shall burst, and the Quick and the Dead shall meet together, beyond the Power of Numbers and Arithmetick, like the Stars for Multitude, and the Sands on the Sea-Shore! And does not this a little shock us to the very Soul! Must not we be there too, in this great Assembly! Must not I expect to give my Account, among the rest! And every one of you who now hear of this Day, must not you expect to see it, and to bear a solemn Part in it!—But are you ready and prepared? Ready to give Account to him, who is ready to judge you, and has told us many Years ago; *Behold! I come quickly!*—Is not the Judge before the Door, and the white Throne already erected? Is not Christ ready to descend from Heaven, with a Shout, and with the Trump of God! May not the Cry be heard at Midnight, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!* And are you all ready, any of you so ready as you should, to go forth and meet him? Shall I

preach to you upon this awful Day, and will you yet slumber and sleep? Will you join our Scoffers, and say, Where is the Promise of his Coming? But remember, he will come, and will not tarry. Neither is he slack concerning his Promise and Threatning, as some Men may count Slackness, but is long-suffering towards you, and gives you Space to repent—O let not the Impenitence of your Hearts treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath—For when that comes, how will you be able to stand? and yet stand you must, Small and Great, Parents and Children, Old and Young—Live and act therefore so now, that you may be able to stand then, and to endure the Things that shall come to pass.

But there is another Reflection, from the Universality of this Judgment, well worthy our Notice and Wonder; for, if the whole World must appear before Christ in Judgment, what a grand Idea must this give us of Christ's Knowledge, and how much Time must we suppose this Judgment to take up? What a Variety of Actions have most Men done in the Body! How great a Number of Words have proceeded out of their Mouths! for every one of which they must give an Account. And how many Thoughts have hourly pass'd thro' the Minds of every individual Man or Woman—Thoughts that have died in the Theory, and were never exhibited in Word or Action—All these must
be

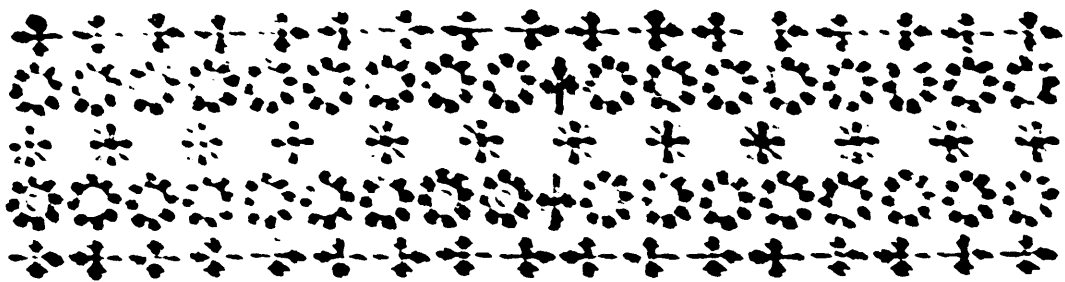
be brought into Judgment, even the Secrets of Men's Hearts; the various Springs and Principles of them must be well weighed; they must be compared with the Laws of God, affected by them, and under a thousand different Circumstances of Time and of Place, of Knowledge, or Ignorance, of Opportunities, Temptations, and Impediments; so that the Tryal of one single Person, must imply a vast Variety in it; how much more the Judgment of all the Nations in the Universe! of which every Individual must have some Circumstances of Guilt, or of Virtue, peculiar to himself! 'Tis an amazing Thought this! what has often astonish'd me, in my retired Reflections on the Subject; and how much it must magnify the *great Judge* in our Eyes! What a Conception does it immediately excite, of his infinite Knowledge and Penetration! How large must the Book of his Omniscience be, which must keep a distinct Account, whether we keep any or no, of every Thought, Word and Action of our Life, in all the several Proportions of their Guilt or Desert!—Surely the Day of Judgment must be a very long Day, or the Judge must have some more expedite Way of proceeding, than we can so much as imagine! This we may be sure of; He will not hurry Things over, He will leave nothing undiscuss'd, He will make his Justice appear to the whole World; and if this should require ten thousand Years, it shall not want it—We have taken

our Time to sin, and Christ will take his Time to judge us ; for there is a Time for every Purpose, and he will judge the Secrets of all Men.

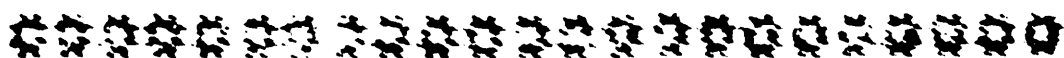
Another Reflection, from the Universal Appearance of Mankind, which should even affect us to *Tears of Blood*, is this ; That we shall meet our Friends and Acquaintance at the dreadful Tribunal of Christ, to our mutual Joy, or inexpressible Grief, according to our Conduct to each other here, and as we have either tempted one another to Sin, or been Helpers together of each others Joy and Improvement in Holiness. There is not a single Person we contract Acquaintance with in this Life, but will certainly appear with us at that awful Day : And Oh ! How many may we think will witness against each other ? How stern and implacable must they look one another in the Face then, who have tempted one another to sinful Practices ; how will they let their Reproaches fly, like so many *Furies of Hell* ! “ I had a Mind to be serious, I was at such a Time awakened into a Sense of my Duty, and resolved to amend my Life ; but you jested me out of it : You spoke Evil of the Way of Holiness, you prejudiced me against my Ministers, you represented them to me in such a hateful Light, as took off all the Edge of those Sermons, which had I followed, I had now been at the right Hand of my Judge : You tempted me away to Taverns, and
Houses

Houses of Debauchery; you led me into the Influence of bad Company; you made me drink to excess, and loiter away my precious Time, and so you have fastned the Bonds of Death upon me! *Christ* be the Day of our first Acquaintance! May Darkness cover it, may the Shadow of Death stain it." Is not this a very natural, but a most dreadful Reflection? Think of it, our young Men, who tempt one another to Sin every Day you live; how will you look *Christ*, or your *Acquaintance* in the Face; what a wretched Greeting will you have! You must there answer, not only for your own Sins, but for all the Sins of others, in which you have had any Share, by your Derision of Holiness, and the Influence of your evil Examples! It is dreadful to have your *own Blood* to answer for; how then will you bear the *Blood* of an hundred others! O what manner of Persons would you be in all Conversation and Godliness; and instead of tempting, how would ye exhort one another daily, if you did but set this Tribunal before your Eyes! if you did but now see Him by an Eye of *Faith*, whom you shall certainly see by an Eye of *Sense*, when He cometh in the Clouds, and every Eye shall see him—And all Nations shall wail because of Him—When, small and great, stand before him; *You*, and your *Companions*, among the rest.

On the other Hand, with what Joy and Extasy, will those see each other, who have been the blessed Instruments of each others Salvation! With what Transport must they look each other in the Face, while they express their mutual Gratitude! “Happy, thrice happy the Day, that I first entered into your Acquaintance and Friendship! I was almost enticed away into the Snare of the Devil—I was ready to halt in the Way of Duty—I had Tempters on the right Hand, and on the left; and should certainly have been caught in the Snare of the Fowler, had I not been under the Influence of your Restraints; had you not acted the faithful Friend and Menitor; had you not told me of the pernicious Ways of Sin, and set this awful Day before me, in all its flaming Colours! God knows what would have become of me, if I had not seen your good Example, and regarded your good Instruction; for they have been the Instruments of saving my Soul. And now I find that the *Wounds* of such a Friend, were better than the *Kisses* of an Enemy!” Who can conceive the Transports we must then feel, who have not only secur’d our own Salvation; but have been instrumental of saving the Souls of others from eternal Death, and making them Fellow-Heirs of the same Grace of Life, and are only waiting at the Bar of our merciful Judge, to receive our *Sentence* to it!



SERMON XI.



THE GREAT DAY.



RE V. XX. 12.

AND I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the Dead were judged out of these Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.

THE Words are an awful Representation of the great and terrible Day of the Lord, so often mentioned in Scripture to keep us from slumbering, and to excite us to Diligence, that we may be found of our Judge in

Peace. I propos'd to go over the several Particulars of it in the Order they here stand, and accordingly I have already consider'd,

The *universal* Appearance of Mankind before this Tribunal, in those Words, *Small and Great*; which comprehends Persons of every Age, Stature, Rank and Distinction.

The next Thing that occurs in the Description, is the *Posture* in which they are represented, Great and Small, Rich and Poor together, they all without any Distinction, *stand* before God.

There is a remarkable Antithesis here, between the Judge, and those that are arraigned: He *sits* upon the great white Throne: they *stand* before him: Postures very agreeable to their different Characters: *sitting* belongs to the Judge; 'tis a Posture declarative of his Power and Authority; *standing* is a fit Posture for those that are arraigned at the Bar, and represents their Guilt; and we may observe, they are said to stand, without an Exception, the Righteous *stand*, as well as the Wicked, that is, they all appear before their Judge, in the Capacity of Delinquents, tho' they are sure to be absolved by Him as a *Judge*, whose Blood they have been wash'd in, as a *Servant*. Besides, till the Righteous are actually under the Sentence of Absolution.

Solution they are guilty. i. e. consider'd as Prisoners at the Bar, and 'tis probable from the Scripture-Account of Things, that they shall stand and must receive their happy Sentences, and then sit in Judgment with Christ, and have white Thrones prepared, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel, yea, judging Angels themselves! But the Wicked at Christ's left hand shall not stand at all in Judgment. They stood it out against him here, and they shall stand it out before him there: The Kings of the Earth once stood up, and the Rulers against the Lord, and against his Christ! How strangely will the Scene be alter'd from what it once was! The Time was, that Christ came not to be minister'd unto, but to minister; not to judge, but to be judged! Pilate sit then upon the Tribunal, while Jesus stand before him: but now Christ sits upon the white Throne, and Pilate stands before Him: So must all the Judges of the Earth, they shall find there is one higher than they, that they must rise from their Seats of Judgment, and stand Criminals at a higher Tribunal, stand before one that will judge them impartially, however they have judg'd others: standing is a proper Posture, while their State is yet undetermined, they stand and wait the decisive Sentence; and when once that is past, they can stand no longer in Judgment, but must be dragg'd away with Devils to everlasting Punishment: and we may justly wonder how they can stand at all before

before Christ. Sure the Resurrection of the Body must make a great Change upon Nature; else who could stand in Suspence, or rather, in full Expectation of being adjudged, and damned to eternal Fire! a Consideration enough to make their Knees smite one against another, their Legs to fail under them, and the Spirit itself to fail before it's Judge! And methinks the Righteous, under the transporting Expectation of everlasting Blessedness, should rather leap and exult, than stand with Patience! I wish this was more remembered by some proud and scornful Youth, who refuse to rise up before the heavy Head! I wish it was remembered by Men who sit carelessly in divine Worship, folding their Hands to sleep! I wish it was remembered always by us, when we sit before him, as his People saith: he suffereth us to *sit* under his Word, and to *sit* with him at his Table; but we must stand at his Tribunal!

3dly. The next Thing that occurs is the *great Character*, in which the Judge is represented, and which indeed puts a great Solemnity upon the last Tribunal.

Christ is here exhibited under a *divine Character*. I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before *God*. This Stile is exactly agreeable to that magnificent Description in the 50th *Psalms*, *The mighty*

mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the Earth, from the rising of the Sun, unto the going down thereof; out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty, God hath shined; our God shall come, and shall not keep Silence; a Fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him; and the Heavens shall declare his Righteousness, for God is Judge himself. I appeal to every one, that compares these two Descriptions of the last Judgment together, whether they can be applied in all their Grandeur and magnificent Terrors to any meer Creature! and yet we are as sure as the Scripture can make us, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the great and only Person here referred to. Him hath God ordained to be the Judge of Quick and Dead; the Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father: plainly implying, that Christ could never sustain so great a Capacity as this of the last and supreme Judge, nor have the Requisites of it vested all in Him, unless he were properly a *divine* Person, and equal with the Father, and upon this plain Hypothesis, when Men should see the Son sitting upon the great white Throne, discharging so important an Office, of so many divine Qualifications, they would naturally infer, that he must be as great a Being as the *Father* himself, and entitled to all the same Honours and Adorations: and 'tis impossi-
ble

ble to form any inferior Idea of him, upon the last Tribunal; for who can judge the World, less than he that made it! What Angel in Heaven is equal to so great a Work, what exalted Creature can penetrate into the Hearts of Men, and bring every secret Thing into Judgment, and never err in his Sentence, amidst so great a Variety of Cases and Circumstances as shall then be laid before him! 'Tis true, it is said that all Judgment is committed unto the Son, because he is the Son of Man; but surely we can never from thence infer, that Christ would have been appointed Judge, if he were *only* the Son of Man, and not the Son of God, in a glorious Equality. All that can be infer'd from it is this, that Christ's Qualifications for a Judge being *essentially* founded in his supreme *Godhead*, He was the more *meet* to sit in Judgment upon Men, because he assumed the *Nature of Man*, than if he had not assumed that Nature; and no doubt this was the Thing, that devolved the great Work upon *Christ*, rather than upon the *Father*, or the *Holy Ghost*: But evident it is, however, that the very Nature of this Work requires a *divine* Person; that it is a Work committed to Christ, in a more peculiar Manner, and that he is expressly called *God*, in those very Passages of Scripture, where the Management of the last Judgment is professedly represented. I take Notice of this Particular in my *Text*, because it gives great
Weight

Weight and Solemnity, to all the Transactions of that awful Day! With God is always terrible Majesty, especially when He appears dress'd in the Character of a Judge. When we consider seriously that He who sits upon the great Throne, is indeed God himself, the Author of all Nature, We shall not be astonish'd that the Earth and the Heavens shall flee from his Face—For we know, that He toucheth the Mountains and they shake; Mount Sinai was all in Flame, when He came down upon it, only in the Capacity of a *Laughing*, and utter'd his Commands in Thunder—When the Sea saw him, only in some of the Wonders of his Providence, it fled; *Jordan* was driven back: The Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs. What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest? Thou *Jordan*, that thou wast driven back? Why, *GOD* was there! for his added, Tremble, thou Earth, at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of *Jacob*! In these his Works of Providence, in his Lightnings and Thunders, the Voice of the Lord is powerful, and full of Majesty; the Voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars, and discovers the Foundations of the Earth—And how then can the World hear his Voice, and not tremble, and flee, when he comes to judge it! The Lord is great, he is to be feared above all Gods! Honour and Majesty are before him, Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary! When we only
speak

Speak of his House, where we assemble to worship him, where he speaks to us in the Language of his Grace, and shows all the Wonders of his Love and Mercy, we pronounce and say; How dreadful is this Place! What a terrible Idea then must it give us of the great and dreadful Day I am describing, that God himself is Judge; that he comes in all his visible Terrors, to require an Account of Sinners, and to demand a Reason of all the hard Speeches they have spoken against him; when he lays by all his Robes of Mercy, and appears array'd in burning Flames! What a fearful Thing must it be, to fall into the Hands of the living God! Who can deliver us in that Day of Wrath! Vengeance is mine, I *will* recompence it, saith the *Lord*! Every Letter of his Name is terrible, He can't be describ'd upon the Judgment-Seat, in any but the most fiery Attributes! Nothing will pierce the wicked, when they stand before him, like this Consideration, that they are standing before *GOD*! Were it an *human* Judge upon an earthly Tribunal, the *Criminal* might cherish some secret Hopes in his Breast! He might think to bribe or deceive him, or to prevail upon the Weakness of his human Passions; that his Fears and Cries might move the Compassion and tender Affections of his Judge; that he should either acquit him, or mitigate his Sentence, and dispense with the Rigors and Severities of the Law he had broken! But the
Name

Name of *GOD* must quite shock and confound him, and can inspire nothing but Despair; 'tis a Name of such heavy Signification, that it will make every Circumstance of the Transactions look dark and gloomy, and all Faces to gather Blackness! It is a Name that will swell the Guilt of the wretched Sinner, and make it appear infinite! Whatever light Thoughts he once had of Sin and Rebellion against God, now he sees himself naked before such a Judge, it will appear in the most crimson and scarlet Colours! He now sees that it was the Law of the great God, the only Lawgiver, and Judge, who is able to save and to destroy, which he had made so bold with, and so freely transgress'd: Once he tho't, God was altogether such a one as himself; but now he is terribly convinc'd, that he is God supreme, infinitely holy, and of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity! This will swell the Guilt of the Sinner's Crimes in his own Eyes; this will shew him his Folly in a Light, in which he never saw it before—His Sins now appear of such a Magnitude, that he despairs of having them pardon'd: He considers himself as standing before *God*, and therefore despairs of hiding the least of his Sins from him! In human *Judicatures*, Men often go unpunish'd for Want of Evidence sufficient, to give a legal Attestation to the Commission of their Crimes: a Judge may be above the Influence of Bribery; but none less than God can be above Deception

Deception and Error ; but the Sinner knows, He is so ; that his Omniscience is instead of a thousand Witnesses : He can't have the least Hopes of Concealment, for he knows that he stands before One that searches the Heart, and tryeth the Reins of the Children of Men ; One that was always with him and by him, in his Chambering and Wantonness ; one that could see him thro' the dark Cloud ; one whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, from whom no Darknes nor Shadow of Death can hide the Workers of Iniquity. The miserable Sinner knows that it is in vain to plead *Not Guilty* at the Bar of God ; that all his Iniquities are in the Light of his Countenance, and no Thought can be withholden from him. And as he can't hide his Crimes from the Eyes of so great a Judge, neither has he any Expectation of securing his Person, or escaping his Power ; He looks in vain for the Hills to fall on him, and for the Rocks to cover him, for he sees them fly away ; He knows, his Judge is *God*, and therefore arm'd with infinite Power : He had better have the whole Creation frowning upon him, and conspiring against him, than the omnipotent Arm of his great Creator revealed and ready to strike him !

The *Divinity* of Christ excites the most shocking Idea of his Power, in the Mind of the Sinner ; for he is conscious that he can pass no Sentence
upon

upon him, but what he is able to put in Execution : He knows, that Heaven and Hell, Angels and Devils, even Legions of them, are ready or obliged to obey him : He knows, that being a God, he is able to find out the keenest Instruments of Torment, and such Things in Nature, as produce the most excruciating and intense Pains !

And from the *Divinity* of his Judge, he draws a most awful Inference of his *Immutability*, and *Eternity* ; he knows there's no bribing of a God, no Repeal of his Sentence, which once past, is past for ever ; for there can be no higher Tribunal to appear to ; this is the last, the definitive Trial, for God is immortal and *immutable* ; he will never alter the Word that is gone out of his Mouth ; and this stamps a dreadful *Eternity* upon the Punishment of the Sinner, who having despised Christ as a *Mediator*, must now dread him as a *Judge* and a *God*, a terrible Avenger ! an everlasting Tormentor ! For there remaineth now no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries of God, whose Wrath, if it be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their Trust in Him.

The next Thing that occurs, is the *opening of the Books*.

This is to shew us, the Equity and methodical Order of the Judge's Proceedings—He neither absolves, nor condemns Persons, by an arbitrary Act of his Will, but the Case of every Man shall be fairly stated; there will be a formal Trial of Saints and Sinners, a solemn Hearing. *Books and Registers* shall be produced in the Court of Heaven, and the whole World shall see by these Books, when they are opened, both what Men ought to do, and what they have done, and how they are accordingly to be rewarded; that Christ may be justified when he speaks, and every Mouth stopped forever. The Dead are to be judged according to their Works, according to the Deeds done in the Body, and according to the Respect these Actions had to the Laws of God; therefore they must be judged out of those Things that are written in the Books: In Order to which, to prevent all Suspicions of Fraud and Injustice, to shew that Mens eternal States are decided by Laws of eternal Righteousness, these Books are here opened. We may know but little now of the Contents of these Books, but then they shall be all opened, and we shall know every Thing that is written in them, whether it be the Book of Remembrance for the Righteous, or that Book that registers the criminal Deeds of the Sinner. And we need not question Christ's Power to open these Books, in every Page they contain, large and voluminous as they may be; since He was found worthy,

to open the Book of God's Decrees and Providence, and to loose the Seals thereof; which the highest Order of Angels durst not presume. But some may enquire what Books are these, that shall be opened? And here we find only one Book distinguished by Name—the *Book of Life*; and are left to our own Enquiries into the other Books, which in general must be all those Books, that we can conceive necessary to demonstrate the Justice of God to the World, and to set the whole Transaction in a solemn and fair Light; and proceeding upon this general Foundation, we may presume,

1. That one of these, must be the Book of the *divine Omniscience*.

God is pleas'd often to incarnate himself, and to speak to us in our own Language; and so to express his distinct Knowledge of Men's Actions the better, he represents it under the Form of a *Book*. As much as to say, that he has taken as particular a Notice, and preserv'd as distinct a Remembrance of what we have been doing in the World, as if all our Actions were distinctly registred in some publick *Book*, ready to be produced for our Condemnation, or Absolution at the Time of Tryal. The divine Understanding being infinite, there can be no possible Defect of Memory in the Almighty; the Actions of Men are more strongly and durably

imprinted upon it, than if they were written in a Book of Iron, or Marble Pages, or engraven on the Lead or Rock, in the most lasting and perennial Characters, too deep and strong and fair, for any Succession of Ages to wear out and efface.— In this Book of the divine *Omniscience*, every Letter is fair and plain: no Blots, no Confusions, no Omissions incident to the Pen of Man; for 'tis written with the Finger of God, and must be like himself, the same Yesterday, to Day, and forever. It seems indeed to astonish us, that God should notice and restrain so great a Number and Variety of Incidents, as must have occur'd in all Ages of the World; but the Surprize arises, from the Sense of our own Weakness, both in Knowledge and Memory, and we may soon recover ourselves, when we consider, that God's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts; we can easily resolve it into the Infinity of his Being and intellectual Capacity. Because we in our little Circle of Being, can attend but a few Objects at a Time, and soon lose the Force of Memory, after the strongest Images have been imprest upon it; we can't infer that it must be so with God, for his Understanding is infinite, and without all Measure: known unto him are all his Works, from the Foundation of the World; such Knowledge is too wonderful for us, who are of Yesterday, and know nothing; but essential to Him, whose Goings
forth

forth were from everlasting, whose very Essence, tho' imperceptible, is immense, who pervades, animates, and sustains every Part of his own Creation, and even reaches thro' all the Infinity of extramundane Spaces. Who shall teach him Knowledge! He form'd the Eye, and sees us in all our Actions; He form'd the Ear, and hears every Word that we speak; He keepeth our Souls, and knows the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, in their first Birth, and original Springs; and so upon the first Inspection he makes into the Book of his *Omniscience*, he brings every secret Thing into Judgment, and the Hearts of Men stand open and naked before his enlighten'd Tribunal: What we have done in secret under the Shadow of the Night, saying, no Eye shall see us! what we have spoken in the Chamber, he will proclaim on the House Top: Sins we were tempted into from the Secresy of them, *Men* and *Angels* shall hear; and the Sinner be confounded, at the Sight and mention of ten Thousand Crimes, which lay lurking in his own Breast, or were long buried in forgetfulness. Things that escaped the most penetrating Judge upon Earth, shall not be hid from him, before whom all Things are naked and open, and Death and Destruction have no Covering! Nor will the Saints be less surpriz'd, when this great Book is opened, and they shall see that God was not unjust, to forget their Labour of Love, Pati-

ance, and Suffering, that he registred every good Action they did, that their most secret Alms, tho' their left Hand knew not what their right Hand did, went up for a Memorial before him; and that a Cup of cold Water, from the Spring of Charity, shall not fail of Reward, and publick Honours! It will be a pleasing Surprize to them, to hear Christ tell them, I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat; when they themselves had quite forgot it! to hear him saying, when thou was under the Fig Tree, or musing in the Fields, or praying in thy Closet, I saw thee! How will they be struck with Astonishment to find, that God numbered their Greans, bottled all their Tears, and filed their secret and ardent Petitions; and yet all these Things will be seen, when the great Judge shall look into his own *Omniscience*, and open that Book of Remembrance which was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name! O may this possess all our Souls! What a Guard would it be to our Virtue! What a Curb upon the Sins of the Night! What an Incentive and Incitement to Holiness, and the Practice of every good Work! and the more so, because 'tis impossible to evade the Indictments drawn from this Book, by any Artifice or Pretence whatsoever. The Authorities produced from Men, depend very much, for the Credit and Force, upon the Characters of Witnesses, which may therefore sometimes be con-

fronted

fronted and discharged. But tho' every Man may be a Liar, yet God is true ! yet he abideth faithful, he cannot Lie ; his Testimony is decisive ; no Pleas, nor Exceptions are admitted ; for as he can't be mocked, neither will he deceive ! whatever Crimes Men are charged with out of this great and *infallible* Book ; whatever is there written in the Praise of any Saint, 'tis all above Contradiction, leaves no Room for Dispute, Men and Angels must assent to it, and every Mouth shall be stopped : especially when all the divine Testimonies shall be corroborated, by a Man's own Conscience ! for the next Book that shall be opened is,

2. The Book of *Conscience*.

Whatever Variance may happen, in the strict Definition of Conscience, however Men may differ what to call it, or in what particular Power of the Soul to seat it, every one is sensible there is such a Thing as *Conscience* in Man ; some active busy Principle, that often remonstrates, when the Sinner is about to commit a known Crime, and which smiles in a Man's Breast, when he has practis'd any Virtue ; and doubtless the very Name of *Conscience*, is derived from this, that it is conscious of all, even our most secret and retired Actions. It is a Kind of Vicegerent Judge within us, and erects a little Tribunal within, with a special Reference to

the great Tribunal in my *Text*. Here every Crime and Vertue seems to pass their *first* Tryal and Examination, and the doing of them to leave Pain or Pleasure behind ; as the *Apostle* speaks of the *Heathen*, whose Consciences accused, or else excused them, in what they did ; and hence we read, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God ; and of some that were self-condemned ; from which it appears, that Conscience must be a Witness to all our Actions. A very close Witness 'tis, as intimate to a Man as his own Soul ; the Sinner may retire from the Eyes of all the World, but he can't from himself : However safe and secret he deems his Iniquities, he carries an Evidence of them in his own Breast ; and tho' Passion may prevail over *Conscience*, bribe and muzzle it, that it can't do the proper Office of a Judge ; tho' it may only whisper when it should lift up his Voice like a Trumpet ; yet 'tis a constant Witness, 'tis a Book that preserves all our Actions, open and private ; and when this Book comes to be opened before the Tribunal of Christ, it will be compar'd and found to harmonize with the Book of God's *Omniscience*. *Conscience* will then confirm the Charge, which the great Judge lays against the Sinner : We are now tempted to cover our Transgressions like *Adam* ; but *Conscience* will let nothing be covered ; then it will make a fair Report of all our past Deeds in the
Body,

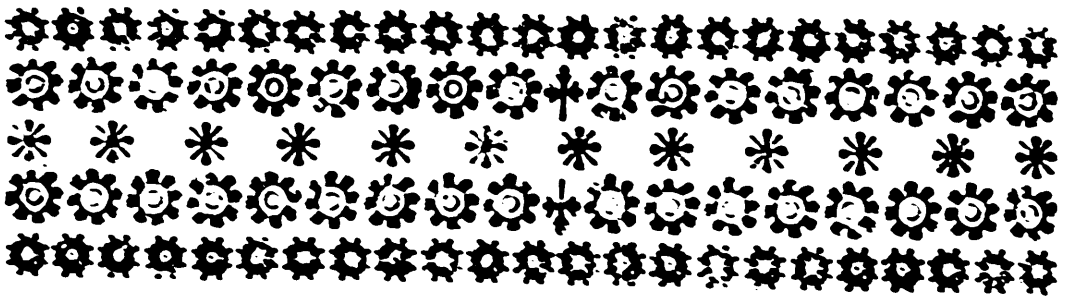
Body, it will openly justify Christ, and say ; it is true Lord, such and such Sins, were committed by this Man, at such and such a Time—I remember them well ; I was displeas'd at them ; I disapproved and condemn'd them ; I represented to him the dreadful and pernicious Consequences of them, and told him of this thy Tribunal, and of this Book of thine *Omniscience*. I spake as plain as I durst, and warn'd him against such Practices ; I told him, he must one Day give an Account of them, and that for all these God would bring him into Judgment : But I seem'd to him as one that mock'd, a Babbler, a Dreamer, a setter forth of strange Doctrine : He was join'd to his Idols, and after them he would go ; his Affections were all in the Interest of Sin, and whenever I whisper'd the Words, *Judgment*, a future State, and Account, and the Place of Torment, he would flatter himself with the Secresy of his Sins, or he would say, others did the same ; that God was merciful, and he might repent at the last Hour ; and so he went on, adding Iniquity unto Sin : This Declaration must the *Conscience* of every Sinner make before God, *Angels* and *Men*—*Conscience* will not then be impos'd on, it will fly in the Sinner's own Face, and roundly tell him of his Guilt, without mincing the Matter : Spake I not unto thee in the Day of Temptation, saying, Do not commit the abominable Thing, and sin against the Lord ! Spake not I
unto

unto thee under such a *Sermon*, and in such a Place and Company, when thou wentest into thy Chamber to sin, when thou thoughtest to conceal thy wicked Deeds under the Curtains of the Night; I was with thee, I spake unto thee, and thou didst bid me be silent and easy; you may now remember, that at such a Time you made a Scoff of Religion, and the Professors of it; such a Time you spent in vain Company and Amusements, and hated them that reprov'd thee for it; so many Hours you consum'd in Drinking, and in Gaming; such a Time thou wast overtaken with strong Drink, and thine Eyes beheld strange Women; at such a Time didst thou take the Name of God in vain; and at another Time didst commit Adultery, and debauch thyself with the Lust of the Flesh; and when I told thee of it, 'twas all in vain: And now from being thy Friend, I am become thy Enemy; and must be with thee for ever, as an immortal *Tormentor*, because thou didst count me, and others, thine Enemy, for telling thee the Truth!

Thus will *Conscience* be summoned as a swift Witness against the Sinner; thus will it justify God, and lay our Guilt naked and open, before the World; it was privy to all our Actions, it kept them all registered in its Book, it will then speak out against us, and help us to recollect ten thousand Follies we have forgot. O wretched Man! that
thus

thus has himself for his Enemy! His *Judge*, and his own *Conscience*, witnessing the same Things against him, and no *Friend* to justify him!

We may hence infer the Folly of committing any Sin, from the Hopes of Secrecy; this is what Men encourage themselves with, in the greatest Part of the Sins they commit; like the Adulterer, they wait for the Twilight, saying, No Eye shall see us! Men think it enough if they can hide any criminal Action from the Eyes of others; but what monstrous Folly is this, while we carry such a Witness in our own *Bosoms*! It was a very reasonable Piece of Advice, from the Pen of an *Heathen*; *Te sine Teste time*, Let *Conscience* awe and restrain you from Sin, tho' you had no *other* Evidence to fear—But with much more Reason might I say, Let *God* and *Conscience* do it. For if we could ever blind and muzzle *Conscience*, it would signify nothing, unless we could strip God of his *Omniscience*. The opening of this single Book would determine us to a State of Misery, and we should feel the Force of that Reproof by a dreadful Experience. These Things hast thou done, and I kept Silence; thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in Order before thine Eyes. Now consider *this*, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver.



SERMON XII.



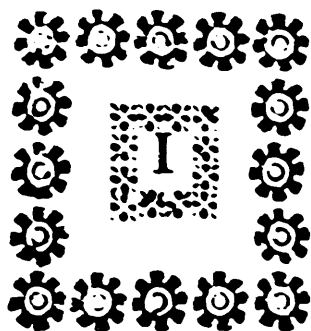
THE

GREAT DAY.



R E V. XX. 12.

AND I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the Books were opened : And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life : And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.

 **I**N my last Discourse on this important Subject, I began to open the Books, out of which the Dead must be judged ; I have mentioned the great Book of God's Omniscience, and the Book of every Man's Conscience. which will

will certainly agree in their Evidence, and bring in the same Verdict against the Sinner, and in Favour of the Saint : In these *two Books* the World will see what every Man *has* done. But in order to make an Estimate of the Morality of Men's Actions, there must be other *Books* produced and opened, to which they had a necessary Reference, and which will shew what Men *ought* to have done ; what Opportunities, what Advantages they had, and what Laws and Dispensations they lived under. all which are necessary to clear up the Honour of the Judge's Proceedings, and to make him appear to all the World, as one that will judge it in strict Righteousness : *These Books* then which will shew what Men ought to have done, and to which their Judgment will have a special Reference, may be ranked under these general Heads.

The Book of *Nature*—the Book of *Providence*—and the Book of *Scripture*.

1. There is a Book of *Nature*, that shall be opened in the Day of Judgment ; this is a great Book ; a universal Book, spread open before the Eyes of all Mankind : it's Line is gone out through all the Earth there is no Speech nor Language, where it's Voice is not heard. And tho' this Book be *not* so fairly written in some Points, as the Book of *Scripture* ; yet it contains in it a great many
important

important Discoveries of God, and our Duty to Him, and must therefore be opened as one of the Rules of Judgment, by which Christ will proceed at the last Day. In this Book we evidently enough read the Attributes of God ; from the Things that are made and seen, are clearly understood his eternal Power and God-head ; and therefore when Sinners come to be judged, they will have no Excuse, if they have not glorified him as God. The shining Canopy of Sun, Moon, and Stars, shew us there must be a Being that made them, that existed before them, and is very great, and worthy all our Homage and Adoration. The Book of *Nature* taught Men, that they were Creatures, the Workmanship of God ; it taught them their Relation to Him, and that a thousand Duties of Love and Obedience were the natural Result of such a Relation. *Nature* itself teaches Men many Lessons of Morality, and social Virtue ; yea the whole moral Law, till the Fall had darkned our Minds, was fairly, and gloriously written upon the Hearts of Men ; and tho' much effaced now, yet there are such Impressions of it, and such natural Consequences arising from the Nature and Reasons, and Combinations of Things, as may read many Lectures of Morality to us, if we would but attend to them—*Nature* itself would teach us to love, fear and reverence a Deity, to submit to all the Indications of his Will, signified to us—

Nature

Nature would teach us to love our Neighbour, to wish well to our own Species, to contribute to the Good of that Society we are Members of, to pay Respect to Parents, and Superiours; to love, provide for, and train up our Children, and initiate them in the best Rules of Life and Practice. *Nature* itself teaches us to depress all disorderly Passions and Affections, not to sin against our own Bodies, to avoid all brutal Lusts and Pleasures, that stain the Glory, and sink the Character of human Nature, to maintain the sacred Maxims of Truth, Equity and Justice; not to lie, slander, or steal, to possess our own Properties in Peace, and avoid Encroachments upon others. All these may be learnt out of the Book of *Nature*; and therefore this Book shall be opened in the Day of Judgment, and the Sinner that never enjoyed the Advantages of *supernatural* Revelation, shall here see, what he might have done; and what He ought to have done; and the Actions he has done shall be scann'd over with a particular Reference to the *Rules* written in this Book. And here will come in the different Advantages and Talents Men have been distinguish'd by. All Men's natural Endowments are not of equal Strength and Brightness; some are of a superiour and more elevated *Genius* than others; some had more Opportunity to learn their natural Duties than others; some lived much longer in the *School of Nature*; and this

this will make a great Disparity in Men's Conditions in the Day of Judgment. For when the Book of *Nature* is opened, all these different Powers and Advantages will be found written therein, and the Sinner will be accountable for them all. It will then be to no Purpose for a *Heathen* to plead, that he wanted the peculiar Advantages of *Revelation*—that he was not born and educated in a Christian Land; for he will then be judged by the Laws, and out of the Book of *Nature*: The great Judge and his own Conscience will convince him, that he has transgress'd the Law of *Nature*, under which he was placed; and has omitted those Duties, which the very *Creation*, and his own reasoning Powers suggested to him.

2. Another Book which shall be opened, is the great Book of *Providence*.

This is a Book of many Folds and Pages; 'tis a large Folio indeed; here are penn'd down all the Dispensations and Works of God to Men, from the Beginning, to the End of the World: There are some general Providences more *common* to Men; but innumerable ones, that are special, and peculiarly adapted to individual Persons. When this *great Volume* is laid open, we shall see the several Occurrences and Scenes of Life, from our Cradle to our Grave. We never enjoy'd one single Mer-
cy:

cy, we never suffer'd one individual Affliction, but it stands recorded in the Book of *Providence*; and by this Book, we shall be convinc'd of many Duties that were incumbent on us, according to the various Aspects of *Providence* upon us; for every *Providence* has its peculiar Duty, and we must answer for every Abuse and Misimprovement of it. *Prosperity* required our Love, Obedience, Praise, and Gratitude to Heaven: *Adversity* demanded our Patience, and Submission to the Will of God. We shall then see, how vilely the Rich have abused their Wealth and Estates in this World: what God designed in bestowing them, and what a perverse Use the Creature made of them; the great and honourable of the Earth, must give an Account of all their tyrannical Abuses of that Power and Promotion God had put into their Hands; we shall be asked to what Uses we put our Youth, our Health, our natural Vigour, Strength, and Beauty; and at the same Time discern, for what End Heaven conferr'd them upon us. Every Turn of *Providence* rightly improv'd, has a religious Tendency, and is designed for the Improvement of Virtue; even those Afflictions which for the present, are not joyous, but grievous, shall yield peaceable Fruits of Righteousness. The Fruit intended is to take away Sin, to convince us of the evil of Sin, to shew us the Justice of God, and his Resolution to punish Sin, to wean our Affections

from the present World, and to advance the Work of Mortification ; and all these glorious Designs will appear in their full Light, when the Book of *Providence* is open—the great Judge will then shew the Sinner, yea his own Conscience will be ready to confirm it. Such a Time will God say, I laid my Hand upon thee, I pursued thee with my Judgments one after another, I hedged up thy Way with Thorns, I was a Moth and a Lion to thee, I diminished thy Estate, I contracted thy Substance and Trade, I disappointed thy Schemes and Undertakings in the World, I smote thee in the tenderest Part, I bereaved thee of thy Children and Friends, I smote thee with Sores and Boils, and pierced thee thro' with Pains and Sorrows. Was this, because I delighted in thy Misery ? because I afflicted willingly, and grieved the Children of Men ? No, it was all for thy Profit ! these Providences, these Losses and Crosses and Adversities, were all my Rod to drive, my Voice to call thee to thy Duty—The Language of them was very plain and loud in thine Ears—Hereby you was warned, against a prevailing worldly Temper ; this was to convince thee, that there was no Happiness under the Sun ; that all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit ; it was to lead thee to the Practice of Self-denial, to prove and to try what was in thy Heart ; it was the natural Tendency of these Afflictions, to make thee turn to him that smote

smote thee : from those Pains you felt in a Time of Trial and Probation, you might have learnt that I was a *jealous* God, that I had a Regard for the *Honour* of my Laws, that I would not suffer Sin to go unpunished, that it was an evil and a bitter Thing to sin against the *Lord thy God* ; that He was able to revenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. When you saw my Judgments upon your *Families, your People, Country and Nation*, what Desolations I wrought in the Earth, it should have magnified me, in all my Power and Justice, in thine Eyes, and made thee to stand in Awe, to commune with thine own Heart, and not to sin : From the Effects of Sin in Time, you might easily have learnt, what would be the dreadful Effects of it in Eternity ; and your Pains and Sorrows, might have given you such a formidable Idea of Hell, and the Place of Torment, as might effectually have restrained you from the Paths of Death and Destruction. It will be impossible for the Sinner to deny these Things, when he sees the Book of *Adversity* open'd, and the evident Tendencies of the Things he had suffer'd ; and it must quite confound him to think, he should be so blind and harden'd to all Judgments, so deaf to these loud Calls, as to rush thro' Thorns into the Fire, and eagerly push thro' temporal Pains and Sorrows, into those that have neither Mixture, Measure, nor Period !

Nor will the great Judge have less Matter of Charge against the Sinner, when he shall look into the Pages of all the *prosperous* Scenes of Providence, thro' which he had pass'd. The ungrateful Wretch must expect to hear of all his Mercies, all his Advantages, and gracious Opportunities, which he vilely misimproved. God will then say unto him; I distinguished you by my Goodness, from Thousands in the World, I heaped the richest Favours upon you, I fed you with the finest of the Wheat, I blessed the Works of your Hands.—My Providence set an Hedge about you—your Children were as Olive Plants round your Board—your Garners were fill'd—your Oxen were strong to labour—you never wanted any of the Conveniencies of Life; nothing that might render it easy and pleasant to you, did I with-hold; when Judgments fail'd of accomplishing their Ends upon you, I changed the Scene, and allured you by my *Goodness*: I blessed you in Basket and Store, in Person and Family, with Wealth and Honour, Strength and Peace; yea with spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ Jesus! I appointed the Bounds of your Habitation in a Land of Light and Vision,—I put my Oracles into your Hands, I sent you my Ministers, and gave you a thousand kind Invitations, and a long Space for Repentance—Mercies enough to have melted a Stone! Mercies of a strong and winning Voice: From these you might have

learn'd:

learnt the soft and tender Dispositions of your God, and have framed some faint Ideas, from the Blessings of my left Hand, of those everlasting Pleasures that are at my right Hand: These Mercies, bestowed in such Numbers, and of such Qualities, could have produced naturally nothing less, than the sincerest Thanks, Gratitude, Love, and Obedience to your best Benefactor. But be astonished O Heavens! and ye Men and Angels now before me at this! I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me; they have been ungrateful to me: See how they have requited my Kindness, and abused all the Riches of my Goodness, not knowing that it led them to Repentance! See how their hard and impenitent Hearts have treasured up Wrath against this Day of Wrath, which I have appointed to be the Revelation of my righteous Judgment! I have only arm'd them with Weapons against myself! My richest Favours they have criminally abused, and converted into Weapons of Rebellion against me! Of the God that made them, and the Rock that begat them, have they been unmindful! They have waxed fat with my Bounty, and kick'd against me! The Power, the Wealth, and all the Honours, I put upon them, have only enabled them to shew their Enmity to me and mine, and the more successfully to oppose my Kingdom and Interest upon Earth! Declare now my Righteousness, O ye

Heavens! If such Rebels as these, deserve not to die! After all the Mercies I have shewn them, they have broken my Bands asunder, they have cast my Cords from them, they would not have me to reign over them; and now they are brought here to be slain before me, and to receive a just Recompence of Reward; and since they could not be melted and won by my Love, Goodness, and Forbearance, 'tis just and infinitely righteous, that I pronounce this Sentence upon them! "Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire?" And there let them try, if they can as easily slight my *Wrath*, as they have done my *Goodness*! Certainly when such Things are produced from the Book of God's *Providence*, the whole World must justify the Proceedings of our Judge; and the Sinner must be struck with Terror and Amazement, and feel a mingled Strife of the most tormenting Passions of Shame and Guilt in his own Breast. Let this awful Consideration teach us, to reverence and regard the *Providences* of God to us: There is nothing so apt to slip our Observation, tho' nothing lies so open to it as this. We can't look back upon the past Scenes of Life, without discovering a long Train and Succession of *Providences* to us, and every one of them has a Lesson of Instruction in it; every one speaks with a loud Voice; every one prescribes some Duty to us; every one therefore will be remembered in
God's

God's *Book*, and produced at the great Day, and come into the Rule and Measure of our Judgment. Whoſo is wiſe, let him underſtand theſe Things, whoſo hath Ears to hear let him hear ! Let us take a religious Notice of every *divine Diſpenſation*, that occurs in the Compaſs of our Life and Obſervation : Let us attend it's Voice and Admonitions—Let us improve it to Virtue and Holineſs : —Then ſhall we not be afraid to ſee this *great Book* opened.

3. We may be ſure that among other Books, the Book of *Scripture* ſhall then be opened.

Our *Saviour* tells us, The Word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt Day ; and ſaith St. *Paul*, God ſhall judge the Secrets of Men, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, according to my Goſpel. Chriſt is thus revealed, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. We can never imagine that God would write to us the great Things of his Law, and never open *that Book* wherein they are written, to diſcover whether our Actions quadrate, or diſagree, with them : Even human Laws written for the Regulation of Societies and good Government, are, or ought to be produced, whenever a Man is charged with the Violation of them ; and certainly, if Sin be the Tranſgreſſion of the Law

of God, that Law, in its several Branches and Editions, shall be opened in the Day of Judgment, that the Transgressor may himself see the Reason and Foundation of his Condemnation, and confess the Sentence of his Judge is right. If Nature and Providence are the Books of God, more emphatically and peculiarly so is the *Scripture*; sure it either contains the immediate Words of God, or else holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—when God at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers, by the Prophets—Therefore the Apostle tells us, that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God: He is the Author of it; 'tis his Book; bears his Image and Authority; contains the Declaration of his Will; and is a transcript of his Laws: Therefore he immediately subjoins the noble Ends for which the Scriptures were divinely inspired, and to which they are, in their own Nature, excellently accommodated; 'tis profitable for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in all Righteousness, that the Man of God might be perfect, thro'ly furnished to every good Work—This is a great Character of the Uses of this *divine Book*—If Nature be not sufficient, if Reasons drawn from the Relation of Things in the Mind of Men, if Philosophy in its best Rules be defective in any Duty we owe, and can't perfectly furnish us with the Knowledge thereof; these Defects are all abundantly

abundantly made up in the *Scripture* ; we may have Recourse to this sacred Book for Direction in every Difficulty ; here God has shewn us what is Good, and what the Lord our God requires of us—This is the Canon of our Faith, the Rule and Measure of our Practice ; to this we are to conform all our Actions. Must not therefore this *great Book* be opened at the Day of Judgment ! Is it not necessary that God should shew the World what plain Lessons he had taught Men, in order to shew Sinners their Guilt, in it's full and proper Light ! Certainly, Yes. And as the Scripture is reducible to two Books, or two different Dispensations ; no doubt, both the Book of the *Law*, and the Book of the *Gospel*, shall be distinctly opened.

1. The Book of the *Law* shall then be opened. For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin, and the Length of Sin is the Law—Where there is no Law, or the Law not promulgated, there can be no Transgression ; for 'tis the Reference our Actions have to a Law, whether the Law of Nature, or the written one, which constitutes and determines their Morality, and gives them Significancy.

By the Book of the *Law* I mean, the Writings of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets* ; and whatever falls within the Compass of the *Old Testament*—The *Law* given by *Moses* shall be re-
cited

cited in the Audience of the whole World, with more Solemnity than it was given by the Ministry of Angels. The great Judge will shew the World how the *Jews* were distinguished, and favoured of Heaven, by having the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants: He will unveil all the Figures and Ceremonies of the *Levitical* Law—He will break open the Seal of all the *Prophecies*. He will shew them how clearly the *Messiah* was indigested and pointed out in them, and will upbraid their Infidelity and Hardness of Heart, and shew their crimson Guilt, in crucifying the Lord of Glory—When they now see him upon his great white Throne, they will then tremble to think of the Indignities they poured upon him, in the Days of his Flesh, tho' he was so clearly revealed in the Law, and so exactly corresponded with all their Types and Sacrifices.—He will also open their *judicial* Law, in all its Branches, and show how wisely it was calculated for a national Genius, and the Regulation and Support of a good Government—He will tell them with a stern Countenance, how he gave them his Statutes and his Judgments, when he had not dealt so by any Nation in the World beside; and say with *Moses*, What Nation under Heaven had Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I had set before you? The more righteous and excellent the Laws and *judicial* Statutes given us are; the more dreadful will they appear

appear, to our Confusion and Condemnation in the great Day!

Again, Christ will then open and produce the *moral* Law. This was a Law of universal Obligation upon all Mankind; this was the fiery Law, that immediately issued from the Mouth of God—God spake *all these Words*, He wrote them with his own Finger; He wrote them upon Tables of Stone, to signify their *eternal* Obligation and Permanency; and that they were not subject to the Variations of Time and Age, nor peculiar to any particular Dispensation—This *Law* was the Summary and Epitome of all *moral* Duties; and other Parts of the old Testament were but Paragraphs, Enlargements, and necessary Explications of it; and this *Law* was delivered with such grand Pomp, and divine Solemnity, as shew'd its vast Importance, and the special Regards it challenged from the Sons of Men: We may therefore be sure, that this *great Rule* of Life, this common Standard of Action, will be in a more solemn Manner produced in the Day of Judgment; for this is the great *Standard* with which our Actions are then to be compared: The great Judge will then convince Mankind, at least *Jews* and *Christians*, that if they have deviated from the Rules of Nature and Equity, if they have not lived answerably to the Figure and Character they have in the Creation; it was
not

not for want of a sufficient Conviction of their Duty, or a proper Measure of Obedience—No Ignorance can be pleaded in the Sinners Justification, where this *Law* stands opened against him—From this very Book of the *Law*, God will shew the World what Care he took to secure and guard his own Honour, the Profession of his own Godhead, his Authority and Institution, the Reverence of his Name, and his Sabbaths and Worship—What a Hedge he had placed about the Honour that was due to Men, in the several Degrees of Superiority among themselves—How he had secured the Life of Man, and threatened Death to him, that should without *legal Cause*, shed his Blood—What a Regard he had for all the Laws of Chastity, and therein the Welfare of human Society—How strictly he forbid all Uncleanness—all Manner of Theft, false Witness, and illegal Proceedings, all Invasion upon our Neighbour's Reputation, or Properties, and every evil coveting. When he recites the *ten Commandments*, it will very much honour his Justice, it will justify the Severity of his Sentence upon the wilful Transgressor; Heaven and Earth will confess the *natural Equity* of every Command; and to these Commands, as their proper *Test*, will every Man's Actions be brought, and determined by that Rule of Judgment! Think seriously, O Sinner, how often thou hast broken every one of these Commands! And if *Mount Sinai* itself quaked

ked, at the first Delivery of *this Law*; if *Moses* himself trembled at the Thundrings, and the Trumpet that proclaimed it; how wilt thou bear to see the Book of the *Law* opened in Judgment, when the Judge shall recite it with a *Voice*, as if the *seven* Thunders of God were all discharged upon thy Head! Now Men are apt to turn away their Ears from hearing the *Law*! or when they hear the *Curses* of this Book, they say they shall have Peace, tho' they walk after the Imagination of their own Hearts! They are more afraid of the Threatnings of *human Laws*, than of the *divine*! They fear them that kill the Body; but they fear not him that has Power to destroy Soul and Body in Hell forever! The *Curses* of God's Law, are now like *barrelless* Thunders in their Ears—they play and jest with them!—They mock and despise them, because they secretly think they shall never hear of them again! But O what Despair, Confusion and Distraction, will seize upon guilty Wretches, when the Book of the *Law* is opened!! When their Guilt is spread before their Eyes, when they come to feel the *Weight* of those Sanctions, which guarded the *Law of God*, in their actual Accomplishment; then they will find these Things are real; then they will feel they are weighty, so *weighty* as to be utterly insupportable! And if this Book of the *Law* shall be opened in Judgment, if our Case must be determined by the Rigour of the Law!
where

where shall the foolish Wretch appear, who sought Justification by the *Works* of the *Law*, and built his Hopes of Happiness upon the sinking Foundation of human Merit, while he neglected *Christ* and the Righteousness of *Faith*! And how happy will it be for us, who have renounced all Confidence in the *Flesh*, and are found in *Christ* at that Day, not having on our own Righteousness, which is of the *Law*, but the *Righteousness* of God, which is by Faith in his *Son*: without which, how shall we bear to see this Book of the *Law* opened! to see how many Things were required in it, how sharp and severe its Curses, and how deficient we have been in our Obedience to it!—Let us then cry out with the *Psalmist*; Enter not into *Judgment* with thy Servant, O Lord; for in thy Sight shall no *Flesh* living be justified.

2. The Book of the *Gospel*, no doubt, will then be opened.

The *Gospel* indeed includes the Book of the *Law*, but 'tis in a much fairer Edition, and gives Life and Force to it—'Tis the Substance of the *Law ceremonial*; it has adopted so much of the *judicial Law*, as comports with *Christian Government*; and for the *moral Law*, *Christ* came not to destroy, but to fulfil it: All the Duties of *Morality* are contained in the *New Testament*, written in
much

much brighter Characters than in the old ; rais'd to a greater Degree of Purity and Perfection ; stated and argued with more Strength, and enforced with many new and engaging Arguments ; and it contains many Things, which were either omitted, or remotely hinted at in the Law of *Moses*. The Law was given by *Moses*, but Grace and Truth came by *Jesus Christ*, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life : He was a greater Prophet than *Moses*—He taught the Way of God in Truth, with the most superior Advantages, and in a Manner beyond the Attainments of the best Jewish *Rabbi's*, or mortal Pens.—What a rich Treasury of divine Truths is his *Sermon* upon the Mount ? How clearly is the *Way* to Happiness there pointed out ? In how many different Lights are the peculiar Virtues of Christianity presented, and with what Variety of Argument enforced upon us ? How much Divinity appears in every Line of that Discourse, and in every Page of the New-Testament ? How illustriously doth the Grace of God, and the Mysteries of Redemption, shine there ! How particular are the *Gospels*, and *Epistles*, in pointing out the *Person*, the *Divinity*, the *Incarnation*, the *Offices*, the *Death* and the *Resurrection* of Christ, with all the glorious Benefits thence resulting ! How plainly are the *Terms* of our Acceptance laid down ! How gloriously is the Influence and Efficacy of a *divine Faith*

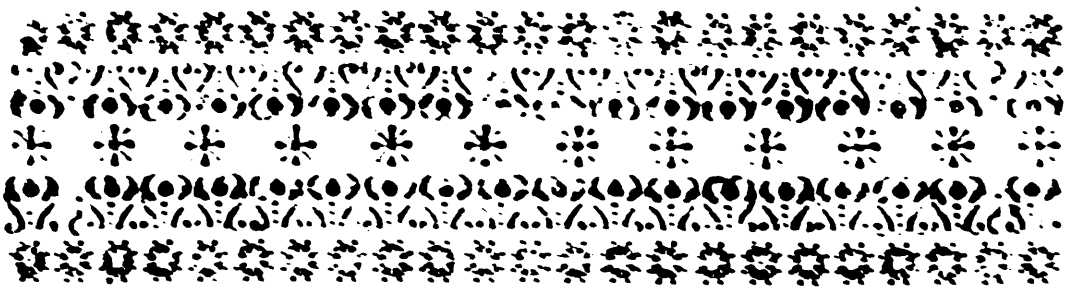
Faith described? How grand are the Descriptions of a *future* State, the Representations of a *future* Judgment! the Glories of Immortality, and the unutterable Pains of the Damned, as Incentives to our Duty, and Restraints from Temptations to Sin! Certainly such a Book as *this* shall be opened; certainly Christ will not let a Book lie sealed for ever, which speaks so much of Himself, and of those Sufferings which he only that felt them can fully describe. And what shall then be the End of them who believe not the Gospel! How shall they escape, who have neglected so great Salvation! How confounded will they look to see a Book opened, which they had in their Hands, and Houses, so many Years, and perhaps never opened themselves; or if they did, never read it, with that Seriousness and Application, that became so great a Book as the New-Testament! What Confusion must cover the Faces, and seize the very Souls of them, who have *sported* with this sacred Book, who cull'd out Passages from it to relieve a dull Hour, and season a profane Wit and Vein of Burlesque! When Christ opens *this Book*, he will shew the Sinner what vast Expence and Cost he was at to redeem him; how much of his precious Blood it cost him, to wash Men from their Sins; What Labour and Toil, to open to them those Gates of Paradise which *Adam* had barr'd against them; and how little he had left them to do

for the Procurement of their own Happiness!— He will shew the Sinner, what terrible Threatnings he despised! What glorious Promises he neglected! What a gracious and loving Redeemer he rejected! And how must it sting the Sinner's Conscience to read, in *this Book*, the fair and melting Description of Christ's Love, and how ready He who now sits as Judge, was once to be the Sinner's Saviour; and when he shall see that he neglected so great a Sacrifice, and that now there remains no other, and no Cloak for his Sins, nothing but Judgment now standing before his Eyes, and a fiery Indignation treading at the very Heels of the dreadful Sentence he expects to hear! Let any Man but represent these Things to his Imagination, in some Hour of Retirement and Leisure, and he must needs feel all his Veins move, and the very Hair of his Head stand up! How much more formidable must the actual Sight and full Vision of it be? Must it not snudder all his Soul! Certainly it will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, in the Day of Judgment, than for such a Sinner; and he wish he had never been born, or been born a *Heathen*, a *Turk*, a *Jew*, or any Thing but a Christian; and wish he had never seen such a Book as the *Bible*. And no doubt every other Book, that has any Relation to this Gospel, will stand open against the present Despisers of it; and will

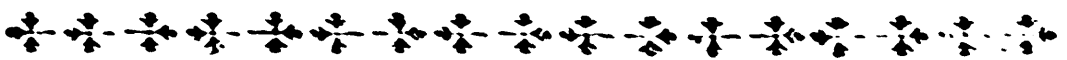
then appear to the Sinner's Face, to upbraid his Ignorance, Infidelity, and Hardness of Heart; yea, every Sermon he has heard, supported by these *sacred Writings*, all Counsels and Instructions from his Ministers, will rise in Judgment against him.



S E R M O N

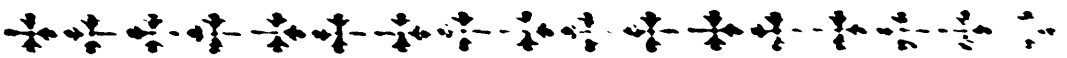


SERMON XIII.



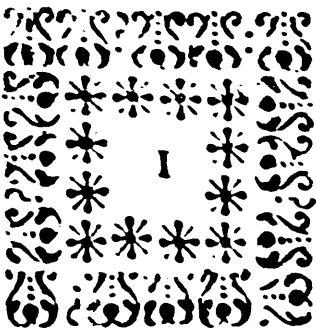
THE

GREAT DAY.



REV. XV. 12.

AND I saw the Dead, small and great stand before God; and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.

 IN the preceding Discourse, the Books of Omniscience, of Conscience, of Nature, Providence, and Scripture, have been opened. Besides which, our *Text* makes mention of *another* Book, which by the Peculiarity of the

Phrase, seems to be very remarkable, and distinct from those other Books, and 'tis called the *Book of Life* : Which, I think, can admit but of these two Interpretations. We must either first understand it of the Actions of Men *in this present Life* ; or of them that are elected to *Life everlasting*.—

The first Construction receives some little Support from that of *Moses*, who, if God should deny him his Request, pray'd, that he might be *blotted out* of the Book of Life : that is, That God would take his Life from him, and number him no more among the living ; but write him in the Register of the dead. And if this Construction were admitted, the Books before-mentioned, must only mean, the Things Men *ought to have done*—the Rules and Measures of their Conduct ; and the Book of Life must then signify their *Actions of Life*, or the Record of what they have done while living ; and indeed this Construction would bid fair, were it not for a Passage in the Close of the Chapter which quite destroys it—For thus *St. John* goes on in his Vision ; “ The Sea gave up the Dead that was in it, and Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire : And whosoever was not found written in the *Book of Life*, was cast into the Lake of Fire” —So that this Construction precludes all Men living, from Salvation, consigns them all to the Flames of Hell ; and for that Reason, it can't be admitted

admitted for the true Sense of the Place. The *Book of Life* therefore must signify here,

The Book of *God's Election to eternal Life*. —He of his free Grace elected some to everlasting Life; this Election is sure and unchangeable; and 'tis represented by a *Book*, in a Way of Accommodation to us; it signifies God's certain and particular Knowledge of those whom he has elected; as certain and distinct, as if he had written down their Names, and should now open a Book, and read them distinctly.

I have taken more than ordinary Pains in consulting the best Expositors upon these Words; and I find they centre upon this Sense of *Election*.

We have the same Phrase in three other Parts of the *Revelation*, besides this *Chapter*. Thus Chap. 3. 5. "He that over-cometh, the same shall be clothed in white Raiment, and I will not blot out his Name out of the *Book of Life*; but I will confess his Name before my Father, and before his Angels"—Here it will be objected, That the *Book of Life* can't intend God's *Election*; because our Saviour insinuates a *Possibility* of being blotted out of it—But the Meaning must be this; He that over-cometh, shall attain to a full *Evidence* of his Election, and that his Name is in the *Book*

of *Life*—The immediate Design of the *Text* be-
 in: to speak, not according to the Things them-
 selves, but Men's Apprehensions and Evidences of
 them—So the Apostle *Peter* exhorts, to make our
 Calling and Election sure—Why, the Decree of
 Election is *always* sure; but we are to give Dili-
 gence to make it known and *sure* to ourselves—
 The Scripture lays down such and such Marks of
 Men's Election; if we find and are fully persuad-
 ed of these Marks upon us, we have made our
Election sure—But if thro' Relapse into fresh Sin
 we cloud our *Evidences*, our Election is no longer
 sure in our Apprehension of it; and in *this Sense*,
 agreeable to Scripture-Phraseology, our Names
 may be *blotted out* (appear to us to be *blotted out*)
 of the *Book of Life*, even tho' we mean the Elec-
 tion of God by it. Again, Chap. 13. 8. “And all
 that dwell upon the Earth shall worship him, whose
 Names are not written in the *Book of Life*, of the
 Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.”
 Which is agreeable to what our Saviour foretold of
 some, that they should, *if possible*, deceive the very
 Elect; intimating; *it was impossible*, because they
 were *Elect*.—So such as were *not* of the Election
 of Grace, should be carried away with the general
 Defection, to worship the Beast: But they whose
 Names were written in the *Book of Life*, could not,
 at least not finally, whatever they might be tempt-
 ed to, for a Time—The *Book of Life* here is
 called

call it the *Book of the Lamb*, because we are elected in Christ to eternal Life; and the Lamb being slain from the Foundation of the World, in the Decree of God, seems to confirm to us, that by the *Book of Life* must be intended our *Election to Life*, from the Foundation of the World, which is the general Style of Scripture to express a past Eternity by.—

Again, Chap. 17. 8. “And they that dwell on the Earth shall wonder (whose Names were *not* written in the *Book of Life*, from the Foundation of the World) when they behold the Feast that was, and is not, and yet is”—In these several Places the *Book of Life* seems to carry the same Sense as in my *Text*; and since I have shewn from the Close of the Chapter, that the Phrase here can't intend the Term of *human Life*, and the Actions of Men in it, we may fairly conclude, that it intends the *Book of Election*: and as it stands discriminated here from the *other Books*, that are said to be opened, since it is called *another Book*, 'tis not improbable that the opening of the former Books relates, if not only, at least principally, to the Judgment and Tryal of the Wicked; and *this*, here called the *Book of Life*, only to the Tryal of the Righteous, whose Names were from Eternity written in the *Book of sovereign and electing Love*, and who in Consequence of it, have attained all the

subsequent Qualifications, requisite to their Absolution and Happiness.

But here we may enquire, First, Why the Book of God's Election is called the *Book of Life*? And Secondly, What may be meant by *opening* this Book of Life?

1. Why is this called the *Book of Life*?

And it may be so called, because those whose Names are written in it, are *elected* to eternal Life; because in *Consequence* of their Election, they are made alive unto God; and lastly, to shew the *Excellency* of that State of Happiness, to which they are elected.—

1. It is the Book of Life, because all whose Names are written therein, are *elected* to eternal Life.

The present Life, as such, is not the Fruit of God's *peculiar* Election. He never design'd to distinguish his People from the rest of the World, by any peculiar Blessings in it; so far from this, that generally speaking, they are the poorer Sort. This is our Calling, and therefore our Election, "Not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God has chosen

chosen the *poor* of this World.—*Lazarus* was one whose Name was written in the *Book of Life*—but certainly his Life did not consist in the Abundance of the Things he possesseth, in the present World. Here he had his evil Things, his Poverty and Rags. But his good Things were reserved for Heaven.—There 'tis God will shew the Fruit of his *electing* Love, there he will make the Manifestations of his Grace; they that are elected, are chosen to *eternal* Life, to live and to reign with Christ—On such the second Death hath no Power, they are chosen to a State of Immortality—That Immortality which is natural to the Soul, is confirm'd to the Body; for this Mortal shall put on Immortality, and this corruptible, put on Incorruption—If Christ be immortal, so shall the *Elect*; for they are chosen in him, and are Fellow-Heirs with him—and their Bodies are to be fashioned like to his.—And this Book of Life does not only denote a bare *Immortality* of Existence (for this will belong to the most reprobate Wretches, whose Worm dieth not) but *Immortality* united to *Happiness*—Glory, Honour, and Immortality, that is to say, immortal Glory and Honour: so that, of such it may be said, he that is *elect*, he that believeth on Christ, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live—and be *alive* for evermore.

2. It is the Book of Life, because in *Consequence* of Men's *Election*, they are made *alive* unto God.

By Nature all Men are spiritually dead in *Trepasses* and *Sins* : But God, in his due *Time*, quickens those whose Names are written in his Book ; whom he predestinates, them he also calls ; he calls them effectually by his *Grace* ; they are born again of God—they have a *new Life* inspired into them ; they *become alive* unto God, and their *Life* is hid with Christ in God, says the great Apostle *Paul*. I live, says he, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the Life that I now live in the *Flesh*, I live by the *Faith* of the Son of God.—

3. It is called the Book of Life, because 'tis a *State* of such *transcendent Glory* and *Excellency*, to which Men are elected.

Life, in itself, is a noble and divine Thing. We can't give the great God a higher Character than this, *the living God* !—It is his *divine Glory*, that in him we live, that he gives *Life* and *Breath* ! and that *Life* and *Death* are under his *Dominion*, and at his *sovereign Disposal* !—Even a *living Dog*, saith the wise *Man*, is better than a *dead Lion*—The *Dog*, and the *Lion*, are not to be compared—but *Life* in the former exceeds *Death* in the latter—and therefore

fore this Phrase, the Book of *Life*, points out some very *extraordinary* Thing. It conveys a high and noble Idea to us, of the State of Happiness, to which Christians were elected, for which they are prepared, and into which they shall be at last introduced, and in the Possession of which they shall forever continue; being as *Pillars* in the Temple of God, — who shall never go out, nor be thrust down. This Life is so short, so fickle, so uncertain, so checker'd, so shaded, so sinful, so dependent, so painful, and fill'd with so many Images of natural Fear and Terror, that it ought not to be called by the Name of *Life*, in strict Propriety of Speech: But the future State of Happiness has all the Glories of *Life*, and all the Ideas the Word *Life* seems to convey. The Scripture chooses out all the best and highest Expressions and Metaphors, the Crowns, the Wealth, the Dignities of this World, to describe the *heavenly Life* and Country; but all too faint, too low: and at last confesses, that Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entered into the *Heart* of Man to conceive, the good Things God hath laid up for them that love him.

2. Our next Enquiry is, what may be meant by *opening* this Book of *Life*?

1. When

1. When God opens the Book of Life, he will shew the *Immutability* of his Purpose and *Grace* to the Heirs of Salvation.—He will shew that whom he elected to eternal Life, them he brought to the actual Possession of it; he will display his Power, and the Triumphs of his Grace; and shew, that the Souls of Men were safe in his Hands; and that nothing had Power to destroy them whom God had chosen. He will shew, that every one who is found in Christ, was first *elected* in Him—And the grand Question will then be decided; Who is elected, and who is not? For all their *Names* are written in the Lamb's Book of *eternal Life*—Whatsoever God decrees, shall come to pass; this we now infer, in a Way of Argumentation—The Elect shall then see it, to their infinite Joy and Comfort; and that of our blessed Saviour shall then be confirm'd before the whole World, “All that the Father gave me, all whose *Names* were written in the Book of Life, shall come unto me: for my Father that gave them to me is greater than all, and none shall be able to pluck them out of my Father's Hands.” Our Names may be often *blotted* out of the Book of Life, in our own Apprehensions and *Fears*: but they never can be so in *Reality*: for then God's *Cause* could not stand, nor could the Thoughts of his Heart endure to all Generations.

Again, when the Book of Life is opened, the Saints shall then see the *prime* and fontal Cause of their Happiness; that it was God's *sovereign* and distinguishing Grace; who chose them, *before* they had chosen him—put their Names down in his Book, and ordained that they should go and bring forth Fruit—They shall then see the Reason why they believed, when others were hardened in their Sins; even because God had *elect* and chosen them to eternal Life, as the *End*, and to Faith and Holiness as the *Means*. Had not their Names been written in his Book, they had certainly perished: and the Reason, why God should write them down, and reject other Sinners, they can only resolve into the *sovereign* Distinction of his Grace, and say, “We thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth! Even so Father, for so it soemed Good in thy Sight! It was thy good Pleasure to give us the Kingdom; which was prepared for us, before the Foundation of the World, when we were predestinated to the Adoption of Sons”—Who can express the Flow of Pleasures, and Surprize, the Rapture and Extasy of the Saints, when they see the Judge open the Book of Life, and read their Names out, as it were *distinctly*, before the whole World!

2. The *Opening* of the Book of Life may signify to us, that Christ will open and justify the Rea-

sons of his Father's *electing* Love, and of the Difference in Men's eternal State.

That God should pass by the Angels that sinned, that Christ should take upon him, not *their* Nature, but Man's; is a Mystery to the *elect* Angels themselves, who desire to look into it—And that God should elect, in his secret Intention and Counsel from Eternity, a *determinate* Number of Men, and leave out *others*, must be forever astonishing to the Sons of Men. Why should he love the one, and hate the other, *before* the Children are born, or have done Good or Evil! That of the very *same* Lump, in the Hands of the *same* Potter, some Vessels should be made to Honour, and some to Dishonour! 'Tis true, we resolve this, with the *Apostle*, into his absolute *Sovereignty*; and it becomes no Man to *reply* against God, after he has revealed that 'tis so in his Word. But then we conceive of God as in the Possession of other Attributes besides *Sovereignty*; and his *Sovereignty* must ever be supposed to be under the Conduct of his *Wisdom*; and this infers, that his Election has good Reasons to support it—Nor is it fair Reasoning, to conclude, God can have no *Reasons* for his original Discrimination of Men, because we can't say *what* the Reasons be—*Reasons* he doubtless has, *Reasons* sufficient to secure his Honour and Justice; and these *Reasons* he will produce, to the Satisfaction
of

of all the World, when he comes to judge it, and the Book of Life shall be opened. Let us study to have our *Names* written in that Book; I mean, to have the *Evidence* of their being so, in a holy Heart and Life.—I had rather read my Name in such a Book as *this*, in the Marks and *Evidences* of true Grace, than to read it in the Front and at the Head of *Monarchs* and *Heroes*, in the brightest Figures of Fame, in past or future Annals! A *Name* in God's House is valuable; but a *Name* in his Book, how dear and honourable must it be! And the Way to know that our Names are written in *Heaven*, is to read God's Name and *Image* upon our Hearts here below—For every Saint may be sure he is elect and precious; and has as much Reason to believe his *Name* is in the *Book of Life*, as if it were already opened, and he *read* it there.

And thus the Books being all opened, We proceed to consider the *actual* Judgment of the Dead, Small and Great.

All this grand Appearance was no mimic Representation of Things. 'Tis more than an empty Pomp and Show; 'tis a most serious Transaction: the World is summon'd, not for an Entertainment to the Eye, not to gratify the Curiosity with a Review of the Number of Inhabitants the Earth has produced, or with a Recollection merely of ancient History,

History, and Things that have been acted over upon the present Stage; but to be *judged*, to receive their final *Sentence* from their *Judge*; and actually to possess the Rewards, or suffer the Punishments eternally consequent upon it.

I shall observe the Order of the Words themselves—

1. That the Dead were *judged*.

2. That they were judged out of the *Things* written in the Books.—

3. That they were judged *according* to their Works.

1. 'Tis here asserted, that the Dead were *judged*.

This will stop the Mouth of the Scoffer, who cries, “Where is the Promise of his Coming? for since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were.” 'Tis a most unaccountable Frenzy that has seized Mankind, which leads them into such a Way of Reasoning as this; that Things must always be in the same precise Condition that they have been—that the Scene will never change; that because we see Day and Night succeed each other, in the Course of Nature, and the Sun regularly

larly rising and setting at its appointed Time and Place ; therefore we shall never see any *Alterations* in the Face of Nature. Judgment is not yet ; therefore it will never be ! Such miserable Logick, as every Man of Sense must be ashamed of ; and yet such as most Men, especially modern *Scoffers*, seem to act upon. Just such was the Stupidity of the old World ; they imagined no Change, they drove on their Business, and what was worse, their sinful Courses : They bought, they sold, they married and gave in Marriage, 'till the Flood came, and took them all away—And so will the World be surprized at last ; so shall the Coming of the *Son of Man* be ; He shall find little, or no Faith, upon the Earth. And when the World is most secure, and Men dream nothing of the Dissolution of it ; the Flames will seize upon it, and they shall see to their Sorrow, that there is a Judgment. Whether we prepare for it or not, whether we believe it or not ; God has appointed a Day to judge the World ; and this is the Day that *now* stands before us. The whole World is here summon'd, and 'tis in Order to be judged ; which implies chiefly these *two* Things.

1. Their *Tryal* ; And 2. Their *Sentence*, at the Bar of Christ.

1. It implies their *Tryal* at the Bar of Christ.

Q

It

It could not else be called a *Judgment*. For all Judgment supposes *Trial*. A fair Hearing and *Trial* precedes Sentence in our Courts below, in all regular and well-constituted Governments; and it must much more become the great Judge of all the Earth, who we know will do right. We can't suffer ourselves to think, that Christ will sentence Sinners to *everlasting* Condemnation, without giving 'em a solemn Hearing: What they can plead for themselves, and in Excuse of their Rebellions, and every Apology they can offer, will have its due Weight and Consideration—And as *Temptations* to Sin, in some Measure extenuate it; so will the Sentence to be past upon them, be proportionably affected and determined. A formal *Trial*, preceding the Sentence, is evidently pointed out, in the solemn Manner of arraigning the Dead, and opening those Books we have already considered; and of evident Necessity, to demonstrate to the World, the eternal Equity of the Judge's Proceedings; and to cut off every Handle of Complaint. Was Christ to pass Sentence upon Men without this *previous Trial*, He could not be represented as acting in the Character of a Judge. And tho' the Sentence he should pass, was never so just in its own Nature; yet it could not appear so to *Angels* and *Men*, without Examination and *Trial*, *antecedently* to it—And the Damned in Hell, amidst the Rage of their Torments, and the Fury of their Flames,

Flames, would be ready enough to blaspheme him, and charge him with Injustice. But the particular *Enquiries*, that precede the passing of the Sentence, will make God's Throne guiltless; tho' the Sinner be miserable, and every Mouth shall be stopped; except those that are opened to cry, Righteous art thou, O Lord, who hast so judged. Methinks there is something awful in the fore-thoughts of having our past Life scanned over, and the most secret Actions we have done, brought to the Bar of an omniscient God—Nor can any Thought be more restless and uneasy in the Breast of a *living* Man than this; that there is but a Step betwixt him and his Judgment; that he is immediately to be tryed, for those Actions, which it will be soon *cut* of his Power to amend and rectify! O could we set and keep this Tryal before our Eyes, what Manner of Persons should we be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness! How carefully should we watch, and keep our Hearts, our Tongues, and all our Powers; especially when we know, that 'tis *not* a bare Examination that will only make us blush in the Face of the World; but a Tryal of *eternal* Importance to our Souls, and must determine in a *Sentence* to everlasting Happiness, or Misery!

2. Our being judged implies some Sentence to be past upon us, in Consequence of the Tryal.

Q.

When

When the great Judge has canvas'd and considered the Quality in which we appear before him; when he has exactly weigh'd all our Actions in the Scale of Justice; when he has compared them with that Law, to which they had their Reference, and duly considered all the Pleas we have to offer in our own Defence; he will then give the Result of all, and in a most solemn Manner proceed to Judgment, to pass a *Sentence* upon us, *decisive* of our eternal State; and from which there can be no Hope of Appeal; but it must immediately be put into *Execution!*

But my Pen trembles to describe! my Tongue falters to speak! my Thoughts are all in Confusion, when I attempt to think of such a *Judgment!* What Agonies must appear in the ghastly Looks of Wretches doom'd to die! What then must they feel! How must they *quake* and tremble, who stand at the left Hand, and hear the thundering Word from the Mouth of such a Judge, *Depart!* It moves our Compassion, at a human Session, to see a Criminal stand arraign'd at the Bar of Man, in Suspence of his Doom, and to hear the Judge pronounce *Death* upon him! And yet here, there may be a *secret* Hope of Mercy or Reprieve—or the Punishment may be only human; and the *penitent* Criminal may, after all, obtain Forgiveness, and be acquitted at the Bar of *Heaven.* But
here

here at this Tribunal, there are no Hopes left, after the judicial Sentence is past ; and 'tis a Sentence not upon the *Body* only, but such as destroys both *Soul* and *Body* in Hell for ever ! A Sentence that signs the *Warrant* of eternal Death ! that fixes the *Æra* of endless Misery ! that carries every Thing in it, terrible to *Sense*, and shocking to *Nature* ! Terrors that we can have no adequate Ideas of, unless we should be so unhappy as to feel them ; which God forbid ! — What horrendous Words ! — *Depart from me* ! — There's an Exclusion of all *Happiness* at once ! a Banishment for ever from the *Presence* of the Lord, and his Glory ! — *Ye cursed* ! Cursed of *God* the Judge of all ! cursed of the only *Saviour* of Sinners ! cursed of him whose Mouth and Hands were once *full of Blessing* ! who *died* himself, to *bless* us, by turning us away from our Iniquities ! — Cursed of *Angels*, who once desired and wished our Happiness ! — cursed of *Men*, and cursed of *Devils* ! Cursed *indeed*, if we must not only go from *Christ*, the *Beauty* of Heaven ; but go into everlasting *Fire* ! — not into Fire for a Year or an Age ; but into the Fire that is *never* quenched ; Fire that is daily kindled, by having *Eternity* joined to it ! Such Fire as is prepared for the *Devil* and his *Angels* ! to dwell with them, to feel *their* Torments ; to be tortured, and derided, and upbraided by them for ever and

ever ! for so long must the Smoke of their Torment ascend up out of the Bottomless Pit !

If there be any such Thing as Passion and Repentment in a human Mind, it must be roused, and threw itself upon this dreadful Occasion ! Now or never must a Sinner's Reflection, and Sense of Misery be awaken'd ; every Thing around him now looks black and gloomy, and must startle his Imagination, and spread the Shadow of Death upon his Countenance ! Yet what are the Shades of *Death*, where the Light is as Darkness ; to the frightful Shades of the *second Death* ! How must the Sinner feel ? What can we imagine must be his Sentiments of Things, when the *last* Sentence is past ! When his flattering Hopes are all swallow'd up in eternal and tormenting *Despair*, and he finds himself cast out from God, into the Belly of a ten thousand Times worse *Hell*, than *Jonah* was ; and sinking in a Lake of Fire and Brimstone ! It must require a very rich Invention, to find Images of Terror strong enough to represent the Sinner's *Scrieks* and Complaints !—Dr. *Young*, in his *Poem* upon the *last Day*, has some moving Lines upon this Subject ; I wish our young People, who have a Taste for Poetry, would read him more, as a Guard against the poisonous Charms of loose and impure Pieces. I shall borrow a few of his *Thots*, with no other Alteration than is necessary, to take

them

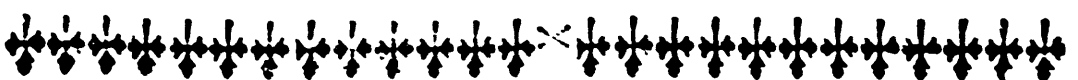
them out of their poetical Drefs and Measures. After he had described the *last* Scene of Things, he thus goes on——

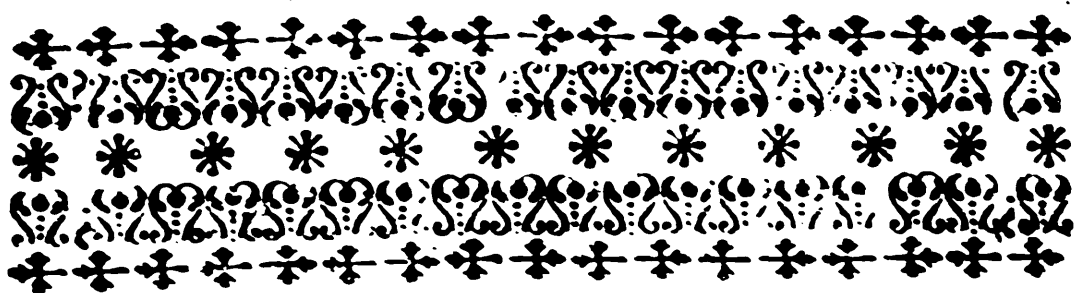
“ The Space of a short Moment, concludes the
 “ Hopes and Fears of human Race—Let him
 “ who is bolder, proceed! I tremble as I write! the
 “ Creation swims before my Eyes! the Sight of
 “ the Judge makes me faint! my Blood grows
 “ tardy, and forgets to flow thro’ the Channels of
 “ Circulation! my Soul starts back and recoils,
 “ while I hear some *guilty Wretch* thus pouring
 “ out his Woes! Who was so much my Enemy,
 “ as to burst the Barriers of my Tomb, where I
 “ lay in Peace and Rest? Why was Death so cru-
 “ el, as to deliver me up to the Wrath of an in-
 “ finite God! Shrieks, the *dreadful* Eloquence of
 “ Pain, is here our only Song! and our sole
 “ Refreshment, is *Fire* without *Light*! Must
 “ these very Powers, which Heaven gave to sup-
 “ ply my Soul with rational Pleasure, now rise up
 “ in *Arms* against me! Must *Sense*, *Reason*, and
 “ *Memory* now join the Foe, and increase my Tor-
 “ ment! Shall that Voice which was ordained to
 “ dwell on Hymns, corrupt to Groans, and blow
 “ the Fires of Hell! Must my *Existence*, only
 “ serve to *measure* my Pain! Can I derive no Beam
 “ of Hope from *Heaven* itself, the Seat of Love
 “ and Grace! no Reprieve! no Indulgence! Is

“ Mercy itself dead ! Is Love *extinguish’d* in the
 “ Source of Life.” !—Then the Sinner reflects
 upon himself, and the ungrateful Abuses of Christ’s
 Love he had been guilty of. “ Did Heaven stoop
 “ down to Hell ! did the Lord of Life expire, to
 “ ransom guilty Worms from Death ! and have I
 “ been ever industrious to provoke him ! Have I
 “ obstinately fled from his *Embraces* ! have I even
 “ courted, and panted after his Hatred ! have I
 “ even laboured, and wrought hard, to work out
 “ my own Destruction ! And dare I now complain
 “ of hard Treatment ! Dare I exclaim against an
 “ *extinguish’d Love*, which I myself *extinguish’d*—
 “ No ! My Lot is just ! Should God take full
 “ Vengeance, and yet rekindle all his Flames, ’tis
 “ just ! ’tis just ! But Ch ! must it transcend the
 “ *Reach* of Time ! Is it without *all* End ! Must it
 “ out-stretch *Thought*, and run beyond *Fancy* !
 “ *Never* ! Where does my Soul fall, at that *dread-*
 “ *ful* Word ! How dark ! how profound the
 “ *Abyss* ! I am always sinking, and my Plunge still
 “ but begun ! And as my Punishment is always
 “ strong, so is my Constitution for ever young !
 “ *Cursed* with the fresh Returns of new Life and
 “ Vigour, only the better to satisfy the Flame,
 “ and make me a fitter Subject for keener Torment !
 “ always perishing, and always renewed to perish ;
 “ and must it be *forever* ? At least, O my Maker,
 “ grant me this Request, this one, this slender, this
 “ wretched

“ wretched Request ; that when I have wept away
 “ a thousand Lives, when Torment is grown wear-
 “ ry of its Prey, and I have rav’d in Fire for ten
 “ thousand Years, multiplied by ten thousand
 “ more ; I may then expire !—Deep Anguish ! but
 “ alas ! too late ! I am enclosed with Horrors,
 “ and transfix’d with Pain ! I roll in Vengeance !
 “ I talk to fiery Tempests ! I implore the *deaf*
 “ Flames, to give over their burning, and divest
 “ themselves of Properties inseparable from them !
 “ And to sum up all my Misery, in a Word, I am
 “ bearing the Wrath of an OFFENDED God ! ”

These Thoughts may be look’d upon perhaps, as
 the imaginary Flights of a poetical Pen : but cer-
 tainly they are not *above*, nay, much *below*, the
 Thing itself, which can be express’d by none, but
 the *Wretches* that shall feel it ! And may none of
 us know it by *Experience* ! but be persuaded by
 the *Terrors* of the Lord, the *Terrors* of the *last*
Day ; and flee from the Wrath to come.—*Watch*
 therefore, for in such an Hour as ye think not, the
 Son of Man cometh : And then blessed is he that
watcheth, and keepeth his Garments.



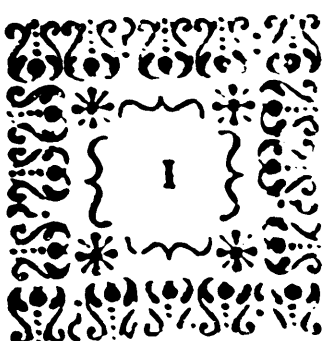


SERMON XIV.

THE GREAT DAY.

REV. XX. 12.

And the Dead were judged out of those Things, which were written in the Books, according to their Works.

 I HAVE shewn, *first*, That the Dead shall be judged; which implies, that they shall have a fair Hearing and *Tryal*, at the Bar of Christ, and receive their *Sentence*; the Tenor of which, I endeavoured to represent in my last Discourse.

I proceed now,

2. To say, that the Dead shall be judged *out of those Things* which were written in the Books—For we must here remember what was formerly observed, that there will be several Books *opened*, at the great Day; some of which will shew, what Men *have* done in a State of Tryal—such as the Book of God's *Omniscience*, and the Book of *Conscience*, wherein all Men's past Actions are distinctly recorded, and from whence they will be recited; *others* of them will shew, what Men *ought* to have done, such as the Book of *Nature*, *Providence* and *Scripture*; the Book of the *Law*, and the Book of the *Gospel*. Now in the Words before us, the Dead are said to be judged *out of these Things*, which are written in the Books; because these Books refer one to another, and must be compared one with another, before any Judgment can pass upon the Actions of Men. 'Tis to no Purpose to have our Actions registred in the Book of God's *Remembrance*, unless these Actions were consider'd in a moral Light, in the Quality either of Crimes or Virtues; and in order to make them appear in such a Light, to denominate them vicious, or virtuous, those Books must be produced which contain the proper Measures of Duty, and gave Law and Precept and Restriction to our Actions: It wou'd likewise be to no Purpose, to produce

duce the Rules of our Duty at the great Day, unless it cou'd be shewn, we had comply'd with, or transgress'd them. And how could this appear, unless those Actions, some of which had been transacted a thousand Years before the Day of Judgment, stood upon some *public* Record, so as to be produced without Mistake or Exception! This makes God's *Omniscience* requisite, and 'tis necessary that *all* these Books should be openea. In *one* Book, the Sinner will see what he *should* have done; in *another* Book, he will see what he *has* done. The very Time, Quality and Circumstances of the minutest Action in moral Life; and from the Union of these will his *Judgment* result. And hence it follows, that there must be a great Difference in the Decision of Men's eternal State, because there is a Difference in the Quality of their Actions, even such Actions as may be *materially* the same. For the Transgressor will be consider'd in those Circumstances under which he sinned, and judged by that Law he transgressed. When an *Heathen* is arraigned, he will not be judged and condemned, for his *not* believing the Gospel—for his *not* submitting to the positive Institutions of *Moses*, or his *Non-compliance* with the peculiar Doctrines of the *Christian* Institution.—He will never be charged with *Want of Faith* in Christ, because he was not under any of the Laws of *Revelation*.—But he shall be judged by the Law
of

of *Nature*, by his own Reason, by the Admonitions of Providence—those Books he had lying open before him—These suggested many Things as Duties, and other Things as Crimes, and Arguments for the one, and Restraints from the other; and he will be *condemned* for not acting agreeable to the Light he had, to the *Law* he was under, to the Dictates of *natural* Religion, and the Things he might have deduced and learn'd by the Exercise of his Faculties, without *Revelation*; and this will render the Judgment of an *Heathen* comparatively light and easy. For the *Jew*, when he is arraigned at the Bar of Christ, will be judged by the Law of *Nature*, as well as the *Heathen*, but not by the Law of Nature *only*; he will see another Book *opened* against him, in which God had written to him the great Things of his *Law*. As our Saviour told the *Jews* in his Day, Think not that I will accuse you to the Father; there's no *Necessity* of my doing it—Were I ever so silent, you will have one to accuse you, even *Moses*, in whom ye trust.—And the Apostle *Paul* declares the same to the *Romans*, in his famous Epistle to them; *there is no Respect of Persons with God*.—A Man shall not ^{be} ~~far~~ the better for being a *Jew*, nor the worse for being a *Gentile*; since both shall be impartially judged at last, and God will proceed against both *Jew* and *Gentile*, according to different Measures of Light they had—
for

for as many as have sinned without Law (the *Law of Moses*) shall also perish *without Law*; and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the *Law*, in the Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by *Jesus Christ*. The *Gentiles* shall be judged, *out of those Things*, that are written in the Book of *Nature*; because tho' they had no written *Law*, as the *Jews* had, yet they had so many Lessons taught them by the Works of *Nature* and Providence, that they were a Law to *themselves*; shewing the Work of the Law written in their *Hearts*, tho' not so plainly, as in the Book of *Moses*. The *Jews* shall be judged, *out of those Things*, that are written in the Book of *Nature*, as well as the *Gentiles*; because *they* had this in *common* with the *Gentiles*, and over and above, *out of those Things*, which were written in the Book of the *Law*; they must answer not only for the neglect and Violation of those Duties, which resulted from the *Nature* of Things; but for their Transgression of all those *positive* Institutions, which the *Law of Moses* ordained and prescribed to them—For in transgressing of these, they acted contrary to the Commands of *God*, as their immediate *King* and *Lawgiver*—All those Privileges of *Peculiarity*, whereby they were distinguished from, and elevated above others, and wherein they were wont to glory and boast, will *rise up* against them in Judgment, and aggravate their Guilt and Punishment,

when

when it shall be told them, *Moses* gave you the *Law*, yet none of you *kept* the *Law*; so that it will be much better for a sinful *Heathen*, than for a *Jew* that is a *Sinner*, in that dreadful *Day*! And better for *both*, than for a criminal *Christian*; for he must be judged not only by the *Laws* of *Nature*, and of *Moses*—but also according to *those Things* that are written in the *Book* of the *Gospel*, the *Book* of the *Generation*, the *Book* of the *Acts* and *Life*, the *Death* and *Suffering*, the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of *JESUS CHRIST*! He shall stand indicted for the *Breach* of a *threefold* *Law*; and must of all *Men*, be the most *inexcusable*! As our *Saviour* said of *Capernaum*, they have been exalted to *Heaven*, and must expect to be brought down to *Hell*—The more precious and invaluable our present *Privileges*, the more weighty our *Guilt*, the more *severe* our *Trial*, at the *Bar* of *Christ*—It will be more tolerable in the *Day* of *Judgment*, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, than for *us*—yea more tolerable for the *infidel Jew*, than for *Christian Unbelievers*—Better were it, we had never heard the *Gospel*, and never read the *New-Testament*—Better *Christ* had never been *preached* in our *Synagogues*; his *Blood* and *Passion*, and *Benefits* in the great *Salvation*, had never been unfolded, and his *Ministers* never been sent among us at all; if it shall then appear, that we have abused such glorious *Privileges*, or not improved them

them to their proper End—Whoever has any Flea at that Bar, I am sure the unbelieving unbely Christian will have none sufficient ; he must be dumb and silent—The poor ignorant *Heathen* may say, Lord, I am a Sinner, I confess ; but my Light was very dim—I had *no* Revelation—I heard nothing of a *Sacrifice* for Sin—nothing at all of a *Saviour*, nothing of the *Spirit* of Grace—I turned over the Writings of our Philosophers, and Masters of Reason, but could hear not a Syllable from them, of a *Mediator* and an *Advocate*—of a *Sanctifier*, and divine Assistant—nothing of the *Method* of Reconciliation : I could find *Guilt* in my Breast, but knew not where the *Atonement* lay, or that any *Satisfaction* was ever made, or how I must come at the Virtue and *Merits* of it—The *Jew* might plead the Darknes, the Obscurity, and Infancy of the Dispensation he was under :— He might say, I saw *Christ's Day*, indeed but it was a great Way off—tho' I had more Light in the *Mysteries* of Christianity than the *Heathen* World ; tho' I lived under a Constitution of most excellent Laws, and had many national and religious Advantages—yet I never saw *Christ* in the Flesh, I only read of him in the Book of *Prophecy*, in dark and mystic Language ; I had but a distant *Glimpse* of him—I saw no immediate Sacrifice, but the Blood of Bulls and of Goats : Our Altars were clouded with Smoke of Incense, our Gospel was wrapt up

in dark *Types* and *Figures*; I lived in the early State of *Christianity*, and when I saw *Christ*, it was not near; and for this Reason, I had not so great a Sense of the Evil of *Sin*, as if I had lived in the Days of his *Flesh*, and seen the Marks of it upon his sacred *Body*, amidst the Anguish of the *Cross*—Nor could my Faith be so steadily fix'd on him, as if I had put my Hands in the Print of the *Nails*, and read over dark *Prophecies* in the clear Light of *History*—This Plea also has some little Weight in the Mouth of an ancient *Jew*, tho' it can't free him from *Damnation*.—But where shall the *ungodly Christian* appear, when the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all *Ungodliness* and *Unrighteousness* of Men, who hold the Truth in *Unrighteousness*!—What can he plead, who heard the blessed *Angels* pronounce the Birth of a Saviour to the World, and strike all their Harps of Gold upon it!—who has seen, and handled, the Word of Life— who has found *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, him of whom *Moses* in the Law, and the Prophets did write! who has read the History of his Life and Miracles, and seen the Truth of his Mission attested by a Series of wonderful Works! who has heard his dying Groans, his Triumph over Death, his Intreaties and Expostulations with Sinners; and has had him preached, in all his Sufficiency of Merit and Glory! who has heard a thousand Sermons upon him, and been shewn his Excellency, and the

last Necessity of *applying* to him ; and yet with an Ingratitude, equally monstrous and criminal, has crucified him afresh, and spilt the precious Stream of his *Blood*, as a Thing of nought, upon the Ground !—What can such a Wretch say for himself ! How *severe* must be his Sentence, whose Guilt is without Parallel ! O that *Gospel-Sinners* would lay this to Heart, let it lie down and rise up with them, and remember that every *Sermon* they hear, or might have heard of *Christ*, will aggravate their Guilt, and give a dreadful *Accent* to their last Sentence, when they shall be judged *out of those Things*, that are written in the Books !—*Terrible ! terrible ! inconceivably terrible !* must be the Condition of a Man, who sees at once the *three great Books*, of *Nature, Law, and Grace*, opened against him, and ten thousand Sins staring him in the Face, without a *Drop* of the Redeemer's Blood to atone for him ; but on the contrary, every *Drop* of it crying louder than *Abel's*, for *divine Vengeance* upon him !—But the *Thought* is too dreadful to dwell upon.

I proceed,

3. To observe, that the Dead shall be judged *according to their Works*.—Which shews us *first*, that God will put a Difference betwixt the good and evil Works of Men ; and *secondly*, *proportion*
his

his Rewards and Punishments, to the different Degrees of Good or Evil, that shall be found in our Actions.

I. God will *differently* reward Men's good and evil Works. This is what *Justice* itself requires, and what the Scriptures plainly assert—It would be unjust, to reward all Actions alike, at that solemn Day—There may be *Reasons* sufficient to justify this Sort of Conduct in a State of *Probation*—and we see in Fact, that very often all Things come alike to all, and there is one Event to Men of quite the reverse and opposite Characters—as is the Righteous, so is the Wicked—this, I say. may be *justify'd* in a State of *Trial*—But it can't be *just* at the Day of Judgment.—Then God will observe the strict Rules of Justice, and put an infinite *Difference* between him that *sweareth*, and him that *feareth an Oath*. As the Apostle Words it, he will render to every Man *according* to his Deeds, to them who by patient Continuance in Well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, *eternal Life*: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and *Anguish*, upon every Soul of Man that doeth Evil; —But Glory, Honour and Peace to every Man that worketh Good.—This Difference of Retribution stands in the *clearest* Light in our Saviour's own

Description of the Day of Judgment—They that fed, and clothed, and visited, and took in his *poor Members* upon Earth, shall stand at his right Hand, and be welcomed to *everlasting Life*—They that were of an opposite Character and Temper, are placed at his left Hand, and doom'd to *everlasting Fire*.—Vice and Virtue are of an *infinitely* distinct Nature, and the Rewards of them will be *proportionably* infinite—These shall go away into *everlasting Punishment*, but the Righteous into *Life eternal*!—Only observe this, that tho' *both* Righteous and Wicked are rewarded *according* to, yet *only* the Wicked are rewarded *for*, their Works. Vice, strictly *merits* Hell, but the Reward of human Virtue, will be of *Grace*, not of *Debt*—*not of Works, lest any Man should boast*—After we have done all, we are to account ourselves *unprofitable* Servants. We must not pretend to stamp the least Degree of *Merit* upon the most specious of our *good Works*. I am clearly of *Bishop Beveridge's* Mind here, “ That we cannot *pray*, but we *sin*.—If our good Works are *rewarded* at the last Day, 'tis to the Merits of Christ we owe the *Reward*, we and our Services are accepted in the *Beloved*.—Eternal Life, after all our good Works, will be the *Gift* of God in Christ. I know, this is *not* the modern Divinity—but I am sure it is the *Apostle's* Doctrine, and I dare not bring you any other.—Not by *Works of Righteousness*,

ness, which we have done, but of *his Mercy* he saveth us : and I can't go into other Sentiments, without first shutting my Eyes, or my *Bible*.

But yet,

2. God will *proportion* our Rewards and Punishments, to the *Degree* of Good and Evil found in our present Actions.

Tho' *no* good Action be *meritorious* ; yet God has declared he will observe the same Rule, in rewarding as if Works were *meritorious*.—The more we do from a Principle of *living Faith* in Christ ; the more sincere our Aims and Intentions be ; the more diligent and assiduous we are in Duty, the *greater Degrees* of Happiness and Glory may we rationally expect. Every righteous Man shall have his *Reward*, but not the *same* Reward—Our future Honour will bear *Proportion* to our present Talents and *Improvements* ; and Saints will differ in the Orbs of Glory, as we see *one* Star differing from *another* : which shou'd surely encourage us to *press* forward towards the *Mark*.—In like Manner, tho' every Sinner shall go to Hell for his *sinful Works*, some *notorious* Sinner shall find it hotter than others ; and *Gospel-Sinners*, *Christ-despisers*, the *hottest* of any.

Thus I have passed thro' the several *Points* of Doctrine, that lie couched in these Words : and shall now improve the Representation here given of the last Day, in a serious Exhortation, to *awaken* our Consideration, to engage us to *search* and try our Hearts, and to get *ready* for that awful Day.

1. I would seriously exhort *you*, and *myself* also, to *consider* of the great and terrible Day of the Lord. Indeed, one would imagine such Kinds of Exhortations *needless*, and that there is enough in the tremendous Subject itself to awaken our Consideration, and keep it always *alive* in our Minds ; that as we are rational Creatures, naturally apprehensive of Danger, we could not help reflecting upon such weighty and awful Things as these ; upon a Transaction, of the highest Certainty, the greatest Consequence ; and in which *every* Man living must have his Share ! But I find my *own* Heart so cold and dead—such a strange Inclination in myself to *forget* this Day, that if I may measure others by my own Temper, there is a Necessity of stirring up your Minds by Way of Remembrance. *Inconsideration* is the Bane of Mankind—*Israel* doth not know, my People do not consider !—*Consideration* is the *first* Step to Religion—I tho't on my Ways, and turned my Feet to thy Testimonies. And the *Consideration* of the last Judgment, is certainly of absolute Necessity, to its Influence and Impression

on our Minds—Did Men seriously *consider*, that there is a Judgment to come ; that it is so exact and impartial ; that it will be attended with so much awful Pomp and Solemnity, it would not be so difficult a Thing to reason them into Religion—All the Poms and Vanities of Life would be dead and insipid to them ; and in the richest Enjoyments of this World, they would conceive no better Satisfaction, than the *Man* at the Prince's Table, with the Point of a Sword hanging over his *Head* by a single Hair !—or than *Belsazzar*, when in the midst of his Cups and Jollity, there appeared the *Writing* of a Man's Hand upon the Wall, which put him into a *pannick*, and made his Knees smite one against another !—The *Enemy* of our Souls is well aware of the Tendency of *considering* these Things : and therefore makes Use of every Stratagem and Policy, to divert our Thoughts from them : When a Preacher has been upon such Subjects, and has perhaps a little alarmed the Passions of his Hearers, *Satan* immediately strives to extinguish the Impression—He raises the Kingdoms and Glories of the World in the Imagination ; he draws some sensible Image upon the Fancy—He leads us away insensibly to worldly Thoughts and Business, or to vain Amusements, and especially to unseasonable Company—We should therefore beware of *such* Devices, and keep a Guard upon our Attention ; summon in all our Tho'ts, and reflect upon what we have heard—

We should choose the soft and silent Hours of Retirement, especially to contemplate Things of this Nature—shut our Eyes and Ears against the Charms of the Tempter, and the Enchantments of the World—endeavour to draw back that thin Curtain of Time and Years which divides the great *Tribunal* from our Eyes—We should imagine, that we hear the *last Trumpet* and Summons; consider ourselves as standing at the Bar of Christ, the Books being opened, and seriously *consider*, what Sentence is like to pass—I'm sure, no Man of unprejudiced Reason, will deny the Reasonableness of this Duty, in a Matter that so much merits his *Consideration*—If a Day of *Judgment* does not deserve it, what is there in universal Nature can?—Were we fallen under the Censure of human Laws, in Crimes of a capital Nature—were we sure there was no possible Way of escaping the Hands of Justice—did we certainly know that we must be brought to the Bar of our Judge, and be uncertain how our *Trial* would issue, whether Life or Death would be determined for us; should we not often reflect upon our Condition! Could such a *Trial* ever be, a Moment almost, out of our Thoughts—Would it not mingle with our very Dreams—or rather should we not deny Sleep to our Eyes, and Slumber to our Eye-lids—Would not the *Trial* stand *pictured* on our busy Imagination and Fears, before it came to be transacted in the *Thing* itself—Would it not

so engross our Thoughts, as to spoil the Relish of our Food, so that we should hardly taste what we eat or what we drink!—And shall our *last Tryal* only, be out of our Thoughts! Is the *Determination* of our everlasting State and Condition, not worth thinking of? Is this the only trifling Thing Men have a Concern in, whether they shall be *saved*, or *darned*, to *Eternity*! And yet are not these the *two* Things propounded to our *Consideration*? Is not all that is dear in *Heaven*, and all that is terrible in *He'll*, included in this Judgment! And are any Things dearer, or more terrible, than what these *two* Names imply and express! Surely we have not the *Understanding* of a Man in us! One would think, Sin had left no Distinction betwixt *us* and the *Brutes*! that it had driven us from among Men, and quite extinguish'd every Spark of *Reason* and *Reflection* in us!—What! Have the Workers of Iniquity no Knowledge, no Sense, no Reason left! None verily; if they neglect to make Use of their *Reflection*, upon so great a Theme, so great a Day as this; which has every Thing in it that is sacred and great, solemn and terrible!—Hence, after the Description of such a Day in the 50th *Psalms*, we have this *loud* Exhortation,—Consider, *Consider* this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver!—I verily believe, it will appear at last, that most, if not all, who shall find this the Day of *Condemnation*,

nation, never *considered* of it; and that such as shall be then acquitted, have been much, and first, wrought upon, by the serious and timely *Consideration* of the Terrors of a Judgment to come— There is something very rousing in the *Word* itself, *Judgment!* how much more in the *Judgment of God!* and yet more in the *last* and *eternal* Judgment! And except I can bring you, my Friends, to *this*; to *consider*; I expect, all I have preached upon the dreadful Subject, will be to no other Purpose, than to render the Day *more* dreadful to you, when it *really* comes—And whether you believe Christ, or no, I can't tell; but this I know, that he will *certainly* come, and that he may come in such an Hour as ye think not of!—The more you sleep and slumber, the less you *consider* and think of such a Time; and the more like it is to be near! Let not the World then *monopolize* all your Tho'ts, but remember it as the serious Advice of the great *Saviour*, Take Heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life; and so that Day come upon you unawares; for as a Snare shall it come! *Watch* ye therefore, and *pray* always (both which imply *Consideration*—) that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things, and to stand before the *Son of Man*.

2. Let us be exhorted, not only to *consider* these great Things, to weigh and ponder them seriously in our Hearts; but to examine ourselves, what State and Condition we are in, and what Account we could give to *Christ*, were we now summon'd to appear before his *Tribunal*!

Without this, *Consideration* will be of little Use to us; but it has a natural Tendency to bring us to such *Enquiries*—For certainly, when I have read such a Text as this, in the Oracles of Truth; when I have the Terrors of this Day describ'd in such solemn Language—I must be a Stock, or a Stone, if I don't ask my Heart, How I am *prepared* for it? if I am not *sollicitous* to *enquire*, what the Actions of my past Life have been, what the present Frame of my Heart, and what I can alledge in Justification of my Conduct?—When our blessed Saviour once told his Disciples, *One of you shall betray me!* how were they all struck with Astonishment, how *sollicitous* to know who that *Devil* should be, who could be guilty of so criminal an Action as Treason against their Master! How seriously do they every one ask, Lord, is it I?—So when the Day of Judgment is described, and we hear Christ reproving Sinners; how very *sollicitous* should we be to *examine* our Hearts, to retrospect our Lives, and to say, Speak, O *Conscience*, is it I? Am I among the Wretches I here read of, *doom'd* to everlasting

everlasting Pains ! or among those blessed ones, which are here *welcomed* to the Kingdom of Heaven ! Certainly 'tis not an *Enquiry* we should be easy or careless about.

We are very prone to censure, and ready to judge others—'This is *not* the Inference that flows from the Doctrine of a *future* Judgment, but quite the Reverse ; we are *not* determinately, and with the *Authority* of a *Judge*, to fix the State of any Man living ; that Work belongs to *Christ*, who has both Authority and Capacity for it—They are *his* Servants, to him they must stand or fall.—We ought therefore, in *this Sense*, to judge nothing before the Time—But judge and *examine* ourselves, we may and ought—Know ye not your own selves, that *Christ* is in you, except you be *Reprobates* ! *Prove* your own selves therefore—the Judgment of God will be *less* severe, and *less* surprizing to us, if we frequently call our Actions to our *own Bar*—And thus to judge ourselves, so as to be thereby excited to fly to the City of Refuge, is the Way *not* to be condemned with the World—Why should we be afraid of standing at the Tribunal of our own *Consciences* ? if we can't stand *these*, how shall we stand before *Christ* in Judgment ! If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all Things ! If we find ourselves, upon a serious *Enquiry*, in a *bad* Situation,—this is a good Step

in Preparation to a *better*. If we find ourselves in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity, let us earnestly cry for renewing Grace.—And if we can upon good Ground pronounce ourselves *Christians*, the Satisfaction that must arise from the Testimony of a Conscience cleansed by the Blood of Sprinkling, will certainly requite the little Pains we are at in the Examination. For if our Hearts upon a thorough, diligent impartial Examination, condemn us not, then have we *Confidence* towards God.—Resolve then upon this necessary Work; remember, you are to be judged *according* to your Works: look back therefore upon your past Behaviour, and seriously *ask your Hearts*, what you have been doing since you came upon the Stage of Action, and to the Years of Discretion! But I tremble to think, what *Answer* the Hearts of most Men must give to so serious a *Question*. Suffer me, and bear with my Plainness and Folly a little, to descend to some particular notorious Crimes, that will *stare* you in the Face at the last Day, unless you *repent* and *believe* the Gospel.

Is there any among you, of the *prophane* Tribe; have you learnt that *bellish* Rhetorick, of mingling Oaths with your common Conversation? Do you indulge your Tongues, in the irreverent Use of *God's great and dreadful Name*; and think that *Prophanity* gives Colours, Form, and Embellishments,

lishments, to your Sentences ! Ask your *Consciences*, what Account you can give to your *Judge*, when He shall open the *Book*, wherein every Oath stands upon *Record* against you ! What will you be able to offer in Excuse for a Sin, so full of Impiety, so bold and daring, so destitute of all Temptations, from *Pleasure* or *Profit* !

Are there any *Debauchees* among you ? Are any of you addicted to youthful Lusts and Gratifications ? Do any of you indulge licentious Thoughts and Practices, Chambering and Wantonness ? Ask yourselves seriously, what *Account* you can give to *Christ*, for Sins, so dishonourable to human Nature, so defiling to yourselves, so much against your own Bodies, so contrary to the Purity of his Laws and sacred Example, and of such a Tendency to the Ruin of Society, and your own Reputation ?

Are any of you given to *excessive* Drinking ? Is Wine a Mocker, to you, and strong Drink raging ? Have you Soreness and Redness of Eyes, by looking upon the Wine when it moveth itself aright, and tempts you ? Do any of you sit up late *tipling* and drinking with the *Drunkard* ! What Account can you render to your *Judge* and *God*, for this vile Abuse of his good Creatures—for transgressing the Laws of Temperance, for wasting so much precious Time, for prejudicing your Health and Con-

stitution ;

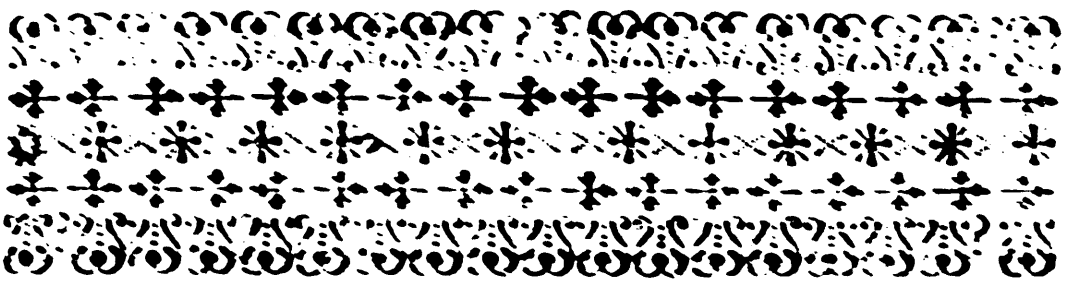
stitution ; enfeebling your Powers, and unmanning yourselves ! Ask yourselves seriously, what a terrible Account you are like to give for these Things—and remember, if God shall judge you according to your Works, how visibly he will write your *Sin* in your *Punishment*, when he shall make you drink of the Wine of the *Wrath of God*, and the full Cup of his *Indignation* !

Are there any among you that give your Tongues to *Slander*, to *Mischief*, and *Lying* ? How will you answer this to your *Judge* ! Who is *Truth* itself, in whose Mouth there was found no *Guile*, and who requireth *Truth* in the inward Parts ; and has threatned to destroy the false and the treacherous Tongue. Thou *false* Tongue, what shall then be done unto thee ! Thou shalt be pierced through, as with burning Arrows—Thou art now set on *Fire* of Hell, and shalt then be tormented with the *Flames* of Hell forever !—Are there any of you that practise the Arts of Deceit and Fraud, in your Trade and Business ? Do any of you *defraud* your Brother ? or is *Theft* found in your Hands ! What Account will you give to him that has said, Thou shalt not *steal* ; and who has done and suffer'd so much to secure the Rights of his Father's *Justice* !

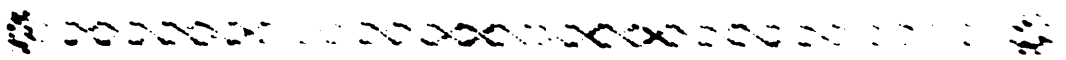
Or are there any *Scorners* among you, that deride Religion, and the Professors of serious Godliness; that hate and calumniate the Righteous;—tainted with the Blood of *Cain*, who was of that *wicked One*.—How will you answer this to that *great Judge*, who himself instituted the *Christian Religion*, attested it with the *Exertion* of almighty Power, and stamp'd such a *Beauty* upon it, in his own Practice, and must needs be tenderly affected with the Abuses offer'd to his Saints! yea, who has before-hand told you, that if you offend the *least* of one of these, better were it a *Milstone* were hanged about your Neck, and you were cast into the Sea!

Examine, my Friends, if you fall under none of these Characters; think how dreadful it will be, to *appear* under them before *Christ* in Judgment: And now prepare by *Faith* and *Repentance*, to meet your God. Thus agree with thine *Adversary* quickly, while thou art in the *Way*! ———





SERMON XV.



The *Effects* of DIVINE FURY.

Preached in Commemoration of the dreadful Fire
in *Charles-Town*, 1740.

N A H U M Chap. I. 6.

*HIS Fury is poured out like Fire ;
and the Rocks are thrown down by
him.*

***** HIS *Propbet* seems to derive his
Name from an *Hebrew* Word, which
signifies *to comfort* ; and it seems to
be the *main* Design of the *Prophecy*,
to comfort *Israel* against the Threat-
nings of the *Assyrian Monarchy* : In Order to
S which,

which, the *Prophet* represents with much *Magnificence* of Expression, the *Power* of the *God of Israel*; and thereby intimates, how vain all *Attempts* upon his *People* would be; He is indeed *fire* to *Anger*, but he is *great* in *Power*: *The Lord has his Way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm; and the Clouds are the Dust of his Feet: He rebuketh the Sea, and maketh it dry; and drieth up all the Rivers: Babylon languisheth, and Carmel, and the Flower of Lebanon languisheth; the Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his Presence; yea the World and all that dwell therein: Who can stand before his Indignation, and who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him.*

In the Words of my *Text*, we may observe *two* Things:

I. The *Passion*, that is ascrib'd by the *Prophet* to *God*; *his Fury*.

II. The *Exercise*; the strong and terrible *Effects* of this *Passion*, this divine *Fury*; *'tis poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him.*

I. Here

I. Here is a very *strong Passion* ascrib'd to *God*, call'd *his Fury*; and here a great Deal of *Cautiō* is necessary, lest, in ascribing any of the *Passions* to our Maker, we measure him by our own Standard, form unworthy *Ideas* of him, and mingle them with our own *Imperfections*: These Things must be considered *analogically*, i. e. we are to consider what our *Passions* are; and must ascribe them to *God* no further, than his Perfections allow us. *Fury* in Men, seems to carry some *excessive Idea* with it; *Fury* is a *Passion* rais'd to a great Height: We say a Man is *in Fury*, when he has lost the *regular Use* and *Command* of his *Passions*; and this is apt to precipitate him into a great many *Inconveniences*, if not actual Crimes. We must therefore take Care, when we speak of *Fury* in *God*, that we don't suffer any *extraneous Idea*, to mingle themselves with it; the Deity may be said to have *Passions*, when he *plainly inclines* to those Things, to which *Passions* lead us; but we may be assur'd of it, that *God* has *no Passions*, that transport him beyond the *Bounds of Reason*: He acts still by *Wisdom*, and in *Justice*; and without any of those *unsteady Emotions*, or *Perturbations of Mind*, which *Passions* create in us: However, as *Fury* is the *Highest* and utmost *Strength* of *Passion* in a *human Soul*, it suggests this to us, that when *God* is represented in it, he exerts himself *highly*; and the *Effects* of it must be *terrible*.

For in the next Place,

II. *His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him.*

Every Syllable here has its Weight and Terror; *His Fury*, the Fury of a God; we are told, that the *Wrath of a King* is like the *Rearing of a Lion*, the most terrible of Creatures: What *Like* then must we have of the Fury of a God, who *revereth Mountains in his Anger*, who *taketh up the Isles as a very little Thing*; whose *Wrath*, if it be kindled but a little, we *perish from the Way*? How terrible is God in Arms? How *bright and glistering* is his Spear? How *keen* the Edge of his Sword? Who ever *hardened* himself against God, and *profpered*? What is *Man*, to contend with his *Maker*, who makes him afraid like a *Grasshopper*? for all the *Inhabitants* of the Earth are such before him: If the *Finger of God* but touch us, how do we cry out to *our Friends*, to have Pity upon us! *What*, if he should make bare his *Arm*? *What*, if he should take hold of *Vengeance*, and give Loose to his *fiercest Fires*? How can we ever *fully* conceive of the *Fury of God*, armed with *infinite and almighty Power*? That *Power*, which gave *Being* to the World; that *Power*, which keeps it from *sinking*; that *Power*, which will *melt and burn* it up, and all its Works? *What a fearful Thing* must it be, to *fall into the Hands of the living God*? The *Fury of Men* may sometimes be despis'd, it may
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be evaded, it may be restrain'd, it may be quite suppress'd; but not so the Fury of a God: Who can stand before his *Indignation*? Who can abide in the *Fierceness* of his Anger? 'Tis a *beautiful* Turn of Thought that *Milton* has, when he represents the *Son of God* riding over the *apostate* Angels, and their Chariots, and War; and tells us, he put not forth *half* his Strength, and stopped in *Mil-valley*; How then would they have born *his Fury*?

But my *Text* is not content to call it the *Fury of God*, but adds, that it is *poured out*; an Expression of *Strength*, and speaks the *Abundance* of it; he does not let his Fury distil in *gentle Drops*, like his *Dew*, and *genial Rains*; but he *pours it out*, he makes it descend in *Shewers*; so he *poured out his Fury* upon the *old World*, when he *destroyed* it with the Flood; he *rained* upon them *forty Days*, and *forty Nights*: But then the last Word *Fire* finishes the Emphasis; his *Fury is poured out like Fire*; 'tis a *fiery Indignation* the Wicked must expect; *God will rain upon them Snares, Hail, Fire, and Brimstone, an horrible Tempest*; this shall be the *Portion of their Cup*. So *Sodom and Gomorrah* are set forth as *Examples*, Instances of *divine Fury*, suffering the Vengeance of *eternal Fire*; for it bore some *Image* of it, when the Lord rained upon it in *Fire and Brimstone*, and the *Smoke of the City went up like the Smoke of a Furnace*;

Furnace; which being kindled by the Jealousy of God, the Coals thereof were *Coals of Fire*; and they were convinced, that our God is a *consuming Fire*. But tho' his Fury may *not* be poured out *in Fire*, yet, when it is poured out, 'tis *like Fire*; so saith my *Text*, i. e. the *Judgments* of an *incensed* God are *irresistible*, like Fire, they devour us, as *Stubble* is devoured by some *mighty and rampant Flame*; *the Fury of the Lord burns like an Oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, are as Stubble*. How do we *fly* seven Ways before the Fire, when it's *proud and curling Waves* pursue us? Thus should we be glad of *some Retreat* from the *Fury of God*; for we have *no Shield* to hold up against it, nor can we disarm the Thunderer. *Again*, it is like Fire in its *quick Execution*; *when we say Peace and Safety, sudden Destruction overtakes us, and we cannot escape*; as a Fire that soon breaks out in a House. *Again*, It is like Fire in the *wide and spreading Desolations* it produces; God in his Fury spreads *Destruction* over whole *Towns, Provinces, Kingdoms and Nations*; *divine Vengeance* runs like Fire over the *Tops of our Houses*, and through all our *Streets*, as when it appears in *Tempests, Earthquakes, Wars, and raging Pestilences*: In short, Fire is a very *apt Similitude and Figure*, to express the Fury of God; it is one of his *keenest*

instruments and fiery Instruments; and the very Cry of it alarms and shocks us.

And yet, as if all this were too faint a Representation of the divine Fury, the Text yet adds further, that *the Rocks are thrown down by him*; we think we are safe, when we build upon a Rock; but what Safety can there be from the Ire, the Fury, of *unsearch'd and almighty Power*? Where is that Rock, where is that Mountain, which can shelter us from God? He makes the Mountains a plain, the Rocks know his Voice, and confess his Power, and will soon rise assunder, and make a Way for his Anger, to pass through.

'Twere easy to enlarge upon these Heads, but let this suffice, to lead us to the Application of the Subject, a fiery Subject, chosen upon a fiery Occasion: The Year One Thousand, seven Hundred and Forty, and the Eighteenth of November, is a Year, and a Day, to be remembered by the Inhabitants of this Town; for then did the Almighty pour out his Fury upon us like Fire; yea, he made Fire itself the Vehicle of his Fury: He had spoken once, twice, yea frequently, to us by other Judgments, and this being disregarded, he at last spoke in Fire: and what a terrible Alarm did it give to the Town? What Desolation did it spread? How irresistible was its Fury?

For it was kindled by the *Breath* of God's *Nostrils*, who from the least *Matter* can raise a *Fire*, that none can extinguish.

You can none of you have forgot the *Triumphs* of that *flaming* Day, when the Vengeance of God triumph'd in our Ruins, and convinc'd us, how vain it is to set ourselves against him? Do you not remember, how the *proud* *Flames* laugh'd at your *Engines*, your *Art*, and your *Numbers*? Have you forgot, how with *winged* Speed the Fire flew from House to House? How it seem'd to choose out your *fairest* *Buildings*, and burnt them down to their Foundation? Where was then the Beauty of *Charlestown-Bay*? Where was her *Merchandize* and *Traffick*? How did the *Gay-Gentlemen* look? How did you *confess* your Weakness? What *Confusion* fate upon your Faces, and mingled your Cries? What *Screamings*, what *wringing of Hands* among the *pitiful* *Women*? Yea, how were the stout-hearted spoiled, and their Hearts ready to fail, as if the *flaming* *Scenes* of Nature, which are to close the World, were already set open, as if the *Elements* were indeed in a *Flame*? Such a Confusion will seize the *Ungodly*, and the *Sinner* e're long, when God shall *pour out his Fury* upon the *whole* *World*, and the *Earth*, and her *Works* shall be burnt up.

But wherefore will the *Stranger* say, was God

‘ *so wrath* ? Why did he seem to torment us before the Time ? What was it, that stirred up his *Fury* against this City ?’ Surely we must say, “ Because we have broken his *Covenant*, and despised his *Altars* ; we had forsaken the *God of our Fathers*, in whom they trusted, and were not ashamed ; we had lost our *first Love* ; we were *lukewarm*, and *indifferent* about Religion ; little was there left of *Christianity* among us, a *few Names* excepted, but the *Name* and *lifeless Image* of it ;” every *serious* Person could observe and did lament it : How were our *Sabbaths* then, as well as now *profaned* ? The *due Observation* of which is the very *Life* and *Support*, next to *divine Grace*, of true Religion : Has not God commanded, saying, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy* ? But where was *Holiness* to the Lord, written upon our *Sabbaths* ? What *licentious Freedom* did we, *alas*, that I must add, do we *now* take, *finding our own Pleasure*, and *doing our own Works* : I wish you would remember, that this *burnt the Gates of Jerusalem*. And we made as free with the *Name* of God, as with his *Sabbaths*. It was heard in a *Hundred unhallow’d Lips* every Day ; *sacred Things* were *Matter of Scoff* with some ; the *Deist* jested upon his *Bible*, and made little other Use of it than to furnish out *Lampoon*, and *ludicrous Wit*. *Uncleanness* was running through the
Town

Town very fast; and *Pride* compass'd us about like a *Circle*; the *Catalogue* is too long, and 'tis too *black* to go over: And this it was, that *larn'd* our *Houses*; this it was that *confam'd* our *Estates*; this it was that *rais'd* the *divine* *Anger* into such a *Flame*; and for this did God *pour out his Fury* upon the *Town*, like *Fire*.

Forty Years was he grieved with this *Generation*; long did he hold in and *suppress* his *Thunder*, as if he knew not how to *strike*, saying; *How shall I give thee up, O Charlestown! How shall I make thee as Sodom? How shall I consume thee? Till he was weary with Fretting, and said; Shall I not visit for these Things, shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Town? And may not Charlestown be burnt again? May not our richest Stores, and Houses, be ruin'd, and demolish'd again? Can we make them Proof against Fire; Proof against God; Proof against his Fury? Has the last Fire burnt up our *Dross*, and purg'd away our *Corruptions*, and left us *Fuel* behind, to re-ignite? Where is the *Reformation*, that it has wrought? Do not the same *Sins* continue, and do they not cry for the same *Vengeance*? Has it suppress'd our *Pride*, has it made us *more humble*? Are our *Sabbaths* better observ'd? Does *Vice* lurk, does *Virtue* show it's Face, does *Religion* revive? Has she more *Friends* and *Voluntaries*; or have we not too many of us, return'd to our *Vomit*, and spend*

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the Prime of our Strength in vain Mirth, and in a *voluptuous* Life? If this be the Case, what Security have we against such another *Fire*? Not that I desire the *awful Day*, the Lord knoweth; I had rather *sleep* with my Fathers in *Peace*, than see such an Evil come upon *my City*, and *my People*.

But the only *effectual Way* to prevent it, and to ease ourselves of such *Apprehensions* is to go about a *general Reformation*: Let us repent and turn from our *Wickedness*, and God also will *repent him of his Evil*, and he will not *pour out his Fury like Fire upon us*, and *throw down our high Places*.

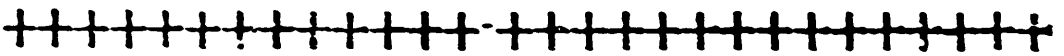
But whether we escape *this Fire*, or not, let us remember, there is a *Day of Conflagration* coming, *infinitely* more terrible; for this *Heaven*, and this *Earth*, are kept in Store against the *Day of Judgment*, reserv'd unto *Fire*, and *Perdition of ungodly Men*; and then blessed are they that have a *Part in the first Resurrection*. *Fly* then, O *Sinner*! *Fly* from the *Wrath to come*; *Fly* from that last *Fire in Time*; *Fly* not to the *Rocks*, for they shall be thrown down; but *fly* for Refuge to the *blessed Hope*; take Shelter in the *Wounds* of Christ, and there shall you be safe, 'till the *flaming Indignation* be over-past; for the *great Day* of the *Wrath of the Lamb* will come, and
who

who shall *be able* to stand? *Behold*, the *Lamb* of God now; and you shall be able to stand before him *at last*? You shall sing *Praises* to him that sitteth on *the Throne*, and to the *Lamb*, who has *loved* you, and *washed* you from your Sins in his *own Blood*, and God will say; *Fury is not in me.*





S E R M O N X V I .








T H E

Necessity of Practice.



J O H N , Chap. XIII. Ver. 17.

*IF ye know these Things ; happy
are ye if ye do them.*

 HAVE read, saith Doctor *Bates*,
 “ of an *excellent Preacher*, that
 “ in a *Sermon* describ'd the last
 “ Judgment in all its Terror, with
 “ such ardent Expressions, and
“ those animated with such an affecting *Voice*, such
“ an

“ an inflam’d *Countenance* and *Affliction*, that his
 “ *Hearers* broke forth into passionate Cries, as if
 “ the Judge himself had been present, to pass the
 “ final Sentence upon them: In the Height of
 “ their Commotion, the *Preacher* bid them stop
 “ their *Fears* and *Passions*, for he had one Thing
 “ more to add, the most *afflicting* and *afforishing*
 “ Consideration of all the rest; and what was
 “ this? Why, He told them that within less than
 “ a Quarter of an Hour, the *Memory*, and *Regards*
 “ of that, which so transported them, would vanish;
 “ and their *Affections* return to carnal Objects,
 “ in their usual Manner.”

Whoever this *Preacher* was, he gave a convinc-
 ing Proof how well he understood *human Nature*:
 No Wonder then our blessed Lord, who knew all
 Men, and what was in Man, should address him-
 self in *this Manner* to his own Disciples; *If ye*
know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.
 Your hearing these Things from me; your being
 affected with them; and even your clearest Appre-
 hensions of them, will be of little Service, without
 a *Practice* agreeable to the Nature of them; but
 if you live up to the *Dictates* of a Conscience
 well informed in these Truths, then *are ye happy*
indeed.

Whether

Whether these *Things*, our Saviour here speaks of, refer to this *particular* Discourse with them in the preceding *Context*, where he set the most admirable *Example* of Condescension and Humility before them, by *washing their Feet*; or whether they look further back, to the whole *System* of Instruction he had given them before, is not easy to determine: But as they are *applicable* in the largest View, I shall accordingly *discourse* upon them; and the Words naturally open themselves into *two general Heads*.

I. That the *Knowledge* of divine Truths is *necessary* to the Practice of divine Vertues.

II. That the *Practice* of Christian Vertues is *necessary* to the Happiness of Men, and can't fail of making them *happy*.

I. The *Knowledge* of divine Truths is *antecedently* necessary to the *Practice* of Christian Vertues.

In the *Illustration* of this Head, I shall in the *first Place* attempt, to give a *general Proof* of the Assertion; and in the *next Place*, mention some of the *leading Articles* of the Christian Faith, which are *necessary* to direct our Practice.

1. I would lay before you a *general Proof* of this Assertion ; that the *Knowledge* of divine Truths is *necessary* to the Practice of Christian *Virtues*.

It has greatly surpris'd me, since I have been capable of making any *Observations* upon the World, to see, and to hear, how indifferent some Men are about *Principles*. In the *civil* and *commercial* Life indeed, they look upon *good Principles* as a Matter of *real* Importance ; and no Man cares to traffick with Persons, who they think would not be governed by Principles of *Honour*, *Virtue*, and *fair Dealing* ; but as to the *Principles of Religion*, they seem only to regard them, as Matters of *Theory*, and meer *Speculation* ; and of *no Influence* upon their Life and Practice : With these Men, all *Persuasions* and *Principles* are equal ; and 'tis of no Moment, whether a Man's Head be stored with just and *orthodox Notions* of Divinity, or not ; 'tis sufficient if he leads, what they call, a *moral, honest Life* ; but I would stop the *Gentlemen* short, and ask them, What *Morality* they can expect in a Man's *Practice*, if he has no *just Notions* of *moral Duties* and Obligations in his Head ?

Besides, Is a common Life of *Morality* the only *Criterion* of a Christian ? Is there nothing more *essential*, than to do *justly* in common Affairs of Life ? are there not many *Duties* of Piety in
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the Constitution of a Christian, which must have their *proper Principles*? And must not the Man be acquainted with them, before he finds himself actuated and instigated by them? Is not this *agreeable* to all the Operations of the *human Soul*? If we look into *the Order* that is establish'd in our *own Nature*, it is impossible but we must confess this. For,

First, No *Action* we perform, can take the *Denomination* of a *moral Action*, but with Reference to our *own Will* it is the *Concern*: which our Will has in them, that *characterizes* our *Actions*, good or vicious. If a Man under the Bereavement of his *rational Powers*, commit any Thing that is *injurious*, the *Law* takes no Cognizance of it; for it looks upon the *Action*, not as flowing from a *Choice*, or *Intention*, but from a *meer Accident*; while it punishes the *same Action* in another. If a Man seized with the *Epilepsy*, or taken with a *sudden Swoon*, kills a *Child* in his Fall, all agree to acquit him of *Murder*, because he was not in *Possession of himself*; his *Reason* was suspended. and there could be no *Intention*, or *Concurrence* of his *Will*.

On the *other Hand*; If a Man that is not a *Master* of himself enough to determine it, we give him no Applause, when he happens to do a
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Thing *materially good* ; and when the *Calvinists* speak of a Man's having no Will of his own, they do not mean to rob him of a *natural self-determining Power*, without which he would be a *Machine* ; but they deny that he has any *Inclination* to true and inward Religion, 'till *divine Grace* operates upon him.

In a Word, you cannot delineate a Man as a *moral Agent*, except you bring into the Definition, his *acting* with some Inclination ; so that the *Morality* of our Actions spring from the Influence our *Faculty* or *Power of Willing* has in them.

But then,

Secondly, The Will always determines to act in Conformity to the *present Apprehension* of the Mind or Understanding ; the *Understanding* directs, and the *Will* determines ; or in a common Phrase of the School, *The Will follows the last practical Judgment* of the *Understanding*.—I am not insensible indeed, that the *Passions* too often sway the Will, and determine it against the general Dictates of *right Reason* ; but they do this by *corrupting* the Judgment and *perverting* the Understanding ; for all *moral Actions* must originate in the Understanding, tho' they are the *immediate Determination* of the Will. A Man acts as he at present *apprehends*
Things ;

Things; or he acts *mechanically*, and *not* under the Character of a *rational Creature*. If therefore I discharge any *Duty* of the Christian Life, I do it because my Understanding *directs*, and my Will *determines* me to it; consequently, I cannot *practise* that Vertue, without the *Knowledge* of those *divine Truths* that have a necessary *Connection* with, and a powerful *Influence* upon them. Not that I would insinuate the Necessity of having a *clear* and *adequate Idea* of those Truths, as to the *Ratio* or *Motus*; but I insist, that we must have such *Ideas* of them, as makes us believe their *Reality*, and so make them the *Principle* of our Actions. Is it not therefore of the *first* Importance, to have *good* and *just Principles*, and to be well *grounded* and *rooted* in the Faith? Surely if our Principles be *wrong*, our Practice cannot be *right*.—But enough upon *this Head*.

I have given a *general Proof* of the Assertion, and proceed as was proposed,

2. To particularize, and point out more distinctly some of the *principal Truths* we ought to be acquainted with, in order to practise those *Actions*, which have such an *Influence* into our own Happiness. And they are such as these—The *Knowledge of the Existence of the Deity*, is the *primary* and *essential* Foundation of all Religion: for he
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that cometh to God, either in a Way of *Worship*, or as his *Portion and Felicity*, must believe that he is, and that he is a *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. If Men can once be Fools enough to say in their Hearts, *there is no God*; they will soon be corrupt in their *Practice*, and do abominable Things; *there will be none that doeth good, no, not one*. The *essential Beauty of Virtue*, and the *Deformity of Vice*, will be found too *abstracted*, and of little Influence, without a *firm Persuasion* of a God, to *punish* one, and to *reward* the other. All the *Exercises of Piety and Devotion*, at least, do in their *own Nature* imply the *Existence* of their *Objects*, and a sufficient *Acquaintance* with those *Perfections*, which challenge *Adoration, Fear and Love*: I have therefore mentioned this, as the *first* divine Truth, that must command our Assent.

The *Knowledge of the holy Scripture*, as the only *complete Rule* of our Practice, is another Thing *necessary* to our Duty. Whatever Sense we have of our *Obligation* to live *vertuously*, it must be an *impracticable* Thing, if we have no *Rule* to direct us: if God has not given us some *Revelations* of his Will, how shall we know what is required of us, or practise from a *Principle of Obedience* to him? I have heard Men talk of the
Law

Law of Nature, and I acknowledge, there are some *Duties*, so plainly painted out by the common *Lights of Nature*, that the *Neglect* of them would be quite *inexcusable*. They are imprinted upon our very *Frame*, and the very *Heathens* had a *natural Conscience*, that *accused, and excused* *them*, who had not the *written Law of Moses*. But does it follow, that our *Reason* is a *sufficient Standard* of all the *Duties* we owe as *Christians*? We have had the *Testimony* of many Ages, how little the weak Efforts of *Reason*, improved by the *Lectures* of the best *Philosophers*, have been able to do in the World towards a *general Reformation*; but *revealed Religion* is more *expious and clear* upon Man's *Duty*, and the *Commands* of it come arm'd with the *immediate Authority* of Heaven, to give *Force and Virtue* to them: Here the *Limits* of our *Duty* are ascertained, and the *Knowledge* of the *Bible*, as a *Rule*, is *absolutely* necessary to *complete* the *Life* of a *Christian*, and to *guard* his *whole Conduct*.

The *Knowledge of our selves* is a further *Requisite* to the *Practice of Virtue*. While we have a *proud Conceit* of the *Powers of Nature*, we put ourselves quite out of the *Way* of all *supernatural Assistance*. It is therefore *necessary* we should be acquainted with our *Apostacy* from *God*, that we

should not now look upon ourselves, as in our *first Perfection*; but as *degenerate Creatures*, who have contracted vicious *Habits*, and labour under an *Impotency* to all that is good, and therefore *not sufficient*, as of ourselves, to *perform a good Thought*.

And hence the *Knowledge of Christ* is necessary to the Practice of religious Duties. For, he is not only the *Lord our Righteousness*; but in him we have *Strength*; thro' him we can do *all Things*; and without him we can do *nothing*. We must know Christ as the *Head of all Spiritual Influences* to his People, of whose *Fulness* we must all receive. Without this *Constitution*, we shall never apply ourselves to him, and so never obtain *divine Aid*. We must know Christ, as the great *Intercessor*, who opened a *Way of Access* to the *Throne of Grace*, and presents the *Prayers* of all Saints, with much *Incense*. 'Tis also necessary, that we be acquainted with the proper *Character and Office* of the Holy Ghost, who was sent into the World, to *convince of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment*; as a *Spirit of Truth*, to teach us our Duty; as a *Sanctifier*, to dispose us to it; and as a *Comforter*, to reward us for it, with that *Peace and Joy*, which is the *Privilege of the true Believer*.

To proceed,—We ought to be established in the Belief of our being *moral Agents*, capable of
Virtue,

Virtue, and therefore accountable to that God, who has given us *Laws* for our Trial. We must not admit of any Doubt, but with the *strongest Assurance* we must believe, that God has appointed a *Day to judge the World in Righteousness*; and that we must all appear before the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*. And if we consider how natural it is for Men to be governed by these great and *master-passions* of Hope and Fear, 'tis necessary to know, that in a future State all our good Actions will be accepted and rewarded thro' Christ, and our evil Deeds severely punished. And 'tis necessary, to know the *Nature and Greatness* of these Rewards and Punishments; that the Name of *Heaven*, and of *Hell*, may fall with a heavy Weight into the *Ear*, and powerfully determine the Operations of the *Will and Passions*.—And if this be the Case; if the Knowledge of *divine Truths* be so *essential* to the Practice of *Virtue*, and of *Consequence* to our true Felicity; this should recommend to us a *religious Education*, as a Thing of great Value and Importance. *Education*, in general, has always had the *Suffrage* of the Wise and Good; it has been honoured in all *polite* Ages; it is that which improves the *rational* Faculties, brightens our *Reason*, perfects and raises the Dignity of our *Nature*, restores Man to his *Character*. 'Tis *Education* which refines the Rustick, and the Clown, into a *Gentleman*; corrects Men's *Notions*, and prepares

them for distinguished Services in their *Generation* : Hence it is, that our *Academies* have poured out *Senators* and *Ministers*, as *publick* Blessings : and the Excellency of it appears every Time we turn our Eyes upon the State of the *uncultivated* Part of the *World*.— But a *religious Education* is of greater Importance, as we can neither know the *Way* of our Duty, or Happiness, without it. If there be an *essential* Dignity in Vertue ; if there be any *Beauty* and *Advantage* in the Practice of Christian Vertues ; if they be *Praise-worthy*, and and of *good* Report ; we need nothing more to recommend a *religious Education*. What a *rich* and *invaluable* Blessing then is the *Christian System* of Truths and Duties, and to be supplied with a *evangelical standing* Ministry, to methodize and comment upon them ? Justly did our Saviour say to his Disciples ; *Blessed are your Eyes, for they see ; blessed are your Ears, for they hear*, the Knowledge of Christianity, which is beyond all other *Sciences* ; for it testifies of *Christ*, and that we have *eternal Life* ; which made *St. Paul* (a great Proficient in *human Learning*) *count all Things but Dross, and Dung, for the Excellency of it only*.

When we have acquired Knowledge, we must reduce it into *Practice*, in order to our being *happy* : for my *Text* saith ; *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them*.

II. The other *Observation*, which I now come to consider, was this, that the *Practice* of Christian Virtues is *necessary* to a Christian's *Happiness*, and cannot fail of making him *happy*. *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

These Words evidently imply, that tho' we can't *practise* our Duty without the Knowledge of it, yet there may be the *Knowledge* of it, where there is not the *Practice*; nor does this carry any Thing in it like a *Contradiction* to my former *Discourse*, when I observ'd, that *the Will follows the last Judgment of the Understanding*; for we may in *general* assent to a *Truth*, and yet in a Time of *Temptation* the *Judgment* may be so corrupted by the *Passions*, as to pronounce against it's *first* and most *general* Dictates. You shall hardly meet with a Man, even of the most *ordinary* Capacity, that will not declare it his *settled Judgment*, that *Intemperance, Rapine, and Murder*, are very bad Things: and yet we find, how many are drawn into these Things, in a Time of *particular Temptation*; because at that *Trial*, in such a *critical* Time, and in those *particular* Circumstances, their *Judgment* is biassed by their *vitiating Passions*. Every Age, and every Country will afford *awful Instances* of this; *Observation* will always point out Men, who neglect the *Practice* of their Duty, not for want of knowing it, but thro' *Disinclination* to it.

How

How many *great Scholars* are found to be perfect *Debauchees*? How many in the World, well versed in the *Science* of Divinity, which is the most *glorious* of all others, who yet *practise* none of those *Virtues* which our Saviour recommends? A Man may have a very polite *Academical* Education, who is a Stranger to the Christian Life: Many one can talk in an *acute* and *orthodox* Strain, upon all the *Mysteries* of the Faith, who have nothing of Christianity or Virtue in their *Lives* and *Conversations*; yea, a Man may have digested a *regular* Chain of Divinity in his *Head*, whose Heart was never warmed, and impressed by it.—To convince his *Disciples* therefore of this, our Saviour does not annex *Happiness* immediately to their Knowledge of *divine* Things, but to their *Practice* of them; *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

It was *necessary* to know, in order to do them: but it was *necessary* to do them, in order to their *Happiness*.—I may therefore divide this *Proposition* into two distinct Parts; *First*, that *Practice* of Christian Virtues is *necessary* to a Christian's *Happiness*; *Secondly*, that it *cannot fail* of making Men happy: These are very different Things, and convey different *Ideas*; and I shall attempt the *Proof* of them both.

First,

First, It may easily be made to appear, that the *Practice* of Christian Virtue is *necessary* to a Christian's Happiness.

1. I would observe, that *Practice* is the *End* of Knowledge, and that which gives a *Value* to it. We act upon this Principle in most *common Affairs* of Life. Why are Men taught the *Art of Navigation*, but in order to put it into Practice? Why do we send our Sons to the *publick Seminaries* of Learning, but that they might be furnished with those *Degrees* of it, which might become *useful* by Practice? Why are they taught the *common Rules of Arithmetick*, or bred up *Accountants*, but in order to Practice? Or which of the *Mechanical Arts*, or *learned Professions*, would be of any *considerable Use*, if they had no Regard to Practice? And can we think the *Science of Divinity*, only, to be merely a *speculative Thing*, and not to look at *forming* the Life, and *correcting* the Manners? Did our *blest Saviour* lay down such a Number of *excellent Maxims*, without a View to the *Reformation* of Men's Manners? What an *impious Reflection* would this be upon him?

2. Without *improving* our Knowledge into Practice, we should not be in a Capacity of *communicating* any Good to others. If the *Ideas* of the Mind were all to be *buried* in the same Place where they

they were *first conceived*, of what *Advantage* would they be to the World? They might please and gratify the *Possessor* a little, perhaps; but, as they were *born*, so they must *die* with him; and the *useful Arts* reap no *Advantage* from them: In this *publick Light*, what a pitiful Figure would a *meer Scholar* make? What a *Cypher* would he stand in Society, and what a *Burden* would he be deemed to the World? To what Purpose is the Head *enlightned*, and the Genius *polish'd*, if the *Fruit* and *Effect* and *Productions* of them were confin'd to a Man's own self, and never appear in any *publick View*? Alas! What an unspeakable Injury would the World have sustained, if all our *famous Commentators* had confin'd their rich *Treasures*, and *Acquisitions* of Knowledge, within their own Breast? What a Loss, and how much to be lamented by Mankind, if our most finish'd and celebrated *Divines* and *Moralists*; if they, who have displayed the *Charms* of Virtue in their useful *Writings*, had never put Pen to Paper; but buried their *Talents*, and put their *Light* under a Bushel, which now shines and gives Light to the World? How many excellent *practical Preachers* have been the Instruments of *reforming* the Taste and Morals of their Hearers, and begetting them to a *divine Life* thro' the Gospel; who had been quite useless in their *Generation*, if they had contented themselves with their *own Attainments* in Knowledge?

Knowledge? Or what should we think of such a Method as this in *Physick*, or *Chirurgery*; whose Operations terminate in the Body, while the Practice of Christian Vertue extends to the *actual* Salvation of *immortal* Spirits? And then all that *Satisfaction* would be lost, that springs from a Sense of our *Charity* and *Beneficence* to our Fellow-Creatures; as well as of that *Glory* we have bro't to the Name of God.

3. Without the *Practice* of Virtue in the several Relations of Life, we should not act up to the *Dignity* of our own Nature.

However unhappily Man may be *dispos'd* to Vice, thro' the Influence of his *original Corruption*, he is distinguished by many *natural Excellencies*; by his *Capacity*, his *rational Faculties*, and the *Passions* that belong to him. We have had *Instances* in many great Men, how far a *human Capacity* may be stretched, and to what *Degree* it may be improved, by an assiduous *Application* of Mind. The *Understanding* is a *noble Faculty*, and has a *Ray* of the *Image* of God, in the Soul of Man: It was a *chief Mark* of his Superiority, that he was made, in his *intellectual Capacity*, little *lower* than the *Angels*, and *wiser* than the *Fowls* of Heaven; 'tis a *great Power* he is Master of, that he can retain many *Impressions* upon his *Memory*,
and

and that by *comparing, joining or separating* a Number of *Ideas*, he can form a *Judgment*, of Right and Wrong; of the Fitness and Unfitness of Things; their Relations and Congruities: And even the *Passions* he has, are of *excellent Use*, and might be the *Springs* of many *good Actions*, if improved in the Service of Virtue. His *Conscience* is a very *noble Faculty*, and sits upon a *Throne* within him, to direct and controul, to distinguish and to judge. But wherefore all the *Waste* of the Gifts of Nature, or why should the great God confer these *intellectual Perfections* upon us, if all our Powers must be *idle and quiescent*, and never exerted in the *Practice* of those *Duties*, for which they qualify us? Surely our *Obligations* to those Virtues must arise in *Proportion* to the Capacity we have for it; and he that knows his Lord's Will, and doeth it not, must be beaten with many *Stripes*. And 'tis with great Force the *Apostle* argues from the *Advantage* of the Christian Dispensation, to the Guilt of rebelling against it.

4. That it is *necessary, and incumbent* upon us, to *practise* those Virtues, abundantly appears from that *natural and easy Connection*, which the Knowledge of *divine Truths* has with the *Practise* of those Duties, they respectively dictate.—I judged it necessary to go into a few *Particulars*, of the *principal Truths* of Religion; I have named the
Existence

Existence of a God, which is a Truth of *natural*, as well as *revealed Religion*; and how naturally does the *Belief* of this lead us into the Duties of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*? One would think it hardly possible, for any Man to reflect, that there is a God, a *strict* Inspector of his *Actions*, and of the very *Recesses* of his Soul, possessed of every *natural* and *moral Attribute*; especially impowered with a Right to *command*, and to *judge*, and *dispense* Rewards; one would think it *impossible*, I say, to reflect upon this Truth, and not feel his Heart *affected*, and himself perfectly *constrained* to *practise* every Thing that God commands, and to study how he might secure *his Favour*: Such a *Truth* imprinted upon the Mind, must have the *directest* Tendency to *correct* the Life and Conversation.—I also mentioned the Knowledge of the *Scripture*, as the *Rule* of our Practice: and who can deny, but it's coming from God, and arm'd with a *divine Authority*, must tend to the *Promotion* of Virtue in our Lives?—So, the Knowledge of *ourselves*, and our *own Weakness*; the Knowledge of *Christ*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, must naturally open our Eyes, to see the *Necessity* we are under, to go out of our selves to them for *Strength* and *Assistance*; and it must be a *mighty Encouragement* to us, to attempt a *virtuous* Life, when we can apply ourselves to these *Fountains* of Grace.—And thus, the Belief of a *future* Existence,

Existence, which takes Place immediately after this, the *Assurance* we have of a Day appointed to judge the World, and the prodigious Consequence of our *present Actions* with Respect to that Day, are in their *own Nature* said to operate very strongly upon Creatures of our *Constitution*, so much actuated by Hope and Fear. *If we know these Things therefore, 'tis expected that we should do them.*

For, not to *live* a Life of Virtue, with these *Principles* before us, will lay us open to the Charge of *going counter* to the *Nature* of Things, as well as to the *Commands* of him that made us.

5. The *Necessity* of living up to the *Rules* of Virtue, further appears, in that many of the *divine Truths* we are to learn, are *practical Truths*, and the very Duties and Virtues themselves. How great a Part of Scripture is of a *preceptive Nature*, as well as *Historical* and *Doctrinal*? Many *Mysteries* of our holy Religion are found in the *Bible*, 'tis true; but many *practical Lessons* are also interspersed with them, and scarce a *Page* is to be seen in the *New Testament* without some *practical Part* of the Christian Life. The *Grace* of God, in *general*, is said to teach us to deny *Un-godliness*, and *worldly Lusts*, and to live *soberly, righteously* and *godly* in his present evil World.

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The *Epistles* are full of *Practice*, and *Rules* of Life; we are therefore directed to think on Things that are *just* and *best*, and *true*, and of *good Report*, and if there be any other *Virtue*; for we are enjoyn'd to add to our Faith, *Virtue*, &c. And such as believe, are to be very careful that they maintain *good Works*; and this is pressed upon the *Conscience* of Men, from their being the *Result* and *Fruit* of the *Incarnation* and *Sufferings* of Christ, and indispensable *Proofs* of the *Sincerity* and genuine *Nature* of our Faith: And what *Chapter* will you find in the *Gospel*, but it recommends the *Practice* of some *Christian Virtues*? I am sure, our blessed Lord in his *Sermon* on the Mount, has given us *excellent* Explications on the *moral Law*, and shewn the *Necessity* of a *moral Life*; and to what *Purpose* is all this? Is it merely that we should *read* them, and commit them to *our Memory* only? Or is it not that we should put them *in Practice*? Surely it is.

I add,

6. That Christians should be *Men of Virtue* in their Lives, because, as I shall prove hereafter, it will *produce* and *terminate* in their own *Happiness*. They will soon find what *the Wages* of *Righteousness* are, that *in keeping God's Commandments there is a Reward*; the further they advance in
 VI
 the

the *School of Christ*, and the more they learn of the *Rules of Wisdom*, the more they will find, that all her *Ways are Ways of Pleasantness*, and all her *Paths are Peace*. A Man of consummate Virtue will look with *Scorn*, or with *Pity*, on the Lives of vicious and profane Men, who know, and therefore seek no other, or *higher* Happiness, than what comes within the *Sense and Capacity* of the Beasts that perish. And what more *prevalent Arguments*, than those we draw from our *own Happiness*? But this Part of my *Discourse* must be deferred; and I now *conclude* with some short *Application*, in a *serious Address* to every Man's *Conscience*.

I had Occasion to recommend *Education* in general, and a *religious Education* in particular; nor is it my *Design* now to retract what I then advanced: No, by no Means; great are the Advantages of our Acquaintance with *divine Truths*; but then remember, that the *Value* they have, results from their Reference to our *Practice*; tho' we know these Things, we can't be *happy* unless we do them. Yea, I dare go further, and assert, that the *Knowledge* of our Duty will make us more *miserable*, if our Practice is not *answerable* to it; the *greater* Manifestation God makes of himself to us, the *more* are we oblig'd to study *Virtue*, and to discharge the Duty of *our Station*:

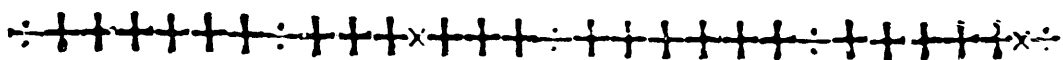
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This is the Voice of *Nature*, this is the Language of *Revelation*, this is the eternal Rule of *Proportion*; for this Reason the *Jews*, to whom were committed the *Oracles of God*, shall have a *heavier Doom*, if they live not up to their own *Dispensation*, than those of the *Heathen World*, who had only the common *Light of Nature*, and *Philosophy*.

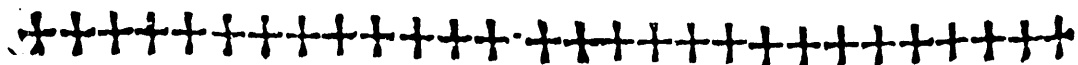
By a *Parity* of Reason, the *slothful* and *negligent Christian*, who lives under a *brighter Dispensation*, than that of *Moses*, will find his Guilt and *Doom heavier* than that of the *Jews*. By the same *Rule*, those of *superior Capacity* and *Knowledge*, shall find their *Neglect* more severely punish'd, than those of a *lower Class*.

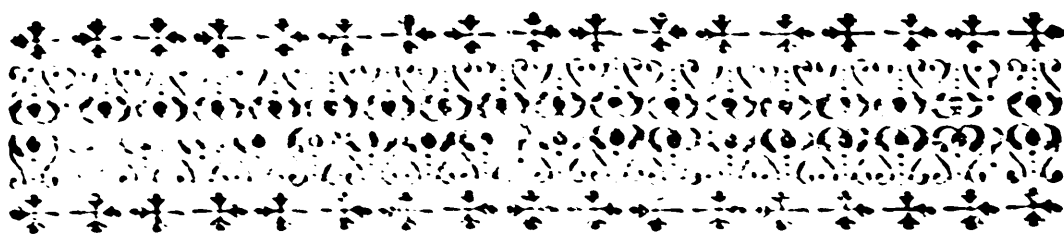
Let us not therefore boast of our *Knowledge* in the *Law*, or of our *evangelical Attainments*, unless by a *good Conversation* we shew forth the *Virtues* and *Praises* of that *God*, who has called us out of *Darkness* into his *marvellous Light*. We have *Light* come into the *World*, and if we love *Darkness* rather than *Light*, because our *Deeds* are evil; it will be our *Condemnation*, with a *dreadful Emphasis*: As therefore we have *particular Advantages* of *Knowledge*, let us ask ourselves, What do we *more* than others? We are acquainted with many of the *great Truths* of the *Gospel*; but what *Impression*

pression have they made? We have often read the *Bible*; but with what *Application*? We have heard a great many *Sermons*, upon the most serious *Topics*; but what *Effect* have they produced? Have we done our *Lord's Will*? Are we *willing* to do it now? What *Fruits* do we bring forth? What *Virtues* do we practise? What *Graces* are we eminent for? Are our *own Souls* the better for our Knowledge? Are we of *more Use* to the World? Or do we bring *more Glory* to God? If so, happy are we; for the *Spirit of Christ*, and of *Glory* reflecteth upon us, and ere long our *Faculties*, and our *Knowledge*, shall be enlarged, and be *progressive* through a *glorious Eternity*.



S E R M O N





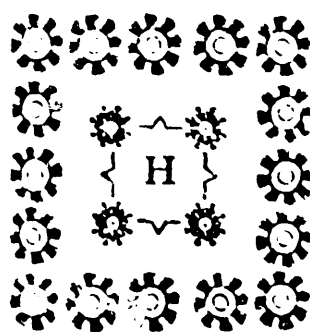
SERMON XVII.

T H E

Necessity of Practice.

J O H N, Chap. XIII. Ver. 17.

*IF ye know these Things, happy
are ye if ye do them.*

 HAPPINESS is every Man's
Aim, but the Attainment of very
few. Most People mistake the
Nature of it, and by wrong Mea-
sures fail of their End. But what-
ever Deceptions we are liable to, a very little

Modesty will teach us, that our Lord was a better Judge, and the fittest Person in the World to point out the Road to Happiness ; and if we will walk in it, this is the Way he has mark'd out, *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.* From whence I have already observed, that the *Knowledge* of divine Truth is necessary to the Practice of Christian Virtue. I have further shewn, that the *Practice* of Virtue is necessary in a Christian. And it only remains now, that I make it appear, that it can't fail of making him *happy* ; in which, I observed, lies the very *Life* and *Soul* of my Text. And here I shall appeal to Experience, and then reason upon the Subject.

I. Let me appeal to *Experience* and *Observation*.

I would even venture to appeal to the *Observation* of those who have no *inward Experience* of the Power of Christianity upon their own Hearts; I will venture to ask them *seriously*, Whether they have not observed those *Families*, those *Countries*, those *Governments*, where these Virtues have prevailed over their *opposite Vices*, to be *more happy* and *flourishing*, than those of a *reverse Character*? Whether the *publick Administration* of a Family, or Government, under the *Influence* of Virtue, has not been the *easiest* and *most pleasant*? Surely, whatever *Aversion* Men themselves have to the
Practice

Practice of Virtue, their own *Observations*, if they have made any, must even constrain them to acknowledge, what the *Scripture* asserts, that Righteousness exalts a *Nation*, exalts it's *Character*, it's *Commerce*, and it's *Glory* ; and it must needs do it, since *Vice* in it's own Nature breaks the *Sinews* of Government, and subverts the *good Order* of the best Constitution. But I would leave those who are Strangers to *civil Religion*, tho' the *Concession* of an Adversary go's a great Way, and seriously appeal to Men of *Christian Experience* ; I hope I have some of this *Number* now to hear me ; to you, *My Friends* ! I appeal : Have you not found by your *own Experience*, that the *Ways of Wisdom are Ways of Pleasantness*, and that *all her Paths are Paths of Peace* ? Are you not ready to set to *your Seal*, that this is true ? Have you not found the *Exercise* of Religion a *perfect Spring* of Pleasure to you ? Is there not a *sweet Satisfaction*, in the *Love* and *Practice* of Virtue, and in the *Sense* of having discharged your Duty to *God* and *Man*, which you could never find in any Thing else ? Have you not felt a *Joy*, and *Complacency*, arising from it, that a Stranger *intermeddeth* not with ? Has not Religion imparted a *Satisfaction*, that has been more to you, than when the *Wicked's Corn*, and *Wine*, did most abound ? Or shew me a *true Christian*, that ever *repented*, in the *whole Course* of his Life, that he lived the

Life of a Christian, sober and temperate, compassionate and charitable? Speak out, Christians! and say, if you have not had a full Remembrance for every Act of Charity and Beneficence, in the very Act itself, and from the Reflection you have made upon it? Whether it be not a pleasing Thought, that with your Ability God has given you a Heart, to be Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, Food to the Hungry, and Covering to the Naked; and whether a little Part of your Estate, applied to these Purposes of Charity, has not sanctified and directed all the Rest to you! I am not afraid of making these Appeals to every sincere Christian.

And it is in vain to object, that Christians are often in an uneasy, dissatisfied Condition: many, I know, are so, yet this never arises from their being religious; but from their not having more Religion; or from the Suspicions of their own Sincerity, which is an Argument in Favour of Religion itself: But as I can only appeal to real Christians, upon the Head of Experience, and no Arguments drawn from this Topic, are like to affect Persons of no Experience,—

II. I shall in the next Piece reason upon this Subject, and make Use of Arguments that must strike every Man, that has the Use of his rational Faculties.

1. I would draw an Argument for the Happiness of those, who live in the *constant Practice* of Virtue, from the *Excellency and Nature* of those Virtues which Christianity recommends to our Practice. Our *Happiness* must needs spring from the very *Duties* we perform, because we are enjoined nothing that *thwarts* our Reason, or is *incompatible* with the Dignity and Perfection of our Nature. If we take the *Christian Life* in its *full and proper Extent*, it comprehends *Piety* towards God, and *Justice* to Men, and *Sobriety* and *Temperance* with respect to our selves; each of which will stand the *Test and Examination* of the *severest* Reason, and be acquitted with Applause. Nothing can appear more *rational* than the *Duties* of Piety to God, which flow from himself, as the *Fountain* of our Being and Capacity. I have to this Purpose somewhere met with a *fine Thought*, (if I remember,) of the great St. *Augustin's*; "That if a Man could frame a *Machine*, capable of all *human Operations*, and could endow it with the Principles of *Perception*; the very *first Act* of it would be to *prostrate* itself in *humble Adoration* before him that made it: Such *Machines* are we in our Bodies, and they are animated with *Life, Perception, Reason, and Reflection*; and what should we do else, what should we do *less*, than pay our *Homage and Adoration* to him that made us?"

The Gifts of *Nature* he has conferred upon us, shew his own *supreme* Excellency, how worthy he is to receive *Honour* from us; and at the same Time they are so *valuable*, as to lay us under the *strongest* Ties of Gratitude. The *Heathens* were not so culpable, in worshipping the Gods they made, as in making Gods of them who by *Nature* were no Gods. The Relation betwixt a Deity, and a *dependent* Being, such as all Creatures are, must necessarily imply the *Obligation* of Worship; and there is not one *Instance* of Piety and Devotion, that can disparage our *Nature*, when the great God himself, the *Possessor* of Heaven and Earth, is the *Object* of it; every *reasonable* Man allows this, though so many *unreasonably* forget and neglect it. — There is also a Decency and Fitness, or *inherent* Excellency in the *Virtue* or *Duty* of *Justice* to Men. Justice is that *Virtue* which gives to every *Man* his due, which preserves the *Rights* of Mankind; and therefore comprehends the *Duties* of those respective Relations Men stand in to each other.

This Virtue, in our Saviour's *Parable*, directs us to do to others, what we would *reasonably* expect from them, upon a Change of Situation, putting ourselves in their Place, and them in our Place, a *Maxim* that all Men must pronounce *good*, and *truly* excellent. — And as for *Seriousness* and *Tempe-*

ence, no Man is Master of himself without them; and he that has them, is so far happy: 'tis a Happiness, when we have *liberty* Dominion over our *Appetites*, when we can controul our *non-Rational* Passions, and act agreeably to the Dictates of regular Judgment: This keeps up an *Harmony* in our several *Powers*, and they move in their *proper Spheres*.

In the *World*, the Christian Virtues are what the *Apottle* calls the *Fruit of the Spirit*: and nothing can proceed from that *divine Author*, which is not like its *parent's Original*. See his own Enumeration of them; *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*; and they that are Christians, have *crushed* the *Snake*, with the *affections and the Light*.

If these Things be in us, and abound, we are as happy as we can expect to be, in a State of Mortality. The chief Miseries of Man, arise from his own *unbridled* and *un-governed* Lusts and Passions: Hence the Wicked are represented as a *troubled Sea*, which cannot rest. Abstracted from the Stings, Reproaches and Lashes of a *guilty Conscience*, Men's own Lusts are their *Tormentors*, especially when they are disappointed in the Gratification of them; but *great Peace* have they that love God's Law, and nothing shall offend them: their own *Justice* is their *Happiness*.

2. The *Practice* of Virtue conduces much to the *Health* of our Bodies, in which consists no little Part of *present* Happiness. Health is an *invaluable* Blessing, none can be insensible of it, but they who do not want it: the Relish of all our Mercies depends upon a *free* and a *good* *Health* of Body: If Nature complains under *Pain* and *Distresses*, 'tis not in the Power of *Peace* and *Plenty*, or of the greatest *Preferment*, to relieve her, or to make the *Pain* easy; and how much does Virtue conduce to Health? Nothing is more apt to break in upon the *Rules of Nature*, than the *Intemperance* of Passions; *rebellious* and *violent* Passions gradually spoil all the *Springs* of Health; while a Man of a *calm* and *easy* *Temper* preserves it, by *Temperance* in *eating* or *drinking*. Those shameful *Characters* of *human* Nature, *Gluttony* and *Drunkenness*, how do they lay *heavy* Burdens upon *Nature*, inflame the *Blood*, and draw after them a long *Train* of Disorders? While the Man of an *abstemious* *Practice* assists her, and lengthens out the *pleasant* Years of Health: And had Men no higher *Motives* set before them, one would think this enough to recommend to them the *Study* and *Practice* of Christian Virtues, since they are *Health* to the Navel, and *Marrow* to the Bones; and 'tis an *Argument*, *Wisdom* frequently makes Use of in the *Book of Proverbs*, that *Master-piece* of *Ethicks*.

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3. The Man of Virtue has this *particular* Happiness, that he stands the fairest to live in *good Esteem* with his Neighbours, and so leave the *Perfume* of a *good Reputation* behind him, when he dies. The *Christian* Virtues are a very *sovereign Guard* against a Life of *Contention*; Virtue makes a Man so *good a Neighbour*, that they who seek *Occasion* against him, rather make, than find one; and as it is *natural* for us all, to wish to support a *fair Reputation* in the World, none are more in the Way of it, than the *truly* virtuous. *Milton* tells us, *That the Devil himself once felt how awful Goodness is.*

The virtuous Man, I will allow, by *his Example*, lays a powerful Restraint upon the *vicious Inclinations* of the Wicked; and 'tis from that Spring they are *prompted* to hate and calumniate him; but *abstracting* from this *vicious Inclination*, they can't help having a *secret Veneration* for his Vertues. When did you hear the most *wicked* Wretches blame an *honest* Man, for his Honesty? They who are *unjust* themselves, yet dare not directly speak against *Justice* in others; and if at any Time, they are inclined to *lampoon* a Man of *strict* Virtue, they do it under another *Character*; they lay hold on some common *Infirmity*, and magnify it into an *enormous* Vice; or they *first* take Care to stigmatize him as an *Hypocrite*, and repre-
sent

sent his Virtue as *feigned* and *imaginary*; for Virtue, when *real*, has something so *venerable* in it, that they dare not attack her in her *native Dress*; but only under a *Disguise*.

And I am persuaded, that the *worst* of Men have such a Sense of *Justice*, *Charity*, *Sobriety*, &c. left unextinguished in their *Minds*, that they would even heap their *Encomiums* upon a Man of Virtue, if he did not censure their *own* Way of Life, and lay an *uneasy* Restraint upon the *Gratification* of their Passions.— And is it not a great Happiness, to maintain a *clear Reputation* among all our Friends and *Acquaintance*? Does it not beget a *secret Complacency* in the Heart? But supposing our *Virtues* have not Force enough to *ingratiate* us with the Wicked and the Vicious; yet surely, they will do what is far more valuable, they will command the *Respect* of the Good and the Wise, who are the *best Judges* of their Worth, and give us a *Character* among those, who have the *same Character* themselves: And surely, the *Euge* of one *good Man*, must preponderate the *Anathema's* of a thousand of the *reverse Stamp*.

Not to mention the *secret Satisfaction* that springs up in the Mind of every *good Man*, when he reflects with *how much Esteem* the very *Angels*, who are *Witnesses* of his Virtues, look down upon them;

them ; if an *Angel* admire me, what signifies the *Opinion* of a *Mortal* ! But above all, if we approve ourselves to *our God* and *Judge*, where is the *Man* that has it in *his Power* to diminish our *Happiness* ? And though we should die in *Poverty*, what a *pleasing Thought* is it, that we shall yet live in our *Virtue*, and leave a *sweet Savour* behind us, when *our Names* shall be mentioned with *Honour*.

4. The *Man* of a *virtuous Life* has this happy Advantage, that his *Virtues* are a *great Support* to him under all the *Calamities* which are incident to *human Nature*. *Outward Calamities* are common Things, in which the *Virtuous* and the *Wicked* frequently have an *equal Share* ; for *Man* is born to *Trouble*, as the *Sparks fly upwards*. Now, since these Things are *inevitable*, since they are *inseparable* from a *State of Probation*, he is certainly the *happiest*, that is furnished with the *best Support* under them ; and who can this be but the *Christian*, the *Man* of *sincere Piety* and *Virtue* ? For my Part, I know not of one *rational Support* the *Wicked* have, under their *temporal Calamities* ; they have nothing to fortify them *from within* ; they can derive no *Comfort* from a *Sense* of their own *Integrity* ; they have no *Hope* in *Futurity* ; and their *heavy Guilt* presses them down, whenever they would raise their *Eyes* to *Heaven*, or look for any *Relief* from *that God*, whom they daily pro-
voked

voke and scorn. But behold the Man of Virtue under *his Tryals*, how many are the *Springs* of his Support? He believes that *all Events* are in the *Hand* of God; he has *Reason* to look upon himself as a *special Favourite* of Heaven, and is well assured, that as he loves God, *all Things* are *working for his Good*. His Virtues, in themselves considered, fortify him with *Strength* to bear his Affliction; he is not liable to that *fretful and uneasy Temper*, which others are, and which *doubles* their Affliction: *Patience* has its *perfect Work* in him, and in *Patience* he can *possess his Soul*; he believes in *God*, he believes also in *Christ*, and so his Heart is not troubled; he can find a *free Access* to the *Throne of Grace*, and *pour out his Soul before God*; he knows that his *present Afflictions* can't affect his *eternal Happiness*, unless it be by *qualifying* him for it. He never *centred* his Heart upon the *World*, and so can better bear its *Disappointments*; his *Hope* is within the *Vail*, as an *Anchor sure and steadfast*: His *Views of eternal and invisible Things*, swallow up much of those *uneasy Sensations*, which the *Men of this World* feel. He comforts himself with the *Consideration*, that *Tribulation* is the *Way to Heaven*, *Reproach* the *Way to Glory*; that *Christ* and his *Followers* have trod in the *same Path*; and that *present Tryals*, however *sharp*, are of *short Duration*, and not worthy to be *compared with the Glory* that

is

is to be revealed in him ; and thus he can rejoice in Tribulation itself, and make his *present Life* easy to him, from the Prospect of an *approaching Eternity of Happiness*, knowing *that there remaineth a Rest for the People of God.*

5. The Man of *Virtue and Devotion*, must needs find himself happy in that *Resemblance* he bears to the *best and highest* of Beings.

How happy was Man, at first, in his Maker's Image,—made after the Similitude of God? This was his Glory, and the Perfection of his Nature, that he was created in the full Maturity of his moral Powers : and even now, there is nothing advances Man nearer to God, than the Principles and Practice of true Virtue ; this is the Image of God, which he imprints upon the Soul : And a Man can't reflect upon these Traces, and Impressions of Heaven upon his Mind, without, at the same Time, exulting in it.

The little *inferior Beauties* of Nature and Art, are very *pleasing* to the Eye ; but they bear no *Proportion* to the *Dignity and Beauty* of the Soul, which is made to partake of the *divine Nature* ; and this is the *happy State* of every true Christian. I am not speaking now of *those* Virtues which pass under the Name of *Morality*, in the *common Lan-*
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guage

guage of the World ; but of those that are *implanted* in the Soul by the Spirit of God : I speak of Virtue here as a *divine Offspring*, as the *Fruit* of the Spirit, as proceeding from a *vital Union* with and *Conformity* to the *blessed Jesus*. A Person of this *Character*, sees that upon himself, which no *Distinction* of a *civil Nature* can communicate to him : *He is born, not of Flesh, nor of Blood, nor of the Will of Man, but of God* ; and tho' the Change be not yet in its *Perfection*, 'tis *progressive*, and will *finish* in it. And how can a Man be *unhappy*, who finds these *Signatures* of Divinity upon himself, and looks upon himself but a little lower than the *Angels* ?—I had before considered the *inherent Excellencies*, and *essential Dignity* of Virtue ; but the Happiness of *possessing* it vastly rises, from the *Similitude* of it to the most *glorious* of Beings. And this pretty naturally leads my Thoughts to another very *superior Instance* and *Argument* of their Happiness, who live in the *conscientious Practice* of *Christian Virtue*.—

6. The Man of Virtue is *best* qualified to receive *divine Communications* from above, and to be made happy in the *present Enjoyment* of his God. For he that inhabits Eternity, will visit the *Mansion*, which he has *sanctified* and *prepared* for himself : when he has *renew'd* us in the Spirit of our Mind, and *restamp'd* his Image upon us, our very *Bodies* become

become the *Temples* of the *Holy Ghost*. What *glorious* Words are these of our Saviour, and what a *triumphant Air*, and *Encouragement*, do they carry to the *good* and *virtuous* Man? He that *hath* my *Commandments*, and *keepeth* them, *he* it is that *loveth* me; and he that *loveth* me, shall be *loved* of my *Father*, and I will *love* him, and will *manifest* myself to him. Judas saith unto him, (*not* *Isca-*
rist) *How* is it, that thou wilt *manifest* thyself unto us, and *not* to the *World*? Jesus answered, and said unto him; *If* a *Man* *love* me, he will *keep* my *Words*, and my *Father* will *love* him; and we will *come* unto him, and *make* our *Abode* with him. The *judicious* Dr. *Guise* gives this short pertinent *Paraphrase* upon them: “ *If* any one *sincerely* loves me, this will *engage* him to receive my *Doctrine*, and *keep* my *Commands*: And such a one is a *proper Subject* for, and shall be *favored* with, *peculiar Manifestations*, not only of *mine*, but likewise of my *Father’s* *Love*; and we will multiply *Tokens* of our *special* *Presence* with him, by our *Word*, *Ordinances*, and *Spirit*; and continue to hold *free* and *intimate* *Communion* with him, as in the *spiritual* *House* and *Temple*, which we take *Pleasure* to dwell in.”—This is the *express* *Doctrine* of the *Scriptures*, seal’d by the *happy* *Experience* of *Thousands*, since it was deliver’d: And why should it be thought a *Thing* *incredible*, that *God* should thus

manifest himself to his *particular Favorites*? What is there in it, which a Man of *other Region* will not readily admit in *Theory*, tho' he never felt it in the happy *Sensation* it produces? Why may not God, who is the *supreme Spirit*, find a *secret Way* of communicating his Love and Favour to a *created Mind*? I know, some *Gentlemen of sagged Reason* are ready to speak of this with a *contemptuous Smear*, and brand us for *Enthusiasts* who maintain it.

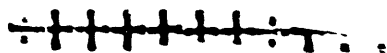
I generally chuse therefore to refuse them from the *Writings* of those whom they can't but acknowledge to be Men of as great and rational *Character* as themselves: such a One was Mr. *Adams*; yet hear what he says, in one of his *Papers*, upon this very Subject. " There is
 " doubtless a *Faculty* in Spirits, by which they ap-
 " prehend one another, as our Senses do *material*
 " *Objects*; and there is no *Question*, but our *Souls*,
 " when placed in *glorified Bodies*, will by *this Fa-*
 " *culty* be always *sensible* of the divine *Presence*.
 " We who have *this Veil* of *Flesh*, standing be-
 " tween us and the *World of Spirits*, must be
 " content to know, that the Spirit of God is *pre-*
 " *sent* with us, by the *Effects* which he produces
 " in us: Our *outward Senses* are too gross to ap-
 " prehend him; we may however taste and see
 " how *gracious* he is, by his *Influence* upon our
 " Minds,

“ Minds, by those *virtuous Thoughts*, which he
 “ awakens in us, by those *finest Comforts* and *Re-*
 “ *joynments*, which he conveys into our Souls ;
 “ and by those *rising Joys* and *innermost Satis-*
 “ *fections*, which are perpetually *springing up*, and
 “ *glorifying* themselves, among all the Thoughts
 “ of good Men. How happy therefore is an *in-*
 “ *tellectual* Being, who by Prayer and Meditation,
 “ by Virtue and good Works, opens this *Communi-*
 “ *cation* between God and his own Soul ? In his
 “ *deepest Solitude* and *Retirements*, he knows,
 “ that he is in Company of the *greatest of Beings*,
 “ and perceives within himself such *real Sensa-*
 “ *tions* of his Presence, as are more *delightful*,
 “ than any *Thing* that can be met with in the
 “ *Conversation* of his Creatures. If we would
 “ be thus *happy*, and thus *sensible* of our Maker’s
 “ *Presence*, from the *secret Effects* of his *Mercy*
 “ and *Goodness*, we must keep such a Watch
 “ over all our *Thoughts*, that in the Language of
 “ the *Scripture*, his Soul may have Pleasure in us.
 “ We must take Care not to grieve his *Holy Spirit*,
 “ and endeavour to make the *Meditations* of our
 “ Hearts always *acceptable* in his Sight, that he
 “ may delight thus to reside and dwell in us.
 “ The *Light of Nature* (he adds,) could direct
 “ *Seneca* to this *Doctrine*.”

Thus speaks the *rational* Mr. *Addison*: and how much is this like the Language of *Inspiration*? It is evident, that he maintains the *Doctrine of Communications* from God of his *Favour* to Man; and that his Spirit and Grace *qualifies* a Man for them: which he asserts to be agreeable to the *Light of Nature* itself; and if to that, much more is it so to *divine Revelation*, which speaks of *Christ's* being *form'd in us, dwelling in our Hearts by Faith, and being one with us*. How happy are those virtuous Men, who know *these* Things by their *own Experience*, who have thus been made Partakers of the *Holy Ghost*, and tasted the *Word of God*, and felt the *Powers of the World to come*! Can the *Wicked's* *Corn* and *Wine* put *so much* Gladness into their Hearts, as when God lifts upon us the *Light* of his Countenance, and sends forth *his Spirit* into our Hearts, as a Witness to our *Adoption*? O! Who can tell, that never felt it, what a *Happiness* it is, to have Joy in the *Holy Ghost*, to have the *Love of God* shed abroad in our Hearts, and to *rejoice* in him, in *Hope of Glory*! This is the *hidden Manna*, the *White Stone*, and the *New Name*; and it was this made *holy Job* express himself in that *devout* and *ardent* Wish: O that I knew where I might find him!

Forgive me for having insisted *so largely* on this *Particular*, it is a *great* Source, and a *great* Argument

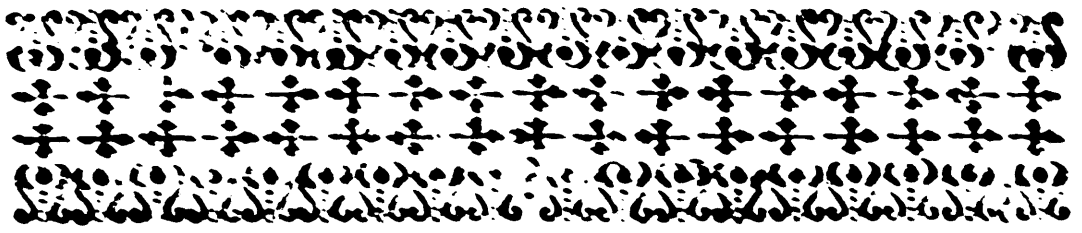
ment of their Happiness, who live up to the Dictates of *practical and vital Christianity*, and do the *Things* which they know ; 'tis a *Felicity*, that nothing can exceed, but *Heaven* itself, where there is a *Fulness of this Joy*, and where God manifests his *Presence*, in a *more sensible Manner*, and communicates *Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory !*



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S E R M O N





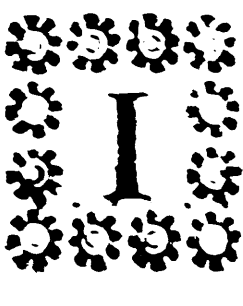
SERMON XVIII.

T H E

Necessity of Practice.

J O H N, Chap. XIII. Ver. 17.

*IF ye know these Things, happy
are ye if ye do them.*

 FIND this Subject to be of so
much Importance, that I can't for-
bear enlarging upon it. I proceed
now to say,

7thly. The

7thly. The Man of Virtue, and of a right Character, is the *happiest* of Men, in the Testimony of a *good Conscience*. Conscience is that *Judgment*, which a Man passes upon his *own Actions*, after comparing them with the *Law of Nature*, or the *written Law* of God ; it is that *Power of Reflection*, which considers all *our Actions* in a *moral Light* ; and when it pronounces right upon them, it is a *Tribunal* erected in our own Breasts, and gives the same *decisive Voice* with that *great Tribunal*, before which we must all appear, to receive according to the *Deeds* done in the Body : It is therefore of great *Importance*, and an *essential* Ingredient of our present Happiness, to have a *good Conscience* in all Things, to have Conscience *our Friend*, and *determining* in our Favour ; for if our own Heart condemn us, it will be no *Satisfaction*, tho' we had the *Applause*, and the *Approbation* of all our Friends ; we can't be easy under that *Sentence*, which we have pronounced against ourselves. We are then *self-condemned*, and look upon ourselves as *already* condemn'd in the *Court of Heaven* ; in this Situation our own Reflections will lash and torment us *before the Time* ; for we shall not be able to turn our Eyes away from the last and *impartial* Tribunal, the great and *terrible Day* of God. The Power of a *guilty Conscience* has shown itself in the *greatest Heroes* : the proud *Monarch's* Feast, and *Courtiers*, could give him no Relief,

Relief; nor could *Gratification* of his Senses, turn away his *Attention*, when he saw the *Hand-writing* upon the Wall, and had the *Interpretation* thereof read to him; *His very Knees smote together.*

But *on the contrary*, how sweet is the *Testimony* of a good Conscience, purg'd by the Blood of Christ? *This is our Rejoycing*, saith St. Paul, the *Testimony of our Conscience*, that in *Simplicity*, and godly *Sincerity*, not with *fleshly Wisdom*, but by the *Grace of God*, we have had our *Conversation in the World*. When a Man can retire into himself, and the *Secrets* of his Breast; when he can take a strict Review of his *past Actions*, and can absolve himself from *Guilt*, at least, in Point of *Sincerity*, and allowing for the *unavoidable* Infirmities of *human Nature*; when he can reflect upon his *own Virtues*, and say, Thus the *Law of God* demanded, thus the *Gospel of Christ* required, and thus I have *sincerely* endeavour'd to act; I have made it *my Business* to please God; I have *delighted* in the Law of the Lord, after the *inward Man*; I have done *Justice*, and loved *Mercy*; I have been *charitable* and *humble*:— Judge ye, what *pleasing Sentiments* must spring up in his Mind; and how a *Consciousness* of his *own Integrity* must fortify him against the *Opinion* of all the World, saying, *It is a small Thing with*

me, to be judged of Man ; he that judgeth me is the Lord !——I made this a *distinct* Head from the former, because, tho' we can't have Joy in the Holy Ghost, without Peace of Conscience, yet, this *Testimony* of our own Hearts, is itself the *Source of inexpressible Happiness.*

And now let me add, what *crowns* all the Rest, *viz.* that a *virtuous Life* issues in a *happy Death*, and is the *best* Thing in the World to *fortify* a Man against the *Terror* of his *last Hour*. For *my Part*, I could never see how a Man can be *happy* in this World, 'till he is *prepared* to leave it, and can live above the *Fear of Death* ; 'till we arrive to this, there can be no *rational Happiness*, no *real Pleasure*, in any of our *present Enjoyments* : And if we *think* of our *latter End*, it must be very uneasy to us ; thro' *Fear of Death*, we must be all our *Life-long* subject to *Bondage*.

This therefore is one of the greatest *Advantages* which attends such a *Life*, that it *prepares* for *Death*, softens its *Terrors*, and converts it into a *Friend* : A *Christian*, who knows himself to be *one*, can view *Death* in every *Position*, and not startle at it. If he looks upon it as the *Offspring* and *Penalty* of *Sin*, he sees that *Sting* taken away by his *Redeemer*, who by *Death* destroyed *Death*. If he considers *Death* as *finishing* all *Scenes* of this
Life,

Life, he must consider these either as *Scenes of Prosperity, or Adversity*; if he considers the *Scenes of Prosperity*, he is prepared to see them shut up; because, by a *strict Course* of true Virtue, by *Moderation and Temperance*, he has been long *abstracting* himself from these Things, and can think of parting with them without *much Pain*: Yea, he has often parted with them already in *Affliction*, and by *Anticipation*; FOR HE DIES DAILY: And if he considers them as *Scenes of Adversity*, he is happy in *Expectation*, that there is a *Period* to them all *at Hand*; and that in the *Grave* he shall rest from all his *Labour and Sorrow*.

And then, if he looks upon *Death* as opening a *new Prospect* of Things, a *future Scene*, and *Mansions* of Existence, and *Entrance into the World of Spirits*; since all his *Hopes* are there, and he has made *God Provision* for his *Change*, he can't think upon it without the greatest *Pleasure and Satisfaction*: Death can't spread such a *Cloud* over the *Felicity and Glory* of the *new invisible World*, but the *Christian's Faith* is able to remove it; and he considers the *Day of his Departure* hence, as the *Day of his first Arrival* at the *Mansions* of the Bleis'd, the *fair Region* that needs not the *Light of the Sun*; for there is no *Night* there: He is ready to take *Death* by the Hand, as a *Messenger* sent from
above.

above, to *transport* him thither; the *Moment* he departs hence, he knows, *he is come to the City of the living God, to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, even the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator*; whom having not seen, he loved, and in whom believing, he rejoiced with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

Thrice *happy* then the Man of Virtue! *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them*; happy in *Life*, happy in *Death*, and most happy in *Eternity*. Enough methinks to make the World *envy* the Righteous, and to make us say, when we reflect on a dying Christian, *Then let us also go that we may die with him.*

I shall now *close* the Subject with an *Application*.

1. *Inference*. We may see now *inexcusable* they are, who are acquainted with the *Principles* of Christianity, and yet neglect to *practise* it; nay, live in *direct Contradiction* to it. Had those *divine* and *amiable* Principles of the Christian Religion, been hid from their Eyes, *they had not had Sin*, comparatively speaking; *but now their Sin remaineth*, and they have no Cloke for it: This is the *Condemnation*, that *Light is come into the World, and Men*

Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Works are evil.

They have not been born and educated among ignorant Heathens, in the Regions of the Shadow of Death ; a great Light has risen upon them : The Gospel has spread its salutary and healing Beams all a-round them ; they have had the Bible, the great Book of God, the inspired Pages, put into their Hands ; they have been instructed in a catechetical Form, in the great Principles and Duties of Christianity : these have been explain'd and enforc'd, Time after Time, from the Pulpit ; and they dare not, they cannot say, that they knew not these Things ; and if they knew them, why have they not done them ? Where are their strong Reasons ? What Subterfuges can they fly to, or what Apologies can they make ? What will they answer to God, or their own Consciences ? Or where shall the Ungodly and Sinner appear, when the Books of the Law and the Gospel, come to be laid open before the whole World, and a solemn Enquiry made, what Use we have put them to, and what Improvements we have made under them ? They that have known these Things, and have done them, will indeed be happy ; but what shall be the End of those, who have not obeyed the Gospel, but have had Pleasure in Unrighteousness ; who have gone on in a Course of Sin, while the Majesty and Authority

Authority of the great God stood before them, in his holy Word; when their own Hearts reproach'd, and their Ministers reproach'd them, shewing them all their Transgressions! Every Sermon they have heard, in which the Reasonableness and Excellency of the Christian Religion have been defended and displayed, will give them a most pungent Sense of their Folly and Wickedness!

But this is not all, they are not only *inexcusable* for acting in *Opposition* to the most glaring *Evidences* of divine Truth; but for living in a *Contrariety* to those *Duties* and *Virtues* which were so admirably calculated to promote their own *Happiness*: For how stupid must Men be, if *Arguments* fail upon them, which are derived from all the Springs of their *own Interest*: *Interest*, which sways Mankind in all their *secular Affairs*! If *Sinners* had it in their Power to raise *Objections* against Christianity, as a *severe* and *cruel* *Dispensation*, that broke in upon their *natural Rights*, that imposed any *unreasonable Hardships* upon them, and restrained them from any Thing that tends to the Preservation of *Life, Interest* and *Reputation*: I say, if it were in *their Power* fairly to *object* these Things against *Christianity*, their not embracing, and living in *Obedience* to it, might seem to admit of some *Excuse*; but the *Christian Precepts* and *Duties* are subject to no *Objections* of this Nature; they

they are of a quite *different Constitution*, and fram'd for other Purposes ; *the Yoke of Christ is easy* : his *Commands are not grievous* ; his *Laws* are not written in *Iron*, unless it be his own, which makes them *the more sacred*. The very *Things* he enjoins us, are *Perfections* of our Nature, and the *best Sources* of our own Happiness ; and therefore, how *infinitely* inexcusable are they who will not receive and obey them ? And what Pleas can they advance, to take off the *Edge* of the last *damnatory Sentence* ? Is it not fit, they should be *miserable*, who would not be persuaded to be *happy* ? And that they should be *punish'd*, who would not submit to the very *Instruments* of their own Happiness ?—But I leave the *Sinner* to debate these *Things* with himself, and proceed to draw another *Inference* from my *Subject*.

2. *Infer.* From the *Excellency* of a *Christian Life*, and the *Tendency* of true *Virtue*, to make us *happy*, we may form a very just *Lies* of the *Turpitude* and *dangerous Tendency* of a *vicious Life*.

Things never *set* to greater Advantage, than when placed in Contrast, and *Opposites* illustrate each other. The *Opposition* betwixt a *Life of Virtue*, and a *Life of Wickedness*, is undeniable ; and therefore, if *Virtue* has her *Beauties*, *Vice* must have her *Disadvantages* ; if the *Christian Life* be at-
tended

tended with *Honour* and *Happiness*, a Life of the reverse to it, can *issue* in nothing but *Insanity* or *Misery*: We need therefore, in order to paint *Vice* in its *natural Colours*, only to recollect what I have said in the *Course* of this Subject, upon the *Glory* and the *Advantages* of Christian *Virtue*; for it follows from thence, that there must be something very *base*, and *unreasonable*, in *Vice*. It has for Instance, in the *first* Place, a most *natural* Tendency to injure a Man in his *Constitution*, and to deprive him of that *invaluable* Blessing of *Health*, without which he is in no Capacity of *Service*—*Temperance* and *Sobriety* keep a Man long in the Possession of a *firm* *Constitution*; but *Vice* weakens all the *Sinews* of it. How many *pleasant* *Days* of *Ease* and *Health* have Men depriv'd themselves of, by *too free* an *Indulgence* of their *Appetites*? How many lay a *Tax* upon *Nature*, by gratifying their *Epicurean* *Palates*, *inflame* their *Blood*, and set the *Course* of *Nature* *on Fire*, by *Excess* of *Drink*? And how many *Distempers* are generated by *Concupiscence*, and the *Lusts* of the *Flesh*? *Solomon* has represented the *pernicious* *Consequence* of these Things, to the *Life* of *Man*, with the *Pen* of a *ready* *Writer*, and worthy of himself; nor does he even speak of them, but with a *peculiar* *Patent*, as of Things of the *greatest* *Importance*. If we pass from the *Sinner's* *Health* to his *Reputation*, this also receives a *lasting* and *deadly* *Wound*,

from his Vices: 'tis true, Persons of the other *Stamp* and *Character*, may be glad of his Company, as it gives some Life to their *fleshy* Conversation, and lulls their *Consciences* asleep; but such as live more up to the Dignity of *rational Beings*, will always *despise* and *stigmatize* them; and a Man famous for a vicious Life, always leaves a *foetid* and *stinking* Memory behind him, the little Share of Time that it lives; for we are told, and no Body disputes it, that the Memory of the *Wicked* *shall rot*. It was observ'd among other *Advantages* of the Christian Life, that it opened many Springs of Support, under the Calamities which are *incident* to our mortal State; but these Springs are all shut up, these Supports all taken away, by a vicious Course of Life; for Vice can promise no Satisfaction, when Prosperity forsakes us: Alas! Where can the Sinner run for any Comfort, when Heaven frowns, when he that made him will not have Mercy on him, and he that formed him will show him no Favour? Man is apt to forsake him in his Trouble, as he forsook his God in his Prosperity; the Sinner must be a *Stoic* indeed, or his Vice will blacken every *dark* Providence he meets with.

But to go on with the Contrast, Since *Vertue* and *Devotion* wear the Signature of Heaven upon them, and make us like God; Vice and Wickedness

ness must needs stamp the *very Form* of the Devil upon us; be not surprized at this Language, 'tis what *our Saviour* himself has used before me; *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and his Lusts ye do*; it is Vice that makes the *Devil* what he is: It was Sin that turn'd an *Angel* into a *Devil*; and consequently every Sinner, as such, and so far he indulges his Vices, has the very Image of the *Devil* upon him.

But to go on, I have largely shewn, that a Man adorn'd with the *Temper*, and all the *Virtues* of Christianity, is *best* qualified for a Life of *Communion* with God, and to have the *quickest Perceptions* of his Presence. And if so, what an *infinite* Injury does that do us, which deprives us of that *Satisfaction*? I say deprive us; *for what Fellowship hath Christ with Belial*; or *what Communion has Light with Darkness*? God is *Light*, and in him is no *Darkness* at all; but the Sinner has his Understanding *darkned*, and what *Pleasure* he has, is in the Works of *Darkness*.

Judge ye then, how *unqualified* he must be to maintain *Communion* with his God: He cannot delight in him, nor can God take *Pleasure* in him; he can't look upon Sin, or Sinners, without *Detestation*; the Sinner therefore, *lives as without God*

in the World! and is a Stranger to the Covenant of Promise; and all this is owing to a vicious Heart, and a vicious Life: How great an Enemy therefore must our Lusts and Vices be to us? What a Disparagement is it to our Nature, that the Author of our Being abhors us? And what an awful Thing is it, to spend all our Days without one gracious Visit from Heaven, which is the highest Honour and Felicity we can have upon Earth, as well as a happy Anticipation of Heaven? 'Tis true, the sensual Man has no proper Idea of this Happiness; neither has the Beast that perishes, any Notion of the Dignity and Happiness of an Angel; but surely the Difference still remains betwixt them: But this is not all; for our Vices rob us of all the Satisfaction that spring from the Testimony of a good Conscience. A Sinner, tho' he makes Self his grand Idol, is yet afraid of nothing so much as of himself; he dare not look into his own Heart; he dare not take a Review of his past Life; his own Conscience is his Enemy, and he can't give the least Attention to its Remonstrance, without a secret Pain: And tho' Conscience is generally little regarded by Men of a vicious and sensual Turn; yet it sometimes stares them in the Face, and will not be dumb; it sets their Sins in Order before them; it punishes them with a View of that tremendous Day, which shall reveal their hidden Works of Darkness; and what makes the Stings of

of

of Conscience more terrible, Men cannot fly from it; it is in the *City*, and in the *Field*; it follows them into *Company*, and retires with them to their *secret Chambers*; and they can't escape its *terrible Suggestions*. If there be a *Purgatory*, this must be it; for 'tis next to the *Torments* of Hell, of which it is to be no small *Ingredient*. How *unhappy* then are those Men, that will make their own *Consciences* Enemies to them, for the *Gratification* of their *low*, and *brutal*, and *sensual* Appetites? But, I have *one Thing* more to add, to shew the *terrible* Effects of a *vicious* Life, that it sharpens the *Sting* of Death, and gives the Sinner an *Aversion* to the very *Thoughts* of dying; and how *unhappy* is a Man, when he can't put *Death* from him, and dare not think upon his *Approaches*? This is the Consequence of a *vicious Indulgence*; for how can a Sinner bear to think of a *Time*, that will rob him of *all the Pleasures* he now enjoys? *Awful Thought!* that the *Hour* is hastening, when all the Things that *his Soul* lusted after, shall depart from him: When his *sensual Capacity* shall be taken away, and he shall say of every Lust; *I have no Pleasure in them*. With what *Satisfaction* can a Man think of dying, who knows that he has made no *Provision* for it; but has left all his *eternal Concerns* unregarded? How gloomy must be the *Grave*, and the *Shadow* of Death? Look to a Man who is then entering upon the

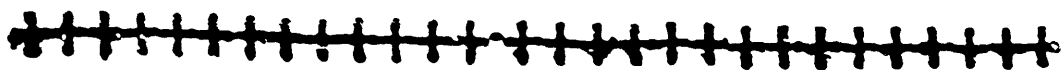
*Blackness of Darkness for ever! How awfully does it sound in the Ear of a Sinner, that he is appointed for this or that to die, and after Death the Judgment! The Terrors of the Lord in that Day makes the Sinner shrink back at the Thoughts of Death. O that I could by these Terrors persuade Men! And that this great Subject were written upon the Hearts of all our *ferocious* Youth! Hear me young Men, hearken to my Voice ye Sons of Men, who spend your Life in the Lusts of the Flesh, in Drinking, Gaming, and vain Company: As you are out of the Way of Virtue, you are out of the Way of Happiness: Destruction and Misery are in your Way, and the Way of Peace you have never yet known; you may rejoice in your Youth, and flatter yourselves, that you shall have Peace; while you walk after the Imaginations of your own Heart; but you will ere long see, God grant you may see it in Time, what Folly you have been guilty of: You will mourn at the last, and say, with a dreadful Emphasis,—*What Fruit had we of those Things, whereof we are now ashamed; for the End of those Things is Death!**

3dly. We may hence see how strangely Christians are misrepresented by those who look upon them as little better than *Idiots* and *Enthusiasts*.

This is a common Charge, but to the last Degree of it; Christians are so far from deserving the Character of *Idlers*, that *Reason* and *Scripture* unite to pronounce them only *wise Men*, and *Sinners None*; he that pursues his own Happiness and Interest, is certainly acting a *wise Part*, which all Men act, who have a *just Sense* of Virtue, and live agreeable to the *Dictates* of Christianity: They may indeed be call'd upon, to renounce the *Pleasures of Sin*; but, they have *Pleasures* in the Room of them, that are truly *rational, angelical* and *divine*. Nor is there a *Sinner* in the World, I believe, but when the *Force* is ended, will be ready to say with *Balaam*; *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his. We Fools counted their Lives Madness, and their End without Honour; but how are they number'd with the Saints?* If Men have no *just Notion* of Religion now, yet, it will appear quickly, in all its *Glory* and *Importance*: And the *whole World* will be convinced, that the Man who chose *Virtue, chose the good Part, that shall never be taken from him*; and thus all *irreligious Banter* will appear in its *own Colours* of *Folly* and *Extravagance*; and *Moses* will be thought a *wise Man, when he chose rather Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, which are but for a Season.*

As therefore, I hope, there is some among you, who have made *Religion* your Choice, and have set out upon a *Course* of Christian Virtue, let me exhort you to persevere in it to the *End*; that no *Man* take your *Crown*; and that you lose not the Things you have already wrought, *You are running well, what should hinder you, or why should you run in vain? The Paths you are in are Wisdom's Paths, and she has been justified of all her Children; and most of all by her eldest Son.*

You are in the *Way* of *Duty*; you are in the *Way* of your *own Happiness*; you are in the *Way* to *Heaven*, and you have a *Cloud of Witnesses*, to direct and animate you: Go on as you have begun; the more *virtuous* you are, the more you will see the *Excellency* of Virtue, and the better *qualified* you will be, thro' the *Merits* of a *Redeemer*, to enter into that *City*, where nothing enters that defileth: *Blessed* are the undefil'd in the *Way*; they shall go from *Strength* to *Strength*, and shall appear before *God* in *Zion*.





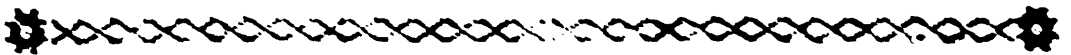
SERMON XIX.



SOLOMON'S Caution

A G A I N S T

The *C U P*.



P R O V. XXIII. 31, 32.

*LOOK not thou upon the Wine when it is red,
when it giveth his Colour in the Cup, when it
moveth it self aright, at the last it biteth like a
Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.*

THEY are the Words of King *Solomon*, and his celebrated Wisdom should give them the greater Weight with us.

'Tis observable, that among all the Sins and Lusts of the Flesh, the royal Preacher takes the most Notice of *Whoredom* and *Drunkenness*. He begins with the Whore in my Context, and describes her by a deep Ditch, and a narrow Pit that lyeth in wait as for a Prey, and increaseth the Transgressors among Men. To this he subjoins the Words of my Text.—*Look not thou upon the Wine, when it is red, when it glittereth in the Cup, when it moveth it self aright.*—Why not? Hath God made any Thing in vain? Is not Wine ordained to cheer the Heart of man? to help his Stomach, and his often Infirmities? Yes: every Creature of God is good, sanctified by Prayer, and receiv'd with Thanksgiving; but it may not be abused, to feast our Luxury, and to quench our drunken and excessive Thirst. The Abuse is here forbidden, the Wine wherein is Excess; where Reason is dethron'd, and Passion become absolute; where Men have lost the Command of their Appetites, and drink at irregular Hours, and to an excessive Degree.—Then they must not look upon it, when it is Red, &c. But guard against it, and keep their Distance.—Because, at the last, *it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.* (i. e.) 'Tis of pernicious Consequence to the Drunkard.

In the Prosecution therefore of the Subject, I shall Consider,

I. The

I. The *Character* and *Consequences* of Wine, or any other Liquor, drank to Excess.

II. The *Reasons*, why we should abstain, and keep our Distance from it.

I. The *Character* and *Consequences* of Wine, or any other Liquor, drank to Excess.

1. 'Tis of pernicious Consequence to the *Purse*.

Be not amongst Wine-bibbers, amongst riotous Eaters of Flesh; for the Drunkard, and the Glutton shall come to Poverty. What is said of the Whore, is applicable enough to the Cup, that by Means thereof, a Man is brought to a piece of Bread. How often has this Observation been verified in our Eyes? How usual a Thing is it for Persons addicted to Liquor, to set out in the World, with a good, improveable Interest, and to be reduced, by excessive Drinking, to Penury and Want; to see them naked and hungry, living on their Neighbours Charity, or spending their Days in Goals and Prisons: Of this we have, not one or two, but many Instances. Men that have brought themselves, and (which is more affecting) their innocent Families, to shameful Beggary:—Nor can it morally speaking, be otherwise.

(1.) When

(1.) When the Liquor they swallow is so *Expensive*.

When their Expences run up to *Hundreds*, if not *Thousands* in the Year. Men need plentiful Estates, a large Fund, and great Incomes, to balance the Expence of superfluous Liquors, abstract from the Necessaries of Life.

(2.) As their Liquor is Expensive, so their *Time* is consumed. When they should be at Home, then they are Abroad at a Tavern, and drinking, when they should attend their Business and Callings; and 'tis well, if their Cups have not the larger Half of their Time: 'Tis notoriously so in too many Instances; who Work one Day, and, perhaps, Drink out two.

(3.) They not only consume their *Time*, but lose their *Disposition* for Business.

The Drunkard daily contracts slothful Habits, and a growing Aversion to his Work and Calling. He is unfit for Labour, and in his soberest Hours, cannot so well project his Schemes, or dispose his Affairs.

(4.) I might add, under the Head of Penury, how exposed he stands to the *Impositions* of Knaves and Cheats. How

How often do they take the advantage of his Cups, and sleeping Reason? to entice him into Contracts and Bargains that are injurious to his Interest; and sometimes to subscribe Papers to his Ruin and Destruction? I am persuaded, I need not help your Memories here, nor recollect for you. These several Ways, among others, does the Drunkard come to Poverty. An Argument, I have the longer insisted upon, because it draws its Force, from the Inconsistency of the Sin, with Riches and Profits of *this* World, which is most apt to affect the Minds of such, as look not at the Things, which are unseen and *eternal*. Nor is Poverty the only pernicious Consequence of the Cup. For,

2. It strikes the *Reputation* and *Character*.

Men act below their Honour, and expose themselves in their Wine, sometimes by foolish, impertinent Questions and Answers, inconsistent with their sober Thoughts and Discretion; and sometimes, by unbecoming, if not immodest Actions; as *Noah* drank of the Wine, and was uncovered in his Tent. When *Micah* saw *David* dance before the Ark, tho' out of a religious Respect and Gladness, she despised him in her Heart, and said scoffing, *How glorious did the King of Israel look to Day in the Eyes of his Servants and Maidens!*—Methinks, the Irony may more naturally, and with a more visible Justice,

Justice, be applied to the Drunkards. How glorious do they look in the Eyes of sober Men! staggering over the Plains; wandering out of their Way; their Mouths full of Bitterness and Cursing, and beastly Communication; their Eyes dim and drowsy; their Reason drowned, and the Man a Brute, in a different Shape. If this be an honourable Stroke in a Man's Character, the Drunkard may be sure of Honour enough. And next to a Man's Life and Health, and before his Interest, is his Character. A good Name is as precious Ointment, but *the Drunkard*, is a dead Fly, which makes it stink in the Nostrils of Fame.

3. Drunkenness is a *leading* Iniquity, a capital Crime, and draws a Complication of Sins after it.

(1.) It's direct Tendency is to all *Uncleaness*.

The wise Man therefore connects them, and assigns impure Desires, as the Effect of the Cup. Thine Eyes shall behold strange Women. Reason is then deposed, and Passion, absolute enough before, receives an Incentive from Liquor, and burns up to an impure Fire: Witness *Lot's* Incest with his two Daughters, after he had drank of the Wine. These two *Adepts* in Wickedness, knew of no other Method, to reach their cursed Ends, but to make their Father drink Wine. I will

will not offend a modest Audience, in descending too much into Particulars; I will only say, that Men (and why should I leave out Women?) run to such extravagant Lengths of Uncleaness, in their Cups, as would make them blush, at the very mention, when their sober Tho'ts and Reason return.

(2.) It directly leads to open *Prophaneness*.

It corrupts the Language, and debauches the Tongue, which is then a Fire, set on Fire of Hell and Liquor, in Union. What prophane Speeches, enough to make a sober Ear tremble, drop from the *Drunkards* Mouth: Language, perhaps, he was never accustomed to. How are all the Bonds of Profession, and the Power of the strictest Education, forgot in a *Tavern*. Those that pass for *Saints*, and Men of Religion, if captivated by the Cup, when it giveth his Colour, are as loose and prophane, as the greatest *Prätitioners*.

(3.) It often runs into *Murder* it self.

A thousand unhappy Proofs we have of this, and some very modern. Liquor inflames the Passions; then arises Contention, Heat and Blood; then Duelling, or private Attempts, and sometimes the open Act of Murder. This is often the Issue with
Men:

Men : And how often have we known the *other Sex*, first in their Cups, then prompted to Unclean-ness, then to stifle their Conception, or to imbrew their Hands in the Blood of their Infants ? The same Persons the Instruments of their Being and Death. These *three* Sins, Drunkenness leads us to, by a natural and direct Tendency ; and in a re-moter Sense, it is the Occasion of *all* Sin. Our Saviour exhorts us, to watch and pray, lest we enter into Temptation ; but a Man in Drink, is unfit for both. Therefore, when the Apostle *Peter* would commend *Vigilance*, he first exhorts to *Sobriety*. *Be Sober, be Vigilant*, for your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. All our Vigilance and Strength, are little enough to guard us against him. What must become of us then, when Wine has thrown us upon our Backs, and lull'd us into a spiritual Lethargy ! There is no Sin so unnatural but a Drunkard may commit it ; tho' it be to murder his *Father*, and to defile his *Mother*.

4. The Sin of Drunkenness wounds the *Conscience*.

What bitter Reflections follow the Cup ! At the last it *biteth* like a Serpent, and *stingeth* like an Adder. Nothing remains but Remorse of Conscience, and like *John's* prophetick Book, the
Wine

Wine that was sweet in the Mouth, becomes bitter in the Belly. Or, if the Drunkard be without this consequent Remorse, when his Reason returns, his Case is yet worse, and more to be pitied; 'tis an awful sign, his Conscience is seared, and instead of warning, shall only awake to *tear* him in Hell, where the Worm dieth not.

5. Drunkenness unfits us for all *publick* Services.

How many Persons, distinguished by Nature, and otherwise qualified for Posts of Honour, and the highest Stations in the civil Government, render themselves incapable of such important Trusts, only by indulging a brutish Appetite after the Cup! I say, incapable: For Men of *Rule*, and Justice, must be Men of Temperance, and *Sobriety*. 'Tis not for *Kings* to drink Wine, nor for *Princes* strong Drink; lest they drink and forget the Law, and pervert the Judgment of the Afflicted. And the same holds good in *sacred* Government. The *Priest* and the *Prophet* have erred thro' strong Drink; they are swallowed up of Wine; they are out of the Way, thro' strong Drink; they err in Vision, they stumble in Judgment. When Persons at the Helm of any Government reel, themselves, how can we expect that Government should be steady, or the Administrations of it regular? So

that the *Set* is, at best, but an insignificant *Cypher* in human Society, and of all Men, is the most unfit to serve his Generation.

6. It incapacitates Men for *Church-Communion*, and the Enjoyment of special Ordinances.

We cannot drink the Cup of the *Lord*, and the Cup of *Devils*. What Fellowship hath *Christ* with *Drunkards*? How dare they drink the consecrated Wine, and be filled with that wherein is *Excess*! To admit such to the Table of the *Lord*, is to give that which is Holy unto Dogs; which we dare not do, at our utmost Perils. And, if there be any *Drunkards* of *our* Communion, I solemnly charge them, either to repent, or absent.

7. Drunkenness is an Enemy to the *Life* of Men.

How frequently is it attended with Surfeits? And how does it impair the Constitution, and often become the Original of mortal Distempers? And who hath *Wo*? who hath *Sorrow*? who hath *Contention*? who hath *Wounds* without Cause? who hath *Redness* of Eyes? They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to seek mix'd Wine. *Wo* unto them that rise up early in the Morning, that they may follow strong Drink; that continue un-
til

til Night, until Wine inflame them : Wo unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle strong Drink. How many Accidents are they exposed to ! They sometimes fall from their Horses, in returning from the *Tavern* ; and sometimes stumble on the dark Mountains, and break and bruise their Limbs, when they escape with their Lives. They are Objects of Contempt and Scorn, to their Company, and subject to the Insults of their Enemies. *Eliah* was drinking himself drunk, in the House of *Akiz*, when *Zimri* smote and killed him. *Benhadad* also was drinking himself drunk, in the Pavilion, when *Israel* came and slew the *Syrians*. So, when Destruction was determined against *Nabal*, his Heart was merry within him, for he was drunken. And, says *Solomon*, describing the Drunkard's Security, in the most imminent Dangers, Thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the Sea, or as he that lieth upon the Top of a Mast ; They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick ; they have beaten me, and I felt it not.

8. Drunkenness destroys the Soul.

The Drunkard drinks at infinite Expence ; he parts with his Soul, to please his Palate ; and will rather cast his whole Body into Hell, then pluck out his right Eye. 'Tis a Sin that drowns Men in

Perdition : For, be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor *Drunkards*, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. The works of the Flesh are manifest, *viz.* Drunkenness, &c. and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Awake therefore, ye Drunkards, and weep and howl, all ye drinkers of Wine. Take heed to your selves, lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Drunkenness, and the Day of the Lord come upon you unawares, and you drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured forth without Mixture, into the Cup of His Indignation : For in the Hand of the Lord is a Cup, and the Wine is Red, and the Dregs thereof all the Wicked of the Earth shall drink.

From the Character and *Effects* of excessive Drinking, I pass

II. To observe the *Reasons*, why we should abstain, and keep, at the utmost Distance, from the *Cup* : Or in the Words of my Text, *not look upon the Wine when it is Red.*

And here,

1. The *Consequences* of it are to be considered.

'Tis

'Tis a good Reason, which is subjoin'd to the Precept. Who would be fond of the Adder's Sting? Or, would not avoid the Bite of the Serpent? *Drunkennes* is the Serpent and the Adder; the Consequences of it make it so: They are very pernicious; pernicious, as I have described it, to the *Purse*, reducing Men and their Families to Want and Poverty; pernicious to their *Reputation* and Character; 'tis a *leading* Iniquity, attended with the complicated Crimes of *Lust*, *Prophaneness*, and *Murder*, and giving the Enemy every Advantage over us; a Sin, that wounds the *Conscience*, fills it with Remorse, or makes it stupid and useless; that unfits for *publick* Service, both in *Church* and *State*; and that incapacitates us for Communion with *Christ*, or a Right to his Ordinances; an Enemy to the Health and *Life* of Man; and in the Issue, destructive to his *Soul*. What greater Consideration can we have, to keep our Distance and Guard? The Argument is fetched from both Worlds; from Body and Soul; Self, and Neighbour, and Family; Reputation, Life, and Interest. If Men have no Regard to these, what can prevail with them!

2. Because *Temptations* to *Drunkennes* will never *excuse* the Sin.

When we are surpris'd by Temptation, the Sin is so far extenuated, and of less Aggravation in the Circumstance, but not wholly excusable; the Authority of *God* prohibiting, being infinitely superior to the Power of the *Creature* tempting. But when we *run* into Temptation, I cannot see how the Power of it will, either excuse, or extenuate a Fault. It will be no Plea for the Drunkard, in the Day of Judgment, that he was *tempted* by the Cup. God may then ask him, What was the Rule of your Practice? Your own Appetite, or my Precept? Which ought to have had the *first* Influence upon you? The Authority of my Law, or the Persuasions of the Creature? Was I to be condemn'd? Was my Law to be undervalu'd? My Threatnings despis'd? And my Grace slighted? And my Son rejected? for a contemptible Cup, and a brutish Gratification? Or, if the Temptations of Liquor were so powerful, and the Charms of the Cup so irresistible, why did you venture upon it? When your Experience told you, once and again, your own Weakness and Insufficiency, why did you not take the Warning? Why would you run again, among foolish Companions, to *Taverns* and Houses of Perdition? If you could not forbear, nor moderate your Draught, you should not have gone, nor have look'd upon the Wine when it was red, when it gave its Colour in the Cup.—

Such

Such Questions as these will strike the Drunkard
Speechless.

3. We should keep our Distance from the Cup,
because we are so often *conquer'd* by it.

Simply considered, it can be no Crime, to look upon the Wine when it is red, nor to drink it in Moderation. This *Timothy* himself might do; but the Consequences of it make it dangerous and criminal. The Line of Division between Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil, is very narrow, and soon stept over: and to venture, in some Cases, to the Extremity of what is lawful, is almost venturing upon what is otherwise. A Man that would not fall, must not go too near the Precipice. A Man that will run into a publick House, is in Danger of looking upon the Wine; and he that looks upon the Wine, is in Danger of drinking; and he that drinks, in Danger of drinking to Excess. I appeal to the Experience of some Drunkards, whether they have not flatter'd themselves, at first, with the Thoughts of Moderation, and been sufficiently guarded, in their own Conceit, against all Excesses; and yet been *insensibly* tempt'd, and drank away their Reason and Senses. If we expect to be delivered from Evil, we must not be led into Temptation. This stands first in the *Lord's Prayer.*

Thus have I shewn the pernicious *Consequences* of Drunkenness; and the *Reasons*, why we should avoid the most distant Temptations to it.—

I will not deny, but both the *Propositions* are directly, and *designedly* levell'd against *Taverns*; not against *Taverns* in their *original* Design, when first set up, to accommodate Strangers, and to provide against their Intrusion into private Families: But against *Taverns degenerated* from their first Design, and debauch'd and fill'd with sottish *Neighbours*. To such Houses we owe all the foremention'd Effects of Drunkenness. *Here 'tis*, that the Wine looks red, and moveth it self aright; *Here 'tis*, that *Nature* and *Art* unite, and tempt the Palate with agreeable Mixtures. These are the Houses, that make Men *Beggars*, that destroy the Funds of *Charity*, and rob Families of their just and proper Livelihoods. These are the Houses, that wound our *Character* and Reputation; that lead into Acts of *Uncleanness*, *Hostility*, *Murder*, and *Prophaneness*; that waste and stupify our *Consciences*; make us unfit for *publick Service* and *Church-Privileges*. These are the Houses, that strike at Men's *Life*, *Health* and *Constitution*; that make Merchandise of their *Souls*; and in a Word, destroy us for *both* Worlds. What a heavy Charge is this upon those that keep them! Thousands may curse them in *this* World, and the Blood of Thousands will cry

cry against them in the next. If we are come to Hell, say they, *You, You* we may thank, in a great Measure, for it. Our Ministers faithfully warn'd us against the Sin of Drunkenness, and plainly told us the Consequences of it : but you have tempted us into it ; you first tempted us to your Houses, and when you saw us drink to Excess, you never put the Knife to our Throat, nor deny'd us Liquor, nor confin'd us to proper Hours ; the longer we staid, and the more we drank, the greater was your Profit from us, and you valued your *Purse* more than our *Souls*. Now, we curse the Day, when we knew you ; we curse the Time, when we step'd over your Threshold, and the unhappy Hours we consum'd in *Drinking* at your Houses.— I know, *Tavern-keepers* think little of this ; and plead, *Not Guilty*, to the whole Charge. We never, say they, forced any Man ; every one had his Liberty to go or stay.—But what Mockery is this ! If they never *forced*, it was because they could not. To *tempt*, was all they could do, and this they did with all imaginable Art : and the *Devil* himself is excused, by the same Argument ; for he can only tempt, and has Power to force no Man. But if those who keep such Houses, regard not what I say, yet I expect some Regard from *you* that hear me, and I now solemnly warn you against *Taverns*.

1. I beseech and charge you this Day, to exercise your parental Affection, Authority, and Endeavours, to keep your *Children* from such Houses of Hell and Perdition.

They are young, and passionate, and more easily tempted, than Age and Experience. Remember, what hopeful Youths have been deceived, and ruin'd by *Taverns*; ruin'd, I say, in *Body* and *Soul*, for *Time* and *Eternity*: And your Children are but *Children* of the same common Nature and Weakness with others; and it must be your parental Care, and the Exercise of your Authority over them, under God, if *they* escape the Snare, and fall not into the same Ditch. Had not the Parents in this Place, been too remiss in this great Duty, so many of our Youth, 'tis probable, had not been so vicious as they are.—Let this Negligence be never again reprov'd in you. If you have any Regard to the Interest of your Children in *this* World; if you value their *Repute* and Character; if you would preserve a good *Conscience* in them; if you have any Compassion for their *Souls* or *Bodies*; if you would have them dedicated to *God*, and devoted to His Service *here*, or dwell with Him *hereafter*; and (I will say) if the Interests of *this* Church, or that Religion, in general, which is pure and undefiled, have any Weight with you; keep them, keep them from *Taverns*; keep them at remotest

remotest Distance; let them not go by the *Door* of such Houses, nor be found in such Company, however civil and obliging, as would lead them *thither*. Keep them therefore, as much as may be, at *Home*, under the Inspection of your own Eye; for better follow your Children to their *Graves*, than see them run into Taverns.

2. With the same Solemnity and Earnestness, I beseech and charge you to absent *your selves*.

If you are not so easily tempted as your Children, yet the Consequences of your going are great, and you have no just *Plea* for it: neither from the Command of your Passions, nor from the Necessity of your *Business*.

1. It is no just Plea, for a Man to say, I am so well fortify'd by the Grace of God, and have my Passions in so just a Subjection to my Reason, that for the Sake of agreeable Company, I may innocently enough frequent a *Tavern*. This, I say, is not a just Plea.

For,

i. You stand by the *Grace* of God, and not by your own natural Power. This you confess, and therefore ought to take Heed lest you fall: If
God

God withdraw His Grace, you will as soon lose the Command of your Passions, as another, and drink with the Drunken.

2. You *tempt* God, by going, to withdraw His Grace.

God's Grace never supersedes Man's Endeavours ; they always act in Concurrence : and when Grace is thus abused to Wantonness, and pleaded as an Argument for publick Houses, 'tis a sovereign Wonder, if it be not withdrawn.

3. Supposing God should continue His Grace, and you should have the Command of your own Passions ; yet your Example may embolden *others*, who perhaps have not your Grace. They think 'tis enough to justify them for ever, when they can say, Such and such a Man, an eminent *Professor*, and a reputed Christian, frequents the Tavern, as well as we. And they will prophanely improve your very *Sobriety* as a further Argument in favour of their Practice. Why, say they, do our Preachers thunder out their Anathema's, and pretend such a necessary Connection betwixt Taverns and Drunkenness, when we see so many return from them *sober* as they went ?—And thus you destroy the Soul of your Brother, for whom Christ died.

4. You

4. You *countenance* the Thing it self, and practically plead in Vindication of those who keep such Houses, more than a *Score*, of the prophanè Character. They will too naturally think, that 'Tavern-keeping (in the very Sense which I intend) is not a Crime, when Men of *Virtue* and *Profession* thus encourage it.

5. You give needless Occasion of Offence to them that are *without*.

If you frequent a Tavern, behave yourselves with the utmost Guard and Caution you can, yet malicious Tongues will make it a Cover for their Slanders, and wound the Church of God thro' your Sides.

6. 'Tis strange and wonderful, how a *Tavern* should afford agreeable Company to a *Christian*: unless Cursing, Swearing, and vain Babbling can be agreeable to Sobriety, Modesty, and Piety. And the Truth is, when a Man runs to a *Tavern* for Company, 'tis a Sign, he has little of the *Saint* in him.—So that an Argument from this Character, and the Command of our Passions, will not bear the Test. Nor

2. Will it answer better, to plead our *Business*. For 'tis hard to conceive, why the *Tavern* should be

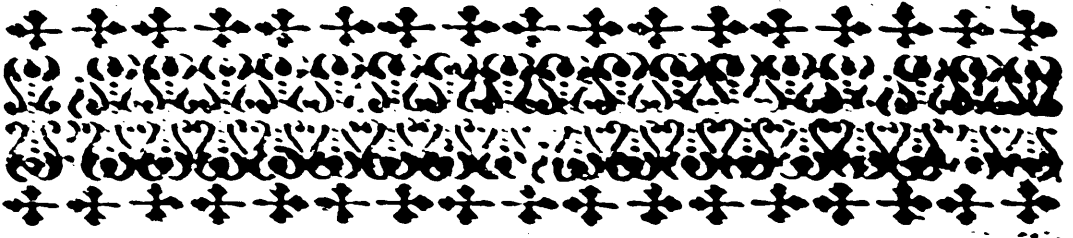
be made the Stage of Business. An improper Place 'tis, I'm sure, for any Transactions of Weight, and Consequence ; amidst Clamour, Drinking, Gaming, and all imaginable Confusions. So that *Business* is a mere Pretence.

Thus have I endeavoured to expose the vile and pernicious Sin of *Drunkenness*, and warn'd you faithfully against the *Taverns*.—I have deliver'd my own Soul : and if you will not take the Warning, your Blood, and your Children's Blood, be upon your own Head.

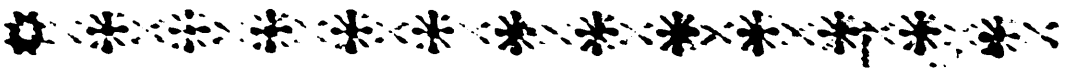


S E R M O N





SERMON XX.



T H E

Character and Employment of good Angels.



PSALM CIII. 20.

BLESS the LORD, ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning unto the Voice of his Word.

HO' we can't conclude the Existence of any created Beings superior to Man, by the mere Light of Nature, we may certainly do it from the Authority of divine Revelation. Our Bible,

Bible, in near an hundred Places, mentions a glorious Species or Rank of *Spirits*, which are not encumbered with Flesh and Blood, as we are; which breath a much freer Air; have a higher Place of Abode; stand nearer the Throne of God; and are capable of doing him vastly more and better Service, than we Mortals can pretend to.

And I can't but think, if we suffer'd our Thoughts to fly away sometimes from our own grosser Atmosphere, to the *Angelick* World, to contemplate the Order, the Character, and Business of *such Spirits*, we might reap many Improvements from it; and particularly see our Obligations to *praise* God, when *Angels* themselves are call'd upon to do it.

My Text takes it for granted, there are *such* Spirits, or superior Beings; calls them by their *Name*, exhibits their *Character* or *Description*, and insinuates their Obligation to *bless the LORD*.— I shall therefore consider these Things, in their natural Order.

I. We have the *Name*, by which these superior Spirits are call'd, viz. *Angels*.—*Bless the LORD, ye his Angels*.

This Name signifies nothing more nor less than *Messengers*: and 'tis a very significant *Name* for

for those *ministering Spirits, which are sent forth to minister to the Heirs of Salvation.* Angels take their Names from their Employment and Character: Nor will the *tallest Spirit* in Heaven think it *beneath* his Order and Degree, to carry the *Messengers* of the LORD of Hosts: Yea, 'tis their *Honour*, that God will send by them, and make them *His Ministers*.—And what an Honour does it put upon *our Ministry* here below, that we are employed in the same Work, and bear the same Name, with the *Angels!* Being *Embassadors for Christ*, and *Messengers of the Churches*, we are dignified as pure *Angels*.—But we must remember, we are not equal to them, in Nature and Endowments.

II. Our Text exhibits a noble *Character and Description* of them; in these Words,—*That excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, bearing to the Voice of his Word.*

Let us spread out this Character, and consider this Description in all its several Particulars.

I. One Part of the Character of *Angels* is, *That they excel in Strength.*

The Psalmist mentions it as a known undisputed Characteristick of the *Angels*, and seems to ground his Argument much upon it. He had over and over

called upon himself, and his best Powers, to *bleſs the LORD*; but he was a *Man*, a mean Creature: and therefore he proceeds to call upon ſuperior Beings, which *excel in Strength*.

'Tis certain, that *Angels* are not ſubject to thoſe *Infirmities*, which encompaſs, incumber and diſhonour, *human Nature*.—Before the Apoſtacy indeed *Man* was but *little lower than the Angels*. Tho' even then, they were our Seniors, our *elder Brethren*; they were higher in the Scale of Exiſtence, and had natural and moral Powers *above Man*.—And now very *far* above him; they *excel in Strength*, whether we take the Word in a *natural* or a *moral* Senſe.

1. In a *natural* Senſe, the *Angels excel in Strength*.

What a prodigious Idea does it give us of their *Strength*, when in one Night, one ſingle *Angel* deſtroyed ſo many in the Camp of the *Aſſyrians*!—Be ſure they are of *limited* Power; but as Revelation has not, neither may we pretend to *fix* the Limits; and ſay, their Power extends to ſuch a particular Effect, and no further.

We know, that the *fallen Angels* have given clear Evidences of a ſurprizing Power, over the
Bodi

Bodies of poor *Demoniacks*. How would they seize, and rend, and tear them, when permitted by Heaven! We see, when God put *Job* into the Hands of *Satan*, he never wanted *Power*, to the very Extent of his Commission. He plainly appears to have Power enough to raise Storms and Tempests, and to direct the Lightning and Thunder, when He is call'd the *Prince of the Power of the Air*.

And no doubt, the Winds and Elements, Fire and Water, are very much under the Power of *good Angels*. Yea, I doubt not, they have Strength enough to overturn the Foundations of the Earth, and to push the Globe we live on from its Centre. And to this excelling Power in the *good Angels*, I doubt not, under God, 'tis owing, that the *Devils* do not burn up, or overflow the whole Earth. For 'tis not improbable, that the Almighty makes use of those Angels which retain'd their Integrity, to vex and counteract the Attempts which Devils make to destroy Mankind. And so he triumphs over them, without any Occasion to send forth his own *immediate Power* for it.

Milton's Fight of the Angels, proceeds entirely upon this Plan and Scheme of Things: And the English Reader, in that noble *Poem*, may find his own Imagination much awaken'd and assisted, to

conceive of the *Strength* of *Angels* ; where He represents them taking up the Mountains, as a *little Thing*, and throwing the Hills, one at another : tho' perhaps he acted the *Part* here, more than the *Divine*, or the *Philosopher*. But 'tis certain, we know not where to assign the *Limits* of *Angelick Power*, or of *Spirits* that excel in *Strength*.

Under this Head of natural Power, I might also mention that prodigious Stretch of *Thought* and *Reason*, which we must be forc'd to ascribe to *Angels*.—They excel, most certainly, in the Strength of their *intellectual Powers* ; in all that Force, Penetration, and Vivacity of Mind or Understanding, which belongs to the Nature, or enters the Description of the most superior of created *Spirits*.

We have indeed some rare Instances of extraordinary Capacities among *Men* : Some that have been anointed above their Brethren, and excell'd Mankind in common, as far, perhaps, as they have excell'd the most sagacious of the Brutes. But still let *Angels* ever have the *Pre-eminence*, in the Riches and Glories of the Mind.

Angels have certainly an unquestionable Title to be *wiser* than the Sons of Men.—Who can pretend

pretend to say, how exquisite their Knowledge is, how quick their Perception, what Furniture of Mind they have, what Treasures of Wisdom! They know the *Path*, which the *Vulturè's Eye hath not seen*. They can penetrate much deeper than our Philosophers, into the *Secrets* of Nature; and see Things in their *Seeds* and *Principles*, which have a thick Veil over them, to mortal Eyes. — We are able, scarcely, to go below the *Surface* of Things; but they can penetrate into the *Recesses* of Nature, and unfold the Reasons of a thousand of the *Phænomenens*, mysterious to Philosophers.

Ask the *Angels*, and I doubt not they can exactly describe to you the *Laws* of the Creation; upon what the *Foundations* of the Earth are fasten'd; who laid the *Corner-stone* thereof; and how he shut up the Sea with *Doors*, and broke up for it his decreed *Place*. They can doubtless enter into the *Springs* of the Sea, and walk in Search of the *Depth*. — They can doubtless tell, where *Light* dwelleth, and the *Place* of *Darkness*, that they might take it to the *Bound* thereof, and know the *Paths* to the *House* thereof. — CENTRE, and GRAVITATION, with all their Rules, and the Motions of COMETS, lie plain, we may think, before the Eye of an *Angel*; who surveys the Planetary Worlds with equal Ease and Wonder.

Some Things indeed the *Angels* have yet to learn, in the Kingdom of *Grace*.—*Great is the Mystery of Godliness*, even to them; and they stoop down to look into these Things. It may be justly question'd, whether they have any comprehensive Knowledge of the glorious Doctrine of the *Trinity*; the Essence of *God* being *unsearchable*. Yet, I can't but suppose, their Apprehensions of it are much clearer than ours.—Their Knowledge of Things must vastly surpass ours, because they are *pure Minds*, Spirits without a Body, nor clogg'd and fetter'd as ours are. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful for us; 'tis high, we cannot attain to it.*

2. In a *moral* Sense, the *Angels* excel in *Strength*.

Here lies *Man's* chief Deficiency; herein appear the dreadful Effects of the first Sin. We have *lost* our original moral Rectitude; and shall never *perfectly* recover it, 'till we quit this Tabernacle of Clay. Our best Schemes of Morality are partial and defective. In some intricate Instances, we are *ignorant*, and know not what we ought to do. Many Cases of Conscience are puzzling.—But where we are inform'd and convinced in our *Judgment*, we yet find a strange *Reluctance* in our *Will*; we feel a Sort of *innate Aversion* to some of

of the plainest Duties: as the *Heathen* said of himself,

—*Vites Meliora. proboque,* — — —
Deteriora sequor.—

Nature has a strange Bent to *rebel* against her own *Light*, and all of us have Reason to join in that noted Confession, *We have done those Things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone those Things which we ought to have done.*— But do the *Angels of Light* ever make this Confession? Or do any of these *moral Feibles* enter the Character of those Beings, which *excel in Strength*? No,—their Nature is not stained like ours.

They are all *Light* and *Flame*, all *Love*, all *Life* and *Vigour*, in moral Duty, to as high a Degree as their Nature and Order of Existence is capable of, or requires. One *sinful Thought* would render them unfit for the *high and holy Place* where they dwell; and unfit to attend upon him who is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity*. We may be sure, they have an unspilly'd Purity, and cannot offend against one Law of Nature; or against any positive Institution, the great Creator may see meet to give them.

Their vast *Understanding* is of great Advantage: so that *moral Perfection*, we ascribe to them. They

excel in the Strength of their Knowledge, and can discern Things that are excellent. Virtue appears in its native and full Lustre, in the Eyes of an Angel.—He knows what is fit, and can see much further than we can pretend, into the almost infinite Relations of Things, what Duties result from them, and ought to be assign'd to them. The Obligations to moral Virtue appear to him in a much superior Light; he sees how amiable every Precept of Nature is; that her Laws are holy, and just, and good; that whatever Things are true, and just, and honest, are also praise-worthy, are lovely, and of good Report.—Temperance, Sobriety, Chastity, Benevolence, &c. have a certain Beauty in the Eyes of Men, even the very worst of Men; but can't be supposed to shine with half the Lustre, in which such spotless Spirits, as Angels, view and admire them.

And as they have high Notions of Virtue, so there is a sincere Purity of Will, which never contracted any Aversion to God, or Goodness, but is naturally bent or inclined to Obedience; and their upright Will stands ready to embrace whatever their Understanding has pronounced good and excellent. 'Tis natural to an Angel of Light, to love God supremely, who is the supreme Object of Love; to admire him, who is clothed with Honour and Majesty, and possessed of every Attribute, necessary

cessary to engage the Attention and Admiration of the most excellent Order of rational Creatures.

Hence our Saviour, in the Prayer he taught his Disciples, makes the Service and Obedience of the *Angels*, the Standard of that Perfection, at which we should aim in ours—*Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* As here is doubtless a Reference had to the *Angels*, so it fairly insinuates the Excellency, the Alacrity, the Universality, and the Zeal of their Obedience.

And where the *Understanding* and the *Will* so happily concur, how noble and well-governed must their *Affections* be! *Angels* have *Passions*; but they are the *Passions* of *Angels*. And in the Vigour of their *Affections*, in the Strength of their *Passions*, do they excel. They well know, how to be *humble* and *submissive*; and when a sacred *Disdain* and *Ambition* becomes them: they excel in the Purity of their *Love*, in the Intensity and Flame of their *Zeal*. Their *Devotion* is high and very ardent. *God maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a Flame of Fire*: And they are never *slotful* in Business, but always *fervent in Spirit, serving the LORD*.

In short, we ourselves shew our Sense of the Glory and Excellency of *Angels*. For, when in

our Panegyricks, we would express a Man's Eloquence, Fire, and Parts, Life and Behaviour—we are apt to say, “*He has the Tongue, and the Pen of an Angel—*” He speaks like a Seraph—“*His Life is Angelick.*—I need not then go any further into this Branch of the *Character* my Text gives the Angels.

But methinks, we should learn to *behave* well and decently in the *Presence* of such venerable and superior Beings; and be *esbawed* of mean and *trifling* Actions, when *Angels* are Witnesses to them.—The Apostle hints at this Argument, *Let them, i. e. the Women, have Power on their Heads, because of the Angels,*—who are supposed to be *present*, especially in the Time and Place of religious Worship, and to observe our Deportment: Where, to be sure, it must fill them with holy *Indignation*, to discern any *Lightness* of Carriage, any Signs of *Laughter*, or other *Indecencies* of Gesture and Behaviour!—And that this is no *trifling* Consideration, appears from St. Paul's Charge to *Timothy*: Says he, *I charge Thee, before God, and the elect Angels.*—

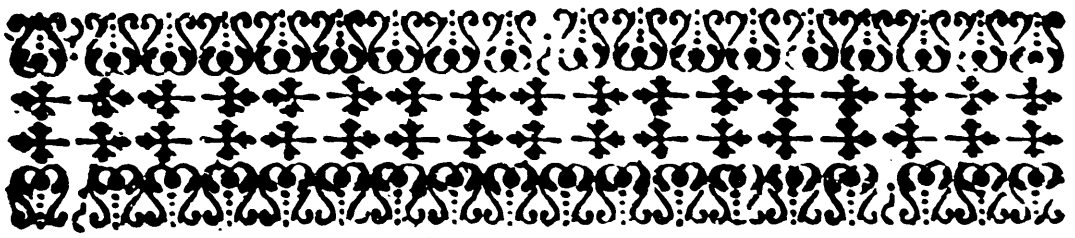
Were the *Adulterer* who waiteth for the Twilight, were the *Drunkard*, or the *Thief*, who love Darkness,—to see some *Angel*, in his venerable Appearance, and seraphick Glories, standing before them,

them, how would it awe and confound them! How would they at once both *blush* and *tremble*!—Why now, tho' *we* don't see them, they certainly see *us*. Notwithstanding they can't search our *Hearts*, yet they are privy to our *Actions* and *Behaviour*; and must be much *displeas'd*, to see us breaking the *Laws* of that *God*, whom *they* love, and reverence, and obey. Let this Consideration then, among others, have its Weight with us: And let us so behave, that there might be *Joy in Heaven*, in the *Presence of the Angels of God*.

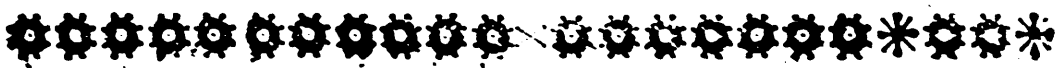


S E R M O N





SERMON XXI.



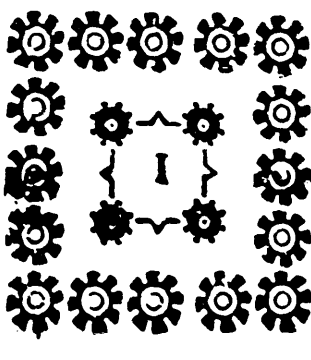
T H E

Character and Employment of good Angels.



P S A L. CIII. 20.

BLESS the LORD, ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning unto the Voice of his Word.

 COME now to consider the *second* Branch of the *Angels* Character, exhibited in *my* Text ; which is, That they *do the* Commandments of God.

This

This may refer to that Respect the Angels have to the *general* and *moral* Commands of God; which they are naturally obliged to obey, and for which they are excellently well qualify'd, by the Purity and Perfection of their *Nature*.— This we consider'd under the former Head, when I shew'd, in how many Respects, they may be said to *excel in Strength*.—Or, the Commands here mention'd, might rather relate to those *positive Orders*, and *particular Messages*, which God issues out, and executes by the Ministry of *Angels*; who are, all of them, *Ministring Spirits*, who *minister continually before him*, and are also, on proper Occasions, *sent forth to minister* in the Kingdom of Providence, thro' the several Parts of his wide Dominion.

The great God, being Himself every where essentially present, *needs not* the Ministry of his Creatures, yet He is pleas'd to *use* it; and sets off the Grandeur of his Providence and Government by the Share *Angels* have in it. He is represented, *sitting upon a Throne of Glory, high and lifted up. Thousands of Thousands stand before Him, and ten thousand Times ten Thousand minister unto Him*.—Like some great Prince, with his Ministers of State around him, and sending forth his Embassadors, to carry on his Designs, thro' the most distant Regions.

They

They are stiled *Angels* ; and as their Name is, so are they.—They are commission'd by Heaven, to move the Wheels of Nature, and to interest themselves in the Affairs of Empires and States.—Being *Spirits* without Bodies, they are the better qualify'd for *Expedition* and *Dispatch*, and must be suppos'd to act in a great many Cases *intelligibly*. I doubt not, the *Angels*, those unseen Spirits, do us many friendly kind Offices, that we know nothing of ; screen us from a thousand Dangers ; and are frequently very near us, when we know it not, and cannot see them.

Some have tho't, that every *Christian*, at least, has his *Guardian* Angel ; whose particular Commission is limited to that Charge ; who goes out, and comes in, with us.—But this Notion has no Foundation, I think, in Scripture ; which rather represents them, promiscuously, *ministering to the Heirs of Salvation*. They seem to have a secret Care and Concern for *all* such ; and to make their Protection a *common* Cause and Charge.

In this, I say, as well as in Acts of Judgment, these Spirits act often *intelligibly* ; but we are assur'd, from holy Writ, that they *can*—for they have assumed *Bodies*, and made *Appearances*. What else does the Apostle mean, when he recommends *Hospitality* from this Consideration, that
by

by entertaining *Strangers*, some have entertained *Angels*, unawares? Surely these *Angels*, thus entertained, could not have been mistaken for *Strangers*, had they not assumed the Shapes, and Visages of *Men*. And the Apostle, no doubt, alludes here to *Abraham*, a Man eminent for his Hospitality; who *saw the three Men*, i. e. *Angels* in human Shape, *standing by him, as he sat in the Door of his Tent*.—So, two *Angels* appear'd to *Lot*, whom he calls *these Men*.—The *Angel* of the Lord called twice to *Abraham*, out of Heaven.—An *Angel* appeared also to *Moses*.—An *Angel* met *Balaam*, with a flaming Sword.—*Jacob* saw the *Angels*, ascending, and descending.—*Angels* address'd *Zechariah*; and visited the Virgin *Mary*.—The *Angel* of the Lord roll'd away the great Stone from the Door of our Saviour's Sepulchre, and sat upon it.—And two *Angels* were seen in the Figure of *Men*, in the Grave itself.—In short, there is nothing in the *Reason* of Things, why we should pronounce either *Heresy* or *Absurdity* upon this Doctrine; and if we give into the Belief of the *Scripture*, it must be admitted.

According to the Scripture of Truth, there is a Rank of *ministering Spirits*, sent down upon some great Occasions, to reveal the Secrets of Heaven to Men, to defend God's People, or to execute his righteous Judgments upon the Wicked.—And the
good

good Angels, we have Reason to think, always are hovering over the dying Bed of a Christian, ready to conduct his Soul to the Gates of *Paradise*, and to lodge it in *Sinners's* Bosom.

A late Writer, of considerable Ingenuity, has advanced an Hypothesis, in which he seems to be pretty singular. He supposes the Almighty to have made a Number of *Spirits*, of a *different* Species, both from *Men* and *Angels*—*Spirits* of great *Intelligence*, and of a very *benignant* Disposition, tho' they do not rise to the Rank of *Angels*.—Them he stations near or about the *Skirts* of our *Globe*: their Residence he assigns in our *Atmosphere*; he supposes them acquainted with the *Springs* of *Mischief*, which are out of our Sight; and that, by the Almighty's Order or Permission, they assume particular *Shapes*; and in these *Shapes*, *communicate* any impending Danger to us, in Order to fortify and put us on our Watch. For he imagines, that admitting the Doctrine of *Apperitions*, the Employment is *below* the Dignity of those *Angels*, which are round the Throne of God.

All I shall say to this *new* Hypothesis, is, that it may be *possible*, but has not the least Foundation in *Scripture*, nor any conclusive Arguments from human *Reason* to support it. Our Bible, I think, evidently assigns the Character, not only to *Angels*,
but

but Angels of the highest Degree : to Angels that excel in Strength : — These are they, who are said to *do his Commandments, hearkning to the Voice of his Word.* And this Form of expressing it, implies two Things.

1. That the *Angels* execute *whatever* God commands.

2. That they do *nothing*, either in a Way of Mercy or Judgment, in their Errands to us, without the Appointment of God.

Both these Propositions are equally implied in the Phrase.

1. That the *Angels* execute *whatever* God commands.

The Expression is indefinite, and admits of no Restriction.—*Partial* Obedience would be indeed a Kind of *Rebellion*. Should the Angels execute ten Thousand of the divine Orders, and refuse in a single Instance, they could with no Propriety be said to *do his Commandments*. For, as the Apostle *James* argues in our Case, *If we keep the whole Law, and offend in one Point, we are guilty of all.* The Reason is obvious, because the *same Authority* which binds to *one*, binds to *all*. And therefore,

when the Text dignifies the *Angels* with this glorious Character, that *they do the Commandments of God*, we may be sure, their Obedience is *universal*, and never fails.

The Almighty, who perfectly knows the Measure of their *Strength*, never commands them any Thing *out of their Power*: and they have such a *Reſtitude* in their Nature, that they are as willing, as able to obey; and as willing to obey all the Commands, as any *one*. They are not only prepared to execute the Orders of divine *Mercy*, and to bring *glad Tidings* of Peace and Good-will: but alſo to execute the *Judgments* of God on a wicked World; to demolish, to pull down, and to pluck up, Nations and Kingdoms. For whatever natural *Pity* may be ſuppos'd to work in the Breſt of a *good Angel* toward any *wretched Object*, 'tis *controul'd* by that ſuperior Regard he has to his *Creator's Authority*, and to *divine Injunction*. He conſiders, 'tis the Authority of God: And he better knows *what God is*, than we can,—a *Being* of ſpotleſs Juſtice;—and is ſure, that he can't tranſgreſs the Rules of Nature and true Fellowship, in any one Act of Obedience, paid to the divine Commands.

He might poſſibly wiſh indeed, that Things were in a better Situation, and that Men's Sins had

not deserv'd such Judgments: but since they have, he readily takes upon him the (otherwise painful) Task assign'd him, and draws the Sword of Vengeance. We have an awful Instance in the Burning of Sodom. The Lord, indeed, *rained from the Lord out of Heaven. Fire and Brimstone.* He was the original Mover, and is said to do that himself, which nevertheless he did by the Ministry of his Angels: Who have Power sometimes over the fiery Element, and were instrumental to overthrow the Cities of Sodom—Or, if we should quit this Way of Reasoning, and suppose a good Angel to feel too strong Sentiments of Compassion, to undertake such a Charge; yet, how many Devils (apostate, wicked, malicious Spirits) stand ready to catch the divine Orders, and to overflow or burn up the Nations, or Provinces, which they first tempted and seduced into Rebellion against God! It was Satan, very apparently, who destroy'd Job's Substance and Servants: And, I am apt to think, the Devils are often employed, in *judicial* and *penitential* Scenes of Providence.

Yet, I doubt not, but good Angels too, have their Share in these Matters. For, if it became the great God to order a Thing, it becomes *them* to execute it. The Angels will not say; "Lord, it is a Work of Vengeance: send by the Hand of them by whom thou wilt send."—No, but when

God makes the Inquiry, saying, *Whom shall we send? And, Who will go for us?* Who will go to *destroy* such a People, whose Sins have come up to Heaven, and ripen'd them for Destruction? Every *Angel* about the Throne is ready to answer, *Lord, here am I, send me.* Not from any *Delight* he can take in the *Ruin* of any Creature, in it self considered; but in Obedience to the Voice and Word of God, and in Honour to his *infinite Government*; just as the *Creator* himself punishes, who has no *Delight* in the *Death* of a *Sinner*, as his Creature, but only in the glorifying of his own Justice.

2. When the Angels are said to *do his Commandments*, it further means, that in their Errands or Embassies to us, they do *nothing*, either in a Way of Mercy or of Judgment, *without* the Appointment or Permission of God.

They are always in Readiness, in a Posture which discovers their Willingness to obey: But they never *run before they are sent*. They are God's Ministers, attending continually on this very Thing; and they wait his Orders. Not an Angel dare spread his Wing, or stir from the Threshold of Heaven, 'till God bids him go: But then he *flies*, thro' the empty Places, with all the Speed and Agility of a *Spirit*. Should he do any Thing,
even

even tho' an Act of *Mercy*, for us, *without* a divine Licence, he would forfeit the *Character* in my Text : he would fall under the Charge of rebelling against God, and into the *Condemnation of the Devil*.

Why should the *Angels*, at any Time, go of their own Errands ? Are they *above* their God ? Are they *wiser* than their MAKER ? Is not the Creator the best Judge, *what* is expedient to be done ? And does he not know the *Times* and the *Seasons* ? Need he *ask* his Creatures ? Or *who* hath been his Counsellor ?—The *Angels*, who are Masters of so much Reason, must be *sensible* of the Force of such Reasonings ; and can be under no Temptations to do this or that, 'till they receive the divine Orders.

Let us remember this, and take Care how we *censure* the Conduct of the *Angels*, in publick *Judgments* and *Defolations*, in which we suppose them to have so considerable a Share. They are but *Instruments*, the *Servants* of the Most High God. They have *done* but as they were *commanded*, by one whom they dare not disobey ; and our Censure will terminate on the Throne of God himself.

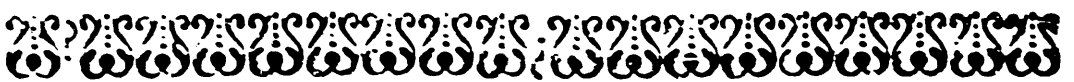
But do *Angels* obey the Commands of God ? We may be sure they obey *like Angels*. They

excel in Strength; and accordingly their Obedience is in a more *sublime* and *perfect* Manner than *ours*.—We may well *think*, to think how *little* we obey; and how *instituted*, how *adulterated*, that little Obedience is, which we pay to the *Lord of Angels*, both their Lord and ours, One to whom we are under indispensable *Obligations*, and these, some of them, of the first Strength.—But *Angels* obey him more *extensively* and *universally*. They have Respect to *all* his Commandments.—They obey him, as they *love* him, with *all* their Heart, and with *all* their Strength.—If they are proud, 'tis of his Service, they think this their Freedom, their Honour, and their highest Glory; and therefore they obey him *cheerfully*. Why else are they represented with *Wings*, but because their Love and Zeal supply the Place of Wings, and they are *swift* to do his Commands.

How should we wish to put off the *Body of this Death*, to fly to the *Angelick* World, to the *innumerable Company of Angels*! Then shall we be *like* them, and *obey* GOD like them!

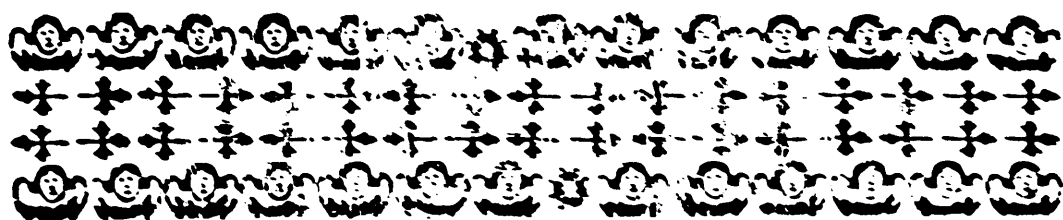
In the mean Time, how provoking must it be to GOD, while *Angels* obey Him, for *Man*, a poor Worm, just passing out of his native Earth, to *disobey* him, to trample on his Commands, and even to *tread under Foot the Son of God*, and count his
Blood

Blood a common Thing ! Oh, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation ? And what Punishment must be prepared for such ! Even that Fire which was prepared for the Devil, and his Angels, the first Rebels, those Spirits in Prison, the Prison of Hell ! ! O let us take Warning by them ; and let us submit to him that can save or destroy us for ever. For, Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and enter in through the Gates ; while they that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, shall be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.



S E R M O N



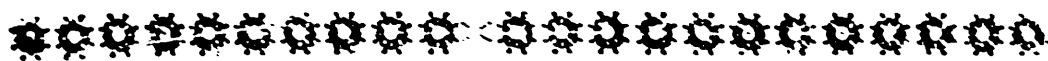


SERMON XXII.



T H E

Character and Employment of good Angels.



P S A L. CIII. 20.

BLESS the LORD, ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning unto the Voice of his Word.

HAVE consider'd the *Character* of good *Angels*, as it stands in my Text, in the two first Branches of it : This Discourse will be devoted to the *last* Branch, expressed in these Words, *Hearkening to the Voice of his Word.*

When

When a *Voice* is attributed to God, it must be understood *Analogically*, and in a Way of Accommodation to ourselves. For, strictly, God being a *Spirit*, has no proper Organs of Speech, as we have, to form an audible *Voice*: Tho', he has Power to assume this, on extraordinary Occasions, as well as any other Appearance.—But I mean, this is not a proper Part of his Nature, or a Property of his Being, as 'tis of ours, who by a natural Constitution are *Spirits embodied*. We cannot *see his Shape*, nor *hear his Voice* at any Time.—And since he makes his *Angels* pure *Spirits*, they are destitute of those Organs, which are necessary to *receive Sounds and Voices*.

By *Voice* therefore understand such a Way of *communicating* the divine Will and Pleasure, as is proper to *Spirits*, that are not essentially attach'd to *Bodies*, nor perform their Operations by the Ministry of them. What *Mediums*, indeed, *Spirits* have to communicate their Sentiments and their Pleasure to one another, we shall never perfectly know, till separate, ourselves, from the *Flesh*. But be-sure, they are superior to *ours*, for Quickness, for Distinctness, and for Certainty.

We make use of an *audible Voice*, to express our Thought, or Meaning: And having agreed to affix particular *Ideas* to particular *Sounds*, the
 Sounds

Sounds and Ideas are communicated together to the Persons we address—But, after the utmost Care and Accuracy of Expression, either from the Incapacity of the Hearer, or from the Poverty of the Language we make use of, the communicated Ideas vary more or less, from our designed Meaning: And this often becomes the unhappy Source of Mistakes, Misunderstandings, and angry Contentions.

However, when Spirits open their Minds, no doubt, the Ideas are convey'd in their full Strength and Clearness: and especially so when God himself reveals his Will to Spirits, that are of such quick Perception, and so perfect Understanding, as the *Angels* are, who (our Text observes) excel in Strength.

But, to let this pass,—I shall attempt two Things:

1. To consider what that *Word* is, to which the *Angels* hearken.

2. What the Import of the Expression is, when they are said to *hearken* to the Voice of his Word.

1. I am to consider what that *Word* is, to which the *Angels* are said to hearken.

Now

Now this may intend, either those *immediate Messages*, whereon they are occasionally sent, and those *particular Errands*, in a Way of Mercy and of Judgment, which they are in Providence made use of to execute:—Or else, that Part of the *Holy Scripture*, which is accommodated to the Nature and Circumstances of *Angels*: and to which we must suppose they diligently hearken: Or lastly, by the *Will of God*, our Lord *Jesus Christ*, personally, must be intended, who is in Scripture called by that Name, and whom the good *Angels* always worship and obey.

(1.) It may intend those *particular Messages*, or *Errands*, on which the *Angels* are *occasionally* sent forth.

That they are employed in Providence, on great and special Errands; that they are *ministering Spirits*, sent forth to minister to the Children of Men, has already been taken Notice of, under another Head, and is fairly imply'd in the very Notation of the Name, *Angel*, which signify's a *Messenger*.

When therefore God (whatever *Medium* he makes use of, in communicating his Mind) notify's it to any of the *Spirits* about his Throne, that it is his Will and Pleasure, they should carry
such

such a *Message*, or execute such an *Order*, or produce such an *Event*, whether in the natural or moral World, this may properly be call'd *His Word*:—And the *Voice* of it signifies, in general, the *expressing* or *communicating* of it to them; as a Superior among Men, makes use of Language and Speech, to notify his Will and Pleasure to his Servants.

(2.) By the *Word of God* here may be intended the *Holy Scriptures*.

The Scriptures indeed were principally written for the Use, not of *Angels*, but of *Men*.—They are given by Inspiration of God, for our Instruction in Righteousness;—that the *Man* of God might be perfect, thoroly furnished to every good Work. They principally teach what *Man* is to believe concerning God, and what Duty God requires of *Man*.—He hath here shewed thee, O *Man*, what is Good, and what the Lord thy God requireth of *Thee*.—A great Part of the written Word is built upon the Hypothesis of *Man's* Ruin and Recovery, of the first and second *Adam*, with the Influence they have respectively upon their Seed.—And these Things in the Bible can have no immediate Respect to *Angels*, who never fell from their Integrity, and need no Redemption; nor can affect them any further than as they display the Perfections of God,

God,

God, and to serve to excite the Praises, and to raise the Wonder of those high and happy Spirits, who desire to look into these Things.

But let us withal remember, that in the Scriptures we are furnished with the sublimest and most consistent Scheme of all moral Truths and Duties: And an Angel of the highest Standing in Heaven, need not be ashamed to converse with the holy Bible, and there read his Creed and his Duty, respecting his Maker, Himself, and his Fellow-Creatures.—And so far the Angels may, with much Propriety, be said to hearken to the Voice of God's Word, in the Holy Scriptures.

Perhaps it may be offered here, as an *Objection* to this Interpretation, That as the *Angels* never *apostrophis'd*, it can't be supposed they need any *written Oracles*, to point out natural *Truth* or *Duty*. The whole Scheme of *Morality*, in its utmost Purity and Glory, was *originally* impress'd upon their Minds; and they need no Dictates in any other Way: They might only look into the Laws and Truths engraven on their own *Nature*, and be sufficiently supply'd with Light and Direction for the whole of natural Religion and Virtue, to be believ'd and practis'd by them.—But admitting all this, yet it must be acknowledged, that these divine and moral Lessons, supposed to be written in the Heart

Heart of an Angel, must exactly correspond with those *moral* Lessons which are written in the Book of God. And in *this* Sense, at least, they hearken to the Voice of the *Bible*.

But I would express my Sentiments here, with the more Caution and Jealousy; because I have no *Interpreters* by me, who seem to go into this Construction.—I therefore proceed to the other Sense, in which I observed the Text may be understood.—

(3.) The *Person* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, may be intended by the *Word of God*.

He has this *Name* expressly given him in Scripture. Rev. 19. 13. *He was clothed with a Vesture dyed in Blood: And his Name is called, THE WORD OF GOD.* This evidently refers to the *Person* of Christ, who in the very first Page of St. *John's* Gospel, is represented under the same Character. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.— And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of Grace and Truth.—* And in the first Verse of the first Epistle of *John*, Christ is denominated *The Word of Life*.—Agreeably to this, some understand *Christ himself*

himself as intended, where we read, *The Word of God is quick and powerful* ; and where God is said, *of his own Will, to beget us by the Word of Truth*. —But the other Texts sufficiently support my present Interpretation of the Passage before us, and lead us to apply it to *Christ* personally.

'Tis a Character suitable to that *Office* he bears in the Christian Church, as a *Teacher come from God*.—He is the great *Oracle* of Heaven ; the very Life and Soul of the *Scripture* itself ; he hath the *Words of eternal Life*, and *teacheth the Way of God in Truth*, *speaking as never Man spake*, with a divine Authority and Energy.

The Voice of his Word then, may signify the Voice of *Christ* ; who, having the Administration of all Things in his Hand, might issue out those *Orders* in his Father's Stead, which the *Angels* are to execute : And *His Authority* might be more immediately considered, in those *scriptural Duties* o which they conform themselves.

Nor need any be surpriz'd, that the *Angels* should be represented as *hearkning* to the Voice of *Christ* ; since *the Name of God is in him*, and all the Perfections of the Deity are ascrib'd to him ; and since he is, even as *Mediator*, advanc'd to be the *Head* of those *Heavenly Principalities*
and

and Powers, and has a Name given Him, which is far above every Name, whether in Earth or Heaven.

But I proceed to the other Thing proposed—

2. To consider the proper Force and Import of the Expression, when the *Angels* are said to *hearken* to the Voice of his Word.

Now, *two* Things seem evidently imported or implied in this; *viz.* a steady fix'd *Attention* to the Significations of the divine Will, and a ready *Obedience* to it.

1. It imports a steady, fix'd *Attention* to the Significations of the divine Will.

To *Hearken*, is to give a close and diligent Attention. And thus the *Angels* are represented as “standing before God” (*arrectis auribus*) with their Ears always open, and prepared to hear what *He* has to say unto them. They incline their Ear, and hear. They are not heedless and unconcern'd Hearers; they don't look upon God's *Word* as a trifling Matter, below their Attention; they are not indifferent, whether they receive the divine Orders, or not; nor careless *how* they receive them. No, but they are always wakeful and attentive to
the

the Voice of the Lord ; always prepared for the most distant Intimations of his Will. Their Powers of Reflection and Attention are all continually awake ; their Ears ever so open'd, that the softest Whispers, the smallest Indications of God's Pleasure, are easily perceived by them. They, as it were, watch for every Word, that proceedeth from the Mouth of God.

And this Attention flows from a double Spring. *First*, from that humble *Deference* they pay to the *Authority* of the great God : whose Throne, they know, is supreme, whose Will is sovereign, and ought to command their Attention.— And *secondly*, from that natural *Esteem* and *Affection*, these sublime Spirits have, for the *Will* of God. When *we* earnestly desire Information, we never want *Attention* ; we are ever impatient, till we obtain it : So, *Angels* desire to know the Will of God, they prize his Commandments, they greatly love his Laws : and this rouses up their *Attention*. Love to the divine *Speaker*, and to his *Word*, always keeps their Attention awake and fix'd.— Which was the *first* Thing imported in the Phrase.

2. To *hearken* to the Voice of his Word, evidently imports also that ready and chearful *Obedience*, which the Angels pay to it.

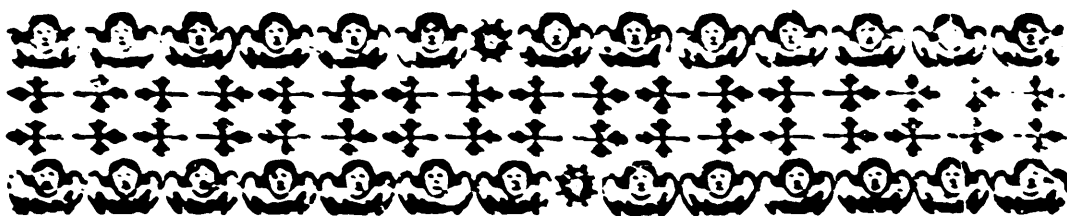
Attention, without a subsequent *Practi* is vain and fruitless. In vain do the Angels *hearken* to the Voice of God's Word, unless they also *obey* it. The *former* is in order to the *latter*. And both, their Attention and their Obedience, flow from the *same* divine Springs. *Love* makes them delight to *know* and *do* the Will of God.—None of his Commandments are *grievous* to them. His Will, being ever *good* and *perfect*, is always *acceptable* to them. His Precepts are all highly reasonable *in themselves* : and must *appear* so in the Eyes of such *pure* and *penetrating* Creatures.—It is *their Meat*, and their *Drink*, to do the Will of the great Father of Spirits. It is agreeable to their own *Nature* ; and their very *Pleasure* consists in it. It would be even *unnatural*, for an *Angel* to refuse Obedience to the Voice of God, whether in the particular Orders of his Providence, in the Commissions given them by his essential Word, the Lord Jesus, or in the standing Revelations of his written Word.—Indeed, they *must* obey, tho' never so *unwilling* : but this is only the Case of *Devils*, not of *holy* Angels. No, these spotless Spirits obey, *not by Constraint*, but of a *ready Mind* : And he is the *happiest* Angel, that has *most Work* to do for God, is the *most devoted* to his Pleasure, and pays the *readiest* Obedience to his Orders.

And now to apply this to *our selves*:—What better Improvement can we make of it, than to learn *Attention* and *Obedience*, from the *Angels*? God signifies his Will to *us*, as well as to *them*. Tho' *we* are not yet so happy, as to join their Society, to be so near to God, and stand about his Throne, as *they* do: Yet the *Word of God* is near to *us*; the *Voice* of the Lord is in his written Word. The Scriptures are a sacred Transcript of his Mind and Will. There he has plainly revealed his Truths to us, and there set his Testimonies before our Eyes. We can't say, that he speaks to us in an *unknown Tongue*; or, that he only *whispers* our Duty, in too soft and low Accents to be heard by us. For indeed he *lifts up his Voice like a Trumpet*: and delivers his Commandments in *Thunder*, as it were, from the flaming Mount.

But, to our Shame, we have not *hearken'd* to the Voice of his Word. Oh, what a Shame is it, to see the *careless* and *indifferent* Air, that visibly sits upon the greater Part of our Congregations, while the *Voice* of the living God is sounding aloud in the *Word* read and preached; while in his Name the Blessing and the Curse are proclaimed, and Things of the most awful Solemnity, Things of eternal Consequence, are utter'd by the *Ministers of Christ*!

Let us reform, I beseech you ; and imitate the good *Angels*. Let us make it our Care, both to *hearken*, and *obey*, even as they do.

So shall we obtain the *Euge* of our Judge at last ; and shall join with *Angels* in the noble Employments of *Thanksgiving* and *Praise*, assign'd them in our Text, and in which the *Saints in Christ Jesus* shall bear them Company throughout a blessed Eternity.



SERMON XXIII.



T H E

Character and Employment of good Angels.



P S A L. CIII. 20.

*BLESS the LORD, ye his Angels, that excel in
Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning
unto the Voice of his Word.*

HAVING considered the *Name*, and
the *Character*, here given to the *An-*
gels, it only remains, under the
last general Head,

III. To take some Notice of the divine and sacred Employment of *Praise*, that is here assign'd them.

For, when the Psalmist calls upon the *Angels*, to *bleſs the LORD*, he insinuates, that the Work of *Praise* well becomes them; and that it is a divine Employment, to which they are no Strangers. And tho' *Angels* have not *Organs of Speech*, or proper and material *Tongues*, as a Part of their Nature and Constitution, yet their grateful and devout Affections are fitly represented by them, and best understood in our own Language.— Besides too, as they are to join in their Worship with *Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles*, and the whole *Church* of the first-born, whose Spirits will one Day be reunited to their Bodies, why may not they assume these *Organs*, which are so fit to communicate their Sentiments, and to impress the very Body?

And if so, surely all the Powers of *Harmony* and *Musick* must be in their Songs; and they never *bleſs the LORD*, but they must *charm* and *ravish* the Ears of all that hear them. For, we must not think, *their* Songs and Devotions are like *ours*, which often die upon our Lips. But, they *excel* in the *Strength* of their Love and Zeal; they are Masters of *Musick*, and make use of the most melodious

melodious Notes ; which *St. Paul* once heard, but could not imitate, nor express.— O, had we the Voice and Tongue of *Angels*, how would the Sound and Harmony reign over our whole Souls, and fire them with a celestial Flame of Extasy and Devotion !

But, if we cannot yet learn their *Notes*, we may guess at their *Themes* ; and reasonably conclude, that these are fit for such elevated *Spirits* to sing upon ; and the *Reasons* why they bless the LORD, are, without doubt, many and very great.

The *Psalmist* indeed, in the excellent Composure before us, seems only to fix his Eye upon some particular *Favours* confer'd on himself : and he would employ *Angels*, yea, the whole *Creation*, to join in, and assist him. For he tho't, one Tongue, and one Heart, could never be sufficient to make due Returns of Gratitude and Praise. Yet, this hinders not, but *Angels* have many other Calls to Praise, and other *Arguments* and Motives, to inspirit their Love, and swell their Hymns. Among which we may well suppose these that follow.

I. 'Tis natural to suppose, that the *Angels* bless God for his immediate *Favours* to themselves.

We must not think *them*, like our selves, *evil* and *unthankful*. Surely, they are conscious of the Riches of divine Goodness toward them : they know their own admirable Make and Constitution ; how noble and extensive a Capacity the great Creator has dignified them with ; how he made them to *excel in Strength*.—They see themselves placed very high in the Scale of the intellectual World, and numberless Species of Creatures below them. They feel their own Powers and their Happiness. They know they were not their own Makers, nor are their own Preservers ; but that God has upheld them in Being, has kept them from falling, and continued them fix'd in their high and heavenly Stations.

And do you imagine, when they reflect upon these Distinctions of the divine Goodness, that they feel no grateful Passions, no Dispositions to Gratitude ! Can they review themselves in all the Glories of the *Angelick* Nature ? Can they see themselves so near the Throne of God, and the very Centre of Happiness ? Can they consider themselves in Heaven, and under the Shines and Smiles of their Creator ? And yet not be inspired with Love and Gratitude !

Does the Psalmist praise God, that *Man* was *fearfully and wonderfully made* ? And shall *Angels*,
the

the highest and most excellent Instances of his Art, be silent! No, they admire the Goodness, the Power, and the Wisdom, that form'd and distinguish'd them; and can never forbear saying, every one of them, *Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits. Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name; who has made me this Spirit, and has given me this Stretch of Thought, this divine Temper, this ample Capacity, this un sullied Purity! For, of all Gifts, intellectual, moral and spiritual ones are to be first desired, and are therefore strong Motives of Praise.*

2. When the Angels look off from themselves, and behold their GOD, they cannot but *bless and praise Him in the View of his adorable Nature and Perfections.*

When they take a Survey of *his Glory, and un-created Excellencies*, 'tis impossible but they must adore and blest Him, for what he *is in himself*, in his own immense *Nature and Essence*, abstract from the *Communications* of his Goodness to the World he has made.

There is no Truth more evident than this,—*Deists* themselves assent to it,—that *God is unsearchable*; tho' other Principles and Reasonings
of

of theirs are inconsistent with it.—*Who by searching can find out God! Who can find out the Almighty unto Perfection!* is the Voice equally of Scripture and of Reason. The Incomprehensibility of the great God is taught both in the Schools of Christianity and Pagan Philosophy. Yet this very Property of the divine Nature is, in itself, a *Reason* why we should admire and *bleſs* the LORD. Because his Perfections are ſo vaſt, that we can't graſp and comprehend them, therefore we ſhould magnify his Name with Thankſgiving; and our Wonder and Praise ſhould bear ſome Proportion to the transcendent Subject.

Now *Angels* have *this* Motive above us; becauſe they *excel* in *Strength*, in the Extent of their Capacity, and Sublimity of their Genius. They can ſtretch the Pinions of Thought, and take a Flight beyond *human* Minds. By this peculiar Advantage, they muſt acquire much grander Ideas of the divine Nature, and more raiſed Apprehenſions of all its Excellencies.—And their Motives to *praiſe* God will conſtantly keep pace with the Discoveries they have of Him. And ſuch as the *Light* and *Glory* is, in which the great Object appears to them, ſuch in Proportion will be the *Strength* and *Fervour* of their Songs.

3. As the Angels bless God in the View of his essential Glories, and the Perfections of his Nature, so likewise, no doubt, they sing the *Displays* and *Impressions* of these, thro' all his *Works*.

The *Works* of the Lord are all of them *Honourable*, sought out of them who have Pleasure therein. And since the *Angels* can penetrate deeper into the *Nature* and *Design* of God's *Works*, than we can pretend to, they must discover the more *Beauty* in them, the more *Wisdom* and *Harmony*, the brighter and stronger *Impressions* of his glorious Attributes; and consequently, feel themselves more powerfully *disposed* to celebrate his Fame, and to speak of the wondrous Acts of his Might.

But here we must enter into one or two Particulars. Let it be observed distinctly,

1. The Angels adore God in the Works of his *Creation*.

The *Creation* is a Scene of Wonders, for its Variety and Magnificence. Nature affords a grand Theatre, on which the Almighty appears in his Glory. The *Act* of *Creation* itself is astonishing; an Act of *Omnipotence*! For nothing less could call Things into Being, from a State of Nothing.

Nothing. The *Angels* therefore are represented *Singing* upon this great Occasion. When God laid the first Foundation, the Corner-Stone of the Earth, These *Morning-Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy*.—No doubt, it was a pleasing Surprize to them, to see a World, of so much Order, and stored with all the Riches and Variety of material Nature, start into Being at the Call of *God*, and rise out of an indigested *Chaos* and Confusion!—To see *Light* commanded to shine out of *Darkness*; to see every *Element* fix'd in its proper Station; and all conspiring to some great and general End! Especially to see such a mysterious Composition of Spirit and Body in *Man*, and the Sovereignty given into his Hands, over all the Creatures here below, could the *Angels* feed their Eyes with these Wonders, these Demonstrations of divine Art and Wisdom, these Profusions of their Maker's Goodness; and not *laud* and *blest* his holy Name!

2. If they find such Occasion for Praise in the Creation of the World, they can never be silent at the *Recovery* of it from Sin and Satan, by the *Incarnation of the Son of God*.

These are eminently the Things the *Angels* desire to look into. They are amazed at the *Contrivance*—their tallest Thoughts are drowned
and

and swallowed up, when they enter into these *Depths of the Riches of divine Wisdom!* They wonder to see *Mercy and Truth* meet together; *Righteousness* and *Peace* kiss each other!—They are astonish'd to find a Scheme propos'd, wherein the divine Compassion might flow out; and yet the severer Attributes of Justice and Holiness not disparag'd.—Methinks, I hear them sing a new Song: *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God!*—

Surely they were amazed at the Condescension of the *Son of God*, in his Incarnation. Certainly they struck all their Harps, when they heard him say, *Lo, I come.*—'Tis true indeed, they were not in a State of Existence, when the Father propos'd, and the Son made this Reply. But they saw it *written of him in the Volume of the Book.*—And could they find no Subject for their Songs, in the *Progress and Execution* of this glorious Work! Were they not struck with great Surprize, to see a *Body prepar'd* for the eternal Son of God! To see him who was the *Ancient of Days*, and Regent of Heaven, pass by the Nature of *Angels*, and assume *Flesh and Blood*, into strictest personal Union with his divine Nature!

How many Wonders must the Person of *Immanuel*, and his *Life* here on Earth, furnish them with!
How

How pleas'd must they be, to mark out his excellent *Virtues*; and be Witnesses of his famous *Miracles*! To see him full of *Grace and Truth*! The *Holy One* and the *Just*! A *Man approved of God*!—Must it not be a pleasing Spectacle to those glorious Spirits, animate their Devotion, and give Life to their Songs, to see with what *Fortitude and Perseverance* our Redeemer waded thro' his *Sufferings*, when he endured the *Cross*, and despised the *Shame*!—How did they shout for Joy, when he pronounced those triumphant Words. *It is finished*!

And surely the whole Band of Angels were transported into Songs of Victory, at the *Resurrection* of Jesus; when they rolled away the Stone from the Sepulchre, when they saw the Son of God raise himself from the Dead, and heard him sing, *O Grave, where is thy Victory*!

Surely with Joy they attended his *Ascension*, and gladly opened the everlasting Doors, the Gates of Heaven, that the *King of Glory* might enter in. And when they saw him seated on the right Hand of the Majesty on high, they praised the Lord with joyful Anthems, such as *Angels* only can sing! Then they saw him, for the *Suffering of Death*, crowned with *Glory and Honour*. Then they read the Name upon his Vesture, *King of Kings, and Lord*

Lord of Lords.—Then they saw him in full Possession of his mediatorial Powers, receiving the highest Honours; and having all the Dispensations of Grace and Providence put into his Hands.—

And now surely, when every *Knee bowed*, when every *Tongue confessed*, that he was *Lord*, the surprizing Scene must give new *Accents* to their Songs of Praise. Especially when it was, as it were, proclaimed thro' Heaven, This is he whom God has appointed *Judge*, both of *Quick and Dead*; and has made him *Heir of all Things*, forever to shine in the *Brightness of the Father's Glory*; and has will'd, that *all Men should honour the Son*, even as they honour the *Father*!

Certainly, we can't muse upon these Things, but we must feel our own *Hearts warm'd* with them, and *burning within us*. What then must be the *Zeal*, the *sacred Fire*, with which the *Angels* continually *blesse the Lord*!

3. The Angels may reasonably be suppos'd to magnify and extol the Lord, for his Works of *Grace* to the *fallen Children of Men*.

They cannot be unmov'd at the *eternal* and *electing Love* of Gpd, to such *Rebels* as we! They could not surely be dumb, nor their *Harp* silent,

silent, when the Decree went forth ; and the Promise was made of the Seed of the Woman, to break the Serpent's Head.—They must be inspired with Joy at the Tho't, that Mankind were not left to perish in their Sins ; that so great a Part of the human Race were snatched from the Jaws of the devouring Lion.

As it must be Matter of Regret to Creatures of their Purity and Love, to see the moral Image of God effaced upon the Soul of Man by Sin ; it must give them an answerable Pleasure, to see this blessed Image restored in the Souls of Men, and gradually advanced to its first Perfection and Brightness.—They can't but rejoice, to see so many moral Disorders among Men happily rectify'd ; so many Errors dissipated, and vain Imaginations cast down ; so many lawless and impetuous Passions controul'd, and so many foolish and hurtful Lusts subdued ; the Love of God taking Place, and diffusing itself, where nothing before was to be seen, but an Aversion to him ; and Grace triumphing, where Sin had reigned unto Death.

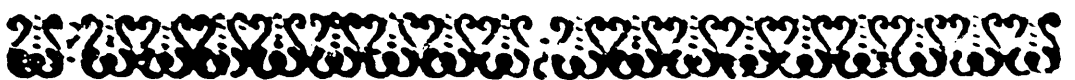
These Things give a new Life and Spirit to the Devotion of the Saints : And how grateful must the Sight be to the Angelick Host ! There's Joy in Heaven among the Angels of God, at the Conversion of one Sinner, even more than for
ninety

ninety and nine just Persons, which need no Repentance.—No sooner is a Sinner bro't to repent, and persuaded to open his Heart to Christ, but the happy Tidings spread among the Angels, and diffuse Joy thro' all the innumerable Company. For now there is added to their Society, such as shall assist them for ever, in their Praises: And now they see a wonderful Display of the Grace of God in Christ, which cannot but make them bless the Lord, whose Glory is above the Heavens.—What is principally the Tenor and Strain of their Songs, we may learn from Luk. 2. 13, 14. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards Men.

I am sensible I have too much *fetter'd* my Thoughts, by confining myself within the Limits of a single Discourse, on this Part of my Subject, which is so very copious, and capable of so much pleasing Amplification.—But these Hints may be improv'd and enlarg'd upon, in your own Meditations.

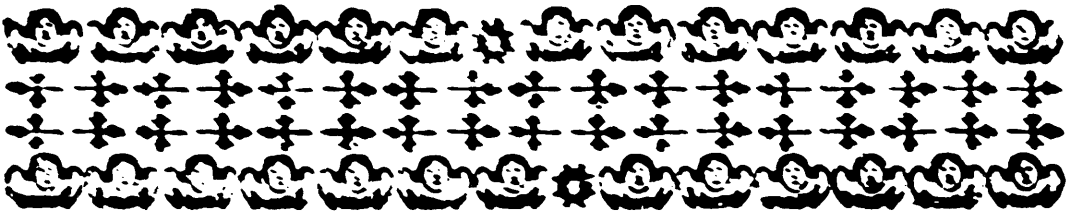
And the noble Theme, which I have but touch'd, if frequently and prayerfully meditated upon, I hope, will kindle a Flame of Love and Gratitude in our Breasts, congenial to that of the *Angels*;

who are even *less* concerned in some of the *greatest* of them, than we ourselves.—The Psalmist breathes a high Spirit of Devotion and Praise, corresponding to that of holy *Angels*, in those Passages following my Text.—*Bless ye the LORD, all ye his Hosts ; ye Ministers of his, that do his Pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his Works, in all Places of his Dominion. Bless the LORD, O my Soul.*



S E R M O N





SERMON XXIV.



T H E

Character and Employment of good Angels.



P S A L. CIII. 20.

*BLESS the LORD, ye his Angels, that excel in
Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning
unto the Voice of his Word.*

WHAT now remains, is the Improve-
ment or Application of my Discourses
on this Text.

Inference 1. Do the *Angels excel in Strength?* Let this *humble us* in our own Eyes, and *reprove* that *vain Opinion*, we are ready to conceive of *our own Excellencies and Attainments*.

We are too apt, unreasonably and very culpably, to *over-value* ourselves, upon the little comparative *Advantages* we have over one another. —How apt is a Man to be puffed up, and to boast himself, for Instance, if his *Understanding* overtops his Neighbour's; if he have a few more or richer *Ideas* floating in his Brain; if he is called of Men, *Rabbi, Rabbi*; if he be a Graduate in the Arts, or a Master of Science, a *Poet, a Philosopher*, or a *Linguist*? Yet these very Excellencies, perhaps, are rather borrowed from a happier *Education*, than owing to any superior Elevation of *Genius*. Or, admit that *Nature* herself had been more liberal of her Gifts to him than another, yet how *mean* an Appearance would he make in an Assembly of *Angels*, the Glory of created Beings, which *excel* in the Strength of their Reason, and Perfection of their Intellect; in the Number and Clearness of their Ideas, in the Reach of their Knowledge, borrowed from no Schools, nor Academies, but arising out of their own vast Capacities!

Such a Comparison as this, properly pursued and apply'd, would go a great Way to bring down our
towering

towering Tho'ts of ourselves ; to give us a right View of our own Dimensions, which must appear as Nothing *in the Presence of the Angels of God*; and to make us remember, that even exclusive of the Inconveniencies of our Apostacy, we were created *lower* than they, and can't pretend to stand upon a *Par*, or Level, of Reputation with *them*.— For this Reason, it would be of great Use, particularly to Men of an *ambitious* Turn of Mind, to make frequent Tours to the *Angelick* World, and there learn their own Poverty and Defects.

I mention this, by no Means to disparage *human Nature*, but only to keep it within its own proper Limits of Worth and Excellency, and to *hide Pride from Man*.

Inf. 2. Do Angels *excel in Strength*? See the *Honour* and *Security*, which God has put upon and given to *his own People*.

Surely the *Saints* must be the most *excellent* of all *in the Earth* ; since God delights to honour them with the Attendance of his *Angels* ; Spirits of such exalted Perfections !—Behold, what an Honour is this, that we should be called the Sons of God, and have the *Angels* as Servitors to us ! For, *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister to the Heirs of Salvation* ? Yet what Wonder,

when the Saints are *Heirs of God*, and *Joint-Heirs with Christ*? This *Honour* have all his *Saints*; *Praise ye the Lord*. And it arises from their *Relation to Christ*. He has greatly dignified *human Nature*, in general, by his own personal *Union* with it. But, a still higher *Glory* has he put upon it in the *Believer*, by uniting his whole *Person* to himself, by the *Inhabitation* of his *Holy Spirit*.

And the *Security* of the Saints is equal to their *Honour*, since they are the *Charge* of *Angels*; such *swift* and *strong* Spirits, which continually watch over them, pitch their *Tents* around them, and ward off a *Thousand* invisible *Mischiefs*. These ministering *Spirits* are awake and active, while *Israel* slumbers and sleeps.—Secure and happy the *People* that is in *such a Case*, having *Angels* to take *Care* of them! *What then can harm us, if we be Followers of that which is good?* Were it not that *Legions* of *Angels* are always ready to fly to our *Succour*.—Surely *more* are they which are *for us*, than they which be *against us*. As the *Mountain* was *full* of *Horses* and *Chariots* round *Eliaba*, so the *People* of *God* always abound with *Angelic Attendants*, to guard and defend them. For the *Angels* are the *Chariots* of *Israel*, and the *Horsemen* thereof.

But,

BUT. O *Sinners*, you see what it is you *lose*, by rebelling against God. You throw yourselves out of the Charge of *Angels*; who are ready to draw their Sword *on the Lord's Side*, and to avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant upon you: while they encamp round about those that fear God, and keep them in all their Ways; and even long to transport such to the Region of eternal Day, to carry them into *Abraham's Bosom*, and to lodge them where the weary are at Rest, and the Wicked cease from Troubling.

Inf. 3. Do the Angels excel in Strength, and bear so honourable a moral Character, as that we have been meditating upon? This serves highly to exalt the Lord *Jesus Christ*; and ought to raise our Esteem of him, who is made higher than the Heavens, is the Lord of *Angels*, and to whom even they pay their Homage.

The Dignity which arises from hence, I can't well express, but in the Language of Inspiration, the Description of *Christ's* Glory, in the 1st Chap. of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*,—*Who being the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power, when he had by himself purged our Sins, sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on High: Being made so much better than the Angels,*

as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they. For unto which of the Angels said he at any Time, *Thou art my Son!*—And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the World, he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship Him.*

Observe, He saith not, Let the Devils fall down before him, for that would be a small Mark of Respect; but, Let the *Angels of God* worship him, even the *Angels* which kept their first Habitation, and stood fast in their Allegiance;—yea, Let *all* the Angels of God,—those of the highest Order, those that might excel others, in their Strength and Powers;—Let them *worship Him*, pay him *divine Honours*, and religious Service.

Observe further, Christ is here considered in his incarnate State, and as *Mediator*. The *Foundation* of their Worship lies deep, in his proper *Divinity*: But the *Modes* and *Motives* of it, many of them, arise out of his *Incarnation* and *Office*.

How glorious then does our *Immanuel* look, upon his Throne, with a numberless Host of *Angels*, all prostrate and casting their Crowns before him!—Surely, this gives him a *Name above every Name*. For, *Angel* is the *first* and *highest* Name, among

among created Beings. But how much inferior to the Son, whom they so much revere and adore; whose *Throne is forever and ever*; who is *ever all*, and must be God *blest forever*, being the *Head of all Principalities and Powers*, not an *Angel* exempt from Obedience and Subjection to him!

The Excellencies which compose and concentre in the Nature of *Angels*, render their *Worship* more considerable, and give a proportional Glory to *Christ* the great *Object* of it. It reflects an Honour upon Him, to receive religious Worship from *Men*, in the low and dying *Praises* especially of our Christian *Assemblies*; but a much superior Honour, to have *Angels* worship Him, to have the whole *Multitude of the heavenly Host* uniting in Adorations and Homages to him.—Yet, it is all his Right and Due; yea, *his glorious Name is exalted above all Blessing and Praise*.

Inf. 4. Do the Angels excel in Strength? How mysterious is the *Incarnation* of our blessed Saviour!

Without Controversy, *great is the Mystery of Godliness*: God was made manifest in the *Flesh*! —And among other Things, the *Mystery* lies here, that *Christ took not* on him the Nature of *Angels*, but the Seed of *Abraham*. They are our elder Brethren, created before us, superior to us in Dignity

nity of Nature: And if the Son of God would condescend to put on the *Form of a Servant*, and be *made in the Likeness of a Creature*, one might have tho't, he would have chosen the *highest and noblest Order*; that, at least, he would not have pass'd by this, to take a *lower*.

The *Devil and his Angels*, the *Powers of Darkness*, deformed and cursed as they are now, were once Spirits of an excellent Make, once *Angels of Light*; yet they are overlook'd, and *Man* visited. The Son of God was *made Flesh*, and *tabernacled with Men on Earth*!—Surely, we must stand forever amaz'd, and *silent* with Astonishment, at this Distinction of his Love.

Had the Distinction ran betwixt *Angels* and *Angels*, or betwixt *Men* and *Men*, it had been less a Wonder: but to run betwixt *Angels* and *Men*, and in Favour of the *inferior* Nature, is indeed one of those marvellous Things, which the *Angels* themselves *desire to look into*, but are not able fully to comprehend: while we can only adore and admire, with the Psalmist, crying out—*LORD, what is Man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou hast visited him!*

Inf. 5. Do the *Angels excel in Strength*? Are they *Creatures of so noble a Species*? This may give
give

give us some Idea of the *Glory* that is reserved for *Saints* in the future State.

For no sooner are *righteous Souls* releas'd from this dark Imprisonment of *Flesh and Blood*; but they become Associates to the *Angelic Host*. They go from the Society of poor sinful Mortals, to the *innumerable Company of Angels*. Blessed *Company!* Glorious *Community!*

We conceive a Pleasure in the Society and Conversation of our Fellow-Creatures here on Earth, *Men of like Passions with us*; especially of Men of superior Parts and Talents; of great Understanding, of ready Wit, and a happy Temper. There is an Attraction we feel upon our Hearts, besides the Advantages we reap from these finer Talents, and nobler Accomplishments.—But, what is there of Satisfaction in this, in compare with the Pleasure of joining the *Angelic Assembly*, and conversing with Spirits, of such *high Degree*, as with our *Equals*,—to see them courteous and affable to us, to charm our Ears with their Musick, and to hear them repeat and communicate Things to us, which we could never attain to the Knowledge of before!

Yet, this is not all; for we shall not only be *with* the Angels, but *like* them. *Our Spirits* too will
will

be made *perfect* ; our minds will be elevated, our *Hearts enlarged*, our Powers invigorated : we shall, *like the Angels, excel in Strength, and in Beauty, the best Beauty, that of the Mind.* To be sure, human Nature must be gloriously refin'd and rais'd, or else we should be *unfit* to stand among *Angels* ; incapable of conversing with them Face to Face. Our Nature must be attemper'd to *theirs* ; or God would never join them and us in the same *Ceremonies* and Association !

How should this Reflection relieve the poor Saint, under all the *Contempt* and *Scorn* which a blind deluded World often throws upon him ! What if *Men* exclude us their Company, and turn from us with Scorn ? *Be patient, my Brethren, till the Coming of the LORD* ; and then *Angels* will receive and embrace you, will bear you on their Wings to the World above, will with Pleasure read their *own Image* upon you, and next to the Image of God and Christ, in which you shall awake at the last Day, *this* will be your chiefest Honour. For indeed the great Judge has, in a Manner, join'd *them* with himself and his Father, where he describes the *Coming of the Son of Man*, in his *own* Glory, and the Glory of his *Father*, and of the *holy Angels* ; whose dazzling Appearance and Beauty will give no little Solemnity to the Terrors and Acclamations of the last Judgment.

I. f. 6. Do the Angels, though they so excel in Strength, yet do God's Commandments, hearkning to the Voice of his Word? This magnifies the Law, and makes it honourable; while it does Honour to the Divine Authority, which is the Ground of their Obedience.

As to the *Moral Law*, I question whether it had half that Honour at its Promulgation from Mount *Sinai*, tho' attended with the most awful Pomp and Display of Majesty, as it hath from the obedient Regard the *Angels* pay to it.—For, surely there must be something in it very *grand* and *solemn*, to recommend it to the Esteem, and to give it a Command over the Love and Obedience, of the *Angels* in Heaven. This is certain, were there any Thing *unfit* and *indecent*, any Thing at all *mean* and *trifling*, any Thing at all *incompatible* with the Nature of true and exalted *Morality*, or with the Perfections of the Deity, any the least *Incongruity* or *Imperfection*, in the Commands which *Angels* obey, they would immediately *refuse* Subjection to them.

And this is a Consideration which should beget in our Minds a just *Veneration* for the sacred Precepts of our *Bible*:—especially, if we further consider, how *great* the divine *Authority* appears, in requiring the Obedience of such Beings as *Angels*

to

to it. For surely, if God has Power enough to oblige *them*, none of his Precepts, not even his *positive* Institutions, can ever want, or lose, their obligatory Power upon *us*.

And since *Sin* is a *Transgression of the Law*, every Instance of it is an insufferable *Contempt* of that divine *Authority*, in which the whole Law is founded; and offended Justice will certainly *punish* impenitent Sinners for the Breach hereof.—But this Reflection leads me to another (which is indeed but a consequential Tho't) under the next Head of Improvement.

Inf. 7. If the *Angels* thus *hearken* and are *obedient* to God's Commandments, then they will certainly appear as *swift Witnesses*, in the Judgment, against *Transgressors*, that die in their Sins.

Whatever *Scoffers* may now pretend to think or say, Reason and Revelation join in the Proof of a future *Judgment*: when *Great* and *Small* must every one Stand before the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*, at that Day; when *every Work*, with *every secret Thing*, whether *Good* or *Evil*, will be bro't into Judgment; for *the Day shall reveal it*, the *Books* shall be opened, and *Witnesses* appear too. Then shall the *Saints* judge the *disobedient Angels*; and then too shall the *Angels of God* judge and condemn the World of *disobedient Mankind*.

And

And what Confusion must cover the sinful Sons of Men, when the *Angels* shall upbraid them with not imitating their Example ; and tell them how punctually *they* had obeyed the Commands of Heaven, which themselves (inferior Creatures) presumed to slight and contemn !

Yea, the *Judge* himself might justly upbraid Sinners, by appealing to the *Angels*, and saying, “ Behold these *your Superiors*, they never failed “ in their Respects to my holy Law ! How dare “ *you* to scorn and despise your God, and renounce “ his Authority, when these glorious *Spirits* re- “ vered and submitted to it ! ” — Now, what can the *Sinner* say to this ? What *Excuse* can Men of the most superior Character make ! How *speechless* will many stand at the Bar of God, — even many *Kings* of the Earth, many *great Men*, and *rich Men* and *migh- ty Men*, who tho’t Religion a Thing *below* them, and were too *proud* to pay that Submission to the Ma- jesty of Heaven, which *Angels* themselves dare not refuse, but ever think it their *Duty* and *Honour* to pay ! Would to God, this Reflection had its proper Weight and Influence with us !

TO CONCLUDE,

Do Angels *bleſs* the LORD ? Surely *Praise* is comely for the *Upright*.

'Tis surely noble and excellent Business, becoming the Saints in the *Earth*; being the Work of *Heaven*, the Employment of *Angels*. While holy *Angels bless the Lord*, triumph in his Works, and make his Praise glorious, how can *we* be silent! Certainly, when we have read our Text, *Ingratitude* must appear more hateful, and *Praise* more worthy and sacred Work, than ever!

Have not We many Calls, loud Calls, strong and pressing Motives, to *bless* and *praise* the Name of the Lord, as well as the *Angels*?—Are not the two great Volumes of *Nature* and *Scripture*, open before us!—And have we not Millions of Mercies; and every one of them *Motives* to Thanksgiving and Praise!—Should not our Wonder and Devotion be excited, from the *Perfections* and *Works* of God? Has *Creation* nothing in it, to stir up our Adorations? Can any Thing strike the most sluggish Soul, like the Wonders of *Redemption*? Is it nothing, to see ourselves recovered from *Hell*, by the sovereign *Grace* of God, and redeeming *Blood* of Christ!—Does not every Day invite us,—every Morning-Light and setting-Sun call upon us,—to *bless the LORD*, who heals our Diseases, who redeems our Life from Destruction, who crowneth us with loving Kindness and tender Mercies, who satisfieth our Mouth with good Things?—Let us then awake up our Glory to sing and give Praise. *Bless*
the

*the Lord. O our Souls, and all within us, bless his
holy Name. Then let us add,—Bless the Lord,
ye his Angels——*

Lord, open thou my Lips; and my Mouth shall
shew forth thy Praises. AMEN.

F I N I S.

