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XL22.1 [A9]

Presented by R.W. Chapman, Esq.  
1923



FIFTEEN  
SERMONS

Preached at the  
ROLLS CHAPEL

Upon the following SUBJECTS.

Upon Humane Nature.	Upon Forgiveness of Injuries,
Upon the Government of the Tongue.	Upon Self-deceit.
Upon Compassion.	Upon the Love of our Neigh- bour.
Upon the Character of <i>Ba- laam.</i>	Upon the Love of God.
Upon Repentment.	Upon the Ignorance of Man.

To which are added,

SIX SERMONS

Preached on PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

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By JOSEPH BUTLER, LL. D.

*now Lord* Now Lord Bishop of *Bristol.*

---

*new* The FOURTH EDITION.

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LONDON:

Printed for JOHN and PAUL KNAPTON, in  
*Ludgate-Street.* M.DCC.XLIX.



To the Right Honourable

**Sir JOSEPH JEKYL,LL,**

Master of the ROLLS, &c.

The following S E R M O N S,  
preached in his Chapel, are  
with all Humility Dedi-  
cated,

*B Y*

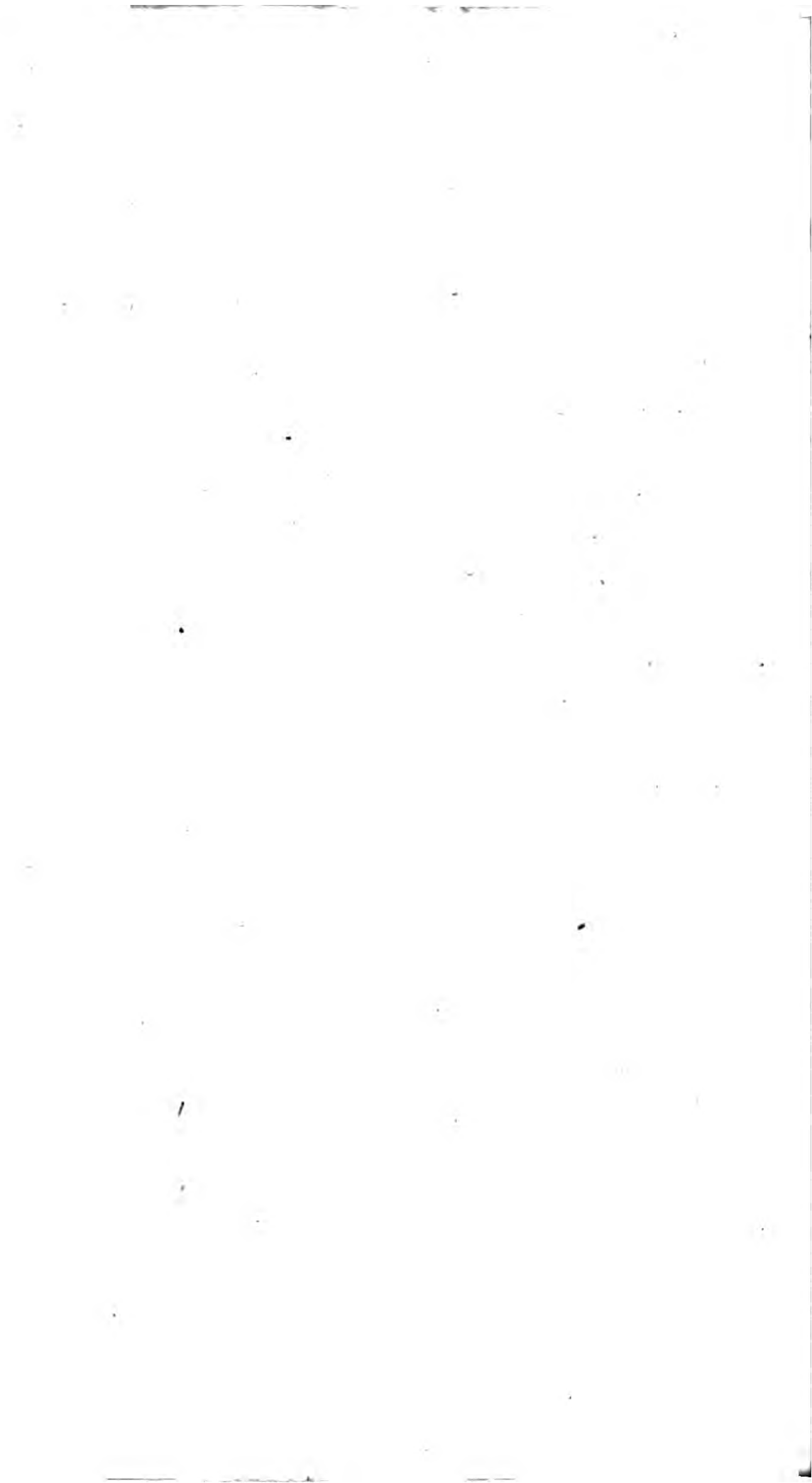
*his most dutiful, and*

*most obedient Servant,*

**JOSEPH BUTLER.**

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**T**HOUGH 'tis scarce possible to avoid judging, in some way or other, of almost every thing which offers itself to one's Thoughts; yet 'tis certain that many Persons, from different Causes, never exercise their Judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be conclusive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with some things, not so with others; they like and they dislike: But whether that which is proposed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a Matter be stated according to the real Truth of the Case, seems to the Generality of People merely a Circumstance of no Consideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for some accidental Purpose: But Proof as such is what they never want for Themselves; for their own Satisfaction of Mind, or Conduct in Life. Not to mention the Multitudes who read merely for the sake of Talking, or to qualify themselves for the World, or some such Kind of

A 3                      Reasons;

Reasons; there are, even of the few who read for their own Entertainment, and have a real Curiosity to see what is said, several, which is prodigious, who have no sort of Curiosity to see what is true: I say, Curiosity; because 'tis too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and sacred Attention, which is due to Truth, and to the important Question, What is the Rule of Life, is lost out of the World.

F O R the Sake of this whole Class of Readers, for they are of different Capacities, different Kinds, and get into this way from different Occasions, I have often wished, that it had been the Custom to lay before People nothing in Matters of Argument but Premises, and leave them to draw Conclusions themselves; which, though it could not be done in all Cases, might in many.

T H E great Number of Books and Papers of Amusement, which, of one Kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in Part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this Means, Time even in Solitude is happily got rid of, without the Pain of Attention: Neither is any Part of it more put to the Account of Idleness, one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less Thought, than great Part of that which is spent in Reading.

T H U S

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**T**H U S People habituate themselves to let things pass through their Minds, as one may speak, rather than to think of them. Thus by Use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and Attention, and even forming a Judgment, becomes Fatigue ; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their Way.

**T**H E R E are also Persons, and there are at least more of them than have a Right to claim such Superiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with every thing ; and that no Subject, if treated in the Manner it should be, can be treated in any Manner but what is familiar and easy to them.

**'T** I S true indeed, that few Persons have a Right to demand Attention ; but 'tis also true, that nothing can be understood without that Degree of it, which the very Nature of the thing requires. Now Morals, considered as a Science, concerning which speculative Difficulties are daily raised, and treated with Regard to those Difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar Attention. For here Ideas never are in themselves determinate, but become so, by the Train of Reasoning and the Place they stand in ; since 'tis impossible that Words can always stand for the same Ideas, even in the same Author, much less in different ones. Hence an Argument may not  
A 4 readily

readily be apprehended, which is different from its being mistaken ; and even Caution to avoid being mistaken may, in some Cases, render it less readily apprehended. 'Tis very unallowable for a Work of Imagination or Entertainment not to be of easy Comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a Work of another Kind, where a Man is not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them.

I T must be acknowledged that some of the following Discourses are very abstruse and difficult ; or, if you please, obscure : But I must take Leave to add, that those alone are Judges, whether or no and how far this is a Fault, who are Judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided—those only who will be at the Trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the Things here insisted upon, and not other Things, might have been put in a plainer Manner ; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.

T H U S much however will be allowed, that general Criticisms concerning Obscurity considered as a distinct thing from Confusion and Perplexity of Thought, as in some Cases there may be Ground for them ; so in others, they may be nothing more at the Bottom than Complaints, that every thing is not to be understood with the same Ease  
that

## P R E F A C E.

that some things are. Confusion and Perplexity in Writing is indeed without Excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what he is about: and 'tis unpardonable for a Man to lay his Thoughts before Others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the Matter before him stands. 'Tis coming Abroad in Disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at Home.

BUT even Obscurities arising from other Causes than the Abstruseness of the Argument, may not be always inexcusable. Thus a Subject may be treated in a Manner, which all along supposes the Reader acquainted with what has been said upon it, both by ancient and modern Writers; and with what is the present state of Opinion in the World concerning such Subject. This will create a Difficulty of a very peculiar Kind, and even throw an Obscurity over the whole before those who are not thus informed; but those who are, will be disposed to excuse such a Manner, and other Things of the like Kind, as a saving of their Patience.

HOWEVER upon the whole, as the Title of *Sermons* gives some Right to expect what is plain and of easy Comprehension, and as the best Auditories are mixt, I shall not set about to justify the Propriety of Preaching,  
or

or under that Title Publishing, Discourses so abstruse as some of these are : Neither is it worth while to trouble the Reader with the Account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a Repetition of the Impropiety, this second Edition \*, but to the Demand for it.

W H E T H E R he will think he has any Amends made him, by the following Illustrations of what seemed most to require them, I myself am by no Means a proper Judge.

T H E R E are two Ways in which the Subject of Morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract Relations of things : the other from a Matter of Fact, namely, what the particular Nature of Man is, its several Parts, their Oeconomy or Constitution ; from whence it proceeds to determine what Course of Life it is, which is correspondent to this whole Nature. In the former Method the Conclusion is express'd thus, that Vice is contrary to the Nature and Reason of things : In the latter, that 'tis a Violation or Breaking in upon our own Nature. Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our Obligations to the Practice of Virtue ; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the  
most

\* The Preface stands exactly as it did before the second Edition of the Sermons.

most direct formal Proof, and in some Respects the least liable to Cavil and Dispute : The latter is in a peculiar Manner adapted to satisfy a fair Mind ; and is more easily applicable to the several particular Relations and Circumstances in Life.

THE following Discourses proceed chiefly in this latter Method. The three first wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the Nature of Man, when it is said that Virtue consists in following, and Vice in deviating from it ; and by explaining to shew that the Assertion is true. That the antient Moralists had some inward Feeling or other, which they chose to express in this Manner, that Man is born to Virtue, that it consists in following Nature, and that Vice is more contrary to this Nature than Tortures or Death, their Works in our Hands are Instances. Now a Person who found no Mystery in this Way of speaking of the Ancients ; who, without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural Feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full Conviction that what they laid down was just and true ; such an one would probably wonder to see a Point, in which he never perceived any Difficulty, so laboured as this is, in the second and third Sermons ; insomuch perhaps as to be at a Loss for the Occasion, Scope and Drift



Drift of them. But it need not be thought strange that this Manner of Expression, though familiar with them, and, if not usually carried so far, yet not uncommon amongst Ourselves, should want explaining; since there are several Perceptions daily felt and spoken of, which yet it may not be very easy at first View to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and ascertain exactly what the Idea or Perception is. The many Treatises upon the Passions are a Proof of this; since so many would never have undertaken to unfold their several Complications, and trace and resolve them into their Principles, if they had thought, what they were endeavouring to shew, was obvious to every one, who felt and talked of those Passions. Thus, though there seems no Ground to doubt, but that the Generality of Mankind have the inward Perception express'd so commonly in that Manner by the ancient Moralists, more than to doubt whether they have those Passions; yet it appeared of Use to unfold that inward Conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit Manner, than I had seen done; especially when there were not wanting Persons, who manifestly mistook the whole thing, and so had great Reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late Author of great and deserved Reputation says, that to place Virtue in following Nature, is  
at

at best a loose Way of Talk. And he has Reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with great Decency, be true, that scarce any other Sense can be put upon those Words, but acting as any of the several Parts without Distinction, of a Man's Nature happened most to incline him\*.

WHOEVER thinks it worth while to consider this Matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the Idea of a System, Oeconomy or Constitution of any particular Nature, or particular any thing: And he will, I suppose, find, that 'tis an One or a Whole, made up of several Parts; but yet, that the several Parts even considered as a Whole, do not compleat the Idea, unless in the Notion of a Whole, you include the Relations and Respects, which those Parts have to each other. Every Work both of Nature and of Art is a System: And as every particular thing both natural and artificial is for some Use or Purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add, to what has been already brought into the Idea of a System, its Conduciveness to this one or more Ends. Let us Instance in a Watch—Suppose the several Parts of it taken to Pieces, and placed apart from each other: Let a Man have ever so exact a Notion of these several Parts, unless he considers the Respects and  
Relations

\* Rel. of Nature delin. Ed. 1724. P. 22, 23.

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Relations which they have to each other, he will not have any thing like the Idea of a Watch. Suppose these several Parts brought together and any how united: Neither will he yet, be the Union ever so close, have an Idea which will bear any Resemblance to that of a Watch. But let him view those several Parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the Manner of a Watch; let him form a Notion of the Relations which those several Parts have to each other—all conducive in their respective Ways, to this Purpose, shewing the Hour of the Day; and then he has the Idea of a Watch. Thus it is with Regard to the inward Frame of Man. Appetites, Passions, Affections, and the Principle of Reflection, considered merely as the several Parts of our inward Nature, do not at all give us an Idea of the System or Constitution of this Nature: Because the Constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into Consideration, namely by the Relations, which these several Parts have to each other; the chief of which is the Authority of Reflection or Conscience. 'Tis from considering the Relations which the several Appetites and Passions in the inward Frame have to each other, and above all the Supremacy of Reflection or Conscience, that we get the Idea of the System or Constitution of Humane Nature.

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ture. And from the Idea itself 'twill as fully appear, that this our Nature, *i. e.* Constitution is adapted to Virtue, as from the Idea of a Watch it appears, that its Nature, *i. e.* Constitution or System is adapted to measure Time. What in Fact or Event commonly happens, is nothing to this Question. Every Work of Art is apt to be out of Order : But this is so far from being according to its System, that let the Disorder increase, and 'twill totally destroy it. This is merely by Way of Explanation, what an Oeconomy, System or Constitution is. And thus far the Cases are perfectly parallel. If we go further, there is indeed a Difference, nothing to the present Purpose, but too important an one ever to be omitted. A Machine is inanimate and passive : but we are Agents. Our Constitution is put in our own Power. We are charged with it : And therefore are accountable for any Disorder or Violation of it.

THUS nothing can possibly be more contrary to Nature than Vice ; meaning by Nature, not only the *the several Parts* of our internal Frame, but also the *Constitution* of it. Poverty and Disgrace, Tortures and Death are not so contrary to it. Misery and Injustice are indeed equally contrary to some different Parts of our Nature taken singly : But Injustice is moreover contrary to the whole Constitution of the Nature.

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IF it be asked whether this Constitution be really what those Philosophers meant, and whether they would have explained themselves in this Manner: The Answer is the same, as if it should be asked, whether a Person, who had often used the Word Resentment and felt the thing, would have explained this Passion exactly in the same Manner; in which 'tis done in one of these Discourses. As I have no Doubt, but that this is a true Account of that Passion, which he referr'd to and intended to express by the Word, Resentment; so I have no Doubt, but that this is the true Account of the Ground of that Conviction, which they referr'd to, when they said, Vice was contrary to Nature. And though it should be thought that they meant no more than, that Vice was contrary to the higher and better Part of our Nature; even this implies such a Constitution as I have endeavoured to explain. For the very Terms, higher and better, imply a Relation or Respect of Parts to each other; and these relative Parts, being in one and the same Nature, form a Constitution and are the very Idea of it. They had a Perception that Injustice was contrary to their Nature, and that Pain was so also. They observed these two Perceptions totally different, not in Degree, but in Kind: And the Reflecting upon each of them as they thus

thus stood in their Nature, wrought a full intuitive Conviction, that more was due and of Right belonged to one of these inward Perceptions, than to the other; that it demanded in all Cases to govern such a Creature as Man. So that upon the whole, this is a fair and true Account of what was the Ground of their Conviction; of what they intended to refer to when they said, Virtue consisted in following Nature: A Manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.

**T H O U G H** I am persuaded the Force of this Conviction is felt by almost every one; yet since, considered as an Argument and put in Words, it appears somewhat abstruse, and since the Connection of it is broken in the three first Sermons, it may not be amiss to give the Reader the whole Argument here in one View.

**M A N K I N D** has various Instincts and Principles of Action, as brute Creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the Community, and some most directly to private Good.

**M A N**, has several which Brutes have not; particularly Reflection or Conscience, an Approbation of some Principles or Actions, and Disapprobation of others.

**B R U T E S** obey their Instincts or Principles of Action, according to certain Rules;  suppose

suppose the Constitution of their Body, and the Objects around them.

THE generality of Mankind also obey their Instincts and Principles, all of them; those Propensions we call Good, as well as the Bad, according to the same Rules; namely the Constitution of their Body, and the external Circumstances which they are in. [Therefore it is not a true Representation of Mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by Self-love, the love of Power and sensual Appetites: Since, as on the one Hand, they are often actuated by these, without any Regard to Right or Wrong; so on the other, 'tis manifest Fact, that the same Persons, the Generality, are frequently influenced by Friendship, Compassion, Gratitude; and even a general Abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its Turn amongst the other Motives of Action. This is the partial inadequate Notion of Human Nature treated of in the first Discourse: And 'tis by this Nature, if one may speak so, that the World is in Fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable Order, in which it is.]

BRUTES in acting according to the Rules before-mentioned, their bodily Constitution and Circumstances, act suitably to their whole Nature. [It is however to be distinctly noted, that the Reason why we affirm

firm

firm this, is not merely that Brutes in Fact act so; for this alone, however universal, does not at all determine, whether such Course of Action be correspondent to their whole Nature: But the Reason of the Assertion is, that as in acting thus, they plainly act conformably to somewhat in their Nature, so from all Observations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the least Ground to imagine them to have any thing else in their Nature, which requires a different Rule or Course of Action.]

MANKIND also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole Nature, if no more were to be said of Man's Nature, than what has been now said; if That, as it is a true, were also a compleat, adequate Account of our Nature.

BUT That is not a compleat Account of Man's Nature. Somewhat further must be brought in to give us an adequate Notion of it; namely, that one of those Principles of Action, Conscience or Reflection, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the Nature of Man, plainly bears upon it Marks of Authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute Direction of them all, to allow or forbid their Gratification: A Disapprobation of Reflection being in itself a Principle manifestly superiour to a mere Propension. And the Conclusion is, that to



allow no more to this superiour Principle or Part of our Nature, than to other Parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its Turn happens to come, from the Temper and Circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the Constitution of Man: Neither can any Human Creature be said to act conformably to his Constitution of Nature, unless he allows to that superiour Principle the absolute Authority which is due to it. And this Conclusion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what Course of Action the Oeconomy of Man's Nature requires, without so much as knowing in what Degree of *Strength* the several Principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest Influence.

THE practical Reason of insisting so much upon this natural Authority of the Principle of Reflection or Conscience is, that it seems in great Measure overlooked by many, who are by no Means the worse sort of Men. 'Tis thought sufficient to abstain from gross Wickedness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their Way. Whereas in reality the very Constitution of our Nature requires, that we bring our whole Conduct before this superior Faculty; wait its Determination; enforce upon ourselves its Authority, and make it the Business of our Lives,

Lives, as it is absolutely the whole Business of a Moral Agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true Meaning of that ancient Precept, *Reverence thy Self*.

THE not taking into Consideration this Authority, which is implied in the Idea of reflex Approbation or Disapprobation, seems a material Deficiency or Omission in *Lord Shaftsbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue*. He has shewn beyond all Contradiction, that Virtue is naturally the Interest or Happiness, and Vice the Misery of such a Creature as Man, placed in the Circumstances which we are in this World. But suppose there are particular Exceptions; a Case which this Author was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put: Or suppose a Case which He has put and determined, that of a Sceptick not convinced of this happy Tendency of Virtue, or being of a contrary Opinion. His Determination is, that 'twould be *without Remedy* \*. One may say more explicitly, that leaving out the Authority of reflex Approbation or Disapprobation, such an one would be under an Obligation to act viciously; since Interest, one's own Happiness, is a manifest Obligation, and there is not supposed to be any other Obligation in the Case. " But does it

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\* *Characteristicks*. V. II, p. 69.

“ much mend the Matter, to take in that  
 “ natural Authority of Reflection? There  
 “ indeed would be an Obligation to Vir-  
 “ tue; but would not the Obligation from  
 “ supposed Interest on the side of Vice re-  
 “ main?” If it should, yet to be under  
 two contrary Obligations, *i. e.* under none  
 at all, would not be exactly the same, as to  
 be under a formal Obligation to be Vicious,  
 or to be in Circumstances in which the Con-  
 stitution of Man’s Nature plainly required,  
 that Vice should be preferr’d. But the  
 Obligation on the side of Interest really does  
 not remain. For the natural Authority of the  
 Principle of Reflection, is an Obligation the  
 most near and intimate, the most certain and  
 known: Whereas the contrary Obligation  
 can at the utmost appear no more than pro-  
 bable; since no Man can be *certain* in any  
 Circumstances, that Vice is his Interest in  
 the present World, much less can he be cer-  
 tain against another: And thus the certain  
 Obligation would intirely supersede and de-  
 stroy the uncertain one; which yet would  
 have been of real Force without the former.

IN Truth the taking in this Considera-  
 tion, totally changes the whole state of the  
 Case; and shews, what this Author does  
 not seem to have been aware of, that the  
 greatest Degree of Scepticism which He  
 thought possible, will still leave Men under  
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the strictest Moral Obligations, whatever their Opinion be concerning the Happiness of Virtue. For that Mankind upon Reflection felt an Approbation of what was Good, and Disapprobation of the Contrary, He thought a plain Matter of Fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere Affectation. Take in then that Authority and Obligation, which is a constituent Part of this reflex Approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a Man should doubt of every thing else, yet, that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain Obligation to the Practice of Virtue; an Obligation implied in the very Idea of Virtue, in the very Idea of reflex Approbation.

AND how little Influence soever this Obligation alone, can be expected to have in Fact upon Mankind, yet one may appeal even to Interest and Self-love, and ask, since from Man's Nature, Condition, and the Shortness of Life, so little, so very little indeed, can possibly in any Case be gained by Vice; whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little, to the most intimate of all Obligations; and which a Man cannot transgress without being Self-condemned, and, unless he has corrupted his Nature, without real Self-dislike: This Question I say may be asked, even upon Supposition that

the Prospect of a future Life were ever so uncertain.

THE Observation that Man is thus by his very Nature a Law to himself, pursued to its just Consequences, is of the utmost Importance ; because from it 'twill follow, that though Men should, through Stupidity or Speculative Scepticism, be ignorant of or disbelieve any Authority in the Universe to punish the Violation of this Law ; yet, if there should be such Authority, they would be as really liable to Punishment, as though they had been before-hand convinced, that such Punishment would follow. For in whatever Sense we understand Justice, even supposing, what I think would be very presumptuous to assert, that the End of Divine Punishment is no other than that of civil Punishment, namely, to prevent future Mischief ; upon this bold Supposition, Ignorance or Disbelief of the Sanction would by no Means exempt even from this Justice : Because it is not Foreknowledge of the Punishment, which renders obnoxious to it ; but merely Violating a known Obligation.

AND here it comes in one's Way to take Notice of a manifest Error or Mistake, in the Author now cited, unless perhaps he has incautiously expressed himself so as to be misunderstood ; namely, that *it is Malice only,*  
*and*

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*and not Goodness, which can make us afraid\**. Whereas in Reality, Goodness is the natural and just Object of the greatest Fear to an ill Man. Malice may be appeased or satiated; Humour may change: But Goodness is a fixt, steady, immoveable Principle of Action. If either of the former holds the Sword of Justice, there is plainly Ground for the greatest of Crimes to hope for Impunity: But if it be Goodness, there can be no possible Hope, whilst the Reasons of Things, or the Ends of Government, call for Punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater Chance of Impunity; an ill Man has, in a partial Administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said that *the Interest or Good of the Whole, must be the Interest of the universal Being, and that He can have no other.* Be it so. This Author has proved, that Vice is naturally the Misery of Mankind in this World. Consequently it was for the Good of the Whole, that it should be so. What Shadow of Reason then is there to assert, that this may not be the Case hereafter? Danger of future Punishment (and if there be Danger, there is Ground of Fear) no more supposes Malice, than the present Feeling of Punishment does.

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\* Charact. V. I. p. 39.

THE Sermon *upon the Character of Balaam*, and that *upon Self-Deceit* both relate to one Subject. I am persuaded, that a very great Part of the Wickedness of the World, is, one Way or other, owing to the Self-partiality, Self-flattery and Self-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained. 'Tis to be observed amongst Persons of the lowest Rank, in Proportion to their Compass of Thought, as much as amongst Men of Education and Improvement. It seems, that People are capable of being thus artful with Themselves, in Proportion as they are capable of being so with Others. Those who have taken Notice that there is really such a Thing, namely, plain Falseness and Insincerity in Men with Regard to Themselves, will readily see the Drift and Design of these Discourses: And nothing, that I can add, will explain the Design of them to him, who has not beforehand remarked, at least, somewhat of the Character. And yet, the Admonitions they contain, may be as much wanted by such a Person, as by Others; for 'tis to be noted, that a Man may be intirely possess'd by this Unfairness of Mind, without having the least speculative Notion what the Thing is.

THE

THE Account given of *Resentment* in the Eighth Sermon, is introductory to the following one *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange Assertion, that Injury is the only natural Object of settled Resentment, or that Men do not in Fact resent deliberately any thing but under this Appearance of Injury. But I must desire the Reader not to take any Assertion alone by itself, but to consider the whole of what is said upon it: Because this is necessary, not only in order to judge of the Truth of it, but often, such is the Nature of Language, to see the very Meaning of the Assertion. Particularly as to this, Injury and Injustice is, in the Sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking Instances of Wickedness, but also Contempt, Scorn, Neglect, any sort of disagreeable Behaviour towards a Person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general Notion of Injury or Wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the Words are mostly confined to the higher Degrees of it.

F O R G I V E N E S S of Injuries is one of the very few moral Obligations which has been disputed. But the Proof that it is really an Obligation, what our Nature and Condition require, seems very obvious, were  
it



it only from the Consideration that Revenge is doing Harm merely for Harm's sake. And as to the Love of our Enemies: Resentment cannot supersede the Obligation to universal Benevolence, unless they are in the Nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not\*.

THIS Divine Precept, to forgive Injuries and love our Enemies, though to be met with in Gentile Moralists, yet is in a peculiar Sense a Precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it, than upon any other single Virtue. One Reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty Creature. But it may be observed also, that a virtuous Temper of Mind, Consciousness of Innocence and good Meaning towards every body, and a strong Feeling of Injustice and Injury, may itself, such is the Imperfection of our Virtue, lead a Person to violate this Obligation, if he be not upon his Guard. And it may well be supposed, that this is another Reason why it is so much insisted upon by Him, who *knew what was in Man*.

THE chief Design of the Eleventh Discourse is to state the Notion of Self-love and Disinterestedness, in Order to shew that Benevolence

\* P. 165.

nevolence is not more unfriendly to Self-love, than any other particular Affection whatever. There is a strange Affectation in many People of explaining away all particular Affections, and representing the whole of Life as nothing but one continued Exercise of Self-love. Hence arises that surprizing Confusion and Perplexity in the *Epicureans* \* of old, *Hobbs*, the Author of *Reflexions Sentences et Maxims Morales*, and this whole Sett of Writers; the Confusion of calling Actions interested which are done in Contradiction to the most manifest known Interest, merely for the Gratification of a present Passion. Now all this Confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to Ourselves wherein the Idea of Self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular Movements towards particular external Objects; the Appetites of Sense, Resentment, Compassion, Curiosity, Ambition, and

\* One need only look into *Torquatus's* Account of the Epicurean System, in *Cicero's* first Book *De Finibus*, to see, in what a surprizing Manner this was done by Them. Thus the Desire of Praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than Desire of Safety: Regard to our Country, even in the most virtuous Character, to be nothing but Regard to Ourselves. The Author of *Reflexions &c. Morales* says, Curiosity proceeds from Interest or Pride; which Pride also would doubtless have been explained to be Self-love. Pag. 85. Ed. 1725. As if there were no such Passions in Mankind, as Desire of Esteem, or of being Beloved, or of Knowledge. *Hobbs's* Account of the Affections of Good-will and Pity, are Instances of the same Kind.

and the rest \*. When this is done, if the Words *Selfish* and *Interested* cannot be parted with, but must be applied to every thing; yet, to avoid such total Confusion of all Language, let the Distinction be made by Epithets: And the first may be called cool or settled Selfishness, and the other passionate or sensual Selfishness. But the most natural Way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, Self-love, and the Actions proceeding from it, Interested: And to say of the latter, that they are not Love to Ourselves, but Movements towards somewhat external: Honour, Power, the Harm or Good of Another: And that the Pursuit of these external Objects, so far as it proceeds from these Movements (for it may proceed from Self-love †) is no otherwise interested, than as every Action of every Creature must, from the Nature of the thing, be; for no one can act but from a Desire, or Choice, or Preference of his own.

SELF-LOVE and any particular Passion may be joined together; and from this Complication, it becomes impossible in numberless Instances to determine precisely, how far an Action, perhaps even of one's own, has for its Principle general Self-love, or some particular Passion. But this need create no Confusion in the Ideas themselves  
of

\* p. 205. &amp;c.

† See the Note, p. 9.

of Self-love and particular Passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one or the other influences us. And though from this Uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different Opinions concerning Mankind, as more or less governed by Interest; and some will ascribe Actions to Self-love, which Others will ascribe to particular Passions: Yet 'tis absurd to say that Mankind are wholly actuated by either; since 'tis manifest that both have their Influence. For as on the one Hand, Men form a general Notion of Interest, some placing it in one Thing, and some in another, and have a considerable Regard to it throughout the Course of their Life, which is owing to Self-love; so on the other Hand, they are often set on Work by the particular Passions themselves, and a considerable Part of Life is spent in the actual Gratification of them, *i. e.* is employed, not by Self-love, but by the Passions.

BESIDES, the very Idea of an interested Pursuit, necessarily pre-supposes particular Passions or Appetites; since the very Idea of Interest or Happiness consists in this, that an Appetite or Affection enjoys its Object. 'Tis not because we love Ourselves that we find Delight in such and such Objects, but because we have particular Affections towards them.

them. Take away these Affections, and you leave Self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about \* ; no End or Object for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding Pain. Indeed the *Epicureans*, who maintained that Absence of Pain, was the highest Happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all Affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual Appetite too: But the very Idea of Interest or Happiness other than Absence of Pain, implies particular Appetites or Passions; these being necessary to constitute That Interest or Happiness.

THE Observation that Benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular Passions †, seems in itself worth being taken notice of; but is insisted upon to obviate that Scorn, which one sees rising upon the Faces of People who are said to know the World, when Mention is made of a disinterested, generous or publick-spirited Action. The Truth of that Observation might be made appear, in a more formal Manner of Proof: For whoever will consider all the possible Respects and Relations which any particular Affection can have to Self-love and private Interest, will, I think, see demonstrably, that Benevolence is not in any Respect more at Variance with Self-love, than any other particular Affec-  
tion

\* pag. 210.

† pag. 213, &amp;c.

on whatever, but that it is in every Respect, at least, as friendly to it.

IF the Observation be true, it follows, that Self-Love and Benevolence, Virtue and Interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same Way as Virtue and any other particular Affection, Love of Arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Every thing is what it is, and not another Thing. The Goodness or Badness of Actions does not arise from hence, that the Epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent Epithet, suppose inquisitive or jealous, may or may not be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future Pleasure or Pain; but from their being what they are: Namely, what becomes such Creatures as we are, what the State of the Case requires, or the contrary. Or in other Words, we may judge and determine, that an Action is morally Good or Evil, before we so much as consider, whether it be interested or disinterested. This Consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an Action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love in its due Degree is as just and morally Good, as any Affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular Persons may be to a Degree of Weakness,

and so be blameable : And Disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible Depravity, which we can in Imagination conceive, is that of disinterested Cruelty.

NEITHER does there appear any Reason to wish Self-love were weaker in the Generality of the World, than it is. The Influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the Degree or Strength of it. Every Caprice of the Imagination, every Curiosity of the Understanding, every Affection of the Heart, is perpetually shewing its Weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known Interest, to Fancy, Inquisitiveness, Love or Hatred, any vagrant Inclination. The Thing to be lamented is, not that Man have so great Regard to their own Good or Interest in the present World, for they have not enough \* ; but that they have so little to the Good of Others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the Gratification of particular Passions unfriendly to Benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to Self-love. As a Proof of this may be observed, that there is no Character more void of Friendship, Gratitude, natural Affection,

on,

on, Love to their Country, common Justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the *abandoned* in, what is called, the Way of Pleasure — hard-hearted and totally without Feeling in Behalf of Others; except when they cannot escape the Sight of Distress, and so are interrupted by it in their Pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned Course of Pleasure interested, when the Person engaged in it knows before-hand, and goes on under the Feeling and Apprehension, that it will be as ruinous to himself, as to those who depend upon him.

UPON the Whole, if the Generality of Mankind were to cultivate within themselves the Principle of Self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to set down and consider, what was the greatest Happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this Life, and if Self-love were so strong and prevalent, as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal Good, without being diverted from it by any particular Passion; it would manifestly prevent numberless Follies and Vices. This was in a great Measure the *Epicurean* System of Philosophy. It is indeed by no Means the religious, or even moral Institution of Life. Yet, with all the Mistakes Men would fall into about Interest,



it would be less mischievous, than the Extravagancies of mere Appetite, Will and Pleasure: For certainly Self-love, though confined to the Interest of this Life, is, of the two, a much better Guide than Passion\*, which has absolutely no Bound nor Measure, but what is set to it by this Self-love, or Moral Considerations.

FROM the Distinction above made between Self-love, and the several particular Principles or Affections in our Nature, we may see how good Ground there was for that Assertion, maintained by the several ancient Schools of Philosophy, against the *Epicureans*, namely, that Virtue is to be pursued as an End, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any Principles or Affections in the Mind of Man distinct from Self-love, that the Things those Principles tend towards, or that the Objects of those Affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible, to be pursued upon its own Account, and to be rested in as an End, is implied in the very Idea of such Principle or Affection †. They indeed asserted much higher Things of Virtue, and with very good Reason; but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it, than may truly be said of the Object of every natural Affection whatever.

THE

\* Pag. 39.

† p. 265.

T H E Question, which was a few Years ago disputed in *France*, concerning *the Love of God*, which was there called *Enthufiasm*, as it will every where by the Generality of the World ; this Question I fay, answers in *Religion*, to that old one in *Morals* now mentioned. And both of them are, I think, fully determined by the fame Observation, namely, that the very Nature of Affection, the Idea itfelf, neceffarily implies refting in its Object as an End.

I SHALL not here add any thing further, to what I have faid in the two Difcourfes upon that moft important Subject, but only this: That if we are conftituted fuch fort of Creatures, as from our very Nature, to feel certain Affections or Movements of Mind, upon the Sight or Contemplation of the meaneft inanimate Part of the Creation, for the Flowers of the Field have their Beauty ; certainly there muft be fomewhat due to Him Himfelf, who is the Author and Cause of all Things ; who is more intimately preftent to us, than any thing elfe can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more conftant Intercourfe, than we can have with any Creature : There muft be fome Movements of Mind and Heart which correfpond to his Perfections, or of which thofe Perfections are the natural Object. And that when we

are command'd to *love the Lord our God, with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and with all our Soul*; somewhat more must be meant than merely, that we live in Hope of Rewards, or Fear of Punishments from Him; somewhat more than this must be intended: Though these Regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely necessary to be often recollected, in such a World as this.

I T may be proper just to advertise the Reader, that he is not to look for any particular Reason for the Choice of the greatest Part of these Discourses; their being taken from amongst many Others, preached in the same Place, through a Course of Eight Years, being in great Measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other Connection between them, than that Uniformity of Thought and Design, which will always be found in the Writings of the same Person, when he writes with Simplicity and in Earnest.

*Stanhope, Sept. the 16th 1729.*

C O N-

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S E R M O N

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# S E R M O N I.

*Upon Humane Nature.*

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R O M. xii. 4, 5.

*For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: So we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.*



THE Epistles in the New Testament have all of them a particular Reference to the Condition and Usages of the Christian World at the Time they were written. Therefore as they cannot be thoroughly understood, unless that Condition and those Usages are known and attended to:

B

so

S E R M. ~~so~~ further, though they be known, yet if

I. they be discontinued or changed ; Exhortations, Precepts, and Illustrations of things, which refer to such Circumstances now ceased or altered, cannot at this Time be urged in that Manner, and with that Force which they were to the Primitive Christians. Thus the Text now before us, in its first Intent and Design, relates to the decent Management of those extraordinary Gifts which were then in the Church \*, but which are now totally ceased. And even as to the Allusion that *we are one Body in Christ* ; though what the Apostle here intends is equally true of Christians in all Circumstances ; and the Consideration of it is plainly still an additional Motive, over and above moral Considerations, to the Discharge of the several Duties and Offices of a Christian : Yet it is manifest this Allusion must have appeared with much greater Force to those, who by the many Difficulties they went through for the sake of their Religion, were led to keep always in View the Relation they stood in to their Saviour, who had undergone the same ; to those, who from the Idolatries of all around them, and their ill Treatment,

\* 1 Cor. xix

## Upon Humane Nature.

3

ment, were taught to consider themselves **SERM.**  
as not of the World in which they lived, **I.**  
but as a distinct Society of themselves; with  
Laws, and Ends, and Principles of Life and  
Action, quite contrary to those which the  
World profess'd themselves at that Time  
influenced by. Hence the Relation of a  
Christian was by them considered as nearer  
than that of Affinity and Blood; and they  
almost literally esteemed themselves as Mem-  
bers one of another.

IT cannot indeed possibly be denied,  
that our being God's Creatures, and Virtue  
being the natural Law we are born under,  
and the whole Constitution of Man being  
plainly adapted to it, are prior Obligations  
to Piety and Virtue, than the Consideration  
that God sent his Son into the World to  
save it, and the Motives which arise from  
the peculiar Relation of Christians, as Mem-  
bers one of another under Christ our Head.  
However, though all this be allowed, as it  
expressly is by the inspired Writers; yet 'tis  
manifest that Christians at the Time of the  
Revelation, and immediately after, could not  
but insist mostly upon Considerations of this  
latter Kind.

SERM. THESE Observations show the original particular Reference of the Text ; and the peculiar Force with which the Thing intended by the Allusion in it must have been felt by the primitive Christian World. They likewise afford a Reason for treating it at this Time in a more general Way.

THE Relation, which the several Parts or Members of the natural Body have to each other and to the whole Body, is here compared to the Relation which each particular Person in Society has to other particular Persons and to the whole Society : And the latter is intended to be illustrated by the former. And if there be a Likeness between these two Relations, the Consequence is obvious : that the latter shows us we were intended to do good to others, as the former shows us that the several Members of the natural Body were intended to be Instruments of Good to each other and to the whole Body. But as there is scarce any Ground for a Comparison between Society and the mere material Body, this without the Mind being a dead unactive Thing ; much less can the Comparison be carried to any length. And since the Apostle speaks of the several Members as having distinct Offices, which im-

4

plies

## Upon Humane Nature.

5

plies the Mind ; it cannot be thought an un-S E R M. allowable Liberty ; instead of the *Body* and I. *its Members*, to substitute the *whole Nature of Man*, and *all the variety of internal Principles which belong to it*. And then the Comparison will be between the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and tending to private Good, his own Preservation and Happiness ; and the Nature of Man as having respect to Society, and tending to promote publick Good, the Happiness of that Society. These Ends do indeed perfectly coincide ; and to aim at publick and private Good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other : Yet in the following Discourse they must be considered as entirely distinct ; otherwise the Nature of Man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no Comparison be made, without considering the Things compared as distinct and different.

FROM this Review and Comparison of the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and as respecting Society, it will plainly appear, that *there are as real and the same kind of Indications in Humane Nature, that we were made for Society and to do good to our Fel-*

SERM. *low-creatures; as that we were intended to*

I. *take Care of our own Life and Health and private Good: and that the same Objections lie against one of these Assertions, as against the other. For*

*First, THERE is a natural Principle of Benevolence \* in Man; which is in some Degree to Society, what Self-love is to the Individual.*

\* Suppose a Man of Learning to be writing a grave Book upon *Humane Nature*, and to shew in several Parts of it that he had an Insight into the Subject he was considering: Amongst other things, the following one would require to be accounted for; The Appearance of Benevolence or Good will in Men towards each other in the Instances of Natural Relation, and in others †. Cautious of being deceived with outward Show, he retires within himself to see exactly, what That is in the Mind of Man from whence this Appearance proceeds; and, upon deep Reflection, asserts the Principle in the Mind to be only the Love of Power, and Delight in the Exercise of it. Would not every Body think here was a Mistake of one Word for another? That the Philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other *Humane Actions*, some other Behaviour of Man to Man? And could any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called Benevolence or Good-will was really the Affection meant, but only by being made to understand that this Learned Person had a general Hypothesis, to which the Appearance of Good-will could no otherwise be reconciled? That what has this Appearance is often nothing but Ambition; That Delight in Superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with Benevolence, only makes it more specious to call it Ambition than Hunger, of the two: Put in reality that Passion does no more account for the whole Appearances of Good-will, than this Appetite does. Is there not often the Appearance of one Man's wishing that Good to Another,

## Upon Humane Nature.

7

*dual.* And if there be in Mankind any SERM.  
Disposition to Friendship; If there be any I.  
such thing as Compassion, for Compassion

B 4

is

Another, which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third Person? And can Love of Power any way possibly come in to account for this Desire or Delight? Is there not often the Appearance of *Mens* distinguishing between two or more Persons, preferring one before another to do good to, in Cases where Love of Power cannot in the least account for the Distinction and Preference? For this Principle can no otherwise distinguish between Objects, than as it is a greater Instance and Exertion of Power to do good to one rather than to another. Again, Suppose Good-will in the Mind of Man to be nothing but Delight in the exercise of Power: Men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental Considerations; but these Restraints being removed, they would have a Disposition to, and Delight in Mischief as an Exercise and Proof of Power: And this Disposition and Delight would arise from or be the same Principle in the Mind, as a Disposition to and Delight in Charity. Thus Cruelty, as distinct from Envy and Resentment, would be exactly the same in the Mind of Man as Good-will: That one tends to the Happiness, the other to the Misery of our Fellow-Creatures, is it seems merely an accidental Circumstance, which the Mind has not the least Regard to. These are the Absurdities which even Men of Capacity run into, when they have occasion to belie their Nature, and will perversely disclaim that Image of God which was originally stamped upon it; the Traces of which, however faint, are plainly discernible upon the Mind of Man. † *Hobbs* of Human Nature, c. 9. § 17.

If any Person can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing as Good-will in one Man towards another; (for the Question is not concerning either the Degree or Extensiveness of it, but concerning the Affection itself;) let it be observed, *that Whether Man be thus, or otherwise constituted, What is the inward*



SERMON. is momentary Love; if there be any such

I. thing as the paternal or filial Affections; if there be any Affection in Humane Nature, the Object and End of which is the Good of another; this is itself Benevolence, or the Love of another. Be it ever so short, be it in ever so low a Degree, or ever so unhappily confined; it proves the Assertion, and

*inward Frame in this Particular*, is a mere Question of Fact or natural History, not proveable immediately by Reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other Facts or Matters of Natural History are: By appealing to the external Senses, or inward Perceptions, respectively, as the Matter under Consideration is cognizable by one or the other: By arguing from acknowledged Facts and Actions; for a great Number of Actions of the same Kind, in different Circumstances, and respecting different Objects, will prove, to a Certainty, what Principles they do not, and, to the greatest Probability, what Principles they do proceed from; And lastly, by the Testimony of Mankind. Now that there is some Degree of Benevolence amongst Men, may be as strongly and plainly proved in all these Ways, as it could possibly be proved, supposing there was this Affection in our Nature. And should any one think fit to assert, that Resentment in the Mind of Man was absolutely nothing but reasonable Concern for our own Safety; the Falsity of this, and what is the real Nature of that Passion, could be shewn in no other Ways than those in which it may be shewn, that there is such a thing in *some Degree* as *real* Good-will in Man towards Man. It is sufficient that the Seeds of it be implanted in our Nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own Heart and Temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform Manner. This is our Work: This is Virtue and Religion.

## Upon Humane Nature.

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and points out what we were designed for, SERM,  
as really as though it were in a higher De- I.  
gree and more extensive. I must however  
remind you, that though Benevolence and  
Self-love are different; though the former  
tends most directly to publick Good, and  
the latter to private: Yet they are so per-  
fectly coincident, that the greatest Satisfac-  
tions to our selves depend upon our having  
Benevolence in a due Degree; and that  
Self-love is one chief Security of our right  
Behaviour towards Society. It may be add-  
ed, that their mutual coinciding, so that we  
can scarce promote one without the other,  
is equally a Proof that we were made for  
both.

Secondly, THIS will further appear from  
observing that the *several Passions and Af-*  
*fections*, which are distinct \* both from Be-  
nevolence

\* Every Body makes a Distinction between Self-love, and  
the several particular Passions, Appetites, and Affections; and  
yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally  
different will be seen by any one who will distinguish between  
the Passions and Appetites *themselves*, and *endeavouring* after the  
Means of their Gratification. Consider the Appetite of Hun-  
ger, and the Desire of Esteem: These being the Occasion both  
of Pleasure and Pain, the coolest *Self-love*, as well as the Ap-  
petites and Passions themselves, may put us upon making Use  
of the *proper Methods of obtaining* that Pleasure, and avoiding  
that

SERM. benevolence and Self-love, do in general contribute and lead us to *publick* Good, as really as to *private*. It might be thought too minute and particular, and would carry us too great a length, to distinguish between and compare together the several Passions or Appetites distinct from Benevolence, whose primary

that Pain; but the *Feelings themselves*, the Pain of Hunger and Shame, and the Delight from Esteem, are no more Self-love than they are any thing in the World. Though a Man hated himself, he would as much feel the Pain of Hunger as he would that of the Gout: And it is plainly supposable there may be Creatures with Self-love in them to the highest Degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as Men in some Cases are) to the Contempt and Esteem of those, upon whom their Happiness does not in some further Respects depend. And as Self-love and the several particular Passions and Appetites are in themselves totally different; so, that some Actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable Cases. One Man rushes upon certain Ruin for the Gratification of a present Desire: No Body will call the Principle of this Action Self-love. Suppose another Man to go through some laborious Work upon Promise of a great Reward, without any distinct Knowledge what the Reward will be: This Course of Action cannot be ascribed to any particular Passion. The former of these Actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular Passion or Affection, the latter as plainly to the general Affection or Principle of Self-love. That there are some particular Pursuits or Actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two Principles are frequently mixt together, and run up into each other. This Distinction is further explained in the Eleventh Sermon.

## Upon Humane Nature. II

primary Use and Intention is the Security SERM.  
and Good of Society; and the Passions di- I.  
stinct from Self-love, whose primary In-  
tention and Design is the Security and Good  
of the Individual\*. It is enough to the pre-  
sent Argument, that Desire of Esteem from  
others, Contempt and Esteem of them, Love  
of Society as distinct from Affection to the  
Good of it, Indignation against successful  
Vice, that these are publick Affections or  
Passions; have an immediate respect to o-  
thers, naturally lead us to regulate our Be-  
haviour in such a Manner as will be of Ser-  
vice to our Fellow-Creatures. If any or all  
of these may be considered likewise as pri-  
vate Affections, as tending to private Good;  
this does not hinder them from being pub-  
lick

\* If any desire to see this Distinction and Comparison made  
in a particular Instance, the Appetite and Passion now men-  
tioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be consider'd as a pri-  
vate Appetite; because the End for which it was given us is  
the Preservation of the Individual. Desire of Esteem is a publick  
Passion; because the End for which it was given us is to regu-  
late our Behaviour towards Society. The respect which This  
has to private Good is as remote, as the respect That has to  
publick Good: And the Appetite is no more Self-love, than  
the Passion is Benevolence. The Object and End of the for-  
mer is merely Food; the Object and End of the latter is  
merely Esteem: But the latter can no more be gratified, with-  
out contributing to the Good of Society; than the former  
can be gratified, without contributing to the Preservation of  
the Individual.

SERM. lick Affections too, or destroy the good In-

I. fluence of them upon Society, and their  
 ~~~~~ Tendency to publick Good. It may be ad-  
 ded, that as Persons without any Conviction  
 on from Reason of the desirableness of  
 Life, would yet of Course preserve it merely  
 from the Appetite of Hunger; so by acting  
 merely from Regard (suppose) to Reputati-  
 on, without any Consideration of the Good  
 of Others, Men often contribute to publick  
 Good. In both these Instances they are  
 plainly Instruments in the Hands of ano-  
 ther, in the Hands of Providence, to carry  
 on Ends, the Preservation of the Individual  
 and Good of Society, which they them-  
 selves have not in their View or Intention.  
 The Sum is, Men have various Appetites,  
 Passions, and particular Affections, quite  
 distinct both from Self-love, and from Be-  
 nevolence: All of these have a tendency to  
 promote both publick and private Good,  
 and may be considered as respecting others  
 and ourselves equally and in common: But  
 some of them seem most immediately to  
 respect others, or tend to publick Good;  
 others of them most immediately to respect  
 Self, or tend to private Good: As the for-  
 mer are not Benevolence, so the latter are  
 not

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not Self-love: Neither Sort are Instances of S E R M.  
our Love either to ourselves or others; but I.  
only Instances of our Maker's Care and Love  
both of the Individual and the Species, and  
Proofs that he intended we should be In-  
struments of Good to each other, as well as  
that we should be so to our selves.

*Thirdly,* T H E R E is a Principle of Re-  
flection in Men, by which they distinguish  
between, approve and disapprove their own  
Actions. We are plainly constituted such  
sort of Creatures as to reflect upon our own  
Nature. The Mind can take a View of  
what passes within itself, its Propensions,  
Aversions, Passions, Affections, as respect-  
ing such Objects, and in such Degrees; and  
of the several Actions consequent thereup-  
on. In this Survey it approves of one,  
disapproves of another, and towards a third  
is affected in neither of these ways, but is  
quite indifferent. This Principle in Man, by  
which he approves or disapproves his Heart,  
Temper, and Actions, is Conscience; for  
this is the strict Sense of the Word, though  
sometimes it is used so as to take in more.  
And that this Faculty tends to restrain Men  
from doing Mischief to each other, and  
leads them to do good, is too manifest to  
need

SERM. need being insisted upon. Thus a Parent

I. has the Affection of Love to his Children :

~ This leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due Provision for them ; the natural Affection leads to this : But the Reflection that it is his proper Business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do ; this added to the Affection, becomes a much more settled Principle, and carries him on through more Labour and Difficulties for the sake of his Children, than he would undergo from that Affection, alone ; if he thought it, and the Course of Action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This indeed is impossible, to do that which is good and not to approve of it ; for which reason they are frequently not considered as distinct, though they really are : For Men often approve of the Actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly be denied that there is this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Humane Nature. Suppose a Man to relieve an innocent Person in great Distress ; suppose the same Man afterwards, in the Fury of Anger, to do the greatest Mischief to a Person who had given no just Cause of Of-

fence ;

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fence ; to aggravate the Injury, add the Cir-  
cumstances of former Friendship, and Obligation from the injured Person ; let the  
Man who is supposed to have done these two different Actions, coolly reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their Consequences to himself : To assert that any common Man would be affected in the same Way towards these different Actions, that he would make no Distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a Falsity to need being confuted. There is therefore this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Mankind. It is needless to compare the Respect it has to private Good, with the Respect it has to publick ; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This Faculty is now mentioned merely as another Part in the inward Frame of Man, pointing out to us in some Degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some Influence. The particular Place assigned to it by Nature, what Authority it has, and how great Influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.


FROM



SERM. FROM this Comparison of Benevolence  
 I. and Self-love, of our publick and private  
 Affections, of the Courses of Life they lead  
 to, and of the Principle of Reflection or  
 Conscience as respecting each of them, it  
 is as manifest, that *we were made for So-*  
*ciety, and to promote the Happiness of it;*  
*as that we were intended to take Care of*  
*our own Life, and Health, and private*  
*Good.*

AND from this whole Review must be gi-  
 ven a different Draught of Humane Nature  
 from what we are often presented with.  
 Mankind are by Nature so closely united,  
 there is such a Correspondence between the  
 inward Sensations of one Man and those of  
 another, that Disgrace is as much avoided  
 as bodily Pain, and to be the Object of  
 Esteem and Love as much desired as any  
 external Goods: And in many particular  
 Cases, Persons are carried on to do good to  
 others, as the End their Affection tends to  
 and rests in; and manifest that they find  
 real Satisfaction and Enjoyment in this  
 Course of Behaviour. There is such a na-  
 tural Principle of Attraction in Man to-  
 wards Man, that having trod the same Tract  
 of Land, having breathed in the same Cli-  
 mate,

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mate, barely having been born in the same SERM.  
artificial District or Division, becomes the I.  
Occasion of contracting Acquaintances and   
Familiarities many Years after : For any thing  
may serve the Purpose. Thus Relations meer-  
ly nominal are sought and invented, not by  
Governours, but by the lowest of the Peo-  
ple ; which are found sufficient to hold  
Mankind together in little Fraternities and  
Copartnerships : Weak ties indeed, and  
what may afford Fund enough for Ridicule,  
if they are absurdly considered as the real  
Principles of that Union : But they are in  
Truth meerly the Occasions, as any 'thing  
may be of any thing, upon which our Na-  
ture carries us on according to its own pre-  
vious Bent and Bias ; which Occasions there-  
fore would be nothing at all, were there not  
this prior Disposition and Bias of Nature.  
Men are so much one Body, that in a pecu-  
liar Manner they feel for each other, Shame,  
sudden Danger, Resentment, Honour, Prof-  
perity, Distress ; one or another, or all of  
these, from the social Nature in general,  
from Benevolence, upon the Occasion of  
natural Relation, Acquaintance, Protection,  
Dependance ; each of these being distinct  
Cements of Society. And therefore to have

SERM. no restraint from, no regard to others in  
 I. our Behaviour, is the speculative Absurdity  
 of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our Nature which has respect to our Fellow-Creatures, reduced to Action and Practice. And this is the same Absurdity, as to suppose a Hand, or any Part to have no natural Respect to any other, or to the whole Body.

BUT allowing all this, it may be asked,  
 “ Has not Man Dispositions and Principles  
 “ within which lead him to do Evil to  
 “ others, as well as to do Good? Whence  
 “ come the many Miseries else, which Men  
 “ are the Authors and Instruments of to  
 “ each other?” These Questions, so far as they relate to the foregoing Discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not Man also Dispositions and Principles within, which lead him to do Evil to himself, as well as good? Whence come the many Miseries else, Sickness, Pain and Death, which Men are the Instruments and Authors of to themselves?

IT may be thought more easie to answer one of these Questions than the other, but the Answer to both is really the same; that Mankind have ungoverned Passions  
 which

which they will gratifie at any Rate, as well S E R M.  
to the Injury of Others, as in Contradicti- I.  
on to known private Interest: But that as  
there is no such thing as Self-hatred, so  
neither is there any such as thing Ill-will in  
one Man towards another; Emulation and  
Resentment being away; whereas there is  
plainly Benevolence or Good-will: There is  
no such thing as Love of Injustice, Oppres-  
sion, Treachery, Ingratitude; but only  
eager Desires after such and such external  
Goods; which, according to a very ancient  
Observation, the most abandoned would  
choose to obtain by innocent Means, if  
they were as easy, and as effectual to their  
End: That even Emulation and Resent-  
ment, by any one who will consider what  
these Passions really are in Nature \*, will  
be found nothing to the Purpose of this Ob-  
jection:

C 2

jection:

\* Emulation is merely the Desire and Hope of Equality with or Superiority over others, with whom we compare our selves. There does not appear to be any *other Grief* in the natural Passion, but only *that Want* which is implied in Desire. However this may be so strong as to be the Occasion of great *Grief*. To desire the attainment of this Equality or Superiority by the *particular Means* of Others, being brought down to our own Level, or below it, is, I think, the distinct Notion of Envy. From whence it is easy to see, that the real End, which the natural Passion Emulation, and which the un-  
lawful


S E R M. jection: And that the Principles and Passions in the Mind of Man, which are distinct both from Self-love and Benevolence, primarily and most directly lead to right Behaviour with regard to Others as well as Himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is Evil. Thus, though Men to avoid the Shame of one Villany are sometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is easy to see, that the original Tendency of Shame is to prevent the doing of shameful Actions; and its leading Men to conceal such Actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done; *i. e.* of the Passions not having answered its first End.

I F it be said, that there are Persons in the World, who are in great Measure without the natural Affections towards their Fellow-Creatures: There are likewise Instances of Persons without the common natural Affections to themselves: But the Nature of Man is not to be judged of by either of these, but by what appears in the common World, in the Bulk of Mankind.

I A M

lawful one Envy aims at, is exactly the same; namely, that Equality or Superiority: And consequently, that to do Mischief is not the End of Envy, but merely the Means it makes use of to attain its End. As to Resentment, see the Eighth Sermon.

## Upon Humane Nature. 21


I AM afraid it would be thought very S E R M.  
strange, if to confirm the Truth of this Ac- L  
count of Humane Nature, and make out   
the Justness of the foregoing Comparison, it  
should be added, that from what appears,  
Men in Fact as much and as often contradict  
that *Part* of their Nature which respects  
*Self*, and which leads them to their *own*  
*private* Good and Happiness; as they con-  
tradict that *Part* of it which respects *So-*  
*society*, and tends to *publick* Good : That there  
are as few Persons, who attain the greatest  
Satisfaction and Enjoyment which they  
might attain in the present World ; as who  
do the greatest Good to others which they  
might do : Nay, that there are as few who  
can be said really and in earnest to aim at  
one, as at the other. Take a Survey of Man-  
kind : The World in general, the Good and  
Bad, almost without Exception, equally are  
agreed, that were Religion out of the Case,  
the Happiness of the present Life would con-  
sist in a Manner wholly in Riches, Honours,  
sensual Gratifications ; infomuch that one  
scarce hears a Reflection made upon Pru-  
dence, Life, Conduct, but upon this Suppo-  
sition. Yet on the contrary, that Persons in  
the greatest Affluence of Fortune are no  
C 3 happier

SERM. happier than such as have only a Competency ; that the Cares and Disappointments of Ambition for the most Part far exceed the Satisfaction of it ; as also the miserable Intervals of Intemperance and Excess, and the many untimely Deaths occasioned by a dissolute Course of Life : These things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged ; but are thought no Objections against, though they expressly contradict, this universal Principle, that the Happiness of the present Life consists in one or other of them. Whence is all this Absurdity and Contradiction ? Is not the middle Way obvious ? Can any thing be more manifest, than that the Happiness of Life consists in These possessed and enjoyed only to a certain Degree ; that to pursue them beyond this Degree, is always attended with more Inconvenience than Advantage to a Man's self, and often with extream Misery and Unhappiness. Whence then, I say, is all this Absurdity and Contradiction ? Is it really the Result of Consideration in Mankind, how they may become most easy to themselves, most free from Care, and enjoy the chief Happiness attainable in this World ? Or is it not manifestly owing either to this, that they have

4

not

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not cool and reasonable Concern enough SERM.  
for themselves, to consider wherein their I.  
chief Happiness in the present Life consists;   
or else, if they do consider it, that they will  
not act conformably to what is the Result  
of that Consideration: *i. e.* reasonable Con-  
cern for themselves, or cool Self-love is  
prevailed over by Passion and Appetite. So  
that from what appears, there is no Ground  
to assert that those Principles in the Nature  
of Man, which most directly lead to pro-  
mote the Good of our Fellow-Creatures, are  
more generally or in a greater Degree vio-  
lated, than those, which most directly lead  
us to promote our own private Good and  
Happiness.

**T H E** Sum of the whole is plainly this.  
The Nature of Man considered in his sin-  
gle Capacity, and with respect only to the  
present World, is adapted and leads him to  
attain the greatest Happiness he can for him-  
self in the present World. The Nature of  
Man considered in his publick or social Ca-  
pacity leads him to a right Behaviour in So-  
ciety, to that Course of Life which we call  
Virtue. Men follow or obey their Nature  
in both these Capacities and Respects to a  
certain Degree, but not intirely; Their Acti-



SERMONS do not come up to the whole of what

I. their Nature leads them to in either of these

Capacities or Respects: and they often violate their Nature in both. *i. e.* As they neglect the Duties they owe to their Fellow-Creatures, to which their Nature leads them; and are injurious, to which their Nature is abhorrent: So there is a manifest Negligence in Men of their real Happiness or Interest in the present World, when that Interest is inconsistent with a present Gratification; for the sake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly are the Authors and Instruments of their own Misery and Ruin. Thus they are as often unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most Part are equally so to both by the same Actions.

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# SERMON II, III.

*Upon Humane Nature.*

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ROM. ii. 14.

*For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves.*

**A**S speculative Truth admits of different Kinds of Proof, so likewise Moral Obligations may be shewn by different Methods. If the real Nature of any Creature leads him and is adapted to such and such Purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a Reason to believe the Author of that Nature intended it for those Purposes. Thus there is no Doubt the Eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any Constitution is,

SERM.  
II.

SERM. is, and the greater Variety of Parts there are  
 II. which thus tend to some one End, the  
 stronger is the Proof that such End was de-  
 signed. However, when the inward Frame  
 of Man is considered as any Guide in Mo-  
 rals, the utmost Caution must be used that  
 none make Peculiarities in their own Tem-  
 per, or any thing which is the Effect of  
 particular Customs, though observable in  
 several, the Standard of what is common  
 to the Species; and above all, that the high-  
 est Principle be not forgot or excluded,  
 That to which belongs the Adjustment and  
 Correction of all other inward Movements  
 and Affections: Which Principle will of  
 Course have some Influence, but which be-  
 ing in Nature supream, as shall now be  
 shown, ought to preside over and govern  
 all the rest. The Difficulty of rightly ob-  
 serving the two former Cautions; the Ap-  
 pearance there is of some small Diversity  
 amongst Mankind with respect to this Fa-  
 culty, with respect to their natural Sense of  
 moral Good and Evil; and the Attention ne-  
 cessary to survey with any Exactness what  
 passes within, have occasioned that it is not  
 so much agreed what is the Standard of the  
 internal Nature of Man, as of his external  
 Form.

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Form. Neither is this last exactly settled. SERM.  
Yet we understand one another when we II.  
speak of the Shape of a Humane Body :  
So likewise we do when we speak of the  
Heart and inward Principles, how far soe-  
ver the Standard is from being exact or pre-  
cisely fixt. There is therefore Ground for  
an Attempt of shewing Men to themselves,  
of shewing them what Course of Life and  
Behaviour their real Nature points out and  
would lead them to. Now Obligations of  
Virtue shown, and Motives to the Practice  
of it enforced, from a Review of the Na-  
ture of Man, are to be considered as an  
Appeal to each particular Person's Heart and  
natural Conscience : As the external Senses  
are appealed to for the Proof of things cog-  
nizable by them. Since then our inward  
Feelings, and the Perceptions we receive  
from our external Senses are equally real ; to  
argue from the former to Life and Conduct,  
is as little liable to Exception, as to argue  
from the latter to absolute speculative Truth.  
A Man can as little doubt whether his Eyes  
were given him to see with, as he can doubt  
of the Truth of the Science of *Opticks*, de-  
duced from ocular Experiments. And al-  
lowing the inward Feeling, Shame ; a Man  
can

SERM. can as little doubt whether it was given him  
 II. to prevent his doing shameful Actions, as he  
 can doubt whether his Eyes were given him  
 to guide his Steps. And as to these inward  
 Feelings themselves; that they are real, that  
 Man has in his Nature Passions and Affections,  
 can no more be questioned, than that  
 he has external Senses. Neither can the  
 former be wholly mistaken; though to a  
 certain Degree liable to greater Mistakes than  
 the latter.

THERE can be no doubt but that several  
 Propensions or Instincts, several Principles in  
 the Heart of Man, carry him to Society, and  
 to contribute to the Happiness of it, in a  
 Sense and a Manner in which no inward Principle  
 leads him to Evil. These Principles,  
 Propensions or Instincts which lead him to  
 do Good, are approved of by a certain Faculty  
 within, quite distinct from these Propensions  
 themselves. All this hath been fully  
 made out in the foregoing Discourse.


BUT it may be said, "What is all this,  
 " though true, to the Purpose of Virtue and  
 " Religion? These require, not only that  
 " we do good to others when we are led  
 " this Way, by Benevolence or Reflection,  
 " happening to be stronger than other Principles,  
 " ciples,

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“ ciples, Passions, or Appetites ; but like- S E R M.  
“ wise that the *whole* Character be formed II.  
“ upon Thought and Reflection ; that *every*   
“ Action be directed by some determi-  
“ nate Rule, some other Rule than the  
“ Strength and Prevalency of any Principle  
“ or Passion. What Sign is there in our  
“ Nature (for the Inquiry is only about what  
“ is to be collected from thence) that this  
“ was intended by its Author ? Or how  
“ does so various and fickle a Temper as  
“ that of Man appear adapted thereto ? It  
“ may indeed be absurd and unnatural for  
“ Men to act without any Reflection ; nay,  
“ without Regard to that particular Kind of  
“ Reflection which you call Conscience ;  
“ because this does belong to our Nature.  
“ For as there never was a Man but who  
“ approved one Place, Prospect, Building,  
“ before another : So it does not appear  
“ that there ever was a Man who would  
“ not have approved an Action of Huma-  
“ nity rather than of Cruelty ; Interest and  
“ Passion being quite out of the Case. But  
“ Interest and Passion do come in, and are  
“ often too strong for and prevail over Re-  
“ flection and Conscience. Now as Brutes  
“ have various Instincts, by which they are  
“ carried

SERM. " carried on to the End the Author of their  
 II. " Nature intended them for: Is not Man  
 ~~~~~ " in the same Condition; with this Diffe-  
 " rence only, that to his Instincts (*i. e.* Ap-  
 " petites and Passions) is added the Princi-  
 " ple of Reflection or Conscience? And  
 " as Brutes act agreeably to their Nature, in  
 " following that Principle or particular In-  
 " stinct which for the present is strongest  
 " in them: Does not Man likewise act a-  
 " greeably to his Nature, or obey the Law  
 " of his Creation, by following that Prin-  
 " ciple, be it Passion or Conscience, which  
 " for the present happens to be strongest in  
 " him? Thus different Men are by their  
 " particular Nature hurried on to pursue  
 " Honour, or Riches, or Pleasure: There  
 " are also Persons whose Temper leads them  
 " in an uncommon Degree to Kindness,  
 " Compassion, doing Good to their Fellow-  
 " Creatures: As there are others who are  
 " given to suspend their Judgment, to weigh  
 " and consider Things, and to act upon  
 " Thought and Reflection. Let every one  
 " then quietly follow his Nature; as Passion,  
 " Reflection, Appetite, the several Parts  
 " of it, happen to be strongest: But let  
 " not the Man of Virtue take upon him

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“ to blame the Ambitious, the Covetous, S E R M.  
“ the Dissolute; since these equally with II.  
“ him obey and follow their Nature. Thus,   
“ as in some Cases we follow our Nature in  
“ doing the Works *contained in the Law*, so  
“ in other Cases we follow Nature in doing  
“ contrary.”


Now all this licentious Talk intirely goes upon a Supposition, that Men follow their Nature in the same Sense, in violating the known Rules of Justice and Honesty for the sake of a present Gratification, as they do in following those Rules when they have no Temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which *St. Paul* asserts, that Men are *by Nature a Law to themselves*. If by following Nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of Nature as any Guide in Morals: Nay the very mention of deviating from Nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of Distinction, would absolutely have no Meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the Antients speak of deviating from Nature as Vice; and of following Nature so much as a Distinction, that according to  
them



SERM. them the Perfection of Virtue consists there-

II. in. So that Language itself should teach  
 ~~~~~ People another Sense to the Words *following Nature*, than barely acting as we please. Let it however be observed, that though the Words *Humane Nature* are to be explained, yet the real Question of this Discourse is not concerning the Meaning of Words, any otherwise than as the Explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the Assertion, that *every Man is naturally a Law to himself*, that *every one may find within himself the Rule of Right, and Obligations to follow it*. This St. Paul affirms in the Words of the Text, and this the foregoing Objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the Objection will be fully answered, and the Text before us explained, by observing that *Nature* is considered in different Views, and the Word used in different Senses; and by shewing in what View it is considered, and in what Sense the Word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the Guide of Life, that by which Men are a Law to themselves. I say, the Explanation of the Term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear, that in  
 some

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some Senses of the Word, *Nature* cannot be, SERM.  
but that in another Sense it manifestly is, a II.  
Law to us. 

I. BY *Nature* is often meant no more than some Principle in Man, without regard either to the Kind or Degree of it. Thus the Passion of Anger, and the Affection of Parents to their Children, would be called equally *natural*. And as the same Person hath often contrary Principles, which at the same Time draw contrary Ways, he may by the same Action both follow and contradict his Nature in this Sense of the Word; he may follow one Passion and contradict another.

II. *Nature* is frequently spoken of as consisting in those Passions which are strongest, and most influence the Actions; which being vicious ones, Mankind is in this Sense naturally vicious, or vicious by Nature. Thus St. Paul says of the *Gentiles, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, and walked according to the Spirit of Disobedience, that they were by Nature the Children of Wrath* \*. They could be no otherwise *Children of Wrath* by Nature, than they were vicious by Nature.

D

H E R E

\* Ephes. ii. 3.

SERM. HERE then are two different Senses of  
 II. the Word *Nature*, in neither of which Men  
 can at all be said to be a Law to themselves.

They are mentioned only to be excluded ; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the Objection, with another Sense of it, which is now to be inquired after, and explained.

III. THE Apostle asserts, that *the Gentiles do by NATURE the things contained in the Law*. Nature is indeed here put by way of Distinction from Revelation, but yet it is not a mere Negative. He intends to express more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the Works of the Law ; namely, by *Nature*. It is plain the meaning of the Word is not the same in this Passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as Evil ; for in this latter it is spoken of as Good ; as that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously. What that is in Man by which he is *naturally a Law to himself*, is explained in the following Words : *Which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another*. If there be a Distinction

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inction to be made between the *Works* SERM.  
*written in their Hearts,* and the *Witness* H.  
*of Conscience*; by the former must be meant  
the natural Disposition to Kindness and  
Compassion, to do what is of good Report,  
to which this Apostle often refers: That  
Part of the Nature of Man, treated of in  
the foregoing Discourse, which with very  
little Reflection and of Course leads him to  
Society, and by means of which he natu-  
rally acts a just and good Part in it, unless  
other Passions or Interest lead him astray.  
Yet since other Passions, and Regards to  
private Interest, which lead us (though in-  
directly, yet they lead us) astray, are them-  
selves in a Degree equally natural, and of-  
ten most prevalent; and since we have no  
Method of seeing the particular Degrees in  
which one or the other is placed in us by  
Nature; it is plain the former, considered  
meerly as natural, good and right as they  
are, can no more be a Law to us than the  
latter. But there is a superiour Principle of  
Reflection or Conscience in every Man,  
which distinguishes between the internal  
Principles of his Heart, as well as his exter-  
nal Actions: Which passes Judgment upon  
himself and them; pronounces determinate-

SERM. ly some Actions to be in themselves just,  
 II. right, good; others to be in themselves evil,  
 wrong, unjust: Which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns Him the doer of them accordingly: And which, if not forcibly stopp'd, naturally and always of Course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual Sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this Part of the Office of Conscience is beyond my present Design explicitly to consider. It is by this Faculty, natural to Man, that he is a moral Agent, that he is a Law to himself: But this Faculty, I say, not to be considered meerly as a Principle in his Heart, which is to have some Influence as well as others; but considered as a Faculty in Kind and in Nature supream over all others, and which bears its own Authority of being so.


THIS *Prerogative*, this *natural Supremacy*, of the Faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several Affections of our Mind, and Actions of our Lives, being that by which Men *are a Law to themselves*, their Conformity or Disobedience to which Law of our Nature renders their  
 Actions,

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ACTIONS, in the highest and most proper S E R M.  
Sense, natural or unnatural; it is fit it be II.  
further explained to you: And I hope it will  
be so, if you will attend to the following Re-  
flections.

M A N may act according to that Principle or Inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a Way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper Nature. Suppose a brute Creature by any Bait to be allured into a Snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the Bent of his Nature, leading him to gratify his Appetite: There is an entire Correspondence between his whole Nature and such an Action: Such Action therefore is natural. But suppose a Man, foreseeing the same Danger of certain Ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present Gratification. He in this Instance would follow his strongest Desire, as did the brute Creature: But there would be as manifest a Disproportion, between the Nature of a Man and such an Action, as between the meanest Work of Art and the Skill of the greatest Master in that Art: Which Disproportion arises, not from considering the Action singly in *itself*, or in its *Consequences*; but from *Comparison* of

SERM. it with the Nature of the Agent. And since

II.  such an Action is utterly disproportionate to the Nature of Man, it is in the strictest and most proper Sense unnatural; this Word expressing that Disproportion. Therefore instead of the Words *Disproportionate to his Nature*, the Word, *Unnatural*, may now be put; this being more familiar to us: But let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely.

Now what is it which renders such a rash Action unnatural? Is it that he went against the Principle of reasonable and cool Self-love, considered *meerly* as a Part of his Nature? No: For if he had acted the contrary Way, he would equally have gone against a Principle or Part of his Nature, namely, Passion or Appetite. But to deny a present Appetite, from Foresight that the Gratification of it would end in immediate Ruin or extream Misery, is by no Means an unnatural Action: Whereas to contradict or go against cool Self-love for the sake of such Gratification, is so in the Instance before us. Such an Action then being unnatural; and its being so not arising from a Man's going against a Principle or Desire barely, nor in going against that Principle or Desire which happens

happens

*Upon Humane Nature.* 39

happens for the present to be strongest; it necessarily follows, that there must be some other Difference or Distinction to be made between these two Principles, Passion and cool Self-love, than what I have yet taken Notice of. And this Difference, not being a Difference in Strength or Degree, I call a Difference in *Nature* and in *Kind*. And since, in the Instance still before us, if Passion prevails over Self-love, the consequent Action is unnatural; but if Self-love prevails over Passion, the Action is natural: It is manifest that Self-love is in Humane Nature a superiour Principle to Passion. This may be contradicted without violating that Nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the Oeconomy of Man's Nature, reasonable Self-love must govern. Thus, without particular Consideration of Conscience, we may have a clear Conception of the *superiour Nature* of one inward Principle to another; and see that there really is this natural Superiority, quite distinct from Degrees of Strength and Prevalency.

LET us now take a View of the Nature of Man, as consisting partly of various Appetites, Passions, Affections, and partly of





SERM. the Principle of Reflection or Conscience;

II. leaving quite out all Consideration of the different Degrees of Strength, in which either of them prevail, and it will further appear that there is this natural Superiority of one inward Principle to another, and that it is even Part of the Idea of Reflection or Conscience.

PASSION or Appetite implies a direct simple Tendency towards such and such Objects, without Distinction of the Means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently 'twill often happen there will be a Desire of particular Objects, in Cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest Injury to others. Reflection or Conscience comes in, and disapproves the Pursuit of them in these Circumstances; but the Desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, Appetite or Reflection? Cannot this Question be answered from the Oeconomy and Constitution of Humane Nature meerly, without saying which is strongest? Or need this at all come into Consideration? Would not the Question be *intelligibly* and fully answered by saying, that the Principle of Reflection or Conscience being compared with the various Appetites, Passions, and Affections

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Affections in Men, the former is manifestly SERM. superiour and chief, without regard to II. Strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is meer *Usurpation*: The former remains in Nature and in Kind its Superiour; and every Instance of such Prevalence of the latter is an Instance of breaking in upon and Violation of the Constitution of Man.

ALL this is no more than the Distinction, which every Body is acquainted with, between *meer Power* and *Authority*: Only, instead of being intended to express the Difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in Civil Government; here it has been shewn applicable to the several Principles in the Mind of Man. Thus that Principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own Heart, Temper and Actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some Influence; which may be said of every Passion, of the lowest Appetites: But likewise as being superiour; as from its very Nature manifestly claiming Superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a Notion of this Faculty, Conscience, without taking in Judgment, Direction, Super-

S E R M. Superintendency. This is a constituent Part

II. of the Idea, that is, of the Faculty itself:

And, to preside and govern, from the very Oeconomy and Constitution of Man, belongs to it. Had it Strength, as it has Right; had it Power, as it has manifest Authority; it would absolutely govern the World.

T H I S gives us a further View of the Nature of Man; shews us what Course of Life we were made for: Not only that our real Nature leads us to be influenced in some Degree by Reflection and Conscience; but likewise in what Degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the Constitution of our Nature: That this Faculty was placed within to be our proper Governour; to direct and regulate all under Principles, Passions, and Motives of Action. This is its Right and Office: Thus sacred is its Authority. And how often soever Men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed Interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of Passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no Alteration as to the *natural Right* and *Office* of Conscience.

L E T

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LET us now turn this whole Matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural Supremacy of Conscience; that there was no Distinction to be made between one inward Principle and another, but only that of Strength; and see what would be the Consequence.

CONSIDER then what is the Latitude and Compass of the Actions of Man with regard to Himself, his Fellow-Creatures and the Supreme Being? What are their Bounds, besides that of our natural Power? With respect to the two first, they are plainly no other than these: No Man seeks Misery as such for himself; and No one unprovoked does Mischief to Another for its own sake. For in every Degree within these Bounds, Mankind knowingly from Passion or Wantonness bring Ruin and Misery upon themselves and others. And Impiety and Profaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the Being of God, have absolutely no Bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of Nature, formally and in Words renounce their Allegiance to their Creator. Put an Instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose prophane Swearing, and in general that

SERM. that Kind of Impiety now mentioned, to  
 II. mean nothing, yet it implies wanton Dis-  
 regard and Irreverence towards an Infinite  
 Being our Creator; and is this as suitable  
 to the Nature of Man, as Reverence and  
 Dutiful Submission of Heart towards that  
 Almighty Being? Or suppose a Man guilty  
 of Parricide, with all the Circumstances of  
 Cruelty which such an Action can admit  
 of. This Action is done in Consequence  
 of its Principle being for the present strong-  
 est: And if there be no Difference between  
 inward Principles, but only that of Strength;  
 the Strength being given, you have the  
 whole Nature of the Man given, so far as it  
 relates to this Matter. The Action plainly  
 corresponds to the Principle, the Principle  
 being in that Degree of Strength it was: It  
 therefore corresponds to the whole Nature  
 of the Man. Upon comparing the Action  
 and the whole Nature, there arises no Dis-  
 proportion, there appears no unsuitableness  
 between them. Thus the *Murder of a Fa-  
 ther* and the *Nature of Man* correspond to  
 each other, as the same Nature and an act  
 of filial Duty. If there be no Difference be-  
 tween inward Principles, but only that of  
 Strength; we can make no Distinction be-  
 tween

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tween these two Actions, considered as the SERM.  
Actions of such a Creature; but in our II.  
coolest Hours must approve or disapprove  
them equally: Than which nothing can be  
reduced to a greater Absurdity.

SERM.  
THE natural Supremacy of Reflection or  
Conscience being thus established; we may III.  
from it form a distinct Notion of what is  
meant by *Humane Nature*, when Virtue is  
said to consist in following it, and Vice in  
deviating from it.

As the Idea of a Civil Constitution im-  
plies in it united Strength, various Subordi-  
nations, under one Direction, that of the  
supream Authority; the different Strength  
of each particular Member of the Society  
not coming into the Idea; whereas, if you  
leave out the Subordination, the Union and  
the one Direction, you destroy and lose it:  
So Reason, several Appetites, Passions and  
Affections, prevailing in different Degrees  
of Strength, is not *that* Idea or Notion of  
*Humane Nature*; but *that Nature* consists  
in these several Principles considered as  
having a natural Respect to each other, in  
the several Passions being naturally subordi-  
nate

SERM. nate to the one superiour Principle of Reflec-  
 III. tion or Conscience. Every Bias, Instinct,  
 Propension within, is a real Part of our  
 Nature, but not the Whole : Add to these  
 the superiour Faculty, whose Office it is to  
 adjust, manage and preside over them, and  
 take in this its natural Superiority, and you  
 compleat the Idea of Humane Nature. And  
 as in Civil Government the Constitution is  
 broken in upon and violated by Power and  
 Strength prevailing over Authority ; so  
 the Constitution of Man is broken in up-  
 on and violated by the lower Faculties or  
 Principles within prevailing over that which  
 is in its Nature supream over them all. Thus,  
 when it is said by ancient Writers, that  
 Tortures and Death are not so contrary to  
 Humane Nature as Injustice ; by this to be  
 sure is not meant, that the Aversion to the  
 former in Mankind is less strong and preva-  
 lent than their Aversion to the latter : But  
 that the former is only contrary to our Na-  
 ture considered in a partial View, and  
 which takes in only the lowest Part of it,  
 that which we have in common with the  
 Brutes ; whereas the latter is contrary to our  
 Nature, considered in a higher Sense, as a  
 System

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System and Constitution, contrary to the SERM.  
whole Oeconomy of Man \*.

III.

AND ~~~~~

\* Every Man in his physical Nature is one individual single Agent. He has likewise Properties and Principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without Regard to the Respects which they have to each other. Neither of these are the Nature we are taking a View of. But it is the inward Frame of Man considered as a *System or Constitution*: Whose several Parts are united, not by a physical Principle of Individuation, but by the Respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the Subjection which the Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections have to the one supream Principle of Reflection or Conscience. The System or Constitution is formed by and consists in these Respects and this Subjection. Thus the Body is a *System or Constitution*: So is a Tree: So is every Machine. Consider all the several Parts of a Tree without the natural Respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the Idea of a Tree; but add these Respects, and this gives you the Idea. The Body may be impaired by Sickness, a Tree may decay, a Machine be out of Order, and yet the System and Constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral Constitution of Man. Whoever will consider his own Nature, will see that the several Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, have different Respects amongst themselves. They are Restraints upon, and are in a Proportion to each other. This Proportion is just and perfect, when all those under Principles are perfectly coincident with Conscience, so far as their Nature permits, and in all Cases under its absolute and intire Direction. The least Excess or Defect, the least Alteration of the due Proportions amongst themselves, or of their Co-incidence with Conscience, though not proceeding into Action, is some Degree of Disorder in the moral Constitution. But Perfection, though plainly intelligible and supposable, was never attained by any Man. If the higher Principle of Reflection maintains its Place, and as much




SERM. AND from all these things put together,  
 III. nothing can be more evident, than that, ex-  
 clusive of Revelation, Man cannot be con-  
 sidered as a Creature left by his Maker to  
 act at random, and live at large up to the  
 Extent of his natural Power, as Passion,  
 Humour, Wilfulness, happen to carry him;  
 which is the Condition brute Creatures are  
 in: But that *from his Make, Constitution,*  
*or Nature, he is in the strictest and most*  
*proper Sense a Law to himself.* He hath  
 the Rule of Right within: What is wanting  
 is only that he honestly attend to it.

THE Inquiries which have been made by  
 Men of Leisure after some general Rule,  
 the Conformity to, or Disagreement from  
 which, should denominate our Actions Good  
 or Evil, are in many Respects of great Ser-  
 vice. Yet let any plain honest Man, before  
 he engages in any Course of Action, ask  
 himself, Is this I am going about Right, or  
 is

as it can corrects that Disorder, and hinders it from breaking  
 out into Action, this is all that can be expected in such a  
 Creature as Man. And though the Appetites and Passions have  
 not their exact due Proportion to each other; though they of-  
 ten strive for Mastery with Judgment or Reflection; yet,  
 since the Superiority of this Principle to all others is the chief  
 Respect which forms the Constitution, so far as this Superi-  
 ority is maintained, the Character, the Man, is good, worthy,  
 virtuous.

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is it Wrong? Is it Good, or is it Evil? I do SERM.  
not in the least doubt but that this Question III.  
would be answered agreeably to Truth and   
Virtue, by almost any fair Man in almost any  
Circumstance. Neither do there appear any  
Cases which look like Exceptions to this; but  
those of Superstition, and of Partiality to  
ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be some-  
what of an Exception: But Partiality to our-  
selves is not; this being itself Dishonesty.  
For a Man to judge that to be the equitable,  
the moderate, the right Part for him to  
act, which he would see to be hard, unjust,  
oppressive in another; this is plain Vice,  
and can proceed only from great Unfairness  
of Mind.


BUT allowing that Mankind hath the  
Rule of Right within himself, yet it may be  
asked, "What Obligations are we under to  
attend to and follow it?" I answer: It  
has been proved that Man by his Nature is a  
Law to himself, without the particular dis-  
tinct Consideration of the positive Sanctions  
of that Law; the Rewards and Punishments  
which we feel, and those which from the  
Light of Reason we have ground to believe,  
are annexed to it. The Question then carries  
its own Answer along with it. Your Obli-  
E gation

SERMON. gation to obey this Law, is its being the  
 III. Law of your Nature. That your Conscience approves of and attests to such a Course of Action, is itself alone an Obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to shew us the Way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own Authority with it, that it is our natural Guide; the Guide assigned us by the Author of our Nature: It therefore belongs to our Condition of Being, it is our Duty, to walk in that Path and follow this Guide without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with Impunity.

H O W E V E R, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this Law of our Nature. And the Sum is no more than this. “ Why  
 “ should we be concerned about any thing  
 “ out of and beyond ourselves? If we do  
 “ find within Ourselves Regards to Others,  
 “ and Restraints of we know not how many different Kinds; yet, these being Embarrassments, and hindering us from going  
 “ the nearest Way to our own Good, why  
 “ should we not endeavour to suppress and  
 “ get over them? ”.

T H U S People go on with Words, which, when applied to Humane Nature, and the  
 Condition


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Condition in which it is placed in this SERM.  
World, have really no Meaning. For does III.  
not all this kind of Talk go upon Supposition,  that our Happiness in this World consists in somewhat quite distinct from Regards to others; and that it is the Priviledge of Vice to be without Restraint or Confinement? Whereas on the contrary, the Enjoyments, in a Manner all the common Enjoyments of Life, even the Pleasures of Vice, depend upon these Regards of one Kind or another to our Fellow-Creatures. Throw off all Regards to others, and we should be quite indifferent to Infamy and to Honour; there could be no such thing at all as Ambition; and scarce any such thing as Covetousness; for we should likewise be equally indifferent to the Disgrace of Poverty, the several Neglects and Kinds of Contempt which accompany this State; and to the Reputation of Riches, the Regard and Respect they usually procure. Neither is Restraint by any means peculiar to one Course of Life: But our very Nature, exclusive of Conscience, and our Condition lays us under an absolute Necessity of it. We cannot gain any End whatever without being confined to the proper Means, which

SERM. is often the most painful and uneasy Con-  
 III. finement. And in numberless Instances a  
 present Appetite cannot be gratified without  
 such apparent and immediate Ruin and Mi-  
 sery, that the most dissolute Man in the  
 World chooses to forego the Pleasure, rather  
 than endure the Pain.



Is the Meaning then, to indulge those  
 Regards to our Fellow-Creatures, and sub-  
 mit to those Restraints, which upon the  
 whole are attended with more Satisfaction  
 than Uneasiness, and get over only those  
 which bring more Uneasiness and Inconve-  
 nience than Satisfaction? “ Doubtless this  
 “ was our Meaning.” You have changed  
 Sides then. Keep to this; be consistent  
 with yourselves; and you and the Men of  
 Virtue are *in general* perfectly agreed. But  
 let us take Care and avoid Mistakes. Let it  
 not be taken for granted that the Temper of  
 Envy, Rage, Repentment, yields greater De-  
 light than Meekness, Forgiveness, Compas-  
 sion, and Good-will: Especially when it is  
 acknowledged that Rage, Envy, Repent-  
 ment, are in themselves meer Misery;  
 and the Satisfaction arising from the Indul-  
 gence of them is little more than Relief  
 from that Misery; whereas the Temper of  
 Compassion

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Compassion and Benevolence is itself de-SERM.  
lightful ; and the Indulgence of it, by doing III.  
Good, affords new positive Delight and En-  
joyment. Let it not be taken for granted,   
that the Satisfaction arising from the Reputa-  
tion of Riches and Power however ob-  
tained, and from the Respect paid to them,  
is greater than the Satisfaction arising from  
the Reputation of Justice, Honesty, Char-  
ity, and the Esteem which is universally ac-  
knowledged to be their due. And if it be  
doubtful which of these Satisfaction is the  
greatest, as there are Persons who think nei-  
ther of them very considerable, yet there  
can be no doubt concerning Ambition and  
Covetousness, Virtue and a good Mind, con-  
sidered in themselves, and as leading to dif-  
ferent Courses of Life ; there can, I say,  
be no doubt, which Temper and which  
Course is attended with most Peace and Tran-  
quillity of Mind, which with most Perplexi-  
ty, Vexation and Inconvenience. And both  
the Virtues and Vices which have been now  
mentioned, do in a Manner equally imply  
in them Regards of one kind or another to  
our Fellow-Creatures. And with respect  
to Restraint and Confinement : Whoever  
will consider the Restraints from Fear and

S E R M. Shame, the Diffimulation, mean Arts of  
 III. Concealment, servile Compliances, one or  
 ~ other of which belong to almost every  
 Course of Vice; will soon be convinced  
 that the Man of Virtue is by no Means upon  
 a Disadvantage in this Respect. How ma-  
 ny Instances are there in which Men feel  
 and own and cry aloud under the Chains  
 of Vice with which they are enthrall'd, and  
 which yet they will not shake off? How  
 many Instances, in which Persons mani-  
 festly go through more Pains and Self-denial  
 to gratify a vitious Passion, than would have  
 been necessary to the Conquest of it? To  
 this is to be added, that when Virtue is be-  
 come habitual, when the Temper of it is  
 acquir'd, what was before Confinement cea-  
 ses to be so, by becoming Choice and De-  
 light. Whatever Restraint and Guard upon  
 ourselves may be needful to unlearn any un-  
 natural Distortion or odd Gesture; yet, in  
 all Propriety of Speech, natural Behaviour  
 must be the most easy and unrestrained. It  
 is manifest that, in the common Course of  
 Life, there is seldom any Inconsistency be-  
 tween our Duty and what is *called* Interest:  
 It is much seldomer that there is an Incon-  
 sistency between Duty and what is really  
 our

*Upon Humane Nature.* 55

our present Interest ; meaning by Interest, SERM.  
Happiness and Satisfaction. Self-love then, III.  
though confined to the Interest of the present   
World, does in general perfectly coin-  
cide with Virtue ; and leads us to one and  
the same Course of Life. But, whatever  
Exceptions there are to this, which are much  
fewer than they are commonly thought, all  
shall be set right at the final Distribution of  
things. It is a manifest Absurdity to suppose  
Evil prevailing finally over Good, under the  
Conduct and Administration of a perfect  
Mind. 


THE whole Argument, which I have  
been now insisting upon, may be thus sum-  
med up and given you in one View. The  
Nature of Man is adapted to some Course  
of Action or other. Upon comparing some  
Actions with this Nature, they appear sui-  
table and correspondent to it: From Com-  
parison of other Actions with the same Na-  
ture, there arises to our View some Unsui-  
tableness or Disproportion. The Corres-  
pondence of Actions to the Nature of the  
Agent renders them natural: Their Dispro-  
portion to it, unnatural. That an Action  
is correspondent to the Nature of the A-  
gent, does not arise from its being agreea-



S E R M. ble to the Principle which happens to be  
 III. the strongest: For it may be so, and yet be  
 quite disproportionate to the Nature of the  
 Agent. The Correspondence therefore, or  
 Disproportion, arises from somewhat else.  
 This can be nothing but a Difference in Na-  
 ture and Kind (altogether distinct from  
 Strength) between the inward Principles.  
 Some then are in Nature and Kind superiour  
 to others. And the Correspondence arises  
 from the Action being conformable to the  
 higher Principle; and the Unsuitableness  
 from its being contrary to it. Reasonable  
 Self-love and Conscience are the chief or  
 superiour Principles in the Nature of Man:  
 Because an Action may be suitable to this  
 Nature, though all other Principles be vio-  
 lated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of  
 those are. Conscience and Self-love, if we  
 understand our true Happiness, always lead  
 us the same Way. Duty and Interest are  
 perfectly coincident; for the most Part in  
 this World, but intirely and in every In-  
 stance if we take in the future, and the  
 whole; this being implied in the Notion  
 of a good and perfect Administration of  
 things. Thus they who have been so wise  
 in their Generation as to regard only their  
 own

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own supposed Interest, at the Expence and SERM.  
to the Injury of others, shall at last find, III.  
that he who has given up all the Advantages   
of the present World, rather than violate his  
Conscience and the Relations of Life, has  
infinitely better provided for himself, and  
secured his own Interest and Happiness.

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SERMON

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# S E R M O N I V.

*Upon the Government of the  
Tongue.*

---

J A M E S i. 26.

*If any Man among you seem to be religious,  
and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth  
his own Heart, this Man's Religion is  
vain.*

**T**HE Translation of this Text would SERM,  
be more determinate by being more IV.  
literal, thus: *If any Man among*   
*you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his*  
*Tongue, but deceiving his own Heart, this*  
*Man's Religion is vain.* This determines  
that the Words, *but deceiveth his own*  
*Heart,* are not put in Opposition to, *seem-*  
*eth to be religious, but to, bridleth not his*  
*Tongue.*

60 A SERMON upon the

SERM. *Tongue.* The certain determinate Meaning  
IV. of the Text then being, that he who seemeth  
to be religious, and bridleth not his  
Tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his  
own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain ; we  
may observe somewhat very forcible and ex-  
pressive in these Words of St. *James.* As if  
the Apostle had said, No Man surely can  
make any Pretences to Religion, who does  
not at least believe that he bridleth his  
Tongue : If he puts on any Appearance or  
Face of Religion, and yet does not govern  
his Tongue, he must surely deceive himself  
in that particular, and think he does : And  
whoever is so unhappy as to deceive himself  
in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly Fa-  
culty in due Subjection, when indeed he does  
not, whatever the other Part of his Life be,  
his Religion is vain ; the Government of the  
Tongue being a most material Restraint which  
Virtue lay us under : Without it no man  
can be truly religious.

IN treating upon this Subject, I will con-  
sider,

*First,* WHAT is the general Vice or Fault  
here referred to : Or what Disposition in Men  
is supposed in Moral Reflections and Precepts  
concerning *bridling the Tongue.*

*Secondly,*

## *Government of the Tongue.* 61

*Secondly,* WHEN it may be said of any one, that he has a due Government over himself in this respect. SERM.  
IV.


I. Now the Fault referred to, and the Disposition supposed, in Precepts and Reflections concerning the Government of the Tongue, is not Evil-speaking from Malice, nor Lying or bearing false Witness from indirect selfish Designs. The Disposition to these, and the actual Vices themselves, all come under other Subjects. The Tongue may be employed about and made to serve all the Purposes of Vice, in tempting and deceiving, in Perjury and Injustice. But the Thing here supposed and referred to, is Talkativeness: A Disposition to be talking, abstracted from the Consideration of what is to be said; with very little or no Regard to, or Thought of doing, either Good or Harm. And let not any imagine this to be a slight Matter, and that it deserves not to have so great Weight laid upon it; till he has considered, what Evil is implied in it, and the bad Effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they who are addicted to this Folly would choose to confine themselves to Trifles and indifferent Subjects, and so intend only to be guilty of being impertinent:

62 A S E R M O N *upon the*

S E R M. Sent: But as they cannot go on for ever

IV. talking of Nothing, as common Matters  
will not afford a sufficient Fund for perpetual continued Discourse: when Subjects of this Kind are exhausted, they will go on to Defamation, Scandal, divulging of Secrets, their own Secrets as well as those of others, any thing rather than be silent. They are plainly hurried on in the Heat of their Talk to say quite different Things from what they first intended, and which they afterwards wish unsaid; or improper things, which they had no other End in saying but only to afford Employment to their Tongue. And if these People expect to be heard and regarded, for there are some content meerly with talking, they will invent to engage your Attention: and, when they have heard the least imperfect Hint of an Affair, they will out of their own Head add the Circumstances of Time and Place, and other Matters to make out their Story, and give the Appearance of Probability to it: Not that they have any Concern about being believed, otherwise than as a Means of being heard. The thing is, to engage your Attention; to take you up wholly for the present Time: What Reflections will be made afterwards,

## *Government of the Tongue.* 63


afterwards, is in Truth the least of their SERMON.  
Thoughts. And further ; when Persons, who IV.  
indulge themselves in these Liberties of the   
Tongue, are in any Degree offended with  
another, as little Disgusts and Misunder-  
standings will be, they allow themselves to  
defame and revile such an one without any  
Moderation or Bounds ; though the Offence  
is so very slight, that they themselves would  
not do, nor perhaps wish him an Injury in  
any other way. And in this Case the Scan-  
dal and Revilings are chiefly owing to Tal-  
kativeness, and not bridling their Tongue ;  
and so come under our present Subject. The  
least Occasion in the World will make the  
Humour break out in this particular Way,  
or in another. It is like a Torrent, which  
must and will flow ; but the least thing  
imaginable will first of all give it either this  
or another Direction, turn it into this or that  
Channel : Or like a Fire ; the Nature of  
which, when in a Heap of combustible Mat-  
ter, is to spread and lay waste all around ;  
but any one of a thousand little Accidents  
will occasion it to break out first either in this  
or another particular Part.

THE Subject then before us, though it  
does run up into, and can scarce be treat-  
ed



64    *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM.ed as intirely distinct from all others; yet

IV.  it needs not be so much mixed or blended with them as it often is. Every Faculty and Power may be used as the Instrument of premeditated Vice and Wickedness, meerly as the most proper and effectual Means of executing such Designs. But if a Man, from deep Malice and Desire of Revenge, should meditate a Falshood with a settled Design to ruin his Neighbour's Reputation, and should with great Coolness and Deliberation spread it; no-body would choose to say of such an one, that he had no Government of his Tongue. A Man may use the Faculty of Speech as an Instrument of False-witness, who yet has so intire a Command over that Faculty, as never to speak but from Forethought and cool Design. Here the Crime is Injustice and Perjury: and, strictly speaking, no more belongs to the present Subject, than Perjury and Injustice in any other way. But there is such a thing as a Disposition to be talking for its own sake; from which Persons often say any thing, good or bad, of others, meerly as a Subject of Discourse, according to the particular Temper they themselves happen to be in, and to pass away the present

## *Government of the Tongue.* 65

sent Time. There is likewise to be observed S E R M.  
in Persons such a strong and eager Desire of IV.  
engaging Attention to what they say, that  
they will speak Good or Evil, Truth or  
otherwise, meerly as one or the other seems  
to be most hearkened to: And this, though  
it is sometimes joined, is not the same with  
the Desire of being thought important and  
Men of Consequence. There is in some  
such a Disposition to be talking, that an Of-  
fence of the slightest Kind, and such as  
would not raise any other Resentment, yet  
raises, if I may so speak, the Resentment of  
the Tongue, puts it into a Flame, into the  
most ungovernable Motions. This Outrage,  
when the Person it respects is present, we  
distinguish in the lower Rank of People by a  
peculiar Term: And let it be observed, that  
though the Decencies of Behaviour are a little  
kept; the same Outrage and Virulence, in-  
dulged when he is absent, is an Offence of  
the same Kind. But not to distinguish any  
further in this Manner: Men run into Faults  
and Follies, which cannot so properly be re-  
ferred to any one general Head as this, that  
they have not a due Government over their  
Tongue.

**F**

**A N D**

66 A S E R M O N upon the

S E R M. AND this unrestrained Volubility and  
 IV. Wantonness of Speech is the Occasion of  
 numberless Evils and Vexations in Life. It  
 begets Resentment in him who is the Subject  
 of it; sows the Seed of Strife and Diffension  
 amongst others; and inflames little Disgusts  
 and Offences, which if let alone would  
 wear away of themselves: It is often of  
 as bad Effect upon the good Name of o-  
 thers, as deep Envy or Malice: And, to say  
 the least of it in this Respect, it destroys  
 and perverts a certain Equity of the utmost  
 Importance to Society to be observed;  
 namely, that Praise and Dispraise, a good  
 or bad Character, should always be bestowed  
 according to Desert. The Tongue used  
 in such a licentious Manner is like a Sword  
 in the Hand of a Madman; it is employed  
 at random, it can scarce possibly do any  
 Good, and for the most Part does a World  
 of Mischief; and implies not only great  
 Folly and a trifling Spirit, but great Vitious-  
 ness of Mind, great Indifference to Truth and  
 Falsity, and to the Reputation, Welfare, and  
 Good of others. So much Reason is there for  
 what St. James says of the Tongue, \* *It is a  
 Fire, a World of Iniquity, it defileth the whole  
 Body,*

\* Chap. iii. v. 6.

## Government of the Tongue. 67

*Body, setteth on Fire the Course of Nature,* SERM.  
*and is itself set on Fire of Hell.* This is the IV.

Faculty or Disposition which we are required to keep a Guard upon: These are the Vices and Follies it runs into, when not kept under due Restraint.

II. WHEREIN the due Government of the Tongue consists, or when it may be said of any one in a moral and religious Sense that he *bridleth his Tongue*, I come now to consider.

THE due and proper Use of any natural Faculty or Power, is to be judged of by the End and Design for which it was given us. The chief Purpose, for which the Faculty of Speech was given to Man, is plainly that we might communicate our Thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the Affairs of the World; for Business, and for our Improvement in Knowledge and Learning. But the good Author of our Nature designed us not only Necessaries, but likewise Enjoyment and Satisfaction, in that Being he hath graciously given, and in that Condition of Life he hath placed us in. There are secondary Uses of our Faculties: They administer to Delight, as well as to Necessity: And as they are equally adapted

68      *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. to both, there is no Doubt but he intended

IV. them for our Gratification, as well as for the  
 Support and Continuance of our Being. The  
 secondary Use of Speech is to please and be  
 entertaining to each other in Conversation.  
 This is in every Respect allowable and  
 right: It unites Men closer in Alliances and  
 Friendships; gives us a Fellow-feeling of the  
 Prosperity and Unhappiness of each other,  
 and is in several Respects serviceable to Vir-  
 tue, and to promote good Behaviour in the  
 World. And provided there be not too  
 much Time spent in it, if it were considered  
 only in the Way of Gratification and De-  
 light, Men must have strange Notions of  
 God and of Religion, to think that He can  
 be offended with it, or that it is any way in-  
 consistent with the strictest Virtue. But the  
 Truth is, such sort of Conversation, though  
 it has no particular good Tendency, yet it  
 has a general Good one: It is social and  
 friendly; and tends to promote Humanity,  
 Good-nature and Civility.

As the End and Use, so likewise the A-  
 buse of Speech, relates to the one or other  
 of These; either to Business, or to Conver-  
 sation. As to the former; Deceit in the  
 Management of Business and Affairs does

## Government of the Tongue. 69

not properly belong to the Subject now before us : Though one may just mention that Multitude, that endless number of Words, with which Business is perplexed ; when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the Purpose : But this must be left to those who understand the Matter. The Government of the Tongue, considered as a Subject of itself, relates chiefly to Conversation ; to that Kind of Discourse which usually fills up the Time spent in friendly Meetings, and Visits of Civility. And the Danger is, lest Persons entertain themselves and others at the Expence of their Wisdom and their Virtue, and to the Injury or Offence of their Neighbour. If they will observe and keep clear of These, they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved, as they can desire.

THE Cautions to be given for avoiding these Dangers, and to render Conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following Particulars : Silence ; Talking of indifferent things ; and, which makes up too great a Part of Conversation, Giving of Characters, Speaking well or evil others.

THE wise Man observes, that *there is a Time to speak, and a Time to keep silence.*



70      *A S E R M O N upon the*

S E R M. One meets with People in the World, who  
 IV. seem never to have made the last of these  
 Observations. And yet these great Talkers  
 do not at all speak from their having any  
 thing to say, as every Sentence shews, but  
 only from their Inclination to be talking.  
 Their Conversation is merely an Exercise  
 of the Tongue : No other humane Faculty  
 has any Share in it. It is strange these Per-  
 sons can help reflecting, that unless they  
 have in Truth a superiour Capacity, and are  
 in an extraordinary Manner furnished for  
 Conversation ; if they are entertaining, it is  
 at their own Expence. Is it possible, that  
 it should never come into People's Thoughts  
 to suspect, whether or no it be to their Ad-  
 vantage to shew so very much of themselves ?  
*O that you would altogether hold your  
 Peace, and it should be your Wisdom \*.*  
 Remember likewise there are Persons who  
 love fewer Words, an inoffensive Sort of  
 People, and who deserve some Regard,  
 though of too still and composed Tempers  
 for you. Of this Number was the Son of  
*Sirach* : For he plainly speaks from Experi-  
 ence, when he says, *As Hills of Sand are  
 to the Steps of the Aged, so is one of ma-*

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\* Job xiii.

## Government of the Tongue. 71

*ny Words to a quiet Man.* But one would SERM.  
think it should be obvious to every one, that IV.  
when they are in Company with their Su-  
perious of any Kind, in Years, Knowledge  
and Experience; when proper and useful  
Subjects are discoursed of, which they cannot  
bear a Part in; that these are Times for Si-  
lence: when they should learn to hear, and  
be attentive; at least in their turn. It is in-  
deed a very unhappy Way these People are  
in: They in a Manner cut themselves out  
from all Advantage of Conversation, except  
that of being entertained with their own  
Talk: Their Business in coming into Com-  
pany not being at all to be informed, to hear,  
to learn; but to display themselves; or ra-  
ther to exert their Faculty, and talk without  
any Design at all. And if we consider Con-  
versation as an Entertainment, as somewhat  
to unbend the Mind; as a Diversion from the  
Cares, the Business, and the Sorrows of Life;  
it is of the very Nature of it, that the Dis-  
course be mutual. This, I say, is implied in  
the very Notion of what we distinguish by  
Conversation, or being in Company. At-  
tention to the continued Discourse of one  
alone grows more painful often, than the  
Cares and Business we come to be diverted  
F 4 from.



72 A S E R M O N *upon the*

SERM. from. He therefore who imposes this upon  
IV. us, is guilty of a double Offence ; arbitrarily  
enjoining Silence upon all the rest, and likewise obliging them to this painful Attention.

I AM sensible these things are apt to be passed over, as too little to come into a serious Discourse: But in reality Men are obliged, even in Point of Morality and Virtue, to observe all the Decencies of Behaviour. The greatest Evils in Life have had their Rise from somewhat, which was thought of too little Importance to be attended to. And as to the Matter we are now upon, it is absolutely necessary to be considered. For if People will not maintain a due Government over themselves, in regarding proper Times and Seasons for Silence, but *will* be talking ; they certainly, whether they design it or not at first, will go on to Scandal and Evil-speaking, and divulging Secrets.

I F it were needful to say any thing further, to persuade Men to learn this Lesson of Silence ; one might put them in mind, how insignificant they render themselves by this excessive Talkativeness : infomuch that, if they do chance to say any thing which deserves to be attended to and regarded, it is  
lost

## Government of the Tongue. 73

lost in the Variety and Abundance which SERM. they utter of another Sort. IV.

T H E Occasions of Silence then are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by every Body: Namely, when a Man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better unsaid: Better, either in regard to the particular Persons he is present with; or from its being an Interruption to Conversation itself; or to Conversation of a more agreeable Kind; or better, lastly, with regard to himself. I will end this Particular with two Reflections of the wise Man: One of which, in the strongest Manner, exposes the ridiculous Part of this Licentiousness of the Tongue; and the other, the great Danger and Viciousness of it. *When he that is a Fool walketh by the Way Side, his Wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a Fool\**. The other is, *In the multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin †*.

As to the Government of the Tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent Subjects; After what has been said concerning the due Government of it in respect to the Occasions and Times for Silence, there is little more necessary,

\* Ecclef. x. 3.


† Prov. x. 19.

74      *A SERMON upon the*

SERM. necessary, than only to caution Men to be  
 IV. fully satisfied, that the Subjects are indeed  
 of an indifferent Nature; and not to spend  
 too much Time in Conversation of this  
 Kind. But Persons must be sure to take  
 heed, that the Subject of their Discourse be  
 at least of an indifferent Nature: That it be  
 no way offensive to Virtue, Religion, or  
 good Manners; that it be not of a licentious  
 dissolute Sort, this leaving always ill Impres-  
 sions upon the Mind; that it be no way in-  
 jurious or vexatious to others; and that too  
 much Time be not spent this way, to the  
 neglect of those Duties and Offices of Life  
 which belong to their Station and Condi-  
 tion in the World. However, though there is  
 not any Necessity, that Men should aim at be-  
 ing important and weighty in every Sentence  
 they speak: Yet since useful Subjects, at least  
 of some Kinds, are as entertaining as others;  
 a wise Man, even when he desires to unbend  
 his Mind from Business, would choose that  
 the Conversation might turn upon some-  
 what instructive.

THE last Thing is, The Government of the  
 Tongue as relating to Discourse of the Af-  
 fairs of others, and giving of Characters.  
 These are in a Manner the same: And one

## *Government of the Tongue.* 75

can scarce call it an indifferent Subject, be- SERM.  
cause Discourse upon it almost perpetually IV.  
runs into somewhat criminal. 

A N D first of all, it were very much to be wished that this did not take up so great a Part of Conversation; because it is indeed a Subject of a dangerous Nature. Let any one consider the various Interests, Competitions, and little Misunderstandings which arise amongst Men; and he will soon see, that he is is not unprejudiced and impartial, that he is not, as I may speak, neutral enough, to trust himself with talking of the Character and Concerns of his Neighbour, in a free, careless, and unreserved Manner. There is perpetually, and often it is not attended to, a Rivalship amongst People of one kind or another, in respect to Wit, Beauty, Learning, Fortune; and that one Thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the Disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed Malice or ill Design. Since therefore it is so hard to enter into this Subject without offending; the first thing to be observed is, that People should learn to decline it; to get over that strong Inclination most have to be talking of the Concerns and Behaviour of their Neighbour.

B U T

SERM. BUT since it is impossible that this Subject  
 IV. should be wholly excluded Conversation;  
 and since it is necessary that the Characters  
 of Men should be known: The next thing  
 is, that it is a Matter of Importance what  
 is said; and therefore, that we should be re-  
 ligiously scrupulous and exact to say nothing,  
 either good or bad, but what is true. I  
 put it thus, because it is in reality of as  
 great Importance to the good of Society,  
 that the Characters of bad Men should be  
 known, as that the Characters of good Men  
 should. People, who are given to Scandal  
 and Detraction, may indeed make an ill use  
 of this Observation; But Truths, which are of  
 Service towards regulating our Conduct, are  
 not to be disowned, or even concealed, be-  
 cause a bad Use may be made of them. This  
 however would be effectually prevented, if  
 these two things were attended to. *First,*  
 That, though it is equally of bad Consequence  
 to Society, that Men should have either good  
 or ill Characters which they do not deserve;  
 yet, when you say somewhat Good of a  
 Man which he does not deserve, there is  
 no wrong done him in particular; where-  
 as, when you say evil of a Man which he  
 does not deserve, here is a direct formal In-  
 jury,

## *Government of the Tongue.* 77

jury, a real Piece of Injustice, done Him. S E R M.  
This therefore makes a wide Difference; IV.  
and gives us, in Point of Virtue, much greater  
Latitude in speaking well, than ill, of Others.  
*Secondly,* A good Man is friendly to his  
Fellow-creatures, and a Lover of Mankind;  
and so will, upon every Occasion, and often  
without any, say all the Good he can of e-  
very Body: But, so far as he is a good Man,  
will never be disposed to speak Evil of any,  
unless there be some other Reason for it, be-  
sides barely that it is true. If he be charged  
with having given an ill Character, he will  
scarce think it a sufficient Justification of  
himself to say it was a true one; unless he  
can also give some farther Account how  
he came to do so: A just Indignation a-  
gainst particular Instances of Villany, where  
they are great and scandalous; or to prevent  
an innocent Man from being deceived and  
betray'd, when he has great Trust and Con-  
fidence in one who does not deserve it.  
Justice must be done to every Part of a Sub-  
ject, when we are considering it. If there  
be a Man, who bears a fair Character in the  
World, whom yet we know to be with-  
out Faith or Honesty, to be really an ill  
Man; it must be allowed in general, that

we

78     *A SERMON upon the*

SERM. we shall do a Piece of Service to Society,


IV. by letting such an one's true Character be  
 known. This is no more, than what we  
 have an Instance of in our Saviour himself;  
 \* though he was mild and gentle beyond  
 Example. However, no Words can express  
 too strongly the Caution which should be  
 used in such a Case as this.

UPON the whole Matter: If People  
 would observe the obvious Occasions of  
 Silence; if they would subdue the Inclina-  
 tion to Tale-bearing; and that eager Desire  
 to engage Attention, which is an Original  
 Disease in some Minds; they would be in  
 little Danger of offending with their Tongue;  
 and would, in a moral and religious Sense,  
 have due Government over it.

I WILL conclude with some Precepts  
 and Reflections of the Son of *Sirach* upon  
 this Subject. *Be swift to hear: and, if thou  
 hast Understanding, answer thy Neighbour;  
 if not, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth.  
 Honour and Shame is in Talk. A Man of  
 an ill Tongue is dangerous in his City, and  
 he that is rash in his Talk shall be bated.  
 A wise Man will hold his Tongue, till he  
 see Opportunity; but a Babler and a Fool  
 will*

\* Mark xii. 38, 40.

## Government of the Tongue. 79

will regard no Time. He that useth many SERM.  
Words shall be abhorred; and he that taketh IV.  
to himself Authority therein, shall be hated.   
A back-biting Tongue hath disquieted many;  
strong Cities hath it pulled down, and over-  
thrown the Houses of great Men. The Tongue  
of a Man is his fall; but if thou love to hear,  
thou shalt receive Understanding.

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# SERMON V.

*Upon Compassion.*

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ROM. xii. 15.


*Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep  
with them that weep.*

**E**VERY Man is to be considered in SERMON  
two Capacities, the Private and Pub- V.  
lick; as designed to pursue his own  
Interest, and likewise to contribute to the  
Good of others. Whoever will consider,  
may see, that in general there is no Con-  
trariety between these; but that from the  
original Constitution of Man, and the Cir-  
cumstances he is placed in, they perfectly  
coincide, and mutually carry on each o-  
ther. But, amongst the great Variety of Af-  
fections or Principles of Action in our Na-  
ture, some in their primary Intention and  
Design seem to belong to the single or pri-  
vate,

SERM. vate, others to the publick or social Capacity. The Affections required in the Text are of the latter Sort. When we rejoyce in the Prosperity of others, and compassionate their Distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their Interest for our own ; and have the same Kind of Pleasure in their Prosperity and Sorrow in their Distress, as we have from Reflection upon our own. Now there is nothing strange or unaccountable in our being thus carried out, and affected towards the Interests of others. For, if there be any Appetite, or any inward Principle besides Self-love ; why may there not be an Affection to the Good of our Fellow-creatures, and Delight from that Affection's being gratified, and Uneasiness from things going contrary to it ? \*

OF

\* There being manifestly this Appearance of Men's substituting Others for Themselves, and being carried out and affected towards them as towards themselves ; some Persons, who have a System which excludes every Affection to this Sort, have taken a pleasant Method to solve it ; and tell you it is *not Another* you are at all concerned about, but *your self only*, when you feel the Affection called Compassion, *i. e.* Here is a plain Matter of Fact, which Men cannot reconcile with the general Account they think fit to give of things : They therefore, instead of *that* manifest Fact, substitute *another*, which is reconcileable to their own Scheme. For does not every

OF these two, Delight in the Prosperity of others and Compassion for their Distresses,  
 G 2 SERM.  
V.  
the 

every Body by Compassion mean, an Affection the Object of which is Another in Distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an Affection or Passion, the Object of which is Ourselves, or Danger to ourselves. *Hobbs* defines *Pity, Imagination, or Fiction of future Calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the Sense* (he means Sight or Knowledge, of another Man's Calamity. Thus Fear and Compassion would be the same Idea, and a fearful and a compassionate Man the same Character, which every one immediately sees are totally different. Further, to those who give any Scope to their Affections, there is no Perception or inward Feeling more universal than this: that one who, has been merciful and compassionate throughout the Course of his Behaviour, should himself be treated with Kindness, if he happens to fall into Circumstances of Distress. Is Fear then or Cowardice so great a Recommendation to the Favour of the Bulk of Mankind? Or is it not plain, that meer Fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is one of the most popular Qualifications? This shews that Mankind are not affected towards Compassion as Fear, but as somewhat totally different.

Nothing would more expose such Accounts as these of the Affections which are favourable and friendly to our Fellow-Creatures, than to substitute the Definitions which this Author, and others who follow his Steps, give of such Affections, instead of the Words by which they are commonly expressed. *Hobbs*, after having laid down that Pity or Compassion is only Fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the Reason why we pity our Friends in Distress more than Others. Now substitute the *Definition* instead of the Word *Pity* in this Place, and the Inquiry will be, why we fear our Friends, &c. which Words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no Question or Sentence at all. So that common Language, the Words *to Compassionate, to Pity*, cannot be accommodated to his Account of Compassion. The very joining

SERM. the last is felt much more generally than  
 V. the former. Though Men do not univer-  
 sally

ing of the Words to *Pity our Friends*, is a direct Contradiction to his Definition of Pity: Because those Words so joined, necessarily express that our Friends are the Objects of the Passion; whereas his Definition of it asserts, that Ourselves (or Danger to Ourselves) are the only Objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this Absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for; namely, why the Sight of the Innocent, or of our Friends in Distress, raises greater Fear for ourselves than the Sight of other Persons in Distress. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the Fact itself would have been doubted; that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Fear for ourselves, than the Sight of others in Distress*. And in the next Place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the Fact now mentioned, which at least is *doubtful*, whether true or false, was not the same with this Fact, which no-body ever doubted, that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Compassion than the Sight of Others in Distress*: Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the *same*, but *two different* Inquiries; and consequently, that Fear and Compassion are not the same. Suppose a Person to be in real Danger, and by some Means or other to have forgot it; any trifling Accident, any Sound might alarm him, recall the Danger to his Remembrance, and renew his Fear: But it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an Absurdity) to speak of that Sound or Accident as an Object of Compassion; and yet according to Mr. *Hobbs*, our greatest Friend in Distress is no more to us, no more the Object of Compassion or of any Affection in our Heart: Neither the one or the other raises any Emotion in our Mind, but only the Thoughts of our Liableness to Calamity, and the Fear of it; and both equally do this. It is fit such sort of Accounts of Humane Nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general Scheme which undermines

*upon Compassion:*

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fally rejoyce with all whom they see re-  
joyce, yet, accidental Obstacles removed,  
they naturally compassionate all in some

SERM.

V.



G 3

Degree

undermines the whole Foundation of common Justice and Honesty. See *Hobbs of Hum. Nat. c. 9. §. 10.*

There are often three distinct Perceptions or inward Feelings upon Sight of Persons in Distress: Real Sorrow and Concern for the Misery of our Fellow-creatures; some Degree of Satisfaction from a Consciousness of our Freedom from that Misery; and, as the Mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an Occasion to reflect upon our own Liableness to the same or other Calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first *only* which is properly Compassion, of which the Distressed are the Objects, and which directly carries us with Calmness and Thought to their Assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated Reasons, may in particular Cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, Instances where the bare *Sight* of Distress, without our feeling any Compassion for it, may be the Occasion of either or both of the two latter Perceptions. One might add, that if there be really any such thing as the Fiction or Imagination of Danger to ourselves from Sight of the Miseries of others, which *Hobbs* speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of Compassion; if there be any thing of this Sort common to Mankind, distinct from the Reflection of Reason, it would be a most remarkable Instance of what was furthest from his Thoughts, namely, of a mutual Sympathy between each Particular of the Species, a Fellow-feeling common to Mankind. It would not indeed be an Example of our substituting others for Ourselves, but it would be an Example of our substituting Ourselves for Others. And as it would not be an Instance of Benevolence, so neither would it be any Instance of Self-love: For this Phantom of Danger to Ourselves, naturally rising to View upon Sight of the Distresses of Others, would be no more an Instance of Love to Ourselves, than the Pain of Hunger is.


SERM. Degree whom they see in Distress, so far  
 V. as they have any real Perception or Sense  
 of that Distress: Infomuch that Words expressing this latter, Pity, Compassion, frequently occur; whereas we have scarce any single one, by which the former is distinctly express'd. Congratulation indeed answers Condolence: But both these Words are intended to signify certain Forms of Civility, rather than any inward Sensation or Feeling. This Difference or Inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider Compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular Affection in Humane Nature; whereas to rejoyce in the Good of others, is only a Consequence of the general Affection of Love and Good-will to them. The Reason and Account of which Matter is this. When a Man has obtained any particular Advantage or Felicity, his End is gained; and he does not in that particular want the Assistance of another: There was therefore no need of a distinct Affection towards that Felicity of another already obtained; neither would such Affection directly carry him to do Good to that Person: Whereas Men in Distress want Assistance; and Compassion leads us directly to assist them.

them. The Object of the former is the present Felicity of another ; the Object of the latter is the present Misery of another : It is easy to see that the latter wants a particular Affection for its Relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want Assistance. And upon Supposition of a distinct Affection in both Cases, the one must rest in the Exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain ; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the Distressed.

BUT, supposing these Affections natural to the Mind, particularly the last ; “ Has not  
“ each Man Troubles enough of his own ?  
“ must he indulge an Affection which appropriates to himself those of others ? which  
“ leads him to contract the least desirable of  
“ all Friendships, Friendships with the Un-  
“ fortunate ? Must we invert the known  
“ Rule of Prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the Distressed ? Or allowing that we ought, so far as it is in our  
“ Power, to relieve them ; yet is it not better to do this from Reason and Duty ? Does  
“ not Passion and Affection of every Kind  
“ perpetually mislead us ? Nay, is not Passion and Affection itself a Weakness, and



S E R M. " what a perfect Being must be entirely free  
 V. " from?" Perhaps so: But it is Mankind I  
 am speaking of; imperfect Creatures, and  
 who naturally and, from the Condition we  
 are placed in, necessarily depend upon each  
 other. With respect to such Creatures, it  
 would be found of as bad Consequence to  
 eradicate all natural Affections, as to be in-  
 tirely governed by them. This would al-  
 most sink us to the Condition of Brutes;  
 and That would leave us without a suffici-  
 ent Principle of Action. Reason alone,  
 whatever any one may wish, is not in Rea-  
 lity a sufficient Motive of Virtue in such a  
 Creature as Man; but this Reason joined  
 with those Affections which God has im-  
 press'd upon his Heart: And when These are  
 allowed Scope to exercise themselves, but  
 under strict Government and Direction of  
 Reason; then it is we act suitably to our  
 Nature, and to the Circumstances God  
 has placed us in. Neither is Affection it-  
 self at all a Weakness; nor does it argue  
 Defect, any otherwise than as our Senses  
 and Appetites do; They belong to our Con-  
 dition of Nature, and are what we can-  
 not be without. God Almighty is to be  
 sure unmoved by Passion or Appetite, un-  
 changed


changed by Affection : But then it is to be S E R M.  
added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor V.  
perceives things by any Senses like ours ; but   
in a Manner infinitely more perfect. Now,  
as it is an Absurdity almost too gross to be  
mentioned, for a Man to endeavour to  
get rid of his Senses, because the supream  
Being discerns things more perfectly with-  
out them ; it is as real, though not so ob-  
vious an Absurdity, to endeavour to eradi-  
cate the Passions he has given us, because  
He is without them. For, since our Passions  
are as really a Part of our Constitution as  
our Senses ; since the former as really belong  
to our Condition of Nature as the latter ;  
to get rid of either, is equally a Violation of  
and breaking in upon that Nature and Con-  
stitution he has given us. Both our Senses  
and our Passions are a Supply to the Im-  
perfection of our Nature : Thus they shew  
that we are such sort of Creatures, as to  
stand in need of those Helps which higher  
Orders of Creatures do not. But it is not  
the Supply, but the Deficiency ; as it is not  
a Remedy, but a Disease which is the Im-  
perfection. However, our Appetites, Passi-  
ons, Senses, no way imply Disease : nor in-  
deed do they imply Deficiency or Imper-  
fection

S E R M. fection of any sort ; but only This, that the

V. Constitution of Nature according to which  
 God has made us, is such as to require them. And it is so far from being true, that a wise Man must intirely suppress Compassion, and all Fellow-feeling for others, as a Weakness; and trust to Reason alone, to teach and enforce upon him the Practice of the several Charities we owe to our Kind; that on the contrary, even the bare Exercise of such Affections would itself be for the Good and Happiness of the World; and the Imperfection of the higher Principles of Reason and Religion in Man, the little Influence they have upon our Practice, and the Strength and Prevalency of contrary ones plainly require these Affections, to be a Restraint upon these latter, and a Supply to the Deficiencies of the former.

*First,* T H E very exercise itself of these Affections in a just and reasonable Manner and Degree, would upon the whole increase the Satisfaction, and lessen the Miseries of Life.

I T is the Tendency and Business of Virtue and Religion to procure, as much as may be, universal Good-will, Trust and Friendship amongst Mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each Man enjoyed

ed the Happiness of others, as every one SERM.  
 does that of a Friend; and looked upon the V.  
 Success and Prosperity of his Neighbour, as   
 every one does upon that of his Children  
 and Family; it is too manifest to be insist-  
 ed upon, how much the Enjoyments of Life  
 would be increased. There would be so  
 much Happiness introduced into the World,  
 without any Deduction or Inconvenience  
 from it, in Proportion as the Precept of *re-*  
*joycing with those who rejoyce* was universally  
 obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good  
 Affection as belonging to our Nature, in  
 the Parable of the *lost Sheep*; and does  
 not think it to the Disadvantage of a perfect  
 State, to represent its Happiness as capable  
 of Increase from Reflection upon that of  
 others.

BUT since in such a Creature as Man,  
 Compassion or Sorrow for the Distress of  
 others, seems so far necessarily connected  
 with Joy in their Prosperity, as that whoever  
 rejoyces in one must unavoidably compassionate  
 the other; there cannot be that Delight or  
 Satisfaction, which appears to be so considera-  
 ble, without the Inconveniencies, whatever  
 they are, of Compassion.

HOWEVER,

SERM. HOWEVER, without considering this

V. Connection, there is no doubt but that more  
 ~~~~~ Good than Evil, more Delight than Sorrow,  
 arises from Compassion itself; there being  
 so many things which ballance the Sor-  
 row of it. There is first the Relief which  
 the distressed feel from this Affection in o-  
 thers towards them. There is likewise the  
 Additional Misery which they would feel  
 from the Reflection that no one commi-  
 serated their Case. It is indeed true, that  
 any Disposition, prevailing beyond a certain  
 Degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and  
 we have ways of speaking, which though  
 they do not directly express that Excess,  
 yet, always lead our Thoughts to it, and  
 give us the Notion of it. Thus, when men-  
 tion is made of Delight in being pitied,  
 this always conveys to our Mind the Notion  
 of somewhat which is really a Weakness:  
 The manner of speaking, I say, im-  
 plies a certain Weakness and Feebleness of  
 Mind, which is and ought to be disap-  
 proved. But Men of the greatest Forti-  
 tude would in Distress feel Uneasiness, from  
 knowing that no Person in the World had  
 any sort of Compassion or real Concern  
 for them; and in some Cases, especially  
 when


when the Temper is enfeebled by Sickneſs S E R M. V.  
or any long and great Diſtreſs, doubtleſs, would feel a kind of Relief even from the helpleſs Good-will and ineffectual Aſſiſtances of thoſe about them. Over againſt the Sorrow of Compassion is likewiſe to be ſet a peculiar calm Kind of Satisfaction, which accompanies it, unleſs in Caſes where the Diſtreſs of Another is by ſome means ſo brought home to Ourſelves, as to become in a manner our own ; or when from Weakneſs of Mind the Affection riſes too high, which ought to be corrected. This Tranquillity or calm Satisfaction proceeds, partly from Conſciouſneſs of a right Affection and Temper of Mind, and partly from a Senſe of our own Freedom from the Miſery we compaſſionate. This laſt may poſſibly appear to ſome at firſt ſight faulty ; but it really is not ſo. It is the ſame with that poſitive Enjoyment, which ſudden Eaſe from Pain for the preſent affords, ariſing from a real Senſe of Miſery, joined with a Senſe of our Freedom from it ; which in all caſes muſt afford ſome Degree of Satisfaction.

To theſe things muſt be added the Obſervation, which reſpects both the Affections we are conſidering ; that they who have

SERM. got over all Fellow-feeling for Others, have  
 V. withal contracted a certain Calloufness of  
 ~~~~~ Heart, which renders them insensible to most  
 other Satisfactions, but those of the grossest  
 kind.

*Secondly*, W I T H O U T the Exercise of  
 these Affections, Men would certainly be  
 much more wanting in the Offices of Charity  
 they owe to each other, and likewise more  
 cruel and injurious, than they are at present.

T H E private Interest of the Individual  
 would not be sufficiently provided for by  
 reasonable and cool Self-Love alone :  
 Therefore the Appetites and Passions are  
 placed within as a Guard and further Secu-  
 rity, without which it would not be taken  
 due Care of. It is manifest our Life would  
 be neglected, were it not for the Calls of  
 Hunger, and Thirst, and Weariness ; not-  
 withstanding that without them Reason  
 would assure us, that the Recruits of Food  
 and Sleep are the necessary means of our  
 Preservation. It is therefore absurd to ima-  
 gine, that, without Affection, the same Rea-  
 son alone would be more effectual to engage  
 us to perform the Duties we owe to our  
 Fellow-Creatures. One of this Make would  
 be as defective, as much wanting, consider-  
 ed

ed with respect to Society; as one of the SERM.  
 former Make would be defective, or want- V.  
 ing, considered as an Individual, or in his   
 private Capacity. Is it possible any can in  
 earnest think, that a Publick Spirit, *i. e.* a  
 settled reasonable Principle of Benevolence  
 to Mankind, is so prevalent and strong in  
 the Species, as that we may venture to  
 throw off the under Affections, which are  
 its Assistants, carry it forward and mark out  
 particular Courses for it; Family, Friends,  
 Neighbourhood, the Distressed, our Coun-  
 try? The common Joys and the common  
 Sorrows, which belong to these Relations  
 and Circumstances, are as plainly useful to  
 Society; as the Pain and Pleasure belonging  
 to Hunger, Thirst, and Weariness are of  
 Service to the Individual. In Defect of that  
 higher Principle of Reason, Compassion is  
 often the only Way by which the Indigent  
 can have access to us: And therefore to era-  
 dicate this, though it is not indeed formal-  
 ly to deny them that Assistance which is  
 their Due; yet it is to cut them off from  
 that which is too frequently their only way  
 of obtaining it. And as for those who have  
 shut up this Door against the Complaints of  
 the Miserable, and conquered this Affection  
 in



SERM. in themselves; even these Persons will be  
 V. under great Restraints from the same Affection in Others. Thus a Man who has himself no Sense of Injustice, Cruelty, Oppression, will be kept from running the utmost Lengths of Wickedness, by fear of that Detestation, and even Resentment of Inhumanity, in many particular Instances of it, which Compassion for the Object, towards whom such Inhumanity is exercised, excites in the Bulk of Mankind. And this is frequently the chief Danger, and the chief Restraint, which Tyrants and the great Oppressours of the World feel.

IN general, Experience will shew, that as want of natural Appetite to Food supposes and proceeds from some bodily Disease; so the Apathy the Stoicks talk of as much supposes or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the Moral Character, in that which is the Health of the Mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the Foot of Philosophy, appear to have had better Success in eradicating the Affections of Tendernefs and Compassion, than they had with the Passions of Envy, Pride, and Resentment: These latter, at best, were but concealed,  
 and

and that imperfectly too. How far this Observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural Impulses of their Affections, in order to form themselves for Business and the World, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any Capacity or Relation to be named, in which Men ought to be entirely deaf to the Calls of Affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

AND as to those who are commonly called the Men of Pleasure, it is manifest that the Reason they set up for Hardness of Heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their Course, by the Ruin and Misery they are the Authors of: Neither are Persons of this Character always the most free from the Impotencies of Envy and Resentment. What may Men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their Passions and Affections of one Kind, and leaving those of the other in their full Strength? But surely it might be expected that Persons who make Pleasure their Study and their Business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect, how many of the Entertainments of Life, how many of those Kind of Amusements which seem peculiarly to belong to Men of Leisure and  
H Education,

S E R M. Education, they become insensible to by  
 V. this acquired Hardness of Heart.

~ I S H A L L close these Reflections with barely mentioning the Behaviour of that Divine Person, who was the Example of all Perfection in Human Nature, as represented in the Gospels mourning, and even, in a literal Sense, weeping over the Distresses of his Creatures.

T H E Observation already made, that, of the two Affections mentioned in the Text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former ; that, from the Original Constitution of Humane Nature we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the Distressed, than rejoice with the Prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This Observation therefore, with the Reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our Thoughts to, shall be the Subject of another Discourse.

F O R the Conclusion of this, let me just take Notice of the Danger of over-great Refinements ; of going besides or beyond the plain, obvious, first Appearances of Things, upon the Subject of Morals and Religion. The least Observation will show, how little the Generality of Men are capable  
 of

of Speculations. Therefore Morality and Religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood : It must appeal to what we call plain common Sense, as distinguished from superiour Capacity and Improvement ; because it appeals to Mankind. Persons of superiour Capacity and Improvement have often fallen into Errors, which no one of meer common Understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter Character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such thing in Mankind as Affection to the Good of others ; suppose of Parents to their Children ; or that what he felt upon seeing a Friend in Distress, was only Fear for himself ; or, upon Supposition of the Affections of Kindness and Compassion, that it was the Business of Wisdom and Virtue, to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could ? And yet each of these manifest Contradictions to Nature has been laid down by Men of Speculation, as a Discovery in moral Philosophy ; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious Appearances to the contrary. This Reflection may be extended further. The Extravagancies of Enthusiasm and Supersti-

S E R M. tion do not at all lie in the Road of com-  
V. mon Sense ; and therefore so far as they are  
original Mistakes, must be owing to going  
beside or beyond it. Now, since Inquiry  
and Examination can relate only to Things  
so obscure and uncertain as to stand in need  
of it, and to Persons who are capable of  
it ; the proper Advice to be given to plain  
honest Men, to secure them from the Ex-  
treams both of Superstition and Irreligion,  
is that of the Son of *Sirach* : *In every good  
Work trust thy own Soul ; for this is the  
keeping of the Commandment* \*.

\* Ecclus. xxxii. 23.

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# S E R M O N VI.

## *Upon Compassion.*

Preached the first Sunday in *Lent*.

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R O M. xii. 15.


*Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep  
with them that weep.*

**T**H E R E is a much more exact Cor-S E R M. VI.  
respondence between the natural  
and moral World, than we are  
apt to take Notice of. The inward Frame  
of Man does in a peculiar Manner answer  
to the external Condition and Circumstances  
of Life, in which he is placed. This is a  
particular Instance of that general Observa-  
tion of the Son of *Sirach*: \* *All things  
are double one against another, and God  
hath made nothing imperfect.* The several  
Passions and Affections in the Heart of  
H 3 Man,

\* *Ecclus. xlii. 24.*

SERM. Man, compared with the Circumstances of  
 VI. Life in which he is placed, afford, to such  
 as will attend to them, as certain Instances  
 of final Causes, as any whatever which are  
 more commonly alledged for such: since  
 those Affections lead him to a certain deter-  
 minate Course of Action suitable to those  
 Circumstances; as (for Instance) Compassi-  
 on, to relieve the Distress'd. And as all Ob-  
 servations of final Causes, drawn from the  
 Principles of Action in the Heart of Man,  
 compared with the Condition he is placed  
 in, serve all the good Uses which Instances  
 of final Causes in the material World about  
 us do; and both these are equally Proofs of  
 Wisdom and Design in the Author of Na-  
 ture: So the former serve to further good  
 Purposes; they shew us what Course of Life  
 we are made for, what is our Duty, and in  
 a peculiar Manner enforce upon us the  
 Practice of it.

S U P P O S E we are capable of Happiness  
 and of Misery in Degrees equally intense  
 and extream, yet, we are capable of the lat-  
 ter for a much longer Time beyond all  
 Comparifon. We see Men in the Tor-  
 tures of Pain for Hours, Days, and, ex-  
 cepting the short Suspensions of Sleep, for  
 Months

Months together without Intermiffion ; to SERM.  
which no Enjoyments of Life do, in Degree VI.  
and Continuance, bear any fort of Proportion.  And fuch is our Make and that of  
the World about us, that any thing may be-  
come the Instrument of Pain and Sorrow  
to us. Thus almost any one Man is capable  
of doing Mifchief to any other, though he  
may not be capable of doing him Good :  
And if he be capable of doing him some  
Good, he is capable of doing him more E-  
vil. And it is, in numberlefs Cafes, much  
more in our Power to leffen the Miferies  
of others, than to promote their positive  
Happinefs, any otherwife than as the  
former often includes the latter ; Eafe from  
Mifery occafioning for fome time the great-  
eft positive Enjoyment. This Conftitution  
of Nature, namely, that it is fo much more  
in our Power to occafion and likewise to lef-  
fen Mifery, than to promote positive Hap-  
pinefs, plainly required a particular Affecti-  
on, to hinder us from abufing, and to incline  
us to make a right Ufe of the former Pow-  
ers, *i. e.* the Powers both to occafion and to  
leffen Mifery ; over and above what was ne-  
ceffary to induce us to make a right Ufe of  
the latter Power, that of promoting positive  
H 4                      Happinefs.



SERM. Happiness. The Power we have over the  
 VI. Misery of our Fellow-creatures, to occasi-  
 on or lessen it, being a more important  
 Trust, than the Power we have of promo-  
 ting their positive Happiness; the former  
 requires and has a further, an additional Se-  
 curity and Guard against its being violated,  
 beyond and over and above what the latter  
 has. The social Nature of Man, and gene-  
 ral Good-will to his Species, equally pre-  
 vent him from doing Evil, incline him to  
 relieve the Distressed, and to promote the  
 positive Happiness of his Fellow-creatures:  
 But Compassion only restrains from the first,  
 and carries him to the second; it hath no-  
 thing to do with the third.

THE final Causes then of Compassion are  
 to prevent and to relieve Misery.


AS to the former: This Affection may  
 plainly be a Restraint upon Resentment,  
 Envy, unreasonable Self-love; that is, upon  
 all the Principles from which Men do Evil  
 to one another. Let us instance only in Re-  
 sentment. It seldom happens, in regulated  
 Societies, that Men have an Enemy so in-  
 tirely in their Power, as to be able to sati-  
 ate their Resentment with safety. But if  
 we were to put this Case, it is plainly sup-  
 poseable,

poseable, that a Person might bring his SERM. Enemy into such a Condition, as from VI. being the Object of Anger and Rage, to become an Object of Compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious Man in the World: And in this Case Compassion would stop him, if he could stop with Safety, from pursuing his Revenge any farther. But since Nature has placed within us more powerful Restraints to prevent Mischief, and since the final Cause of Compassion is much more to relieve Misery, let us go on to the Consideration of it in this View.

As this World was not intended to be a State of any great Satisfaction or high Enjoyment; so neither was it intended to be a meer Scene of Unhappiness and Sorrow. Mitigations and Reliefs are provided by the merciful Author of Nature, for most of the Afflictions in Humane Life. There is kind Provision made even against our Frailties; as we are so constituted that Time abundantly abates our Sorrows, and begets in us that Resignment of Temper, which ought to have been produced by a better Cause; a due Sense of the Authority of God, and our State of Dependance. This holds in  
respect

S E R M. respect to far the greatest Part of the Evils of  
 VI. Life ; I suppose, in some Degree, as to Pain  
 and Sicknes. Now this Part of the Con-  
 stitution or Make of Man, considered as  
 some Relief to Misery, and not as Provision  
 for positive Happiness, is, if I may so speak,  
 an Instance of Nature's Compassion for us ;  
 and every natural Remedy or Relief to Mi-  
 sery, may be considered in the same View.

B U T since, in many Cases, it is very much  
 in our Power to alleviate the Miseries of  
 each other ; and Benevolence, though na-  
 tural in Man to Man, yet is in a very low  
 Degree, kept down by Interest and Compe-  
 titions ; and Men, for the most Part, are so  
 engaged in the Business and Pleasures of the  
 World, as to overlook and turn away from  
 Objects of Misery ; which are plainly con-  
 sidered as Interruptions to them in their  
 Way, as Intruders upon their Business,  
 their Gaiety and Mirth : Compassion is an  
 Advocate within us in their behalf, to gain  
 the Unhappy Admittance and Access, to  
 make their Case attended to. If it some-  
 times serves a contrary Purpose, and makes  
 Men industriously turn away from the Mi-  
 serable, these are only Instances of Abuse  
 and Perversion : For the End, for which the  
 Affection

Affection was given us, most certainly is not SERM.  
to make us avoid, but to make us attend VI.  
to the Objects of it. And if Men would   
only resolve to allow thus much to it; let it  
bring before their View, the View of their  
Mind, the Miseries of their Fellow-crea-  
tures; let it gain for them that their Case  
be considered; I am persuaded it would  
not fail of gaining more, and that very few  
real Objects of Charity would pass unrelie-  
ved. Pain and Sorrow and Misery have  
a right to our Assistance: Compassion  
puts us in Mind of the Debt, and that we  
owe it to ourselves, as well as to the Di-  
stressed. For, to endeavour to get rid of  
the Sorrow of Compassion by turning from  
the Wretched, when yet it is in our Power  
to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endea-  
vour to get rid of the Pain of Hunger by  
keeping from the Sight of Food. That we  
can do one with greater Success than we  
can the other, is no Proof that one is less a  
Violation of Nature than the other. Com-  
passion is a Call, a Demand of Nature, to  
relieve the Unhappy; as Hunger is a natural  
Call for Food. This Affection plainly gives  
the Objects of it an additional Claim to  
Relief and Mercy, over and above what  
our

SERM. our Fellow-creatures in common have to  
 VI. our Good-will. Liberality and Bounty are  
 exceedingly commendable; and a particular  
 Distinction in such a World as this, where  
 Men set themselves to contract their Heart,  
 and close it to all Interests but their own.  
 It is by no means to be opposed to Mercy,  
 but always accompanies it: The Distinction  
 between them is only, that the former leads  
 our Thoughts to a more promiscuous and  
 undistinguished Distribution of Favours; to  
 those who are not, as well as those who are  
 necessitous; whereas the Object of Com-  
 passion is Misery. But in the Comparison,  
 and where there is not a Possibility of both,  
 Mercy is to have the Preference: The Affec-  
 tion of Compassion manifestly leads us to this  
 Preference. Thus, to relieve the Indigent  
 and Distressed, to single out the Unhappy,  
 from whom can be expected no Returns ei-  
 ther of present Entertainment or future Ser-  
 vice, for the Objects of our Favours; to e-  
 steeem a Man's being friendless as a Recom-  
 mendation.; Dejection, and Incapacity of  
 struggling though the World, as a Motive  
 for assisting him; in a word, to consider  
 these Circumstances of Disadvantage, which  
 are usually thought a sufficient Reason for  
 Neglect

Neglect and overlooking a Person, as a Motive for helping him forward: This is the Course of Benevolence which Compassion marks out and directs us to: This is that Humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our Nature and Circumstances in this World.

To these Considerations, drawn from the Nature of Man, must be added the Reason of the Thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shews the same. For, since it is so much more in our Power to lessen the Misery of our Fellow-creatures, than to promote their positive Happiness; in Cases where there is an Inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more Good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the Competition be between the Poor and the Rich. It is easy, you will say, to see which will have the Preference. True: But the Question is, which ought to have the Preference? What Proportion is there, between the Happiness produced by doing a Favour to the Indigent, and that produced by doing the same Favour to one in easy Circumstances? It is manifest, that the Addition of a very large Estate to one who before had an Affluence, will in many Instances

SERM. stances yield him less new Enjoyment or Sa-  
 VI. tisfaction, than an ordinary Charity would  
 yield to a necessitous Person. So that it  
 is not only true, that our Nature, *i. e.* the  
 Voice of God within us, carries us to the  
 Exercise of Charity and Benevolence in the  
 Way of Compassion or Mercy, preferably  
 to any other Way; but we also manifestly  
 discern much more Good done by the for-  
 mer; or, if you will allow me the Expressi-  
 ons, more Misery annihilated, and Happi-  
 ness created. If Charity and Benevolence,  
 and endeavouring to do Good to our Fel-  
 low-creatures, be any thing, this Observation  
 deserves to be most seriously considered  
 by all who have to bestow. And it holds  
 with great Exactness, when applied to the  
 several Degrees of greater and less Indigency  
 throughout the various Ranks in Humane  
 Life: The Happiness or Good produced not  
 being in Proportion to what is bestowed,  
 but in Proportion to This joined with the  
 Need there was of it.

IT may perhaps be expected, that upon  
 this Subject, Notice should be taken of Oc-  
 casions, Circumstances and Characters,  
 which seem at once to call forth Affections  
 of different Sorts. Thus Vice may be  
 thought

*upon Compassion.*

III

thought the Object both of Pity and Indig- SERM.  
nation: Folly, of Pity and of Laughter. VI.  
How far this is strictly true, I shall not in-  
quire; but only observe upon the Appea-  
rance, how much more Humane it is to  
yield and give Scope to Affections, which  
are more directly in Favour of, and friendly  
towards our Fellow-creatures; and that there  
is plainly much less Danger of being led  
wrong by these, than by the other.

BUT, notwithstanding all that has been  
said in Recommendation of Compassion,  
that it is most amiable, most becoming Hu-  
mane Nature, and most useful to the World;  
yet it must be owned, that every Affection,  
as distinct from a Principle of Reason, may  
rise too high, and be beyond its just Pro-  
portion. And by means of this one carried  
too far, a Man throughout his Life is sub-  
ject to much more Uneasiness than belongs  
to his Share: And in particular Instances, it  
may be in such a Degree, as to incapacitate  
him from assisting the very Person who is the  
Object of it. But, as there are some who up-  
on Principle set up for suppressing this Affec-  
tion itself as Weakness, there is also I know  
not what of Fashion on this Side; and, by  
some Means or other, the whole World al-



SERMON. most is run into the Extrems of Insensibility


VI. towards the Distresses of their Fellow-creatures: So that general Rules and Exhortations must always be on the other Side.

AND now to go on to the Uses we should make of the foregoing Reflections, the further ones they lead to, and the general Temper they have a Tendency to beget in us. There being that distinct Affection implanted in the Nature of Man, tending to lessen the Miseries of Life, that particular Provision made for abating its Sorrows, more than for increasing its positive Happiness, as before explained; this may suggest to us, what should be our general Aim respecting ourselves, in our passage through this World: Namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape Misery, keep free from Uneasiness, Pain and Sorrow, or to get Relief and Mitigation of them; to propose to ourselves Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, rather than pursue after high Enjoyments. This is what the Constitution of Nature before explained, marks out as the Course we should follow, and the End we should aim at. To make Pleasure and Mirth and Jollity our Business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay Amusement, some  
new

new Gratification of Sense or Appetite; to SERM.  
those who will consider the Nature of Man VI.  
and our Condition in this World, will appear the most romantick Scheme of Life that ever entered into Thought. And yet how many are there who go on in this Course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly Disappointments, Listlessness and Satiety, which accompany this fashionable Method of wasting away their Days?

THE Subject we have been insisting upon would lead us into the same kind of Reflections, by a different Connection. The Miseries of Life brought home to ourselves by Compassion, viewed through this Affection considered as the Sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that Moderation, Humility, and Soberness of Mind, which has been now recommended; and which peculiarly belongs to a Season of Recollection, the only Purpose of which is to bring us to a just Sense of Things, to recover us out of that Forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true State, which it is manifest far the greatest Part of Men pass their whole Life in. Upon this Account *Solomon* says, that *it is better to go to the House of mourning, than to go to the House of feasting.*

SERM. *feasting. i. e.* It is more to a Man's Advan-

VI.  tages to turn his Eyes towards Objects of Distress, to recall sometimes to his Remembrance the Occasions of Sorrow, than to pass all his Days in thoughtless Mirth and Gaiety. And he represents the Wise as choosing to frequent the former of these Places; to be sure not for its own Sake, but because *by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better.* Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable Men are when humbled and brought low by Afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high Prosperity. By this voluntary Resort to the House of Mourning which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful Instructions which Calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves; and grow wiser and better at a more easy Rate than Men commonly do. The Objects themselves, which in that Place of Sorrow lie before our View, naturally give us a Seriousness and Attention, check that Wantonness which is the Growth of Prosperity and Ease, and lead us to reflect upon the Deficiencies of Humane Life itself; that *every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity.* This would correct the florid and gaudy Prospects  
and

and Expectations which we are too apt to SERM.  
indulge, teach us to lower our Notions of VI.  
Happiness and Enjoyment, bring them down  
to the Reality of things, to what is attain-  
able, to what the Frailty of our Condition  
will admit of, which, for any Continuance,  
is only Tranquillity, Ease, and moderate Sa-  
tisfactions. Thus we might at once become  
Proof against the Temptations, with which  
the whole World almost is carried away;  
since it is plain, that not only what is called  
a Life of Pleasure, but also vicious Pursuits  
in general, aim at somewhat besides and be-  
yond these moderate Satisfactions.

AND as to that Obstinacy and Wilfulness,  
which renders Men so insensible to the Mo-  
tives of Religion; this right Sense of our-  
selves and of the World about us would  
bend the stubborn Mind, soften the Heart,  
and make it more apt to receive Impressi-  
on: And this is the proper Temper in which  
to call our Ways to Remembrance, to re-  
view and set home upon ourselves the Mis-  
carriages of our past Life. In such a com-  
pliant State of Mind, Reason and Consci-  
ence will have a fair Hearing; which is the  
Preparation for, or rather the Beginning of

SERM. that Repentance, the outward show of  
VI. which we all put on at this Season.

*Lastly,* THE various Miseries of Life which lie before us wherever we turn our Eyes, the Frailty of this mortal State we are passing through, may put us in Mind that the present World is not our Home; that we are meerly Strangers and Travellers in it, as all our Fathers were. It is therefore to be considered as a foreign Country; in which our Poverty and Wants, and the insufficient Supplies of them were designed to turn our Views to that higher and better State we are Heirs to: A State where will be no Follies to be overlooked, no Miseries to be pitied, no Wants to be relieved; where the Affection we have been now treating of will happily be lost, as there will be no Objects to exercise it upon: For *God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former things are passed away.*

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# SERMON VII.

*Upon the Character of Balaam.*

Preached the second Sunday after *Easter.*

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N U M B. XXiii. 10.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and  
let my last End be like his.*

**T**H E S E Words, taken alone, and S E R M. VII. without respect to him who spoke them, lead our Thoughts immediately to the different Ends of good and bad Men. For, though the Comparison is not express'd, yet it is manifestly implied; as is also the Preference of one of these Characters to the other in that last Circumstance, Death. And, since dying the Death of the Righteous or of the Wicked, necessarily implies Men's being righteous or

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SERMON. wicked, *i. e.* having lived righteously or  
 VII. wickedly; a Comparison of them in their

~ Lives also might come into Consideration from such a single View of the Words themselves. But my present Design is, to consider them with a particular Reference or Respect to him who spoke them; which Reference, if you please to attend, you will see. And if what shall be offered to your Consideration at this Time, be thought a Discourse upon the whole History of this Man, rather than upon the particular Words I have read, this is of no Consequence: It is sufficient, if it afford Reflection of Use and Service to ourselves.

BUT, in order to avoid Cavils respecting this remarkable Relation in Scripture, either that Part of it which you have heard in the first Lesson for the Day, or any other; let me just observe, that as this is not a Place for answering them, so they no way affect the following Discourse; since the Character there given is plainly a real one in Life, and such as there are Parallels to.

THE Occasion of *Balaam's* coming out of his own Country into the Land of *Me-ab*, where he pronounced this solemn Prayer or Wish, he himself relates in the  
 first

## Character of Balaam. 119

first Parable or prophetick Speech, of which SERM.  
it is the Conclusion. In which is a Custom VII.  
referr'd to, proper to be taken Notice of:   
That of devoting Enemies to Destruction,  
before the Entrance upon a War with them.  
This Custom appears to have prevailed over  
a great Part of the World; for we find it  
amongst the most distant Nations. The  
*Romans* had publick Officers, to whom it  
belonged as a stated Part of their Office.  
But there was somewhat more particular in  
the Case now before us; *Balaam* being look-  
ed upon as an extraordinary Person, whose  
Blessing or Curse was thought to be always  
effectual.

IN order to engage the Readers Attenti-  
on to this Passage, the sacred Historian has  
enumerated the preparatory Circumstances,  
which are these. *Balaam* requires the King  
of *Moab* to build him seven Altars, and to  
prepare him the same Number of Oxen and  
of Rams. The Sacrifice being over, he re-  
tires alone to a Solitude sacred to these Oc-  
casions, there to wait the divine Inspiration  
or Answer, for which the foregoing Rites  
were the Preparation. \* *And God met*

I 4

*Balaam.*



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SERM. *Balaam, and put a Word in his Mouth, up-*


VII. on receiving which, he returns back to the  
 Altars; where was the King, who had all  
 this while attended the Sacrifice, as appointed; he and all the Princes of *Moab* standing, big with Expectation of the Prophet's Reply. \* *And he took up his Parable and said, Balak the King of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the Mountains of the East; saying, come, Curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the Rocks I see him, and from the Hills I behold him: Lo, the People shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the Nations. Who can count the Dust of Jacob, and the Number of the fourth Part of Israel? Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.*

IT is necessary, as you will see in the Progress of this Discourse, particularly to observe what he understood by *Righteous*. And he himself is introduced in the Book of *Micah* † explaining it; if by *Righteous* is meant

\* Ver. 6.

† *Micah* vi.

## Character of Balaam. 121

meant Good, as to be sure it is. O my Peo- SERM.  
ple, remember now what Balak King of VII.  
Moab consulted, and what Balaam the Son   
of Beor answered him from Shittim unto  
Gilgal. From the mention of Shittim it  
is manifest, that it is this very Story which  
is here referr'd to, though another Part of  
it, the Account of which is not now extant;  
as there are many Quotations in Scripture  
out of Books which are not come down to  
us. Remember what Balaam answered,  
that ye may know the Righteousness of the  
Lord, i. e. the Righteousness which God  
will accept. Balak demands, *Wherewith  
shall I come before the Lord, and bow my-  
self before the high God? Shall I come be-  
fore him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves  
of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with  
thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of  
Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my first-born  
for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body  
for the Sin of my Soul? Balaam answers  
him, He hath shewed thee, O Man, what  
is Good: And what doth the Lord require  
of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mer-  
cy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*  
Here is a good Man expressly characterized,  
as distinct from a dishonest, and a supersti-  
tious

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S E R M. tious Man. No Words can more strongly


VII. *W* exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart, than *doing Justice*, and *loving Mercy*: And both these, as well as *walking humbly with God*, are put in Opposition to those ceremonial Methods of Recommendation, which *Balak* hoped might have served the Turn. From hence appears what he meant by the *Righteous*, whose *Death* he desires to die.

W H E T H E R it was his own Character shall now be inquired: And in order to determine it, we must take a View of his whole Behaviour upon this Occasion. When the Elders of *Moab* came to him, though he appears to have been much allured with the Rewards offered, yet he had such Regard to the Authority of God, as to keep the Messengers in Suspence until he had consulted his Will. *And God said to him \**, *Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the People, for they are blessed*. Upon this he dismisses the Ambassadors, with an absolute refusal of accompanying them back to their King. Thus far his Regards to his Duty prevailed, neither does there any thing appear as yet amiss in his Conduct. His Answer being reported to the  
King

\* Chap. xxii. 12.

## Character of Balaam.

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King of *Moab*, a more honourable Embassy SERM.  
is immediately dispatched, and greater Re- VII.  
wards proposed. Then the Iniquity of his   
Heart began to disclose itself. A thorough  
honest Man would without Hesitation have  
repeated his former Answer, that he could  
not be guilty of so infamous a Prostitution  
of the sacred Character with which he was  
invested, as in the Name of a Prophet to  
curse those whom he knew to be blessed.  
But instead of this, which was the only ho-  
nest Part in these Circumstances that lay be-  
fore him, he desires the Princes of *Moab*  
to tarry that Night with him also; and for  
the Sake of the Reward deliberates, whe-  
ther by some Means or other he might not  
be able to obtain leave to curse *Israel*; to  
do that, which had been before revealed to  
him to be contrary to the Will of God,  
which yet he resolves not to do without  
that Permission. Upon which, as when this  
Nation afterwards rejected God from reign-  
ing over them, he gave them a King in his  
Anger; in the same Way, as appears from  
other Parts of the Narration, he gives *Ba-  
laam* the Permission he desired: For this is  
the most natural Sense of the Words. Arri-  
ving in the Territories of *Moab*, and being


received

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SERM. received with particular Distinction, by the  
 VII. King, and He repeating in Person the Pro-  
 ~~~~~  
 mise of the Rewards he had before made, to him by his Ambassadors: he seeks, the Text says, by *Sacrifices* and *Enchantments*, (what these were is not to our Purpose) to obtain Leave of God to curse the People; keeping still his Resolution, not to do it without that Permission: Which not being able to obtain, he had such regard to the Command of God, as to keep this Resolution to the last. The Supposition of his being under a supernatural Restraint is a meer Fiction of *Philo*: He is plainly represented to be under no other Force or Restraint, than the Fear of God. However, he goes on persevering in that Endeavour, after he had declared, that *God had not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither had he seen Perverseness in Israel.* \* *i. e.* they were a People of Virtue and Piety so far as not to have drawn down, by their Iniquity, that Curse which he was soliciting Leave to pronounce upon them. So that the State of *Balaam's* Mind was this: He wanted to do what he knew to be very wicked, and contrary to the express  
 Command

\* Ver. 21.

## Character of Balaam. 125

Command of God ; he had inward Checks S E R M.  
and Restraints, which he could not intirely VII.  
get over ; he therefore casts about for Ways   
to reconcile this Wickedness with his Duty.  
How great a Paradox soever this may ap-  
pear, as it is indeed a Contradiction in Terms,  
it is the very Account which the Scripture  
gives us of him.

B U T there is a more surprizing Piece of  
Iniquity yet behind. Not daring in his re-  
ligious Character as a Prophet to assist the  
King of *Moab*, he considers whether there  
might not be found some other Means of  
assisting him against that very People, whom  
he himself by the Fear of God was restrain-  
ed from cursing in Words. One would  
not think it possible, that the Weakness, e-  
ven of religious Self-deceit in its utmost Ex-  
cess, could have so poor a Distinction, so  
fond an Evasion, to serve itself of. But  
so it was: And he could think of no other  
Method, than to betray the Children of  
*Israel* to provoke his Wrath, who was their  
only Strength and Defence. The Tempta-  
tion which he pitched upon, was that con-  
cerning which *Solomon* afterwards observed,  
that it had *cast down many wounded ; yea,  
many strong Men had been slain by it :*

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S E R M. And of which he himself was a sad Example

VII. when *his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods*. This succeeded: The People sin against God; and thus the Prophet's Counsel brought on that Destruction; which he could by no means be prevailed upon to assist with the religious Ceremony of Execration, which the King of *Moab* thought would itself have effected it. Their Crime and Punishment are related in *Deuteronomy* \*, and *Numbers* †. And from the Relation repeated in *Numbers* (a), it appears, that *Balaam* was the Contriver of the whole Matter. It is also ascribed to him in *the Revelation* (b), where he is said to have *taught Balaak to cast a stumbling-block before the Children of Israel*.

T H I S was the Man, this *Balaam*, I say, was the Man who desired to *die the Death of the Righteous*, and that his *last End might be like his*: And this was the State of his Mind, when he pronounced these Words.

So that the Object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the World: A very wicked Man, under a deep Sense of  
God

\* Chap. iv. † Chap. xxv. (a) Chap. xxxi. (b) Chap. ii.

## Character of Balaam.

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God and Religion, persisting still in his Wickedness, and preferring the Wages of Unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively View of Death, and that approaching Period of his Days, which should deprive him of all those Advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a Prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future State of Retribution: All this joined with an explicit ardent Wish, that, when he was to leave this World, he might be in the Condition of a righteous Man. Good God, what Inconsistency, what Perplexity is here! With what different Views of things, with what contradictory Principles of Action, must such a Mind be torn and distracted! It was not unthinking Carelessness, by which he run on headlong in Vice and Folly, without ever making a stand to ask himself what he was doing: No; he acted upon the cool Motives of Interest and Advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to Impressions of Religion, what we call Abandoned; for he absolutely denied to curse *Israel*. When Reason assumes her Place, when convinced of his Duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the Influence of the divine Authority;

SERM.

VII.





SERM. Authority ; whilst he is carrying on his

VII. Views to the Grave, the End of all temporal Greatness ; under this Sense of things, with the better Character and more desirable State present—full before him—in his Thoughts, in his Wishes, voluntarily to choose the worse—What Fatality is here ! Or how otherwise can such a Character be explained ? And yet, strange as it may appear, it is not altogether an uncommon one : Nay, with some small Alterations, and put a little lower, it is applicable to a very considerable Part of the World. For, if the reasonable Choice be seen and acknowledged, and yet Men make the unreasonable one, is not this the same Contradiction ; that very Inconsistency, which appeared so unaccountable ?

To give some little Opening to such Characters and Behaviour, it is to be observed in general, that there is no Account to be given in the Way of Reason, of Men's so strong Attachments to the present World : Our Hopes and Fears and Pursuits are in Degrees beyond all Proportion to the known Value of the Things they respect. This may be said without taking into Consideration Religion and a future State ; and when these  
are

## Character of Balaam. 129

are considered, the Disproportion is infinite-  
ly heightened. Now when Men go against  
their Reason, and contradict a more im-  
portant Interest at a Distance, for one near-  
er, though of less Consideration; if this be  
the Whole of the Case, all that can be said  
is, that strong Passions, some kind of brute  
Force within, prevails over the Principle of  
Rationality. However, if this be with a  
clear, full and distinct View of the Truth  
of Things, then it is doing the utmost Vio-  
lence to Themselves, acting in the most palpa-  
ble Contradiction to their very Nature. But if  
there be any such thing in Mankind, as put-  
ting Half-deceits upon themselves; which  
there plainly is, either by avoiding Reflecti-  
on, or (if they do reflect) by religious Equi-  
vocation, Subterfuges, and palliating Mat-  
ters to themselves; by these Means Consci-  
ence may be laid asleep, and they may go on  
in a Course of Wickedness with less Distur-  
bance. All the various Turns, Doubles and  
Intricacies in a dishonest Heart, cannot be  
unfolded or laid open; but that there is  
somewhat of that Kind is manifest, be it to  
be called Self-deceit, or by any other Name.  
*Balaam* had before his Eyes the Authority of  
God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for  
K the

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SERM. the Sake of a Reward, had the strongest Inclination to: He was likewise in a State of Mind sober enough to consider Death and his last End: By these Considerations he was restrained, first from going to the King of *Moab*; and after he did go, from cursing *Israel*. But notwithstanding this, there was great Wickedness in his Heart. He could not forego the Rewards of Unrighteousness: He therefore first seeks for Indulgences; and when these could not be obtained, he sins against the whole Meaning, End and Design of the Prohibition, which no Consideration in the World could prevail with him to go against the Letter of. And surely that impious Counsel, he gave to *Balak* against the Children of *Israel*, was, considered in itself, a greater Piece of Wickedness, than if he had cursed them in Words.

IF it be inquired what his Situation, his Hopes and Fears were, in respect to this his Wish: The Answer must be, that Conscience of the Wickedness of his Heart must necessarily have destroyed all settled Hopes of dying the Death of the Righteous: He could have no calm Satisfaction in this View of his last End: Yet, on the other hand, it is possible that those partial Regards

## Character of Balaam.

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gards to his Duty, now mentioned, might keep him from perfect Despair.

SERM.  
VII.

UPON the Whole, it is manifest that *Balaam* had the most just and true Notions of God and Religion; as appears, partly from the original Story itself, and more plainly from the Passage in *Micah*; where he explains Religion to consist in real Virtue and real Piety, expressly distinguished from Superstition, and in Terms which most strongly exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart. Yet you see his Behaviour: He seeks Indulgences for plain Wickedness; which not being able to obtain, he glosses over that same Wickedness, dresses it up in a new Form, in order to make it pass off more easily with himself. That is, he deliberately contrives to deceive and impose upon himself, in a Matter which he knew to be of the utmost Importance.


To bring these Observations home to ourselves. It is too evident that many Persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable Courses, who yet make great Pretences to Religion; not to deceive the World, none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our Age; but from Principles, Hopes, and Fears; respecting God and a future State;

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S E R M. and go on thus with a sort of Tranquilli-  
 VII. ty and Quiet of Mind. This cannot be  
 upon a thorough Consideration, and full  
 Resolution, that the Pleasures and Advan-  
 tages they propose are to be pursued at all  
 Hazards, against Reason, against the Law of  
 God, and though everlasting Destruction is  
 to be the Consequence. This would be do-  
 ing too great Violence upon themselves.  
 No, they are for making a Composition  
 with the Almighty. These of his Com-  
 mands they will obey: But as to others—  
 why they will make all the Atonements in  
 their Power; the ambitious, the covetous,  
 the dissolute Man, each in a Way which  
 shall not contradict his respective Pursuit.  
 Indulgences before, which was *Balaam's*  
 first Attempt, though he was not so success-  
 ful in it as to deceive himself, or Atonements  
 afterwards, are all the same. And here  
 perhaps come in faint Hopes that they may,  
 and Half-resolves that they will, one time or  
 other, make a Change.

B E S I D E S these, there are also Persons,  
 who from a more just way of considering  
 things, see the infinite Absurdity of This, of  
 substituting Sacrifice instead of Obedience;  
 there are Persons far enough from Super-  
 stition,

*Character of Balaam.* 133

stitution, and not without some real Sense of SERM.  
God and Religion upon their Minds; who VII.  
yet are guilty of most unjustifiable Practices,   
and go on with great Coolness and Com-  
mand over themselves. The same Dishonesty  
and Unsoundness of Heart discovers itself  
in These another way. In all common or-  
dinary Cases we see intuitively at first View  
what is our Duty, what is the honest Part.  
This is the Ground of the Observation, that  
the first Thought is often the best. In these  
Cases Doubt and Deliberation is itself Dis-  
honesty; as it was in *Balaam* upon the  
second Message. That which is called con-  
sidering what is our Duty in a particular Case,  
is very often nothing but endeavouring to  
explain it away. Thus those Courses, which,  
if Men would fairly attend to the Dictates  
of their own Consciences, they would see  
to be Corruption, Excess, Oppression, Un-  
charitableness; these are refined upon—  
Things were so and so circumstantiated—  
Great Difficulties are raised about fixing  
Bounds and Degrees: And thus every moral  
Obligation whatever may be evaded. Here  
is Scope, I say, for an unfair Mind to ex-  
plain away every moral Obligation to it-  
self. Whether Men reflect again upon

124 A S E R M O N upon the

S E R M. this internal Management and Artifice, and  
 VII. how explicit they are with themselves, is another Question. There are many Operations of the Mind, many things pass within, which we never reflect upon again; which a By-stander, from having frequent Opportunities of observing us and our Conduct, may make shrewd Guesses at.

\* T H A T great Numbers are in this Way of deceiving themselves is certain. There is scarce a Man in the World, who has intirely got over all Regards, Hopes and Fears, concerning God and a future State; and these Apprehensions in the Generality, bad as we are, prevail in considerable Degrees: Yet Men will and can be wicked with Calmness and Thought; we see they are. There must therefore be some Method of making it fit a little easy upon their Minds; which, in the Superstitious, is those Indulgences and Atonements before-mentioned, and this Self-deceit of another Kind in Persons of another Character. And both these proceed from a certain Unfairness of Mind, a peculiar inward Dishonesty; the direct contrary to that Simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the Notion of *becoming little Children*, as a necessary Qualification for

for our entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. SERM.  
VII.

**BUT** to conclude: How much soever Men differ in the Course of Life they prefer, and in their Ways of palliating and excusing their Vices to themselves; yet all agree in the one thing, desiring to *die the Death of the righteous*. This is surely remarkable. The Obsarvetion may be extended further, and put thus: Even without determining what that is which we call Guilt or Innocence, there is no Man but would choose, after having had the Pleasure or Advantage of a vitious Action, to be free of the Guilt of it, to be in the State of an innocent Man. This shews at least the Disturbance, and implicit Dissatisfaction in Vice. If we enquire into the Grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate Sense of having done Evil; and partly from an Apprehension, that this inward Sense shall one time or another be seconded by an higher Judgment, upon which our whole Being depends. Now to suspend and drown this Sense, and these Apprehensions, be it by the Hurry of Business or of Pleasure, or by Superstition, or moral Equivocations, this is in a Manner one and the same, and makes



SERM. no Alteration at all in the Nature of our  
 VII. Case. Things and Actions are what they are,  
 and the Consequences of them will be what  
 they will be: Why then should we desire to  
 be deceived? As we are reasonable Crea-  
 tures, and have any Regard to ourselves, we  
 ought to lay these things plainly and honest-  
 ly before our Mind, and upon this, act as  
 you please, as you think most fit; make that  
 Choice and prefer that Course of Life, which  
 you can justify to yourselves, and which fits  
 most easy upon your own Mind. It will  
 immediately appear, that Vice cannot be the  
 Happiness, but must upon the whole be  
 the Misery, of such a Creature as Man; a  
 Moral, an Accountable Agent. Supersti-  
 tious Observances, Self-Deceit though of a  
 more refined Sort, will not in reality at all  
 mend Matters with us. And the Result of  
 the whole can be nothing else, but that  
 with Simplicity and Fairness we *keep Inno-*  
*cence, and take heed unto the thing that is*  
*right; for this alone shall bring a Man Peace*  
*at the last.*

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# S E R M O N V I I I .

## *Upon Resentment.*

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M A T T H . V . 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you,*

**S** I N C E perfect Goodness in the Deity S E R M .  
is the Principle, from whence the U- V I I I .  
niverse was brought into Being, and  
by which it is preserved; and since general  
Benevolence is the great Law of the whole  
moral Creation: It is a Question which im-  
mediately occurs, *Why had Man implanted*  
*in him a Principle, which appears the di-*  
*rect contrary to Benevolence?* Now the

SERM. Foot upon which Inquiries of this Kind  
 VIII. should be treated is this : To take Humane  
 Nature as it is, and the Circumstances in  
 which it is placed as they are ; and then consider the Correspondence between that Nature and those Circumstances, or what Course of Action and Behaviour, respecting those Circumstances, any particular Affection or Passion leads us to. This I mention to distinguish the Matter now before us from Disquisitions of quite another Kind ; namely, *Why we are not made more perfect Creatures, or placed in better Circumstances ?* These being Questions which we have not, that I know of, any thing at all to do with. God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the Disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this State of things. If upon this we set ourselves to search and examine, why he did not prevent them ; we shall, I am afraid, be in Danger of running into somewhat worse than impertinent Curiosity. But upon this to examine, how far the Nature which he hath given us hath a Respect to those Circumstances, such as they are ; how far it leads us to act a proper Part in them ; plainly belongs to us : And such Inquiries are in many ways of excellent Use. Thus the  
 thing

thing to be considered is, not, *Why we were* SERM. *not made of such a Nature, and placed in* VIII. *such Circumstances, as to have no need of*  *so harsh and turbulent a Passion as Resentment*; But, taking our Nature and Condition as being what they are, *Why or for what End such a Passion was given us*: And this chiefly in order to shew, what are the Abuses of it.

THE Persons who laid down for a Rule, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy*, made short Work with this Matter. They did not, it seems, perceive any thing to be disapproved in Hatred, more than in Good-will: And, according to their System of Morals, our Enemy was the proper natural Object of one of these Passions, as our Neighbour was of the other of them. This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the Subject. But this cannot be satisfactory; because Hatred, Malice and Revenge, are directly contrary to the Religion we profess, and to the Nature and Reason of the thing itself. Therefore, since no Passion God hath endued us with can be in itself Evil; and yet since Men frequently indulge a Passion in such Ways and Degrees that at length it becomes quite another

SERMON. nother thing from what it was originally in  
 VIII. our Nature; and those Vices of Malice and  
 ~~~~~ Revenge in particular take their Occasion  
 from the natural Passion of Resentment: It  
 will be needful to trace This up to its Original,  
 that we may see, *What it is in itself, as placed in our Nature by its Author*; from  
 which it will plainly appear, *For what Ends it was placed there.* And when we know  
 what the Passion is in itself, and the Ends of  
 it, we shall easily see, *What are the Abuses of it, in which Malice and Revenge consist*; and  
 which are so strongly forbidden in the Text, by the direct contrary being com-  
 manded.


RESENTMENT is of two Kinds: *Hasty and sudden, or settled and deliberate.* The former is called Anger, and often *Passion*; which, though a general Word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular Feeling, sudden Anger, as distinct from deliberate Resentment, Malice and Revenge. In all these Words is usually implied somewhat vicious; somewhat unreasonable as to the Occasion of the Passion, or immoderate as to the Degree or Duration of it. But that the natural Passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that Precept, *Be ye angry*  
 gry

*gry and sin not* \* : Which though it is by SERM. VIII. no means to be understood as an Encouragement to indulge ourselves in Anger, the Sense being certainly this, *Though ye be angry, sin not*; yet here is evidently a Distinction made, between Anger and Sin; between the natural Passion, and sinful Anger.

*Sudden Anger* upon certain Occasions is meer Instinct: As meerly so, as the Disposition to close our Eyes upon the Apprehension of somewhat falling into them; and no more necessarily implies any Degree of Reason. I say, *necessarily*: For to be sure *hasty*, as well as *deliberate*, Anger may be occasioned by Injury or Contempt; in which Cases Reason suggests to our Thoughts that Injury and Contempt, which is the Occasion of the Passion: But I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only Way, in which our Reason and Understanding can raise Anger, is by representing to our Mind Injustice or Injury of some Kind or other. Now momentary Anger is frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent Reason; that is, without any Appearance of Injury, as distinct from Hurt or Pain.

It

\* Ephes. iv. 26.

SERM. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this  
 VIII.  Passion, in Infants ; in the lower Species of  
 Animals ; and, which is often seen, in Men  
 towards them ; it cannot, I say, be imagi-  
 ned that these Instances of this Passion are  
 the Effect of Reason : No, they are occa-  
 sioned by meer Sensation and Feeling. It is  
 Opposition, sudden Hurt, Violence, which  
 naturally excites the Passion ; and the real  
 Demerit or Fault of him who offers that Vio-  
 lence, or is the Cause of that Opposition or  
 Hurt, does not in many Cases so much as  
 come into Thought.

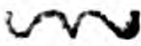
THE Reason and End, for which Man was  
 made thus liable to this Passion, is, that he  
 might be better qualified to prevent, and like-  
 wise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat,  
 sudden Force, Violence and Opposition, con-  
 sidered meerly as such, and without Regard to  
 the Fault or Demerit of him who is the Au-  
 thor of them. Yet, since Violence may be  
 considered in this other and further View,  
 as implying Fault ; and since Injury, as distinct  
 from Harm, may raise sudden Anger ; sud-  
 den Anger may likewise accidentally serve  
 to prevent, or remedy, such Fault and Injury.  
 But, considered as distinct from settled Anger,  
 it stands in our Nature for Self-defence, and  
 not

not for the Administration of Justice. There SERM.  
are plainly Cafes, and in the uncultivated VIII.  
Parts of the World, and, where regular Go-  
vernments are not formed, they frequently  
happen, in which there is no Time for Con-  
sideration, and yet to be passive is certain  
Destruction; in which, sudden Resistance is  
the only Security.

BUT from *This, deliberate Anger or Re-  
sentment* is essentially distinguished, as the  
latter is not naturally excited by, or intended  
to prevent meer Harm without appearance  
of Wrong or Injustice. Now, in order to  
see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural  
Object and Occasion of such Resentment;  
let us reflect upon the Manner in which we  
are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned  
Story of Baseness and Villany, properly  
worked up to move our Passions. This im-  
mediately raises Indignation, somewhat of a  
Desire that it should be punished. And though  
the designed Injury be prevented, yet that it  
was designed is sufficient to raise this inward  
Feeling. Suppose the Story true, this inward  
Feeling would be as natural and as just:  
And one may venture to affirm, that there  
is scarce a Man in the World, but would  
have it upon some Occasions. It seems *in*



S E R M. *us* plainly connected with a Sense of Virtue  
 VIII. and Vice, of moral Good and Evil. Suppose  
 further, we knew both the Person who did,  
 and who suffered the Injury : Neither would  
 this make any Alteration, only that it would  
 probably affect us more. The Indignation  
 raised by Cruelty and Injustice; and the De-  
 sire of having it punished, which Persons un-  
 concerned would feel, is by no means Ma-  
 lice. No, it is Repentment against Vice and  
 Wickedness : It is one of the common Bonds,  
 by which Society is held together ; a Fellow-  
 feeling which each Individual has in Behalf  
 of the whole Species, as well as of him-  
 self. And it does not appear that This, gene-  
 rally speaking, is at all too high amongst  
 Mankind. Suppose now the Injury I have  
 been speaking of, to be done against our-  
 selves ; or those whom we consider as our-  
 selves. It is plain, the Way, in which we  
 should be affected, would be exactly the same  
 in Kind : but it would certainly be in a high-  
 er Degree, and less transient ; because a Sense  
 of our own Happiness and Misery is most in-  
 timately and always present to us ; and  
 from the very Constitution of our Nature,  
 we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to,  
 and be more deeply interested in, what con-  
 cerns


cerns ourselves. And this seems to be the SERM.  
whole of this Passion which is, properly VIII.  
speaking, natural to Mankind: Namely, a   
Resentment against Injury, and Wickedness  
in general; and in a higher Degree when  
towards ourselves, in Proportion to the  
greater Regard which Men naturally have  
for themselves, than for others. From hence  
it appears, that it is not natural, but moral  
Evil; it is not Suffering, but Injury, which  
raises that Anger or Resentment, which is of  
any Continuance. The natural Object of it  
is not one, who appears to the suffering Per-  
son to have been only the innocent Occasion  
of his Pain or Loss; but one, who has been  
in a moral Sense injurious either to ourselves  
or others. This is abundantly confirmed by  
observing, what it is which heightens or less-  
ens Resentment; namely, the same which  
aggravates or lessens the Fault: Friendship  
and former Obligations, on one hand; or In-  
advertency, strong Temptations and Mistake,  
on the other. All this is so much under-  
stood by Mankind, how little soever it be  
reflected upon, that a Person would be reck-  
oned quite distracted, who should coolly re-  
sent an Harm, which had not to himself the  
Appearance of Injury or Wrong. Men do

L

indeed

SERM. indeed resent what is occasioned through  
 VIII. Carelessness: But then they expect Observance as their due, and so that Carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that they resent more strongly an Injury done, than one which, though designed, was prevented, in Cases where the Guilt is perhaps the same: The Reason however is, not that bare Pain or Loss raises Resentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional Sense of the Injury or Injustice. According to the natural Course of the Passions, the Degrees of Resentment are in Proportion, not only to the Degree of Design and Deliberation in the injurious Person; but in Proportion to this, joined with the Degree of the Evil designed or premeditated; since this likewise comes in to make the Injustice greater or less. And the Evil or Harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it: So therefore will the Injury: And consequently the Resentment will be greater.

THE natural Object, or Occasion, of settled Resentment then being Injury, as distinct from Pain or Loss; it is easy to see, that to prevent and to remedy such Injury, and the Miseries arising from it, is the End for which

which this Passion was implanted in Man. S E R M.  
It is to be considered as a Weapon, put in- VIII.  
to our Hands by Nature, against Injury, In-   
justice and Cruelty: How it may be inno-  
cently employed and made use of, shall pre-  
sently be mentioned.

THE Account, which has been now given of this Passion, is in brief, that sudden Anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, meer Harm distinct from Injury: But that it *may* be raised by Injury, and *may* serve to prevent or to remedy it; and then the Occasions and Effects of it are the same, with the Occasions and Effects of deliberate Anger. But they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by Harm, distinct from Injury; and its natural proper End is to remedy or prevent only that Harm, which implies, or is supposed to imply, Injury or moral Wrong. Every one sees that these Observations do not relate to those, who have habitually suppressed the Course of their Passions and Affections, out of Regard either to Interest or Virtue; or who, from Habits of Vice and Folly, have changed their Nature. But, I suppose, there can be no doubt but this, now described, is the general Course of Resent-

SERM. ment, considered as a natural Passion, neither  
 VIII. increased by Indulgence, nor corrected by  
 ~~~~~ Virtue, nor prevailed over by other Passions,  
 or particular Habits of Life.

As to the Abuses of Anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different Degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called *Passion*; to which some Men are liable, in the same Way as others are to the *Epilepsie*, or any sudden particular Disorder. This Distemper of the Mind seizes them upon the least Occasion in the World, and perpetually without any real Reason at all: And by Means of it they are plainly, every Day, every waking Hour of their Lives, liable and in Danger of running into the most extravagant Outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent Kind, is *Peevishness*; which I mention with Pity, with real Pity to the unhappy Creatures, who, from their inferiour Station, or other Circumstances and Relations, are obliged to be in the Way of, and to serve for a Supply to it. Both these, for ought that I can see, are one and the same Principle: But, as it takes Root in Minds of different Makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different Names. That  
 which

which in a more feeble Temper is Peevish-SERM.  
ness, and languidly discharges itself upon e-VIII.  
very thing which comes in its Way ; the  
same Principle, in a Temper of greater Force  
and stronger Passions, becomes Rage and Fu-  
ry. In one, the Humour discharges itself at  
once ; in the other, it is continually discharg-  
ing. This is the Account of *Passion* and  
*Peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and  
appearing in different Persons. It is no Ob-  
jection against the Truth of it, that they are  
both to be seen sometimes in one and the  
same Person.

WITH respect to deliberate Resentment,  
the chief Instances of Abuse are : When, from  
Partiality to ourselves, we imagine an Injury  
done us, when there is none : When this  
Partiality represents it to us greater than it  
really is : When we fall into that extrava-  
gant and monstrous Kind of Resentment, to-  
wards one who has innocently been the Oc-  
casion of Evil to us ; that is, Resentment up-  
on Account of Pain or Inconvenience, with-  
out Injury ; which is the same Absurdity, as  
settled Anger at a thing that is inanimate :  
When the Indignation against Injury and  
Injustice rises too high, and is beyond Pro-  
portion to the particular ill Action it is exer-  
cised

S. F. R. M. cised upon: Or lastly, when Pain or Harm of  
 VIII. any Kind is inflicted meerly in Consequence  
 of, and to gratify, that Resentment, though  
 naturally raised.

IT would be endless to descend into and explain all the Peculiarities of Perverseness, and wayward Humour, which might be traced up to this Passion. But there is one thing, which so generally belongs to and accompanies all Excess and Abuse of it, as to require being mentioned: a certain Determination, and resolute Bent of Mind, not to be convinced or set right; though it be ever so plain, that there is no Reason for the Displeasure, that it was raised meerly by Error or Misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great Mixture of Pride; but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than, that Resentment has taken Possession of the Temper and of the Mind, and will not quit its Hold. It would be too minute, to inquire whether this be any thing more than bare Obstinacy: It is sufficient to observe, that it, in a very particular Manner and Degree, belongs to the Abuses of this Passion.

BUT, notwithstanding all these Abuses;  
 “ Is not just Indignation against Cruelty and  
 “ Wrong, one of the *Instruments of Death*  
 “ which

“ which the Author of our Nature hath pro- SERM.  
“ vided ? Are not Cruelty, Injustice and VIII.  
“ Wrong, the natural Objects of that Indig-  
“ nation ? Surely then it may one way or o-  
“ ther be innocently employed against them.”

True. Since therefore it is necessary for the very Subsistence of the World, that Injury, Injustice and Cruelty, should be punished ; and since Compassion, which is so natural to Mankind, would render that Execution of Justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy ; Indignation against Vice and Wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a Ballance to that Weakness of Pity, and also to any thing else which would prevent the necessary Methods of Severity. Those, who have never thought upon these Subjects, may perhaps not see the Weight of this : But let us suppose a Person guilty of Murder, or any other Action of Cruelty, and that Mankind had naturally no Indignation against such Wickedness and the Authors of it ; but that Every Body was affected towards such a Criminal in the same Way, as towards an innocent Man : Compassion, amongst other Things, would render the Execution of Justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithstanding that the



SERMON. Principle of Benevolence is denied by some,  
 VIII. and is really in a very low Degree, that Men  
 are in great Measure insensible to the Happiness of their Fellow-creatures; yet they are not insensible to their Misery, but are very strongly moved with it: Infomuch that there plainly is Occasion for that Feeling which is raised by Guilt and Demerit, as a Ballance to that of Compassion. Thus much may I think justly be allowed to Resentment, in the strictest way of Moral Consideration.

THE good Influence which this Passion has in Fact upon the Affairs of the World, is obvious to every one's Notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their Fellow-creatures by Fear of their Resentment; and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a Principle of Virtue. And after an Injury is done, and there is a Necessity that the Offender should be brought to Justice; the cool Consideration of Reason, that the Security and Peace of Society requires Examples of Justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure Laws to be enacted, and Sentence pass'd: But is it that cool Reflection in the injured Person, which, for the most Part, brings the Offended to Justice? Or is it not Resentment and Indignation

indignation against the Injury and the Author SERM.  
of it? I am afraid there is no Doubt, which VIII.  
is commonly the Case. This however is to  
be considered as a good Effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that Men would act from a better Principle, Reason and cool Reflection.

T H E Account now given of the Passion of Resentment, as distinct from all the Abuses of it, may suggest to our Thoughts the following Reflections.

*First*, That Vice is indeed of ill-desert, and must finally be punished. Why should Men dispute concerning the Reality of Virtue, and whether it be founded in the Nature of Things, which yet surely is not Matter of Question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every Man carries about him this Passion, which affords him Demonstration, that the Rules of Justice and Equity are to be the Guide of his Actions? For every Man naturally feels an Indignation upon seeing Instances of Villany and Baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

*Secondly*, That we should learn to be cautious lest we *charge God foolishly*, by ascribing That to him, or the Nature He has given

SERM. ven us, which is owing wholly to our own

VIII. Abuse of it. Men may speak of the Degeneracy and Corruption of the World, according to the Experience they have had of it; but Human Nature, considered as the divine Workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred: For *in the Image of God made He Man*. That Passion, from whence Men take Occasion to run into the dreadful Vices of Malice and Revenge; even That Passion, as implanted in our Nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous Movement of Mind. It is in itself, and in its Original, no more than Indignation against Injury and Wickedness: That which is the only Deformity in the Creation, and the only reasonable Object of Abhorrence and Dislike. How manifold Evidence have we of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, when even Pain in the natural World, and the Passion, we have been now considering in the Moral, come out Instances of it!

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# S E R M O N IX.

*Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.*


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M A T T H. . V. 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

**A**S God Almighty foresaw the Irregularities and Disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this State of Things; He hath graciously made some Provision against them, by giving us several Passions and Affections, which arise from, or whose Objects are those Disorders. Of this Sort are Fear, Resentment, Compassion and others; of which there could  
be


SERM.  
IX.



SERMON. be no Occasion or Use in a perfect State : But  
 IX. in the present we should be exposed to greater Inconveniencies without them ; though there are very considerable ones, which they themselves are the Occasions of. They are Incumbrances indeed, but such as we are obliged to carry about with us, through this various Journey of Life: Some of them as a Guard against the violent Assaults of others, and in our own Defence ; some in Behalf of others ; and all of them to put us upon, and help to carry us through, a Course of Behaviour suitable to our Condition, in Default of that Perfection of Wisdom and Virtue, which would be in all Respects our better Security.

THE Passion of Anger or Resentment hath already been largely treated of. It hath been shown, that Mankind naturally feel some Emotion of Mind against Injury and Injustice, whoever are the Sufferers by it ; and even though the injurious Design be prevented from taking Effect. Let this be called Anger, Indignation, Resentment, or by whatever Name any one shall chuse ; the thing itself is understood, and is plainly natural. It has likewise been observed, that this natural Indignation is generally moderate and low enough in Mankind, in each particular Man, when the  
 Injury

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 157

Injury which excites it doth not affect himself, SERM.  
or one whom he considers as himself. There- IX.  
fore the Precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our*   
*Enemies*, do not relate to that general In-  
dignation against Injury and the Authors of  
it, but to this Feeling, or Resentment when  
raised by private or personal Injury. But no  
Man could be thought in earnest, who should  
assert, that, though Indignation against Inju-  
ry, when Others are the Sufferers, is inno-  
cent and just ; yet the same Indignation a-  
gainst it, when we ourselves are the Suf-  
ferers, becomes faulty and blameable. These  
Precepts therefore cannot be understood to  
forbid This in the latter Case, more than in  
the former. Nay they cannot be understood  
to forbid this Feeling in the latter Case, tho'  
raised to a higher Degree, than in the for-  
mer : Because, as was also observed further,  
from the very Constitution of our Nature,  
we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to  
what concerns ourselves. Therefore the Pre-  
cepts in the Text, and others of the like Im-  
port with them, must be understood to forbid  
only the Excess and Abuse of this natural  
Feeling, in Cases of personal and private In-  
jury : The chief Instances of which Excess  
and Abuse have likewise been already re-  
marked ;

SERM. marked; and all of them, excepting that of  
 IX. Retaliation, do so plainly in the very Terms  
 exprefs somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate and absurd, as to admit of no Pretence or Shadow of Justification.

BUT since Custom and false Honour are on the Side of Retaliation and Revenge, when the Resentment is natural and just; and Reasons are sometimes offered in Justification of Revenge in these Cases; and since Love of our Enemies is thought *too hard a Saying* to be obeyed: I will shew *the absolute unlawfulness of the former; The Obligations we are under to the latter; And then proceed to some Reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate Tendency to beget in us a right Temper of Mind towards those who have offended us.*

IN shewing the Unlawfulness of Revenge, it is not my present Design to examine what is alledged in Favour of it, from the Tyranny of Custom and false Honour, but only to consider the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself; which ought to have prevented, and ought now to extirpate, every thing of that Kind.

*First*, Let us begin with the Supposition of That being innocent, which is pleaded for,  
 and

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 159

and which shall be shewn to be altogether S E R M.  
vicious, the Supposition that we were allowed IX.  
to *render Evil for Evil*, and see what would  
be the Consequence. Malice or Resent-  
ment towards any Man hath plainly a Ten-  
dency to beget the same Passion in him who  
is the Object of it; and this again increases  
it in the Other. It is of the very Nature of  
this Vice to propagate itself, not only by  
way of Example, which it does in common  
with other Vices, but in a peculiar Way of  
its own; for Resentment itself, as well as  
what is done in Consequence of it, is the  
Object of Resentment: Hence it comes to  
pass that the first Offence, even when so  
slight as presently to be dropt and forgotten,  
becomes the Occasion of entering into a long  
Intercourse of ill Offices: Neither is it at  
all uncommon to see Persons, in this Pro-  
gress of Strife and Variance, change Parts;  
and Him, who was at first the injured Per-  
son, become more injurious and blameable  
than the Aggressor. Put the Case then, that  
the Law of Retaliation was universally re-  
ceived, and allowed, as an innocent Rule of  
Life, by all; and the Observance of it  
thought by many, (and then it would soon  
come to be thought by all,) a Point of Ho-  
nour :



SERM. nou: This supposes every Man in private

IX. Cases to pass Sentence in his own Cause; and likewise, that Anger or Resentment is to be the Judge. Thus, from the numberless Partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when He was not : and in most Cases would represent an Injury as much greater than it really is ; the imagined Dignity of the Person offended would scarce ever fail to magnifie the Offence. And, if bare Retaliation, or returning just the Mischief received, always begets Resentment in the Person upon whom we retaliate, what would that Excess do? Add to this, that he likewise has his Partialities——There is no going on to represent this Scene of Rage and Madness: It is manifest there would be no Bounds, nor any End. *If the Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water, what would it come to when allowed this free and unrestrained Course? As Coals are to burning Coals, or Wood to Fire; so would these contentious Men be to kindle Strife.* And, since the Indulgence of Revenge hath manifestly this Tendency, and does actually produce these Effects in Proportion as it is allowed ; a Passion of so dangerous a Nature ought not to be indulged,

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 161

indulged, were there no other Reason a-SERM.  
gainst it. IX.

*Secondly,* It hath been shewn that the  
Passion of Resentment was placed in Man,  
upon Supposition of, and as a Prevention or  
Remedy to Irregularity and Disorder. Now  
whether it be allowed or not, that the Passi-  
on itself and the Gratification of it joined to-  
gether are painful to the malicious Person;  
it must however be so with Respect to the  
Person towards whom it is exercised, and  
upon whom the Revenge is taken. Now, if  
we consider Mankind, according to that  
fine Allusion of *St. Paul*, as *one Body, and  
every one Members one of another*; it must  
be allowed that Resentment is, with Re-  
spect to Society, a painful Remedy. Thus  
then the very Notion or Idea of this Passion,  
as a Remedy or Prevention of Evil, and as  
in itself a painful Means, plainly shews that  
it ought never to be made use of, but only  
in order to produce some greater Good.

IT is to be observed, that this Argument  
is not founded upon an Allusion or Simile;  
but that it is drawn from the very Nature  
of the Passion itself, and the End for which  
it was given us. We are obliged to make


M

use

SERM. use of Words taken from sensible things,  
 IX. to explain what is the most remote from  
 them: And every one sees, from whence  
 the Words Prevention and Remedy are taken.  
 But if you please, let these Words be drop-  
 ped: The thing itself, I suppose, may be ex-  
 press'd without them.

THAT Mankind is a Community, that  
 we all stand in a Relation to each other, that  
 there is a publick End and Interest of Society  
 which each Particular is obliged to promote,  
 is the Sum of Morals. Consider then the Pas-  
 sion of Resentment, as given to this one Bo-  
 dy, as given to Society. Nothing can be  
 more manifest, than that Resentment is to  
 be considered as a secondary Passion, placed  
 in us upon Supposition, upon Account of,  
 and with Regard to Injury; not, to be sure,  
 to promote and further it, but to render it,  
 and the Inconveniences and Miseries arising  
 from it, less and fewer than they would be  
 without this Passion. It is as manifest, that  
 the Indulgence of it is, with regard to So-  
 ciety, a painful Means of obtaining these  
 Ends. Considered in itself, it is very unde-  
 sirable, and what Society must very much  
 wish to be without. It is in every Instance  
 absolutely

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absolutely an Evil in itself ; because it implies SERM.  
producing Misery ; And consequently must IX.  
never be indulged or gratified for itself,   
by any one who considers Mankind as a  
Community or Family, and himself as a  
Member of it.

LET us now take this in another View.  
Every natural Appetite, Passion and Affection,  
may be gratified in particular Instances,  
without being subservient to the particular  
chief End, for which these several Principles  
were respectively implanted in our Nature.  
And, if neither this End, nor any other moral  
Obligation be contradicted, such Gratification  
is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are Cases  
in which each of these Principles, this one of  
Resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified,  
without being subservient to what is the main  
End of it : That is, though it does not conduce  
to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting  
that End, or any other Obligation. But the  
Gratification of Resentment, if it be not conducive  
to the End for which it was given us, must necessarily  
contradict, not only the general Obligation to  
Benevolence, but likewise that particular  
End itself. The End, for which it was gi-

SERM. ven, is to prevent or remedy Injury; *i. e.*

IX. the Misery occasioned by Injury; *i. e.* Misery itself: And the Gratification of it consists in producing Misery; *i. e.* in contradicting the End, for which it was implanted in our Nature.

THIS whole Reasoning is built upon the Difference there is between this Passion and all others. No other Principle, or Passion, hath for its End the Misery of our Fellow-creatures. But Malice and Revenge meditates Evil itself; and to do Mischief, to be the Author of Misery, is the very Thing which gratifies the Passion: This is what it directly tends towards, as its proper Design. Other Vices eventually do Mischief: This alone aims at it as an End.

NOTHING can with Reason be urged in Justification of Revenge, from the good Effects which the Indulgence of it were before mentioned \* to have upon the Affairs of the World; because, though it be a remarkable Instance of the Wisdom of Providence to bring Good out of Evil, yet Vice is Vice to him who is guilty of it. "But suppose these good Effects are foreseen:" That is, Suppose

\* Serm. VIII. p. 152.

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 165

pose Reason in a particular Case leads a Man SERM.  
the same Way as Passion? Why then, to be IX.  
sure, he should follow his Reason, in this  
as well as in all other Cases. So that, turn  
the Matter which way ever you will, no  
more can be allowed to this Passion, than  
that hath been already\*.

As to that Love of our Enemies, which is  
commanded; this supposes the general Ob-  
ligation to Benevolence or Good-will to-  
wards Mankind: And this being supposed,  
that Precept is no more than to forgive In-  
juries; that is, to keep clear of those Abuses  
before-mentioned: Because that we have  
the habitual Temper of Benevolence, is taken  
for granted.

R E S E N T M E N T is not inconsistent with  
Good-will: For we often see both together in  
very high Degrees; not only in Parents to-  
wards their Children, but in Cases of Friend-  
ship and Dependance, where there is no na-  
tural Relation. These contrary Passions,  
though they may lessen, do not necessarily  
destroy each other. We may therefore love  
our Enemy, and yet have Resentment a-  
gainst him for his injurious Behaviour to-  
wards us. But when this Resentment in-

M 3 tirely


\* SERM. VIII, p. 151.

SERM. tirely destroys our natural Benevolence to-  
 IX. wards him, it is excessive, and becomes Ma-  
 lice or Revenge. The Command, to pre-  
 vent its having this Effect, *i. e.* to forgive  
 Injuries, is the same as to love our Enemies;  
 because that Love is always supposed, unless  
 destroyed by Resentment.

“ B U T though Mankind is the natural  
 “ Object of Benevolence, yet may it not be  
 “ lessened upon Vice, *i. e.* Injury?” Allow-  
 ed: But if every Degree of Vice or Injury  
 must destroy that Benevolence, then no Man  
 is the Object of our Love; for no Man is  
 without Faults.

“ B U T if lower Instances of Injury may  
 “ lessen our Benevolence, why may not  
 “ higher, or the highest, destroy it?” The  
 Answer is obvious. It is not Man’s being a  
 social Creature, much less his being a moral  
 Agent, from whence *alone* our Obligations  
 to Good-will towards him arise. There is  
 an Obligation to it prior to either of these, a-  
 rising from his being a sensible Creature;  
 that is, capable of Happiness or Misery. Now  
 this Obligation cannot be superseded by his  
 moral Character. What justifies publick  
 Executions is, not that the Guilt or Demerit  
 of the Criminal dispenses with the Obligati-  
 on

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on of Good-will, neither would this justify SERM.  
any Severity; but, that his Life is incon- IX.  
sistent with the Quiet and Happiness of the   
World: That is, a general and more enlarg-  
ed Obligation necessarily destroys a particular  
and more confined one of the same Kind, in-  
consistent with it. Guilt or Injury then does  
not dispense with or supersede the Duty of  
Love and Good-will.

NEITHER does that peculiar Regard to  
ourselves, which was before allowed to be  
natural \* to Mankind, dispense with it: Be-  
cause that can no way innocently heighten  
our Resentment against those who have been  
injurious to ourselves in particular, any o-  
therwise than as it heightens our Sense of the  
Injury or Guilt; and Guilt, though in the  
highest Degree, does not, as hath been shewn,  
dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love  
and Good-will.

IF all this be true, what can a Man say,  
who will dispute the Reasonableness, or  
the Possibility, of obeying the divine Pre-  
cept we are now considering? Let him  
speak out, and it must be thus he will speak.  
“ Mankind, *i. e.* a Creature defective and  
“ faulty, is the proper Object of Good-  
M 4 “ will,

\* Serm. VIII. p. 144.




SERM. " will, whatever his Faults are, when they  
 IX, " respect others ; but not when they re-  
 spect me my self." That Men should be  
*affected* in this Manner, and *act* accordingly,  
 is to be accounted for like other Vices ; but  
 to *assert* that it *ought*, and *must* be thus, is  
 Self-partiality possess'd of the very Under-  
 standing.

THUS Love to our Enemies, and those  
 who have been injurious to us, is so far from  
 being a *Rant*, as it has been prophanelly cal-  
 led, that it is in Truth the Law of our Na-  
 ture, and what every one must see and own,  
 who is not quite blinded with Self-love.

FROM hence it is easy to see, what is the  
 Degree in which we are commanded to  
 love our Enemies, or those who have been  
 injurious to us. It were well if it could  
 as easily be reduced to Practice. It cannot be  
 imagined, that we are required to love them  
 with any peculiar Kind of Affection. But  
 suppose the Person injured to have a due, na-  
 tural Sense of the Injury, and no more ; he  
 ought to be affected towards the injurious  
 Person in the same Way any good Men, un-  
 interested in the Case, would be ; if they  
 had the same just Sense, which we have sup-  
 posed the injured Person to have, of the  
 Fault ;

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Fault: After which there will yet remain SERM.  
real Good-will towards the Offender. IX.


N o w what is there in all this, which   
should be thought impracticable? I am sure  
there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is in-  
deed no more than that we should not in-  
dulge a Passion, which, if generally indulg-  
ed, would propagate itself so as almost to lay  
waste the World: That we should suppress  
that partial, that false Self-love, which is  
the Weakness of our Nature: That Uneasi-  
ness and Misery should not be produced,  
without any good Purpose to be served by it:  
And that we should not be affected towards  
Persons differently from what their Nature  
and Character require.

B U T since to be convinced that any  
Temper of Mind, and Course of Behavi-  
our, is our Duty, and the contrary vicious,  
hath but a distant Influence upon our Tem-  
per and Actions; let me add some few Re-  
flections, which may have a more direct Ten-  
dency to subdue those Vices in the Heart, to  
beget in us this right Temper, and lead us  
to a right Behaviour towards those who have  
offended us: Which Reflections however  
shall be such as will further shew the Ob-  
ligations we are under to it.

N o

SERM. No one, I suppose, would choose to  
IX. have an Indignity put upon him, or to be  
injuriously treated. If then there be any  
Probability of a Misunderstanding in the  
Case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the Injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an Intimation of this Sort might be kindly received, and that People would be glad to find the Injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing Particulars, I take upon me to assure all Persons who think they have received Indignities or injurious Treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a Manner certain, that the Offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar Situation, with respect to Injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our Eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due Distance, *i. e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern That to be in reality Inadvertence and Mistake in our Enemy, which we now fancy we see to be Malice or Scorn. From this proper point of View, we should likewise in all Probability see something of these latter in ourselves,

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ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of SERM.  
the former. Thus the Indignity or Injury IX.  
would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps   
at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-  
love is a Medium of a peculiar Kind: In  
these Cases it magnifies every thing which is  
amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens  
everything amiss in ourselves.


ANGER also or Hatred may be confi-  
dered as another false Medium of viewing  
things, which always represents Characters  
and Actions much worse than they really are.  
Ill-will not only never speaks, but never  
thinks well, of the Person towards whom it  
is exercised. Thus in Cases of Offence and  
Enmity, the whole Character and Behaviour  
is considered with an Eye to that particular  
Part which has offended us, and the whole  
Man appears monstrous, without any thing  
right or human in him: Whereas the Re-  
sentment should surely at least be confined  
to that particular Part of Behaviour which  
gave Offence; since the other Parts of a  
Man's Life and Character stand just the same  
as they did before.

IN general, there are very few In-  
stances of Enmity carried to any length  
but Inadvertency, Misunderstanding, some  
real

SERM. real Mistake of the Case, on one side how-  
 IX. ever, if not on both, has a great Share  
 in it.

IF these things were attended to, these Ill-  
 humours could not be carried to any length  
 amongst good Men, and they would be ex-  
 ceedingly abated amongst all. And one  
 would hope they might be attended to : For  
 all that these Cautions come to, is really no  
 more than desiring, that Things may be con-  
 sidered and judged of as they are in them-  
 selves, that we should have an Eye to, and be-  
 ware of, what would otherwise lead us into  
 Mistakes. So that to make Allowances for In-  
 advertence, Misunderstanding, for the Par-  
 tialities of Self-love, and the false Light which  
 Anger sets things in ; I say, to make Allow-  
 ances for these, is not to be spoken of as an  
 Instance of Humbleness of Mind, or Meek-  
 ness and Moderation of Temper ; but as  
 what common Sense should suggest, to avoid  
 judging wrong of a Matter before us, though  
 Virtue and Morals were out of the Case.  
 And therefore it as much belongs to ill Men,  
 who will indulge the Vice I have been argu-  
 ing against ; as to good Men, who endeavour  
 to subdue it in themselves. In a word, all  
 these Cautions, concerning Anger and Self-  
 love,


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love, are no more than desiring a Man, who S E R M. was looking through a Glass which either IX. magnified or lessened, to take Notice, that  the Objects are not in themselves what they appear through that Medium.

To all these Things one might add, that, Resentment being out of the Case, there is not properly speaking any such Thing as direct Ill-will in one Man towards another: Therefore the first Indignity or Injury, if it be not owing to Inadvertence or Misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular Passions or Self-love: Principles quite distinct from Ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great Man of Antiquity is reported to have said, that, as He never was indulgent to any one Fault in himself, He could not excuse those of others. This Sentence could scarce with Decency come out of the Mouth of any humane Creature. But if we invert the former Part, and put it thus: That He was indulgent to many Faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable; how monstrous would such an Assertion appear? And this is the Case in Respect to every humane Creature, in Proportion


SERMON. portion as He is without the forgiving Spirit

IX. I have been recommending.


**FURTHER**, Though Injury, Injustice, Oppression, the Baseness of Ingratitude, are the natural Objects of Indignation, or if you please of Resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the Objects of Compassion, as they are their own Punishment, and without Repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed Injury to another, but at the same time He did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural Course of our Affections, an Object of Compassion, as well as of Displeasure: And to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in Opposition to Show and Pretence, argues the true Greatness of Mind. We have an Example of Forgiveness in this Way in its utmost Perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is Good, in that Prayer of our Blessed Saviour on the Cross: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

**BUT** *Lastly*, The Offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the Injuries which Men do to each other, are often mentioned together: And, making Allowances

## Forgiveness of Injuries. 175

for the infinite Distance between the Majesty SERM.  
of Heaven, and a frail Mortal, and likewise IX.  
for this, that He cannot possibly be affected or   
moved as we are ; Offences committed by o-  
thers against ourselves, and the Manner in  
which we are apt to be affected with them,  
give a real Occasion for calling to Mind our  
own Sins against God. Now there is an Ap-  
prehension and Pre-sentiment, natural to  
Mankind, that we ourselves shall one Time  
or other be dealt with, as we deal with others ;  
and a peculiar Acquiescence in, and Feeling  
of the Equity and Justice of this equal Distri-  
bution. This natural Notion of Equity the  
Son of *Sirach* has put in the strongest way.  
*\* He that revengeth shall find Vengeance from  
the Lord, and he will surely keep his Sins in  
Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the  
Hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy  
Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One  
Man beareth Hatred against another, and  
doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He  
sheweth no Mercy to a Man which is like him-  
self; and doth He ask Forgiveness of his  
own Sins? Let any one read our Saviour's  
Parable of the King who took Account of his  
Servants †; and the Equity and Rightness  
of*


\* *Ecclus.* xxviii. 1-4.

† *Matth.* xviii.



SERM. of the Sentence, which was passed upon  
 IX. him who was unmerciful to his Fellow-Ser-  
 vant, will be felt. There is somewhat in  
 Humane Nature, which accords to, and falls  
 in with that Method of Determination. Let  
 us then place before our Eyes the Time which  
 is represented in the Parable ; That of our  
 own Death, or the final Judgment. Suppose  
 your selves under the Apprehensions of ap-  
 proaching Death ; that you were just going  
 to appear naked and without Disguise before  
 the Judge of all the Earth, to give an Ac-  
 count of your Behaviour towards your Fel-  
 low-creatures : Could any thing raise more  
 dreadful Apprehensions of that Judgment,  
 than the Reflection that you had been impla-  
 cable, and without Mercy towards those who  
 had offended you : without that forgiving  
 Spirit towards others, which that it may  
 now be exercised towards yourselves, is your  
 only hope ? And these natural Apprehensi-  
 ons are authorized by our Saviour's Applica-  
 tion of the Parable : *So likewise shall my  
 heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from  
 your hearts forgive not every one his Brother  
 their Trespases.* On the other hand, sup-  
 pose a good Man in the same Circumstance,  
 in the last Part and Close of Life ; conscious  
 of

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of many Frailties, as the best are, but con-SERM.  
scious too that He had been meek, forgiving IX.  
and merciful ; that He had in Simplicity of   
Heart been ready to pass over Offences a-  
gainst himself: The having felt this good  
Spirit will give him, not only a full View of  
the Amiability of it, but the surest Hope  
that He shall meet with it in his Judge. This  
likewise is confirmed by his own Declara-  
tion: *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your  
heavenly Father will likewise forgive you.*  
And that we might have a constant Sense  
of it upon our Mind, the Condition is ex-  
press'd in our daily Prayer. A forgiving Spi-  
rit is therefore absolutely necessary, as ever  
we hope for Pardon of our own Sins; as  
ever we hope for Peace of Mind in our dying  
Moments, or for the divine Mercy at that  
Day when we shall most stand in need of it.

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# S E R M O N X.

## *Upon Self-Deceit.*

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2. S A M. xii. 7.

*And Nathan said to David, Thou art the Man.*

**T**H E S E Words are the Application S E R M. X. of Nathan's Parable to David, upon Occasion of his Adultery with  Bathsheba, and the Murder of Uriah her Husband. The Parable, which is related in the most beautiful Simplicity, is this.

\* *There were two Men in one City ; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds : But the poor Man had nothing save one little Ew-Lamb, which he had bought and nourished up : And it grew up together with him,*

N 2

and

SERM. *and with his Children ; it did eat of his  
X. own Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and  
lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a  
Daughter. And there came a Traveller  
unto the rich Man, and he spared to take  
of his own Flock, and of his own Herd, to  
dress for the way-faring Man that was  
come unto him, but took the poor Man's  
Lamb, and dressed it for the Man that was  
come to him. And David's Anger was  
greatly kindled against the Man, and he said  
to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the Man  
that hath done this thing shall surely die.  
And he shall restore the Lamb four-fold,  
because he did this thing, and because he  
had no Pity. David passes Sentence, not  
only that there should be a four-fold Resti-  
tution made ; but he proceeds to the Ri-  
gour of Justice, the Man that hath done  
this thing shall die : And this Judgment is  
pronounced with the utmost Indignation a-  
gainst such an Act of Inhumanity ; As the  
Lord liveth, he shall surely die : and his  
Anger was greatly kindled against the Man.  
And the Prophet answered, Thou art the  
Man. He had been guilty of much greater  
Inhumanity, with the utmost Deliberation,  
Thought and Contrivance. Near a Year  
must*

must have passed, between the Time of the SERM.  
Commission of his Crimes, and the Time X.  
of the Prophet's coming to him ; and it does  
not appear from the Story, that he had in  
all this while the least Remorse or Contri-  
tion.

T H E R E is not any thing, relating to Men and Characters, more surprizing and unaccountable, than this Partiality to themselves, which is observable in many ; as there is nothing of more melancholy Reflection, respecting Morality, Virtue and Religion. Hence it is that many Men seem perfect Strangers to their own Characters. They think, and reason, and judge quite differently upon any Matter relating to themselves, from what they do in Cases of Others where they are not interested. Hence it is one hears People exposing Follies, which they themselves are eminent for ; and talking with great Severity against particular Vices, which, if all the World be not mistaken, they themselves are notoriously guilty of. This Self-ignorance and Self-partiality may be in all different Degrees. It is a lower Degree of it, which *David* himself refers to in these Words, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth ? O cleanse thou me from my secret Faults.* This

SERM. is the Ground of that Advice of *Elibu* to

X. *Job*: Surely it is meet to be said unto God,  
 ~~~~~ That which I see not, teach thou me; if  
 I have done Iniquity, I will do no more. And  
*Solomon* saw this thing in a very strong Light,  
 when he said, He that trusteth his own  
 Heart is a Fool. This likewise was the Rea-  
 son why that Precept, *Know thy self*, was  
 so frequently inculcated by the Philosophers  
 of old. For if it were not for that partial  
 and fond Regard to ourselves, it would cer-  
 tainly be no great Difficulty to know our own  
 Character, what passeth within, the Bent and  
 Bias of our Mind; much less would there  
 be any Difficulty in judging rightly of our  
 own Actions. But from this Partiality it fre-  
 quently comes to pass, that the Observation,  
 of many Men's being themselves last of all  
 acquainted with what falls out in their own  
 Families, may be applied to a nearer Home,  
 to what passeth within their own Breasts.


T H E R E is plainly, in the Generality of  
 Mankind, an Absence of Doubt or Distrust,  
 in a very great Measure, as to their moral  
 Character and Behaviour; and likewise a  
 Disposition to take for granted, that all is  
 right and well with them in these Respects.  
 The former is owing to their not reflect-  
 ing,

ing, not exercising their Judgment upon SERM. themselves; the latter, to Self-love. I am X. not speaking of that Extravagance, which is sometimes to be met with; Instances of Persons declaring in Words at length, that they never were in the wrong, nor had ever any Diffidence to the Justness of their Conduct, in their whole Lives. No, these People are too far gone to have any thing said to them. The thing before us is indeed of this Kind, but in a lower Degree, and confined to the moral Character; somewhat of which we almost all of us have, without reflecting upon it. Now consider how long, and how grossly, a Person of the best Understanding might be imposed upon by one of whom he had not any Suspicion, and in whom he placed an intire Confidence; especially if there were Friendship and real Kindness in the Case: Surely this holds even stronger with respect to that Self we are all so fond of. Hence arises in Men a Disregard of Reproof and Instruction, Rules of Conduct and moral Discipline, which occasionally come in their Way: A Disregard, I say, of these; not in every Respect, but in this single one, namely, as what may be of Service to them in particular towards



SERMON. mending their own Hearts and Tempers, and  
 X. making them better Men. It never in earnest comes into their Thoughts, whether such Admonitions may not relate, and be of Service to themselves; and this quite distinct from a positive Persuasion to the contrary, a Persuasion from Reflection that they are innocent and blameless in those Respects. Thus we may invert the Observation which is somewhere made upon *Brutus*, that he never read but in order to make himself a better Man. It scarce comes into the Thoughts of the Generality of Mankind, that this Use is to be made of moral Reflections which they meet with; that this Use, I say, is to be made of them by Themselves, for every Body observes and wonders that it is not done by Others.

FURTHER, there are Instances of Persons having so fixed and steady an Eye upon their own Interest, whatever they place it in, and the Interest of those whom they consider as themselves, as in a Manner to regard nothing else; their Views are almost confined to this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted with, or in any Propriety of Speech be said to know any thing, but what we attend to. If therefore they attend only to one Side, they

they really will not, cannot see or know what SERM.  
is to be alledged on the other. Though a X.  
Man hath the best Eyes in the World, he   
cannot see any Way but that which he turns  
them. Thus these Persons, without passing  
over the least, the most minute Thing which  
can possibly be urged in Favour of them-  
selves, shall overlook intirely the plainest and  
most obvious Things on the other Side.  
And whilst they are under the Power of this  
Temper, Thought and Consideration up-  
on the Matter before them has scarce any  
Tendency to set them right: Because they  
are engaged; and their Deliberation concern-  
ing an Action to be done, or Reflection up-  
on it afterwards, is not to see whether it be  
right, but to find out Reasons to justify or  
palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to  
themselves.

IN some there is to be observed a general  
Ignorance of themselves, and wrong Way of  
thinking and judging in every thing relating  
to themselves; their Fortune, Reputation,  
every thing in which Self can come in:  
And this perhaps attended with the rightest  
Judgment in all other Matters. In others  
this Partiality is not so general, has not ta-  
ken hold of the whole Man, but is confined  
to

S E R M. to some particular favourite Passion, Interest  
 X. or Pursuit; suppose Ambition, Covetous-  
 ness, or any other. And these Persons may  
 probably judge and determine what is perfectly  
 just and proper, even in things in which  
 they themselves are concerned, if these things  
 have no Relation to their particular favourite  
 Passion or Pursuit. Hence arises that  
 amazing Incongruity, and seeming Incon-  
 sistency of Character, from whence slight  
 Observers take it for granted, that the Whole  
 is hypocritical and false; not being able o-  
 therwise to reconcile the several Parts:  
 Whereas in truth there is real Honesty, so  
 far as it goes. There is such a thing as  
 Men's being honest to such a Degree, and  
 in such Respects, but no further. And this,  
 as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to  
 be taken Notice of, and allowed them; such  
 general and undistinguishing Censure of their  
 whole Characters, as designing and false, be-  
 ing one main thing which confirms them in  
 their Self-deceit. They know that the whole  
 Censure is not true; and so take for granted  
 that no Part of it is.

B U T to go on with the Explanation of  
 the thing itself: Vice in general consists in  
 having an unreasonable and too great Re-  
 gard

gard to ourselves, in Comparison of others. SERM.  
Robbery and Murder is never from the Love X.  
of Injustice or Cruelty, but to gratify some  
other Passion, to gain some supposed Ad-  
vantage : And it is false Selfishness alone,  
whether cool or passionate, which makes a  
Man resolutely pursue that End, be it ever  
so much to the Injury of another. But  
whereas, in common and ordinary Wicked-  
ness, this Unreasonableness, this Partiality  
and Selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to  
the Temper and Passions ; in the Characters  
we are now considering, it reaches to the  
Understanding, and influences the very Judg-  
ment \*. And, besides that general want of  
Distrust

\* That peculiar Regard for ourselves which frequently produces this Partiality of Judgment in our own Favour, may have a quite contrary Effect, and occasion the utmost Diffidence and Distrust of Ourselves ; were it only, as it may set us upon a more frequent and strict Survey and Review of our own Character and Behaviour. This Search or Recollection itself implies somewhat of Diffidence ; and the Discoveries we make, what is brought to our View, may possibly increase it. Good-will to Another may either blind our Judgment, so as to make us overlook his Faults ; or it may put us upon exercising that Judgment with greater strictness, to see whether he is so faultless and perfect as we wish him. If that peculiar Regard to Ourselves leads us to examine our own Character with this greater Severity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the most commendable Turn of Mind possible, and can scarce be to Excess. But if, as every Thing hath its Counterfeit, we are so much employed about ourselves

SERM. Distrust and Diffidence concerning our own

X. Character, there are, you see, two things  
 which may thus prejudice and darken the  
 Understanding itself: That Over-fondness  
 for ourselves, which we are all so liable to;  
 and also being under the Power of any par-  
 ticular Passion or Appetite, or engaged in any  
 particular Pursuit. And these, especially the  
 last of the two, may be in so great a Degree,  
 as to influence our Judgment, even of other  
 Persons and their Behaviour. Thus a Man,  
 whose Temper is formed to Ambition or  
 Covetousness, shall even approve of them  
 sometimes in others.

THIS seems to be in a good Measure the  
 Account of Self-partiality and Self-deceit,  
 when traced up to its original. Whether it  
 be, or be not thought satisfactory, That  
 there is such a thing is manifest; and that it  
 is the Occasion of great Part of the unrea-  
 sonable Behaviour of Men towards each o-  
 ther: That by means of it they palliate their  
 Vices and Follies to themselves: and that it  
 prevents

ourselves in order to Disguise what is amiss, and to make a  
 better Appearance; or if our Attention to ourselves has chiefly  
 this Effect; it is liable to run up into the greatest Weakness  
 and Excess, and is like all other Excesses its own Disappoint-  
 ment: For scarce any show themselves to Advantage, who  
 are over-sollicitous of doing so.

prevents their applying to themselves those S E R M.  
 Reproofs and Instructions, which they meet X.  
 with either in Scripture or in moral and re-  
 ligious Discourses, though exactly suitable to  
 the State of their own Mind, and the Course  
 of their Behaviour. There is one thing fur-  
 ther to be added here, that the Temper we  
 distinguish by Hardness of Heart with respect  
 to others, joined with this Self-partiality,  
 will carry a Man almost any Lengths of  
 Wickedness, in the Way of Oppression, hard  
 Usage of others, and even to plain Injustice ;  
 without his having, from what appears, any  
 real Sense at all of it. This indeed was not  
 the general Character of *David*: For he  
 plainly gave Scope to the Affections of Com-  
 passion and Good-will, as well as to his Pas-  
 sions of another Kind.

B U T as some Occasions and Circumstan-  
 ces lie more open to this Self-deceit, and  
 give it greater Scope and Opportunities than  
 others, these require to be particularly men-  
 tioned.

I T is to be observed then, that as there  
 are express determinate Acts of Wickedness,  
 such as Murder, Adultery, Theft: So on the  
 other hand, there are numberless Cases in  
 which the Vice and Wickedness cannot be  
 exactly

SERM. exactly defined ; but consists in a certain

X. general Temper and Course of Action, or in  
 the neglect of some Duty, suppose Charity  
 or any other, whose Bounds and Degrees are  
 not fixed. This is the very Province of  
 Self-deceit and Self-partiality : Here it go-  
 verns without Check or Controul. “ For  
 “ what Commandment is there broken ? Is  
 “ there a Transgression where there is no  
 “ Law ? a Vice which cannot be defined ? ”

W H O E V E R will consider the whole  
 Commerce of Humane Life, will see that a  
 great Part, perhaps the greatest Part, of the  
 Intercourse amongst Mankind, cannot be re-  
 duced to fixed determinate Rules. Yet in  
 these Cases there is a Right and a Wrong :  
 A merciful, a liberal, a kind and compassio-  
 nate Behaviour, which surely is our Duty ;  
 and an unmerciful contracted Spirit, an hard  
 and oppressive Course of Behaviour, which  
 is most certainly immoral and vitious. But  
 who can define precisely, wherein that con-  
 tracted Spirit and hard Usage of others con-  
 sist, as Murder and Theft may be defined ?  
 There is not a Word in our Language, which  
 expresses more detestable Wickedness than  
*Oppression* : Yet the Nature of this Vice  
 cannot be so exactly stated, nor the Bounds

of it so determinately marked, as that we SERM. shall be able to say in all Instances, where X. rigid Right and Justice ends, and Oppression begins. In these Cases there is great Latitude left, for every one to determine for, and consequently to deceive himself. It is chiefly in these Cases that Self-deceit comes in; as every one must see that there is much larger Scope for it here, than in express, single, determinate Acts of Wickedness. However it comes in with respect to the *Circumstances* attending the most gross and determinate Acts of Wickedness. Of this, the Story of *David*, now before us, affords the most astonishing Instance. It is really prodigious, to see a Man, before so remarkable for Virtue and Piety, going on deliberately from Adultery to Murder, with the same cool Contrivance, and, from what appears, with as little Disturbance, as a Man would endeavour to prevent the ill Consequences of a Mistake he had made in any common Matter. That total Insensibility of Mind with respect to those horrid Crimes, after the Commission of them, manifestly shews that he did some way or other delude himself: And this could not be with respect to the Crimes themselves, they were so manifestly



SERM. feftly of the groffest Kind. What the particular Circumftances were, with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himself, is not related.

HAVING thus explained the Nature of internal Hypocrify and Self-deceit, and remarked the Occasions upon which it exerts itself; there are feveral Things further to be observed concerning it: That all of the Sources, to which it was traced up, are sometimes observable together in one and the fame Person; But that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher Degree, in some, and others of them are fo in others: That in general it is a complicated Thing; and may be in all different Degrees and Kinds: That the Temper itfelf is essentially in its own Nature vitious and immoral. It is Unfairness; it is Dishonesty; it is Falſeneſs of Heart: And is therefore fo far from extenuating Guilt, that it is itfelf the greateſt of all Guilt in Proportion to the Degree it prevails; for it is a Corruption of the whole moral Character in its Principle. Our Understanding, and Senſe of Good and Evil, is the Light and Guide of Life: *If therefore this Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great*

*great is that Darknefs?* \* For this Reason SERM.  
our Saviour puts an *evil Eye* as the direct X.  
opposite to a *single Eye*; the Absence of  
that Simplicity, which these last Words im-  
ply, being itself evil and vitious. And whilst  
Men are under the Power of this Temper,  
in Proportion still to the Degree they are so,  
they are fortified on every Side against Con-  
viction: And when they hear the Vice and  
Folly of what is in Truth their own Course  
of Life, exposed in the justest and strongest  
Manner, they will often assent to it, and e-  
ven carry the Matter further; persuading  
themselves, one does not know how, but  
some Way or other persuading themselves,  
that they are out of the Case, and that it  
hath no Relation to them. Yet, notwith-  
standing this, there *frequently appears* a Sus-  
picion, that all is not right, or as it should be;  
and perhaps there *is always* at bottom some-  
what of this Sort. There are doubtless many  
Instances of the Ambitious, the Revengeful,  
the Covetous, and those whom with too  
great Indulgence we only call the Men of  
Pleasure, who will not allow themselves to  
think how guilty they are, who explain and

O

argue

\* Matth. vi. 23.

SERM. argue away their Guilt to Themselves : And

X. though they do really impose upon Themselves in some Measure, yet there are none of them but have, if not a proper Knowledge, yet at least, an implicit Suspicion, where the Weakness lies, and what Part of their Behaviour they have Reason to wish unknown or forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good Sense, and thorough Integrity, carry along with them a peculiar Consciousness of their own Genuineness: There is a Feeling belonging to them, which does not accompany their Counterfeits, Error, Folly, Half-Honesty, partial and slight Regards to Virtue and Right, so far only as they are consistent with that Course of Gratification which Men happen to be set upon. And, if this be the Case; it is much the same, as if we should suppose a Man to have had a general View of some Scene, enough to satisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and then to shut his Eyes, that he might not have a particular or distinct View of its several Deformities. It is as easy to close the Eyes of the Mind, as those of the Body : And the former is more frequently done with Wilfulness, and yet not attended to, than the latter ; the Actions of the Mind being more  
quick

quick and transient, than those of the Senses. SERM.  
This may be further illustrated by another X.  
thing observable in ordinary Life. It is not  
uncommon for Persons, who run out their  
Fortunes, intirely to neglect looking into the  
State of their Affairs, and this from a gene-  
ral Knowledge, that the Condition of them  
is bad. These extravagant People are per-  
petually ruined before they themselves ex-  
pected it: And they tell you for an Ex-  
cuse, and tell you truly, that they did not  
think they were so much in Debt, or that  
their Expences so far exceeded their Income.  
And yet no one will take this for an Excuse,  
who is sensible that their Ignorance of their  
particular Circumstances was owing to their  
general Knowledge of them; that is, their  
general Knowledge, that Matters were not  
well with them, prevented their looking in-  
to Particulars. There is somewhat of the  
like Kind with this in Respect to Morals,  
Virtue, and Religion. Men find that the  
Survey of themselves, their own Heart and  
Temper, their own Life and Behaviour,  
doth not afford them Satisfaction: things  
are not as they should be: Therefore they  
turn away, will not go over Particulars, or  
look deeper, lest they should find more

SERM. amiss. For who would choose to be put  
 X. out of Humour with himself? No one surely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be more thoroughly and better pleased with himself for the future.

IF this sincere Self-Enjoyment and Home-Satisfaction be thought desirable, and worth some Pains and Diligence ; the following Reflections will, I suppose, deserve your Attention ; as what may be of Service and Assistance to all who are in any Measure honestly disposed, for avoiding that fatal Self-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themselves.

THE *first* is, that those who have never had any Suspicion of, who have never made Allowances for this Weakness in themselves, who have never (if I may be allowed such a manner of speaking) caught themselves in it, may almost take for granted that they have been very much misled by it. For consider : Nothing is more manifest, than that Affection and Passion of all Kinds influence the Judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater Regard to ourselves than to others, as the private Affection is more prevalent than the publick ; the former will have proportionally a greater Influence upon

on the Judgment, upon our Way of considering things. People are not backward in owning this Partiality of Judgment, in Cases of Friendship and natural Relation. The Reason is obvious, why it is not so readily acknowledged, when the Interest which misleads us is more confined, confined to ourselves : But we all take Notice of it in each other in these Cases. There is not any Observation more common, than that there is no judging of a Matter from hearing only one Side. This is not founded upon Supposition, at least it is not always, of a formed Design in the Relater to deceive : For it holds in Cases, where he expects that the Whole will be told over again by the other Side. But the Supposition, which this Observation is founded upon, is the very thing now before us ; namely, that Men are exceedingly prone to deceive themselves, and judge too favourably in every Respect, where Themselves, and their own Interest are concerned. Thus, though we have not the least Reason to suspect that such an interested Person hath any Intention to deceive us, yet we of Course make great Allowances for his having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every

SERM. Man can think himself an Exception, and  
 X. that he is free from this Self-partiality. The  
 direct contrary is the Truth. Every Man  
 may take for granted that he has a great deal  
 of it, till, from the strictest Observation up-  
 on himself, he finds particular Reason to think  
 otherwise.

*Secondly,* There is one easy and almost  
 sure Way to avoid being misled by this Self-  
 partiality, and to get acquainted with our  
 real Character: To have regard to the suspi-  
 cious Part of it, and keep a steady Eye over  
 ourselves in that Respect. Suppose then a  
 Man fully satisfied with himself, and his own  
 Behaviour; such an one, if you please, as  
 the Pharisee in the Gospel, or a better Man—  
 Well, but allowing this good Opinion you  
 have of your self to be true, yet every one is  
 liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then  
 an Enemy were to set about defaming you,  
 what Part of your Character would he sin-  
 gle out? What particular Scandal, think  
 you, would he be most likely to fix upon  
 you? And what would the World be most  
 ready to believe? There is scarce a Man  
 living but could, from the most transient  
 superficial View of himself, answer this  
 Question. What is that ill Thing, that faulty  
 Behaviour,

Behaviour, which I am apprehensive an ENE-SERM. my, who was thoroughly acquainted with X. me, would be most likely to lay to my Charge, and which the World would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a Man may not be guilty in that Respect. All that I say is, let him in Plainness and Honesty fix upon that Part of his Character for a particular Survey and Reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that Respect, and how far he is one or the other.


*Thirdly*, It would very much prevent our being misled by this Self-partiality, to reduce that practical Rule of our Saviour, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, even so do unto them*, to our Judgment, and Way of thinking. This Rule, you see, consists of two Parts. One is, to substitute another for yourself, when you take a Survey of any Part of your Behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any Occasion: The other Part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; consider yourself as the Person affected by such a Behaviour, or towards whom such an Action is done: And then you would not only see, but like-



SE R M.wise feel, the Reasonableness or Unreason-  
 X. ableness of such an Action or Behaviour.

But alas, the Rule itself may be dishonestly applied: There are Persons, who have not Impartiality enough with respect to themselves, nor regard enough for others, to be able to make a just Application of it. This just Application, if Men would honestly make it, is in Effect all that I have been recommending; it is the whole Thing, the direct contrary to that inward Dishonesty as respecting our Intercourse with our Fellow-creatures. And even the Bearing this Rule in their Thoughts, may be of some Service; the Attempt thus to apply it, is an Attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may chance unawares to shew them to themselves, to shew them the Truth of the Case they are considering.

UPON the whole it is manifest, that there is such a thing as this Self-partiality and Self-deceit: That in some Persons it is to a Degree which would be thought incredible, were not the Instances before our Eyes; of which the Behaviour of *David* is perhaps the highest possible one, in a single particular Case; for there is not the least Appearance, that it reached his general

nal Character: That we are almost all of SERM.  
us influenced by it in some Degree, and X.  
in some Respects: That therefore every one   
ought to have an Eye to and beware of it.  
And all that I have further to add upon  
this Subject is, that either there is a Diffe-  
rence between Right and Wrong, or there  
is not: Religion is true, or it is not. If it  
be not, there is no Reason for any Con-  
cern about it: But if it be true, it requires  
real Fairness of Mind and Honesty of Heart,  
And, if People will be wicked, they had  
better of the two be so from the common  
vicious Passions without such Refinements,  
than from this deep and calm Source of De-  
lusion; which undermines the whole Princi-  
ple of Good; darkens that Light, that *Candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct  
our Steps; and corrupts Conscience, which  
is the Guide of Life.



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# SERMON XI.


*Upon the Love of our Neighbour.*

Preached on *Advent* Sunday.

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R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment,  
it is briefly comprehended in this Saying,  
namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as  
thy self.*

**I**T is commonly observed, that there is SERMON.  
a Disposition in Men to complain of XI.  
the Vitioufness and Corruption of the   
Age in which they live, as greater than that  
of former ones; which is usually followed  
with this further Observation, that Man-  
kind has been in that respect much the same  
in all Times. Now not to determine whether  
this last be not contradicted by the Accounts  
of

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SERMON of History ; thus much can scarce be doubt-

XI.  ed, that Vice and Folly takes different Turns, and some particular Kinds of it are more open and avowed in some Ages than in others: And, I suppose, it may be spoken of as very much the Distinction of the present, to profess a contracted Spirit, and greater Regards to Self-interest, than appears to have been done formerly. Upon this Account it seems worth while to inquire, whether private Interest is likely to be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which Self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other Principles ; or whether the contracted Affection may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own End, private Good.

AND since further, there is generally thought to be some peculiar Kind of Contrariety between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour, between the Pursuit of publick and of private Good ; insomuch that when you are recommending one of these, you are supposed to be speaking against the other ; and from hence arises a secret Prejudice against, and frequently open Scorn of all Talk of publick Spirit, and real Good-will to our Fellow-creatures ; it will


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will be necessary to *inquire what Respect* SERM.  
*Benevolence hath to Self-love, and the Pur-* XI.  
*suit of private Interest, to the Pursuit of pub-*  
*lick:* Or whether there be any thing of that  
peculiar Inconsistence and Contrariety between  
them, over and above what there is between  
Self-love and other Passions and particular  
Affections, and their respective Pursuits.

T H E S E Inquiries, it is hoped, may be fa-  
vourably attended to: For there shall be all  
possible Concessions made to the favourite  
Passion, which hath so much allowed to it,  
and whose Cause is so universally pleaded:  
It shall be treated with the utmost Tenderneſs,  
and Concern for its Interests.

I N order to this, as well as to determine  
the forementioned Questions, it will be ne-  
cessary to *consider the Nature, the Object and*  
*End of that Self-love, as distinguished from*  
*other Principles or Affections in the Mind,*  
*and their respective Objects.*

E V E R Y Man hath a general Desire of his  
own Happiness; and likewise a Variety of  
particular Affections, Passions and Appetites  
to particular external Objects. The former  
proceeds from, or is Self-love; and seems  
inseparable from all sensible Creatures, who  
can reflect upon themselves and their own  
**Interest**

SE R M. Interest or Happiness, so as to have that In-  
 XI. terest an Object to their Minds : What is to  
 be said of the latter is, that they proceed  
 from, or together make up that particular  
 Nature, according to which Man is made.  
 The Object the former pursues is some-  
 what internal, our own Happiness, Enjoy-  
 ment, Satisfaction ; whether we have, or  
 have not a distinct particular Perception what  
 it is, or wherein it consists : The Objects of  
 the latter are this or that particular exter-  
 nal Thing, which the Affections tend to-  
 wards, and of which it hath always a par-  
 ticular Idea or Perception. The Principle  
 we call Self-love never seeks any Thing ex-  
 ternal for the sake of the Thing, but only  
 as a Means of Happiness or Good : Particu-  
 lar Affections rest in the external Things  
 themselves. One belongs to Man as a rea-  
 sonable Creature reflecting upon his own  
 Interest or Happiness. The other, though  
 quite distinct from Reason, are as much a  
 Part of Humane Nature.

T H A T all particular Appetites and Passi-  
 ons are towards *external Things themselves*,  
 distinct from the *Pleasure arising from them*,  
 is manifested from hence ; that there could  
 not be this Pleasure, were it not for that  
 prior

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prior Suitableness between the Object and SERM.  
the Passion: There could be no Enjoyment XI.  
or Delight from one Thing more than another, from eating Food more than from swallowing a Stone, if there were not an Affection or Appetite to one thing more than another.

EVERY particular Affection, even the Love of our Neighbour, is as really our own Affection, as Self-love; and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification is as much my own Pleasure, as the Pleasure Self-love would have, from knowing I my self should be happy some time hence, would be my own Pleasure. And if, because every particular Affection is a Man's own, and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification his own Pleasure, or Pleasure to himself, such particular Affection must be called Self-love; according to this way of speaking, no Creature whatever can possibly act but merely from Self-love; and every Action and every Affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one Principle. But then this is not the Language of Mankind: Or if it were, we should want Words to express the Difference, between the Principle of an Action, proceeding from cool Consideration that it will  
be



SERM. be to my own Advantage; and an Action;

XI. suppose of Revenge, or of Friendship, by which  
 a Man runs upon certain Ruin, to do Evil  
 or Good to another. It is manifest the Prin-  
 ciples of these Actions are totally different,  
 and so want different Words to be distin-  
 guished by: All that they agree in is, that  
 they both proceed from, and are done to  
 gratify an Inclination in a Man's Self. But  
 the Principle or Inclination in one Case is  
 Self-love; in the other, Hatred or Love of  
 another. There is then a Distinction be-  
 tween the cool Principle of Self-love, or ge-  
 neral Desire of our own Happiness, as one  
 Part of our Nature, and one Principle of  
 Action; and the particular Affections to-  
 wards particular external Objects; as ano-  
 ther Part of our Nature, and another Princi-  
 ple of Action. How much soever therefore  
 is to be allowed for Self-love, yet it cannot  
 be allowed to be the Whole of our inward  
 Constitution; because, you see, there are  
 other Parts or Principles which come into it.

FURTHER, private Happiness or Good  
 is all which Self-love can make us desire, or  
 be concerned about: In having this consists  
 its Gratification: It is an Affection to our-  
 selves; a Regard to our own Interest, Hap-  
 piness

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piness, and private Good : And in the Pro-<sup>SERM.</sup>portion a Man hath this, he is interested, or <sup>XI.</sup> a Lover of himself. Let this be kept in Mind ; because there is commonly, as I shall presently have Occasion to observe, another Sense put upon these Words. On the other Hand, particular Affections tend towards particular external things : These are their Objects : Having these is their End : In this consists their Gratification : No Matter whether it be, or be not, upon the Whole, our Interest or Happiness. An Action done from the former of these Principles is called an interested Action. An Action proceeding from any of the latter has its Denomination of passionate, ambitious, friendly, revengeful, or any other, from the particular Appetite or Affection from which it proceeds. Thus Self-love as one Part of Humane Nature, and the several particular Principles as the other Part, are, Themselves, their Objects and Ends, stated and shewn.

F R O M hence it will be easy to see, how far, and in what Ways, each of these can contribute and be subservient to the private Good of the Individual. Happiness does not consist in Self-love. The Desire of Happiness is

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SERM. no more the Thing itself, than the Desire of

XI. Riches is the Possession or Enjoyment of  
them. People may love themselves with  
the most entire and unbounded Affection,  
and yet be extremely miserable. Neither  
can Self-love any way help them out, but  
by setting them on work to get rid of the  
Causes of their Misery, to gain or make use  
of those Objects which are by Nature a-  
dapted to afford Satisfaction. Happiness or  
Satisfaction consists only in the Enjoyment  
of those Objects, which are by Nature suited  
to our several particular Appetites, Passi-  
ons and Affections. So that if Self-love  
wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room  
for any other Principle, there can be abso-  
lutely no such thing at all as Happiness, or  
Enjoyment of any Kind whatever ; since  
Happiness consists in the Gratification of par-  
ticular Passions, which supposes the having  
of them. Self-love then does not consti-  
tute *This* or *That* to be our Interest or  
Good ; but, our Interest or Good being con-  
stituted by Nature and supposed, Self-love  
only puts us upon obtaining and securing it.  
Therefore, if it be possible, that Self-love  
may prevail and exert itself in a Degree  
or Manner which is not subservient to  
this


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this End; then it will not follow, that our Interest will be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which that Principle engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay further, the private and contracted Affection, when it is not subservient to this End private Good, may, for any thing that appears, have a direct contrary Tendency and Effect. And if we will consider the Matter, we shall see that it often really has. *Disengagement* is absolutely necessary to Enjoyment: And a Person may have so steady and fixed an Eye upon his own Interest, whatever he places it in, as may hinder him from *attending* to many Gratifications within his reach, which others have their Minds *free* and *open* to. Over-fondness for a Child is not generally thought to be for its Advantage: And, if there be any Guess to be made from Appearances, surely that Character we call Selfish is not the most promising for Happiness. Such a Temper may plainly be and exert itself in a Degree and Manner which may give unnecessary and useless Sollicitude and Anxiety, in a Degree and Manner which may prevent obtaining the Means and Materials of Enjoyment, as well as the making use of them. Immoderate Self-love does very

SERM.

XI.

SERM. ill consult its own Interest: And, how much

XI.  foever a Paradox it may appear, it is certainly true, that even from Self-love we should endeavour to get over all inordinate Regard to, and Consideration of ourselves. Every one of our Passions and Affections hath its natural Stint and Bound, which may easily be exceeded; whereas our Enjoyments can possibly be but in a determinate Measure and Degree. Therefore such Excess of the Affection, since it cannot procure any Enjoyment, must in all Cases be useless; but is generally attended with Inconveniences, and often is downright Pain and Misery. This holds as much with regard to Self-love as to all other Affections. The natural Degree of it, so far as it sets us on work to gain and make use of the Materials of Satisfaction, may be to our real Advantage; but beyond or besides this, it is in several Respects an Inconvenience and Disadvantage. Thus it appears, that private Interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which Self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other Principles; that *the contracted Affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself,*

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*and even contradict its own End, private* SERM.  
*Good.* XI.

“ B U T who, except the most fordidly Co-  
“ vetous, ever thought there was any Ri-  
“ valship between the Love of Greatness,  
“ Honour, Power, or between sensual Ap-  
“ petites, and Self-love? No, there is a per-  
“ fect Harmony between them. It is by  
“ means of these particular Appetites and  
“ Affections that Self-love is gratified in En-  
“ joyment, Happiness and Satisfaction. The  
“ Competition and Rivalship is between  
“ Self-love, and the Love of our Neighbour :  
“ That Affection which leads us out of our-  
“ selves, makes us regardless of our own  
“ Interest, and substitute that of another in  
“ its stead.” Whether then there be any  
peculiar Competition and Contrariety in this  
Case, shall now be considered.

S E L F-L O V E and Interestedness was sta-  
ted to consist in or be an Affection to our-  
selves, a Regard to our own private Good :  
It is therefore distinct from Benevolence,  
which is an Affection to the Good of our  
Fellow-creatures. But that Benevolence is  
distinct from, that is, not the same thing with  
Self-love, is no Reason for its being looked  
upon with any peculiar Suspicion ; because

SERM. every Principle whatever, by means of which

XI. Self-love is gratified, is distinct from it: And  
 all things which are distinct from each other,  
 are equally so. A Man has an Affection or  
 Aversion to another: That one of these  
 tends to and is gratified by doing Good,  
 that the other tends too and is gratified by  
 doing Harm, does not in the least alter the  
 Respect which either one or the other of  
 these inward Feelings has to Self-love. We  
 use the Word *Property* so as to exclude a-  
 ny other Persons having an Interest in that  
 of which we say a particular Man has the  
 Property. And we often use the Word  
*Selfish* so as to exclude in the same Manner  
 all Regards to the Good of Others. But the  
 Cases are not parallel: For though That  
 Exclusion is really Part of the Idea of Pro-  
 perty; yet such positive Exclusion, or bring-  
 ing this peculiar Disregard to the Good of  
 Others into the Idea, or Self-love, is in reali-  
 ty adding to the Idea of changing it from  
 what it was before stated to consist in, name-  
 ly, in an Affection to Ourselves\*. This  
 being the whole Idea of Self-love, it can no  
 otherwise exclude Good-will or Love of O-  
 thers, than merely by not including it, no  
 otherwise,

\* p. 208.

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otherwise, than it excludes Love of Arts or SERM.  
Reputation, or of any thing else. Neither on XI.  
the other hand does Benevolence, any more  
than Love of Arts or of Reputation, exclude  
Self-love. Love of our Neighbour then has  
just the same Respect to, is no more distant  
from Self-love, than Hatred of our Neigh-  
bour, or than Love or Hatred of any thing  
else. Thus the Principles, from which Men  
rush upon certain Ruin for the Destruction  
of an Enemy, and for the Preservation of a  
Friend, have the same Respect to the private  
Affection, and are equally interested, or e-  
qually disinterested : And it is of no Avail,  
whether they are said to be one or the o-  
ther. Therefore to those who are shocked  
to hear Virtue spoken of as disinterested, it  
may be allowed that it is indeed absurd to  
speak thus of it ; unless Hatred, several par-  
ticular Instances of Vice, and all the com-  
mon Affections and Aversions in Mankind,  
are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is  
there any less Inconsistence, between the  
Love of inanimate Things, or of Creatures  
meerly sensitive, and Self-love ; than be-  
tween Self-love, and the Love of our Neigh-  
bour ? Is Desire of and Delight in the Hap-  
piness of another any more a Diminution of




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S E R M. Self-love, than Desire of and Delight in the

XI. Esteem of another? They are both equally  
 ~~~~~ Desire of and Delight in somewhat external  
 to ourselves: Either both or neither are so.  
 The Object of Self-love is expressed in the  
 Term, Self: And every Appetite of Sense,  
 and every particular Affection of the Heart,  
 are equally interested or disinterested, be-  
 cause the Objects of them all are equally  
 Self or somewhat else. Whatever Ridicule  
 therefore the mention of a disinterested  
 Principle or Action may be supposed to lie  
 open to, must, upon the Matter being thus  
 stated, relate to Ambition, and every Ap-  
 petite and particular Affection, as much as  
 to Benevolence. And indeed all the Ridi-  
 cule, and all the grave Perplexity, of which  
 this Subject hath had its full Share, is meerly  
 from Words. The most intelligible Way of  
 speaking of it seems to be this: That Self-  
 love, and the Actions done in consequence  
 of it (for these will presently appear to be  
 the same as to this Question) are interested;  
 that particular Affections towards external  
 Objects, and the Actions done in conse-  
 quence of those Affections, are not so. But  
 every one is at Liberty to use Words as he  
 pleases. All that is here insisted upon is,  
 that

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that Ambition, Revenge, Benevolence, all SERM. particular Passions whatever, and the Acti- XI. ons they produce, are equally interested or  disinterested.

**T H U S** it appears that there is no peculiar Contrariety between Self-love and Benevolence; no greater Competition between these, than between any other particular Affections and Self-love. This relates to the Affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar Contrariety between the respective Courses of Life which these Affections lead to; whether there be any greater Competition between the Pursuit of private and of publick Good, than between any other particular Pursuits and that of private Good.

**T H E R E** seems no other Reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar Contrariety, but only that the Courses of Action which Benevolence leads to, has a more direct Tendency to promote the Good of Others, than that Course of Action which Love of Reputation, suppose, or any other particular Affection leads to. But that any Affection tends to the Happiness of Another, does not hinder its tending to one's own Happiness too. That Others enjoy the Benefit

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SERM. next of the Air and the Light of the Sun;  
 XI. does not hinder but that these are as much  
 ~~~~~ one's own private Advantage now, as they  
 would be if we had the Property of them  
 exclusive of all Others. So a Pursuit which  
 tends to promote the Good of Another, yet  
 may have as great Tendency to promote pri-  
 vate Interest, as a Pursuit which does not  
 tend to the Good of Another at all, or which  
 is Mischievous to him. All particular Af-  
 fections whatever, Resentment, Benevo-  
 lence, Love of Arts, equally lead to a  
 Course of Action for their own Grati-  
 fication, *i. e.* the Gratification of Our-  
 selves; and the Gratification of each gives  
 Delight: So far then 'tis manifest they  
 have all the same Respect to private Inte-  
 rest. Now take into Consideration further  
 concerning these three Pursuits, that the  
 End of the first is the Harm, of the second,  
 the Good of Another, of the last, somewhat  
 indifferent; and is there any Necessity, that  
 these additional Considerations should alter  
 the Respect, which we before saw these  
 three Pursuits had to private Interest; or  
 render any one of them less conducive to it,  
 than any other? Thus One Man's Affecti-  
 on is to Honour as his End; in order to ob-  
 tain

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tain which, he thinks no Pains too great. SERM.  
Suppose another with such a Singularity of XI.  
Mind, as to have the same Affection to pub-  
lick Good as his End, which he endeavours  
with the same Labour to obtain. In Case  
of Success, surely the Man of Benevolence  
hath as great Enjoyment as the Man of Am-  
bition; they both equally having the End  
their Affections, in the same Degree, tend-  
ed to: But in Case of Disappointment, the  
benevolent Man has clearly the Advantage;  
since endeavouring to do Good considered  
as a Virtuous Pursuit, is gratified by its own  
Consciousness, *i. e.* is in a Degree its own  
Reward.

AND as to these two, or Benevolence and  
any other particular Passions whatever, con-  
sidered in a further View, as forming a gene-  
ral Temper, which more or less disposes us  
for Enjoyment of all the common Bles-  
sings of Life, distinct from their own Grati-  
fication: Is Benevolence less the Temper of  
Tranquillity and Freedom than Ambition or  
Covetousness? Does the benevolent Man  
appear less easy with himself, from his Love  
to his Neighbour? Does he less relish his  
Being? Is there any peculiar Gloom seated  
on his Face? Is his Mind less open to Enter-  
tainment,

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S E R M. tainment, to any particular Gratification ?

XI. Nothing is more manifest, than that being in  
Good-humour, which is Benevolence whilst  
it lasts, is itself the Temper of Satisfaction and  
Enjoyment.

S U P P O S E then a Man sitting down to  
consider how he might be come most easy to  
himself, and attain the greatest Pleasure he  
could ; all that which is his real natural  
Happiness. This can only consist in the  
Enjoyment of those Objects, which are by  
Nature adapted to our several Faculties.  
These particular Enjoyments make up the  
Sum Total of our Happiness : And they are  
supposed to arise from Riches, Honours,  
and the Gratification of sensual Appetites :  
Be it so : Yet none profess themselves so  
completely happy in these Enjoyments, but  
that there is room left in the Mind for others,  
if they were presented to them : Nay these,  
as much as they engage us, are not thought  
so high, but that Humane Nature is capable  
even of greater. Now there have been Per-  
sons in all Ages, who have profess'd that  
they found Satisfaction in the Exercise of  
Charity, in the Love of their Neighbour, in  
endeavouring to promote the Happiness of  
all they had to do with, and in the Pursuit  
of

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of what is just and right and good, as the general Bent of their Mind, and End of their Life; and that doing an Action of Baseness or Cruelty, would be as great Violence to *their* Self, as much breaking in upon their Nature, as any external Force. Persons of this Character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the View of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher Sense the Object of Reverence and of Love, than all the World besides; and therefore they could have no more Enjoyment from a wicked Action done under his Eye, than the Persons to whom they are making their Apology could, if all Mankind were the Spectators of it; and that the Satisfaction of approving themselves to His unerring Judgment, to whom they thus refer all their Actions, is a more continued settled Satisfaction than any this World can afford; as also that they have, no less than Others, a Mind free and open to all the common innocent Gratifications of it, such as they are. And if we go no further, does there appear any Absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a Man cannot find his Account in this general Course of Life, as much as in the most unbounded Ambition,


SERM.

XI.



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SERMON. Ambition, and the Excesses of Pleasure? Or

XI.  that such a Person has not consulted so well for Himself, for the Satisfaction and Peace of his own Mind, as the ambitious or dissolute Man? And though the Consideration, that God himself will in the End justify their Taste, and support their Cause, is not formally to be insisted upon here; yet thus much comes in, that all Enjoyments whatever are much more clear and unmixed from the Assurance that they will end well. Is it certain then that there is nothing in these Pretensions to Happiness? especially when there are not wanting Persons, who have supported themselves with Satisfaction of this Kind in Sickness, Poverty, Disgrace, and in the very Pangs of Death; whereas it is manifest all other Enjoyments fail in these Circumstances. This surely looks suspicious of having somewhat in it. Self-love methinks should be alarmed. May she not possibly pass over greater Pleasures, than those she is so wholly taken up with?

THE short of the Matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the Gratification of certain Affections Appetites, Passions, with Objects which are by Nature adapted to them. Self-love may indeed set us on


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work to gratify these : But Happiness or SERM.  
Enjoyment has no immediate Connection XI.  
with Self-love, but arises from such Gra-  
tification alone. Love of our Neighbour is  
one of those Affections. This, considered as  
a *virtuous Principle*, is gratified by a Con-  
sciousness of *endeavouring* to promote the  
Good of others; but considered as a natu-  
ral Affection, its Gratification consists in the  
actual Accomplishment of this Endeavour.  
Now Indulgence or Gratification of this Af-  
fection, whether in that Consciousness, or  
this Accomplishment, has the same Respect  
to Interest, as Indulgence of any other Af-  
fection; they equally proceed from or do  
not proceed from Self-love, they equally in-  
clude or equally exclude this Principle. Thus  
it appears, that *Benevolence and the Pursuit  
of publick Good hath at least as great Re-  
spect to Self-love and the Pursuit of private  
Good, as any other particular Passions, and  
their respective Pursuits.*

NEITHER is Covetousness, whether as  
a Temper or Pursuit, any Exception to this.  
For if by Covetousness is meant the Desire  
and Pursuit of Riches for their own Sake,  
without any Regard to, or Consideration of  
the Uses of them; this hath as little to do  
with



SERM. with Self-love, as Benevolence hath. But by

XI.  this Word is usually meant, not such Madness and total Distraction of Mind, but immoderate Affection to and Pursuit of Riches as Possessions in order to some further End: namely, Satisfaction, Interest, or Good. This therefore is not a particular Affection, or particular Pursuit, but it is the general Principle of Self-love, and the general Pursuit of our own Interest; for which Reason, the Word, Selfish, is by every one appropriated to this Temper and Pursuit. Now as it is ridiculous to assert, that Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour are the same; so neither is it asserted, that following these different Affections hath the same Tendency and Respect to our own Interest. The Comparison is not between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour; between Pursuit of our own Interest, and the Interest of others: But between the several particular Affections in Humane Nature towards external Objects, as one Part of the Comparison; and the one particular Affection to the Good of our Neighbour, as the other Part of it: And it has been shewn, that all these have the same Respect to Self-love and private Interest.

T H E R E

THERE is indeed frequently an Inconfist-SERM.  
ence or Interfering, between Self-love or XI.  
private Interest, and the several particular  
Appetites, Passions, Affections, or the Pur-  
suits they lead to. But this Competition or  
Interfering is meerly accidental; and hap-  
pens much oftener between Pride, Revenge,  
sensual Gratifications, and private Interest,  
than between private Interest and Benevo-  
lence. For nothing is more common, than  
to see Men give themselves up to a Passion  
or an Affection to their known Prejudice  
and Ruin, and in direct contradiction to ma-  
nifest and real Interest, and the loudest Calls  
of Self-love: Whereas the seeming Compe-  
titions and Interfering, between Benevolence  
and private Interest, relate much more to  
the Materials or Means of Enjoyment, than  
to Enjoyment itself. There is often an in-  
terfering in the former, when there is none  
in the latter. Thus as to Riches: So much  
Money as a Man gives away, so much less  
will remain in his Possession. Here is a real  
interfering. But though a Man cannot pos-  
sibly give without lessening his Fortune, yet  
there are Multitudes might give without les-  
sening their own Enjoyment; because they  
may have more than they can turn to any

Q

real

SERM. real Use or Advantage to themselves. Thus

XI  
 ~~~~~  
 the more Thought and Time any one employs about the Interests and Good of others, he must necessarily have less to attend his own; but he may have so ready and large a Supply of his own Wants, that such Thought might be really useless to himself, though of great Service and Assistance to Others.

THE general Mistake, that there is some greater Inconsistence between endeavouring to promote the Good of Another and Self-interest, than between Self-interest and pursuing any thing else seems, as hath already been hinted, to arise from our Notions of Property; and to be carried on by this Property's being supposed to be itself our Happiness or Good. People are so very much taken up with this one Subject, that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other things that they have nothing to do with. Hence, in a confused and slight way, it might well be taken for granted, that Another's having no Interest in an Affection (*i. e.* his Good not being the Object of it) renders, as one may speak, the Proprietor's  
 I Interest


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Interest in it greater; and that if Another SERM.  
had an Interest in it, this would render his XI.  
less, or occasion that such Affection could  
not be so friendly to Self-love, or conducive  
to private Good, as an Affection or Pursuit  
which has not a Regard to the Good of A-  
nother. This I say might be taken for  
granted, whilst it was not attended to, that  
the Object of every particular Affection is  
equally somewhat external to Ourselves;  
and whether it be the Good of another Par-  
son, or whether it be any other external  
thing, makes no Alteration with Regard to  
its being one's own Affection, and the Gra-  
tification of it one's own private Enjoy-  
ment. And so far as 'tis taken for granted,  
that barely having the Means and Materials  
of Enjoyment is what constitutes Interest and  
Happiness; that our Interest or Good con-  
sists in Possessions themselves, in having the  
Property of Riches, Houses, Lands, Gardens,  
not in the Enjoyment of them; so far 'twill  
even more strongly be taken for granted,  
in the Way already explained, that an Af-  
fection's conducing to the Good of another;  
must even necessarily occasion it to conduce  
less to private Good, if not to be positively  
Q 2 detrimental

SERM. detrimental to it. For, if Property and Happiness are one and the same thing, as by increasing the Property of another, you lessen your own Property, so by promoting the Happiness of another you must lessen your own Happiness. But whatever occasioned the Mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one; as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar Rivalship or Competition between Self-love and Benevolence; that as there may be a Competition between these two, so there may also between any particular Affection whatever and Self-love; that every particular Affection, Benevolence among the rest, is subservient to Self-love by being the Instrument of private Enjoyment; and that in one Respect Benevolence contributes more to private Interest, *i. e.* Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than any other of the particular common Affections, as it is in a Degree its own Gratification.

AND to all these Things may be added, That Religion, from whence arises our strongest Obligation to Benevolence, is so far from disowning the Principle of Self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very Principle, and always to the Mind in that State when Reason presides; and there can

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no Access be had to the Understanding, but SERM.  
by convincing Men, that the Course of Life XI.  
we would persuade them to is not contrary   
to their Interest. It may be allowed, with-  
out any Prejudice to the Cause of Virtue and  
Religion, that our Ideas of Happiness and  
Misery are of all our Ideas the nearest and  
most important to us; that they will, nay,  
if you please, that they ought to prevail over  
those of Order, and Beauty, and Harmony,  
and Proportion, if there should ever be, as  
it is impossible there ever should be, any In-  
consistence between them: Though these  
last too, as expressing the Fitness of Acti-  
ons, are real as Truth itself. Let it be al-  
lowed, though Virtue or moral Rectitude  
does indeed consist in Affection to and Pur-  
suit of what is Right and Good, as such;  
yet, that when we sit down in a cool Hour,  
we can neither justify to ourselves this or  
any other Pursuit, till we are convinced that  
it will be for our Happiness, or at least not  
contrary to it.

COMMON Reason and Humanity will  
have some Influence upon Mankind, what-  
ever becomes of Speculations: But, so far as  
the Interests of Virtue depend upon the The-  
ory of it being secured from open Scorn,

S E R M. so far its very Being in the World depends  
 XI. upon its appearing to have no Contrariety to  
 private Interest and Self-love. The foregoing  
 Observations therefore, it is hoped, may  
 have gained a little Ground in Favour of the  
 Precept before us ; the particular Explanati-  
 on of which, shall be the Subject of the next  
 Discourse.

I WILL conclude at present, with ob-  
 serving the peculiar Obligation which we are  
 under to Virtue and Religion, as enforced in  
 the Verses following the Text, in the Epistle  
 for the Day, from our Saviour's coming in-  
 to the World. *The Night is far spent,  
 the Day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off  
 the Works of Darkness, and let us put on  
 the Armour of Light, &c.* The Meaning  
 and Force of which Exhortation is, that  
 Christianity lays us under new Obligations  
 to a good Life, as by it the Will of God is  
 more clearly revealed, and as it affords ad-  
 ditional Motives to the Practice of it, over  
 and above those which arise out of the Na-  
 ture of Virtue and Vice ; I might add, as  
 our Saviour has set us a perfect Example of  
 Goodness in our own Nature. Now Love  
 and Charity is plainly the Thing in which he  
 hath placed his Religion ; in which there-  
 fore,

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fore, as we have any Pretence to the Name SERM.  
of Christians, we must place ours. He XI.  
hath at once enjoined it upon us by Way of   
Command with peculiar Force; and by his  
Example, as having undertaken the Work  
of our Salvation out of pure Love and Good-  
will to Mankind. The Endeavour to set  
home this Example upon our Minds is a  
very proper Employment of this Season,  
which is bringing on the Festival of his  
Birth: Which as it may teach us many ex-  
cellent Lessons of Humility, Resignation,  
and Obedience to the Will of God; so there  
is none it recommends with greater Autho-  
rity, Force and Advantage, than this of Love  
and Charity; since it was *for us Men, and  
for our Salvation, that he came down from  
Heaven, and was incarnate, and was made  
Man; that he might teach us our Duty,*  
and more especially that he might enforce  
the Practice of it, reform Mankind, and fi-  
nally bring us to that *eternal Salvation,* o  
which *he is the Author to all those that obey  
him.*





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# S E R M O N XII.

*Upon the Love of our Neighbour.*

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R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment,  
it is briefly comprehended in this Saying,  
namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy  
self.*

**H**AVING already removed the Pre-SERM.  
judices against publick Spirit, or the XII.  
Love of our Neighbour, on the Side  
of private Interest and Self-love; I proceed  
to the particular Explanation of the Precept  
before us, by shewing, *Who is our Neigh-  
bour : In what Sense we are required to  
love him as ourselves : The Influence such  
Love would have upon our Behaviour in Life :*  
And lastly, *How this Commandment compre-  
prehends in it all others.*

I. T H E

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SERM. I. THE Objects and due Extent of this Affection will be understood by attending to the Nature of it, and to the Nature and Circumstances of Mankind in this World. The Love of our Neighbour is the same with Charity, Benevolence, or Good-will: It is an Affection to the Good and Happiness of our Fellow-creatures. This implies in it a Disposition to produce Happiness: And this is the simple Notion of Goodness, which appears so amiable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the Perfection of Goodness consists in Love to the whole Universe. This is the Perfection of Almighty God.

BUT as Man is so much limited in his Capacity, as so small a Part of the Creation comes under his Notice and Influence, and as we are not used to consider things in so general a Way, it is not to be thought of, that the Universe should be the Object of Benevolence to such Creatures as we are. Thus in that Precept of our Saviour, \* *Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*, the Perfection of the Divine Goodness is proposed to our Imitation as it is promiscuous, and extends to the Evil

as

\* Matth. v. 48.

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as well as the Good ; not as it is absolutely SERM.  
universal, Imitation of it in this Respect be- XII.  
ing plainly beyond us. The Object is too   
vast. For this Reason moral Writers also have  
substituted a less general Object for our Be-  
nevolence, Mankind. But this likewise  
is an Object too general, and very much  
out of our View. Therefore Persons more  
practical have, instead of Mankind, put our  
Country ; and made the Principle of Vir-  
tue, of Humane Virtue, to consist in the  
intire uniform Love of our Country : And  
this is what we call a publick Spirit ; which  
in Men of publick Stations is the Character  
of a Patriot. But this is speaking to the up-  
per Part of the World. Kingdoms and  
Governments are large ; and the Sphere of  
Action of far the greatest Part of Man-  
kind is much narrower than the Govern-  
ment they live under : Or however, com-  
mon Men do not consider their Actions as  
affecting the whole Community of which  
they are Members. There plainly is want-  
ing a less general and nearer Object of Be-  
nevolence for the Bulk of Men, than that  
of their Country. Therefore the Scripture,  
not being a Book of Theory and Specula-  
tion, but a plain Rule of Life for Mankind,  
has


SERM. has with the utmost possible Propriety put  
 XII. the Principle of Virtue upon the Love of  
 our Neighbour; which is that Part of the  
 Universe, that Part of Mankind, that Part  
 of our Country, which comes under our im-  
 mediate Notice, Acquaintance and Influence,  
 and with which we have to do.

THIS is plainly the true Account or Rea-  
 son, why our Saviour places the Principle of  
 Virtue in the Love of our *Neighbour*; and  
 the Account itself shows who are compre-  
 hended under that Relation.

II. LET us now consider in what Sense  
 we are commanded to love our Neighbour *as  
 ourselves*.

THIS Precept, in its first Delivery by our  
 Saviour, is thus introduced: *Thou shalt love  
 the Lord thy God with all thine Heart,  
 with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength;  
 and thy Neighbour as thy self*. These very  
 different Manners of Expression do not lead  
 our Thoughts to the same Measure or De-  
 gree of Love, common to both Objects; but  
 to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then,  
 which is to be supposed, a distinct Meaning  
 and Propriety in the Words, *as thy self*;  
 the Precept we are considering will admit of  
 any of these Senses: That we bear the *same  
 Kind*

*Love of our Neighbour.* 237

*Kind of Affection to our Neighbour, as we* SEEM.  
do to ourselves : Or, that the Love we bear **XII.**  
to our Neighbour should have *some certain*   
*Proportion or other* to Self-love : Or, lastly,  
that it should bear the particular Proportion of  
*Equality, that it be in the same Degree.*


*First,* The Precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the *same Kind* of Affection to our Fellow-creatures, as to ourselves : That, as every Man has the Principle of Self-love, which disposes him to avoid Misery, and consult his own Happiness; so we should cultivate the Affection of Good-will to our Neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same Kind of Regard to him. This at least must be commanded : And this will not only prevent our being injurious to him, but will also put us upon promoting his Good. There are Blessings in Life, which we share in common with others ; Peace, Plenty, Freedom, healthful Seasons. But real Benevolence to our Fellow-creatures would give us the Notion of a common Interest in a stricter Sense : For in the Degree we love one another, his Interest, his Joys and Sorrows, are our own. It is from Self-love that we form the Notion of private Good, and consider it as our  
own :

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**S E R M O N** : Love of our Neighbour would teach  
**XII.** us thus to appropriate to ourselves his Good  
 and Well-fare ; to consider ourselves as ha-  
 ving a real Share in his Happiness. Thus  
 the Principle of Benevolence would be an  
 Advocate within our own Breasts, to take  
 care of the Interests of our Fellow-Creatures  
 in all the interfering and Competitions  
 which cannot but be, from the Imperfection  
 of our Nature, and the State we are in. It  
 would likewise, in some Measure, lessen that  
 interfering ; and hinder Men from forming  
 so strong a Notion of private Good, exclusive  
 of the Good of others, as we commonly do.  
 Thus, as the private Affection makes us in  
 a peculiar Manner sensible of Humanity,  
 Justice, or Injustice, when exercised towards  
 ourselves ; Love of our Neighbour would  
 give us the same Kind of Sensibility in his  
 Behalf. This would be the greatest Security  
 of our uniform Obedience to that most  
 equitable Rule ; *Whatsoever ye would that Men  
 should do unto you, do ye even so unto  
 them.*

A L L this is indeed no more than that we  
 should have a real Love to our Neighbour :  
 But then, which is to be observed, the  
 Words, *as thy self* ; express this in the most  
 distinct

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distinct Manner, and determine the Precept SER M.  
to relate to the Affection itself. The Advan- XII.  
tage, which this Principle of Benevolence   
has over other remote Considerations, is that  
it is itself the Temper of Virtue; and like-  
wise, that it is the chief, nay the only ef-  
fectual Security of our performing the fe-  
veral Offices of Kindness, we owe to our  
Fellow-creatures. When from distant Con-  
siderations Men resolve upon any thing to  
which they have no liking, or perhaps an  
Averseness, they are perpetually finding out  
Evasions and Excuses; which need never be  
wanting, if People look for them: And they  
equivocate with themselves in the plainest  
Cases in the World. This may be in respect  
to single determinate Acts of Virtue: But  
it comes in much more, where the Obliga-  
tion is to a general Course of Behaviour;  
and most of all, if it be such as cannot be  
reduced to fixed determinate Rules. This  
Observation may account for the Diversity  
of the Expression, in that known Passage of  
the Prophet *Micah*: *To do justly, and to  
love Mercy.* A Man's Heart must be form-  
ed to Humanity and Benevolence, he must  
*love Mercy*, otherwise he will not act mer-  
cifully in any settled Course of Behaviour.

As



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SERM. As Consideration of the future Sanctions of

XII. Religion is our only Security of persevering  
in our Duty, in Cases of great Temptations:  
So to get our Heart and Temper formed to  
a Love and Liking of what is Good, is ab-  
solutely necessary in order to our behaving  
rightly in the familiar and daily Intercourses  
amongst Mankind.

*Secondly,* The Precept before us may be  
understood to require, that we love our  
Neighbour in some certain *Proportion*  
or other, *according as* we love ourselves.  
And indeed a Man's Character cannot be de-  
termined by the Love he bears to his Neigh-  
bour, considered absolutely : But the Pro-  
portion which this bears to Self-love, whe-  
ther it be attended to or not, is the chief  
thing which forms the Character, and in-  
fluences the Actions. For, as the Form of  
the Body is a Composition of various Parts ;  
so likewise our inward Structure is not sim-  
ple or uniform, but a Composition of vari-  
ous Passions, Appetites, Affections, together  
with Rationality ; including in this last both  
the Discernment of what is right, and a Dis-  
position to regulate ourselves by it. There is  
greater Variety of Parts in what we call a  
Character, than there are Features in a Face :  
And

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And the Morality of That is no more deter-SERM.  
mined by one Part, than the Beauty or De-XII.  
formity of This is by one single Feature :  
Each is to be judged of by all the Parts or  
Features, not taken singly, but together. In  
the inward Frame the various Passions, Ap-  
petites, Affections, stand in different Re-  
spects to each other. The Principles in our  
Mind may be contradictory, or Checks and  
Allays only, or Incentives and Assistants to  
each other. And Principles, which in their  
Nature have no Kind of Contrariety or Affi-  
nity, may yet accidentally be each other's  
Allays or Incentives.

FROM hence it comes to pass, that though  
we were able to look into the inward Con-  
texture of the Heart, and see with the great-  
est Exactness in what Degree any one Prin-  
ciple is in a particular Man ; we could not  
from thence determine, how far that Prin-  
ciple would go towards forming the Cha-  
racter, or what Influence it would have upon  
the Actions, unless we could likewise dis-  
cern what other Principles prevailed in him,  
and see the Proportion which that one bears  
to the others. Thus, though two Men should  
have the Affection of Compassion in the  
same Degree exactly ; yet one may have the

R


Princi-

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S E R M. Principle of Resentment, or of Ambition so  
 XII. strong in him, as to prevail over that of Com-  
 ~~~~~ passion, and prevent its having any Influ-  
 ence upon his Actions ; so that he may de-  
 serve the Character of an hard or cruel Man :  
 Whereas the other, having Compassion in  
 just the same Degree only, yet having Re-  
 sentment or Ambition in a lower Degree, his  
 Compassion may prevail over them, so as to  
 Influence his Actions, and to denominate his  
 Temper compassionate. So that, how strange  
 soever it may appear to People who do not  
 attend to the thing, yet it is quite manifest,  
 that, when we say one Man is more Resent-  
 ing or Compassionate than another, this  
 does not necessarily imply that one has the  
 Principle of Resentment or of Compassion  
 stronger than the other. For if the Pro-  
 portion, which Resentment or Compassion  
 bears to other inward Principles, is greater  
 in one than in the other ; this is itself suffi-  
 cient to denominate one more Resenting or  
 Compassionate than the other.

F U R T H E R, the whole System as I may  
 speak, of Affections, (including Rationality)  
 which constitute the Heart, as this Word is  
 used in Scripture and on moral Subjects,  
 are each and all of them stronger in some  
 than

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than in others. Now the Proportion which S E R M.  
the two general Affections, Benevolence and XII.  
Self-love, bear to each other, according to   
this Interpretation of the Text, denominates  
Men's Character as to Virtue. Suppose then  
one Man to have the Principle of Benevo-  
lence in an higher Degree than another : It  
will not follow from hence, that his general  
Temper or Character or Actions will be more  
Benevolent than the other's. For he may  
have Self-love in such a Degree as quite to  
prevail over Benevolence ; so that it may  
have no Influence at all upon his Actions ;  
Whereas Benevolence in the other Person,  
though in a lower Degree, may yet be the  
strongest Principle in his Heart ; and strong  
enough to be the Guide of his Actions, so  
as to denominate him a good and virtuous  
Man. The Case is here as in Scales : It is  
not one Weight, considered in itself, which  
determines whether the Scale shall ascend or  
descend ; but this depends upon the Propor-  
tion, which that one Weight hath to the  
other.

IT being thus manifest that the Influence  
which Benevolence has upon our Actions,  
and how far it goes towards forming our  
Character, is not determined by the Degree

S E R M. itself of this Principle in our Mind; but

XII. the Proportion it has to Self-love and other Principles: A Comparison also being made in the Text between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour; these joint Considerations afforded sufficient occasion for treating here of that Proportion: It plainly is implied in the Precept, though it should be questioned whether it be the exact Meaning of the Words, *as thy Self*.

L O V E of our Neighbour then must bear some Proportion to Self-love, and Virtue to be sure consists in the due Proportion. What this due Proportion is, whether as a Principle in the Mind, or as exerted in Actions, can be judged of only from our Nature and Condition in this World. Of the Degree in which Affections and the Principles of Action, considered in themselves, prevail, we have no Measure: Let us then proceed to the Course of Behaviour, the Actions they produce.

B O T H our Nature and Condition require, that each particular Man should make particular Provision for himself: And the Inquiry, what Proportion Benevolence should have to Self-love, when brought down to Practice, will be, what is a competent Care

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and Provision for ourselves. And how cer-  
tain soever it be, that each Man must deter-  
mine this for himself; and how ridiculous  
soever it would be, for any to attempt to  
determine it for Another: yet it is to be ob-  
served, that the Proportion is real; and that  
a competent Provision has a Bound; and  
that it cannot be all which we can possibly  
get and keep within our Grasp, without le-  
gal Injustice. Mankind almost universally  
bring in, Vanity, Supplies for what is cal-  
led a Life of Pleasure, Covetousness, or  
imaginary Notions of Superiority over O-  
thers, to determine this Question: But eve-  
ry one who desires to act a proper Part in  
Society, would do well to consider, how  
far any of them come in to determine it,  
in the Way of Moral Consideration. All  
that can be said is, supposing, what, as the  
World goes, is so much to be supposed that  
'tis scarce to be mentioned, that Persons do  
not neglect what they really owe to Them-  
selves; the more of their Care and Thought,  
and of their Fortune they employ in doing  
Good to their Fellow-creatures, the nearer  
they come up to the Law of Perfection *Thou  
shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.*

R 3

*Thirdly,*

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S E R M. *Thirdly*, If the Words, *as thy self*, were to

XII. be understood of an Equality of Affection ;  
 it would not be attended with those Consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a Person to have the same settled Regard to Others, as to Himself ; that in every deliberate Scheme or Pursuit He took their Interest into the Account in the same Degree as his own, so far as an Equality of Affection would produce this ; Yet He would in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about Himself, and his own Concerns ; than about Others, and their Interests. For, besides the one common Affection toward Himself and his Neighbour, He would have several other particular Affections, Passions, Appetites, which he could not possibly feel in common both for Himself and Others : Now these Sensations themselves very much employ us ; and have perhaps as great Influence, as Self-love. So far indeed as Self-love, and cool Reflection upon what is for our Interest, would set us on work to gain a Supply of our own several Wants ; so far the Love of our Neighbour would make us do the same for him : But the Degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the Means  
 of

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of Gratification, by the feeling of those Affections, Appetites and Passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves. SERM. XII.

THAT there are particular Passions, (suppose Shame, Resentment) which Men seem to have, and feel in common both for Themselves and Others, makes no Alteration in Respect to those Passions and Appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence, (and perhaps more things of the like Kind might be mentioned,) it follows, that though there were an Equality of Affection to both, yet Regards to Ourselves would be more prevalent than Attention to the Concerns of Others.

AND from moral Considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the Equality of Affection commanded: Because we are in a peculiar manner, as I may speak, entrusted with ourselves; and therefore Care of our own Interests, as well as of our Conduct, particularly belongs to us.

To these things must be added, that moral Obligations can extend no further than to natural Possibilities. Now we have a Perception of our own Interests, like Consciousness of our own Existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its Continuation,



SERMON. ation, Kind, and Degree, seems impossible  
 XII. to be felt in respect to the Interests of O-  
 ~~~~~thers.


FROM all these Things it fully appears, that though we were to love our Neighbour in the same Degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the Care of ourselves, of the Individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended Danger of which seems to be the only Objection against understanding the Precept in this strict Sense.

III. THE general Temper of Mind which the due Love of our Neighbour would form us to, and the Influence it would have upon our Behaviour in Life, is now to be considered.

THE Temper and Behaviour of Charity is explained at large, in that known Passage of St. Paul \* : *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things.* As to the Meaning of the Expressions, *seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, believeth all things*; however those Expressions may be explained a-  
 way,

\* 1 Cor. xiii.

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way, this Meekness, and, in some Degree SERM.  
Easiness of Temper, Readiness to forego XII.  
our Right for the sake of Peace as well as in   
the Way of Compassion, Freedom from  
Mistrust, and Disposition to believe well of  
our Neighbour, this general Temper, I say,  
accompanies and is plainly the Effect of Love  
and Good-will. And, though such is the  
World in which we live, that Experience  
and Knowledge of it, not only may, but  
must beget in us greater Regard to ourselves,  
and Doubtfulness of the Characters of O-  
thers, than is natural to Mankind; yet these  
ought not to be carried further than the Na-  
ture and Course of things make necessary.  
It is still true, even in the present State of  
things, bad as it is, that a real good Man  
had rather be deceived, than be suspicious;  
had rather forego his known Right, than  
run the Venture of doing even a hard thing.  
This is the general Temper of that Charity,  
of which the Apostle asserts, that if he had  
it not, giving his *Body to be burned would a-  
vail him nothing*; and which, he says, *shall  
never fail.*

THE happy Influence of this Temper ex-  
tends to every different Relation and Cir-  
cumstance in Humane Life. It plainly ren-  
ders

SERM. ders a Man better, more to be desired, as  
 XII. to all the Respects and Relations we can  
 stand in to each other. The benevolent  
 Man is disposed to make use of all external  
 Advantages in such a Manner, as shall contribute to the Good of Others, as well as to his own Satisfaction. His own Satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind to his Dependants, compassionate to the Poor and Distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good Neighbour, Parent, Master, Magistrate : And such a Behaviour would plainly make Dependance, Inferiority, and even Servitude, easy. So that a good or charitable Man of superiour Rank in Wisdom, Fortune, Authority, is a common Blessing to the Place he lives in ; Happiness grows under his Influence. This good Principle in Inferiours would discover itself in paying Respect, Gratitude, Obedience, as due. It were therefore methinks one just way of trying one's own Character, to ask ourselves, Am I, in reality a better Master or Servant, a better Friend, a better Neighbour, than such and such Persons ; whom, perhaps, I may think not to deserve the Character of Virtue and Religion so much as my self?

A N D

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A N D as to the Spirit of Party, which un-  
happily prevails amongst Mankind, what-  
ever are the Distinctions which serve for a  
Supply to it, some or other of which have  
obtained in all Ages and Countries : One,  
who is thus friendly to his Kind, will im-  
mediately make due Allowances for it, as  
what cannot but be amongst such Creatures  
as Men, in such a World as this. And as  
Wrath and Fury and Overbearing upon these  
Occasions proceed, as I may speak, from  
Men's feeling only on their own Side : So  
a common Feeling, for others as well as for  
ourselves, would render us sensible to this  
Truth, which it is strange can have so lit-  
tle Influence ; that we ourselves differ from  
others, just as much as they do from us. I  
put the Matter in this Way, because it can  
scarce be expected that the Generality of Men  
should see, that those things, which are made  
the Occasions of Diffension and fomenting  
the Party-Spirit, are really nothing at all :  
But it may be expected from all People,  
how much soever they are in earnest about  
their respective Peculiarities, that Human-  
ity, and common Good-will to their Fellow-  
creatures, should moderate and restrain that  
wretched Spirit.

T H I S

SERM. THIS good Temper of Charity likewise

XII. would prevent Strife and Enmity arising from other Occasions: It would prevent our giving just Cause of Offence, and our taking it without Cause. And in Cases of real Injury, a good Man will make all Allowances which are to be made; and, without any Attempts of Retaliation, he will only consult his own and other Men's Security for the future, against Injustice and Wrong.

IV. I PROCEED to consider lastly, what is affirmed of the Precept now explained, That it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.* that to love our Neighbour as ourselves includes in it all Virtues.

NOW the Way in which every Maxim of Conduct, or general Speculative Assertion, when it is to be explained at large, should be treated, is, to show what are the particular Truths which were designed to be comprehended under such a general Observation, how far it is strictly true; and then the Limitations, Restrictions, and Exceptions, if there be Exceptions, with which it is to be understood. But it is only the former of these, namely, how far the Assertion in the Text holds, and the Ground of the Pre-eminence assigned to the Precept of it, which

in

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in strictness comes into our present Consideration. SERM. XII.

HOWEVER, in almost every thing that is said, there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of Course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a Restriction or Limitation. Thus, when Benevolence is said to be the Sum of Virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind Propension, but as a Principle in reasonable Creatures, and so to be directed by their Reason: For Reason and Reflection comes into our Notion of a moral Agent. And That will lead us to consider distant Consequences, as well as the immediate Tendency of an Action: It will teach us, that the Care of some Persons, suppose Children and Families, is particularly committed to our Charge by Nature and Providence; as also that there are other Circumstances, suppose Friendship or former Obligations, which require that we do good to some, preferably to others. Reason, considered merely as subservient to Benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest Good, will teach us to have particular Regard to these Relations and Circumstances; because it is plainly for the Good of the World

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SERM. World that they should be regarded. And

XII. as there are numberless Cases, in which, notwithstanding Appearances, we are not competent Judges, whether a particular Action will upon the Whole do Good or Harm; Reason in the same Way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these Cases of Uncertainty. It will suggest to our Consideration, which is the safer Side; how liable we are to be led wrong by Passion and private Interest; and what Regard is due to Laws, and the Judgment of Mankind. All these things must come into Consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest Good. Thus, upon Supposition that it were in the strictest Sense true, without Limitation, that Benevolence includes in it all Virtues; yet Reason must come in as its Guide and Director, in order to attain its own End, the End of Benevolence, the greatest publick Good. Reason then being thus included, let us now consider the Truth of the Assertion itself.

*First,* It is manifest that nothing can be of Consequence to Mankind or any Creature, but Happiness. This then is all which any Person can, in strictness of speaking, be

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be said to have a Right to. We can there-  
fore *owe no Man any thing*, but only to  
further and promote his Happiness, ac-  
cording to our Abilities. And therefore a  
Disposition and Endeavour to do Good to  
all with whom we have to do, in the De-  
gree and Manner which the different Rela-  
tions we stand in to them require, is a Dis-  
charge of all the Obligations we are under to  
them.

As Humane Nature is not one simple uni-  
form Thing, but a Composition of various  
Parts; Body, Spirit, Appetites, particular  
Passions and Affections; for each of which  
reasonable Self-love would lead Men to have  
due Regard, and make suitable Provision:  
So Society consists of various Parts, to which  
we stand in different Respects and Relati-  
ons; and just Benevolence would as surely  
lead us to have due Regard to each of these,  
and behave as the respective Relations re-  
quire. Reasonable Good-will, and right Be-  
haviour towards our Fellow-creatures, are in  
a Manner the same: Only that the former  
expresseth the Principle as it is in the Mind;  
the latter, the Principle as it were become  
external, *i. e.* exerted in Actions.

AND

SERM.  
XII.



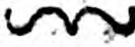


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SERM. AND so far as Temperance, Sobriety, and  
 XII. Moderation in sensual Pleasures, and the  
 contrary Vices, have any Respect to our Fellow-creatures, any Influence upon their Quiet, Welfare, and Happiness; as they always have a real, and often a near Influence upon it; so far it is manifest those Virtues may be produced by the Love of our Neighbour, and that the contrary Vices would be prevented by it. Indeed, if Men's Regard to themselves will not restrain them from Excess; it may be thought little probable, that their Love to others will be sufficient: But the Reason is, that their Love to others is not, any more than their Regard to themselves, just, and in its due Degree. There are however manifest Instances of Persons kept sober and temperate from Regard to their Affairs, and the Welfare of those who depend upon them. And it is obvious to every one, that habitual Excess, a dissolute Course of Life, implies a general neglect of the Duties we owe towards our Friends, our Families and our Country.

FROM hence it is manifest that the common Virtues, and the common Vices of Mankind, may be traced up to Benevolence,  
 or

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or the want of it. And this intitles the SERM.  
Precept, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as* XII.  
*thy self,* to the Pre-eminence given to it;   
and is a Justification of the Apostle's Assertion, that all other Commandments are comprehended in it; whatever Cautions and Restrictions \* there are, which might require

\* For Instance: As we are not competent Judges, what is upon the whole for the Good of the World; there may be other immediate Ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing Good, or producing Happiness. Though the Good of the Creation be the only End of the Author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular Obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a Perception, that the Observance or Violation of them is for the Happiness or Misery of our Fellow-creatures. And this is in Fact the Case. For there are certain Dispositions of Mind, and certain Actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by Mankind, abstracted from the Consideration of their Tendency to the Happiness or Misery of the World; approved or disapproved by Reflection, by that Principle within, which is the Guide of Life, the Judge of Right and Wrong. Numberless Instances of this Kind might be mentioned. There are Pieces of Treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are Actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general Name given them than Indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to Humane Nature. There is such a thing as Meanness, a little Mind; which, as it is quite distinct from Incapacity, so it raises a Dislike and Disapprobation quite different from that Contempt, which Men are too apt to have, of meer Folly. On the other Hand; what we call Greatness of Mind, is the Object of another Sort of Approbation, than superiour Understanding. Fidelity, Honour, strict Justice, are themselves approved in the highest Degree, abstracted from the Consideration

SERM. require to be considered, if we were to  
 XII. state particularly and at length, what is  
 ~~~~~ Virtue and right Behaviour in Mankind.  
 But,

*Secondly*, IT might be added, that in a higher and more general Way of Consideration, leaving out the particular Nature of Creatures, and the particular Circumstances in which they are placed, Benevolence seems in the strictest Sense to include in it all that is Good and Worthy; all that is Good, which we have any distinct particular Notion of. We have no clear Conception of any positive moral Attribute in the supream Being, but what may be resolved up into Goodness. And, if we consider a reasonable Creature or moral Agent, without Regard to the particular Relations and Circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive any thing else to come in towards determining

of their Tendency. Now, whether it be thought that each of these are connected with Benevolence in Our Nature, and so may be considered as the same thing with it; or whether some of them be thought an inferiour Kind of Virtues and Vices, somewhat like natural Beauties and Deformities; or lastly, plain Exceptions to the general Rule; thus much however is certain, that the things now instanced in, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by Mankind in general, in quite another View than as conducive to the Happiness or Misery of the World.

*Love of our Neighbour.* 259

determining whether he is to be ranked in an S E R M.  
higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, XII.  
but the higher or lower Degree in which  
that Principle, and what is manifestly con-  
nected with it, prevail in him.

T H A T which we more strictly call Piety, or the Love of God, and which is an essential Part of a right Temper, some may perhaps imagine no Way connected with Benevolence: Yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in Being an Object infinitely Good. Humane Nature is so constituted, that every good Affection implies the Love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the Object of a new Affection in the same Person. Thus, to be righteous implies in it the Love of Righteousness; to be benevolent the Love of Benevolence; to be good the Love of Goodness; whether this Righteousness, Benevolence, or Goodness, be viewed as in our own Mind, or in another's: And the Love of God as a Being perfectly Good, is the Love of perfect Goodness contemplated in a Being or Person. Thus Morality and Religion, Virtue and Piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same Point, and *Love* will be in all Senses *the End of the Commandment.*



## A SERMON upon, &c.

O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine Principle; kill in us all the Seeds of Envy and Ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the Love of our Neighbour, to improve in the Love of Thee. Thou hast placed us in various Kindreds, Friendships, and Relations, as the School of Discipline for our Affections: Help us, by the due Exercise of them, to improve to Perfection; till all partial Affection be lost in that intire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all.

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# SERMON XIII, XIV.

*Upon the Love of G O D.*

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M A T T H. xxii. 37:

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.*

**E**VERY Body knows, you therefore SERM. need only just be put in Mind, that XIII. there is such a Thing, as having so great Horror of one Extream, as to run insensibly and of Course into the contrary; and that a Doctrine's having been a Shelter for Enthusiasm, or made to serve the Purposes of Superstition, is no Proof of the Falsity of it: Truth or Right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its

SERM. Liableness to Abuse, or by its supposed Distance from or Nearness to Error. It may be sufficient to have mentioned this in general, without taking Notice of the particular Extravagancies, which have been vented under the Pretence or Endeavour of explaining the Love of God; or how manifestly we are got into the contrary Extream, under the Notion of a reasonable Religion; so very reasonable, as to have nothing to do with the Heart and Affections, if these Words signify any thing but the Faculty by which we discern speculative Truth.

By the Love of God, I would understand all those Regards, all those Affections of Mind which are due immediately to him from such a Creature as Man, and which rest in him as their End. As this does not include servile Fear; so neither will any other Regards, how reasonable soever, which respect any thing out of or besides the Perfection of the divine Nature, come into Consideration here. But all Fear is not excluded, because his Displeasure is itself the natural proper Object of Fear. Reverence, Ambition of his Love and Approbation, Delight in the Hope or Consciousness of it, come likewise into this Definition of the  
Love

*the Love of G O D.* 263

Love of God ; because he is the natural SERM.  
Object of all those Affections or Movements XIII.  
of Mind, as really as he is the Object of the  
Affection, which is in the strictest Sense called  
Love ; and all of them equally rest in him,  
as their End. And they may all be under-  
stood to be implied in these Words of our  
Saviour, without putting any Force upon them :  
For he is speaking of the Love of God and  
our Neighbour, as containing the whole of  
Piety and Virtue.

I T is plain that the Nature of Man is so  
constituted, as to feel certain Affections up-  
on the Sight or Contemplation of certain  
Objects. Now the very Notion of Affecti-  
on implies resting in its Object as an End.  
And the particular Affection to good Cha-  
racters, Reverence and moral Love of them,  
is natural to all those who have any Degree  
of real Goodness in themselves. This will  
be illustrated by the Description of a perfect  
Character in a Creature ; and by consider-  
ing the Manner, in which a good Man in his  
Presence would be affected towards such a  
Character. He would of Course feel the  
Affections of Love, Reverence, Desire of  
his Approbation, Delight in the Hope or  
Consciousness of it. And surely all this is




S E R M. applicable, and may be brought up to that  
 XIII. Being, who is infinitely more than an adequate  
 Object of all those Affections; whom we are commanded to *Love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind.* And of these Regards towards Almighty God, some are more particularly suitable to and becoming so imperfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal State we are passing through; and some of them, and perhaps other Exercises of the Mind, will be the Employment and Happiness of Good Men in a State of Perfection.

T H I S is a general View of what the following Discourse will contain. And it is manifest the Subject is a real one; There is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable. And if it be indeed at all a Subject, it is one of the utmost Importance.

A s Mankind have a Faculty by which they discern speculative Truth; so we have various Affections towards external Objects. Understanding and Temper, Reason and Affection, are as distinct Ideas, as Reason and Hunger; and one would think could no more be confounded. It is by Reason that we get the Ideas of several Objects of our Affections: But in these Cases Reason and  
 Affection

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Affection are no more the same, than Sight S E R M.  
of a particular Object, and the Pleasure or XIII.  
Uneasiness consequent thereupon, are the   
same. Now, as Reason tends to and rests  
in the Discernment of Truth, the Object of  
it; so the very Nature of Affection con-  
sists in tending towards, and resting in, its  
Objects as an End. We do indeed often  
in common Language say, that things are  
loved, desired, esteemed, not for themselves,  
but for somewhat further, somewhat out of  
and beyond them: Yet, in these Cases, who-  
ever will attend, will see, that these Things  
are not in Reality the Objects of the Af-  
fections, *i. e.* are not loved, desired, e-  
steemed, but the somewhat further and be-  
yond them. If we have no Affections which  
rest in what are called their Objects, then  
what is called Affection, Love, Desire, Hope,  
in Humane Nature, is only an uneasiness in  
being at Rest; an unquiet Disposition to  
Action, Progress, Pursuit, without End or  
Meaning. But if there be any such thing  
as Delight in the Company of one Person,  
rather than of another; whether in the  
Way of Friendship, or Mirth and Entertain-  
ment, it is all one, if it be without respect  
to Fortune, Honour, or increasing our Stores  
of

SERM. of Knowledge, or any thing beyond the present time; here is an Instance of an Affection absolutely resting in its Object as its End, and being gratified, in the same Way as the Appetite of Hunger is satisfied with Food. Yet nothing is more common than to hear it asked, What Advantage a Man hath in such a Course, suppose of Study, particular Friendships, or in any other; nothing, I say, is more common than to hear such a Question put in a Way which supposes no Gain, Advantage or Interest, but as a Means to somewhat further: And if so, then there is no such thing at all as real Interest, Gain or Advantage. This is the same Absurdity with respect to Life, as an infinite Series of Effects without a Cause is in Speculation. The Gain, Advantage or Interest consists in the Delight itself, arising from such a Faculty's having its Object: Neither is there any such thing as Happiness or Enjoyment, but what arises from hence. The Pleasures of Hope and of Reflection are not Exceptions: The former being only this Happiness anticipated; the latter, the same Happiness enjoyed over again after its Time. And even the general Expectation of future Happiness

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can afford Satisfaction, only as it is a present SERM.  
Object to the Principle of Self-love. XIII.

IT was doubtless intended, that Life should be very much a Pursuit to the Grofs of Mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable, that what gives immediate Satisfaction, *i. e.* our present Interest, is scarce considered as our Interest at all. It is Inventions which have only a remote Tendency towards Enjoyment, perhaps but a remote Tendency towards gaining the Means only of Enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the World. And though this way of thinking were just with respect to the imperfect State we are now in, where we know so little of Satisfaction without Satiety; yet it must be guarded against, when we are considering the Happiness of a State of Perfection; which Happiness being Enjoyment and not Hope, must necessarily consist in this, that our Affections have their Objects, and rest in those Objects as an End, *i. e.* be satisfied with them. This will further appear in the Sequel of this Discourse.

OF the several Affections, or inward Sensations, which particular Objects excite in Man, there are some, the having of which implies the Love of them, when they are reflect.

SERM. reflected upon \*. This cannot be said of all  
 XIII. our Affections, Principles, and Motives of  
 Action. It were ridiculous to assert, that a  
 Man upon Reflection hath the same Kind of  
 Approbation of the Appetite of Hunger, or  
 the Passion of Fear, as he hath of Good-will  
 to his Fellow-creatures. To be a just, a  
 good, a righteous Man, plainly carries with  
 it a peculiar Affection to, or Love of Justice,  
 Goodness, Righteousness, when these Prin-  
 ciples are the Objects of Contemplation.  
 Now if a Man approves of, or hath an Af-  
 fection to, any Principle in and for itself; in-  
 cidental things allowed for, it will be the  
 same whether he views it in his own Mind  
 or in another; in himself, or in his Neigh-  
 bour. This is the Account of our Approbati-  
 on of, our moral Love and Affection to good  
 Characters; which cannot but be in those  
 who have any Degrees of real Goodness in  
 themselves, and who discern and take Notice  
 of the same Principle in others.

\* St. *Austin* observes, *Amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quod bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis Virtus, quâ vivitur bene. i. e. The Affection which we rightly have for what is lovely, must ordinate justly, in due Manner, and Proportion, become the Object of a new Affection, or be itself beloved, in order to our being endued with that Virtue which is the Principle of a good Life. Civ. Dei. L. 15. c. 22.*

*the Love of G O D.* 269

FROM Observation of what passes with-  
in ourselves, our own Actions, and the Be-  
haviour of others, the Mind may carry on  
its Reflections as far as it pleases ; much beyond  
what we experience in ourselves, or discern in  
our Fellow-creatures. It may go on, and con-  
sider Goodness as become an uniform continu-  
ed Principle of Action, as conducted by Rea-  
son, and forming a Temper and Character ab-  
solutely good and perfect, which is in a higher  
Sense excellent, and proportionably the Object  
of Love and Approbation. SERM.  
XIII.

LET us then suppose a Creature perfect ac-  
cording to his created Nature : Let his Form  
be Humane, and his Capacities no more than  
equal to those of the Chief of Men : Good-  
ness shall be his proper Character ; with  
Wisdom to direct it, and Power within some  
certain determined Sphere of Action to ex-  
ert it : But Goodness must be the simple  
actuating Principle within him ; this being  
the moral Quality which is amiable, or the  
immediate Object of Love as distinct from  
other Affections of Approbation. Here then  
is a finite Object for our Mind to tend to-  
wards, to exercise itself upon : A Creature,  
perfect according to his Capacity, fixt, stea-  
dy, equally unmoved by weak Pity or more  
weak

SERM. weak Fury and Resentment; forming the  
 XIII. justest Scheme of Conduct; going on un-  
 ~~~~~ disturbed in the Execution of it, through  
 the several Methods of Severity and Reward,  
 towards his End, namely, the general Hap-  
 piness of all with whom he hath to do, as  
 in itself right and valuable. This Character,  
 though uniform in itself, in its Principle, yet  
 exerting itself in different Ways, or consi-  
 dered in different Views, may by its appear-  
 ing Variety move different Affections. Thus,  
 the Severity of Justice would not affect us  
 in the same Way, as an Act of Mercy: The  
 adventitious Qualities of Wisdom and Power  
 may be considered in themselves: And even  
 the Strength of Mind, which this immove-  
 able Goodness supposes, may likewise be  
 viewed as an Object of Contemplation, di-  
 stinct from the Goodness itself. Superiour  
 Excellence of any Kind, as well as superiour  
 Wisdom and Power, is the Object of Awe  
 and Reverence to all Creatures, whatever  
 their moral Character be: But so far as Crea-  
 tures of the lowest Rank were good, so far  
 the View of this Character, as simply good,  
 must appear amiable to them, be the Object  
 of, or beget Love. Further, suppose we were  
 conscious, that this superiour Person so far  
 approved

approved of us, that we had nothing fer- SERM.  
vilely to fear from him; that he was really XIII.  
our Friend, and kind and good to us in particu-  
lar, as he had occasionally Intercourse with us:  
We must be other Creatures than we are, or  
we could not but feel the same Kind of Satis-  
faction and Enjoyment (whatever would be  
the Degree of it) from this higher Acquain-  
tance and Friendship, as we feel from com-  
mon ones; the Intercourse being real, and the  
Persons equally present, in both Cases. We  
should have a more ardent Desire to be ap-  
proved by his better Judgment, and a Satis-  
faction in that Approbation of the same sort  
with what would be felt in respect to com-  
mon Persons, or be wrought in us by their  
Presence.

LET us now raise the Character, and sup-  
pose this Creature, for we are still going on  
with the Supposition of a Creature, our pro-  
per Guardian and Governour; that we were  
in a Progress of Being towards somewhat  
further; and that his Scheme of Govern-  
ment was too fast for our Capacities to  
comprehend; remembering still that he is  
perfectly Good, and our Friend as well as  
our Governour. Wisdom, Power, Good-  
ness, accidentally viewed any where, would  
inspire



S E R M. inspire Reverence, Awe, Love: And as these

XIII. Affections would be raised in higher or lower Degrees, in Proportion as we had occasionally more or less Intercourse with the Creature endued with those Qualities; so this further Consideration and Knowledge, that he was our proper Guardian and Governour, would much more bring these Objects, and Qualities home to ourselves; teach us they had a greater respect to us in particular, that we had an higher Interest in that Wisdom and Power and Goodness. We should, with Joy, Gratitude, Reverence, Love, Trust, and Dependance, appropriate the Character, as what we had a right in; and make our Boast in such our Relation to it. And the Conclusion of the whole would be, that we should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and cast ourselves entirely upon him. As the whole Attention of Life should be to obey his Commands; so the highest Enjoyment of it must arise from the Contemplation of this Character, and our Relation to it, from a Consciousness of his Favour and Approbation, and from the Exercise of those Affections towards Him which could not but be raised from his Presence. A Being who hath these Attributes, who stands in this Relation,

lation, and is thus sensibly present to the SERM.  
Mind, must necessarily be the Object of these XIII.  
Affections: There is as real a Correspondence  
between them, as between the lowest Appetite  
of Sense and its Object.


**T H A T** this Being is not a Creature, but the Almighty God; that he is of infinite Power and Wisdom and Goodness, does not render him less the Object of Reverence and Love, than he would be if he had those Attributes only in a limited Degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we intirely depend, is the Object of some Regards. He hath given us certain Affections of Mind, which correspond to Wisdom, Power, Goodness; *i. e.* which are raised upon View of those Qualities. If then he be really wise, powerful, good; he is the natural Object of those Affections, which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those Attributes. That he is infinite in Power, perfect in Wisdom and Goodness, makes no Alteration, but only that he is the Object of those Affections raised to the highest Pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our Senses. *I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he*

**T**

*doth*


SERM. *doth work, but I cannot behold him: He bi-*  
 XIII. *deth himself on the right hand, that I can-*  
 not see him. O that I knew where I might  
 find him! that I might come even to his  
 Seat! \* But is He then afar off: Does he  
 not fill Heaven and Earth with his Presence?  
 The Presence of our Fellow-creatures affects  
 our Senses, and our Senses give us the Know-  
 ledge of their Presence; which hath differ-  
 ent Kinds of Influence upon us; Love, Joy,  
 Sorrow, Restraint, Encouragement, Reve-  
 rence. However this Influence is not imme-  
 diately from our Senses, but from that  
 Knowledge. Thus suppose a Person neither  
 to see nor hear Another, not to know by a-  
 ny of his Senses, but yet certainly to know,  
 that Another was with him; this Knowledge  
 might, and in many Cases would, have one  
 or more of the Effects before-mentioned.  
 It is therefore not only reasonable, but also  
 natural, to be affected with a Presence,  
 though it be not the Object of our Senses:  
 Whether it be, or be not, is merely an acci-  
 dental Circumstance, which needs not come  
 into Consideration: It is the Certainty that  
 He is with us, and we with him, which hath  
 the Influence. We consider Persons then as  
 present,

\* Job xxii.

present, not only when they are within SERM.  
Reach of our Senses, but also when we are XIII.  
assured by any other Means that They are   
within such a Nearness; nay, if they are not,  
we can recall them to our Mind, and be moved  
towards them at present: And must He, who  
is so much more intimately with us, that *in*  
*Him we live and move and have our Being,*  
be thought too distant to be the Object of  
our Affections? We own and feel the Force  
of amiable and worthy Qualities in our Fel-  
low-creatures: And can we be insensible to  
the Contemplation of perfect Goodness?  
Do we reverence the Shadows of Greatness  
here below, are we solicitous about Honour  
and Esteem and the Opinion of the World;  
And shall we not feel the same with respect  
to Him, whose are Wisdom and Power in  
their Original, *who is the God of Judgment*  
*by whom Actions are weighed?* Thus Love,  
Reverence, Desire of Esteem, every Facul-  
ty, every Affection, tends towards, and is  
employed about its respective Object in com-  
mon Cases: And must the Exercise of them  
be suspended with Regard to him alone, who  
is an Object, an infinitely more than adequate  
Object, to our most exalted Faculties; Him,

SERM. of *whom, and through whom, and to whom are*  
 XIII. *all things?*

As we cannot remove from this Earth, or change our general Business on it; so neither can we alter our real Nature. Therefore no Exercise of the Mind can be recommended, but only the Exercise of those Faculties you are conscious of. Religion does not demand new Affections, but only claims the Direction of those you already have, those Affections you daily feel; though unhappily confined to Objects, not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate Objects of those very Faculties and Affections. Let the Man of Ambition go on still to consider Disgrace as the greatest Evil; Honour, as his chief Good. But Disgrace, in whose Estimation! Honour, in whose Judgment? This is the only Question. If Shame, and Delight in Esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled Ground of Pain or Pleasure; both these must be in Proportion to the supposed Wisdom and Worth of him, by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical to speak of a Sensibility of this Sort, which shall have respect to an unerring Judgment, to infinite Wisdom;

dom ; when we are assured This unerring S E R M.  
Judgment, This infinite Wisdom does observe XIII.  
upon our Actions? 

'T I S the same with respect to the Love of God in the strictest and most confined Sense. We only offer and represent the highest Object of an Affection, supposed already in your Mind. Some Degree of Goodness must be previously supposed: This always implies the Love of itself, an Affection to Goodness: The highest, the adequate Object of this Affection, is perfect Goodness; which therefore we are to *love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.* " Must we then, forgetting our own Interest, " as it were go out of ourselves, and love God " for his own Sake ?" No more forget your own Interest, no more go out of yourselves than when you prefer one Place, one Prospect, the Conversation of one Man to that of Another. Does not every Affection necessarily imply, that the Object of it be itself loved? If it be not, 'tis not the Object of the Affection. You may and ought if you can, but it is a great Mistake to think you can love or fear or hate any Thing, from Consideration that such Love or Fear or Hatred may be a Means of obtaining Good or avoid-

SERM. ing Evil. But the Question, whether we  
 XIII. ought to love God for his Sake or for our  
 own, being a mere Mistake in Language; the real Question, which this is mistaken for, will, I suppose, be answered by observing, that the Goodness of God already exercised towards us, our present Dependance upon him, and our Expectation of future Benefits, ought, and have a natural Tendency, to beget in us the Affection of Gratitude, and greater Love towards Him, than the same Goodness exercised towards others: were it only for this Reason, that every Affection is moved in Proportion to the Sense we have of the Object of it; and we cannot but have a more lively Sense of Goodness, when exercised towards ourselves, than when exercised towards others. I added Expectation of future Benefits, because the Ground of that Expectation is present Goodness.

T H U S Almighty God is the natural Object of the several Affections, Love, Reverence, Fear, Desire of Approbation. For though He is simply One, yet we cannot but consider Him in partial and different Views. He is in Himself one uniform Being, and for ever the same without *Variableness* or *Shadow of Turning*; But his infinite Greatness,  
 His


His Goodness, His Wisdom, are different SERM.  
Objects to our Mind. To which is to be XIII.  
added, that from the Changes in our own  
Characters, together with his Unchangeable-  
ness, we cannot but consider ourselves as  
more or less the Objects of His Approbation,  
and really be so. For if He approves what  
is Good; He cannot, meerly from the Un-  
changeableness of his Nature, approve what  
is Evil. Hence must arise more various  
Movements of Mind, more different Kinds  
of Affections. And this greater Variety also  
is just and reasonable in such Creatures as we  
are, though it respects a Being simply one,  
good and perfect. As some of these Affec-  
tions are most particularly suitable to so im-  
perfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal  
State we are passing through; so there may  
be other Exercises of Mind, or some of these  
in higher Degrees, our Employment and  
Happiness in a State of Perfection.

CONSIDER then our Ignorance, the SERM.  
Imperfection of our Nature, our Virtue and XIV.  
our Condition in this World, with respect to  
an infinitely good and just Being, our Crea-  
tor and Governour; and you will see what  
religious Affections of Mind are most par-  
ticularly



SERMON. particularly suitable to this mortal State we are  
XIV. passing through.

THOUGH we are not affected with any thing so strongly, as what we discern with our Senses; and though our Nature and Condition require, that we be much taken up about sensible things; yet our Reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the Effects of his Goodness: He is therefore the Object of some Regards. The Imperfection of our Virtue, joined with the Consideration of his absolute Rectitude or Holiness, will scarce permit that Perfection of Love, which entirely casts out all Fear: Yet Goodness is the Object of Love to all Creatures who have any Degree of it themselves; and Consciousness of a real Endeavour to approve ourselves to Him, joined with the Consideration of his Goodness, as it quite excludes servile Dread and Horror, so it is plainly a reasonable Ground for Hope of his Favour. Neither Fear, nor Hope, nor Love then are excluded: And one or another of these will prevail, according to the different Views we have of God; and ought to prevail, according to the Changes we find in our own Character. There is a Temper of Mind made up of, or  
which

which follows from all three, Fear, Hope, SERM.  
Love; namely, Resignation to the Divine XIV.  
Will, which is the general Temper belonging   
to this State; which ought to be the habi-  
tual Frame of our Mind and Heart, and to  
be exercised at proper Seasons more distinctly,  
in Acts of Devotion.

R E S I G N A T I O N to the Will of God  
is the whole of Piety: It includes in it all that  
is good, and is a Source of the most settled  
Quiet and Composure of Mind. There is  
the general Principle of Submission in our  
Nature. Man is not so constituted as to de-  
sire Things, and be uneasy in the want of  
them, in Proportion to their known Value:  
Many other Considerations come in to de-  
termine the Degrees of Desire; particularly,  
whether the Advantage we take a View of,  
be within the Sphere of our Rank. Who  
ever felt Uneasiness, upon observing any of  
the Advantages Brute Creatures have over  
us? And yet it is plain they have several. It  
is the same with respect to Advantages be-  
longing to Creatures of a superiour Order.  
Thus, though we see a Thing to be highly  
valuable, yet that it does not belong to our  
Condition of Being, is sufficient to suspend  
our Desires after it, to make us rest satisfied  
without

S E R M. without such Advantage. Now there is just  
 XIV. the same Reason for quiet Resignation in the  
 ~~~~~ Want of every Thing equally unattainable,  
 and out of our Reach in particular, though  
 others of our Species be possessed of it.  
 All this may be applied to the Whole of  
 Life ; to positive Inconveniences as well as  
 Wants ; not indeed to the Sensations of  
 Pain and Sorrow, but to all the Uneasinesses  
 of Reflection, Murmuring and Discontent.  
 Thus is Humane Nature formed to Compli-  
 ance, Yielding, Submission of Temper. We  
 find the Principles of it within us ; and every  
 one exercises it towards some Objects or other ;  
*i. e.* feels it with Regard to some Persons, and  
 some Circumstances. Now this is an excel-  
 lent Foundation of a reasonable and religi-  
 ous Resignation. Nature teaches and in-  
 clines us to take up with our Lot : The  
 Consideration, that the Course of Things  
 is unalterable, hath a Tendency to quiet  
 the Mind under it, to beget a Submission  
 of Temper to it. But when we can  
 add, that this unalterable Course is ap-  
 pointed and continued by infinite Wisdom  
 and Goodness ; how absolute should be our  
 Submission, how intire our Trust and De-  
 pendance ?

T H I S

T H I S would reconcile us to our Condi-  
tion; prevent all the supernumerary Trou-  
bles arising from Imagination, distant Fears,  
Impatience; all Uneasiness, except that  
which necessarily arises from the Calamities  
themselves we may be under. How many of  
our Cares should we by this Means be disbur-  
thened of? Cares not properly our own, how  
apt soever they may be to intrude upon us,  
and we to admit them; the Anxieties of Ex-  
pectation, Sollicitude about Success and Dis-  
appointment, which in Truth are none of  
our Concern. How open to every Gratifi-  
cation would that Mind be, which was clear  
of these Incumbrances?

O U R Resignation to the Will of God may  
be said to be perfect, when our Will is lost  
and resolved up into His; when we rest in  
his Will as our End, as being itself most just,  
and right, and good. And where is the Im-  
possibility of such an Affection to what is  
just, and right, and good, such a Loyalty of  
Heart to the Governour of the Universe, as  
shall prevail over all sinister indirect Desires  
of our own? Neither is this at bottom any  
thing more than Faith, and Honesty, and  
Fairness of Mind; in a more enlarged Sense  
indeed, than those Words are commonly  
used.

SERM.

XIV.



SERM. used. And as, in common Cases, Fear and

XIV. Hope and other Passions are raised in us  
 by their respective Objects : So this Submissi-  
 on of Heart and Soul and Mind, this reli-  
 gious Resignation, would be as naturally  
 produced by our having just Conceptions of  
 Almighty God, and a real Sense of his Pre-  
 sence with us. In how low a Degree so-  
 ever this Temper usually prevails amongst  
 Men, yet it is a Temper right in itself :  
 It is what we owe to our Creator : It is par-  
 ticularly suitable to our mortal Condition,  
 and what we should endeavour after for our  
 own Sakes in our Passage through such a  
 World as this ; where is nothing upon which  
 we can rest or depend ; nothing but what  
 we are liable to be deceived and disappointed  
 in. Thus we might *acquaint ourselves with  
 God, and be at Peace.* This is Piety and  
 Religion in the strictest Sense, considered as  
 an Habit of Mind : An habitual Sense of  
 God's Presence with us ; being affected to-  
 wards him, as present, in the Manner his su-  
 perior Nature requires from such a Creature  
 as Man : This is to *walk with God.*

LITTLE more need be said of Devotion  
 or religious Worship, than that it is this  
 Temper exerted into Act. The Nature of it  
 consists

*the Love of GOD.* 285

consists in the actual Exercise of those Affections towards God, which are supposed habitual in good Men. He is always equally present with us: But we are so much taken up with sensible things, that, *Lo, He goeth by us, and we see Him not: He passeth on also, but we perceive Him not* \*. Devotion is Retirement, from the World he has made, to Him alone: It is to withdraw from the Avocations of Sense, to employ our Attention wholly upon Him as upon an Object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the Influence of the Divine Presence, and to give full Scope to the Affections of Gratitude, Love, Reverence, Trust and Dependance; of which infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, is the natural and only adequate Object. We may apply to the whole of Devotion those Words of the Son of Sirach: *When you glorifie the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough* †. Our most raised Affections of every Kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate, when an infinite Being is the Object of them. This is  
the

\* Job ix. 11.

† Eccclus. xliii 30.

SERM.

XIV.



SERM. the highest Exercise and Employment of  
 XIV. Mind, that a Creature is capable of. As this  
 ~~~~~ Divine Service and Worship is itself absolute-  
 ly due to God, so also is it necessary in order  
 to a further End, to keep alive upon our  
 Minds a Sense of his Authority, a Sense that  
 in our ordinary Behaviour amongst Men we  
 act under him as our Governour and Judge.

T H U S you see the Temper of Mind re-  
 specting God, which is particularly suitable  
 to a State of Imperfection ; to Creatures in a  
 Progress of Being towards somewhat further.

S U P P O S E now this something further at-  
 tained ; that we were arrived at it : What a  
 Perception will it be, to see and know and  
 feel that our Trust was not vain, our Depen-  
 dance not groundless ? That the Issue, Event,  
 and Consummation came out such as fully  
 to justify and answer that Resignation ? If  
 the obscure View of the divine Perfection,  
 which we have in this World, ought in just  
 consequence to beget an intire Resignation ;  
 what will this Resignation be exalted into,  
 when *we shall see Face to Face, and know as  
 we are known* ? If we cannot form any dis-  
 tinct Notion of that Perfection of the Love  
 of God, which *casts out all Fear* ; of that En-  
 joyment of him, which will be the Happiness  
 of

of good Men hereafter; the Consideration S E R M.  
of our Wants and Capacities of Happiness, XIV.  
and that He will be an adequate Supply to  
them, must serve us instead of such distinct  
Conception of the particular Happiness itself.

L E T us then suppose a Man intirely disen-  
gaged from Business and Pleasure, sitting  
down alone and at leisure, to reflect upon  
himself and his own Condition of Being. He  
would immediately feel that he was by no  
means compleat of himself, but totally in-  
sufficient for his own Happiness. One may  
venture to affirm that every Man hath felt  
this, whether He hath again reflected upon it  
or not. It is feeling this Deficiency, that they  
are unsatisfied with themselves, which makes  
Men look out for Assistance from abroad ;  
and which has given Rise to various Kinds of  
Amusements, altogether needless any other-  
wise than as they serve to fill up the Blank  
Spaces of Time, and so hinder their feeling  
this Deficiency, and being uneasie with  
Themselves. Now, if these external Things  
we take up with, were really an adequate Sup-  
ply to this Deficiency of Humane Nature, if  
by their Means our Capacities and Desires  
were all satisfied and filled up ; then it might  
be truly said, that we had found out the pro-  
per



SERMON. per Happiness of Man; and so might fit down


XIV. satisfied, and be at Rest in the Enjoyment of  
 it. But if it appears, that the Amusements,  
 which Men usually pass their Time in, are so  
 far from coming up to, or answering our  
 Notions and Desires of Happiness, or Good,  
 that they are really no more than what they  
 are commonly called, somewhat to pass a-  
 way the Time; *i. e.* somewhat which serves  
 to turn us aside from, and prevent our attend-  
 ing to this our internal Poverty and Want;  
 if they serve only, or chiefly, to suspend,  
 instead of satisfying our Conceptions and  
 Desires of Happiness; if the Want remains,  
 and we have found out little more than bare-  
 ly the Means of making it less sensible; then  
 are we still to seek for somewhat to be an  
 adequate Supply to it. It is plain that there  
 is a Capacity in the Nature of Man, which  
 neither Riches, nor Honours, nor sensual  
 Gratifications, nor any thing in this World  
 can perfectly fill up, or satisfy: There is a  
 deeper and more essential Want, than any  
 of these Things can be the Supply of. Yet  
 surely there is a Possibility of Somewhat,  
 which may fill up all our Capacities of Hap-  
 piness; Somewhat, in which our Souls may  
 find Rest; Somewhat, which may be to us  
 that

that satisfactory Good we are inquiring after. SERM.  
But it cannot be any Thing which is valuable XIV.  
only as it tends to some further End. Those  
therefore who have got this World so much  
into their Hearts, as not to be able to confi-  
der Happiness as consisting in any Thing but  
Property and Possessions, which are only va-  
luable as the Means to somewhat else, can-  
not have the least Glimpse of the Subject be-  
fore us; which is the End, not the Means;  
the Thing itself, not somewhat in order to  
it. But if you can lay aside that general,  
confused, undeterminate Notion of Happi-  
ness, as consisting in such Possessions; and  
fix in your Thoughts, that it really can con-  
sist in Nothing but in a Faculty's having its  
proper Object; you will clearly see, that in  
the coolest way of Consideration, without  
either the Heat of fanciful Enthusiasm, or  
the Warmth of real Devotion, nothing is  
more certain, than that an infinite Being may  
Himself be, if He pleases, the Supply to all  
the Capacities of our Nature. All the com-  
mon Enjoyments of Life are from the Fa-  
culties He hath endued us with, and the Ob-  
jects He hath made suitable to them. He  
may Himself be to us infinitely more than all  
these: He may be to us all that we want.

SERM. As our Understanding can contemplate itself,  
 XIV. and our Affections be exercised upon them-  
 selves by Reflection, so may each be em-  
 ployed in the same manner upon any other  
 Mind: And since the Supream Mind, the  
 Author and Cause of all Things, is the high-  
 est possible Object to Himself, He may be an  
 adequate Supply to all the Faculties of our  
 Souls; a Subject to our Understanding, and  
 an Object to our Affections.

CONSIDER then: When we shall have  
 put off this mortal Body, when we shall be  
 devided of sensual Appetites, and those Pos-  
 sessions which are now the Means of Grati-  
 fication shall be of no Avail; when this rest-  
 less Scene of Business and vain Pleasures,  
 which now diverts us from ourselves, shall  
 be all over; We, our proper Self, shall still  
 remain: We shall still continue the same  
 Creatures we are, with Wants to be supplied,  
 and Capacities of Happiness. We must have  
 Faculties of Perception, though not sensitive  
 ones; and Pleasure or Uneasiness from our  
 Perceptions, as now we have.

THERE are certain Ideas, which we ex-  
 press by the Words, Order, Harmony, Pro-  
 portion, Beauty, the furthest removed from  
 any thing sensual. Now what is there in  
 those

those intellectual Images, Forms, or Ideas, SERM.  
which begets that Approbation, Love, De- XIV.  
light, and even Rapture, which is seen in   
some Person's Faces upon having those Ob-  
jects present to their Minds?—"Mere En-  
"thusiasm!"—Be it what it will: There are  
Objects, Works of Nature and of Art, which  
all Mankind have Delight from, quite dis-  
tinct from their affording Gratification to  
sensual Appetites; and from quite another  
View of them, than as being for their Inte-  
rest and further Advantage. The Faculties  
from which we are capable of these Plea-  
sures, and the Pleasures themselves, are as  
natural, and as much to be accounted for, as  
any sensual Appetite whatever, and the Plea-  
sure from its Gratification. Words to be  
sure are wanting upon this Subject: To say,  
that every thing of Grace and Beauty through-  
out the whole of Nature, every thing excel-  
lent and amiable shared in differently lower  
Degrees by the whole Creation, meet in the  
Author and Cause of all Things; this is an  
inadequate, and perhaps improper Way of  
speaking of the Divine Nature: But 'tis ma-  
nifest that absolute Rectitude, the Perfection  
of Being, must be in all Senses, and in every  
Respect the highest Object to the Mind.

SERM. IN this World it is only the Effects of  
 XIV. Wisdom and Power and Greatness, which we  
 discern: It is not impossible, that hereafter  
 the Qualities Themselves in the Supream Be-  
 ing may be the immediate Object of Con-  
 templation. What amazing Wonders are  
 opened to View by late Improvements!  
 What an Object is the Universe to a Crea-  
 ture, if there be a Creature who can com-  
 prehend its System! But it must be an infinite-  
 ly higher Exercise of the Understanding, to  
 view the Scheme of it in that Mind, which  
 projected it, before its Foundations were  
 laid. And surely we have Meaning to the  
 Words, when we speak of going further; and  
 viewing, not only this System in His Mind,  
 but the Wisdom and Intelligence itself from  
 whence it proceeded. The same may be said  
 of Power. But since Wisdom and Power  
 are not God, He is a wise, a powerful Being;  
 the Divine Nature may therefore be a further  
 Object to the Understanding. It is nothing  
 to observe that our Senses give us but an im-  
 perfect Knowledge of Things: Effects them-  
 selves, if we knew them thoroughly, would  
 give us but imperfect Notions of Wisdom  
 and Power; much less of his Being, in whom  
 they reside. I am not speaking of any fan-  
 ciful

*the Love of GOD.* 293

ciful Notion of seeing all Things in God; SERM.  
but only representing to you, how much an XIV.  
higher Object to the Understanding an infi-  
nite Being himself is, than the Things which  
He has made : And this is no more than say-  
ing, that the Creator is superiour to the Works  
of his Hands.

**T H I S** may be illustrated by a low Exam-  
ple. Suppose a Machine, the Sight of which  
would raise, and Discoveries in its Contri-  
vance gratifie, our Curiosity : the real Delight,  
in this Case, would arise from its being the  
Effect of Skill and Contrivance. This Skill  
in the Mind of the Artificer would be an  
higher Object, if we had any Senses or Ways  
to discern it. For, observe, the Contempla-  
tion of that Principle, Faculty or Power  
which produced any Effect, must be an high-  
er Exercise of the Understanding, than the  
Contemplation of the Effect itself. The  
Cause must be an higher Object to the Mind  
than the Effect.

**B U T** whoever considers distinctly what the  
Delight of Knowledge is, will see Reason  
to be satisfied that it cannot be the chief  
Good of Man : All this, as it is applicable,  
so it was mentioned with Regard to the At-  
tribute of Goodness. I say, Goodness. Our

SERM. Being and all our Enjoyments are the Effects

XIV. of it: Just Men bear its Resemblance: But  
 how little do we know of the Original, of what it is in itself? Recall what was before observed concerning the Affection to moral Characters; which, in how low a Degree soever, yet is plainly natural to Man, and the most excellent Part of his Nature: Suppose this improved, as it may be improved to any Degree whatever, in the *Spirits of just Men made perfect*; and then suppose that they had a real View of that *Righteousness, which is an everlasting Righteousness*; of the Conformity of the Divine Will to the *Law of Truth*, in which the moral Attributes of God consist; of that Goodness in the Sovereign Mind, which gave Birth to the Universe: Add, what will be true of all good Men hereafter, a Consciousness of having an Interest in what they are contemplating; Suppose them able to say, *This God is our God for ever and ever*: Would they be any longer to seek for what was their chief Happiness, their final Good? Could the utmost Stretch of their Capacities look further? Would not infinite perfect Goodness be their very End, the last End and Object of their Affections; beyond which they  
 could


could neither have, nor desire; beyond which SERM.  
they could not form a Wish or Thought? XIV.

CONSIDER wherein that Presence of a Friend consists, which has often so strong an Effect, as wholly to possess the Mind, and intirely suspend all other Affections and Regards; and which itself affords the highest Satisfaction and Enjoyment. He is within Reach of the Senses. Now, as our Capacities of Perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some Faculty intirely new, a Perception of God's Presence with us in a nearer and stricter way; since it is certain He is more intimately present with us, than any Thing else can be. Proof of the Existence and Presence of any Being is quite different from the immediate Perception, the Consciousness of it. What then will be the Joy of Heart, which His Presence, and *the Light of His Countenance*, who is the Life of the Universe, will inspire good Men with, when they shall have a Sensation, that He is the Sustainer of their Being, that they exist in him; when they shall feel his Influence to cheer and enliven and support their Frame, in a Manner of which we have now no Conception? He will be in a literal Sense *their Strength and their Portion for ever.*



SERM. WHEN we speak of things so much above our Comprehension, as the Employment and Happiness of a future State, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all Modesty and Distrust of ourselves. But the Scripture represents the Happiness of that State under the Notions of *seeing God, seeing him as He is, knowing as we are known, and seeing Face to Face.* These Words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular determinate Happiness. And I will be bold to say, that nothing can account for, or come up to these Expressions, but only this, that God himself will be an Object to our Faculties, that He Himself will be our Happiness; as distinguished from the Enjoyments of the present State, which seem to arise, not immediately from Him, but from the Objects He has adapted to give us Delight.

To conclude: Let us suppose a Person tired with Care and Sorrow and the Repetition of vain Delights which fill up the Round of Life; sensible that every thing here below in its best Estate is altogether Vanity. Suppose him to feel that Deficiency of Humane Nature, before taken Notice of; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate Supply

ply to it. What could be more applicable to SERM.  
a good Man, in this State of Mind ; or bet- XIV.  
ter exprefs his present Wants and distant   
Hopes, his Passage through this World as a  
Progress towards a State of Perfection, than  
the following Passages in the Devotions of  
the Royal Prophet ? They are plainly in an  
higher and more proper Sense applicable to  
This, than they could be to any Thing else.  
*I have seen an End of all Perfection. Whom  
have I in Heaven but Thee ? And there is  
none upon Earth that I desire in Compari-  
son of Thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth :  
but God is the Strength of my Heart, and  
my Portion for ever. Like as the Hart  
desireth the Water-Brooks : so longeth my  
Soul after Thee, O God. My Soul is athirst  
for God, yea, even for the living God :  
when shall I come to appear before Him ?  
How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, O  
God ! and the Children of Men shall put  
their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings.  
They shall be satisfied with the Plenteous-  
ness of thy House : and Thou shalt give them  
Drink of thy Pleasures, as out of the River.  
For with thee is the Well of Life : And in  
thy Light shall we see Light. Blessed is the  
Man whom thou chooseth, and receivest unto  
Thee :*

298 A S E R M O N upon, &c.

SERM. Thee: he shall dwell in thy Court, and shall  
XIV. be satisfied with the Pleasures of thy House,  
even of thy holy Temple. Blessed is the  
People, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee:  
they shall walk in the Light of thy Counte-  
nance. Their Delight shall be daily in thy  
Name, and in thy Righteousness shall they  
make their Boast. For thou art the Glory  
of their Strength: and in thy Loving-kind-  
ness They shall be exalted. As for me, I  
will behold thy Presence in Righteousness:  
and when I awake up after thy Likeness,  
I shall be satisfied with it. Thou shalt shew  
me the Path of Life; in thy Presence is the  
Fullness of Joy, and at thy right Hand there  
is Pleasure for evermore.

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S E R M O N

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# SERMON XV.

*Upon the Ignorance of Man.*


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ECCLES. viii. 16, 17.

*When I applied mine Heart to know Wisdom, and to see the Business that is done upon the Earth: Then I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun: Because though a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*

**T**HE Writings of Solomon are very much taken up with Reflections upon Humane Nature, and Humane Life; to which he hath added, in this Book, Reflections upon the Constitution of Things. And it is not improbable, that the little Satisfaction, and the great Difficulties he met with

SERM.  
XV.



SERM. with in his Researches into the general Con-  
 XV. stitution of Nature, might be the Occasion  
 of his confining himself, so much as he hath  
 done, to Life and Conduct. However, upon that joint Review he expresses great Ignorance of the Works of God, and the Method of his Providence in the Government of the World; great Labour and Weariness in the Search and Observation he had employed himself about; and great Disappointment, Pain, and even Vexation of Mind, upon that which he had remarked of the Appearances of things, and of what was going forward upon this Earth. This whole Review and Inspection, and the Result of it, Sorrow, Perplexity, a Sense of his necessary Ignorance, suggests various Reflections to his Mind. But, notwithstanding all this Ignorance and Dissatisfaction, there is somewhat upon which he assuredly rests and depends; somewhat, which is the Conclusion of the whole Matter, and the only Concern of Man. Following this his Method and Train of Reflection, let us consider,

I. THE Assertion of the Text, the Ignorance of Man; that the wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the Ways and Works of God: And then,

II. WHAT

*the Ignorance of Man.* 301

II. **W H A T** are the just Consequences of **S E R M.**  
this Observation and Knowledge of our own **XV.**  
Ignorance, and the Reflections which it leads  
us to.

I. **T H E** wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the Works of God, the Methods and Designs of his Providence in the Creation and Government of the World.

**C R E A T I O N** is absolutely and intirely out of our Depth, and beyond the Extent of our utmost Reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the World, as it is certain that Effects must have a Cause. It is indeed in general no more than Effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: For as to Causes, they are as intirely in the Dark as the most Ignorant. What are the Laws by which Matter acts upon Matter, but certain Effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general Rules? The real Nature and Essence of Beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so intirely out of our Reach, that we have not the least Glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the World about us: How we were made, how our Being is continued and preserved, what the  
Faculties

SERM. Faculties of our Minds are, and upon what  
 XV. the Power of exercising them depends. *I am  
 ~~~~~ fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvel-  
 lous are thy Works, and that my Soul know-  
 eth right well.* Our own Nature, and the  
 Objects we are surrounded with, serve to  
 raise our Curiosity; but we are quite out of  
 a Condition of satisfying it. Every Secret  
 which is disclosed, every Discovery which is  
 made, every new Effect which is brought to  
 View, serves to convince us of numberless  
 more which remain concealed, and which  
 we had before no Suspicion of. And what  
 if we were acquainted with the whole Crea-  
 tion, in the same Way and as thoroughly  
 as we are with any single Object in it? What  
 would all this natural Knowledge amount  
 to? It must be a low Curiosity indeed which  
 such superficial Knowledge could satisfy. On  
 the contrary, would it not serve to convince  
 us of our Ignorance still; and to raise our  
 Desire of knowing the Nature of Things  
 themselves, the Author, the Cause, and the  
 End of them?

As to the Government of the World:  
 Though from Consideration of the final  
 Causes which come within our Knowledge;  
 of Characters, personal Merit and Demerit;  
 of

of the Favour and Disapprobation, which re-  
spectively are due and belong to the Righteous and the Wicked, and which therefore must necessarily be in a Mind which sees things as they really are; though, I say, from hence we may know somewhat concerning the Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, enough to enforce upon us Religion and the Practice of Virtue: Yet, since the Monarchy of the Universe is a Dominion unlimited in Extent, and everlasting in Duration; the general System of it must necessarily be quite beyond our Comprehension. And, since there appears such a Subordination and Reference of the several Parts to each other, as to constitute it properly one Administration or Government; we cannot have a thorough Knowledge of any Part, without knowing the Whole. This surely should convince us, that we are much less competent Judges of the very small Part which comes under our Notice in this World, than we are apt to imagine. *No Heart can think upon these things worthily: And who is able to conceive his Way? It is a Tempest which no Man can see: For the most Part of his Works are hid. Who can declare the Works*  
of


SERM.  
XV.






SERM. of his Justice ? for his Covenant is afar

XV. off, and the trial of all things is in the

 End: i. e. The Dealings of God with the Children of Men are not yet compleated, and cannot be judged of by that Part which is before us. So that a Man cannot say, This is worse than that: For in time they shall be well approved. Thy Faithfulness, O Lord, reacheth unto the Clouds: Thy Righteousness standeth like the strong Mountains: Thy Judgments are like the great Deep. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the World in their Heart; so that no Man can find out the Work that God maketh from the Beginning to the End. And thus St. Paul concludes a long Argument upon the various Dispensations of Providence: O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord?

T H U S the Scheme of Providence, the Ways and Works of God, are too vast, of too large Extent for our Capacities. There is, as I may speak, such an Expence of Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, in  
the

the Formation and Government of the SERM.  
World, as is too much for us to take in or XV.  
comprehend. Power, and Wisdom, and   
Goodness are manifest to us in all those  
Works of God, which come within our  
View: But there are likewise infinite Stores  
of each poured forth throughout the Im-  
mensity of the Creation; no Part of which  
can be thoroughly understood, without ta-  
king in its Reference and Respect to the  
whole: And this is what we have not Facul-  
ties for.

AND as the Works of God, and his Scheme  
of Government, are above our Capacities  
thoroughly to comprehend: So there possi-  
bly may be Reasons which originally made  
it fit that many things should be concealed  
from us, which we have perhaps natural Ca-  
pacities of understanding; many things con-  
cerning the Designs, Methods and Ends of  
Divine Providence in the Government of the  
World. There is no Manner of Absurdity  
in supposing a Veil on Purpose drawn over  
some Scenes of infinite Power, Wisdom,  
and Goodness, the Sight of which might  
some Way or other strike us too strongly;  
or that better Ends are designed and served  
by their being concealed, than could be by  
X their

SERM. their being exposed to our Knowledge. The  
 XV. Almighty may cast Clouds and Darknes  
 ~~~~~ round about him, for Reasons and Purposes  
 of which we have not the least Glimpse or  
 Conception.

H O W E V E R, it is surely reasonable, and  
 what might have been expected, that Crea-  
 tures in some Stage of their Being, suppose in  
 the Infancy of it, should be placed in a State  
 of Discipline and Improvement, where their  
 Patience and Submission is to be tried by  
 Afflictions, where Temptations are to be  
 resisted, and Difficulties gone through in the  
 Discharge of their Duty. Now if the great-  
 est Pleasures and Pains of the present Life  
 may be overcome and suspended, as they  
 manifestly may, by Hope and Fear, and o-  
 ther Passions and Affections; then the Evi-  
 dence of Religion, and the Sense of the  
 Consequences of Virtue and Vice, might  
 have been such, as intirely in all Cases to  
 prevail over those Afflictions, Difficulties and  
 Temptations; prevail over them so, as to  
 render them absolutely none at all. But the  
 very Notion itself now mentioned, of a  
 State of Discipline and Improvement, neces-  
 sarily excludes such sensible Evidence and  
 Conviction of Religion, and of the Conse-  
 quences

*the Ignorance of Man.* 307

quences of Virtue and Vice. Religion consists in Submission and Resignation to the Divine Will. Our Condition in this World is a School of Exercise for this Temper: And our Ignorance, the Shallowness of our Reason, the Temptations, Difficulties, Afflictions, which we are exposed to, all equally contribute to make it so. The general Observation may be carried on; and whoever will attend to the thing will plainly see, that less sensible Evidence, with less Difficulty in Practice, is the same, as more sensible Evidence, with greater Difficulty in Practice. Therefore Difficulties in Speculation as much come into the Notion of a State of Discipline, as Difficulties in Practice: And so the same Reason or Account is to be given of both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to talk of the greater Merit of Assent, upon little or no Evidence, than upon Demonstration; yet the strict Discharge of our Duty, with less sensible Evidence, does imply in it a better Character, than the same Diligence in the Discharge of it upon more sensible Evidence. This fully accounts for and explains that Assertion of our Saviour, \* *Bles-*

X 2


*sed*

• Joh. xx. 29.

SERM. *fed are they that have not seen, and yet have*  
 XV. *believed*; have become Christians and obeyed  
 the Gospel, upon less sensible Evidence, than  
 that which *Thomas*, to whom he is speaking,  
 insisted upon.

BUT after all, the same Account is to be given, why we were placed in these Circumstances of Ignorance, as why Nature has not furnished us with Wings; namely, that we were designed to be Inhabitants of this Earth. I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our Rank in the Creation, and of what is due to us. What Sphere of Action, what Business is assigned to Man, that he has not Capacities and Knowledge fully equal to? It is manifest he has Reason, and Knowledge, and Faculties superiour to the Business of the present World: Faculties which appear superfluous, if we do not take in the Respect which they have to somewhat further, and beyond it. If to acquire Knowledge were our proper End, we should indeed be but poorly provided: But if Somewhat else be our Business and Duty, we may, notwithstanding our Ignorance, be well enough furnished for it; and the Observation of our Ignorance  
 may

may be of Assistance to us in the Discharge SERM.  
of it. XV.

II. LET us then consider, what are the   
Consequences of this Knowledge and Obser-  
vation of our own Ignorance, and the Re-  
flection it leads to.

*First,* WE may learn from it, with what  
Temper of Mind a Man ought to enquire in-  
to the Subject of Religion; namely, with  
Expectation of finding Difficulties, and with  
a Disposition to take up and rest satisfied with  
any Evidence whatever, which is real.

HE should before-hand expect Things my-  
sterious, and such as he will not be able  
thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the Bot-  
tom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive  
View of the whole Subject, clear of Diffi-  
culties and Objections, is to forget our Na-  
ture and Condition; neither of which admit  
of such Knowledge, with respect to any  
Science whatever. And to inquire with this  
Expectation, is not to enquire as a Man, but  
as one of another Order of Creatures.

DUE Sense of the general Ignorance of  
Man would also beget in us a Disposition to  
take up and rest satisfied with any Evidence  
whatever, which is real. I mention this as  
the contrary to a Disposition, of which there

SERM. are not wanting Instances, to find Fault with

XV. and reject Evidence, because it is not such as  
 was desired. If a Man were to walk by Twilight, must he not follow his Eyes as much as if it were broad Day and clear Sunshine? Or if he were obliged to take a Journey by Night, would he not *give heed to any Light shining in the Darknes, till the Day should break and the Day-Star arise?* It would not be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how much better it were to have Day-light; he might perhaps have great Curiosity to see the Country round about him; he might lament that the Darknes concealed many extended Prospects from his Eyes, and wish for the Sun to draw away the Veil: But how ridiculous would it be, to reject with Scorn and Disdain the Guidance and Direction which that lesser Light might afford him, because it was not the Sun itself? If the Make and Constitution of Man, the Circumstances he is placed in, or the Reason of Things affords the least Hint or Intimation, that Virtue is the Law he is born under; Scepticism itself should lead him to the most strict and inviolable Practice of it; that he may not make the dreadful Experiment, of leaving the Course of Life marked out for him by Nature, whatever

*the Ignorance of Man.*

311

ever that Nature be, and entering Paths of his own, of which he can know neither the Dangers nor the End. For though no Danger be seen, yet Darkness, Ignorance and Blindness are no manner of Security. SERM.  
XV.


*Secondly,* OUR Ignorance is the proper Answer to many Things, which are called Objections against Religion; particularly, to those which arise from the Appearances of Evil and Irregularity in the Constitution of Nature and the Government of the World. In all other Cases 'tis thought necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the Scheme, even one of so narrow a Compass as those which are formed by Men, in order to judge of the Goodness or Badness of it: And the most slight and superficial View of any Humane Contrivance comes abundantly nearer to a thorough Knowledge of it, than that Part, which we know of the Government of the World, does to the general Scheme and System of it; to the whole Set of Laws by which it is governed. From our Ignorance of the Constitution of Things, and the Scheme of Providence in the Government of the World; from the Reference the several Parts have to each other, and to the Whole; and from our not being able to



SERM. see the End and the Whole; it follows, that  
 XV. however perfect Things are, they must even  
 necessarily appear to us otherwise, less perfect  
 than they are \*.

*Thirdly,*


\* Suppose some very *complicated Piece of Work, some System or Constitution, formed for some general End, to which each of the Parts had a Reference.* The Perfection or Justness of this Work or Constitution would consist in the Reference and Respect, which the several Parts have to the general Design. This Reference of Parts to the general Design may be infinitely various, both in Degree and Kind. Thus one Part may only contribute and be subservient to another; this to a third; and so on through a long Series, the last Part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general Design. Or a Part may have this distant Reference to the general Design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For Instance: If the general Design or End, for which the complicated Frame of Nature was brought into Being, is Happiness; whatever affords present Satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the Course of Things, hath this double Respect to the general Design. Now suppose a Spectator of that Work or Constitution was in a great Measure ignorant of such various Reference to the general End, whatever that End be; and that, upon a very slight and partial View which we had of the Work, several Things appeared to his Eye as disproportionate and wrong; others, just and beautiful: What would He gather from these Appearances? He would immediately conclude there was a Probability, if he could see the whole Reference of the Parts appearing wrong to the general Design, that this would destroy the Appearance of Wrongness and Disproportion: But there is no Probability, that the Reference would destroy the particular right Appearances, though that Reference might shew the thing already appearing just, to be so likewise in an higher Degree or another Manner. There is a Probability, that the right Appearances were intended: There

*Thirdly*, SINCE the Constitution of Na-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
ture, and the Methods and Designs of Provi-<sup>XV.</sup>  
dence in the Government of the World,   
are above our Comprehension, we should  
acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with, our Igno-  
rance; turn our Thoughts from that which is  
above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to  
that which is level to our Capacities, and  
which is our real Business and Concern.  
Knowledge is not our proper Happiness.  
Whoever will in the least attend to the thing  
will see, that 'tis the Gaining, not the Having  
of it, which is the Entertainment of the  
Mind. Indeed, if the proper Happiness of  
Man consisted in Knowledge considered as a  
Possession or Treasure, Men who are posses-  
sed of the largest Share would have a very ill  
Time of it; as they would be infinitely more  
sensible than others, of their Poverty in this  
Respect. Thus *He who increases Know-  
ledge would eminently increase Sorrow.*  
Men

is no Probability, that the wrong Appearances were. We cannot suspect Irregularity and Disorder to be designed. The Pillars of a Building appear beautiful; but their being likewise its Support does not destroy that Beauty; There still remains a Reason to believe that the Architect intended the beautiful Appearance, after we have found out the Reference, Support. It would be reasonable for a Man of himself to think thus, upon the first Piece of Architecture he ever saw.

SERM. Men of deep Research and curious Inquiry  
 XV. should just be put in Mind, not to mistake  
 ~~~~~ what they are doing. If their Discoveries  
 serve the Cause of Virtue and Religion, in  
 the way of Proof, Motive to Practice, or  
 Assistance in it; or if they tend to render  
 Life less unhappy, and promote its Satisfac-  
 tions; then they are most usefully employed:  
 But bringing Things to Light, alone and of it-  
 self, is of no manner of Use, any otherwise  
 than as an Entertainment or Diversion. Nei-  
 ther is this at all amiss, if it does not take up  
 the Time which should be employed in bet-  
 ter Work. But it is evident that there is ano-  
 ther Mark set up for us to aim at; another  
 End appointed us to direct our Lives to: An  
 End, which the most Knowing may fail of,  
 and the most Ignorant arrive at. *The secret  
 things belong unto the Lord our God; but  
 those things which are revealed belong unto  
 us, and to our Children for ever, that we  
 may do all the Words of this Law.* Which  
 Reflection of *Moses*, put in general Terms, is,  
 that the only Knowledge, which is of any  
 Avail to us, is that which teaches us our Du-  
 ty, or assists us in the Discharge of it. The  
 Oeconomy of the Universe, the Course of  
 Nature, Almighty Power exerted in the Cre-  
 ation

*the Ignorance of Man.* 315

ation and Government in the World, is out S E R M.  
of our Reach? What would be the Confe- XV.  
quence, if we could really get an Inſight into   
theſe Things, is very uncertain; whether it  
would aſſiſt us in, or divert us from what we  
have to do in this preſent State. If then there  
be a Sphere of Knowledge, of Contemplation  
and Employment, level to our Capacities,  
and of the utmoſt Importance to us; we  
ought ſurely to apply ourſelves with all Dili-  
gence to This our proper Buſineſs, and eſteem  
every thing elſe nothing, nothing as to us,  
in Compariſon of it. Thus *Job*, diſcourſing  
of natural Knowledge, how much it is above  
us, and of Wiſdom in general, ſays, *God un-  
derſtandeth the Way thereof, and He know-  
eth the Place thereof. And unto Man He  
ſaid, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is  
Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil is Under-  
ſtanding.* Other Orders of Creatures may  
perhaps be let into the ſecret Counſels of  
Heaven; and have the Deſigns and Methods  
of Providence, in the Creation and Govern-  
ment of the World, communicated to them:  
But this does not belong to our Rank or Con-  
dition. *The Fear of the Lord, and to de-  
part from Evil,* is the only Wiſdom which  
Man ſhould aſpire after, as His Work and  
Buſineſs.

SERM. Business. The same is said, and with the same  
 XV. Connexion and Context, in the Conclusion  
 of the Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Our Ignorance, and the little we can know of other Things, affords a Reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them: But no way invalidates that which is the *Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Concern of Man*. So that *Socrates* was not the first who endeavoured to draw Men off from labouring after, and laying Stress upon other Knowledge, in Comparison of that which related to Morals. Our Province is Virtue and Religion, Life and Manners; the Science of improving the Temper, and making the Heart better. This is the Field assigned us to cultivate: How much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstrably the Happiness of Man: It consists in good Actions, proceeding from a good Principle, Temper or Heart. Overt-acts are intirely in our Power. What remains is, that we learn to *keep our Heart*; to govern and regulate our Passions, Mind, Affections: that so we may be free from the Impotencies of Fear, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, Ambition; that we may be clear of these, considered

ed as Vices seated in the Heart, considered as SERM. constituting a general wrong Temper ; from XV. which general wrong Frame of Mind, all the Mistaken Pursuits, and far the greatest Part of the Unhappiness of Life, proceed. He, who should find out one Rule to assist us in this Work, would deserve infinitely better of Mankind, than all the Improvers of other Knowledge put together.

*Lastly, LET us adore that infinite Wisdom and Power and Goodness, which is above our Comprehension. To whom hath the Root of Wisdom been revealed? Or who hath known her wise Counsels? There is one wise and greatly to be feared; the Lord sitting upon his Throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works. If it be thought a considerable thing, to be acquainted with a few, a very few, of the Effects of infinite Power and Wisdom; the Situation, Bigness, and Revolution of some of the heavenly Bodies; what Sentiments should our Minds be filled with concerning Him, who appointed to each its Place and Measure and Sphere of Motion, all which are kept with the most uniform Constancy? Who stretched out the Heavens, and telleth the Number of the Stars,*

318    *A S E R M O N upon, &c.*

*S E R M. Stars, and calleth them all by their Names:*

*XV. Who laid the Foundations of the Earth, who comprehendeth the Dust of it in a Measure, and weigheth the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. And, when we have recounted all the Appearances which come within our View, he must add, Lo, these are Part of His ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Hell; what canst thou know?*

*T H E Conclusion is, that in all Lowliness of Mind we set lightly by Ourselves: That we form our Temper to an implicit Submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute Resignation to all the Methods of his Providence, in his Dealings with the Children of Men: That, in the deepest Humility of our Souls, we prostrate ourselves before Him, and join in that celestial Song; *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints: Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name?**

S E R M O N







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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.


*At their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish Church of St. Mary-le-Bow,*

*On Friday, February 16, 1738-9.*

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MATT. XXIV. 14.

*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.*

**T**HE general Doctrine of Religion, SERM.  
that all things are under the Direc- XVI.  
tion of One righteous Governor,   
having been established by repeated Revelations in the first Ages of the World, was left with the Bulk of Mankind, to be honestly preserved pure and intire, or carelessly forgotten, or wilfully corrupted. And though Reason, almost intuitively, bare witness to the Truth of this moral System of Nature,

Y yet

SERM. yet it soon appeared, that *They did not like to*  
 XVI. *retain God in their knowledge* \*, as to any

~ Purposes of real Piety. Natural Religion became gradually more and more darkened with Superstition, little understood, less regarded in Practice; and the Face of it scarce discernible at all, in the religious Establishments of the most learned, polite Nations. And how much soever could have been done towards the Revival of it by the Light of Reason, yet this Light could not have discovered, what so nearly concerned Us, that important Part in the Scheme of this World, which regards a Mediator; nor how far the settled Constitution of its Government admitted, Repentance to be accepted for Remission of Sins; after the obscure Intimations of these Things, from Tradition, were corrupted or forgotten. One People indeed had clearer Notices of them, together with the genuine Scheme of natural Religion, preserved in the primitive and subsequent Revelations committed to their Trust; and were designed to be a Witness of God, and a Providence to the Nations around them: But this People also had corrupted themselves and their Religion to the highest Degree, that was consistent with keeping up the Form of it. IN

\* Rom. i. 28.

IN this State of things, when infinite Wisdom saw proper, the general Doctrine of Religion was authoritatively republished in its Purity; and the particular Dispensation of Providence, which this World is under, manifested to all Men, even \* *the Dispensation of the grace of God* towards us, as sinful, lost Creatures, to be recovered by Repentance through a Mediator; who was † *to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*, and at length establish that new State of things foretold by the Prophet *Daniel*, under the Character of || *a Kingdom, which the God of heaven would set up, and which should never be destroyed.* This, including a more distinct Account of the instituted Means, whereby Christ the Mediator would *gather together in one, the children of God, that were scattered abroad ‡*, and conduct them to *the place he is gone to prepare for them §*; is the Gospel of the kingdom, which he here foretells, and elsewhere commands, *should be preached in all the World, for a witness unto all Nations.* And it first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with

Y 2 *signs*

\* Eph. iii. 2.  
‡ Joh. xi. 52.

† Dan. ix. 24.  
§ John xiv. 2, 3.

|| ii. 44.

322     *A SERMON before the Society for*  
SERM. *signs and wonders, and with divers miracles,*  
XVI. *and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his*  
*own will* \* : by which means it was spread  
very widely among the nations of the world,  
and became *a witness unto them.*

WHEN thus much was accomplished, as there is a wonderful Uniformity in the Conduct of Providence, Christianity was left with Christians, to be transmitted down pure and genuine, or to be corrupted and sunk; in like manner as the Religion of Nature had been before left with Mankind in general. There was however this Difference, that by an Institution of external Religion fitted for all Men, (consisting in a common Form of Christian Worship, together with a standing Ministry of Instruction and Discipline,) it pleased God to unite Christians in Communities or visible Churches, and all along to preserve them, over a great Part of the World; and thus perpetuate a general Publication of the Gospel. For these Communities, which together make up the catholick visible Church, are *First*, the Repositories of the written Oracles of God; and, in every Age, have preserved and published them, in every Country, where the Profession of Christianity has obtained. Hence it has come  
to

\* Heb. ii. 3, 4.

to pass, and it is a thing very much to be observed in the Appointment of Providence, that even such of these Communities, as, in a long Succession of Years, have corrupted Christianity the most, have yet continually carried, together with their Corruptions, the Confutation of them: for they have every where preserved the pure original Standard of it, the Scripture, to which Recourse might have been had, both by the Deceivers and the Deceived, in every successive Age. *Secondly*, any particular Church, in whatever Place established, is like a *City that is set on an hill, which cannot be hid\**, inviting all who pass by, to enter into it. All Persons to whom any Notices of it come, have, in Scripture language, the *Kingdom of God come nigh unto them*. They are reminded of that Religion, which natural Conscience attests the Truth of: and they may, if they will, be instructed in it more distinctly, and likewise in the gracious Means, whereby sinful Creatures may obtain eternal Life; that chief and final Good, which all Men, in Proportion to their Understanding and Integrity, even in all Ages and Countries of the heathen World, were ever in Pursuit of. And *Lastly*, Out

SERM.  
XVI.

Y 3

of

\* Mat. v. 14.

SERM. of these Churches have all along gone forth  
XVI. Persons, who have preached the Gospel in  
remote Places, with greater or less good Effect : For the Establishment of any Profession of Christianity, however corrupt, I call a good Effect, whilst accompanied with a continued Publication of the Scripture, notwithstanding it may for some Time lie quite neglected.

FROM these things, it may be worth observing by the way, appears the Weakness of all Pleas for neglecting the Publick Service of the Church. For though a Man prays with as much Devotion and less Interruption at Home, and reads better Sermons there, yet That will by no means excuse the Neglect of his appointed Part in keeping up the Profession of Christianity amongst Mankind. And this Neglect, were it universal, must be the Dissolution of the whole visible Church, *i. e.* of all Christian Communities : and so must prevent those good Purposes, which were intended to be answered by them ; and which they have, all along, answered over the World. For we see that by their Means, the Event foretold in the Text, which began in the preaching of Christ and the Apostles, has been carried on, more or less, ever since,  
and

and is still carrying on ; these being the pro-  
vidential Means of its Progress. And it is, I  
suppose, the Completion of this Event, which  
St. *John* had a Representation of, under the  
Figure of an *Angel flying in the midst of hea-*  
*ven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach*  
*unto them that dwell on the earth, and to eve-*  
*ry nation, and kindred, and tongue, and*  
*people* \*.

OUR Lord adds in the Text, that this  
should be *for a Witness unto them* : for an  
Evidence of their Duty, and an Admonition  
to perform it. But what would be the Ef-  
fect, or Success of the general Preaching of  
the Gospel, is not here mentioned. And  
therefore the Prophecy of the Text is not pa-  
rallel to those others in Scripture, which seem  
to foretel the glorious Establishment of Chri-  
stianity in the last Days : nor does it appear  
that they are coincident ; otherwise than as  
the former of these Events must be supposed  
preparatory to the latter. Nay it is not said  
here, that *God willeth all men should be saved,*  
*and come unto the knowledge of the truth* † :  
though this is the Language of Scripture  
elsewhere. The Text declares no more, than  
that it was the Appointment of God, in his

Y 4 righteous

\* Rev. xiv. 6.

† 1 Tim. ii. 4.



SERM. righteous Government over the World, that  
 XVI. *the Gospel of the Kingdom should be preached  
 for a Witness unto it.*

THE visible Constitution and Course of Nature, the moral Law written in our Hearts, the positive Institutions of Religion, and even any Memorial of it, are all spoken of in Scripture under this, or the like Denomination : So are the Prophets, Apostles, and our Lord himself. They are all *Witnesses*, for the most Part unregarded Witnesses, in Behalf of God, to Mankind. They inform us of his Being and Providence, and of the particular Dispensation of Religion, which We are under ; and continually remind us of them. And they are equally Witnesses of these things, whether we regard them, or not. Thus after a Declaration, that *Ezekiel* should be sent with a divine Message to the Children of *Israel*, it is added, *and they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them* \*. And our Lord directs the seventy Disciples, upon their Departure from any City which refused to receive them, to declare, *Notwithstanding, be you sure of this, that*

\* Ezek. ii. 5, 7.

*that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you* \*. The thing intended in both these Passages is, That which is expressed in the Text by the Word, *Witness*. And all of them together evidently suggest thus much, that the Purposes of Providence are carried on, by the Preaching of the Gospel to those who reject it, as well as to those who embrace it. It is indeed true, *God willeth that all men should be saved*: yet, from the unalterable Constitution of his Government, the Salvation of every man cannot but depend upon his Behaviour, and therefore cannot but depend upon himself; and is necessarily his own Concern, in a Sense, in which it cannot be Another's. All this the Scripture declares, in a Manner the most forcible and alarming: *Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy way perfect †? If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it ‡. He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear ||. And again, He that hath ears to hear, let*

SERM.  
XVI.

\* Luke x. 11.    † Job. xxii. 2, 3.    ‡ Prov. ix. 12.  
|| Ezek. iii. 27.

SERM. *let him bear : But if any man be ignorant,*  
 XVI. *i. e. wilfully, let him be ignorant \**. To the

same Purpose are those awful Words of the Angel, in the Person of Him, to whom *all judgment is committed † : He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his Work shall be ‡.* The righteous Government of the world must be carried on ; and, of Necessity, men shall remain the Subjects of it, by being Examples of its Mercy, or of its Justice. *Life and death are set before them, and whether they like shall be given unto them ||.* They are to make their Choice, and abide by it : but which soever their Choice be, the Gospel is equally a *Witness* to them ; and the Purposes of Providence are answered by this *Witness* of the Gospel.

FROM the foregoing View of things we should be reminded, that the same Reasons which make it our Duty to instruct the ignorant in the Relation, which the Light of Nature

• 1 Cor. xiv. 38. † Joh. v. 22. ‡ Rev. xxii. 11, 12.  
 [ Ecclus. xv. 17.

Nature shews they stand in to God their SERM.  
Maker, and in the Obligations of Obedience, XVI.  
Resignation and Love to him, which arise  
out of that Relation; make it our Duty  
likewise to instruct them in all those other  
Relations, which Revelation informs us of,  
and in the Obligations of Duty, which arise  
out of Them. And the Reasons for in-  
structing Men in both these, are of the very  
same Kind, as for communicating any useful  
Knowledge whatever. God, if he had so  
pleased, could indeed miraculously have re-  
vealed every religious Truth which concerns  
Mankind, to every individual Man: and so  
he could have every common Truth; and  
thus have superseded all use of human Teach-  
ing in Either. Yet he has not done this:  
but has appointed, that Men should be in-  
structed by the Assistance of their Fellow-  
creatures, in Both. Further: though all  
Knowledge from Reason is as really from  
God, as Revelation is: yet this last is a  
distinguished Favour to us, and naturally  
strikes us with the greatest Awe, and carries  
in it an Assurance, that those things which  
we are informed of by it, are of the utmost  
Importance to us to be informed of. Reve-  
lation therefore, as it demands to be received  
with

SERM. with a Regard and Reverence peculiar to it-  
 XVI. self; so it lays us under Obligations, of a like  
 peculiar Sort, to communicate the Light of  
 it. Further still: It being an indispensable  
 Law of the Gospel, that Christians should  
 unite in religious Communities, and these  
 being intended for \* Repositories of the writ-  
 ten *Oracles of God*, for standing Memorials  
 of Religion to unthinking Men, and for the  
 Propagation of it in the World; Christianity  
 is very particularly to be considered as a Trust,  
 deposited with us in Behalf of Others, in  
 Behalf of Mankind, as well as for our own  
 Instruction. No one has a Right to be call-  
 ed a Christian, who doth not do somewhat  
 in his Station, towards the Discharge of this  
 Trust; who doth not, for Instance, assist in  
 keeping up the Profession of Christianity  
 where he lives. And it is an Obligation but  
 little more remote, to assist in doing it in our  
 Factories abroad; and in the Colonies to  
 which we are related, by their being peopled  
 from our own Mother-country, and Subjects,  
 indeed very necessary ones, to the same Go-  
 vernment with ourselves: and nearer yet is  
 the Obligation upon such Persons in particu-  
 lar,

\* P. 322, 323.

lar, as have the Intercourse of an advantageous Commerce with them.

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XVI.

OF these our Colonies, the Slaves ought to be considered as inferior Members, and therefore to be treated as Members of them; and not meerly as Cattle or Goods, the Property of their Masters. Nor can the highest Property, possible to be acquired in these Servants, cancel the Obligation to take care of their religious Instruction. Despicable as they may appear in our Eyes, they are the Creatures of God, and of the Race of Mankind, for whom Christ died: and it is inexcusable to keep them in Ignorance of the End, for which they were made; and the Means, whereby they may become Partakers of the general Redemption. On the contrary, if the Necessity of the Case requires, that they may be treated with the very utmost Rigour, that Humanity will at all permit, as they certainly are; and, for our Advantage, made as miserable as they well can be in the present World; this surely heightens our Obligation to put them into as advantageous a Situation as we are able, with regard to Another.

THE like Charity we owe to the Natives; owe to them in a much stricter Sense than

SERM. than we are apt to consider, were it only  
 XVI. from Neighbourhood, and our having gotten  
 Possessions in their Country. For incidental  
 Circumstances of this Kind appropriate all  
 the general Obligations of Charity to parti-  
 cular Persons; and make such and such In-  
 stances of it, the Duty of One Man rather  
 than Another. We are most strictly bound  
 to consider these poor unformed Creatures,  
 as being in all Respects, of one Family with  
 ourselves, the Family of Mankind; and in-  
 struct them in our *common Salvation* \*: that  
 they may not pass through this Stage of their  
 Being like brute Beasts; but be put into a  
 Capacity of moral Improvements, how low so-  
 ever they must remain as to others, and so in-  
 to a Capacity of qualifying themselves for an  
 higher State of Life Hereafter.

ALL our Affairs should be carried on in  
 the Fear of God, in Subserviency to His  
 Honour, and the Good of Mankind. And  
 thus Navigation and Commerce should be  
 consecrated to the Service of Religion, by be-  
 ing made the Means of propagating it in every  
 Country, with which we have any Inter-  
 course. And the more widely we endeavour  
 to spread its Light and Influence, as the fore-  
 mentioned

\* Jude 3.

mentioned Circumstances, and others of a SERM.  
like Kind, open and direct our Way, the XVI.  
more faithful shall we be judged in the Dis-  
charge of that Trust \*, which is committed  
to us as Christians, when our Lord shall re-  
quire an Account of it.

AND it may be some Encouragement to  
cheerful Perseverance in these Endeavours, to  
observe, not only that they are our Duty, but  
also that they seem the Means of carrying on  
a great Scheme of Providence, which shall  
certainly be accomplished. For *the everlast-  
ing Gospel shall be preached to every Nation †:*  
*And the kingdoms of this world shall be-  
come the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his  
Christ ‡.*

HOWEVER, We ought not to be discour-  
aged in this good Work, though its future  
Success were less clearly foretold; and though  
its Effect now in reforming Mankind, ap-  
peared to be as little as our Adversaries pre-  
tend. They indeed, and perhaps some  
Others, seem to require more, than either  
Experience or Scripture give Ground to hope  
for, in the present Course of the World. But  
the bare Establishment of Christianity in any  
Place, even the external Form and Profession  
of

● P. 330. † Rev. xiv. 6. ‡ xi. 15.



SERM. of it, is a very important and valuable Effect.

XVI. It is a serious Call upon Men to attend to the natural, and the revealed Doctrine of Religion. It is a standing Publication of the Gospel, and renders it a *Witness* to them: and by this Means the Purposes of Providence are carrying on, with regard to remote Ages, as well as to the present. *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good* \*. We can look but a very little way into the Connexions and Consequences of things: Our Duty is to spread the *incorruptible Seed* as widely as we can, and leave it to *God to give the increase* †. Yet thus much we may be almost assured of, that the Gospel wherever it is planted, will have its genuine Effect upon some few; upon more perhaps than are taken Notice of in the Hurry of the World. There are, at least, a few Persons in every Country and successive Age, scattered up and down, and mixt among the rest of Mankind; who, not being corrupted past Amendment, but having within them the Principles

\* Ecclef. xi 1, 6.

† 1 Cor. iii. 6.

Principles of Recovery, will be brought to a moral and religious Sense of things, by the Establishment of Christianity where they live: and then will be influenced by the peculiar Doctrines of it, in Proportion to the Integrity of their Minds; and to the Clearness, Purity and Evidence, with which it is offered them. Of these our Lord speaks in the *Parable of the Sower*, as *understanding the word, and bearing fruit, and bringing forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty\**. One might add, that these Persons, in Proportion to their Influence, do at present better the State of things: better it even in the civil Sense, by giving some Check to that avowed Profligateness, which is a Contradiction to all Order and Government; and, if not checkt, must be the Subversion of it.


THESE important Purposes, which are certainly to be expected from the good Work before us, may serve to shew, how little Weight there is in that Objection against it, from the Want of those miraculous Assurances, with which the first Preachers of Christianity proved its Truth. The plain State of the Case is, that the Gospel, though it be notain

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\* Matt. xiii. 23.

SERM. the same Degree a *Witness* to all, who have

XVI.  it made known to them; yet in some Degree is so to all. Miracles to the Spectators of them, are intuitive Proofs of its Truth: but the bare preaching of it is a serious Admonition to all who hear it, to attend to the Notices which God has given of himself by the Light of Nature; and, if Christianity be preached with its proper Evidence, to submit to its peculiar Discipline and Laws; if not, to inquire honestly after its Evidence, in Proportion to their Capacities. And there are Persons of small Capacities for Inquiry and Examination, who yet are wrought upon by it, to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World\**, in Expectation of a future Judgment by Jesus Christ. Nor can any Christian, who understands his Religion, object, that these Persons are Christians without Evidence: for he cannot be ignorant Who has declared, that *if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God †*. And, since the whole End of Christianity is to influence the Heart and Actions, were an Unbeliever to object in that Manner, he should be asked, whether he would think  
it

\* Tit. ii. 12, 13. † John vii. 17.

it to the Purpose to object against Persons of like Capacities, that they are prudent without Evidence, when, as is often the Case, they are observed to manage their worldly Affairs with Discretion.

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THE Design before us being therefore in general unexceptionably good, it were much to be wished, that serious Men of all Denominations would join in it. And let me add, that the foregoing View of things affords distinct Reasons why they should. For, first, by so doing, they assist in a Work of the most useful Importance, that of spreading over the World the Scripture itself, as a divine Revelation: and it cannot be spread under this Character, for a Continuance, in any Country, unless Christian Churches be supported there; but will always more or less, so long as such Churches subsist: and therefore their Subsistence ought to be provided for. In the next Place, they should remember, that if Christianity is to be propagated at all, which they acknowledge it should, it must be in some particular Form of Profession. And though they think ours liable to Objections, yet it is possible they themselves may be mistaken: and whether they are or no, the very Nature of

SERM. Society requires some Compliance with  
XVI. Others. And whilst, together with our  
particular Form of Christianity, the confessed Standard of Christian Religion, the Scripture, is spread ; and especially whilst every one is freely allowed to study it, and worship God according to his Conscience ; the evident Tendency is, that genuine Christianity will be understood and prevail. Upon the whole therefore, these Persons would do well to consider, how far they can with Reason satisfy themselves in neglecting what is certainly Right, on Account of what is doubtful, whether it be Wrong ; and when the Right is of so much greater Consequence one Way, than the supposed Wrong can be the other.

To conclude: Atheistical Immorality and Profaneness, surely, is not better in itself, nor less contrary to the Design of Revelation, than Superstition. Nor is Superstition the distinguishing Vice of the present Age ; either at Home, or Abroad. But if our Colonies abroad are left without a publick Religion, and the Means of Instruction, what can be expected, but that from living in a continued Forgetfulness of God, they will at length cease to believe in Him ; and  
so

so sink into stupid Atheism? And there is too apparent Danger of the like horrible Depravity at Home, without the like Excuse for it. Indeed amongst Creatures naturally formed for Religion, yet so much under the Powers of Imagination, so apt to deceive Themselves, and so liable to be deceived by Others, as Men are; Superstition is an Evil, which can never be out of Sight. But even against This, true Religion is a great Security; and the only one. True Religion takes up that Place in the Mind, which Superstition would usurp, and so leaves little Room for it; and likewise lays us under the strongest Obligations to oppose it. On the contrary, the Danger of Superstition cannot but be increased by the Prevalence of Irreligion: and by its general Prevalence, the Evil will be unavoidable. For the common People, wanting a Religion, will of course take up with almost any Superstition, which is thrown in their way: and, in Process of Time, amidst the infinite Vicissitudes of the political World, the Leaders of Parties will certainly be able to serve themselves of that Superstition, whatever it be, which is getting ground; and will not fail to carry it on to the utmost Length their Occasions re-

SERM.  
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SERM. quire. The general Nature of the thing  
XVI. shews this: and History and Fact confirm

it. But what brings the Observation home to ourselves is, that the great Superstition of which this Nation, in particular, has Reason to be afraid, is imminent; and the Ways in which we may, very supposeably, be overwhelmed by it, obvious. It is therefore wonderful, those People who seem to think there is but one Evil in Life, that of Superstition, should not see, that Atheism and Profaneness must be the Introduction of it. So that in every View of things, and upon all Accounts, Irreligion is at present our chief Danger. Now the several religious Associations among us, in which many good Men have of late united, appear to be providentially adapted to this present State of the World. And as all good Men are equally concerned in promoting the End of them; to do it more effectually, they ought to unite in promoting it: which yet is scarce practicable upon any new Models, and quite impossible upon such as every one would think unexceptionable. They ought therefore to come into those already formed to their Hands: and even take Advantage of any Occasion of Union, to add mutual Force to  
each


each other's Endeavours in furthering their SERM.  
common End ; however they may differ as XVI.  
to the best Means, or any thing else, subor-  
dinate to it. Indeed there are well-disposed  
Persons, who much want to be admonished,  
how dangerous a thing it is, to discoun-  
tenance what is good, because it is not bet-  
ter ; and hinder what they approve, by  
raising Prejudices against some Under-part of  
it. Nor can they assist in rectifying what  
they think capable of Amendment, in the  
manner of carrying on these Designs, unless  
they will join in the Designs themselves ;  
which they must acknowledge to be good  
and necessary ones. For what can be called  
good and necessary by Christians, if it be not  
so, to support Christianity where it must  
otherwise sink, and propagate it, where it  
must otherwise be unknown ; to restrain  
abandoned, barefaced Vice, by making use-  
ful Examples, at least of Shame, perhaps of  
Repentance ; and to take Care of the Edu-  
cation of such Children, as otherwise must  
be, even educated in Wickedness, and train-  
ed up to Destruction ? Yet good Men sepa-  
rately can do nothing, proportionable to  
what is wanting, in any of these Ways : but



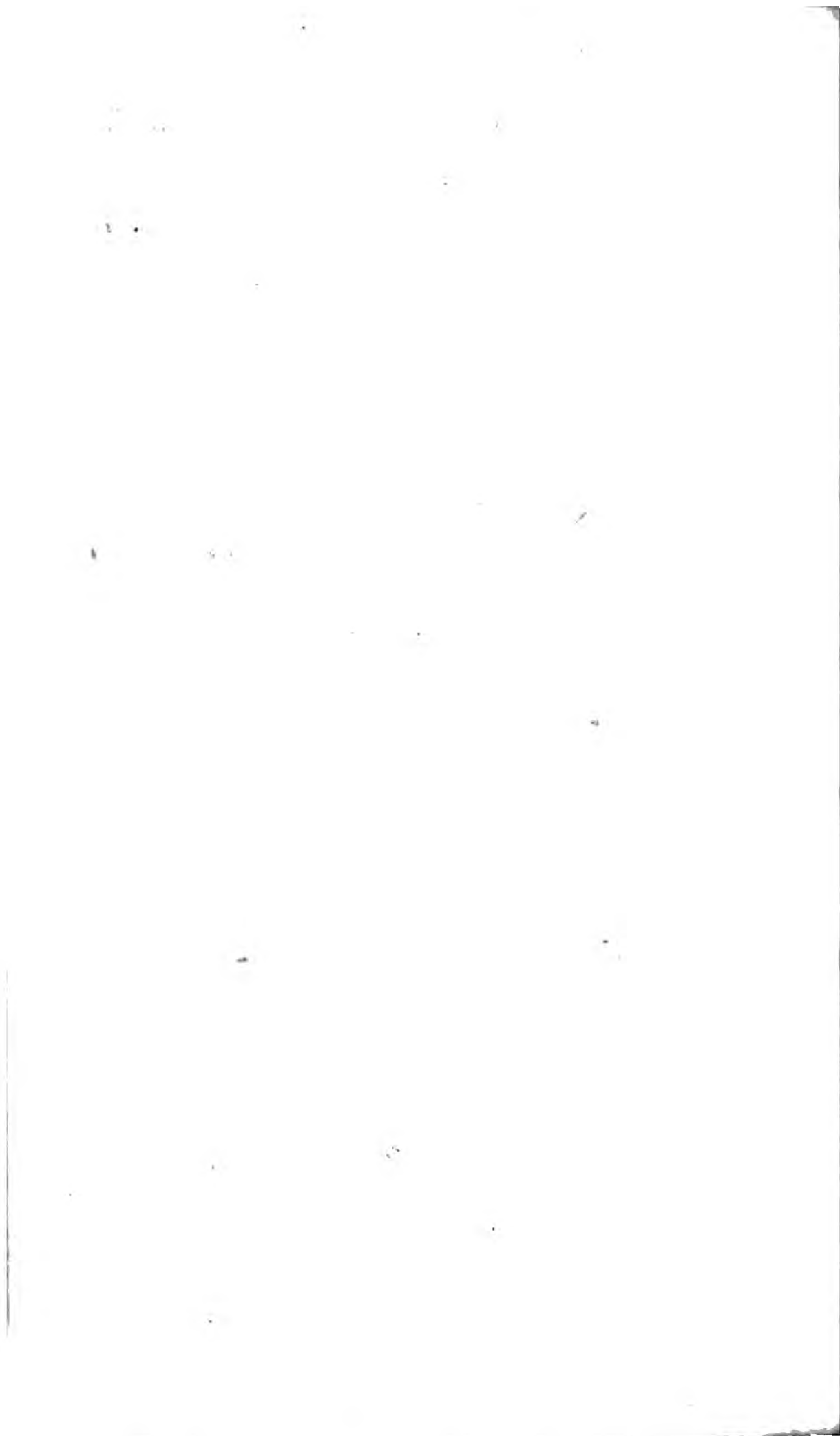
SERM. their common, united Eendeavours may do  
 XVI. a great deal in all of them.

AND besides the particular Purposes, which these several religious Affociations serve; the more general ones, which they all serve, ought not to be passed over. Every thing of this Kind is, in some Degree, a Safeguard to Religion; an Obstacle, more or less, in the Way of those who want to have it extirpated out of the World. Such Societies also contribute more especially towards keeping up the Face of Christianity among ourselves; and by their obtaining here, the Gospel is rendered more and more a *Witness* to us.

AND if it were duly attended to, and had its genuine Influence upon our Minds, there would be no Need of Persuasions to impart the Blessing: Nor would the Means of doing it be wanting. Indeed the present Income of this Society, which depends upon voluntary Contributions, with the most frugal Management of it, can in no wise sufficiently answer the bare Purposes of our Charter: but the Nation, or even this opulent City itself, has it in its Power to do so very much more, that I fear the Mention of it may be thought too severe a Reproof, since  
 so

so little is done. But if the Gospel had its SERM.  
proper Influence upon the Christian World XVI.  
in general, as it is the Centre of Trade and   
Seat of Learning, a very few Ages, in all  
Probability, would settle Christianity in every  
Country, without miraculous Assistances.  
For scarce any thing else, I am persuaded,  
would be wanting to effect this, but laying  
it before Men in its divine Simplicity, toge-  
ther with an Exemplification of it in the  
Lives of Christian Nations. *The unlearned  
and unbelievers, falling down on their faces,  
would worship God, and report that God is  
in us of a Truth\*.*

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, the  
Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs,  
and the Governors of the several  
Hospitals of the City of *London*,  
*At the Parish Church of St. Bridget.*  
On *Monday* in *Easter-Week*, 1740.

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PROV. XXII. 2.

*The Rich and Poor meet together : the Lord  
is the Maker of them all.*

**T**HE Constitution of Things being  
such, that the Labour of one Man,  
or the united Labour of several, is  
sufficient to procure more *Necessaries* than  
he or they stand in need of, which it may  
be supposed was, in some Degree, the Case,  
even in the first Ages; this immediately  
gave Room for Riches to arise in the World,  
and

SERM.  
XVII.

SERM. and for Men's acquiring them by honest  
 XVII. Means; by Diligence, Frugality and prudent  
 Management. Thus some would very soon  
 acquire greater Plenty of *Necessaries* than  
 they had Occasion for. And Others by con-  
 trary Means, or by cross Accidents, would  
 be in Want of them. And he who should  
 supply their Wants, would have the Property  
 in a proportionable Labour of their Hands;  
 which he would scarce fail to make Use of,  
 instead of his own, or perhaps together with  
 them, to provide future *Necessaries* in greater  
 Plenty. Riches then were first bestowed  
 upon the World, as they are still continued  
 in it, by the Blessing of God upon the In-  
 dustry of Men, in the Use of their Under-  
 standing and Strength. Riches themselves  
 have always this Source; though the Posses-  
 sion of them is conveyed to particular Persons  
 by different Channels. Yet still, *the hand of  
 the diligent maketh rich\**, and, other Cir-  
 cumstances being equal, in Proportion to its  
 Diligence.

BUT to return to the first Rich Man;  
 whom we left in Possession of Dependents,  
 and Plenty of *Necessaries* for himself and  
 them. A Family would not be long in this  
 State,

\* Prov. x. 4.

State, before *Conveniencies*, somewhat *Orna-* SERM.  
*mental*, and for *Entertainment*, would be XVII.  
wanted, looked for, and found out. And, }  
by Degrees, these secondary Wants, and In-  
ventions for the Supply of them, the Fruits  
of Leisure and Ease, came to employ much  
of Men's Time and Labour. Hence *a new*  
*Species of Riches* came into the World, con-  
sisting of things which it might have done  
well enough without, yet thought desirable,  
as affording Pleasure to the Imagination, or  
the Senses. And these went on increasing,  
till, at length, the *Superfluities* of Life took  
in a vastly larger Compass of things, than  
the *Necessaries* of it. Thus Luxury made  
its Inroad, and all the numerous Train of  
Evils its Attendants; of which Poverty, as  
bad an one as we may account it, is far  
from being the worst. Indeed the Hands  
of the Generality must be employed: and  
a very few of them would now be sufficient  
to provide the World with Necessaries: and  
therefore the rest of them must be employed  
about what may be called Superfluities;  
which could not be, if these Superfluities  
were not made Use of. Yet the Desire of  
such things, insensibly, becomes immoderate,  
and the Use of them, almost of Course, de-  
generates

SERM. generates into Luxury; which, in every  
 XVII. Age, has been the Diffipation of Riches,  
 and, in every Sense, the Ruin of those who  
 were possessed of them : and therefore cannot be too much guarded against by all opulent Cities. And as Men sink into Luxury, as much from Fashion, as direct Inclination, the richer Sort together may easily restrain this Vice, in almost what Degree they please : and a few of the chief of them may contribute a great deal towards the restraining it.

'Tis to be observed further concerning the Progress of Riches, that had they continued to consist only in the Possession of *the things themselves*, which were necessary, and of *the things themselves*, which were, upon their own Account, otherwise desirable ; this, in several Respects, must have greatly embarrass'd Trade and Commerce ; and have set Bounds to the Increase of Riches in all Hands, as well as have confined them in the Hands of a few. But, in Process of Time, it was agreed to substitute somewhat more lasting and portable, which should pass every where, in Commerce, for real natural Riches ; as Sounds had before, in Language, been substituted for Thoughts. And this general

neral Agreement (by what Means soever it SERM.  
became general) that *Money* should answer XVII.  
all things, together with some other Improve-  
ments, gave full Scope, for Riches to increase  
in the Hands of particular Persons, and like-  
wise to circulate into more Hands. Now  
this, tho' it was not the first Origin of Co-  
vetousness, yet it gives greater Scope, Encou-  
agement and Temptation to Covetousness  
than it had before. And there is moreover  
the Appearance, that this artificial Kind of  
Riches, Money, has begot an artificial Kind  
of Passion for them: both which Follies  
well-disposed Persons must, by all means,  
endeavour to keep clear of. For indeed *the*  
*Love of Riches is the root of all evil\**: tho'  
Riches themselves may be made instrument-  
al in promoting every thing that is good.

THE Improvement of Trade and Com-  
merce has made another Change, just hinted  
at, and I think a very happy one, in the State  
of the World, as it has enlarged the middle  
Rank of People: many of which are, in good  
Measure, free from the Vices of the highest  
and the lowest Part of Mankind. Now these  
Persons must remember, that whether, in  
common Language, they do, or do not, pass  
under

\* 1 Tim. vi. 10.



SERM. under the Denomination of Rich, yet they  
 XVII. really are so, with Regard to the Indigent and  
 ~~~~~ Necessitous: and that considering the great  
 Numbers which make up this middle Rank  
 among Us, and how much they mix with  
 the Poor, they are able to contribute very  
 largely to their Relief, and have in all Re-  
 spects a very great Influence over them.

You have heard now the Origin and Pro-  
 gress of what this great City so much abounds  
 with, Riches; as far as I had Occasion to  
 speak of these things. For this brief Account  
 of them has been laid before you for the Sake  
 of the good Admonitions it afforded. Nor  
 will the Admonitions be thought foreign to  
 the Charities, which we are endeavouring to  
 promote. For These must necessarily be less,  
 and the Occasions for them greater, in Pro-  
 portion as Industry should abate, or Luxury  
 increase. And the Temper of Covetousness  
 is, we all know, directly contrary to that  
 of Charity, and eats out the very Heart of it.  
 Then, lastly, There are good Sort of People  
 who really want to be told, that They are in-  
 cluded in the Admonitions to be given to the  
 Rich, tho' they do see Others richer than  
 themselves.

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The Ranks of Rich and Poor being thus formed, they *meet together*; they continue to make up one Society. The mutual Want, which they still have of each other, still unites them inseparably. But they *meet* upon a Foot of great Inequality. For, as *Solomon* expresses it in brief, and with much Force, *the rich ruleth over the poor* \*. And this their general Intercourse, with the Superiority on one hand, and Dependence on the other, are in no sort accidental, but arise necessarily from a settled providential Disposition of things, for their common Good. Here then is a real, standing Relation between the Rich and the Poor. And the former must take Care to perform the Duties belonging to their Part of it, for these chiefly the present Occasion leads me to speak to, from Regard to Him, who placed them in That Relation to the Poor, from whence those Duties arise, and who *is the Maker of them all*.

WHAT these Duties are, will easily be seen, and the Obligations to them strongly enforced, by a little further Reflection upon both these Ranks, and the natural Situation which they are in with Respect to each other.

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\* Prov. xxii. 7.



THE lower Rank of Mankind go on, for the most Part, in some Tract of Living, into which they got by Direction or Example ; and to this their Understanding and Discourse, as well as Labour, are greatly confined. Their Opinions of Persons and Things they take upon Trust. Their Behaviour has very little in it Original or of Home-growth ; very little which may not be traced up to the Influence of Others, and less which is not capable of being changed by such Influence. Then as God has made plentiful Provision for all his Creatures, the Wants of all, even of the poorest, might be supplied, so far as 'tis fit they should, by a proper Distribution of it. This being the Condition of the lower Part of Mankind, consider now what Influence, as well as Power, their Superiors must, from the Nature of the Case, have over them. For they can instil Instruction, and recommend it in a peculiar Manner by their Example, and enforce it still further with Favour and Discouragement of various Kinds. And Experience shews, that they do direct and change the Course of the World as they please. Not only the civil Welfare, but the Morals and Religion of their Fellow-creatures, greatly depend upon them ; much more indeed

indeed than they would, if the common People were not greatly wanting to their Duty. All this is evidently true of Superiors in general; Superiors in Riches, Authority, and Understanding, taken together. And need I say how much of this whole Superiority goes along with Riches? 'Tis no small Part of it, which arises out of Riches themselves. In all Governments, particularly in our own, a good Share of civil Authority accompanies them. Superior natural Understanding may, or may not: but when it does not, yet Riches afford great Opportunities for Improvement, and may command Information; which things together are equivalent to natural Superiority of Understanding. SERM. XVII.

BUT I am sure you will not think, I have been reminding you of these Advantages of Riches in Order to beget in you that Complacency and Trust in them, which you find the Scripture every where warning you against. No: The Importance of Riches, this their Power and Influence, affords the most serious Admonition in the World to those who are possessed of them. For it shews, how very blameable even their Carelessness in the Use of that Power and Influence must be: since it must be blameable in a Degree propor-

SERM. tionate to the Importance of what they are  
XVII. thus carelefs about.



BUT it is not only true, that the Rich have the Power of doing a great deal of Good, and must be highly blameable for neglecting to do it: but it is moreover true, that this Power is given them by way of Trust, in order to their keeping down that Vice and Misery, with which the lower People would otherwise be quite over-run. For without Instruction and good Influence They, of course, grow rude and vicious, and reduce themselves to the utmost Distresses; often to very terrible ones without deserving much Blame. And to these must be added their unavoidable Distresses, which yet admit of Relief. This their Case plainly requires, that some natural Provision should be made for it: as the Case of Children does, who if left to their own Ways, would almost infallibly ruin themselves. Accordingly Providence has made Provision for this Case of the Poor: not only by forming their Minds peculiarly apt to be influenced by their Superiors, and giving those Superiors Abilities to direct and relieve them; but also by putting the latter under the Care and Protection of the former: for this is plainly done, by Means of  
that

that Intercourse of various Kinds between SERM.  
them, which, in the natural Course of XVII.  
things, is unavoidably necessary. In the pri-  
mitive Ages of the World, the Manner in  
which *the rich and the poor met together*, was  
in Families. Rich Men had the Poor for  
their Servants: not only a few for the Offices  
about their Persons, and for the Care of what  
we now call domestick Affairs; but great  
Numbers also for the Keeping of their Cattle,  
the Tillage of their Fields, for working up  
their Wool into Furniture and Vestments of  
necessary Use as well as Ornament, and for  
preparing them those many things at Home,  
which now pass through a Multitude of un-  
known poor Hands successively, and are by  
them prepared, at a Distance, for the Use  
of the Rich. The Instruction of these large  
Families, and the Oversight of their Morals  
and Religion, plainly belonged to the Heads  
of them. And that obvious Humanity,  
which every one feels, must have induced  
them to be kind to all whom they found un-  
der their Roof, in Sicknes and Old-age. In  
this State of the World, the Relation between  
the Rich and the Poor could not but be uni-  
versally seen and acknowledged. Now in-  
deed it is less in Sight, by Means of artificial

SERM. Methods of carrying on Business, which yet  
 XVII. are not blameable. But the Relation still  
 subsists, and the Obligations arising out of it ;  
 and cannot but remain the same, whilst the  
 Rich have the same Want of the Poor, and  
 make the same Use of them, tho' not so  
 immediately under their Eye ; and whilst  
 the Instruction, and Manners, and good or  
 bad State of the Poor, really depend in so  
 great a Degree upon the Rich, as all these  
 things evidently do ; partly in their Capacity  
 of Magistrates, but very much also in their  
 private Capacity. In short, He who has dis-  
 tributed Men into these different Ranks, and  
 and at the same Time united them into one  
 Society, in such Sort as Men are united, has,  
 by this Constitution of things, formally put  
 the Poor under the Superintendency and Pa-  
 tronage of the Rich. The Rich then are  
 charged, by natural Providence, as much as  
 by revealed Appointment, with the Care of  
 the Poor : not to maintain them idle ; which,  
 were it possible they could be so maintained,  
 would produce greater Mischiefs than those  
 which Charity is to prevent ; but to take  
 Care, that they maintain themselves by their  
 Labour, or in case they cannot, then to re-  
 lieve them ; to restrain their Vices, and form  
 their

their Minds to Virtue and Religion. This is a Trust, yet it is not a Burthen, but a Privilege, annexed to Riches. And if every one discharged his Share of the Trust faithfully, whatever be his Share of it, the World would be quite another Place from what it is. But that cannot be, till Covetousness, Debauchery, and every Vice be unknown among the Rich. Then, and not before, will the Manners of the Poor be, in all Respects, what they ought to be, and their Distresses find the full Relief, which they ought to find. And, as far as things of this Sort can be calculated, in Proportion to the right Behaviour of Persons whom God has placed in the former of these Ranks, will be the right Behaviour and good Condition of those, who are cast into the latter. Every one of Ability then is to be persuaded to do Somewhat towards this, keeping up a Sense of Virtue and Religion among the Poor, and relieving their Wants; each as much as he can be persuaded to. Since the Generality will not part with their Vices, it were greatly to be wished, they would bethink themselves, and do what Good they are able, so far only as is consistent with them. A vicious Rich Man cannot pass through Life without doing an incredible deal

SERM.  
XVII.



SERM. of Mischief, were it only by his Example and  
 XVII. Influence; besides neglecting the most im-  
 portant Obligations, which arise from his su-  
 perior Fortune. Yet still, the fewer of them  
 he neglects, and the less Mischief he does,  
 the less Share of the Vices and Miseries of his  
 Inferiors, will lie at his Door: the less will  
 be his Guilt, and Punishment. But con-  
 scientious Persons of this Rank must revolve  
 again and again in their Minds, how great  
 the Trust is, which God has annexed to it.  
 They must each of them consider impartially,  
 what is his own particular Share of that  
 Trust; which is determined by his Situation,  
 Character, and Fortune together: and then  
 set himself to be as useful as he can, in those  
 particular Ways, which he finds thus marked  
 out for him. This is exactly the Precept of  
 St. Peter \*; *As every man hath received the  
 gift, even so minister the same one to another,  
 as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*  
 And as Rich Men, by a right Direction of  
 their greater Capacity, may intitle them-  
 selves to a greater Reward; so by a wrong  
 Direction of it, or even by great Negli-  
 gence, they may become † *partakers of other  
 men's sins*, and chargeable with other Men's  
 Miseries.

\* 1 Pet. iv. 10.

† 1 Tim. v. 22.

Miseries. For if there be at all any Measures of Proportion, any sort of Regularity and Order in the Administration of things, 'tis self-evident, that *\* unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom much is committed, of him shall more be demanded.*

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XVII.


But still it is to be remembered, that every Man's Behaviour is his own Concern, for every one must give account of his own Works; and that the lower People are very greatly to blame in yielding to any ill Influence, particularly following the ill Example of their Superiors; though these are more to blame in setting them such an Example. For, as our Lord declares, in the Words immediately preceding those just mentioned, *† that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* Vice is itself of Ill-desert, and therefore shall be punished in All; though its Ill-desert is greater or less, and so shall be its Punishment, in Proportion to Men's Knowledge of God and Religion: But 'tis in  
the

\* Luke xii 48.

† Luke xii. 47, 48.

SERM. the most literal Sense true, that *he who knew*  
 XVII. *not his Lord's will, and committed things*  
*worthy of stripes, shall be beaten, though with*  
*few stripes,* For it being the Discernment,  
 that such and such Actions are evil, which  
 renders them vicious in him who does them,  
 Ignorance of other things, though it may less-  
 sen, yet it cannot remit the Punishment of  
 such Actions in a just Administration, be-  
 cause it cannot destroy the Guilt of them:  
 much less can corrupt Deference and Regard  
 to the Example of Superiors in Matters of  
 plain Duty and Sin, have this Effect. In-  
 deed the lowest People know very well,  
 that such ill Example affords no Reason why  
 they should do ill; but they hope it will be  
 an Excuse for them, and thus deceive them-  
 selves to their Ruin: which is a forcible  
 Reason why their Superiors should not lay  
 this Snare in their Way.

ALL this approves itself to our natural  
 Understanding; though it is by means of  
 Christianity chiefly, that it is thus enforced  
 upon our Consciences. And Christianity, as  
 it is more than a Dispensation of Goodness, in  
 the general Notion of Goodness, even a Dis-  
 pensation of Forgiveness, of Mercy and Fa-  
 vour on God's Part, does in a peculiar Man-  
 ner

ner heighten our Obligations to Charity SERM.  
among ourselves. *In this was manifested the* XVII.  
*love of God towards us,—that he sent his Son*   
*to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved,*  
*if God so loved us, we ought also to love one*  
*another* \*. With what unanswerable Force  
is that Question of our Lord to be applied to  
every Branch of this Duty, *Shouldst not thou*  
*also have compassion on thy fellow-servant,*  
*even as I had pity on thee?* † And can  
there be a stronger Inducement to endeavour  
the Reformation of the World, and bringing  
it to a Sense of Virtue and Religion, than the  
Assurance given us, *that he which converteth*  
*a sinner from the error of his way,* and, in  
like manner, he also who preventeth a Per-  
son's being corrupted, by taking care of his  
Education, *shall save a soul from death, and*  
*bide a multitude of sins?* ‡

THESE things lead us to the follow-  
ing Observations on the several Charities,  
which are the Occasion of these annual So-  
lemnities.

I. WHAT we have to bestow in Charity  
being a Trust, we cannot discharge it faith-  
fully, without taking some Care to satisfy our-  
selves

\* 1 John iv. 9, 10, 11. † Matth. xviii. 33.

‡ James v. 20.

SERM. selves in some Degree, that we bestow it upon  
 XVII. the proper Objects of Charity. One hears  
 Persons complaining, that 'tis difficult to distinguish, who are such; yet often seeming to forget, that this is a Reason for using their best Endeavours to do it. And others make a Custom of giving to idle Vagabonds: a Kind of Charity, very improperly so called, which one really wonders People can allow themselves in; merely to be relieved from Importunity, or at best to gratify a false Good-nature. For they cannot but know, that it is, at least, very doubtful, whether what they thus give, will not immediately be spent in Riot and Debauchery. Or suppose it be not, yet still they know, they do a great deal of certain Mischief, by encouraging this shameful Trade of begging in the Streets, and all the Disorders which accompany it. But the Charities towards which I now ask your Assistance, as they are always open; so every one may contribute to them with full Assurance, that he bestows upon proper Objects, and in general that he does vastly more good, than by equal Sums given separately to particular Persons. For that these Charities really have these Advantages, has been fully made out, by some who have gone before me  
 in

in the Duty I am discharging, and by the Reports annually published at this Time.

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*Here the Report annexed was read.*

Let us thank God for these Charities, in Behalf of the Poor ; and also on our own Behalf, as they give us such clear Opportunities of doing good. Indeed without them, Vice and Misery, of which there is still so much, would abound so much more in this populous City, as to render it scarce an habitable Place.


2. AMONGST the peculiar Advantages of publick Charities above private ones, is also to be mentioned, that they are Examples of great Influence. They serve for perpetual Memorials of what I have been observing, of the Relation which subsists between the Rich and the Poor, and the Duties which arise out of it. They are standing Admonitions to all within Sight or Hearing of them, to *go and do likewise* \*. Educating poor Children in Virtue and Religion, Relieving the Sick, and Correcting Offenders in order to their Amendment, are, in themselves, some of the very best of good Works. These Charities would indeed be the Glory of your City, though their Influence were confined to it.

But

\* Luke x. 37.

SERM. But important as they are in themselves, their  
 XVII. Importance still increases, by their being Ex-  
 amples to the rest of the Nation ; which, in  
 Process of Time, of course copies after the  
 Metropolis. It has indeed already imitated  
 every one of these Charities: for of late, the  
 most difficult and expensive of them, Hospi-  
 tals for the Sick and Wounded, have been  
 established ; Some within your Sight, Others  
 in remote Parts of the Kingdom. You will  
 give me Leave to mention particularly That \*  
 in its second trading City ; which is con-  
 ducted with such disinterested Fidelity and  
 Prudence, as I dare venture to compare with  
 yours. Again, there are particular Persons  
 very blameably unactive and careless, yet not  
 without

\* As it is of very particular Benefit to those, who ought  
 always to be looked upon with particular Favour by us, I  
 mean our Seamen ; so likewise it is of very extensive Bene-  
 fit to the large Tracts of Country West and North of it.  
 Then the medicinal Waters near the City, render it a still  
 more proper Situation for an Infirmary. And so likewise  
 does its Neighbourhood to the *Bath-hospital*. For it may  
 well be supposed, that Some poor Objects will be sent thi-  
 ther, in hopes of Relief from the *Bath-waters*, whose Case  
 may afterwards be found to require the Assistance of Physick  
 or Surgery : and on the other hand, that Some may be sent  
 to our Infirmary for Help from those Arts, whose Case may  
 be found to require the *Bath-waters*. So that if I am not  
 greatly partial, the *Bristol-Infirmary* as much deserves En-  
 couragement, as any charitable Foundation in the King-  
 dom.

without good Dispositions, who, by these SERM.  
Charities, are reminded of their Duty, and XVII.  
*\* provoked to love and to good works.* And   
let me add, though one is sorry any should  
want so slight a Reason for contributing to  
the most excellent Designs, yet if any are sup-  
posed to do so merely of Course, because they  
see others do it, still they help to support  
these Monuments of Charity, which are a  
continued Admonition to the Rich, and Re-  
lief to the Poor : And herein all good Men  
*rejoice*, as *St. Paul* speaks of himself in a like  
Case, *yea, and will rejoice †.*

3. As all human Schemes admit of Im-  
provement, all publick Charities, methinks,  
should be considered as standing open to Pro-  
posals for it; that the whole Plan of them,  
in all its Parts, may be brought to as great  
Perfection as is possible. Now it should  
seem, that employing some Share of the  
Children's Time in easy Labour, suitable to  
their Age, which is done in Some of our  
Charity-Schools, might be done in most  
Others of them, with very good Effect ; as it  
is in All those of a neighbouring Kingdom.  
Then as the only Purposes of Punishments  
less than capital, are to reform the Offenders  
them-

\* Heb. x. 24.

† Phil. i. xviii.



SERM. themselves, and warn the Innocent by their  
XVII. Example, every thing which should contribute to make this Kind of Punishments answer these Purposes better than it does, would be a great Improvement. And whether it be not a thing practicable, and what would contribute somewhat towards it, to exclude utterly all sorts of Revel-mirth from Places where Offenders are confined, to separate the Young from the Old, and force them Both, in Solitude, with Labour and low Diet, to make the Experiment, how far their natural Strength of Mind can support them under Guilt and Shame and Poverty ; this may deserve Consideration. Then again, some religious Instruction particularly adapted to their Condition, would as properly accompany those Punishments which are intended to reform, as it does capital ones. God forbid that I should be understood to discourage the Provision which is made for it in this latter Case : I heartily wish it were better than it is ; especially since it may well be supposed, as the State of Religion is at present among us, that some condemned Malefactors may have never had the Doctrine of the Gospel enforced upon their Consciences. But since it must be acknowledged of greater Consequence,

quence, in a religious, as well as civil Re-  
spect, how Persons live, than how they  
die; it cannot but be even more incumbent  
on us, to endeavour, in all Ways, to reclaim  
those Offenders, who are to return again into  
the World, than those who are to be re-  
moved out of it: and the only effectual  
Means of reclaiming them, is to instil into  
them a Principle of Religion. If Persons of  
Authority and Influence would take things of  
this and a like Kind under their Consideration,  
they might perhaps still improve those  
Charities; which are already, I truly believe,  
under a better Management than any other of  
so large a Compass in the World. But

4. WITH regard to the two particular  
Branches of them last mentioned, I would  
observe, that our Laws and whole Constitution,  
civil and ecclesiastical, go more upon  
Supposition of an Equality amongst Mankind,  
than the Constitution and Laws of other  
Countries. Now this plainly requires, that  
more particular Regard should be had to the  
Education of the lower People Here, than in  
Places, where they are born Slaves of Power,  
and to be made Slaves of Superstition. It is,  
I suppose, acknowledged, that They have  
greater Liberty here, than they have any

SERM. where else in the World. But unless Care  
 XVII. be taken for giving them some inward Prin-  
 ciple, to prevent their abusing this greater  
 Liberty which is their Birth-right, can we  
 expect it will prove a Blessing to them? or  
 will they not in all Probability become more  
 dissolute, or more wild and extravagant,  
 whatever wrong Turn they happen to take,  
 than People of the same Rank in other Coun-  
 tries?

5. LET me again remind you of the ad-  
 ditional Reason, which Persons of Fortune  
 have to take particular Care of their whole  
 Behaviour, that it be in all Respects good  
 and exemplary, upon Account of the In-  
 fluence which it will have upon the Manners  
 of their Inferiors. And pray observe how  
 strictly this is connected with the Occasion of  
 our present Meeting; how much your good  
 Behaviour in private Life, will contribute to  
 promote the good Design of all these Char-  
 ities; and how much the contrary would tend  
 to defeat it, and even to produce the Evils  
 which They are intended to prevent or to re-  
 medy. Whatever Care be taken in the Edu-  
 cation of these poor Children at School, there  
 is always Danger of their being corrupted,  
 when they come from it. And this Danger  
 is

is greater, in Proportion to the greater Wick-SERM.  
edness of the Age they are to pass through. XVII.

But if, upon their coming abroad into the World, they find the Principles of Virtue and Religion recommended by the Example of their Superiors, and Vice and Irreligion really discountenanced, this will confirm them in the good Principles in which they have been brought up, and give the best Ground to hope, they will never depart from them. And the like is to be said of Offenders, who may have had a Sense of Virtue and Religion wrought in them, under the Discipline of Labour and Confinement. Again; Dissolute and debauched Persons of Fortune, greatly increase the general Corruption of Manners; and this is what increases Want and Misery of all Kinds. So that they may contribute largely to any or all of these Charities, and yet undo but a very small Part of the Mischief which they do, by their Example, as well as in other ways. But still the Mischief which they do, suppose by their Example, is an additional Reason why they should contribute to them; even in Justice to particular Persons, in whose Ruin they may have an unknown Share of Guilt; or however in Justice to Society in general: for which they

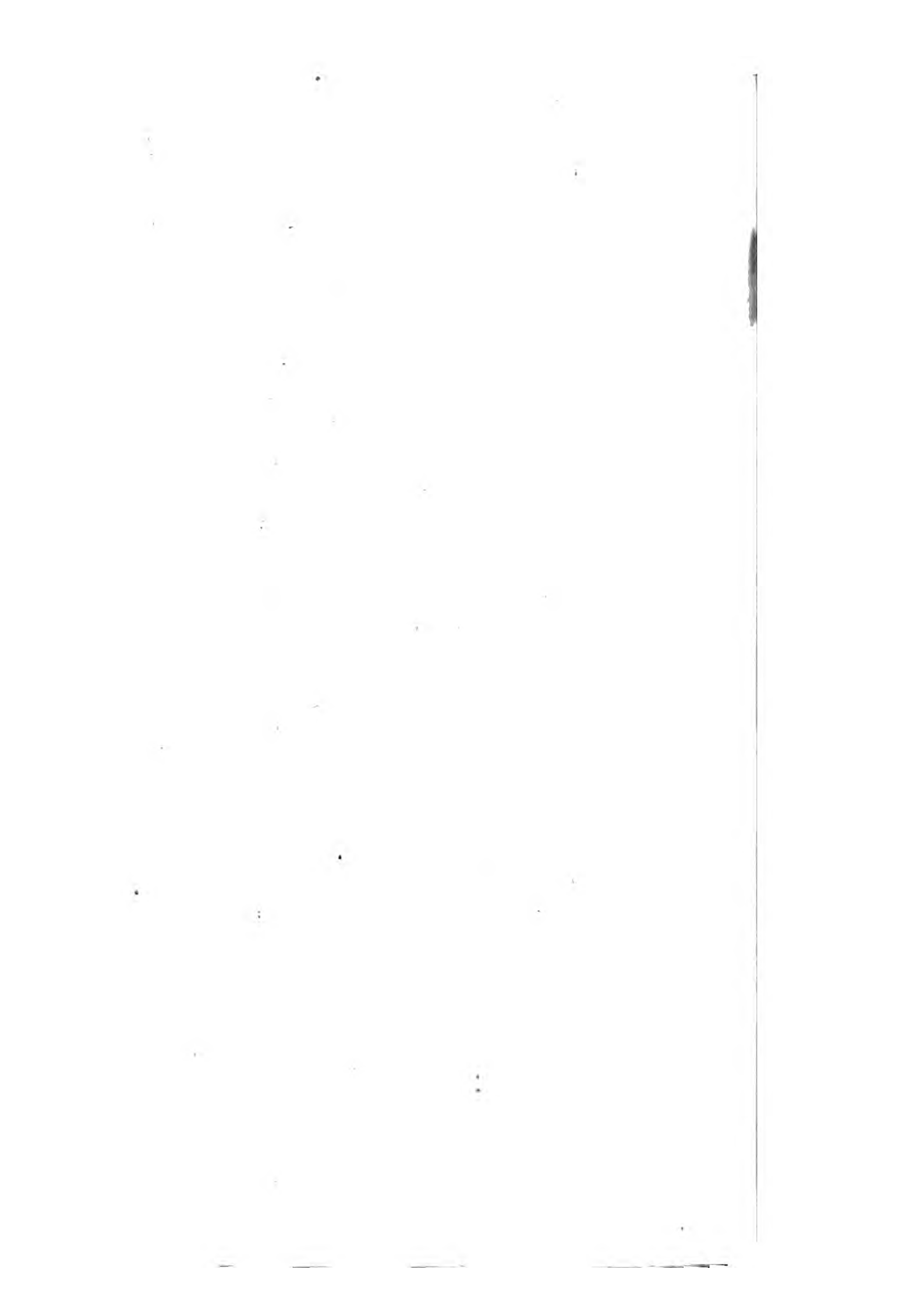
SERM. will deserve Commendation, how blameable  
 XVII. foever they are for the other. And indeed  
 amidst the dark Prospect before us, from that  
 Profligateness of Manners, and Scorn of Religion, which so generally abound, this good Spirit of Charity to the Poor discovering itself in so great a Degree, upon these Occasions, and likewise in the late necessitous Time, even amongst Persons far from being blameless in other Respects; this cannot but afford Hopes, that we are not given over by Providence, and also that They Themselves will at length consider, and not go on contributing, by the Example of their Vices, to the Introduction of that Distress, which they so commendably relieve, by their Liberality.

To conclude, Let our Charity towards Men be exalted into Piety towards God, from the serious Consideration, that we are all his Creatures; a Consideration which enforces That Duty upon our Consciences, as we have any Regard to Him. This Kind of Adjuration, and a most solemn one it is, one often hears profaned by a very unworthy Sort of People, when they ask Relief *for God's Sake*. But surely the Principle itself, which contains in it every thing great, and  
 just,

just, and good, is grievously forgotten among SERM.  
us. To relieve the Poor *for God's Sake*, is XVII.  
to do it in Conformity to the Order of Na-  
ture, and to His Will, and His Example,  
who is the Author and Governor of it; and  
in thankful Remembrance, that all we have  
is from His Bounty. 'Tis to do it, in His  
Behalf, and as to Him. For *he that bath  
pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord* \* :  
And our Saviour has declared, that he will  
take as given to himself, what is given in a  
well-chosen Charity †. Lastly, 'Tis to do it  
under a Sense of the Account which will be  
required of what is committed to our Trust,  
when *the rich and poor*, who *meet* Here upon  
Terms of so great Inequality, shall *meet*  
Hereafter upon a Level, before Him who  
*is the Maker of them all.*

\* Prov. xix. 17,

† Matth. xxv. 40.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
HOUSE of LORDS,  
IN THE  
*Abbey-Church of Westminster,*

On *Friday, Jan. 30, 1740-41.*

Being the Day appointed to be observed as  
the Day of the Martyrdom of King  
CHARLES I.

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I PETER, ii. 16.

*And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

**A**N History so full of important and interesting Events as that which this Day recalls annually to our Thoughts, cannot but afford them very different Subjects for their most serious and useful Employment. But there seems none which it more naturally leads us to consider



SERM. than that of Hypocrisy, as it sets before us  
 XVIII. so many Examples of it; or which will  
 yield us more practical Instruction, as these  
 Examples so forcibly admonish us, not only  
 to be upon our Guard against the pernicious  
 Effects of this Vice in Others, but also to  
 watch over our own Hearts, against every  
 thing of the like kind in Ourselves: for Hy-  
 pocrisy, in the moral and religious Considera-  
 tion of Things, is of much larger Extent  
 than every one may imagine.

IN common language, which is formed  
 upon the common Intercourses amongst  
 Men, Hypocrisy signifies little more than their  
 pretending what they really do not mean, in  
 order to delude one another. But in Scrip-  
 ture, which treats chiefly of our Behaviour  
 towards God and our own Consciences, it  
 signifies not only the Endeavour to delude  
 our Fellow-creatures, but likewise Insincerity  
 towards Him, and towards Ourselves. And  
 therefore, according to the whole Analogy of  
 Scripture Language, \* *to use liberty as a cloke*  
*of*

\* The Hypocrisy laid to the Charge of the Pharisees, and  
 Sadducees, in *Matth. xvi.* at the Beginning, and in *Luke xii.*  
 54, is determinately this, that their vicious Passions blinded  
 them so as to prevent their discerning the Evidence of our  
 Saviour's Mission; though no more Understanding was ne-  
 cessary to discern it, than what they had, and made use of  
 in

of maliciousness, must be understood to mean, not only endeavouring to impose upon Others, by indulging wayward Passions, or carrying on indirect Designs, under Pretences of

SERM.  
XVIII.


in common Matters. Here they are called Hypocrites merely upon Account of their Insincerity towards God and their own Consciences, and not at all upon Account of any Insincerity towards Men. This last indeed is included in that general Hypocrisy, which, throughout the Gospels, is represented as their distinguished Character ; but the former is as much included. For they were not Men, who, without any Belief at all of Religion, put on the Appearance of it only in order to deceive the World : on the contrary they believed their Religion, and were zealous in it. But their Religion, which they believed, and were zealous in was in its Nature hypocritical : for it was the Form, not the Reality ; it allowed them in immoral Practices ; and indeed was itself in some Respects immoral, as they indulged their Pride, and Uncharitableness under the Notion of Zeal for it. See *Jer.* ix. 6. *Psal.* lxxviii. 36. *Job.* iii. 19. and *Matth.* xv. 7—14. and xxiii. 13, 16, 19, 24, 26. where *Hypocrite*, and *Blind*, are used promiscuously. Again, the Scripture speaks of the *Deceitfulness of sin* ; and its deceiving those who are guilty of it : *Heb.* iii. 13. *Eph.* iv. 22. *Rom.* vii. 11. of Men's acting as if they could *deceive and mock God* : *Is.* xxix. 15. *Acts* v. 3. *Gal.* vi. 7. of their *blinding their own eyes* : *Matth.* xiii. 15. *Acts* xxviii. 27. and *deceiving themselves* ; which is quite a different thing from being deceived. *1 Cor.* iii. 18. *1 Job.* i. 8. *Gal.* vi. 3. *Jam.* i. 22, 26. Many more coincident Passages might be mentioned : but I will add only one. In *2 Theff.* ii. it is foretold, that by Means of some *Force*, some *Energy of Delusion*, Men should believe *the Lye* which is there treated of : this *Force of Delusion* is not any thing without them, but somewhat

SERM. of it; but also excusing and palliating such  
 XVIII. Things to Ourselves; serving Ourselves of  
 such Pretences to quiet our own Minds in  
 any thing which is wrong.

LIBERTY in the Writings of the New Testament, for the most Part, signifies, being delivered from the Bondage of the ceremonial Law; or of Sin and the Devil, which St. Paul calls *the glorious liberty of the children of God*\*. This last is a progressive State :

somewhat within them, which it is expressly said they should bring upon themselves, by *not receiving the love of the truth, but having pleasure in unrighteousness*. Answering to all this is that very remarkable Passage of our Lord, *Matth. vi. 22, 23. Luke xi. 34, 35.* and that Admonition repeated fourteen Times in the New Testament, *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. And the Ground of this whole Manner of considering things; for it is not to be spoken of as only a peculiar Kind of Phraseology, but is a most accurate and strictly just Manner of considering Characters and moral Conduct; the Ground of it, I say, is, that when Persons will not be influenced by such Evidence in Religion as they act upon in the daily Course of Life, or when their Notions of Religion (and I might add of Virtue) are in any sort reconcileable with what is vicious, 'tis some faulty Negligence or Prejudice, which thus deludes them; in very different Ways, perhaps, and very different Degrees. But when any one is thus deluded through his own Fault, in whatever Way or Degree it is, he deludes himself. And this is as properly Hypocrisy towards himself, as deluding the World is Hypocrisy towards the World: And he who is guilty of it acts as if he could deceive and mock God; and therefore is an Hypocrite towards Him, in as strict and literal a Sense as the Nature of the Subject will admit.

\* Rom. viii. 21.

State: and the Perfection of it, whether at- SERM.  
tainable in this World or not, consists in that XVIII.  
*perfect love †*, which St. *John* speaks of;   
and which, as it implies an entire Coinci-  
dence of our Wills with the Will of God,  
must be a State of the most absolute Free-  
dom, in the most literal and proper Sense.  
But whatever St. *Peter* distinctly meant by  
this Word, *Liberty*, the Text gives Occasion  
to consider any kind of it, which is liable to  
the Abuse he here warns us against. How-  
ever, it appears that he meant to comprehend  
That Liberty, were it more or less, which  
they to whom he was writing enjoyed under  
civil Government: for of civil Government  
he is speaking just before and afterwards:  
*¶ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man  
for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king,  
as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them  
that are sent by him. For so is the will of  
God, that with well-doing, of which dutiful  
Behaviour towards Authority is a very mate-  
rial Instance, ye may put to silence the igno-  
rance of foolish men: As free, perhaps in  
Distinction from the servile State, of which  
he speaks afterwards ‡, and not using your  
liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, of any  
thing*

† 1 Joh. iv. 18.

¶ v. 13.


‡ v. 18.

SERM. thing wrong, for so the word signifies; and XVIII. therefore comprehends Petulance, Affectation of Popularity, with any other like frivolous Turn of Mind, as well as the more hateful and dangerous Passions, such as Malice, or Ambition; for all of which *liberty* may equally be *used as a cloke*. The Apostle adds, *But as the servants of God: as free—but as His Servants*, who requires dutiful Submission to *every ordinance of Man*, to Magistracy; and to whom we are accountable for our Manner of using the Liberty we enjoy under it; as well as for all other Parts of our Behaviour. - *Not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

HERE are three things offered to our Consideration:

*First*, A general Supposition, that what is Wrong cannot be avowed in its proper Colours, but stands in need of some *Cloke* to be thrown over it: *Secondly*, A particular one, that there is Danger, some singular Danger, of Liberty's being made use of for this Purpose: *Lastly*, An Admonition not to make this ill Use of our Liberty, *but to use it as the servants of God.*

I.

I. H E R E is a general Supposition, that SERM.  
what is Wrong cannot be avowed in its pro- XVIII.  
per Colours, but stands in need of some   
*Cloke* to be thrown over it. God has con-  
stituted our Nature, and the Nature of Socie-  
ty after such a Manner, that, generally  
speaking, Men cannot encourage or sup-  
port themselves in Wickedness upon the  
Foot of there being no Difference between  
Right and Wrong, or by a direct Avowal of  
Wrong; but by disguising it, and endea-  
vouring to spread over it some Colours of  
Right. And they do this in every Capacity  
and every Respect, in which there is a Right  
or a Wrong. They do it, not only as social  
Creatures under civil Government, but also as  
moral Agents under the Government of God;  
in one Case to make a proper Figure in the  
World, and delude their Fellow-creatures;  
in the other to keep Peace within Them-  
selves, and delude their own Consciences.  
And the Delusion in both Cases being volun-  
tary, is, in Scripture, called by one Name,  
and spoken against in the same Manner:  
though doubtless they are much more expli-  
cit with themselves, and more distinctly con-  
scious of what they are about, in one Case  
than in the other.

THE fundamental Laws of all Govern-  
ments are virtuous ones, prohibiting Treache-  
ry, Injustice, Cruelty : and the Law of Re-  
putation enforces those civil Laws, by ren-  
dering these Vices every where infamous, and  
the contrary Virtues honourable and of good  
Report. Thus far the Constitution of So-  
ciety is visibly moral : And hence it is,  
that Men cannot live in it without taking  
Care to cover those Vices when they have  
them, and make some Profession of the op-  
posite Virtues, Fidelity, Justice, kind Re-  
gard to others when they have them not :  
but especially is this necessary in order to  
disguise and colour over indirect Purposes,  
which require the Concurrence of several  
Persons.

Now all false Pretences of this Kind are  
to be called hypocritical, as being contrary to  
Simplicity ; though not always designed,  
properly speaking, to beget a false Be-  
lief. For it is to be observed, that they are  
often made without any formal Intention to  
have them believed, or to have it thought  
that there is any Reality under these Pre-  
tences. Many Examples occur of verbal  
Professions of Fidelity, Justice, publick Re-  
gards, in Cases where there could be no  
Imagination

*House of Lords*, Jan. 30, 1740-41. 381

Imagination of their being believed. And what other Account can be given of these merely verbal Professions, but that they were thought the proper Language for the publick Ear ; and made in Business, for the very same Kind of Reasons as Civility is kept up in Conversation ?

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XVIII.

THESE false Professions of Virtue, which Men have, in all Ages, found it necessary to make their Appearance with Abroad, must have been originally taken up in Order to deceive in the proper Sense : then they became habitual, and often intended merely by way of Form : yet often still, to serve their original Purpose of deceiving.

THERE is doubtless amongst Mankind a great deal of this Hypocrisy towards each other : but not so much as may sometimes be supposed. For Part which has, at first sight, this Appearance, is in Reality that other Hypocrisy before-mentioned ; that Self-deceit, of which the Scripture so remarkably takes Notice. There are indeed Persons who live *without God in the world* \* : and Some appear so hardened as to keep no Measures with Themselves. But as very ill Men may have a real and strong Sense of Virtue and Religion,

\* Eph. ii. 12.




SERM. Religion, in Proportion as this is the Case  
XVIII. with any, they cannot be easy within them-

— selves but by deluding their Consciences. And tho' they should, in great Measure, get over their Religion, yet this will not do. For as long as they carry about with them any such Sense of things, as makes them condemn what is wrong in Others, they could not but condemn the same in Themselves, and dislike and be disgusted with their own Character and Conduct, if they would consider them distinctly, and in a full Light. But this sometimes they carelessly neglect to do, and sometimes carefully avoid doing. And as *the integrity of the upright guides him* \*, guides even a Man's Judgment; so Wickedness may distort it to such a Degree, as that he may *call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness* †; and *think wickedly, that God is such an one as himself* ‡. Even the better Sort of Men are, in some Degree, liable to disguise and palliate their Failings to themselves: but perhaps there are few Men who go on calmly in a Course of very bad things, without somewhat of the Kind now described in a very high Degree. They try Appearances upon Themselves as well

\* Prov. xi. 3. † Is. v. 20. ‡ Psal. l. 21.

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well as upon the World, and with at least SERM.  
as much Success ; and chuse to manage so as XVIII.  
to make their own Minds easy with their   
Faults, which can scarce be without Manage-  
ment, rather than to mend them.

BUT whether from Men's deluding them-  
selves, or from their intending to delude the  
World, 'tis evident scarce any thing Wrong  
in publick has ever been accomplished, or even  
attempted, but under false Colours : either  
by pretending one thing, which was Right,  
to be designed, when it was really another  
thing, which was Wrong ; or if that which  
was Wrong was avowed, by endeavouring to  
give it some Appearance of Right. For Ty-  
ranny, and Faction so friendly to it, and  
which is indeed Tyranny out of Power, and  
unjust Wars, and Persecution, by which the  
Earth has been laid waste ; all this has all  
along been carried on with Pretences of  
Truth, Right, general Good. So it is,  
Men cannot find in their Heart to join in  
such things, without such honest Words to  
be the Bond of the Union, though they know  
among themselves, that they are only Words,  
and often though they know, that every body  
else knows it too.

SERM. THESE Observations might be exemplified  
XVIII. by numerous Instances in the History which  
led to them : and without them it is impossible to understand in any sort the general Character of the chief Actors in it, who were engaged in the black Design of subverting the Constitution of their Country. This they compleated with the most enormous Act of mere Power, in Defiance of all Laws of God and Man, and in exprefs Contradiction to the real Design and publick Votes of that Assembly, whose Commission, they professed, was their only Warrant for any thing they did throughout the whole Rebellion. Yet with unheard-of Hypocrisy towards Men, towards God and their own Consciences, for without such a Complication of it their Conduct is inexplicable ; even this Action, which so little admitted of any Cloke, was, we know, contrived and carried into Execution, under Pretences of Authority, Religion, Liberty, and by profaning the Forms of Justice in an Arraignment and Trial, like to what is used in regular legal Procedures. No Age indeed can shew an Example of Hypocrisy parallel to this. But the History of all Ages, and all Countries will shew, what has been really going forward

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ward over the Face of the Earth, to be very SERM.  
different from what has been always pre- XVIII.  
tended; and that Virtue has been every  
where professed much more than it has been  
any where practised: nor could Society,  
from the very Nature of its Constitution,  
subsist without some general publick Profes-  
sion of it. Thus the Face, and Appearance  
which the World has in all Times put on,  
for the Ease and Ornament of Life, and in  
Pursuit of further Ends, is the justest Satyr  
upon what has in all Times been carrying on  
under it: and ill Men are destined, by the  
Condition of their Being as social Creatures,  
always to bear about with them, and, in  
different Degrees, to profess, that Law of  
Virtue, by which they shall finally be judged  
and condemned.

II. As fair Pretences, of one sort or other,  
have thus always been made Use of by Man-  
kind to colour over indirect and wrong De-  
signs from the World, and to palliate and  
excuse them to their own Minds; Liberty,  
in common with all other good things, is  
liable to be made this Use of, and is also  
liable to it in a Way more peculiar to it-

SERM. self : which was the second thing to be con-  
XVIII. sidered.

IN the History which this Day refers us to, we find our Constitution, in Church and State, destroyed under Pretences, not only of Religion, but of securing Liberty, and carrying it to a greater Height. The Destruction of the former was with Zeal of such a Kind, as would not have been warrantable, though it had been employed in the Destruction of Heathenism. And the Confusions, the persecuting Spirit, and incredible Fanaticism, which grew up upon its Ruins, cannot but teach sober-minded Men to reverence so mild and reasonable an Establishment, now it is restored ; for the Preservation of Christianity and keeping up a Sense of it amongst us, and for the Instruction and Guide of the ignorant ; nay were it only for guarding Religion from such Extravagancies : especially as these important Purposes are served by it without bearing hard in the least upon Any.

AND the concurrent Course of Things, which brought on the Ruin of our civil Constitution, and what followed upon it, are no less instructive. The Opposition, by legal and Parliamentary Methods, to Prerogatives

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gatives unknown to the Constitution, was doubtless formed upon the justest Fears in Behalf of it. But new Distrusts arose: new Causes were given for them: these were most unreasonably aggravated. The better Part gradually gave way to the more violent: and the better Part themselves seem to have insisted upon impracticable Securities against that one Danger to Liberty, of which they had too great Cause to be apprehensive; and wonderfully overlooked all other Dangers to it, which yet were, and ever will be many and great. Thus they joined in the current Measures, till they were utterly unable to stop the Mischiefs, to which, with too much Distrust on one Side, and too little on the other, they had contributed. Never was a more remarkable Example of the Wise Man's Observation, that *the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water\**. For this Opposition, thus begun, surely without Intent of proceeding to Violence; yet as it went on, like an overflowing Stream in its Progress, it collected all sort of Impurities, and grew more outrageous as it grew more corrupted; till at length it bore down every thing good before it. This naturally

SERM.

XVIII.

C c 3

turally

\* Prov. xvii. 14.

SERM. naturally brought on arbitrary Power in one  
 XVIII. Shape, which was odious to every body, and  
 which could not be accommodated to the  
 Forms of our Constitution; and put us in  
 the utmost Danger of having it entailed upon  
 us under another, which might. For at the  
 King's Return, such was the just Indignation  
 of the Publick at what it had seen, and Fear  
 of feeling again what it had felt, from the  
 popular Side; such the Depression and Com-  
 pliance, not only of the more guilty, but al-  
 so of those, who with better Meaning had  
 gone on with them; and a great deal too far  
 many of this Character had gone; and such  
 the undistinguishing Distrust the People had  
 of them All, that the chief Security of our  
 Liberties seems to have been, their not being  
 attempted at that Time.

BUT though Persons contributed to all  
 this Mischief and Danger with different De-  
 grees of Guilt, none could contribute to them  
 with Innocence, who at all knew what they  
 were about. Indeed the Destruction of a  
 free Constitution of Government, though  
 Men see or fancy many Defects in it, and  
 whatever they design or pretend, ought not  
 to be thought of without Horror. For the  
 Design is in itself unjust, since it is romantick  
 to

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to suppose it legal : it cannot be prosecuted SERM.  
without the most wicked Means : nor ac- XVIII.  
complished but with the present Ruin of Li-  
berty, religious as well as civil ; for it must  
be the Ruin of its present Security. Whereas  
the Restoration of it must depend upon a  
thousand future Contingencies, the Integrity,  
Understanding, Power of the Persons, into  
whose Hands Anarchy and Confusion should  
throw things : and who they will be, the  
History before us may surely serve to shew,  
no human Foresight can determine ; even  
though such a terrible Crisis were to happen  
in an Age, not distinguished for the Want of  
Principle and publick Spirit, and when no-  
thing particular were to be apprehended from  
Abroad. It would be Partiality to say, that  
no Constitution of Government can possibly  
be imagined more perfect than our own.  
And ingenuous Youth may be warmed with  
the Idea of one, against which nothing can  
be objected. But it is the strongest Objection  
against attempting to put in Practice the most  
perfect Theory, that it is impracticable, or  
too dangerous to be attempted. And who-  
ever will thoroughly consider, in what De-  
gree Mankind are really influenced by Rea-  
son, and in what Degree by Custom, may, I  
C c 4 think,



SERM. think, be convinced, that the State of human  
 XVIII. Affairs does not even admit of an Equivalent,  
 for the Mischief of setting things afloat ; and  
 the Danger of parting with those Securities of  
 Liberty, which arise from Regulations of  
 long Prescription and ancient Usage : espe-  
 cially at a Time when the Directors are so  
 very numerous, and the Obedient so few.  
 Reasonable Men therefore will look upon  
 the general Plan of our Constitution, tran-  
 smitted down to us by our Ancestors, as sa-  
 cred ; and content themselves with calmly  
 doing what their Station requires, towards  
 rectifying the particular things which they think  
 amiss, and supplying the particular things which  
 they think deficient in it, so far as is practi-  
 cable without endangering the Whole.

BUT Liberty is in many other Dangers  
 from itself besides those which arise from  
 formed Designs of destroying it, under hy-  
 pocritical Pretences, or romantick Schemes  
 of restoring it upon a more perfect Plan. It  
 is particularly liable to become excessive, and  
 to degenerate insensibly into Licentiousness ;  
 in the same Manner as Liberality, for Ex-  
 ample, is apt to degenerate into Extravagance.  
 And as Men cloke their Extravagance to  
 themselves under the Notion of Liberality,  
 and to the World under the Name of it, so  
 Licentiousness

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Licentiousness passes under the Name and SERM.  
Notion of Liberty. Now it is to be observed, XVIII.  
that there is, in some Respects or other, a   
very peculiar Contrariety between those Vices  
which consist in Excess, and the Virtues of  
which they are said to be the Excess, and  
the Resemblance, and whose Names they  
affect to bear; the Excess of any thing being  
always to its Hurt, and tending to its De-  
struction. In this Manner Licentiousness is,  
in its very Nature, a present Infringement  
upon Liberty, and dangerous to it for the  
future. Yet it is treated by many Persons  
with peculiar Indulgence under this very  
Notion, as being an Excess of Liberty.  
And an Excess of Liberty it is to the licen-  
tious themselves: but what is it to those  
who suffer by them, and who do not think,  
that Amends is at all made them by having it  
left in their Power to retaliate safely? When  
by popular Insurrections, or defamatory Li-  
bels, or in any like Way, the Needy and the  
Turbulent securely injure quiet People in  
their Fortune or Good-name, so far quiet  
People are no more free than if a single Ty-  
rant used them thus. A particular Man may  
be licentious without being less free: but a  
Community cannot; since the Licentious-  
ness

SERM. nefs of One will unavoidably break in upon  
 XVIII. the Liberty of Another. Civil Liberty, the

**Liberty of a Community, is a severe and a restrained thing ; implies in the Notion of it, Authority, settled Subordinations, Subjection and Obedience ; and is altogether as much hurt by too little of this Kind as by too much of it. And the Love of Liberty, when it is indeed the Love of Liberty, which carries us to withstand Tyranny, will as much carry us to reverence Authority, and support it ; for this most obvious Reason, that One is as necessary to the very Being of Liberty, as the Other is destructive of it. And therefore the Love of Liberty, which does not produce this Effect ; the Love of Liberty, which is not a real Principle of dutiful Behaviour towards Authority ; is as hypocritical, as the Religion which is not productive of a good Life. Licentiousness is in Truth, such an Excess of Liberty as is of the same Nature with Tyranny. For what is the Difference between them, but that One is lawless Power exercised under Pretence of Authority, or by Persons invested with it ; the Other lawless Power exercised under Pretence of Liberty, or without any Pretence at all ? A People then must always**


ways be less free in Proportion as they are more licentious ; Licentiousness being, not only different from Liberty, but directly contrary to it ; a direct Breach upon it.

SERM.  
XVIII.

IT is moreover of a growing Nature ; and of speedy Growth too ; and, with the Culture which it has amongst us, needs no great Length of Time to get to such an Height as no legal Government will be able to restrain, or subsist under : which is the Condition the Historian describes in saying, they could neither bear their Vices, nor the Remedies of them \*. I said legal Government : for, in the present State of the World, there is no Danger of our becoming Savages. Had Licentiousness finished its Work, and destroyed our Constitution, Power would not be wanting, from one Quarter or another, sufficient to subdue us, and keep us in Subjection. But Government, as distinguished from mere Power, free Government, necessarily implies Reverence in the Subjects of it, for Authority, or Power regulated by Laws ; and an Habit of Submission to the Subordinations in civil Life, throughout its several Ranks : nor is a People capable of Liberty without some-  
what

\* Nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus. Liv. L. I. c. 1.

SERM. what of this Kind. But it must be observed.  
 XVIII. and less surely cannot be observed, this Re-  
 verence and Submission will at best be very precarious, if it be not founded upon a Sense of Authority being God's Ordinance, and the Subordinations in Life a providential Appointment of things. Now let it be considered, for surely it is not duly considered, what is really the short Amount of those Representations, which Persons of superior Rank give, and encourage to be given of each other, and which are spread over the Nation? Is it not somewhat, in itself, and in its Circumstances, beyond any thing in any other Age or Country of the World? And what Effect must the Continuance of this extravagant Licentiousness in Them, not to mention other Kinds of it, have upon the People in those Respects just mentioned? Must it not necessarily tend to wear out of their Minds all Reverence for Authority, and Respect for Superiors of every Sort; and, joined with the irreligious Principles we find so industriously propagated, to introduce a total Profligateness amongst them; since, let them be as bad as they will, 'tis scarce possible they can be so bad as they are instructed they may be, or worse than they are told their Superiors

periors are? And is there no Danger that all SERM.  
this, to mention only one supposeable Course XVIII.  
of it, may raise somewhat like that levelling   
Spirit, upon atheistical Principles, which, in  
the last Age, prevailed upon enthusiastick  
ones? not to speak of the Possibility, that  
different Sorts of People may unite, in it,  
upon these contrary Principles. And may  
not this Spirit, together with a Concurrence  
of Ill-humours, and of Persons who hope to  
find their Account in Confusion, soon prevail  
to such a Degree, as will require more of the  
good old Principles of Loyalty and of Reli-  
gion to withstand it, than appear to be left  
amongst us?

What legal Remedies can be provided  
against these Mischiefs, or whether any at  
all, are Considerations the farthest from my  
Thoughts. No Government can be free,  
which is not administered by general stated  
Laws: and these cannot comprehend every  
Case, which wants to be provided against:  
nor can new ones be made for every parti-  
cular Case, as it arises: and more particular  
Laws, as well as more general ones, admit  
of infinite Evasions: and legal Government  
forbids any but legal Methods of Redress;  
which cannot but be liable to the same Sort  
of

SERM. of Imperfections: besides the additional one  
 XVIII. of Delay; and whilst Redress is delayed,

however unavoidably, Wrong subsists. Then there are very bad Things, which human Authority can scarce provide against at all, but by Methods dangerous to Liberty; not fully, but by such as would be fatal to it. These Things shew, that Liberty, in the very Nature of it, absolutely requires, and even supposes, that People be able to govern Themselves in those Respects in which they are free; otherwise their Wickedness will be in Proportion to their Liberty, and this greatest of Blessings will become a Curse.

III. These Things shew likewise, that there is but one adequate Remedy to the forementioned Evils, even That which the Apostle prescribes in the last Words of the Text, to consider ourselves *as the servants of God*, who enjoins dutiful Submission to civil Authority, as his Ordinance; and to whom we are accountable for the Use we make of the Liberty which we enjoy under it. Since Men cannot live out of Society, nor in it without Government, Government is plainly a divine Appointment; and consequently Submission to it, a most evident Duty  
 of

of the Law of Nature. And we all know in SERM.  
how forcible a Manner it is put upon our XVIII.  
Consciences in Scripture. Nor can this Ob-  
ligation be denied formally upon any Princi-  
ples, but such as subvert all other Obliga-  
tions. Yet many amongst us seem not to  
consider it as any Obligation at all. This  
doubtless is, in a great Measure, owing to  
Diffoluteness and Corruption of Manners:  
but I think it is partly owing to their having  
reduced it to nothing in Theory. Whereas  
this Obligation ought to be put upon the  
same Foot with all other general ones, which  
are not absolute and without Exception: and  
our Submission is due in all Cases but those,  
which we really discern to be Exceptions to  
the general Rule. And they, who are per-  
petually displaying the Exceptions, though  
they do not indeed contradict the Meaning  
of any particular Texts of Scripture, which  
surely intended to make no Alteration in  
Men's civil Rights; yet they go against the  
general Tenor of Scripture. For the Scrip-  
ture, throughout the whole of it, commands  
Submission; supposing Men apt enough of  
themselves to make the Exceptions, and not  
to need being continually reminded of them.  
Now if we are really under any Obligations  
of



SERM. of Duty at all to Magistrates, Honour and  
 XVIII. Respect, in our Behaviour towards them,  
 must doubtless be their due. And they who  
 refuse to pay them this small and easy Re-  
 gard, who *despise dominion, and speak evil*  
*of dignities* \*, should seriously ask them-  
 selves, what restrains them from any other  
 Instance whatever of Undutifulness? And if  
 it be Principle, why not from this? Indeed  
 free Government supposes, that the Conduct  
 of Affairs may be inquired into, and spoken  
 of with Freedom. Yet surely this should  
 be done with Decency, for the Sake of Li-  
 berty itself; for its Honour, and its Secu-  
 rity. But be it done as it will, it is a very  
 different thing from libelling, and endea-  
 vouring to vilify the Persons of such as are in  
 Authority. It will be hard to find an In-  
 stance, in which a serious Man could calmly  
 satisfy himself in doing this. It is in no  
 Case necessary, and in every Case of very  
 pernicious Tendency. But the Immorality  
 of it increases in Proportion to the Integrity,  
 and superior Rank of the Persons thus  
 treated. It is therefore in the highest De-  
 gree immoral, when it extends to the su-  
 preme Authority in the Person of a Prince,  
 from

\* Jude viii.

from Whom our Liberties are in no imaginable Danger, whatever they may be from Ourselves; and whose mild, and strictly legal Government could not but make any virtuous People happy.

SERM.  
XVIII.

A FREE Government, which the good Providence of God has preserved to us through innumerable Dangers, is an invaluable Blessing. And our Ingratitude to Him in abusing of it, must be great in Proportion to the Greatness of the Blessing, and the providential Deliverances by which it has been preserved to us. Yet the Crime of abusing this Blessing \*, receives further Aggravation from hence, that such Abuse always is to the Reproach, and tends to the Ruin of it. The Abuse of Liberty has directly overturned many free Governments, as well as our own, on the popular Side; and has, in various Ways, contributed to the Ruin of many, which have been overturned on the Side of Authority. Heavy therefore must be their Guilt, who shall be found to have given such Advantages against it, as well as theirs who have taken them.

D d

*Lastly,*

\* See p. 391. &c. &c.

SERM.  
XVIII.

Lastly, The Consideration, that we are the Servants of God, reminds us, that we are accountable to Him for our Behaviour in those Respects, in which it is out of the Reach of all human Authority; and is the strongest Enforcement of Sincerity, as *all things are naked, and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do* \*. Artificial Behaviour might perhaps avail much towards quieting our Consciences, and making our Part good in the short Competitions of this World: but what will it avail us considered as under the Government of God? Under His Government, *there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves* †. He has indeed instituted civil Government over the Face of the Earth, *for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise*, the Apostle does not say the Rewarding, but, *for the praise of them that do well* ‡. Yet as the worst answer these Ends in some Measure, the best can do it very imperfectly. Civil Government can by no means take Cognizance of *every Work*, which is good or evil: many *things* are done  
 in

\* Heb. iv. 13.

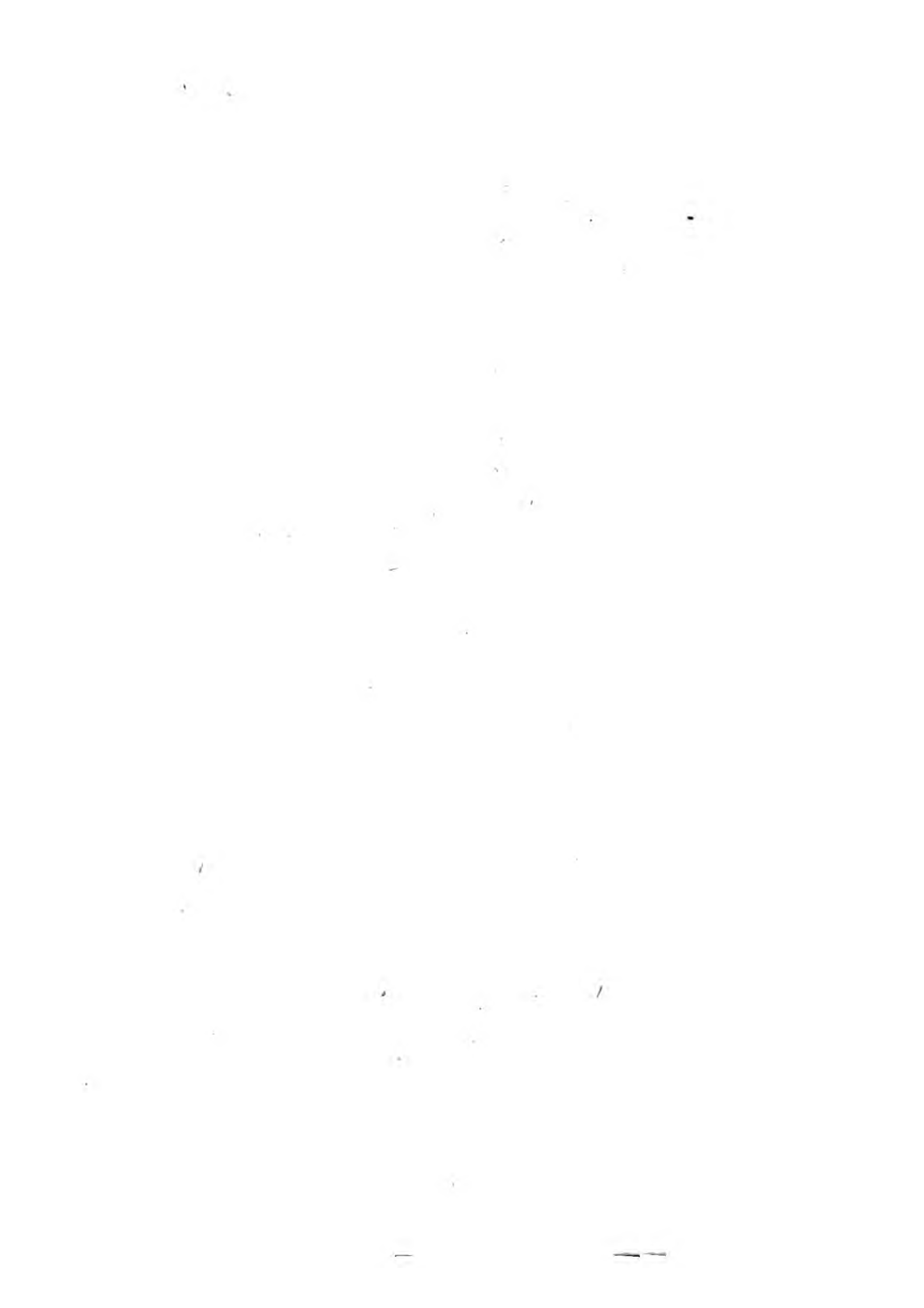
† Job xxxiv. 22.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 14.

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in *secret*; the Authors unknown to it, and SERM.  
often the things themselves: Then it cannot XVIII.  
so much consider Actions, under the View of  
their being morally *good*, or *evil*, as under  
the View of their being mischievous, or be-  
neficial to Society: nor can it in any wise  
execute *Judgment* in rewarding what is *Good*,  
as it can, and ought, and does, in punishing  
what is *evil*. But *God shall bring every  
work into judgment, with every secret thing,  
whether it be Good, or whether it be evil* \*.

\* Eccl xii. 14.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of  
Christ-Church, LONDON ;

On *Thursday, May 9, 1745.*

Being the Time of the YEARLY MEETING  
of the CHILDREN educated in the Cha-  
rity-Schools, in and about the Cities of  
*London and Westminster.*

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PROV. xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should go :  
and when he is old, he will not depart  
from it.*

**H**UMAN Creatures, from the Con- SERM.  
stitution of their Nature and the XIX.  
Circumstances in which they are  
placed, cannot but acquire Habits during  
their Childhood, by the Impressions which  
are given them, and their own customary  
Actions. And long before they arrive at

SERM. mature Age, these Habits form a general  
 XIX. settled Character. And the Observation of  
 the Text, that the most early Habits are  
 usually the most lasting, is likewise every  
 one's Observation. Now whenever Children  
 are left to themselves, and to the Guides and  
 Companions which they choose, or by Ha-  
 zard light upon, we find by Experience, that  
 the first Impressions they take, and Course of  
 Action they get into, are very bad; and so  
 consequently must be their Habits, and Cha-  
 racter, and future Behaviour. Thus if they  
 are not trained up in the Way they *should* go,  
 they will certainly be trained up in the Way  
 they *should not* go; and, in all Probability,  
 will persevere in it, and become miserable  
 Themselves, and mischievous to Society:  
 which, in Event, is worse, upon Account  
 of Both, than if they had been exposed to  
 perish in their Infancy. On the other hand,  
 the ingenuous Docility of Children before  
 they have been deceived, their Distrust of  
 themselves, and natural Deference to grown  
 People, whom they find here settled in a  
 World where they themselves are Strangers;  
 and to whom they have recourse for Advice,  
 as readily as for Protection; which Deference  
 is still greater towards those who are placed  
 over

over them: These Things give the justest SERM.  
Grounds to expect, that they may receive XIX.  
such Impressions, and be influenced to such a  
Course of Behaviour, as will produce lasting  
good Habits; and, together with the Dan-  
gers beforementioned, are as truly a natural  
Demand upon us to *train them up in the way*  
*they should go*, as their bodily Wants are a  
Demand to provide them bodily Nourish-  
ment. Brute Creatures are appointed to do  
no more than this last for their Offspring,  
Nature forming them by Instincts to the par-  
ticular Manner of Life appointed them;  
from which they never deviate. But this is  
so far from being the Case of Men, that, on  
the contrary, considering Communities col-  
lectively, every successive Generation is left,  
in the ordinary Course of Providence, to be  
formed by the preceding one; and becomes  
good or bad, though not without its own  
Merit or Demerit, as this Trust is discharged  
or violated, chiefly in the Management of  
Youth.

WE ought, doubtless, to instruct and ad-  
monish grown Persons; to restrain them from  
what is Evil, and encourage them in what is  
Good, as we are able: But this Care of  
Youth, abstracted from all Consideration of



SERM. the parental Affection, I say, this Care of  
 XIX. Youth, which is the general Notion of *Edu-*  
 cation, becomes a distinct Subject, and a  
 distinct Duty, from the particular Danger of  
 their Ruin, if left to themselves, and the  
 particular Reason we have to expect they  
 will do well, if due Care be taken of them.  
 And from hence it follows, that Children  
 have as much Right to some proper Educa-  
 tion, as to have their Lives preserved; and  
 that when this is not given them by their  
 Parents, the Care of it devolves upon all  
 Persons, it becomes the Duty of all, who are  
 capable of contributing to it, and whose Help  
 is wanted.

THESE trite, but most important Things,  
 implied indeed in the Text, being thus pre-  
 mised as briefly as I could express them, I pro-  
 ceed to consider distinctly the general Manner  
 in which the Duty of Education is there laid  
 before us: which will further shew its Ex-  
 tent, and further obviate the idle Objections  
 which have been made against it. And all  
 this together will naturally lead us to confi-  
 der the Occasion and Necessity of Schools for  
 the Education of poor Children, and in  
 what Light the Objections against them are  
 to be regarded.

SOLOMON

SOLOMON might probably intend the Text **SERM.**  
for a particular Admonition to educate Chil- **XIX.**  
dren in a Manner suitable to their respective  
Ranks, and future Employments: but cer-  
tainly he intended it for a general Admoni-  
tion to educate them in Virtue and Religion,  
and good Conduct of themselves in their  
temporal Concerns. And all this together,  
in which they are to be educated, he calls  
*the way they should go, i. e.* he mentions it  
not as a Matter of Speculation but of Practice.  
And conformably to this Description of the  
Things in which Children are to be educated,  
he describes Education itself: For he calls  
it *training them up*; which is a very differ-  
ent Thing from merely teaching them some  
Truths, necessary to be known or believed:  
It is endeavouring to form such Truths into  
practical Principles in the Mind, so as to  
render them of habitual good Influence upon  
the Temper and Actions, in all the various  
Occurrences of Life. And this is not done  
by bare Instruction; but by that, together  
with admonishing them frequently as Occa-  
sion offers; restraining them from what is  
Evil, and exercising them in what is Good.  
Thus the Precept of the Apostle concerning  
this Matter is, to *bring up children in the*  
*nurture*

SERM. *nurture and admonition of the Lord* \* ; as *it*  
 XIX. were by way of Distinction from acquainting  
 them merely with the Principles of Christi-  
 anity, as you would with any common Theo-  
 ry. Though Education were nothing more  
 than informing Children of some Truths  
 of Importance to them, relating to Reli-  
 gion and common Life, yet there would be  
 great Reason for it, notwithstanding the fri-  
 volous Objections concerning the Danger of  
 giving them Prejudices. But when we con-  
 sider, that such Information itself is really  
 the least Part of it; and that it consists in  
 endeavouring to put them into right Disposi-  
 tions of Mind, and right Habits of Living, in  
 every Relation and every Capacity; this Con-  
 sideration shews such Objections to be quite  
 absurd: since it shews them to be Objections  
 against doing a Thing of the utmost Impor-  
 tance at the natural Opportunity of our do-  
 ing it, Childhood and Youth; and which is  
 indeed, properly speaking, our only one.  
 For when they are grown up to Maturity,  
 they are out of our Hands, and must be left  
 to themselves. The natural Authority on  
 One Side ceases, and the Deference on the  
 Other. God forbid, that it should be im-  
 possible

\* Eph. vi. 4.

possible for Men to recollect Themselves, and reform at an advanced Age : but it is in no sort in the Power of Others to gain upon them ; to turn them away from what is Wrong, and enforce upon them what is Right, at that Season of their Lives, in the Manner we might have done in their Childhood.

SERM.  
XIX.

DOUBTLESS Religion requires Instruction, for it is founded in Knowledge and Belief of some Truths. And so is common Prudence in the Management of our temporal Affairs. Yet neither of them consist in the Knowledge or Belief even of these fundamental Truths ; but in our being brought by such Knowledge or Belief to a correspondent Temper and Behaviour. Religion, as it stood under the Old Testament, is perpetually stiled *the Fear of God* : under the New, *Faith in Christ*. But as that Fear of God does not signify literally being afraid of Him, but having a good Heart, and leading a good Life, in Consequence of such Fear ; so this Faith in Christ does not signify literally *believing* in Him in the Sense that Word is used in common Language, but becoming his real Disciples, in Consequence of such Belief.

OUR Religion being then thus practical, consisting in a Frame of Mind and Course of  
Be-

SERM. Behaviour, suitable to the Dispensation we  
XIX. are under, and which will bring us to our final Good; Children ought, by Education, to be habituated to this Course of Behaviour, and formed into this Frame of Mind. And it must ever be remembered, that if no Care be taken to do it, they will grow up in a direct contrary Behaviour, and be hardened in direct contrary Habits. They will more and more corrupt themselves, and spoil their proper Nature. They will alienate themselves farther from GOD; and not only neglect, but *trample under foot*, the Means which He in his infinite Mercy has appointed for our Recovery. And upon the whole, the same Reasons which shew, that they ought to be instructed and exercised in what will render them useful to Society, secure them from the present Evils they are in Danger of incurring, and procure them that Satisfaction which lies within the Reach of human Prudence; shew likewise, that they ought to be instructed and exercised in what is suitable to the highest Relations in which we stand, and the most important Capacity in which we can be considered; in that Temper of Mind and Course of Behaviour, which will secure them from their chief Evil, and bring them to  
their

their chief Good. Besides that Religion is SERM.  
the principal Security of Men's acting a right XIX.  
Part in Society, and even in respect to their  
own temporal Happiness, all Things duly  
considered.

IT is true indeed, Children may be taught Superstition, under the Notion of Religion ; and it is true also, that, under the Notion of Prudence, they may be educated in great Mistakes as to the Nature of real Interest and Good, respecting the present World. But this is no more a Reason for not educating them according to the best of our Judgment, than our knowing how very liable we all are to err in other Cases, is a Reason why we should not, in those other Cases, act according to the best of our Judgment.

IT being then of the greatest Importance, that Children should be thus educated, the providing Schools to give this Education to such of them as would not otherwise have it, has the Appearance, at least at first Sight, of deserving a Place amongst the very best of good Works. One would be backward, methinks, in entertaining Prejudices against it ; and very forward, if one had any, to lay them aside, upon being shewn that they were groundless. Let us consider the whole  
State

SERM. State of the Case. For though this will lead  
 XIX. us some little Compass, yet I chuse to do it;  
 and the rather, because there are People who  
 speak of Charity Schools as a new-invented  
 Scheme, and therefore to be looked upon  
 with I know not what Suspicion. Whereas  
 it will appear, that the Scheme of Charity  
 Schools, even the Part of it which is most  
 looked upon in this Light, teaching the  
 Children Letters and Accounts, is no other-  
 wise new, than as the Occasion for it is so.

FORMERLY not only the Education of  
 poor Children, but also their Maintenance,  
 with that of the other Poor, were left to  
 voluntary Charities. But great Changes of  
 different Sorts happening over the Nation,  
 and Charity becoming more cold, or the Poor  
 more numerous, it was found necessary to  
 make some legal Provision for them. This  
 might, much more properly than Charity  
 Schools, be called a new Scheme. For with-  
 out question, the Education of poor Children  
 was all along taken Care of, by voluntary  
 Charities, more or less: but obliging us by  
 Law to maintain the Poor, was new in the  
 Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*. Yet, because a  
 Change of Circumstances made it necessary,  
 its Novelty was no Reason against it. Now  
 in

in that legal Provision for the Maintenance of the Poor, poor Children must doubtless have had a Part in common with grown People. But this could never be sufficient for Children, because their Case always requires more than mere Maintenance; it requires that they be educated in some proper Manner. Wherever there are Poor who want to be maintained by Charity, there must be poor Children who, besides this, want to be educated by Charity. And whenever there began to be Need of *legal* Provision for the *Maintenance* of the Poor, there must immediately have been Need also of some *particular* legal Provision in Behalf of poor Children for their *Education*; this not being included in what we call their Maintenance. And many whose Parents are able to maintain them, and do so, may yet be utterly neglected as to their Education. But possibly it might not at first be attended to, that the Case of poor Children was thus a Case by itself, which required its own particular Provision. Certainly it would not appear, to the Generality, so urgent an one as the Want of Food and Raiment. And it might be necessary, that a Burden so entirely new as that of a Poor-Tax was at the Time I am speaking

SERM.  
XIX.



ing




SERM. ing of, should be as light as possible. Thus  
 XIX. the legal Provision for the Poor was first  
 settled; without any particular Consideration  
 of that additional Want in the Case of Chil-  
 dren; as it still remains, with scarce any Al-  
 teration in this Respect. In the mean Time,  
 as the Poor still increased or Charity still les-  
 sened, many poor Children were left exposed,  
 not to perish for want of Food, but to grow  
 up in Society and learn every Thing that is  
 Evil and nothing that is Good in it; and  
 when they were grown up, greatly at a Loss  
 in what honest Way to provide for them-  
 selves, if they could be supposed inclined to  
 it. And larger Numbers, whose Case was  
 not so bad as this, yet were very far from ha-  
 ving due Care taken of their Education.  
 And the Evil went on increasing, till it was  
 grown to such a Degree, as to be quite out of  
 the Compass of separate Charities to remedy.  
 At length some excellent Persons, who were  
 united in a \* *Society* for carrying on almost  
 every good Work, took into Consideration  
 the neglected Case I have been representing;  
 and first of all, as I understand it, set up  
 Charity Schools; or however promoted  
 them, as far as their Abilities and Influence  
 could

\* SOCIETY for promoting *Christian Knowledge*.

could extend. Their Design was not in any SERM.  
fort to remove poor Children out of the XIX.  
Rank in which they were born, but, keep-  
ing them in it, to give them the Assistance  
which their Circumstances plainly called for ;  
by educating them in the Principles of Reli-  
gion, as well as civil Life ; and likewise ma-  
king some sort of Provision for their Main-  
tenance : under which last I include Clothing  
them, giving them such Learning, if it is to  
be called by that Name, as may qualify  
them for some common Employment, and  
placing them out to it, as they grow up.  
These two general Designs coincide, in many  
Respects, and cannot be separated. For  
teaching the Children to read, though I have  
ranked it under the latter, equally belongs to  
both : And without some Advantages of the  
latter sort, poor People would not send their  
Children to our Charity Schools : Nor could  
the poorest of all be admitted into any  
Schools, without some charitable Provision of  
Clothing. And Care is taken, that it be  
such as cannot but be a Restraint upon the  
Children. And if this, or any Part of their  
Education, gives them any little Vanity, as  
has been poorly objected, whilst they are  
Children, it is scarce possible but that it will

SERM. have even a quite contrary Effect when they  
 XIX. are grown up, and ever after remind them  
 of their Rank. Yet still we find it is apprehended, that what they here learn may set them above it.

BUT why should People be so extremely apprehensive of the Danger, that poor Persons will make a perverse Use of every the least Advantage, even the being able to read, whilst they do not appear at all apprehensive of the like Danger for themselves or their own Children, in Respect of Riches or Power, how much soever; though the Danger of perverting these Advantages is surely as great, and the Perversion itself of much greater and worse Consequence? And by what odd Reverse of Things has it happened, that such as pretend to be distinguished for the Love of Liberty, should be the only Persons who plead for keeping down the Poor, as one may speak; for keeping them more inferior in this Respect, and, which must be the Consequence, in other Respects, than they were in Times past? For till within a Century or two, all Ranks were nearly upon a Level as to the Learning in question. The Art of Printing appears to have been providentially reserved till these latter Ages,  
 and

and then providentially brought into Use, as SERM.  
what was to be instrumental for the future in XIX.  
carrying on the appointed Course of Things.   
The Alterations which this Art has even already made in the Face of the World, are not inconsiderable. By means of it, whether immediately or remotely, the Methods of carrying on Business are, in several Respects, improved, *Knowledge has been increased* \*, and some sort of Literature is become general. And if this be a Blessing, we ought to let the Poor, in their Degree, share it with us. The present State of Things and Course of Providence plainly leads us to do so. And if we do not, it is certain, how little soever it be attended to, that they will be upon a greater Disadvantage, on many Accounts, especially in populous Places, than they were in the dark Ages : for they will be more ignorant, comparatively with the People about them, than they were then ; and the ordinary Affairs of the World are now put in a Way which requires, that they should have some Knowledge of Letters, which was not the Case then. And therefore, to bring up the Poor in their former Ignorance, now this Knowledge is so much

E e 2                      more

\* Dan. xii. 4.

SERM. more common and wanted, would be, not  
 XIX. to keep them in the same, but to put them  
 into a lower Condition of Life than what  
 they were in formerly. Nor let People of  
 Rank flatter themselves, that Ignorance will  
 keep their Inferiors more dutiful and in  
 greater Subjection to them: for surely there  
 must be Danger, that it will have a contrary  
 Effect, under a free Government such as  
 ours, and in a dissolute Age. Indeed the  
 Principles and Manners of the Poor, as to  
 Virtue and Religion, will always be greatly  
 influenced, as they always have been, by the  
*Example* of their Superiors, if that would  
 mend the Matter. And this Influence will,  
 I suppose, be greater, if they are kept more  
 inferior than formerly in all Knowledge and  
 Improvement. But unless their Superiors of  
 the present Age, Superiors, I mean, of the  
 Middle, as well as higher Ranks in Society,  
 are greater Examples of publick Spirit, of  
 dutiful Submission to Authority, human and  
 divine, of Moderation in Diversions, and  
 proper Care of their Families and domestick  
 Affairs; unless, I say, Superiors of the pre-  
 sent Age are greater Examples of Decency,  
 Virtue and Religion, than those of former  
 Times; for what Reason in the World is it  
 desirable,

desirable, that their Example should have SERM.  
 this greater Influence over the Poor? On the XIX.  
 contrary, why should not the Poor, by be-  
 ing taught to read, be put into a Capacity of  
 making some Improvement in moral and re-  
 ligious Knowledge, and confirming them-  
 selves in those good Principles, which will be  
 a great Security for their following the Ex-  
 ample of their Superiors if it be good, and  
 some sort of Preservative against their follow-  
 ing it if it be bad? And serious Persons will  
 farther observe very singular Reasons for this  
 amongst us; from the Discontinuance of that  
 religious Intercourse between Pastors and Peo-  
 ple in private, which remains in Protestant  
 Churches abroad, as well as in the Church of  
*Rome*; and from our small publick Care and  
 Provision for keeping up a Sense of Religion  
 in the lower Rank, except by distributing  
 religious Books. For in this Way they have  
 been assisted; and any well-disposed Person  
 may do much Good amongst them, and at a  
 very trifling Expence, since the worthy *So-*  
*ciety* before-mentioned has so greatly lessened  
 the Price of such Books. But this pious  
 Charity is an additional Reason why the  
 Poor should be taught to read, that they may  
 be in a Capacity of receiving the Benefit of

SERM. it. Vain indeed would be the Hope, that  
 XIX. any thing in this World can be fully secured  
 from Abuse. For as it is the general Scheme  
 of divine Providence to bring Good out of  
 Evil; so the Wickedness of Men will, if it  
 be possible, bring Evil out of Good. But  
 upon the whole, Incapacity and Ignorance  
 must be favourable to Error and Vice; and  
 Knowledge and Improvement contribute, in  
 due Time, to the Destruction of Impiety as  
 well as Superstition, and to the general Preva-  
 lence of true Religion. But some of these  
 Observations may perhaps be thought too re-  
 mote from the present Occasion. It is more  
 obviously to the Purpose of it to observe,  
 that Reading, Writing and Accounts, are  
 useful, and, whatever Cause it is owing to,  
 would really Now be wanted in the very  
 lowest Stations: And that the *Trustees* of  
 our *Charity Schools* are fully convinced of the  
 great Fitness of joining to Instruction easy  
 Labour, of some Sort or other, as fast it is  
 practicable; which they have already been  
 able to do in some of them.

THEN as to placing out the poor Children,  
 as soon as they are arrived at a fit Age for it;  
 this must be approved by every one, as it is  
 putting them in a Way of Industry under  
 domestick

domestick Government, at a Time of Life, in SERM.  
some Respects, more dangerous than even XIX.  
Childhood. And it is a known Thing, that Care  
is taken to do it in a Manner which does not  
set them above their Rank : though it is not  
possible always to do it exactly as one would  
wish. Yet, I hope it may be observed with-  
out Offence, if any of them happen to be of  
a very weakly Constitution, or of a very di-  
stinguished Capacity, there can be no Im-  
propriety in placing these in Employments  
adapted to their particular Cases ; though  
such as would be very improper for the Ge-  
nerality.

BUT the principal Design of this Charity  
is to educate poor Children in such a Man-  
ner, as has a Tendency to make them good,  
and useful, and contented, whatever their  
particular Station be. The Care of this is  
greatly neglected by the Poor : nor truly is  
it more regarded by the Rich, considering  
what might be expected from them. And  
if it were as practicable to provide Charity  
Schools, which should supply this shameful  
Neglect in the Rich, as it is to supply the  
like, though more excusable, Neglect in the  
Poor, I should think certainly, that Both  
ought to be done for the same Reasons. And



SERM. most People, I hope, will think so too, if  
 XIX. they attend to the Thing I am speaking of ;  
 which is the moral and religious Part of Edu-  
 cation ; what is equally necessary for all  
 Ranks, and grievously wanting in all. Yet  
 in this Respect the Poor must be greatly  
 upon a Disadvantage, from the Nature of  
 the Case ; as will appear to any one who will  
 consider it.

FOR if poor Children are not sent to  
 School, several Years of their Childhood, of  
 course, pass away in Idleness and Loitering.  
 This has a Tendency to give them, perhaps  
 a feeble Lifflesness, perhaps an headstrong  
 Profligateness of Mind ; certainly an Indif-  
 position to proper Application as they grow  
 up, and an Aversion afterwards, not only to  
 the Restraints of Religion, but to those which  
 any particular Calling, and even the Nature  
 of Society, require. Whereas Children kept  
 to stated Orders, and who many Hours of  
 the Day are in Employment, are by this  
 Means habituated, both to submit to those  
 who are placed over them, and to govern  
 Themselves ; and they are also by this Means  
 prepared for Industry, in any Way of Life in  
 which they may be placed. And all this  
 holds abstracted from the Consideration of  
 their

their being taught to read ; without which, SERM.  
However, it will be impracticable to employ XIX.  
their Time : not to repeat the unanswerable  
Reasons for it before mentioned. Now Se-  
veral poor People cannot, Others will not be  
at the Expence of sending their Children to  
School. And let me add, that such as can  
and are willing, yet if it be very inconvenient  
to them, ought to be eased of it, and the  
Burden of Children made as light as may be  
to their poor Parents.


CONSIDER next the Manner in which  
the Children of the Poor, who have vicious  
Parents, are brought up, in Comparison with  
other Children whose Parents are of the same  
Character. The Children of dissolute Men  
of Fortune may have the Happiness of not  
seeing much of their Parents. And this,  
even though they are educated at Home, is  
often the Case, by Means of a customary  
Distance between them, which cannot be  
kept amongst the Poor. Nor is it impossi-  
ble, that a rich Man of this Character, de-  
siring to have his Children better than him-  
self, may provide them such an Education  
as may make them so, without his having  
any Restraint or Trouble in the Matter.  
And the Education which Children of better  
Rank

**SERM.** Rank must have, for their Improvement in  
**XIX.** the common Accomplishments belonging to  
it, is of course, as yet, for the most Part,  
attended with some Sort of religious Educa-  
tion. But the Poor, as they cannot provide  
Persons to educate their Children; so from  
the Way in which they live together in poor  
Families, a Child must be an Eye and Ear-  
witness of the worst Part of his Parents Talk  
and Behaviour. And it cannot but be ex-  
pected, that his own will be formed upon it.  
For as Example in general has very great  
Influence upon all Persons, especially Chil-  
dren, the Example of their Parents is of  
Authority with them, when there is nothing  
to balance it on the other Side. Now take  
in the Supposition, that these Parents are  
dissolute, profligate People; then, over and  
above giving their Children no Sort of good  
Instruction, and a very bad Example, there  
are more Crimes than one in which, it may  
be feared, they will directly instruct and en-  
courage them; besides letting them ramble  
abroad wherever they will, by which, of  
course, they learn the very same Principles  
and Manners they do at Home. And from  
all these Things together, such poor Chil-  
dren will have their Characters formed to  
Vice,

Vice, by those whose Business it is to restrain SERM.  
them from it. They will be disciplined and XIX.  
trained up in it. This surely is a Case which  
ought to have some publick Provision made  
for it. If it can't have an adequate one, yet  
such an one as it can : unless it be thought  
so rare as not to deserve our Attention. But  
in reality, though there should be no more  
Parents of this Character amongst the Poor,  
in Proportion, than amongst the Rich, the  
Case which I have been putting will be far  
from being uncommon. Now notwithstanding  
the Danger, to which the Children of  
such wretched Parents cannot but be exposed,  
from what they see at Home ; yet by instil-  
ling into them the Principles of Virtue and  
Religion at School, and placing them soon  
out in sober Families, there is Ground to  
hope, they may avoid those ill Courses, and  
escape that Ruin, into which, without this  
Care, they would almost certainly run. I  
need not add how much greater Ground  
there is to expect, that those of the Children  
who have religious Parents will do well.  
For such Parents, besides setting their Chil-  
dren a good Example, will likewise repeat  
and enforce upon them at Home, the good  
Instructions they receive at School.

AFTER

SERM. AFTER all, we find the World continues  
XIX. very corrupt. And it would be miraculous  
indeed, if Charity Schools alone should make  
it otherwise: or if they should make even  
all who are brought up in them Proof against  
its Corruptions. The Truth is, every Me-  
thod that can be made use of to prevent or  
reform the bad Manners of the Age, will  
appear to be of less Effect, in Proportion to  
the greater Occasion there is for it: As Cul-  
tivation, though the most proper that can  
be, will produce less Fruit, or of a worse  
Sort, in a bad Climate than in a good one.  
And thus the Character of the common Peo-  
ple, with whom these Children are to live, in  
the ordinary Intercourse of Business and Com-  
pany when they come out into the World,  
may more or less defeat the good Effects of  
their Education. And so likewise may the  
Character of Men of Rank, under whose  
Influence they are to live. But whatever  
Danger may be apprehended from either or  
both of these, it can be no Reason why we  
should not endeavour, by the likeliest Me-  
thods we can, to better the World, or keep  
it from growing worse. The good Tenden-  
cy of the Method before us is unquestionable.  
And I think myself obliged to add, that up-  
on

on a Comparison of Parishes where Charity SERM.  
Schools have been for a considerable Time XIX.  
established, with neighbouring ones, in like   
Situations, which have had none, the good  
Effects of them, as I am very credibly in-  
formed, are most manifest. Notwithstand-  
ing I freely own, that it is extremely diffi-  
cult to make the necessary Comparisons in  
this Case, and form a Judgment upon them.  
And a Multitude of Circumstances must  
come in to determine, from Appearances on-  
ly, concerning the positive Good which is  
produced by this Charity, and the Evil  
which is prevented by it; which last is full  
as material as the former, and can scarce be  
estimated at all. But surely there can be no  
Doubt, whether it be useful or not, to edu-  
cate Children in Order, Virtue and Reli-  
gion.

HOWEVER, suppose, which is yet far  
from being the Case, but suppose it should  
seem, that this Undertaking did not answer  
the Expence and Trouble of it, in the civil  
or political Way of considering Things.  
What is this to Persons who profess to be en-  
gaged in it, not only upon mere civil Views,  
but upon moral and christian ones? We are  
to do our Endeavours to promote Virtue and  
Religion

SERM. Religion amongst Men, and leave the Success  
 XIX. to God : The Designs of his Providence are  
 answered by these Endeavours, *whether they*  
*will bear, or whether they will forbear ; i. e.*  
 whatever be the Success of them : And the  
 least Success in such Endeavours is a great  
 and valuable Effect \*.

FROM these foregoing Observations, duly  
 considered, it will appear, that the Objec-  
 tions which have been made against Charity  
 Schools, are to be regarded in the same Light  
 with those which are made against any other  
 necessary Things ; for Instance, against pro-  
 viding for the Sick and the aged Poor. Ob-  
 jections in this latter Case could be considered  
 no otherwise than merely as Warnings of  
 some Inconvenience which might accompany  
 such Charity, and might, more or less, be  
 guarded against, the Charity itself being still  
 kept up ; or as Proposals for placing it upon  
 some better Foot. For tho', amidst the Dis-  
 order and Imperfection in all human Things,  
 these Objections were not obviated, they  
 could not however possibly be understood as  
 Reasons for discontinuing such Charity ; be-  
 cause thus understood, they would be Rea-  
 sons

\* See the Sermon before the SOCIETY for the Propaga-  
 tion of the Gospel.


sons for leaving necessitous People to perish. SERM.

Well-disposed Persons therefore will take XIX.

Care, that they be not deluded with Objections against this before us, any more than against other necessary Charities; as though such Objections were Reasons for suppressing them, or not contributing to their Support, unless we can procure an Alteration of That to which we object. There can be no possible Reasons for leaving poor Children in that imminent Danger of Ruin, in which many of these must be left, were it not for this Charity. Therefore Objections against it, cannot, from the Nature of the Case, amount to more than Reasons for endeavouring, whether with or without Success, to put it upon a right and unexceptionable Foot, in the particular Respects objected against. And if this be the Intention of the Objectors, the Managers of it have shewn themselves remarkably ready to second them: for they have shewn even a Docility in receiving Admonitions of any thing thought amiss in it, and Proposals for rendring it more complete. And, under the Influence of this good Spirit, the Management of it is really improving; particularly in greater Endeavours to introduce Manufactures



SERM. manufactures into these Schools; and in more  
XIX. particular Care to place the Children out to  
Employments in which they are most  
wanted, and may be most serviceable, and  
which are most suitable to their Ranks. But  
if there be any thing in the Management of  
them, which some particular Persons think  
should be altered, and others are of a contrary  
Opinion, these Things must be referr'd to the  
Judgment of the Publick, and the Determi-  
nation of the Publick complied with. Such  
Compliance is an essential Principle of all cha-  
ritable Affociations; for without it they could  
not subsist at all: and by charitable Affocia-  
tions, Multitudes are put in mind to do Good,  
who otherwise would not have thought of it;  
and infinitely more Good may be done, than  
possibly can by the separate Endeavours of  
the same Number of charitable Persons.  
Now he who refuses to help forward the  
good Work before us, because it is not con-  
ducted exactly in his own Way, breaks in  
upon that general Principle of Union; which  
those who are Friends to the Indigent and  
distressed Part of our Fellow-Creatures, will  
be very cautious how they do in any Case:  
but more especially will they beware, how  
they

they break in upon that necessary Principle in SERM.  
a Case of so great Importance as is the pre- XIX.  
sent. For the Publick is as much interested   
in the Education of poor Children, as in the  
Preservation of their Lives.

THIS last, I observed, is legally provided  
for. The former is left amongst other  
Works of Charity, neglected by many who  
care for none of these Things, and to be  
carried on by such only as think it their Con-  
cern to be doing Good. Some of you are  
able, and in a Situation, to assist in it in an  
eminent Degree, by being *Trustees*, and over-  
looking the Management of these Schools ;  
or in different Ways countenancing and re-  
commending them ; as well as by contribu-  
ting to their Maintenance : Others can assist  
only in this latter Way. In what Manner  
and Degree then it belongs to You, and to  
me, and to any particular Person to help it  
forward, let us all consider seriously, not for  
one another, but each of us for himself.

AND may the Blessing of Almighty God  
accompany this Work of Charity,  
which He has put into the Hearts of  
his Servants, in Behalf of these poor

F f

Children

432

SERM.  
XIX.



A SERMON, &c.

Children : that being now *trained up in the way they should go, when they are old they may not depart from it.* May He, of his Mercy, keep them safe amidst the innumerable Dangers of this bad World, through which they are to pass, and preserve them unto his heavenly Kingdom.

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SERMON

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
HOUSE of LORDS,  
IN THE  
Abbey Church of *Westminster*,

On *Thursday, June 11, 1747.*

Being the Anniversary of his MAJESTY'S  
Happy Accession to the Throne.

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I TIM. ii. 1, 2.


*I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

**I**T is impossible to describe the general SERM.  
End, which Providence has appointed XX.  
us to aim at in our Passage through the  
present World, in more expressive Words,  
than these very plain ones of the Apostle, *to*  
*lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godli-*

SERM. *ness and honesty : A quiet and peaceable life,*

XX. by way of Distinction, surely, from eager, tumultuary Pursuits in our private Capacity, as well as in Opposition both to our making Insurrections in the State, and to our suffering Oppression from it. *To lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, is the Whole that we have any Reason to be concerned for. To this the Constitution of our Nature carries us ; and our external Condition is adapted to it.*

Now in Aid to this general Appointment of Providence, Civil Government has been instituted over the World, both by the Light of Nature and by Revelation, to instruct Men in the Duties of Fidelity, Justice, and Regard to common Good, and enforce the Practice of these Virtues, without which there could have been no Peace or Quiet amongst Mankind ; and to preserve, in different Ways, a Sense of Religion, as well as Virtue, and of God's Authority over us. For if we could suppose Men to have lived out of Government, they must have run Wild, and all Knowledge of Divine Things must have been lost from among them. But by means of their uniting under it, they have been preserved in some tolerable  
Security

Security from the Fraud and Violence of SERM.  
each other ; Order, a Sense of Virtue, and XX.  
the Practice of it has been in some Measure   
kept up ; and Religion, more or less pure,  
has been all along spread and propagated.  
So that I make no Scruple to affirm, that  
Civil Government has been, in all Ages, a  
standing Publication of the Law of Nature,  
and an Enforcement of it ; though never in  
its Perfection, for the most Part greatly  
corrupted, and I suppose always so in some  
Degree.

AND considering, that Civil Government  
is that Part of God's Government over the  
World, which he exercises by the Instru-  
mentality of Men, wherein, that which is  
Oppression, Injustice, Cruelty, as coming  
from Them, is, under his Direction, neces-  
sary Discipline, and just Punishment ; con-  
sidering that *all Power is of God* \*, all Autho-  
rity is properly of Divine Appointment ;  
Men's very living under Magistracy might  
naturally have led them to the Contempla-  
tion of Authority in its Source and Origin ;  
the one, supreme, absolute Authority of Al-  
mighty God ; by which he *doth according to*  
*his will in the army of heaven, and among*

F f 3 *the*

\* Rom. xiii. 1.

SERM. *the inhabitants of the earth* †: which he  
 XX. Now exerts, visibly and invisibly, by differ-  
 ent Instruments, in different Forms of Ad-  
 ministration, different Methods of Discipline  
 and Punishment; and which he will conti-  
 nue to exert Hereafter, not only over Man-  
 kind when this mortal Life shall be ended,  
 but throughout his universal Kingdom; till,  
 by having rendered to all according to their  
 Works, he shall have compleatly executed  
 that just Scheme of Government, which he  
 has already begun to execute in this World,  
 by their Hands, whom he has appointed,  
 for the present \* *punishment of evil doers, and  
 for the praise of them that do well.*

AND though that Perfection of Justice  
 cannot in any sort take Place in this World,  
 even under the very Best Governments; yet  
 under the Worst, Men have been enabled to  
 lead much more quiet and peaceable Lives,  
 as well as attend to and keep up a Sense of  
 Religion much more, than they could possi-  
 bly have done without any Government at  
 all. But a free Christian Government is  
 adapted to answer these Purposes in a higher  
 Degree, in Proportion to its just Liberty,  
 and the Purity of its religious Establishment.

And

† Dan. iv. 35.

\* 1 Peter ii. 14.

And as we enjoy these Advantages, civil and religious, in a very eminent Degree, under a good Prince, and those he has placed in Authority over us, we are eminently obliged to offer up Supplications and Thanksgivings in their Behalf; to pay them all that Duty which these Prayers imply; and *to lead, as those Advantages enable and have a Tendency to dispose us to do, quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.*

OF the former of these Advantages, our free Constitution of civil Government, we seem to have a very high Value. And if we would keep clear from Abuses of it, it could not be overvalued; otherwise than as every thing may, when considered as respecting this World only. We seem, I say, sufficiently sensible of the Value of our civil Liberty. It is our daily Boast, and we are in the highest Degree jealous of it. Would to God we were somewhat more judicious in our Jealousy of it, so as to guard against its chief Enemy, one might say, the only Enemy of it, we have at present to fear, I mean Licentiousness; which has undermined so many free Governments, and without whose treacherous Help no free Government, perhaps, ever was undermined. This Licentiousness



SERM. XX. **ousness** indeed is not only dangerous to Liberty, but it is actually a present Infringement of it in many Instances.—But I must not turn this good Day into a Day of Reproach. Dropping then the Encroachments which are made upon our Liberty, Peace and Quiet by Licentiousness, we are certainly a freer Nation than any other we have an Account of ; and as free, it seems, as the very Nature of Government will permit. Every Man is equally under the Protection of the Laws ; may have equal Justice against the most rich and powerful ; and securely enjoy all the common Blessings of Life, with which the Industry of his Ancestors, or his own has furnished him. In some other Countries the upper Part of the World is free, but in *Great-Britain* the whole Body of the People is free. For we have at length, to the distinguished Honour of those who began, and have more particularly laboured in it, emancipated our northern Provinces from most of their *legal* Remains of Slavery : for *voluntary* Slavery cannot be abolished, at least not directly, by Law. I take Leave to speak of this long-desired Work as done ; since it wants only His Concurrence, who, as we have found by many Years Experience, considers

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considers the Good of his People as his own. SERM.  
And I cannot but look upon these Acts of **XX.**  
the Legislature in a further View, as In-  
stances of Regard to Posterity ; and Declara-  
tions of its Readiness to put every Subject up-  
on an equal Foot of Security and Freedom, if  
any of them are not so, in any other Re-  
spects, which come into its View ; and as a  
President and Example for doing it.

**LIBERTY**, which is the very Genius of  
our civil Constitution, and runs thro' every  
Branch of it, extends its Influence to the  
Ecclesiastical Part of it. A religious Esta-  
blishment without a Toleration of such as  
think they cannot in Conscience conform to  
it, is itself a general Tyranny ; because it  
claims absolute Authority over Conscience :  
and would soon beget particular Kinds of  
Tyranny of the worse Sort, Tyranny over  
the Mind, and various Superstitions ; after  
the Way should be paved for them, as it  
soon must, by Ignorance. On the other  
hand, a Constitution of civil Government  
without any religious Establishment, is a  
chimerical Project, of which there is no Ex-  
ample : and which, leaving the Generality  
without Guide and Instruction, must leave  
Religion to be sunk and forgotten amongst  
them ;

SERM. them ; and at the same Time give full Scope  
 XX. to Superstition, and the Gloom of Enthufiasm ; which last, especially, ought surely to be diverted and checked, as far as it can be done without Force. Now a reasonable Establishment provides Instruction for the Ignorant, withdraws them, not in the Way of Force but of Guidance, from running after those Kinds of Conceits. It doubtless has a Tendency likewise to keep up a Sense of real Religion, and real Christianity in a Nation : and is moreover necessary for the Encouragement of Learning ; some Parts of which the Scripture-revelation absolutely requires should be cultivated.

IT is to be remarked further, that the Value of any particular religious Establishment is not to be estimated merely by what it is in itself, but also by what it is in Comparison with those of other Nations ; a Comparison which will sufficiently teach us not to expect Perfection in human Things. And what is still more material, the Value of our own ought to be very much heightened in our Esteem, by considering what it is a Security from ; I mean that great Corruption of Christianity, Popery, which is ever hard at work to bring us again under its  
 Yoke.

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Yoke. Whoever will consider the Popish SERM.  
Claims, to the Disposal of the whole Earth, XX.  
as of divine Right, to dispense with the most  
sacred Engagements, the Claims to supreme  
absolute Authority in Religion; in short, the  
general Claims which the Canonists express by  
the Words, *Plenitude of Power*—whoever, I  
say, will consider Popery as it is professed at  
*Rome*, may see, that it is manifest, open  
Usurpation of all human and divine Autho-  
rity. But even in those Roman-catholick  
Countries where these monstrous Claims are  
not admitted, and the Civil Power does, in  
many Respects, restrain the Papal; yet Per-  
secution is professed, as it is absolutely in-  
joined by what is acknowledged to be their  
highest Authority, a General Council, so  
called, with the Pope at the Head of it;  
and is practiced in all of them, I think  
without Exception, where it can be done  
safely. Thus they go on to substitute Force  
instead of Argument; and external Profes-  
sion made by Force instead of reasonable  
Conviction. And thus Corruptions of the  
grossest Sort have been in Vogue, for many  
Generations, in many Parts of Christendom;  
and are so still, even where Popery obtains  
in its least absurd Form: and their Anti-  
quity

SERM. quity and wide Extent are insisted upon as  
 XX. Proofs of their Truth ; a Kind of Proof,  
 which at best can be only presumptive, but  
 which looses all its little Weight, in Pro-  
 portion as the long and large Prevalence of  
 such Corruptions, have been obtained by  
 Force.

INDEED it is said in the Book of *Job*,  
 that the Worship of *the sun and moon was*  
*an iniquity to be punished by the Judge* \*.  
 And this, though it is not so much as a Pre-  
 cept, much less a general one, is, I think,  
 the only Passage of Scripture, which can  
 with any Colour be alledged in Favour of  
 Persecution of any Sort : for what the *Jews*  
 did, and what they were commanded to do,  
 under their Theocracy, are both quite out of  
 the Case. But whenever that Book was written,  
 the Scene of it is laid at a Time when Ido-  
 latri was in its Infancy, an acknowledged  
 Novelty, essentially destructive of true Reli-  
 gion, arising, perhaps, from mere Wanton-  
 ness of Imagination. In these Circumstances,  
 this greatest of Evils, which afterwards laid  
 waste true Religion over the Face of the  
 Earth, might have been suppressed at once,  
 without Danger of Mistake or Abuse. And

one

\* Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28.

one might go on to add, that if those to whom the Care of this belonged, instead of serving themselves of prevailing Superstitions, had in all Ages and Countries opposed them in their Rise; and adhered faithfully to that primitive Religion, which was received *of old, since man was placed upon earth* \*; there could not possibly have been any such Difference of Opinion concerning the Almighty Governor of the World, as could have given any Pretence for tolerating the Idolatries which overspread it. On the contrary His universal Monarchy must have been universally recognized; and the general Laws of it more ascertained and known, than the municipal ones of any particular Country can be. In such a State of Religion, as it could not but have been acknowledged by all Mankind, that Immorality of every Sort was Disloyalty to Him, *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy* †; so it could not but have been manifest, that Idolatry, in those determinate Instances of it, was plain Rebellion against him: and therefore might have been punished as an Offence, of the highest Kind, against the Supreme Authority in Nature. But this is in no Sort applicable

\* Job. xx. 4.

† Isaiah lvii. 15.

SERM. ble to the present State of Religion in the  
 XX. World. For if the Principle of punishing  
 } Idolatry were now admitted, amongst the  
 feveral different Parties in Religion, the  
 weakest in every Place would run a great  
 Risque of being convicted of it; or however  
 Heresy and Schism would soon be found  
 Crimes of the same Nature, and equally de-  
 serving Punishment. Thus the Spirit of  
 Persecution would range without any Stop  
 or Controul, but what should arise from its  
 want of Power. But our religious Esta-  
 blishment disclaims all Principles of this  
 Kind, and desires not to keep Persons in its  
 Communion, or gain Profelytes to it, by any  
 other Methods than the Christian ones of Ar-  
 gument and Conviction.

THESE Hints may serve to remind us of  
 the Value, we ought to set upon our Con-  
 stitution in Church and State, the Advan-  
 tages of which are the proper Subjects of our  
 Commemoration on this Day, as his Majesty  
 has shewn himself, not in Words, but in the  
 whole Course of his Reign, the Guardian and  
 Protector of Both. And the Blessings of his  
 Reign are not only rendered more sensible,  
 but are really heightened, by its securing us  
 from that Pretender to his Crown, whom

we

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we had almost forgot, till our late Danger SERM.  
renewed our Apprehensions ; who, we XX.  
know, is a professed Enemy to our Church ;  
and grown old in Resentments, and Maxims  
of Government directly contrary to our civil  
Constitution ; nay his very Claim is founded  
in Principles destructive of it. Our Delive-  
rance and our Security from this Danger,  
with all the other Blessings of the King's Go-  
vernment, are so many Reasons, for *suppli-  
cations, prayers, intercessions, and giving of  
thanks*, to which we are exhorted ; as well  
as for all other dutiful Behaviour towards it ;  
and should also remind us to take Care and  
make due Improvement of those Blessings,  
by *leading*, in the Enjoyment of them, *quiet  
and peaceable lives in all godliness and ho-  
nesty*.

THE Jewish Church offered Sacrifices  
even for Heathen Princes to whom they  
were in Subjection : And the primitive  
Christian Church, the Christian Sacrifices of  
Supplications and Prayers, for the Prosperity  
of the Emperor, and the State ; though they  
were falsely accused of being Enemies to  
both, because they would not join in their  
Idolatries. In Conformity to these Exam-  
ples of the Church of God in all Ages,  
Prayers



SERM. Prayers for the King and those in Authority  
 XX. under him, are Part of the daily Service of  
 our own. And for the Day of his Inauguration a particular Service is appointed, which we are here assembled in the House of God to celebrate. This is the first Duty we owe to Kings, and those who are in Authority under them, that we make Prayers and Thanksgivings for them. And in it is comprehended, what yet may be considered as another, paying them Honour and Reverence. Praying for them is itself an Instance and Expression of this, as it gives them a Part in our highest Solemnities. It also reminds us of that further Honour and Reverence which we are to pay them, as Occasions offer, throughout the whole Course of our Behaviour. *Fear God, honour the King \**, are Apostolick Precepts; and *despising government, and speaking evil of dignities \**, Apostolick Descriptions of such as *are reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished †*. And if these *evil Speeches* are so highly criminal, it cannot be a thing very innocent to make a Custom of entertaining ourselves with them.

FURTHER, if we are to pray, *that we may*, that it may be permitted us, to *lead a quiet*

\* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

† 2 Pet. ii. 10, 9.

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*quiet and peaceable life, we ought surely to* SERM.  
*live so, when, by Means of a mild, equal* XX.  
Government, it is permitted us : and be very  
thankful, first to God, and then to those  
whom he makes the Instruments of so great  
Good to us, and pay them all Obedience  
and Duty ; though every thing be not con-  
ducted according to our Judgment, nor eve-  
ry Person in Employment whom we may  
think deserving of it. Indeed opposition, in  
a legal, regular Way, to Measures which a  
Person thinks wrong, cannot but be allowed  
in a free Government. It is in itself just,  
and also keeps up the Spirit of Liberty. But  
Opposition, from indirect Motives, to Mea-  
sures which he sees to be necessary, is itself  
immoral : it keeps up the Spirit of Licenti-  
ousness ; is the greatest Reproach of Liberty,  
and in many Ways most dangerous to it ;  
and has been a principal Means of overturning  
free Governments. It is well too if the *legal*  
*Subjection* to the Government we live under,  
which may accompany such Behaviour, be  
not the Reverse of *Christian Subjection* ; *Sub-*  
*jection for wrath only, and not for conscience*  
*sake* \*. And one who wishes well to his  
Country will beware, how he inflames the


G g common

\* Rom. xiii. 5.

SERM. common People against Measures, whether  
 XXI. right or wrong, which they are not Judges  
 of. For no one can foresee how far such  
 Disaffection will extend ; but every one sees,  
 that it diminishes the Reverence, which is  
 certainly owing to Authority. Our due Re-  
 gards to these Things are indeed Instances of  
 our Loyalty, but they are in Reality as  
 much Instances of our Patriotism too. Hap-  
 py the People who live under a Prince, the  
 Justice of whose Government renders them  
 coincident.

*Lastly,* As by the good Providence of  
 God we were born under a free Government,  
 and are Members of a pure reformed Church,  
 both of which he has wonderfully preserved  
 through infinite Dangers ; if we do not take  
 heed to live like Christians, nor to govern  
 ourselves with Decency in those Respects in  
 which we are free, we shall be a Dishonour  
 to both. Both are most justly to be valued :  
 but they may be valued in the wrong Place.  
 It is no more a Recommendation of Civil,  
 than it is of Natural Liberty \*, that it must  
 put us into a Capacity of behaving ill. Let  
 us then value our civil Constitution, not be-  
 cause

\* *Natural Liberty* as opposed to Necessity, or Fate.

cause it leaves us the Power of acting as mere SERM.  
Humour and Passion carries us, in those Re- XX.  
spects, in which Governments less free lay   
Men under Restraints; but for its equal  
Laws, by which the Great are disabled from  
oppressing those below them. Let us trans-  
fer, each of us, the Equity of this our civil  
Constitution to our whole personal Character;  
and be sure to be as much afraid of Subjection  
to mere arbitrary Will and Pleasure in Our-  
selves, as to the arbitrary Will of Others.  
For the Tyranny of our own lawless Passions,  
is the nearest and most dangerous of all Ty-  
rannies.

THEN as to the other Part of our Consti-  
tution; let us value it, not because it leaves  
us at Liberty to have as little Religion as we  
please, without being accountable to human  
Judicatories; but because it affords us the  
Means and Assistances to worship God ac-  
cording to his Word; because it exhibits to  
our View, and enforces upon our Conscience,  
genuine Christianity, free from the Supersti-  
tions with which it is defiled in other Coun-  
tries. These Superstitions naturally tend to  
*abate* its Force: Our Profession of it in its  
Purity, is a particular Call upon us to yield  
ourselves up to its *full* Influence; *to be pure*

SERM. *in heart* \* ; *to be holy in all manner of conversation* †. Much of the *Form of godliness* is laid aside amongst us : this itself should admonish us to attend more to *the Power thereof* ‡. We have discarded many burdensome Ceremonies : let us be the more careful to cultivate inward Religion. We have thrown off a Multitude of superstitious Practices, which were called Good Works : let us the more abound in all moral Virtues, these being unquestionably such. Thus our Lives will justify and recommend the Reformation ; and we shall || *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

• Matt. v. 8.      † 1 Peter i. 15.      ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 5.  
 || Tit. ii. 10.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before his GRACE  
CHARLES Duke of *Richmond*,  
PRESIDENT ;

And the GOVERNORS of the  
LONDON INFIRMARY,  
For the Relief of Sick and Diseased Persons,  
especially MANUFACTURERS, and  
SEAMEN in Merchant-Service, &c.

At the Parish Church of *St. Lawrence-Jewry*,  
On *Thursday, March 31, 1748.*

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I P E T. iv. 8.

*And above all things have fervent Charity  
among yourselves : for Charity shall cover  
the Multitude of Sins.*

AS we owe our Being, and all our SERM.  
Faculties, and the very Opportu- XXI.  
nities of exerting them, to Al-  
mighty God, and are plainly His and not  
our own, we are admonished, even though  
we should *have done all those things which*

SERM. *are commanded us, to say, We are unprofit-*  
 XXI. *able servants* \*. And with much deeper

Humility must we make this Acknowledgment, when we consider, in how *many things we have all offended* †. But still the Behaviour of such Creatures as Men, highly criminal in Some Respects, may yet in Others be such, as to render them the proper Objects of Mercy, and, our Saviour does not decline saying, *thought worthy of it* ||. And, conformably to our natural Sense of Things, the Scripture is very express, that Mercy, Forgiveness, and in general Charity to our Fellow-creatures, has this Efficacy in a very high Degree.

SEVERAL copious and remote Reasons have been alledged, why such Preheminence is given to this Grace or Virtue; some of great Importance, and none of them perhaps without its Weight. But the proper one seems to be very short and obvious, that by fervent Charity, with a Course of Beneficence proceeding from it, a Person may make Amends for the Good he has blameably omitted, and the Injuries he has done, so far, as that Society would have no Demand

\* Luke xvii. 10.

† James iii. 2.

|| Luke xx. 35.


mand upon him for such his Misbehaviour; SERM.  
nor consequently would Justice have any in XXI.  
Behalf of Society, whatever it might have  
upon other Account. Thus by fervent Charity he may even merit Forgiveness of Men :  
And this seems to afford a very singular Reason, why it may be graciously granted him by God ; a very singular Reason, the Christian Covenant of Pardon always supposed, why divine Justice should permit, and divine Mercy appoint, that such his Charity should be allowed to *cover the multitude of sins.*

AND this Reason leads me to observe, what Scripture, and the whole Nature of the Thing shews, that the Charity here meant must be such hearty Love to our Fellow-Creatures, as produceth a settled Endeavour to promote, according to the best of our Judgment, their real lasting Good, both present and future ; and not that easiness of Temper, which, with peculiar Propriety, is expressed by the Word Good-humour, and is a Sort of benevolent Instinct left to itself, without the Direction of our Judgment. For this Kind of Good-humour is so far from making the Amends before-mentioned, that, though it be agreeable in Conversation, it is



SERM. often most mischievous in every other Inter-  
 XXI. course of Life; and always puts Men out of  
 a Capacity of doing the Good they might,  
 if they could withstand Importunity, and  
 the Sight of Distress, when the Case requires  
 they should be withstood: Many Instances  
 of which Case daily occur, both in Publick  
 and Private. Nor is it to be supposed, that  
 we can any more promote the lasting Good  
 of our Fellow-creatures, by acting from mere  
 kind Inclinations, without *considering* what  
 are the proper Means of promoting it, than  
 that we can attain our own personal Good,  
 by a *thoughtless* Pursuit of every thing which  
 pleases us. For the Love of our Neighbour,  
 as much as Self-love, the social Affections,  
 as much as the private Ones, from their very  
 Nature, require to be under the Direction  
 of our Judgment. Yet it is to be remem-  
 bered, that it does in no sort become such a  
 Creature as Man to harden himself against  
 the Distresses of his Neighbour, except  
 where it is really necessary; and that even  
 well-disposed Persons may run into great  
 Perplexities, and great Mistakes too, by be-  
 ing over-sollicitous in distinguishing, what  
 are the most proper Occasions for their Cha-  
 rity, or who the greatest Objects of it. And  
 therefore,

*Governors of the London Infirmary.* 455

therefore, as on the one Side, we are obliged SERM.  
to take some Care not to squander that XXI.  
which, one may say, belongs to the Poor, as   
we shall do, unless we competently satisfy  
ourselves beforehand, that what we put to  
our Account of Charity will answer some  
good Purpose; so on the other Side, when we  
are competently satisfied of this, in any par-  
ticular Instance before us, we ought by no  
Means to neglect such present Opportunity  
of doing Good, under the Notion of making  
further Inquiries: for of these Delays there  
will be no End.

HAVING thus briefly laid before you the  
Ground of that singular Efficacy, which the  
Text ascribes to Charity in general; obvi-  
ated the Objection against its having this Efficacy;  
and distinguished the Virtue itself from  
its Counterfeits; let us now proceed to ob-  
serve the Genuineness and Excellency of the  
particular Charity, which we are here met  
together to promote.

MEDICINE and every other Relief, *under  
the Calamity of bodily Diseases and Casualties,*  
no less than the daily Necessaries of Life, are  
natural Provisions; which God has made for  
our present indigent State; and which he has  
granted in common to the Children of Men,  
whether

SERM. whether they be poor or rich : to the Rich  
 XXI. by Inheritance, or Acquisition ; and by their  
 Hands to the disabled Poor.

N O R can there be any Doubt, but that publick Infirmaries are the most effectual Means of administring such Relief ; besides that they are attended with incidental Advantages of great Importance : Both which Things have been fully shewn, and excellently enforced, in the annual Sermons upon this and the like Occasions.

B U T indeed publick Infirmaries are not only the best, they are the only possible Means by which the Poor, especially in this City, can be provided, in any competent Measure, with the several Kinds of Assistance, which *bodily Diseases and Casualties* require. Not to mention poor Foreigners ; 'tis obvious no other Provision can be made for poor Strangers out of the Country, when they are overtaken by these Calamities, as they often must be, whilst they are occasionally attending their Affairs in this Centre of Business. But even the Poor who are settled Here, are in a manner Strangers to the People amongst whom they live : and, were it not for this Provision, must unavoidably be neglected, in the Hurry and Con-  
 course

course around them, and be left unobserved SERM.  
to languish in Sickness, and suffer extremely, XXI.  
much more than they could in less populous  
Places; where every one is known to every  
one; and any great Distress, presently  
becomes the common Talk; and where  
also poor Families are often under the particular  
Protection of some or other of their  
rich Neighbours, in a very different Way  
from what is commonly the Case Here.  
Observations of this Kind shew, that there  
is a peculiar Occasion, and even a Necessity,  
in such a City as this, for publick Infirmaries,  
to which easy Admittance may be had,  
and here in Ours no Security is required,  
nor any Sort of Gratification allowed;  
and that they ought to be multiplied, or  
enlarged, proportionably to the Increase of  
our Inhabitants: for to this the Increase of  
the Poor will always bear Proportion; tho'  
less in Ages of Sobriety and Diligence,  
and greater in Ages of Profusion and Debauchery.

Now tho' nothing, to be called an Objection  
in the Way of Argument, can be alledged  
against thus providing for poor sick  
People, in the properest, indeed the only  
Way in which they can be provided for;  
yet

SERM. yet Persons of too severe Tempers can, even  
 XXI. upon this Occasion, talk in a Manner,  
 which, contrary surely to their Intention,  
 has a very malignant Influence upon the  
 Spirit of Charity — talk of the Ill-deserts of  
 the Poor, the good Uses they might make of  
 being let to suffer more than they do, un-  
 der Distresses which they bring upon them-  
 selves, or however might, by Diligence and  
 Frugality, provide against ; and the idle  
 Uses they may make of knowing before-  
 hand, that they shall be relieved in Case  
 of those Distresses. Indeed there is such  
 a Thing as a Prejudice against them, ari-  
 sing from their very State of Poverty, which  
 ought greatly to be guarded against ; a Kind  
 of Prejudice, to which perhaps most of us,  
 upon some Occasions, and in some Degree,  
 may inattentively be liable, but which Pride  
 and Interest may easily work up to a settled  
 Hatred of them ; the utter Reverse of that  
 amiable Part of the Character of *Job*, that *he*  
*was a father to the poor* \*. But 'tis undoubt-  
 edly fit, that such of them as are good and  
 industrious should have the Satisfaction of  
 knowing beforehand, that they shall be re-  
 lieved under *Diseases and Casualties* : and  
 Those,

\* Job. xxix. 16.

Those, 'tis most obvious, ought to be relieved SERM.  
preferably to Others. But these others, who XXI.  
are not of that good Character, might possibly  
have the Apprehension of those Calamities in  
so great a Degree, as would be very mis-  
chievous, and of no Service, if they thought they  
must be left to perish under them. And tho'  
their Idleness and Extravagance are very in-  
excusable, and ought by all reasonable Me-  
thods to be restrained; and they are highly  
to be blamed for not making some Provision  
against Age and supposeable Disasters, when  
it is in their Power; yet it is not to be de-  
sired, that the Anxieties of Avarice should be  
added to the natural Inconveniencies of Po-  
verty.

IT is said, that our common Fault to-  
wards the Poor is not Harshness, but too  
great Lenity and Indulgence. And if allow-  
ing them in Debauchery, Idleness and open  
Beggary; in Drunkenness, profane Cursing  
and Swearing in our Streets, nay in our  
Houses of Correction; if this be Lenity,  
there is doubtless a great deal too much of  
it. And such Lenity towards the Poor is  
very consistent with the most cruel Neglects  
of them, in the extream Misery to which  
those Vices reduce them. Now though this  
last

SERM. XXI. last certainly is not our general Fault; yet it cannot be said, every one is free from it. For this Reason, and that nothing, which has so much as the Shadow of an Objection against our publick Charities, may be intirely passed over, you will give me leave to consider a little the supposed Case above-mentioned, though possibly Some may think it unnecessary, that of Persons reduced to Poverty and Distress by their own Faults.

INSTANCES of this there certainly are. But it ought to be very distinctly observed, that in judging which are such, we are liable to be mistaken: and more liable to it, in judging to what Degree those are faulty, who really are so in some Degree. However, we should always look with Mildness upon the Behaviour of the Poor; and be sure not to expect more from them than can be expected, in a moderate Way of considering Things. We should be forward, not only to admit and encourage the Good-deserts of such as do well, but likewise as to those of them who do not, be ever ready to make due Allowances for their bad Education, or, which is the same, their having had none; for what may be owing to the ill Example of their Superiors, as well as Companions,  
and

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and for Temptations of all Kinds. And re-  
member always, that be Men's Vices what  
they will, they have not forfeited their Claim  
to Relief under Necessities, till they have for-  
feited their Lives to Justice.

*Our heavenly father is kind to the un-  
thankful and to the evil : and sendeth his  
rain on the just and on the unjust* \*. And, in  
Imitation of Him, our Saviour expressly re-  
quires, that our Beneficence be promiscuous.  
But we have moreover the divine Example  
for relieving those Distresses, which are  
brought upon Persons by their own Faults ;  
and this is exactly the Case we are consider-  
ing. Indeed the general Dispensation of  
Christianity is an Example of this ; for its  
general Design is to save us from our Sins,  
and the Punishments which would have been  
the just Consequence of them. But the di-  
vine Example in the daily Course of Nature,  
is a more obvious and sensible one. And  
tho' the natural Miseries which are foreseen  
to be annexed to a vicious Course of Life,  
are providentially intended to prevent it, in  
the same Manner as Civil Penalties are intend-  
ed to prevent Civil Crimes ; yet those Mis-  
eries.

\* Matt. v. 45. Luke vi. 35.



SERM. rics, those natural Penalties admit of, and  
 XXI. receive natural Reliefs, no less than any  
 other Miseries, which could not have been  
 foreseen or prevented. Charitable Provi-  
 dence then, thus manifested in the Course of  
 Nature, which is the Example of our hea-  
 venly Father, most evidently leads us to re-  
 lieve, not only such Distresses as were un-  
 avoidable, but also such as People by their  
 own Faults have brought upon themselves.  
 The Case is, that we cannot judge in what  
 Degree it was intended they should suffer,  
 by considering what, in the natural Course of  
 Things, would be the whole bad Conse-  
 quences of their Faults, if those Conse-  
 quences were not prevented, when Nature  
 has provided Means to prevent great Part of  
 them. We cannot, for Instance, estimate  
 what Degree of present Sufferings God has  
 annexed to Drunkenness, by considering the  
 Diseases which follow from this Vice, as they  
 would be if they admitted of no Reliefs or  
 Remedies : but by considering the remain-  
 ing Misery of those Diseases, after the Ap-  
 plication of such Remedies as Nature has  
 provided. For as 'tis certain on the one  
 Side, that those Diseases are providential  
 Cor-

Corrections of Intemperance, 'tis as certain SERM.  
on the other, that the Remedies are providential XXI.  
Mitigations of those Corrections; and  
altogether as much providential, when administered by the good Hand of Charity in the Case of our Neighbour, as when administered by Self-love in our own. Thus the Pain, and Danger, and other Distresses of Sickness and Poverty remaining, after all the charitable Relief which can be procured; and the many uneasy Circumstances which cannot but accompany that Relief, tho' distributed with all supposeable Humanity; these are the natural Corrections of Idleness and Debauchery, supposing these Vices brought on those Miseries. And very severe Corrections they are: and they ought not to be increased by withholding that Relief, or by Harshness in the Distribution of it. Corrections of all Kinds, even the most necessary ones, may easily exceed their proper Bound: and when they do so, they become mischievous; and mischievous in the Measure they exceed it. And the natural Corrections, which we have been speaking of, would be excessive, if the natural Mitigations provided for them were not administered.

H h

THEN


THEN Persons, who are so scrupulously apprehensive of every thing, which can possibly, in the most indirect Manner, encourage Idleness and Vice; which, by the way, any thing may accidentally do; ought to turn their Thoughts to the moral and religious Tendency of Infirmaries. The religious Manner in which they are carried on has itself a direct Tendency to bring the Subject of Religion into the Consideration of those whom they relieve; and, in some Degree, to recommend it to their Love and Practice, as it is productive of so much Good to them, as restored Ease and Health, and a Capacity of resuming their several Employments. It is to Virtue and Religion, they may mildly be admonished, that they are indebted for their Relief. And this, amongst other Admonitions of their spiritual Guide, and the Quiet and Order of their House, out of the Way of bad Examples, together with a regular Course of Devotion, which it were greatly to be wished might be Daily; these Means, it is to be hoped, with the common Grace of God, may enforce deeply upon their Consciences those serious Considerations, to which a State of Affliction naturally renders the Mind attentive,  
and

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and that they will return, as from a religious Retreat, to their several Employments in the World, with lasting Impressions of Piety in their Hearts. By such united Advantages, which these poor Creatures can in no Sort have any other Way, very remarkable Reformations have been wrought. Persons of the strictest Characters therefore would give a more satisfactory Proof, not to the World, but to their own Consciences, of their Desire to suppress Vice and Idleness; by setting themselves to cultivate the religious Part of the Institution of Infirmaries, which, I think, would admit of great Improvements; than by allowing themselves to talk in a Manner, which tends to discountenance either the Institution itself, or any particular Branch of it.

· ADMITTING then the Usefulness and Necessity of these Kinds of Charity, which indeed cannot be denied; *yet every thing has its Bounds.* And, in the Spirit of Severity before mentioned, it is imagined, that *People are enough disposed,* such, it seems, is the present Turn, *to contribute largely to them.* And Some, whether from Dislike of the Charities themselves, or from mere Profligateness, think *these formal Recommenda-*


*SERM. tions of them at Church every Year, might  
XXI. very well be spared.*


 BUT surely it is desirable, that a customary Way should be kept open for removing Prejudices as they may arise against these Institutions; for rectifying any Misrepresentations which may, at any Time, be made of them; and informing the Publick of any new Emergencies; as well as for repeatedly enforcing the known Obligations of Charity, and the Excellency of this particular Kind of it. Then Sermons, you know, amongst Protestants, always of Course accompany these more solemn Appearances in the House of God: nor will these latter be kept up without the other. Now publick Devotions should ever attend, and consecrate publick Charities. And it would be a sad Prefage of the Decay of these Charities, if ever they should cease to be professedly carried on in the Fear of God, and upon the Principles of Religion. It may be added, that real charitable Persons will approve of these frequent Exhortations to Charity, even though they should be conscious, that they do not themselves stand in Need of them, upon Account of such as do. And Such can possibly have no Right to complain of being too often admonished

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monished of their Duty, till they are pleased SERM.  
to practice it. It is true indeed, we have the XXI.  
Satisfaction of seeing a Spirit of Beneficence   
prevail, in a very commendable Degree,  
amongst all Ranks of People, and in a very  
distinguished Manner in some Persons  
amongst the highest; yet it is evident, too  
many of all Ranks are very deficient in it,  
who are of great Ability, and of whom  
much might be expected. Though every  
Thing therefore were done in Behalf of the  
Poor which is wanted, yet these Persons  
ought repeatedly to be told, how highly  
blameable they are for letting it be done  
without them; and done by Persons, of  
whom great Numbers must have much less  
Ability than they.

BUT whoever can really think, that the  
Necessities of the disabled Poor are suffi-  
ciently provided for already, must be strangely  
prejudiced. If one were to send you to them  
themselves to be better informed, you would  
readily answer, that their Demands would be  
very extravagant; that Persons are not to be  
their own Judges in Claims of Justice, much  
less in those of Charity. You then, I am  
speaking to the hard People above-mentioned,  
you are to judge, what Provision is to be

SERM. made for the Necessitous, so far as it depends  
XXI. upon your Contributions. But ought you  
 not to remember, that you are interested,  
that you are Parties in the Affair, as well as  
they. For is not the Giver as really so, as  
the Receiver? And as there is Danger, that  
the Receiver will err one Way, is there not  
Danger, that the Giver may err the other?  
Since it is not Matter of arbitrary Choice,  
which has no Rule, but Matter of real  
Equity, to be considered as in the Presence  
of God, what Provision shall be made for  
the Poor? And therefore, though you are  
yourselves the only Judges, what you will do  
in their Behalf, for the Case admits no other;  
yet let me tell you, you will not be impar-  
tial, you will not be equitable Judges, until  
you have guarded against the Influence,  
which Interest is apt to have upon your  
Judgment; and cultivated within you the  
Spirit of Charity to balance it. Then you  
will see the various remaining Necessities  
which call for Relief. But that there are  
many such, must be evident at first Sight to  
the most careless Observer, were it only from  
hence, that both this and the other Hospitals  
are often obliged to reject poor Objects which  
offer,

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offer, even for want of Room, or Wards to contain them.

SERM.  
XXI.

NOTWITHSTANDING many Persons have Need of these Admonitions, yet there is a good Spirit of Beneficence, as I observed, pretty generally prevailing. And I must congratulate you upon the great Success it has given to the particular good Work before us; great, I think beyond all Example for the Time it has subsisted. Nor would it be unfuitable to the present Occasion, to recount the Particulars of this Success. For the necessary Accommodations which have been provided, and the Numbers who have been relieved, in so short a Time, cannot but give high Reputation to the *London Infirmary*. And the Reputation of any particular Charity, like Credit in Trade, is so much real Advantage, without the Inconveniences to which That is sometimes liable. It will bring in Contributions for its Support; and Men of Character, as they shall be wanted, to assist in the Management of it; Men of Skill in the Professions, Men of Conduct in Business, to perpetuate, improve and bring it to Perfection. So that you the Contributors to this Charity, and more especially those of you by whose immediate Care and Eco-



SERM. nomy it is in so high Repute, are encouraged  
 XXI. to go on with *your Labour of Love* \*, not  
 only by the present Good, which you see is  
 here done, but likewise by the Prospect of  
 what will probably be done, by your Means,  
 in future Times, when this Infirmary shall  
 become, as I hope it will, no less renowned,  
 than the City in which it is established.

BUT to see how far it is from being yet  
 complete, for want of Contributions, one  
 need only look upon the settled Rules of the  
 House for *Admission of Patients*. See there  
 the Limitations which Necessity prescribes,  
 as to the Persons to be admitted. Read but  
 that one Order, tho' others might be men-  
 tioned, that *none who are judged to be in an  
 asthmatick, consumptive, or dying Condition,  
 be admitted on any Account whatsoever*.  
 Harsh as these Words sound, they proceed  
 out of the Mouth of Charity herself. Cha-  
 rity pronounces it to be better, that poor  
 Creatures who might receive much Ease and  
 Relief, should be denied it, if their Case  
 does not admit of Recovery, rather than  
 that Others, whose Case does admit of it, be  
 left to perish. But it shocks Humanity to  
 hear such an Alternative mentioned; and  
 to

\* Heb. vi. 10.

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to think, that there should be a Necessity, as SERM.  
there is at present, for such Restrictions, in XXI.  
one of the most beneficent and best managed  
Schemes in the World. May more nume-  
rous or larger Contributions, at length, open  
a Door to such as these ; that what renders  
their Case in the highest Degree compaffio-  
nable, their languishing under incurable Di-  
seases, may no longer exclude them from the  
House of Mercy.

BUT besides the Persons to whom I have  
been now more particularly speaking, there  
are Others, who do not cast about for Ex-  
cuses for not contributing to the Relief of  
the Necessitous ; perhaps are rather dispo-  
sed to relieve them ; who yet are not so  
careful as they ought to be, to put them-  
selves into a Capacity of doing it. For we  
are as really accountable for not doing the  
Good which we might have in our Power  
to do, if we would manage our Affairs with  
Prudence, as we are for not doing the Good  
which is in our Power now at present. And  
hence arise the Obligations of Economy  
upon People in the highest, as well as in the  
lower Stations of Life, in order to enable  
themselves to do that Good, which, with-  
out Economy, both of them must be  
incapable

SERM. incapable of; even though without it, they  
 XXI. could answer the strict Demands of Justice;  
 which yet we find neither of them can. *A*  
*good man sheweth favour, and lendeth;*  
*and, to enable himself to do so, he will guide*  
*his affairs with discretion* \*. For want of  
 this, many a one has reduced his Family  
 to the Necessity of asking Relief from those  
 publick Charities, to which he might have  
 left them in a Condition of largely contri-  
 buting

As Economy is the Duty of all Persons,  
 without Exception, Frugality and Diligence  
 are Duties which particularly belong to the  
 middle, as well as lower Ranks of Men;  
 and more particularly still to Persons in  
 Trade and Commerce, whatever their For-  
 tunes be. For Trade and Commerce can-  
 not otherwise be carried on, but is plainly  
 inconsistent with Idleness and Profusion:  
 though indeed were it only from Regard to  
 Propriety, and to avoid being absurd, every  
 one should conform his Behaviour to what  
 his Situation in Life requires, without which  
 the Order of Society must be broken in  
 upon. And considering how inherited  
 Riches, and a Life of Leisure are often em-  
 ployed,

\* Psal. cxii. 5.

ployed, the Generality of Mankind have SERM.  
Cause to be thankful, that their Station ex- XXI.  
empts them from so great Temptations ;  
that it engages them in a sober Care of their  
Expences, and in a Course of Application  
to Business: especially as these Virtues,  
moreover, tend to give them, what is an  
excellent Ground-work for all others, a stay-  
ed Equality of Temper and Command of  
their Passions. But when a Man is diligent  
and frugal, in Order to have it in his Power  
to do Good ; when he is more industrious,  
or more sparing, perhaps, than his Circum-  
stances necessarily require, that he may *have*  
*to give to him that needeth\** ; when he *la-*  
*bours in order to support the weak †* ; such  
Care of his Affairs is itself Charity, and the  
actual Beneficence which it enables him to  
practise, is additional Charity.

You will easily see, why I insist thus up-  
on these Things, because I would particu-  
larly recommend the good Work before us  
to all Ranks of People in this great City.  
And I think I have Reason to do so, from  
the Consideration, that it very particularly  
belongs to them to promote it. The Gos-  
pel indeed teaches us to look upon every one  
in

\* Eph. iv. 28.

† Acts xx. 35.

SERM. in Distress as our Neighbour, yet Neighbourhood in the literal Sense, and likewise

several other Circumstances, are providential Recommendations of such and such Charities, and Excitements to them; without which the Neccessitous would suffer much more than they do at present. For our general Disposition to Beneficence would not be sufficiently directed, and in other Respects would be very ineffectual, if it were not called forth into Action by some or other of those providential Circumstances; which form particular Relations between the Rich and the Poor, and are of Course regarded by every one in some Degree. But though many Persons among you, both in the Way of Contributions, and in other Ways no less useful, have done even more than was to be expected, yet, I must be allowed to say, that I do not think, the Relation the Inhabitants of this City bear to the Persons for whom our Infirmary was principally designed, is sufficiently attended to by the Generality; which may be owing to its late Establishment. It is you know designed principally for *diseased Manufacturers, Seamen in Merchant-Service, and their Wives and Children*: and *poor Manufacturers* comprehend

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prehend all who are employed in any Labour whatever belonging to Trade and Commerce. The Description of these Objects shews their Relation, and a very near one it is, to You, my Neighbours, the Inhabitants of this City. If any of your domestick Servants were disabled by Sickness, there is none of you but would think himself bound to do somewhat for their Relief. Now these Seamen and Manufacturers are employed in your immediate Business. They are Servants of Merchants, and other principal Traders; as much your Servants as if they lived under your Roof: though by their not doing so, the Relation is less in Sight. And supposing they do not all depend upon Traders of lower Rank, in exactly the same Manner, yet many of them do; and they have all Connexions with you, which give them a Claim to your Charity preferably to Strangers. They are indeed Servants of the Publick; and so are all industrious poor People, as well as they. But that does not hinder the latter from being more immediately Yours. And as their being Servants to the Publick, is a general Recommendation of this Charity to all other Persons, so their being more immediately Yours, is, surely, a particular

SERM.  
XXI.



SERM. particular Recommendation of it to You-  
 XXI. Notwithstanding all this, I will not take up-  
 on me to say, that every one of you is blame-  
 able who does not contribute to your Infir-  
 mary, for yours it is in a peculiar Sense:  
 but I will say, that those of you who do,  
 are highly commendable. I will say more,  
 that you promote a very excellent Work,  
 which your particular Station is a providen-  
 tial Call upon you to promote. And there  
 can be no stronger Reason than this for do-  
 ing any thing, except the one Reason, that  
 it would be criminal to omit it.

THESE Considerations, methinks, might  
 induce every Trader of higher Rank in this  
 City, to become a Subscriber to the Infirma-  
 ry which is named from it; and Others of  
 you, to contribute somewhat yearly to it, in  
 the Way in which smaller Contributions are  
 given. This would be a most proper Offer-  
 ing out of your Increase to Him, whose  
 *blessing maketh rich* \*. Let it be more or  
 less, *Every man according as he purposeth in  
 his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for  
 God loveth a chearful giver* †.

THE large Benefactions of some Persons  
 of Ability, may be necessary in the first Estab-  
 lishment

\* Prov. x. 22.

† 2 Cor. ix. 7.

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blishment of a publick Charity, and are greatly useful afterwards in maintaining it: But the Expences of this before us, in the Extent and Degree of Perfection to which one would hope it might be brought, cannot be effectually supported, any more than the Expences of Civil Government, without the Contribution of great Numbers. You have already the Assistance of Persons of highest Rank and Fortune, of which the List of our Governors, and the present Appearance, are illustrious Examples. And their Assistance would be far from lessening by a general Contribution to it amongst yourselves. On the contrary, the general Contribution to it amongst yourselves which I have been proposing, would give it still higher Repute, and more invite such Persons to continue their Assistance, and accept the Honour of being in its Direction. For the greatest Persons receive Honour from taking the Direction of a good Work, as they likewise give Honour to it. And by these concurrent Endeavours, our Infirmary might at length be brought to answer, in some competent Measure, to the Occasions of our City.

BLESSED

SERM.

XXI.



SERM. BLESSED are they who employ their  
XXI. Riches in promoting so excellent a Design.

The temporal Advantages of them are far from coming up, in Enjoyment, to what they promise at a Distance. But the distinguished Privilege, the Prerogative of Riches is, that they increase our Power of doing Good. This is their proper Use. In Proportion Men make this Use of them, they imitate Almighty God ; and co-operate together with him in promoting the Happiness of the World ; and may expect the most favourable Judgment, which their Case will admit of, at the last Day, upon the general, repeated Maxim of the Gospel, that we shall Then be treated Ourselves as we Now treat Others. They have moreover the Prayers of all good Men, those of them particularly whom they have befriended ; and, by such Exercise of Charity, they improve within themselves the Temper of it, which is the very Temper of Heaven. Consider next the peculiar Force with which this Branch of Charity, Almsgiving, is recommended to us in these Words, *He that hath Pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord \** : and in these of our Saviour ; *Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it, relieved the Sick and Needy,*

• Prov. xix. 17.

Needy, unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me †. Beware you do not explain away these Passages of Scripture, under the Notion, that they have been made to serve superstitious Purposes: but ponder them fairly in your Heart; and you will feel them to be of irresistible Weight. Lastly, let us remember, in how many Instances we have all left undone those Things which we ought to have done, and done those Things which we ought not to have done. Now whoever has a serious Sense of this, will most earnestly desire to supply the Good, which he was obliged to have done, but has not, and undo the Evil which he has done, or neglected to prevent; and when that is impracticable, to make Amends, in some other Way for his Offences — *I can* mean only to our Fellow-Creatures. To make Amends, in some Way or other, to a particular Person, against whom we have offended, either by positive Injury, or by Neglect; is an express Condition of our obtaining Forgiveness of God, when it is in our Power to make it. And when it is not, surely the next best Thing is to make Amends to Society by fervent Charity, in a Course of

SERM. doing Good; which Riches, as I observed,  
XXI. put very much within our Power.

How unhappy a Choice then do those rich Men make, who sacrifice all these high Prerogatives of their State, to the wretched Purposes of Dissoluteness and Vanity, or to the sordid Itch of heaping up, to no Purpose at all; whilst in the mean Time they stand charged with the important Trust, in which they are thus unfaithful, and of which a strict Account remains to be given?

F I N I S.

BOOKS printed for JOHN and PAUL  
KNAPTON in Ludgate-street.

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