The ANTIQUITY *and* HOLINESS *of Places set apart for* PUBLICK WORSHIP.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

CONSECRATION

OF

ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL,

In the Parish of PORTSEA,

Near PORTSMOUTH,

In the County of SOUTHAMPTON,

On *Tuesday, Sept.* 17. 1754.

By PHILIP BARTON, LL.D.
Vicar of PORTSEA;
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE, for RICHARD CLEMENTS; and Sold by WILLIAM SANDBY in *Fleet-Street*, LONDON, and JAMES WILKINSON in PORTSMOUTH.

MDCCLV.

Imprimatur,

GEO. HUDDESFORD,

Vice-Can. OXON.

Nov. 17. 1754.

TO

HIS BELOVED PARISHIONERS,

THE TRUSTEES, AND PROPRIETORS,

OF ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL;

AND TO THE OTHER INHABITANTS

OF THE PARISH OF PORTSEA;

THIS DISCOURSE,

PREACHED AND PRINTED

AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS WITH ALL HUMILITY

INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

AND FAITHFULL SERVANT,

PHILIP BARTON.

LUKE VII. 5.

For He loveth Our Nation, and He hath built Us a SYNAGOGUE.

THE *Jews* had been for a long while subject to the *Roman* Government; and consequently proper Garrisons were distributed into several Parts of the Country. — When our B. Saviour came to *Capernaum*, He found there a *Centurion*, and a Band of Soldiers. It so happened, that the Centurion's Servant was *sick and ready to die*, And as He was extreamly sollicitous for his Recovery, He desired the Elders of the Jews to intercede with Our Lord in his behalf. — For such was his Modesty, that it was with Difficulty He presumed to offer the Petition Himself; *Lord*, (says he) *I am not worthy, that Thou shouldst come under my Roof; but speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed*[a]. — We may be sure, so much Faith and Humility was immediately rewarded by the Saviour of Mankind; and accordingly We are told, *That the Servant was healed in the Self-same Hour*[b].

a Matt. VIII. 8. b Matt. VIII. 13.

This Centurion was by Religion an Heathen; yet probably ſo far a Proſelyte, as to be admitted into the Court of the Gentiles. — For it appears, that He was governed by the Natural Rules of Juſtice and Equity, or (as They are uſually called by the *Rabbi*'s) the Seven Precepts of *Noah*. — But what We are here to obſerve is, his admirable Prudence, his Moderation, and Temper; Virtues, which One would wiſh to be imitated by Every Chriſtian. — For tho' He was a Stranger in every Reſpect; tho' his Language, Cuſtoms, and Ceremonies, tho' his All was different; though He was in a Tributary Country, and in ſome Degree armed with Military Power; — yet ſtill the *Good Man* was generous, humane, and benevolent; a Friend to Religion, where ever He found it; zealous for the Honour of God, and reſolved to promote the Eſtabliſhment of his Publick Worſhip and Service. — *He loveth Our Nation*, (ſay the Jews) *and He hath built Us a* SYNAGOGUE.

From which Words, I ſhall take Occaſion to give ſome Hiſtorical Account of Places ſet apart for *Publick Worſhip*;

And then, *Secondly*, I ſhall make ſome Obſervations, ſuitable to the Occaſion of *this Day*'s Solemnity.

Firſt, then, — I am to give ſome Account of Places ſet apart for *Publick Worſhip*.

Now

Now it would carry Us into very remote Antiquity, if We were to enlarge upon this Subject, and to consider the Argument in it's full Extent. — As soon as ever our First Parents were created, They were endued with Faculties capable of adoring the God, that made Them. — And, even in *Paradise*, it is probable, that there was some peculiar Place, some Retirement in the Garden, where in the Cool of the Evening, They might pay their Devotions to the Supreme Being. — From this Period to the Flood the Accounts are extremely short. — However, We have many Intimations of Publick Worship; where the *Fruits of the Earth*, and *the Firstlings of the Flock*[a] were solemnly offered up to the God of Heaven. — In what Sort of Places They were offered is quite unknown; — but This is probable, that They were plain and unadorned, and agreeable to the artless Simplicity of those early Times.

Immediately after the Flood, we find *Noah built an Altar unto the Lord*[b], in Order to return Thanks for his Own Deliverance, and to offer up his Prayers for the yet-unpeopled World. — When the Posterity of *Noah* was multiplied, We may be sure, that the Service of Religion was in Proportion encreased, and that proper Provision was made for it by the *Fathers* of Mankind. — Accordingly We read, that the Pa-

a Gen. IV. 3. 4. b Gen. VIII. 20.

triarchs

triarchs *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* (where-ever They pitched their Tents) erected Places for Divine Worship. — These were generally *Altars*, situate upon Hills and Mountains, shaded by Groves, and surrounded by Sacred Enclosures. They are frequently represented under the Name of *Bethel*[a], or the House of God; — and 'till They were profaned by Idolatry, were reverenced as *Sanctuaries*, or Holy Places. — Agreeable to this Description, We are expressly told, That *Abraham planted a Grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the Name of the Lord, the Everlasting God*[b].

When *Moses* was journeying thro' the Wilderness, He had his Tent, or *Tabernacle of the Congregation*[c], which was placed without the Camp, and where the People of the Jews were directed to *enquire of the Lord*. — This was succeeded by that *Glorious* TABERNACLE, which We read of in the Book of *Exodus*, where all the Materials, Ornaments, and Vestments are distinctly described[d]. We are to consider *This* as a Moveable Temple, and intended to be a Memorial of the Divine Presence. For, like the Engravings upon *Aaron*'s Forehead, *All was Holiness to the Lord*[e].

Still we are to remember, — That This was only a temporary Dispensation, agreeable to their

a Gen. XXVIII. 19. b Gen. XXI. 33. c Exod. XXXIII. 7. d Exod. XXVI. 1. &c. e Exod. XXVIII. 36.

unsettled

unsettled and wandring State. But when They were in full Possession of the Promised Land, then a *Magnificent* TEMPLE was built at *Jerusalem* [a]; every Part of which was erected by Divine Appointment, adorned with all the Riches and Splendor, and consecrated [b] with all the Solemnity and Devotion that can be imagined. [c] Thrice a Year the Males were obliged to pay their Attendance here in Person; and in the mean time [d] the Borders of their Country were miraculously preserved from foreign Invasion. — Here We are to observe, — That tho' They were to have but One Place of Sacrifice, [e] *Such as the Lord should choose*, and Such as the *Tabernacle* or the *Temple* was; yet We find that They had many other Places of Devotion, appropriated to Religious Uses, and separated and set apart for Private Worship.

This, for many Years, was the unvaried Constitution of the Jewish Church; 'till, after repeated Provocations, GOD in his Anger withdrew his Presence, aud delivered his People into the Hands of the *King* of *Babylon*. [f] Full Seventy Years the Jews groaned under Captivity, without Temple, without Sacrifice, without Altar; 'till at last God was graciously pleased to restore Them under the Reign of *Cyrus* [g]. The Council of the Elders was re-established, the Wall of Jerusalem repaired, and the Temple

a 1 Kings vi. 1. b 1 Kings viii. 1. c Exod. xxxiv. 23. d Exod. xxxiv. 24. e Deut. xii. 5. f Jerem. xxv. 11. g Ezra i. 1. &c.

rebuilt;

rebuilt; but (except that it was to be honoured by the Presence of the *Messiah)* infinitely inferiour to that of *Solomon* [a].

It was just at this Period, under the *Second Temple*, that We have the first Accounts of SYNAGOGUES amongst the Jews. — Perhaps, during the Captivity, They were obliged by Necessity to erect Such Buildings; Or, what is more probable, tho' the Name was unknown, yet the Thing subsisted in the earliest Times, even in the Days of *Joshua*, and the Judges of Israel. — This was evidently the Opinion of the *Seventy Interpreters*; as appears from the Book of *Samuel* [b]; where speaking of *Bethel*, *Gilgal*, and *Mizpeh*, They consider Them as *consecrated* or holy Places [c].

As to that Expression in the *Psalms*, *They have burnt up all the Synagogues*, or Houses, *of God in the Land* [d]; — This probably refers to the Destruction made by *Nebuchadnezzar*; — and the Word in the Original more properly signifies *Feasts*, and *stated Solemnities*. And then the Meaning will be, — that They had destroyed the Temple, and abrogated all the sacred Ceremonies, and solemn Appointments of the Jewish Worship. — And thus again We find it translated in the Septuagint Version [e].

a Ezra III. 12. b 1 Sam. VII. 16. c Εν πᾶσι τοῖς ΗΓΙΑΣΜΕΝΟΙΣ τόποις. N. B. There is no Word in the Original to answer ἡγιασμένοις. d Psal. LXXIV. 8. f Τὰς ΕΟΡΤΑΣ Κυρίου.

Syna-

Synagogues then were familiar and frequent immediately after the Captivity. To which We may add another Sort of Oratories, called PROSEUCHÆ; of which Mention is made both in Sacred and Profane Writers. — Such were the Sanctuaries and Places of Devotion before described; and particularly that at *Sichem*, where *Joshua set up a Great Stone*, or a Pillar, *under the Oak, that was by the Sanctuary of the Lord* [a].

However there was this Difference, that *Synagogues* were covered Buildings, erected in Cities, and fitted for Publick Assemblies; where the Law of *Moses was read*, and expounded *every Sabbath Day* [b]. Whereas *Proseuchæ* were only Enclosures, open, and exposed to the Air, situate without their Cities, either in the High Ways, or by the Sea-Side, and immediately intended for Private Prayer. — Not to mention many other Places of Scripture, We are told by St. Luke, that Our Saviour *went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God* [c], or (as it should with more propriety be translated) in a *Proseucha* or *House of Prayer unto God* [d]. — The same may be observed of that Passage in the Acts [e], where St. Paul and Timothy are said to go out of the City of *Philippi, by a River Side, where Prayer was wont to be made*, that is, into a *Proseucha*, or *House of Prayer* [f].

a Josh. xxiv. 26. b Acts xv. 21. c Luke vi. 12. d Εν τῇ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ τοῦ Θεοῦ. e Acts xvi. 13. f οὗ ἐνομίζετο ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ εἶναι.

In

In this Situation was the *Jewiſh* Church, when [a] *the Deſire of all Nations*, the long-expected *Meſſiah* was pleaſed to deſcend from Heaven. — And tho' He came to eſtabliſh a better Covenant, and put an End to the Religion of *Moſes*; yet, whilſt it ſubſiſted, He was reſolved [b] *to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*. —— Accordingly We find Him [c] *daily in the Temple, and in the Synagogue*, hearing, reading, interpreting the Holy Scriptures, and attending all the Offices of the then eſtabliſhed Religion. — Here We might obſerve the Many Miracles He wrought, and the Heavenly Doctrines He taught; 'till at length He compleated his Miniſtry by his Meritorious Death on the Croſs. — It was then began the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſt's Kingdom; — which was ſoon after followed by the Final Deſtruction of the Temple: — *That Temple*, which was built by *Zorobabel*, which was adorned by *Herod*, and which (as We obſerved before) was honoured by the Preſence of the *Meſſiah*. — All was laid waſte by the *Roman* Armies, the City in Ruins, and it's Inhabitants diſperſed; which abſolutely put an end to the *Jewiſh* Polity and Religion.

We may imagine, that *Chriſtianity*, in it's perſecuted and infant State, was but little ſupplied with Places for Publick Worſhip. As it's *Great Founder* was laid in a Manger; ſo it's *Firſt Followers* were glad to retire to Dens and Caves,

a Haggai II. 7. b Matt. III. 15. c Matt. XXVI. 55.

and

and to pay their Devotions over the Graves and Sepulchres of their *Martyrs.* — But when Kings and Princes *had cast down their Crowns before the Throne of the Lamb* [a], and the *Christian* Religion became the Favourite of Mankind; it was then it began to appear in a proportionable Degree of Splendor: Temples that had been prophaned by Idolatry were consecrated to Religious Uses; New ones were erected in the Imperial Cities; and by Degrees *Parochial* Churches (not unlike the *Synagogues* of the Text) were prepared in all the several parts of the World. — This has been the well-known State of Christianity, since it's First Establishment. — To which We need only add; that no Nation hath been more devoted to Religion, or expressed a greater Zeal for the House of God, than these *Happy Kingdoms*, to which We belong. This is what We are informed by the best Historians, and it is for the Honour of Our *Country*, that it should be remembered.

I proceed now in the *Second* Place, to make some Observations, suitable to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

And here, I shall not wander from my Point, if I consider a little the Excellency of Our Holy Religion. — Long had Mankind *been dead in Trespasses and Sins* [b], and given up to the blindest Superstition and Idolatry. And when every other Method had proved ineffectual, it was then the

a Rev. IV. 10. b Ephes. II. 1.

Son of God was pleaſed to come down from Heaven; He left the Boſom of his Father, that He might redeem what was loſt, and give Inſtructions to an ignorant and immoral World. We can never enough expreſs Our Gratitude to this *Divine Meſſenger*. For *All* He delivered was Supremely Good; his Religion was juſt and holy; pure as that Heaven from whence it came, and ſpiritual as that great Being, who is the Object of it. — Recollect the Ceremonies of the Heathen Worſhip; and you will find that All was Wildneſs and Extravagance; the very Service They paid their Gods was a Diſhonour to Human Nature. — Compare again, if you pleaſe, the impure and bloody *Mahomet*; take a view of his Luſt and Cruelty, the many Battles He fought, and the Thouſands He deſtroyed; only conſider This, and you will ſoon ſee the difference between Him, and the Friend of Mankind, the meek and humble JESUS. In ſhort, the nearer We obſerve the *Chriſtian* Religion, the more We ſhall be convinced of it's Divine Original; and that it is the beſt, the wiſeſt, and holieſt Inſtitution, that ever was propoſed to the Sons of Men.

And yet, by I know not what Fatality, this pure, this excellent Religion was quite corrupted. It was in Ages of Ignorance, and by a ſurpriſing Train of Events, that *Popery* prevailed, and almoſt equalled the Cruelties and Superſtition of *Heathen Rome*. It hath been often thought, that *Anti-Chriſt* was then erecting his Kingdom.

— For

—For the Religion of Mahomet and Infallibility arose together; established at the same time, propagated and supported by the same means. — But, God be thanked, We are delivered from these Abominations, which neither *Our Fore-Fathers, nor We were able to bear* [a]. Upon the Revival of Learning, the glorious Light of the Gospel was restored, and Superstition and Ignorance fled before it. —Christianity appeared again in her Native Dress, just as she came down from Heaven, in the venerable Robes of Truth and Holiness.

It was for the Honour of Our *Reformation*, that at the same time Arts and Sciences flourished, a Spirit of Liberty prevailed, and the Appearance of Ease and Plenty was every where displayed. — Amidst such Advantages as These, no wonder that the Happy Effects were enjoyed by the *British Dominions*. For the *Genius* of *Our Country* could not rest idle; Industry in every Instance was encouraged, Houses built; the Number of *Our Subjects* encreased, and Our Commerce extended to the remotest Parts of the Earth. For a Proof of This, We need only recollect the Situation of this Place, and the Happy Occasion of *this Day's Solemnity*.

It is but a Few Years ago, that every Thing *here* was desolate, and there was only a Wild Waste, which is now covered over with Buildings, and filled with Inhabitants. — These In-

a Acts xv. 10.

habitants are the Inſtruments of Our NAVAL Strength, employed in Our Maritime Affairs, and therefore may be conſidered, as in the immediate Service of their *King* and *Country*. Providence has been pleas'd to ſurround Us by the *Sea*, and it is from this Situation, that We derive Our Power and Influence; It is Our Superiority here, that introduces Wealth amongſt Us, that adds a Weight and Dignity to all Our Affairs, gives Us Diſtinction abroad, and makes Us reverenced and eſteemed by the Nations All around Us. So that, whether We are employed in the Arts of Peace, in improving Our Manufactures, and enlarging Our Trade; or whether We are engaged in a juſt and neceſſary War, either for the Honour of Our Sovereign, or the Defence of His Kingdoms; *Here* We are to look for Our Support, and (next to the Bleſſing of Heaven) depend upon that Element, in the midſt of which We are placed. This was evidently the Deſign of Nature and Providence; and it is from this Appointment of Providence, that Our Numbers are ſo encreaſed.

Our Numbers, I ſay, are encreaſed; and to ſuch a Degree, as to create a real Diſtreſs with Regard to the Services of Religon. Multitudes had no Opportunities of attending the Publick Worſhip of God; — tho' They longed for the Holy Offices of Religion, *as the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks*[a]; — yet They wanted Conveniencies for Themſelves, their little Ones, and

a Pſalm XLII. I.

their

their respective Families. Amidst Our many Advantages, it was a disagreeable Thought to consider, that *This* was wanting;—and it had still been wanting, if it had not been for the Benefactions and Contributions of the *Devout*, and *Well-disposed*. And it will be for ever remembered to Their Honour, that whilst Some have given out of their Abundance, Others have spared out of their Industry; All I hope have exerted their Prayers and Wishes for this pious Work. *Remember Them, O God, concerning this, and wipe not out their Good Deeds, that They have done for the House of God, and for the Offices thereof*[a].

It is true, We are not yet arrived at any Perfection; and hereafter We may hope for more Encouragement, and further Enlargement.—However what We now offer up to Heaven is a Sacrifice highly agreeable, and will be accepted as a well-pleasing Incense before the Throne of God. Only whilst We are consecrating this Holy Place, let Us be sure not to forget to consecrate Ourselves. Let Us dedicate Our Souls, and Bodies, every thing We have, and All that We can do or think, to the Service of God. Let Us erect a Throne for Him in Our Hearts;—there let Him reign, preside, and govern, and with such an absolute Sovereignty over Us, that We may indeed *be Temples of the Holy Ghost*[b], and a fit Habitation for Him, who is the God of Purity.

a Nehem. xiii. 14. b 1 Cor. 6. 19.

When

When We read of the Temple of *Solomon*, We ſtand amazed at the Magnificence of the Building, the Profuſion of Ornaments and Expence, the Riches of Gold and Silver, the Number of Officers attending; and (what adds to the Solemnity of the Whole) We are told, that *All* was by Divine Appointment. We ſtand amazed at This; — but let *Us* remember, that *a Greater than Solomon is here* [a]. The *Son of God* Himſelf is the Founder of Our Religion, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the true *Meſſiah* that was to come. And we All of Us know, that Moſes was only the Image of this Great Prophet; and that all the Types and Shadows of the Law were to expire in the Graces, Truths, and Glories of the Goſpel State.

Here We may with all Humility obſerve, that to *Us* is committed this Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt. For We ſpeak in *his* Name, and by *his* Authority; We deliver the ſame Doctrines, which *He* taught; We adminiſter the ſame Sacraments, which *He* ordained. And We are expreſſly told, that *where Two or Three are gathered together in his Name* [b], (as ſuppoſe in This Place) there is *He* in the midſt of his Faithfull Servants. *This Place*, We hope, will be for ever ſacred to Truth, never prophaned by intereſted Views, or ſubſervient to the Purpoſes of Error and Enthuſiaſm, of any Sort. — So that the Adverſary *may have no Occaſion to blaſpheme* [c],

a Luke XI. 31. b Matt. XVIII. 20. c 1 Tim. I. 20.

when

when He sees Our Good Works, and hears the sincere Word of God, just as We find it in the Holy Scriptures; in Simplicity and Purity, and in all the Majesty and Decency of the CHURCH of ENGLAND.

The Difficulties of the Pastoral Office are well known. And therefore We hope You will judge of Us candidly, and think impartially. For We pretend to no Infallibility; We own We have the same Infirmities, and are liable to the same Mistakes, and Miscarriages, as Yourselves. However the *Good Shepherd* will endeavour to abound in Loyalty, Learning, and Virtue; his Labours will be constant and uniform, *not as pleasing Men*[a], *but as the Servant of the Lord.* Example is better than a Thousand Arguments; and tho' *it has neither Speech nor Language*[b], yet it is the most persuasive and powerful Eloquence in the World. So that both by Preaching and Living He will study the Good of his People; without any affected Desire of Admiration Himself; more sollicitous to do Good, or convert one single Sinner, than to receive the Applauses of the most crowded Audience.

But in vain shall WE the *Preachers* exert Our best Abilities, unless YOU the *Hearers* resolve to concur and cooperate with Us. — For there must be a reciprocal Discharge of Duty between Us, or else Our Ministry will be quite

a 1 Thess. ii. 4. b Psalm xix. 3.

ineffec-

ineffectual. Bring hither Humility of Mind, and a Desire of knowing the Will of God; and then Our Instructions will have their full Weight; —The light of Heavenly Truth will shine upon You, and the Divine Impressions will be engraven upon Your Hearts. And if You intend these Impressions should be communicated to Your several Families, lay the Foundations of Virtue at home, and never doubt the happy effects; for it will derive a Blessing *upon your Wives, Your little Ones, and all Your Substance*[a]. Sow the Seeds of Religion early in their untaught, and tender minds, and They will soon grow up into a plentiful Harvest.

But, *above all*, my Brethren, *put on Charity*[b], which is the very bond of Peace, and of all Virtues. Let the Spirit of Union descend upon Our Hearts, without any idle Disputes about Affairs of little Concernment; Such as a *Wise* Man would think of no Consequence, and Such as a *Good* Man would always choose to avoid. Had We been engaged in some Political and Civil Affair, no Wonder if there had been a Variety of Interests and Inclinations, and consequently Our Passions a little enflamed. But, as it is purely an Act of Religion, and dedicated immediately to the God of Peace and Order, One would think it impossible there should be any Disunion amongst Us. —

a Ezra VIII. 21. b Coloss. III. 14.

But,

But *I am perswaded better Things of You, and Things that accompany Salvation*[a]. And I hope there will be no other Contention amongst Us, but This; — Who shall be the best *Men*, the best *Subjects*, the best *Christians*; most enflamed with the Love of God, and Our Neighbour *here*, and best prepared for the Society of Angels *hereafter*.

But it is Time to hasten to a Conclusion; tho' it is not easy to have done with so affecting and copious a Subject. — Only give Me leave to observe, That We are now providing for *Futurity*, and the Happiness of Generations yet to come — *Nature* sees all her Children go down to the Grave, and it is but a little while, before We shall All of *Us be gathered to Our Fathers*[b]. However the *Solemnity of this Day* will be *remembered*, when We Ourselves are in the Land, where all Things are *forgotten*. For We are laying the Foundations of Virtue, which I hope will last as long as the World itself, and convey the Blessings of true Religion to Our Children's Children, and to Ages yet unborn. — Pleased with this Happy Prospect, and with Prayers for the Divine Assistance, let Us, *in the Name of God*, sanctify Ourselves, and this Holy Place. So that after a Life of Virtue here, long devoted to the Honour of God, and exercised in all

a Heb. VI. 9. b Judg. II. 10.

the Offices of the Church *Militant*, We may be at laſt tranſlated into Heaven, and there enjoy the Praiſes, and Hallelujahs of the Church *Triumphant*.

GOD GRANT US ALL AN HAPPY MEETING AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST! AMEN.

FINIS.