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A  
SERMON

Preached in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
OF  
WERRINGTON,  
DEVON,  
AT THE  
CONSECRATION  
OF THAT CHURCH,  
On *Wednesday, Septemb. 7. 1743.*

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By WILLIAM HOLE M. A. Fellow  
of *Exeter* College in *Oxford*, and Chaplain  
to the Lord Bishop of *Exeter*.

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Published by Order of his *Lordship*, and at the  
Desire of some Gentlemen who were Present.

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**Imprimatur,**

**GUALT. HODGES**

**Vice-Can. Oxon.**

**Nov. 28. 1743.**

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

*NICOLAS,*

By Divine Permissiion,

Lord Bishop of *EXETER*;

And to the Honourable

*Sir William Morice* Bart.

(at whose Expence the Church  
of *Werrington* was erected)

This DISCOURSE

Is most Humbly Inscribed

By the AUTHOR.

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## HAGGAI I. 8.

— *Build the House, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.*

**T**HESSE Words contain a Command from God to the People, the Priests and the Elders of the Jewish Nation, after their return from the Captivity and the heavy Loss They had sustained in the Destruction of the first Temple, to erect another for his publick Worship. This had been undertaken <sup>a</sup> indeed by Them some Years before, when the Assistance and Protection of *Cyrus* <sup>b</sup> concurred with their own Desires for laying the Foundation of it. But as their Efforts in conducting this Work had been, by the Instigation of their Enemies, at first attended with real Obstacles<sup>c</sup>; so afterwards, on the Removal of these, Imaginary one's arose, and by their Actions they evidenced a regard for Themselves superior to any They enter-

<sup>a</sup> Ezra I. 5. <sup>b</sup> I. 1. — 7. <sup>c</sup> IV. — 4, 5.

tained for promoting God's Glory. For tho' They had been very industrious in providing elegant Accommodations <sup>a</sup> for their own Private Use, yet they were totally remiss in proceeding to finish their Fabric for the Publick Services of Religion. To excuse this Neglect false Pretexts indeed were alledged <sup>b</sup> by them; But as God saw that their true Motives to This were founded on their Follies and Vices, and that his own Just Honour and the common Benefit of his People admitted of no longer Delays, He sent his Prophet to reprove Them for their past Neglect, to admonish Them of those severe Temporal Judgments it had occasioned<sup>c</sup>, and to excite Them to resume and compleat their Work by the Assurance of his singular Mercies<sup>d</sup>.

To this end They are exhorted (v. 7.) in the awful Name of *the Lord of Hosts*, to *consider their Ways*; impartially to reflect on their unworthy treatment of God and his Religion, and on those heavy Calamities they had incurred by it. And hence They are directed, as it followeth in the Words immediately preceding my Text, to *goe to the Mountain and bring Wood*, i. e. to supply themselves from the

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<sup>a</sup> Haggai I. 4. <sup>b</sup> I. 2. <sup>c</sup> I. 6 — 9, 10, 11. <sup>d</sup> II. 5.

Forests on Mount *Libanus* with Cedars and the like Materials for finishing this Temple, as *Solomon* had provided for His <sup>a</sup>. And then, agreeably to the Promise heretofore made <sup>b</sup> to that First Temple, God declares that *He would take pleasure in it, and He would be glorified*; signifying that He would dwell in it and vouchsafe his more especial Favour to it, inasmuch as He chose to have his Worship and Praise there celebrated, his Honour and Majesty there displayed.

As from the Words of my Text, thus explained, We may see that the rebuilding a Place for the regular Performance of God's publick Worship was expressly required by Him; and as, when erected with a suitable Elegance and Dignity, <sup>c</sup> We see it was solemnly Dedicated <sup>d</sup> to his Service; so from hence I may take Occasion to consider, in my following Discourse, not only the Necessity of Appropriating, but likewise the Reasonableness of Adorning and Consecrating Buildings to Religious Uses. After which I shall give some Account of our Obligations to answer rightly the Ends of such Places, by dili-

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<sup>a</sup> I. Kings V. 14, 15. <sup>b</sup> I — VIII. 29. <sup>c</sup> Ezra I. 4 — 7. VI. 14. <sup>d</sup> VI. 16.



gently resorting to them, and by a Devout Behaviour in them.

I. The Necessity of Appropriating Buildings to Religious Uses may clearly be evinced as well from God's positive Appointment in the more early Ages of the World, and under the *Jewish* Oeconomy, as from their being peculiarly suited to the Christian Dispensation, and the Directions and Examples of the First Preachers of the Gospel: From most of which Instances We may likewise infer the great Propriety of Adorning and Consecrating them. But indeed if we consider abstractedly from these Particulars, which I shall hereafter treat of, the several Grounds on which such Practises are founded, and the general Ends for which Buildings of this kind are destined, We may even from hence deduce our strictest Obligations concerning them.

Accordingly, an open Publick Worship of the Deity, a National established Form of it (with which the having Places for it's Exercise in all the Subordinate Divisions of a Country hath so near a Connexion) is not only founded on the Authority of Revelation, but on the Justest Conclusions of Reason. For if We only consider God's Nature, as comprehending within it all Perfection and Power, and the im-  
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mediate Relation which He bears to all Collective Bodies of Men, What can be more necessary than for such Members of Communities, as are associated together, to Joyn in publickly adoring and celebrating his Excellencies, and to unite in one Common Acknowledgment and Address to Him? And if we consider ourselves in our National Capacity, as having Publick Blessings to petition for, or to commemorate; -- Publick Sins to confess and to lament; and Publick Calamities to deprecate; Is there not a Natural Fitness that These, and the like Particulars, should become Subjects of a Joint Concern, and that such Concern should be expressed in some Publick and Common Form of Worship? But if these Points are true, may we not hence alone discern the Reasonableness of providing, in proper Districts, for Those who are Sharers in the same Good, or Partakers of the same Evil, and Joined by the Ties of Neighbourhood, some Publick and Common Edifices, in which They may solemnize the several Kinds of Worship.

The having these the Dictates of mere Human Prudence, and the Suggestions of Common Understanding, grounded on the Advantages resulting from them in other Cases, must recommend and prescribe, We know that Rea-  
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sons of Conveniency and Use, with a Sense of Decency and Elegance, have exercised Human Industry, and have even given Birth to Arts for raising and adorning Private Habitations. We see that, moved by the like causes, Civil Societies have Judged it necessary to appropriate Publick Buildings for the Reception of Persons assembled on affairs purely secular ; that more stately Structures have been erected for the Seats of Laws and Government and for the solemn Administration of Justice ; and that the Treasures of Nature and Art have been employed on the Palaces of Princes, as suited to and becoming their Grandeur, and as productive of Awe and Respect in Those who resort to them. But these Reasons are more peculiarly applicable to, and such Ends more especially promoted by the erecting and adorning Places which may be appropriated to the Service of God. For, Is it not of infinitely more Importance to provide for the commodious Reception of Persons assembled on Occasions where their Temporal and Spiritual, their Present and Eternal Interests are concerned, than to study the Accommodation of Those who are called together for the Transaction of Inferior Concerns, and to prosecute a less extensive Interest? And forasmuch as God's Nature, Perfections  
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and Authority are infinitely superior to those faint Emanations from them visible in all creat-Beings, Is it not, above all Obligations of this Kind, incumbent on us, to use all just means for creating in others, and testifying by our own Conduct the most awful Conceptions of our Almighty Creator and Governor? If therefore External Uniformity, Fitness and Order are adapted to promote such Ends, are not those Rules concerning them, which Mankind Judge expedient with regard to Themselves, as far as Circumstances may admit, to be transfer'd to Places devoted to God's Use, and to be more inviolable Laws with relation to them? For tho' a Magnificence and Grandeur in them can only be necessary on particular occasions, and tho' Superstitious or Superfluous Ornaments may be productive of ill Effects; yet in all cases a modest unaffected Elegance at least, and a Just Decency of Ornament, cannot but highly become the Dignity of such Places, and be worthy of the Majesty of that Being to whom they are appropriated.

Nor may Reason only dictate the providing Places for Publick Worship in this manner, but shew likewise the Expediency of solemnly declaring and publishing their intended Sacred  
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Use, in order to guard them from any future licentious Prostitution, and to implant and cultivate a Veneration and Religious Preconception in their Favour, by yielding them up in a solemn manner, as the sole Right and Property of the Almighty. For as in the way of Analogy, from Publick Edifices erected for Civil Uses We may infer our greater Obligation to the erecting and adorning Religious Structures; so from the Nature and Use of solemn Designations to Supreme Offices amongst Mankind, from their Forms in transferring Properties, notifying the Uses of Publick Places and the like, We may in a higher degree discern the Reasonableness of publicly dedicating and consecrating Houses for God's Worship by proper and significant Forms. And when This circumstance concurs in Them with those others which have been mentioned already, They must not only be more worthy to be used by Rational Beings and the true Votaries of Religion, but We may have Just grounds for hoping, that the Great God may accept of Them as his Particular Habitations, and the Places where his Glory may peculiarly reside.

True indeed it is, according to the sublime Descriptions of the inspired Writers, that

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<sup>a</sup> *Heaven is God's Throne and the Earth his foot-stool*; that as <sup>b</sup> *He inhabiteth Eternity*, so the <sup>c</sup> *Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain his infinite Majesty*. But certainly Nothing can be more vain than the Inferences, which some have presumed to draw from Truths of this kind to arraign or discredit the Relative Holiness of Places, and the Propriety of serving God in Temples peculiarly set apart for his Worship. For however impossible it may be in any wise to comprehend God's Presence, by whose enlivening Power all Beings are supported, or to limit his Beneficence, which is perpetually diffused thro' the whole Universe; yet may we not Justly presume (as Revelation authorizes Us to assert) that his Divine Influence and Energy may more peculiarly operate and more especially be manifested in Houses dedicated to his Service? And hence also, tho' God be undoubtedly able at all times to attend to our Requests, and tho' He cannot but graciously accept the Prayers which are offer'd to Him, in any Places whatsoever, by rightly disposed Persons; yet may We not conclude that, in Places specially set apart for honouring Him it is most fit to implore his Assistance and

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<sup>a</sup> Isaiah LXVI. 1. <sup>b</sup> LVII. 15. <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings VIII.

pay our publick Homage; and consequently, that to worship God There is most expressive of our Reverence towards Him?

As this may be alledged beyond the Reasons before mentioned to Justify and commend the erecting, and consecrating Decent Buildings to God's Worship; so other Observations likewise may be rightly urged to this purpose. For if God by his Almighty Power and Goodness created and framed this visible World, -- has stationed Us therein, and given it to Us for our Dwelling Place; ought not We, (who of all his Creatures here below are alone dignified with Powers which enable Us to perform it,) ought not we to single out some Portion, and solemnly allott some part of it for glorifying his Name and propagating his Praises? And if all his Works, of infinite use and inimitable Beauty, administer to our Necessities or Delight, should not We be desirous of paying Him some Tribute by providing Places for his immediate Service, which may have that Workmanship and Art employed on Them, which Himself inspired abilities for performing, and provided Materials for the exercising? In Truth, where God's indulgent Bounty permits and enables Men to erect and adorn such Buildings, They are Monuments of their awful Regard

gard and grateful Affections to the Great Author of their Beings and of all their Blessings. When They are likewise religiously appropriated and assigned to his sole Use and Worship, his Moral *Image* and *Superscription* is, as it were, stamp'd and impressed on Them. As This may remind Us of *rendring to God the Things that are His*; so it may instruct Us that the Place *whereon we stand is*, upon account of the Relation it bears to Him, *Holy Ground*. And by this it's sacred Character, in Conjunction with some degree of External Beauty, it may be instrumental towards promoting a Right Conduct in our Religious Addresses.

Were These to be offered up in the same Places, where ordinarily the Busy and Gay Scenes of Life are transacted, Ideas of Levity or Business would be oftner associated in the Imagination. The very Places might tempt the Proneness of our corrupted Nature to a Diffipation of Mind. They might invite and encourage such Sentiments, as it would be very difficult to exclude, however unworthy of us to entertain. In like manner were this most important Business of Publick Worship to be performed in Dwellings of Sordid Meanings, low and groveling Thoughts would probably intrude themselves, and a Behaviour cor-  
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respondent thereto would be apt to follow. Hence, as Persons of Taste and Elegance would naturally dislike such Places, this very Dislike would be improved into a Reason for not frequenting them, or at least the Devotion, there performed, would be remiss, and negligent, as needing to be enlivened by those Objects, which are fitted to produce and cherish it. On the other Side, when Publick Structures, decently adorned, are consecrated and devoted solely to Religious Worship, they have a natural Tendency to advance and improve it's Exercise. For, as by pleasing the Eye and striking the Imagination they may draw Those Persons, who might otherwise absent themselves ; so in those who are present they may favour and encourage such a Frame of Mind, as is most suitable to the Employment they are engaged in, and is most fitted to procure an Access to the Majesty of God. They tend to raise Men's Minds from abject Sentiments, and to dissipate vitious one's, --- to implant and promote a Spirit of Awe and Seriousness, and to excite and enliven every good and pious Affection.

To this may be added, that besides those useful Effects thus produced by the Elegance and Solemnity of consecrated Places, the Manner  
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likewise of assembling together in them by Persons, who concur in the same Religious Addresses, may promote their Right Performance. By Society itself Devotion may be increased, kindred Passions awakened, mutual Zeal inflamed; and in Others pious Examples may operate by influencing and animating Men to the same Practise. And hence scarce any Thing can be judged more acceptable to the Great God, or more efficacious for procuring his Attention and Blessings, than the united Thanks and Petitions of a whole Multitude, with one Heart and Voice thus prostrating themselves before his Throne, in Dwellings erected for his Glory, and dedicated to his Service.

And as, by these means, a greater Degree of Power may be given to Devotion, and of inward Life and Vigour to Religion; so the outward Face of it, and it's publick conspicuous Profession is more especially preserved, and propagated in the World. Who sees not, that the Bulk of Mankind is prone to immerse themselves in Worldly Concerns; --- apt to be overrun with Ignorance; and unwilling, or unable, of themselves, to perform, rightly at least, their own Devotion? And hence, however suitable Religion is to the uncorrupted Dictates  
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of Reason; --- however much it dignifies our Nature, and thus recommends itself to our Choice; yet it may justly be feared, that were Men exempted from all Publick Worship and Instruction, a Deluge of almost total Irreligion would soon overwhelm the World, and a Savage and brutal Barbarity of Manners, as it's genuine and natural Effect, must accompany it. But these Inconveniences are in a great measure avoided, and these Evils remedied, by Men's enjoying the Opportunities of receiving frequently Publick Assistance and Direction in their Forms of Worship, together with Spiritual Instruction. For, hence it is, that the Principles of Virtue and Piety are instilled into their Minds; that the Knowledge thereof is cultivated amongst them; and that a Foundation is laid for the habitual Practice of all Religious Duties. Nay, by Men's accustomed regular assembling together for this Purpose, the Natural and Civil Grounds of Union are cemented; the Social Bonds and Ties are drawn closer together; and the Manners and Understandings of the Vulgar are, in some Degree, civilized and refined. For the Attainment therefore of all these Ends, not only Persons to officiate and Times to assemble at, must be appointed, but the appropriating

priating likewise of known and stated Places for the undisturbed Discharge of Such Duties is essentially requisite; and these Places, when accompanied with the Circumstances of Elegance and a solemn Designation, which I have before represented, cannot but be most adapted to all such Uses.

As these are Natural Reasons, from whence We may derive our Obligations to the erecting (as well as to the adorning and consecrating) Places for God's Publick Worship, so, agreeably to This, We may observe, that Those, who have been guided by the Light of Nature alone, have judged the Practice of all these Particulars incumbent on them. For, not only in the Present, but throughout the Antient Pagan World, in Proportion as Arts were invented, improved and perfected; they were devoted to sacred Uses; and, as, for Civil purposes, publick Places were distinguished from Private, it was deemed at least equally necessary, to raise and preserve, for the Publick Exercise of Religious Worship, Structures distinct from all Others. The erecting these their Legislators, renowned for Virtue and Wisdom, required; --- their Sages encouraged; --- and the Rich and the Great contributed cheerfully towards them. And, as by these  
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means also the most sumptuous Decorations of Art were bestowed on their Temples; so a solemn Consecration, by established Customs and the Sanctions of their Laws, preceded the Religious Use of Them.

True indeed it is, that in all these respects, by the manner of discharging their Duty, they often really transgressed it. In their Worship, their Rites and Ornaments, they were apt to regard principally External Pomp and Pageantry; nor did they dedicate and appropriate their Temples to the Service and Honour of the True, Invisible, Spiritual God, who made Heaven and Earth, but to Gods of their own making, of Wood and Stone, --- or to the Host of Heaven, --- or to Deceased Men, --- or to Creatures who were inferior to Men. However, as This may teach us how Natural Religion is, and how suitable to the Minds of Men some publick Worship is (tho' without Revelation extremely liable to be perverted and misapplied;) so it shews likewise, that in their Opinion, this Worship should be performed in Buildings adorned and solemnly set apart for that purpose. An almost universal Agreement of all Nations in these Points (however Customs of Superstition and Idolatry became intermixed therewith) is Proof abundant that

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in their Judgments They were useful or necessary to that End; and hence this general Consent of Mankind may serve to illustrate the Arguments before alledged from the Reason and Nature of Things.

But indeed as the fullest Confirmation hereof arises from the Authority of Revelation; and as the Necessity of Appropriating Places to Religious Uses may appear, not only from God's positive Appointment in the more early Ages of the World and under the *Jewish* Oeconomy, but from such Places being peculiarly suited to the Christian Dispensation, and to the Directions and Examples of the First Preachers of the Gospel; and as from most of these Instances We may likewise infer the great Propriety of Adorning and Consecrating them; so these are Particulars which, as was before proposed, I shall now proceed to treat of.

II. Accordingly, if we begin with surveying the Earliest Infant State of the World, when extraordinary Manifestations by God were made, when the Light of Reason in Men was less darkned and eclipsed, and their Worship unallayed with those Corruptions which afterwards oppressed it, We may see the true Original of Appropriating and Consecrating Places to Religious Uses.

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Thus, We read, that soon after the first Formation of Mankind, as God set apart One Day, <sup>a</sup> in the weekly Revolution, for his Service; so by his Immediate Presence, He sanctified particular Places <sup>b</sup>; which We may conjecture from the sacred Text were, in conformity to his Will, pitched on by our First Parents, as well as others of the same <sup>c</sup> kind by their immediate Descendants, for presenting in them their Prayers, Oblations and Sacrifices.

If after this We consider the ensuing Patriarchal State, when Families began to be multiplied, and Communities to be formed, We may find a more distinct account of such Practices. For however in those times, the Inhabitants of the World were dispersed by Travellings, and disunited by Warfare; and however imperfectly the Manual Arts had probably been cultivated by Them; yet We may see that the most Distinguished Persons, either from the express Command of the Supreme Being, or moved by the Dictates of their own Reason, were Zealous in establishing some peculiar Places for Publick Worship. Hence we find *Abraham*, the illustrious Founder of the

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<sup>a</sup> Gen. II. 3. <sup>b</sup> III. 8. <sup>c</sup> IV. 3, 4. 16.

*Jewish* Nation, to whom God made frequent Revelations of his Will, constantly erecting Altars <sup>a</sup> wherever He fixed his Abode, and sometimes planting near them sacred Groves<sup>b</sup>; and in these places He solemnized the different Offices of Religion. Thus also We read that *Jacob* by Divine Command built an Altar<sup>c</sup>, and that, after an extraordinary Vision vouchsafed, He reared a Monumental Pillar<sup>d</sup>, which He Dedicated to God by one of the same Rites whereby the Persons of Princes are at present declared sacred, and which He denominated his *House*<sup>e</sup>, as being a Seat thus solemnly set apart for the Future exercising External Worship.

Other Instances resembling these occur in the History of the Venerable and Primitive Fathers of Mankind, who were under the more immediate Direction of the Almighty. And from thence We may see, that as they commonly pitched on Places, which by the extraordinary Appearance God had made in them, or else upon some other accounts tended to imprint a reverential Awe on their Minds, so they provided likewise such Altars and Orato-

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<sup>a</sup> Gen. XII. 7, 8. XIII. 18. <sup>b</sup> XXI. 33. <sup>c</sup> XXXV. 1. <sup>d</sup> XXXV. 1. <sup>e</sup> XXVIII. 18, 19. <sup>e</sup> 22;

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ries, as were most adapted to their peculiar circumstances, and the Climate they lived under; in the Frame of which We have little reason to doubt, but as much Gracefulness and Order were used, as was consistent with the almost artless Simplicity of those Times.

In the next memorable Period of the Religious State of the World, when the *Jewish* Nation were miraculously rescued from their Captivity, and placed by God as *shining Lights* on the Earth, They were by Himself required, on the first Delivery of their Law, and immediately on their being formed into a National Church, to provide for it's Use a moveable Tabernacle<sup>a</sup>, suited to this their Then unsettled State. However as this Tabernacle was ornamented and embellished with all the Elegance and Lustre which Divinely inspired Artificers could confer on it<sup>b</sup>; so was it by God's Appointment solemnly consecrated<sup>c</sup>; and We find Him likewise condescending by visible Tokens, and by some extraordinary Manifestations of his Glory and Presence<sup>d</sup>, to take, as it were, Personal Possession of it, and promising There to maintain an Intercourse with them<sup>e</sup>.

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<sup>a</sup> XXV. 8. <sup>b</sup> XXXI. 2. <sup>c</sup> Exod. XL. 9. <sup>d</sup> — 34. <sup>e</sup> XXV. 22.

Nay, God enjoined them to come thither from their remotest Habitations, after their Possession of the promised Land, thrice in each Year, in order to pay to Him their united Publick Homage <sup>a</sup>; He to this End, by a standing Miracle (which of itself demonstrated the Divine Authority of their Religion) protecting them from all Incurfions, and all Designs of Invasions from their Enemies <sup>b</sup>.

However, as after their settled Abode in this Land, many Places for Divine Worship (some of which were agreeable to the Patriarchal Model <sup>c</sup>) seem, in Conjunction with the Tabernacle, to be used by them <sup>d</sup>; so God had declared <sup>e</sup> that the Tabernacle itself (which, tho' splendid in it's kind, was only, in it's Nature, of Temporary Convenience) should at length be altered for a more Durable and fixed Edifice, in which his *Name* should be *recorded*, and his Worship celebrated. And to this End *David* is represented <sup>f</sup>, as soon as a proper Conjunction of Circumstances admitted, to have expressed the warmest Zeal for erecting One Great National Temple in which God's Service might be Daily celebrated, and to which

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<sup>a</sup> XXXIV. 23. <sup>b</sup> — 24. <sup>c</sup> Josh. XXIV. 26. 1 Sam. VII. 17.  
<sup>d</sup> Pl. LXXIV. 8. <sup>e</sup> Dent. XII. 10, 11. <sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. XXII. 2.

all the Tribes, at stated times, with a Joint concurrence in the same Faith and Worship, might be commanded to resort. But the Design, which had been meditated by the Father, (and which tho' prevented in it's Execution, is said to have met with God's particular Approbation <sup>a</sup>) his Son and Successor fully accomplished <sup>b</sup>; who, suitably to the Greatness of his Riches, the Extent of his Power, and the Magnificence of his Disposition, displayed his Piety by erecting a Temple of unequalled Grandeur, worthy of the Great *Jehovah* to inhabit. And as He made a solemn Dedication <sup>c</sup> of it in those becoming Strains of Eloquence and Wisdom, which You have heard read to You this Day; so God by a resplendent Cloud of Glory displayed his Majesty therein <sup>d</sup>, and promised that He would be attentive and propitious to the Worship offered up in it <sup>e</sup>.

But nevertheless God at this Time likewise awfully declared <sup>f</sup>, that if the *Jews* did not attend his Service with a true Zeal, and conduct their Lives with a Just Obedience, they should feel the heaviest Effects of his Displeasure, and their Temple should at length be totally destroyed. And agreeably to this We find afterwards,

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings VIII. 18. <sup>b</sup> VI. 1. <sup>c</sup> VIII. 23. <sup>d</sup> — 10, 11. <sup>e</sup> IX. 3. <sup>f</sup> 1 Kings IX 6 — 9. <sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. XXXVI. 19.

that,

that, in Consequence of their Idolatry and Immoralities, their Temple fell a Sacrifice to hostile Rage, and they themselves were sent into a Foreign Land in severe Captivity.

However, when an Amendment of Manners had rendered them more worthy of it, God took Compassion on them, and by his Will they were not only resettled in their antient Country<sup>a</sup>, but a Second Temple (according to my Text) was by his immediate Command required to be erected; He to this End inspiring the Hearts of Princes to permit and to favour their undertaking it, and sending his Prophets to excite and animate them to the compleating it. To this End also *the Glory of Lebanon*<sup>b</sup> (in Conjunction with the remaining Ornaments of the First Temple<sup>c</sup>) was chosen by God *to beautify the Place of this his Sanctuary*; and when the Whole was finally concluded, We see that it's Dedication was celebrated with solemn Forms of Worship. To which may be added that as in Procefs of Time this Temple was sacrilegiously prophaned; so We find the Restoration of it to it's pristin Beauty and Worship attended with the like Solemnities of a Consecration.<sup>d</sup> In succeeding

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<sup>a</sup> Ezra I. 4. <sup>b</sup> II. LX. 13. <sup>c</sup> Ezra I. 6. 7. <sup>d</sup> I Macc. IV. 54.

Times likewise the same Forms seem to be repeated when by *Herod* it's former Buildings were renewed, and those great Accessions made to it of Ornament and Dignity.

But what most truly hallowed, ennobled and dignified this Temple, in Pursuance of the Prophetic Predictions<sup>a</sup>, was the Appearance and Preaching of *the Prince of Peace, the King of Glory, the Messiah in whom all Nations were to be blessed*; and the Necessary Uses of such Places were by Him likewise made, in some respects, more manifest to the World.

As indeed He during his Ministry declared, that *He came not to destroy, but to fulfill the Law*<sup>b</sup>, signifying not only That which was founded in Reason, but That also which was delivered in the *Jewish* Revelation; so from hence alone We might collect his Will concerning the Appropriating, as well as the Adorning and Consecrating Places to Religious Uses. For if (as I have before represented) Practices of this Kind are founded on various Moral Grounds, and if they were generally received by the Gentiles, and likewise, in obedience to Divine Command, strictly observed by the Jews; there needed no Particular Ex-

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<sup>a</sup> Haggai II. 9. Malac. III. 1. <sup>b</sup> Matt. V. 17.

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hortations, no New Positive Law to enforce them.

However, if We consider the true Nature of our Saviour's Oeconomy, and of some of his Instructions, We may deduce New Obligations to the having Places for Publick Worship; as well as from his Life and Conduct infer his highest Regard for all Places of this kind established amongst the Jews.

Thus We find Him during his Abode at Jerusalem constantly resorting to the Temple, to attend it's stated Offices, and There to exercise his Spiritual Functions<sup>a</sup>. As the Anniversary Festival of it's Dedication was always observed, He honoured it with his own Personal Appearance<sup>b</sup>. He declared that Oaths were strictly obligatory, even when made by *the Temple*<sup>c</sup>, as deriving their Force from Him *that dwelleth therein*, i. e. as being consecrated to his Service, and peculiarly inhabited by his Presence. Lastly, he gave a memorable Proof of the Sanctity belonging to this Place, by that unusual Degree of severe Zeal, which he expressed against the Profaners of it<sup>d</sup>. For, tho' Secular Uses had been made of that part

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<sup>a</sup> Luke XIX. 47. <sup>b</sup> John X. 22. <sup>c</sup> Matt. XXIII. 31; <sup>d</sup> Matt. XXI. 12 — 16. Luke XIX. 45. John II. 13.

only, which was appropriated to *the Profelytes of the Gentiles*; and these being *Aliens to the Common Wealth of Israel*, embraced not the Religion of *Moses*, yet as they adhered to the Belief of the true God, and were wont There to assemble for the regular performance of his Publick Worship, He thought it necessary to espouse their Cause; and making use of his Regal Power, he did authoritatively eject those who dared to obstruct or interrupt them. And hence likewise, tho' the Place in which they assembled, was only an Appendage or Exterior Part of their Temple, yet as it had been by Prophetic Prediction<sup>a</sup>, by Antient Usage, and by solemn Designation, set apart as a *House of Prayer for all Nations*, he was Zealous in vindicating it from sacrilegious invasion, and in restoring it to it's true Sacred Use.

As to the Synagogues, which were every where dispersed throughout *Judea*, in Subordination and Aid to the Temple (and in which Elegance was consulted, as well as Rites of Consecration used) We find it represented as our Saviour's custom<sup>b</sup> likewise, to embrace all fuitable Occasions of frequenting them. And hence the erecting One of these by a Roman

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<sup>a</sup> II. LVI. 6, 7. <sup>b</sup> Matt. IV. 23. Mark IV. 16.

Officer, was alledged by the Elders of the *Jews* as a Testimony of his Worthiness and Affection to their Country; and was admitted by Christ himself as a just Inducement to requite his Beneficence and Piety, by exerting a miraculous Power to heal his Servant <sup>a</sup>.

As from these Instances of our Blessed Saviour's Conduct We may see sufficient Indications of his high Regard for Places of this kind; so this may likewise be strongly inferred from their great Conduciveness to promote the avowed Causes of his coming into the World, I mean God's Glory and the Salvation of Men's Souls. To this purpose he ordained <sup>b</sup> that an External Church, or, a Perpetual Visible Body of his Disciples (of which Himself is the Head) should in all Ages be established throughout the World. He instituted likewise a Sett of Pastors and Governors <sup>c</sup>, for these Ends especially, namely to instruct Men in the knowledge of his Religion, and to conduct the Publick Worship. And hence they were required also to administer his Two distinguishing Ordinances; by the One of which they were to be publicly ad-

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<sup>a</sup> Luke VII. 4, 5. <sup>b</sup> Matt. XVI. 18. <sup>c</sup> Eph. IV. 11, 12, 13.

mitted



mitted into the Communion of his Church <sup>a</sup>, and by the Other as publickly to declare their continuing in the same, and for ever to commemorate his Death <sup>b</sup>. But all such Institutions of Christ, as they are Visible and Publick Acts, and ought to have stated Assemblies for the Performance of them; so they presuppose, or by Necessary implication require the having Structures appropriated to such Uses.

The Necessity of these in regard to the Professors of Christ's Religion, will farther appear, if we consider how strictly it is commanded that Unity and Communion <sup>c</sup> should be preserved amongst it's Members, by the Exercise of all mutual Affection and good Offices, ---- by the Profession of all the Essentials of the same common Faith, ---- and by the Performance of the same common Worship. And as in regard to this latter Christ hath declared, that *wherever Two or Three are gathered together in his Name he will be in the midst of them* <sup>d</sup>; so hath he likewise, that if Men do not recognize his Authority and profess their Homage to him in the Eye of the World, he will finally disown them <sup>e</sup>. Which gracious Promise on the one

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<sup>a</sup> Matt. XXVIII. 19. <sup>b</sup> Matt. XXVI. 26. 1 Cor. XI. 25.  
<sup>c</sup> John XVII. 21. Eph. IV. 3. &c. <sup>d</sup> Matt. XVIII. 20. <sup>e</sup> Luke XII. 8, 9.

hand, and severe Threatning on the other, We cannot but peculiarly apply to those, who by frequenting Places dedicated to God's Worship entitle themselves to his Blessings, or by neglecting to do so expose themselves to his Displeasure.

To this account of our Blessed Saviour's Instructions and Practice it may be proper to add some brief account of the similar Conduct of the more early Christians both when they first embraced his Religion, and afterwards when it was peaceably established in the World.

Thus We find the Apostles and Disciples of our Saviour, immediately after his Ascension, continually resorting to the Temple at the Times of it's stated Publick Devotions<sup>a</sup>, as being not as yet obliged to renounce Communion with the Jews. However as Disciples of Christ, and as Members of his Mystical Body, They constantly repaired likewise to a Private sacred Apartment<sup>b</sup>, which We may presume to have been that *Large Upper Room* which their Lord himself had sanctified to Acts and Exercises of Religion<sup>c</sup>. Here, it seems, they daily assembled to solemnize their united Worship in

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<sup>a</sup> Luke XXIV, 52, 53. Acts II. 46, 47; <sup>b</sup> I. 13, 14. II. 46.  
<sup>c</sup> Mark XIV. 15. Luke XXII. 12.

his Name; --- to observe more particularly that Sabbath-Day which was dedicated to his Memory; ----- and to partake of that Holy Feast which had been instituted by his Command. It may farther be remarked that a most conspicuous Divine Glory (the same perhaps as formerly filled their Tabernacle and Temple) seems here to have been displayed<sup>a</sup>, producing a most miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit. And as hence *the number of Disciples* both amongst *the Priests and People in Jerusalem multiplied greatly*<sup>b</sup>; so We may justly presume that Oratories of the same kind, where they could assemble with most convenience and security, were proportionably increased amongst them<sup>c</sup>.

After this Time, when the Apostles, in obedience to Divine Command, travelled to several distant Parts of the World, propagating Christ's Gospel, We find that on gaining a competent Number of Profelytes, they were Zealous in forming and regulating Publick Societies and Churches. Hence We read an Epistle of St Paul full of directions for a right Deportment in *the House of God*<sup>d</sup>; and hence We see Him enjoying his Converts *not to for-*

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<sup>a</sup> Acts II. 1. 4.    <sup>b</sup> VI. 7.    <sup>c</sup> V. 42.    <sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. III. 15.

*sake the assembling themselves together*<sup>a</sup>; heavily censuring those who *despised the Church of God* by making no just Discrimination between *Houses* and Assemblies for Entertainment, and those other sacred Places and Assemblies; and lastly, prescribing Rules for perfect *Order* and External Decorum therein <sup>c</sup>.

From these Particulars, compared with the Accounts which we meet with of *Churches* in private Houses <sup>d</sup>, We may reasonably collect that if those who first embraced the Gospel had not Structures resembling the *Jewish Synagogues* (whose general Oeconomy the Apostles seem to have adopted) yet that they were not destitute of such Retired and Private Oratories, as were frequent amongst the *Jews*, and most accommodated to their Particular Conveniency. For as they were generally labouring under the Sense of Present, or the Apprehension of impending Persecutions; so their Numbers rarely required large Publick Edifices, nor did their Circumstances allow of Expensive Ornaments; Besides that an additional load of Envy would have been incurred by them.

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<sup>a</sup> Heb. X. 25. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. XI. 22. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. XIV. 40. <sup>d</sup> Acts XX. 23. Coloss. IV. 15. Philem. 2. Rom. XVI. 5.

However, as soon as the Times of Persecution were ended, and Christians received the Protection and Support of the Civil Powers, We may in their Conduct discern the nearest resemblance of the Practice and Constitution of our own National Church. For in the Seats of Empire and other Extensive and Capital Cities Such Stately and Magnificent Structures were erected, as were suited to great occasions, and were standing Monuments of that Publick Glory which was given to God. But in lesser Districts commodious Buildings were raised, Decent Utensils and Ornaments were provided, an Elegant Simplicity was introduced. And as a necessary completing part We read that a peculiar Consecration by authorized Governors of the Church was always superadded, in which a particular Donation to God was made, a sole Property to him conveyed, and a sacred Benediction implored.

III. Having thus endeavoured to shew the Necessity of Appropriating, as well as the great Propriety of Adorning and Consecrating Buildings to Religious Uses, by various Arguments drawn from Reason and Revelation, and from the Examples of those who followed the dictates of both, as far as suitable

able Circumstances would permit; I shall now proceed to the last Head of my Discourse, and give some account of our obligations to answer rightly the Ends of such Places by diligently resorting to them, and by a devout Behaviour in them.

And with Regard to these Duties it may be noted, that the Declaration made by God in my Text concerning his Temple when erected, that *He would take Pleasure in it, and He would be glorified*, may deserve particularly to be considered by Us, as implying likewise the strongest Motives to the making a Right Use of it. For, We cannot conceive God paying his Regard to the mere Material Edifice, abstracted from that Spiritual End to which it was subservient, namely that his People might themselves *love the Habitation of his House, and the place where his Honour dwelleth*<sup>a</sup>. And from hence whilst they frequented it to pay, in a becoming manner, their Publick Homage to Him, they were entitled to Priviledges and Blessings as extensive as the Duties they performed were important.

As therefore for the attainment of such Ends God required his Temple to be erected,

<sup>a</sup> Ps. XXVI. 8.

and annexed his Gracious Promises to it, so under the Christian Dispensation We have the justest reason to be assured, that Publick Worship, when sincerely and rightly performed, will be in like manner the means of procuring God's Approbation and Favour, as it must also be an instrument of advancing his Honour and Glory. And these are Reasons which of themselves give Us the greatest Encouragement, and lay on Us the highest Obligation to answer rightly the Ends of those Places which are dedicated to his Service.

Thus, what more Rational Ambition can a Human Mind be possessed with than the performing those Duties in which God's Goodness inclines Him to take some kind of Complacency? What more powerful Motive can there be to *enter into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and into his Courts with Praise*, than that He will accept our Imperfect Services; that He *will hear Us from his Seat in Heaven; and that when He heareth He will be merciful*? And what greater Ends can We propose to ourselves, than that He, who is the Almighty Disposer of all Events, and the Great Director of our Lives in all Stages of our Be-

ing, should by these means communicate both his Personal, and Publick, his Temporal and Spiritual Blessings on Us? In our Private Capacities a Consciousness of God's Approbation and Favour ought to be regarded as the supreme Happiness of Human Life; and the partaking of it, in whatever way He pleases to confer it, ought to be the ultimate End of all our Pursuits. And as Members of Communities, We always ought to regard likewise the Guidance of his Counsel, and the Protection of his Providence, as our truest Security and Defence.

These Blessings therefore We are encouraged to hope for by regularly attending his Service, and by offering up our united Publick Addresses to him. Here We may humbly presume that our joint Humiliations may avert his Judgments, that our Mutual Intercessions, through Christ's, may bring down his Mercies, and that our Publick Thanksgivings may be accepted as some kind of suitable Return for the numberless unmerited Blessings conferred on Us. In a Word, by here attending God's Publick Service (when joined with the Performance of all other Parts of our Duty) We may hope that our Wants will be supplied by his Fullness; that our  
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Weakness will be aided by his Strength ; and that thro' his Paternal Care all our just Desires and Requests will be crowned with Success.

As thus a Regard to our own most important Interest demands our Attendance on Publick Worship ; so what makes it a Duty to God of the greatest Obligation is His Honour and Glory resulting from it. To This We are obliged to refer all our Thoughts, Words and Actions<sup>a</sup>, and This is one Great End, one peculiar distinguishing Advantage of Publick Worship. True indeed it is that, strictly speaking, God's infinite Perfections make Him incapable of receiving any additions to that inconceivable Glory, which is essentially inherent in his Nature, and displayed in all his Works. However as He created Us Intelligent and Moral Agents, and endued Us with Faculties which enable Us to discern, acknowledge and adore his Excellencies, Reason itself teaches that by the Right Use of these Faculties We should exhibit his Glory to the World. Of this the Material Parts of his Creation are Instruments, by uniformly observing the Laws impressed on them ; and all irra-

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. X. 31.

tional Beings, by acting according to their implanted Instincts. But our Province and our Duty is, to *glorify his Name* by perfecting our own Nature, and by acting wholly to his Honour; not only out of regard to the Faculties with which He created Us, and to his continued Providential Government over Us; but also on Account of those farther Obligations which arise from our Redemption thro' Christ<sup>a</sup>.

To this purpose in Places and Assemblies for God's Worship, we make publick Confession of all our Deviations from his Laws; -- We openly profess Allegiance to his adorable Majesty; --- We testify our absolute Dependance on Him; --- and proclaim the inward Sense We entertain of his Perfections. By these means it is that our *Light shines before Men*, and that worthy notions of our common Parent, Preserver and Governour are produced and cherished in their Minds. And when Communities of Men thus concur in outward and visible Acts of this kind, greater Honour and Glory must redound to God, than can possibly arise from any private or particular Acts. In short, this gives some faint Idea of

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<sup>a</sup> -- VI. 20. Luke II. 14.

the glorified Spirits above, who perpetually join in saying, *Blessing, and Honour and Glory and Power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*<sup>a</sup>.

These are Obligations to a diligent Attendance on Publick Worship which may be derived from the Declaration made by God in my Text. Various other Proofs to the same purpose might indeed be alledged from the Reason and Nature of Things ---- from the Authority of Divine Revelation ---- from the Examples of the First Preachers of the Gospel, and other Heads of Argument. But I have anticipated my discoursing on these by the Reflections which have been offered in the preceding Parts of my Discourse. For the same Reasons which have been assigned to prove the Necessity of Appropriating Buildings to Publick Worship cannot but as strongly infer our Obligations to answer the End proposed by them. And from all these reasons We may be convinced that if We would act the Part that becomes Us as Men and Christians, and if We would manifest a just Regard to our own true Interest and Duty, We ought to pay a diligent attendance on the Pub-

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<sup>a</sup> Rev. V. 13.

lick Services of Religion, as suitable occasions may offer; and more especially on that Day which has been by Divine and Human Laws appropriated to them.

However, our attendance alone on Publick Worship cannot of itself avail, except it be accompanied with all those becoming Circumstances, and with that Right Deportment, which the Presence and Place We are in, and the Business We are assembled about, require from Us. For We should consider that We are in the House and under the more immediate Inspection of the Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, *cloathed with Majesty and Honour*, armed with irresistible Power, in whose Nature unbounded Knowledge, Holiness and Purity are essentially inherent; --- That We prefer our Petitions at the Throne of his Justice and Mercy, from whence Punishments are denounced to the obstinately Guilty, Pardon is proclaimed to the sincerely Penitent, and Eternal Glory proposed to the truly Obedient. And hence We may clearly discern how indispensably all suitable Regard and Attention is required from Us, and how culpable a supine and remiss Discharge of our Duty, and any irreverent Behaviour must be.

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To avoid therefore all just Imputations of this kind, We must first pay a Seasonable and Early Attendance on the stated Publick Offices of Religion, when about to be performed. We should come to them with a prepared and recollecting Frame of Mind, and with Right Conceptions imprinted on it. We should endeavor to banish all Levity from our Affections, and Alienation from our Thoughts; to dismiss all our Worldly Cares, and to prevent or dissipate the incursions of Foreign Ideas in our Imagination. However difficult it may be to obtain perfectly these Qualifications, which are the Perfections of Glorified Beings, yet our Diligence and our best Efforts to this purpose are essentially requisite in the Publick Discharge of this our Duty to God. Even in the Presence of any distinguished Earthly Superiors the Practice of all indecent or unworthy Deportment is avoided, as an Indignity offered to them. But how infinitely more anxious should We be not to incur any Guilt of this kind in our Addresses to our Almighty Governor and Judge.

In truth, if We would offer up these in a becoming manner We should have our Hearts possessed with an awful Sense of all his great Perfections, and actuated with lively Sentiments

ments of Gratitude and Obedience to Him. We should have our Minds fixt on the Business We are employed in, and our Attention awakened to the Declarations made of God's Will. And as we thus should be *cloathed with* all these *Ornaments* of a Right Frame of Mind; so our outward Deportment likewise must be suitable to the Nature and Employments of that Place which is dignified with God's Name and Authority. And hence all those Reverential Gestures must be carefully used by which our inward Affections are expressed, and such as are suited to the different Offices which We perform.

To conclude: When our regular Attendance on Publick Worship is thus accompanied with all becoming Circumstances in our Deportment, the Ends of those Sacred Places are fully answered, and God's Will is rightly performed. By such a Conduct We may be able to find our Knowledge of all Christian Duties enlarged, our Faith increased, our Virtues improved, and our Graces heightened. Nay, This may be some means of qualifying Us for holding a perpetual Sabbath in *the House of God not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*, where We may adore and magnify his Name,

and where We may obey and perform his Will in a manner resembling, tho' in a Degree infinitely superior to, our Best Efforts, and our continued Practice here on Earth.

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