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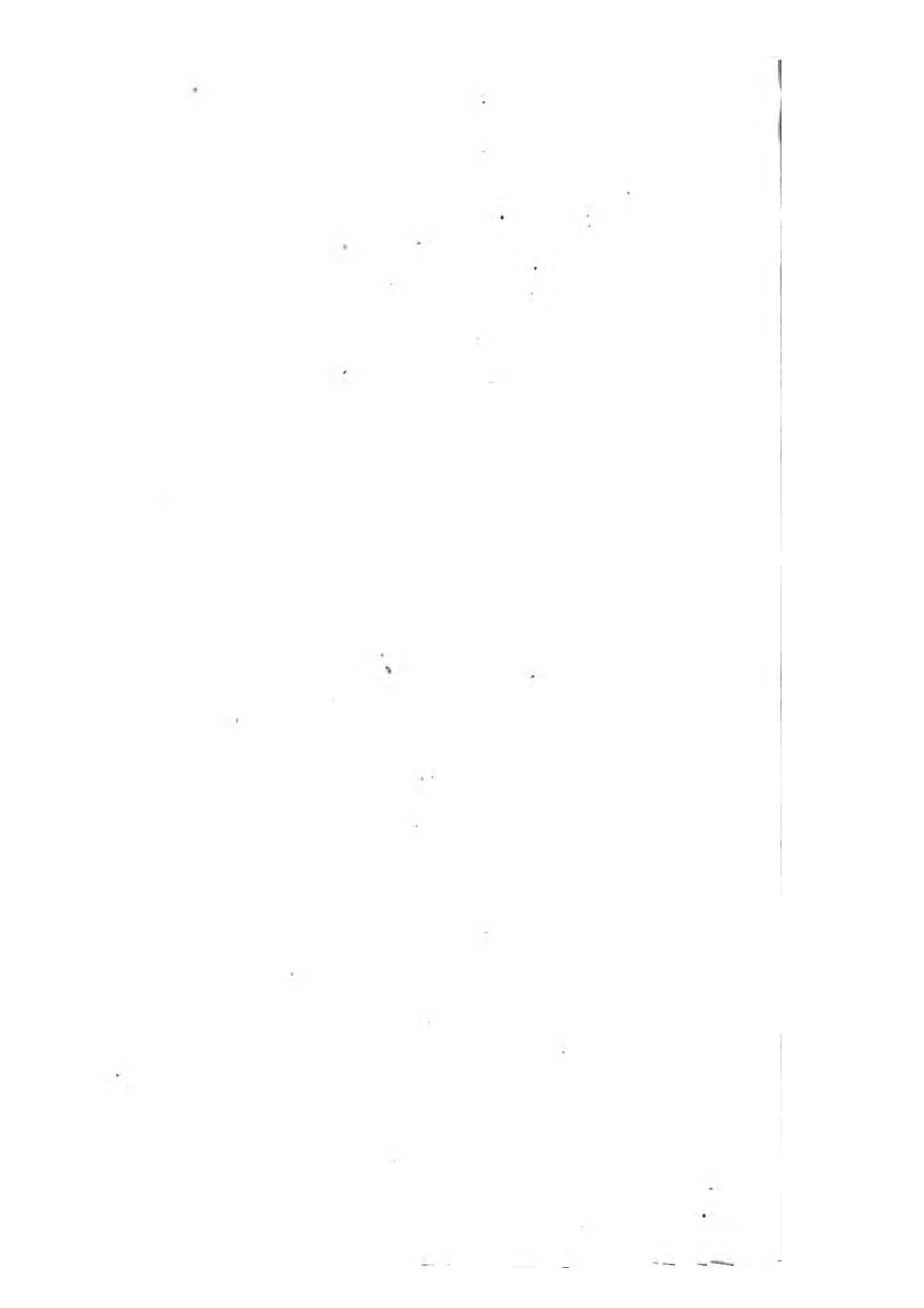
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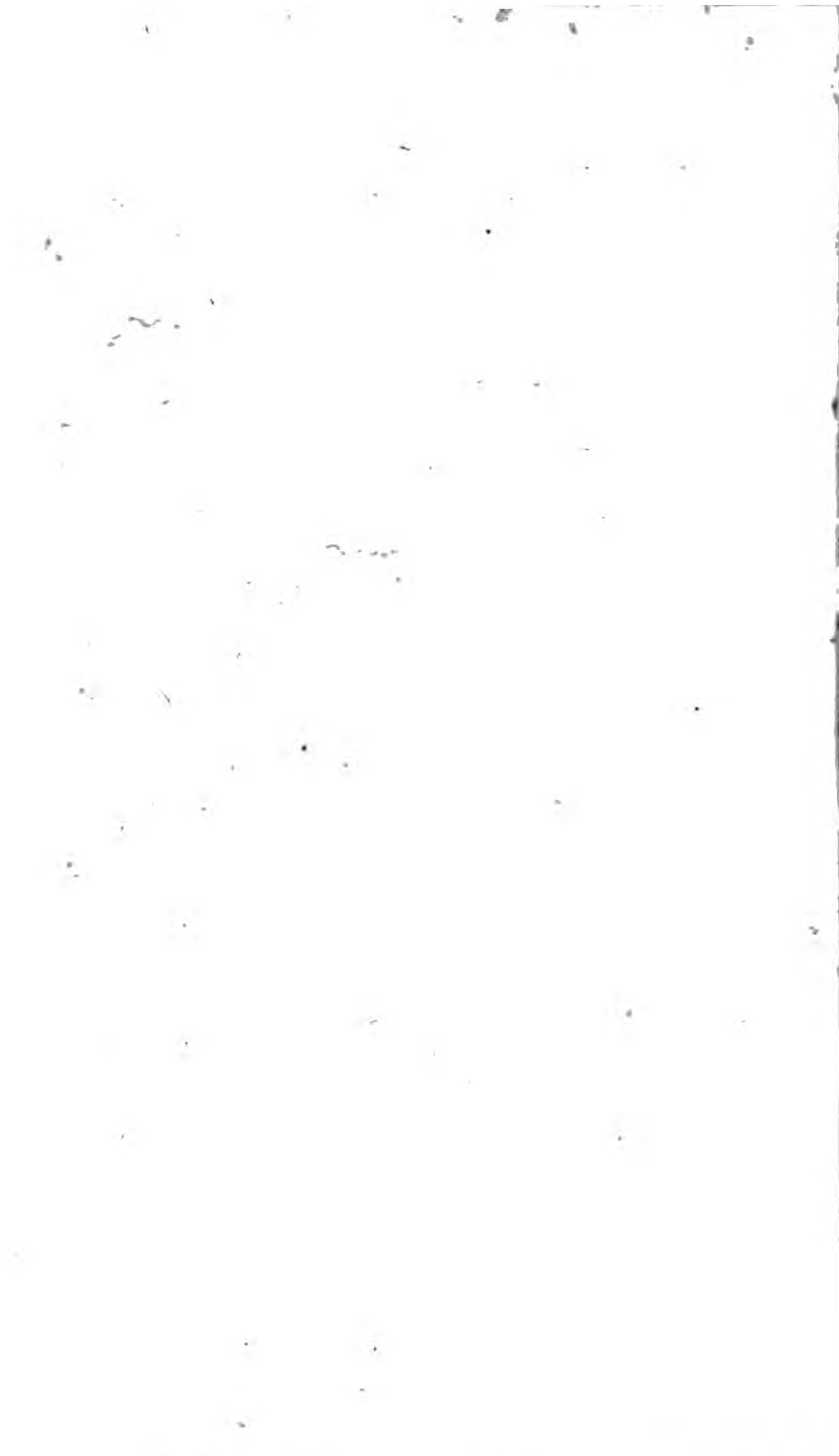


Dr. CLARKE'S
SERMON

Preach'd at the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF
St James's Westminster,

ON
Sunday *April 18,* 1725.





A ✓
SERMON

Preach'd at the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF
St James's Westminster,

ON
Sunday *April 18, 1725.*

UPON
Occasion of the Erecting a CHARITY-
SCHOOL, as a House of EDUCATION
for WOMEN-SERVANTS.

BY
SAMUEL CLARKE, *D. D. Rector*
of St James's Westminster.

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MATT. V, 16.

Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.



LIGHT, in the first and natural Sense of the word, is That which causes all things to *be Seen* as they *Are*, in their *True Nature*, and in their *Proper Colours*. 'Tis That which *discovers every Secret*, which *removes every Uncertainty*, which *detects every Deformity*, which *opens to us* in all their *Glory* the innumerable and inimitable *Beauties* of Nature. Hence in the *Figurative Sense*, whatso-

ever enables us to discover any *Truth*, we usually speak of as *giving us Light* in That matter : For, as the Apostle expresses it, *Eph. v, 13, whatsoever doth make manifest, is Light*. And because some things, the *more* they are *inlightened*, the *more Beautiful* they appear ; whereas Other things love to have their *Deformities* concealed in *Darkness* : hence in the *Moral Sense* also, whatever Actions or Persons are truly *virtuous* and *praise-worthy*, and consequently always the *more valuable* in proportion, as they are more perfectly and thoroughly *known* ; are frequently in Scripture filed by the name of *Light*, and the *contrary ones* by that of *Darkness*, Concerning God himself, upon account of the infinite Purity and Holiness of his Nature , the Apostle thus speaks ; 1 *Job. i, 5, God is LIGHT, and in Him is no Darkness at all*. And to good Men likewise, in *their* proportion, is the same manner of speaking applied ; *Eph. v, 8, Ye were sometimes Darkness, but Now are ye LIGHT in the Lord : Walk, as children*

dren of Light : — And have no fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them.

Again ; Because all Luminous Bodies, in proportion to the degree of their *own* Brightness, necessarily diffuse their Light around them, and at a Distance inlighten all *Other* Bodies ; hence, in the *religious* sense, a *Good Example* is a *Light* shining in darkness ; spreading its influence every way ; diffusing Instruction, Knowledge, Incouragement to Virtue, and Motives to reformation of Manners, in the midst of a dissolute and corrupt World. In *This sense* the word is used by St. Paul, *Phil. ii, 15 ; That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as LIGHTS in the World.* And in *This sense* 'tis used by our Saviour in the Text ; *Let your LIGHT so shine before men. Ye are* (saith he in the words immediately foregoing, *Ye are*) *the LIGHT of the World : As therefore*

fore *a City that is set on an hill, cannot be hid*; and as men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth Light unto all that are in the House; Even so, saith he, let YOUR LIGHT shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven: Let your whole Behaviour be so exemplary, and the Influence of your religion upon your own Lives so conspicuous to the World; that men being thereby convinced of the *Excellency* of your doctrine, may by your Preaching be led from Errour to Truth, and be converted by your Example from Wickedness to Virtue.

'Tis well worth observing here, by the way, that This expression of our Saviour, concerning men's *lighting a candle*, and putting it not under a Bushel, but on a *Candlestick*, so that it giveth Light unto all that are in the House; is the Foundation of That lively and beautiful Image in St. John's Vision, where the seven primitive

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Manners, and of living under a constant Sense of God upon their Minds, in expectation of a righteous judgment to come. The *Practise of Virtue* upon *These Principles*, is the Establishment of the *Kingdom of God* among Men. And in the *Inlargement of this Kingdom of Righteousness and Holiness*, in the *Increase of the Efficacy of Truth and Virtue*, which is the *Proper Subjection* of Rational and Free Agents; in *This* consists the *Glory of God* upon Earth. Thus the *Conversion of Unbelievers*, which St *Paul* describes by their being *convinced*, and *falling down on their Faces and worshipping God*, 1 Cor. xiv, 24; St *Peter* expresses by the *same Phrase* with *This* in the Text, of *glorifying God*: 1 Pet. ii, 12, *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, GLORIFY GOD in the day of Visitation.* And St *John*, in his *Revelation*, uses the expression of men's *giving Glory to God*, and *repenting*

repenting of their evil deeds, as words having one and the same signification: *Ch. ix, 20; xvi, 9; The rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet REPENTED NOT of——their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts; but——blasphemed the Name of God, who hath power over these Plagues; and they REPENTED NOT, to give him GLORY.*

Glorifying of God therefore, and *promoting Righteousness and Truth among Men*, being in effect *one* and the *same* thing: from hence appears the *Reason* and the *Consistency* of our Lord's commanding his Disciples in the Text, to *let their Light shine before men*; and yet exhorting them, in another part of the very same Discourse, *ch. vi, 1, Take heed that ye DO NOT your Alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven: And, When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in*

the Synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of Men: Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward. The Reason (I say) and the Consistency of Both these Exhortations, appears from the peculiar Considerations annexed to each exhortation respectively. The Same thing, in different Circumstances, is not the Same thing. A Particular good Action, done with a Particular View of *vain-glory* and *popular Applause*; ceases to be a religious Action, and falls short of its Reward. The Same Action performed with *such* a View, and in *such* a manner, as to have a direct and proper Tendency to *promote* and *incourage* the universal *Practice of Virtue* in the World; is, in the most *immediate* and *real sense* of the words, a *glorifying of our Father which is in Heaven*; 'Tis causing men (as much as in Us lies,) to make acknowledgment of *God*, and to order their Lives as being under a perpetual sense of his Inspection and Government.

Every

Every Act of *Any* Virtue *whatsoever*, has a natural Tendency to *This* End; and in *general*, by *habitual* good Living, is the *Glory of God*, in *This* sense of the phrase, most highly advanced. But *Some* Virtues *in particular*, have a more *conspicuous* Influence towards This End, than Others. And since in That passage which I *now* referred to, of the *same* Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount, 'tis agreed on all hands, that What, in the best Copies of the Original, is, *Take heed that ye do not your* Matt. vi, 1.
RIGHT EOUSNESS *before men*, means undoubtedly, and is accordingly rendered in *Our* Translation, *Take heed that ye do not your ALMS before men*: 'tis very probable that *here* in *my* Text likewise, our Lord, under the *general* terms, *Light* and *Good Works*, might have a *particular* regard to Works of *Beneficence and Charity*: Commanding his disciples to make *conspicuous* their Practice of the *same* Virtue, when their *so doing* might be an *Honour* to Religion; which, in
other

other circumstances, he commands them to keep *private*, when its being *publick* would serve only the Purposes of Vain-glory.

And indeed there is no one Christian virtue, to the Practise of which there are in Scripture given more *earnest Exhortations*, or more *large and repeated Promises*, than to This of *Charity*. *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters; for thou shalt find it after many days*, Eccles. xi, 1. *If thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house: If when thou seest the naked, thou cover him; and hide not thy self from thine own flesh: Then shall thy Light break forth — in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day*, Is. lviii, 7—10. In like manner, in the *New Testament*, our *Lord* exhorts: *When thou makest a Feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the Blind: And thou shalt be blessed; For they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed*

sed at the resurrection of the Just, Luke xiv; 13, 14. And in his description of the last judgment, he expresses the sentence of the Blessed thus; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.* Matt. xxv, 34. And in his discourse to the Pharisees, *Luke xi, 41, Give alms*, says he, *of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you.* His meaning is; not that *Charity*, or *Any* other *Virtue*, will compensate for *vitious* and *immoral* Practices; but that These *Virtues* are *really* acceptable before God, in whose sight the Pharisaical ceremonious Purifications were of no Esteem.

It must and ought here to be acknowledged, to the Honour of the Present Generation, that there appears to be *at This time* among us a number of persons so charitably disposed, and so ready to make a good Use of the Plenty wherewith the
 Providence

Providence of God has blessed them; that, were it possible they could be absolutely certain, their charity should always be *expended* in such ways, and applied to such purposes only, for which it was designed; so as neither to become in any degree an encouragement to *Idleness*, nor a support of any *Party*, nor an occasion of *Pride*, or of raising persons *Above* those Circumstances in which they might be employed most usefully to the Publick: it cannot at all be doubted, but the Supply would immediately be *more* than is requisite, to relieve the truly indigent, and to answer the wants of All who were really unable to provide for the necessities of Life by Honest Labour. But indeed, hardly any thing is more difficult, in an idle and corrupt Age, than for those who have the strongest *Inclinations* as well as the greatest *Abilities* of doing Acts of Beneficence, to find out in *what manner*, and upon *what Objects* in particular, they may best bestow their charitable good Offices; so as that the Use and Benefit of them

them may be the *most* extensive, and the *least* liable to misapplication or Abuse. Nor is it possible in This case, to lay down any certain and determinate *Rules*. Every person, as he must of necessity be left to the determination of his own prudence, at *what* particular *Times* and *Places*, and in *what proportions* he will choose to bestow his Charity; so must he also in judging about the *Manner* of disposing it, and upon *what Objects*, and with *what particular Views* he will principally direct it; that it may more immediately answer the *intention* of the Giver, and may be *most* conducive to the *particular Purposes* he is chiefly desirous to promote. According to the *different* Stations of *Life* men have been employed in, and the *different* Scenes of humane affairs they have seen in the World; they are apt naturally in consequence to frame to themselves very different notions, what *Kinds* of charities will in the whole be most useful to the Publick, and most likely to answer the general Intention with

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Success.

Success. In every Method that *has* or *can* be proposed, when considered under *different Views and Regards*, it cannot be otherwise, but that *Each one* will be found liable in *Some Respects* to *more* Objections than others, and in *Some* to *fewer*. *Whatever* Way be taken, and *whatever* care and circumspection men use, in the disposal of their Charity; it will always be possible, that the End they propose to themselves shall not be fully answered; And in *no way* can there be any certain and absolute security, that every sort of miscarriage shall be prevented. That which of all other methods seems, upon the whole, to have the *Advantage* in *most respects*; as being most *extensive* in its *Influence*, and *lasting* in its *Effects*; subject to the *Fewest Inconveniences*, and *those* from time to time the most easily *remedied*; is the *Education of Poor Children*. Which, when put in a right Method, and directed in a right and proper manner; is in effect a Compendium of almost every sort and kind of Charity, of almost

almost all the several and most different Instances of Beneficence in One. 'Tis, at the same time, both Feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked with a Garment. 'Tis instructing the Ignorant in the first principles of Religion, and promoting a general Sense and Knowledge of God in the World. 'Tis sowing early the Seeds of Virtue and good Manners, and preventing the first Beginnings of those vicious Habits, which, when they have taken root by Custom and long Practise, seldom Any Zeal for reformation of Manners is ever after able to correct. 'Tis, when joined with putting them upon works of *Labour* and *Industry*, as it ought always to be; 'tis then (I say) a remedy against all the ill Effects of Idleness and Poverty, and (by a *Double* Benefit) making Those to become Useful Members of the Publick, who would otherwise have been a Burden and a Weight upon it. In a word, 'tis at once relieving the necessities of the Present Generation, and (as far as Humane Care and

Forefight can extend,) preventing the Wants of Those which are to come. To *This sort* of Charity therefore, (whenever there is *reasonable* Ground to hope it will be duly applied to the Purposes now mentioned,) we are exhorted by *All* those arguments *in conjunction*, which *singly* incite us to be beneficent in Any of the Particular Instances. To this we are invited by all the considerations of Publick Benefit, and by all the Motives and Arguments of Religion. To This we are encouraged by the united Force of all those Promises *at once*, which in Scripture are made, on many *different* occasions, to the *several* methods of showing mercy and charity.

It has upon some occasions been observed, and perhaps not always wholly without reason; that the children of the *Meanest* parents, sustained, educated, and instructed merely upon the Charity of Others; have sometimes in consequence of these Advantages, and upon account of

This

This very instruction, been tempted to become *conceited* and *vain*, and *Above* being employed in those *Meaner Services*, which are of all others the *most necessary*, and at the same time the *most useful* to the Publick : And sometimes that they have become liable to be led away into *Factions*, which, being frequently founded upon Pretenses of Religion, do find very great Support from whatever is capable of being changed into the *Ceremonies* and *Formalities* of *Superstition*. In order to remedy, as far as possible, these Inconveniences, and to turn Objects of Charity into useful Members of the Publick ; to instruct them in the plainest Principles of Sobriety and Virtue ; and to inure them to Labour and Industry, which is the Great Support of every Nation ; It has been resolved that the poor Children to be supported by *your* Charity, shall for the future (and the Design is already begun actually to be put in execution) be employed the greatest part of their time in such *Kinds of Work*, as may qualify them for
the

the *lower* and *most necessary Services* of Life. And to This End provision has been made, that they shall *not only* be *cloathed* and *taught* as formerly, but that they shall be furnished moreover with *Food* and *Lodging*; that, being constantly kept together in a Place of *Work* and *Employment*, the proposed Intention may be more effectually answered; and the Inconveniencies, which it has perhaps not unjustly been apprehended would follow upon their being raised *Above* their proper Station, we may reasonably *hope*, will in great measure be prevented.

One evident and very obvious good effect of This Method, is; that whereas, when children have only been *Taught* in Schools, it too often happens that by returning constantly home to their Parents or Relations, the Principles of Religion and good Manners wherein they have been instructed, have from time to time been as it were *extinguished* by the influence of *ill Examples*, and overpowered by
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the continual Sight of *vicious Practises*; they will Now, as far as possible, be kept out of that danger of being led away by ill Example; and, in a good degree, out of the reach of the contagion, of the most profligate and dissolute part of the World. For Vice is not *natural* to mankind, but taught by ill Education and corrupt Examples, confirmed by Custom and Habit, and Then indeed very hard to be rooted out by the Strongest Arguments or by the Wisest Instructions. For, that which has long been *crooked*, will not easily be *made streight*; and that which is *wanting*, cannot be *numbred*, Eccl. i, 15. But if young persons can *from the Beginning* be kept out of ill Company, and be taught only the *plain* Principles of Religion and Virtue, and be inured to *Industry* and moderate *Labour*; they will easily be formed to *Habits* of Sobriety and Modesty, to a sense of the reasonableness of virtuous Living, and to a Hatred of those vicious and debauched Practises, which bring so great a part of Mankind *visibly* to *Temporal*

poral, and *too certainly* to *Eternal Destruction*.

And whereas *Poor Orphans particularly*, who are left wholly destitute of Friends and Relations, are apt to be exposed not only to the Disadvantages of ignorance and want of instruction, and to the seducements of ill Company in the worst and lowest part of a loose and degenerate World, but very frequently also to lie under the greatest *Temporal Wants*, and be subject to such a variety of *Hardships* and *Oppressions*; as often render them almost *incapable* of Any useful Employment in the World; By the Method now proposed, *These Objects* in particular, as they will probably be more *Willing than Others* to *submit* to such a manner of Education as may best fit them for the *meanest* and most necessary *Services*, so *These* ('tis likely) will be the *principal and most numerous* Sharers in your present Beneficence. Which is one not inconsiderable additional recommendation,

mendation, of the design of turning Charity into this particular Channel.

The Provision *now* made for accommodating the poor children with *Food* and *Lodging*, who *before* were only *Cloathed* and *Taught*; must indeed of necessity cause a considerable *Increase* of the Annual *Expense*. But if there be good reason to *hope*, (as there plainly is in the Nature of the Thing,) that the *Accession of Usefulness to the Charity* by this method, will in proportion be greater than the *Increase of the Expense*; this is a very just argument to prevail with well-disposed persons, to enlarge their contributions. *Every* 2 Cor. ix. 7. *man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful Giver. — As it is written; he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever. — Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth thro' Us Thanksgiving to*
- D
God.

God. For the administration of This Service, not only supplieth the Wants of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God: Whilst by the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed Subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal Distribution unto Them, and unto all Men.

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