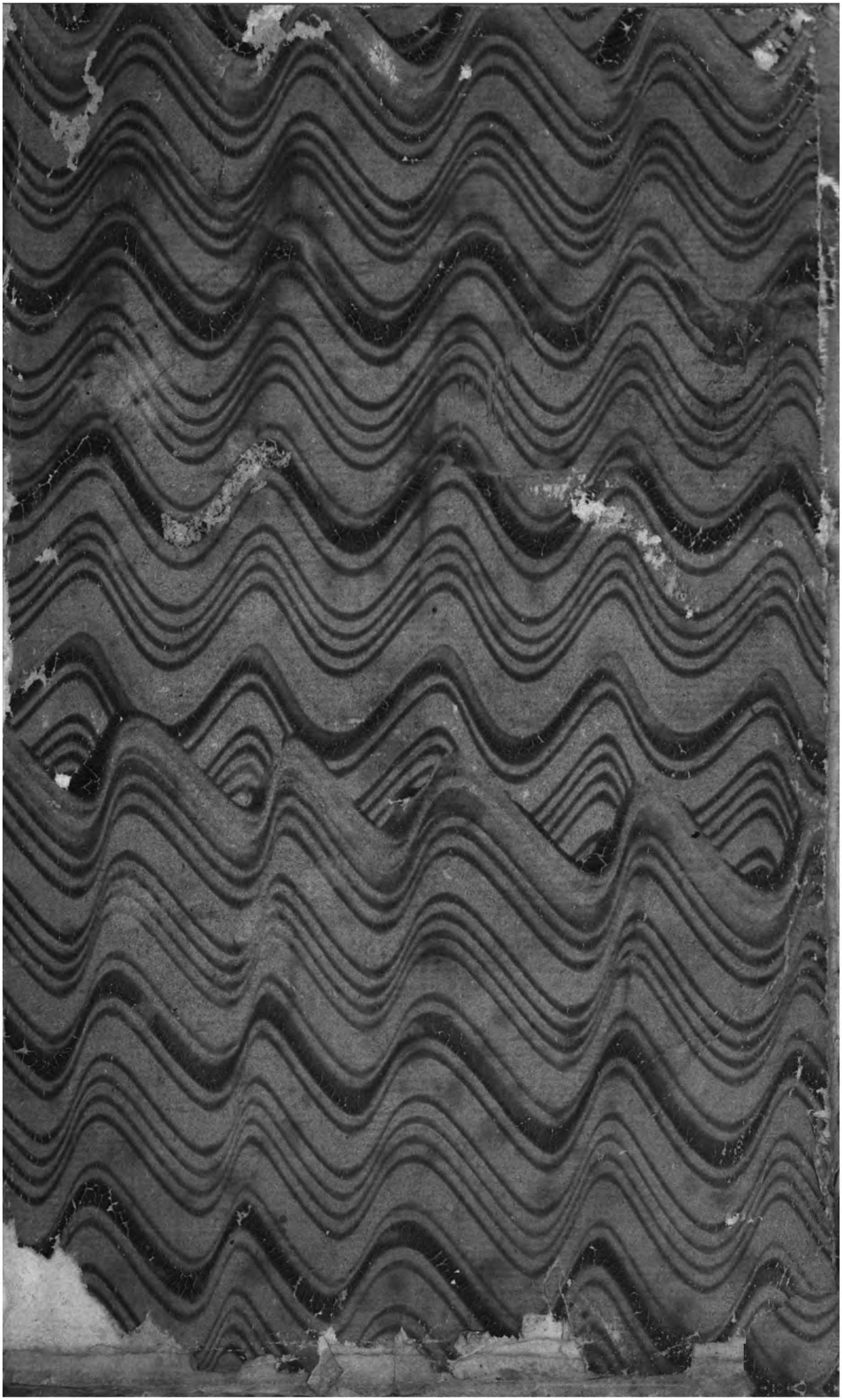

Thos: Johnson
B. A. C.
1818

SERMONS

ON

Uſeful and Important

SUBJECTS.

By DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

Iſ. lviii. 1. Cry aloud, ſpare not; lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and ſhew my People their Tranſgreſſion, and the Houſe of Jacob their Sins.

Iſ. lxii. 1. For Zion's Sake will I not hold my Peace, and for Jeruſalem's Sake I will not reſt, until the Righteouſneſs thereof go forth as Brightneſs, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth.

1 Cor. i. 23. We preach Chriſt crucified.

MACCLESFIELD:

Printed for the AUTHOR, by T. BAYLEY. MDCCLXXIV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

TO enlighten the Underſtanding, and amend the Heart: To promote Love towards God, and Good-Will towards Men: To advance the Honor of the Redeemer, and the Salvation of Souls: Theſe were the Author's Views when he wrote, preached, and publiſhed the following Diſcourſes. They were not deſigned to gratify the Curious, the Captious, and the Critical; but ſimply to edify a large Congregation of plain People. May the Divine Bleſſing attend the Publication.

D. SIMPSON.

The Excellency and Importance of the Bible.

A

SERMON

Preached before one of the

SOCIETIES

Of

ARTIFICERS

In

MACCLESFIELD.

" I have been acquainted ſomewhat with Men and Books: " I have had long Experience in Learning, and in the " World: There is no Book like the Bible, for excellent " Learning, Wiſdom and Uſe; and it is want of Underſtand- " ing in them, who think, or ſpeak otherwiſe."

JUDGE HALE.

" Study the Holy Scriptures, eſpecially the New Teſta- " ment; therein are contained the Words of eternal Life. " It has God for its Author; Salvation for its End; and " Truth, without any Mixture of Error, for its Matter."

LOCK.

The Prayer before Sermon.

O INFINITELY great, gracious, and glorious Lord God, who in Compaſſion to Mankind haſt cauſed the Holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning and Inſtruction; grant to us thy Divine Spirit to enlighten our Minds, that we may underſtand thy Word aright. Enable us to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt it, that by Patience, and the Comfort thereof, we may embrace, and ever hold faſt the bleſſed Hope of everlaſting Life. To this important End, accompany with thy Bleſſing what is about to be delivered. Remove groundleſs Prejudices; baniſh from our Minds every Unchriſtian Thought; awaken every ſecure and careleſs Sinner; ſoften every hard and obdurate Heart; comfort the Mourners in Zion; relieve the Afflicted; eaſe the Pained; ſuccour the Tempted; ſupply the Neceſſitous; be a Father to the Fatherleſs, an Husband to the Widow, and a Friend to the Diſtreſſed. Theſe undeſerved Mercies we ask in the Name, and for the Sake, of Jeſus Chriſt, the great Redeemer; in whoſe comprehenſive Form of Words we ſum up all our Petitions;

Our Father &c.

MEN and BRETHREN,

Being called upon to preach before you this Morning, I ſhall not amuſe you for Half an Hour with curious and vain Speculations, but with Matters of infinite and univerſal Concern. It ſhall be our Endeavor to ſpeak in a plain, popular, practical Manner; and to advance only ſuch Truths as are worthy of a wiſe Man's Ear and Attention. To your candid and unbiaſſed Judgments therefore, O Chriſtians, we make our Appeal.

ROM. i. 16.

For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt: For it is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth.

THE BIBLE is a Book of ſuch vaſt Importance, that I would omit no proper Opportunity of recommending it to your ſerious Peruſal and Regard. Looſe, profane, cavelling Witlings indeed, will harangue for Hours, a-

 mong

mong their Companions, againſt the monſtrous Abſurdities, the palpable Contradictions, the horrid Cruelties, and the incoherent Jargon, therein aſcribed to the God of Order and Perfection. They ſet the Bible at Defiance; and cry up Reaſon and Natural-Religion, as alone ſufficient, to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace, Truth, and Happineſs.

But methinks, before we draw ſuch poſſitive and important Concluſions from Theoretical Reaſoning upon the Strength or Weakneſs of the natural Powers of Man; we ſhould do well to conſider, what was the antient, and what is the modern State of thoſe Nations, where the Goſpel never ſhone. They have lived under the Conduct of unaſſiſted Reaſon (improved indeed by ſome ſmall Remains of traditionary Revelation) for the Space of near 4000 Years. During this long Period, they have had Time enough, one would imagine, to make a thorough Experiment, whether Reaſon alone is ſufficient to guide Mankind into the Knowledge of Truth and Duty. Let curious Theoriſts conclude as Pride and Self-Importance ſhall dictate, the

Matter

Matter of Fact is well known and incontrovertable, That they were loſt and bewildered in endleſs Mazes. " Even their Philoſophers perpetually diſagreed, oppoſed, and contradicted one another in all their Diſputations to ſuch a Degree, that *Varro* reckons up no leſs than 280 Opinions concerning that one Queſtion, What was the Chief Good, or Final Happineſs of Man". *Socrates* himſelf, one of the wiſeſt, and perhaps one of the very beſt Men the Heathen World ever produced, after all his anxious Enquiries, wavered in his Belief, Whether the World was governed by One, or by a Variety of Beings. " He was not aſhamed openly to confeſs his Senſe of the Want of a Divine Revelation. He declares it as his Judgment, that it was moſt natural and truly agreeable to right and ſound Reaſon, to hope for Something of that Nature". Take his own Words:

" It ſeems beſt to me, *ſaith Socrates to one of* " *his Diſciples,* that we hope quietly; nay, 'tis " abſolutely neceſſary that we wait with Pati- " ence, till ſuch Time as we can learn certainly " how we ought to behave our ſelves both to-

" wards God and towards Men. When will
" that Time come, *replies the Disciple*; and who
" is it that will teach us this? For methinks I
" earneſtly deſire to ſee and know who the
" Perſon is that will do it. It is one, *anſwers So-*
" *crates*, who has now a Concern for you. But
" in like manner as Homer relates that *Miner-*
" *va* took away the Miſt from before *Diomedes*
" Eyes, that he might be able to diſtin-
" guiſh one Perſon from another; ſo 'tis neceſ-
" ſary that the Miſt, which is now before your
" Mind, be firſt taken away, that afterwards
" you may learn to diſtinguiſh rightly between
" Good and Evil; for as yet you are not able
" to do it. Let the Perſon you mentioned,
" *replies the Diſciple*, take away this Miſt, or
" whatever elſe it be, as ſoon as he pleaſes: For
" I am willing to do any Thing he ſhall direct,
" whoſoever this Perſon be; ſo that I may but
" become a good Man. Nay, *anſwers Socrates*,
" That Perſon has a wonderful Readineſs and
" Willingneſs to do all this for you. It will be
" beſt then, *replies the Diſciple*, to forbear of-
" fering any more Sacrifices 'till the Time that

" this

" this Perſon appears. You judge very well, " *anſwers Socrates*, it will be much ſafer ſo to " do, than to run ſo great a Hazard of offer- " ing Sacrifices, which you know not whether " they are acceptable to God or no. Well then, " *replies the Diſciple*, we will Then make our " Offerings to the Gods, when That Day comes; " and I hope, God willing, it may not be far off."

Strange! That notwithſtanding all the perplexing Doubts and Uncertainties under which theſe virtuous Heathens labored, our modern Free-Thinkers, our Rational Chriſtians, as they inconſiſtently affect to call themſelves, ſhould take ſo much Pains to laugh at, and redicule, that Book of Divine Revelation, the Bible. Many of them have not Learning enough to examine the Languages in which it was originally wrote; and they want Candor and Good-Senſe to make proper Allowances for the unavoidable Imperfections of a literal Tranſlation; for Diſtance of Time, and the different Manners and Cuſtoms which prevailed; and for a great Variety of Circumſtances to us unknown, and which are ne-

ceſſary

ceſſary to be known, in order to a full and complete Underſtanding of the Sacred Writings.

Others there are, who, though perhaps not unſkilled in the original Languages of the Old and New Teſtament, yet forbear to give them a ſober, candid, and ſerious Examination. They will read Plays, Novels, and Romances; they will read profane Hiſtory, Lives, and Memoirs, and enter into the very Spirit of them: No Time is too much; no Pains too great. And if there are any indelicate Expreſſions, or unbecoming Sentiments, in the Authors with which they happen to converſe, they will retail them out upon every Occaſion, with all the Fire of Originals. They are pleaſed, they are delighted, they are ſatisfied.

But if theſe ſame Perſons happen to take the Bible in Hand, that Treaſure of Holy Inſtruction, and True Conſolation, what dull, melancholy Work it is! How ſtupid, how drowſy, how feeble they grow! It is laid aſide as dark, myſterious, and unintelligible. And they are ready to bleſs themſelves, when they can get into more cheerful Company.

Now,

Now, my Brethren, it is the Glory of the Bible to have ſuch Adverſaries as theſe. Their Diſapprobation is no ſmall Praiſe. It requires in all the True Diſciples of Chriſt, in all Real Chriſtians; and that too upon Pain of eternal Damnation; ſuch Purity, ſuch Self-denial, ſuch Mortification; ſuch inward Holineſs, and ſuch outward Obedience, that, in the Opinion of many, 'tis a Yoke too heavy to be born. Hence ſome reject the Bible entirely: Others refine its Precepts and Doctrines, into a Syſtem of little better than Heathen-Morality. And no Wonder: One Man is addicted to Drunkenneſs; another to Whoredom; another to Covetouſneſs; another to Pleaſure; another to Pride and Vanity of Underſtanding; and another to Careleſneſs and Diſſipation: They read the Bible: They ſee theſe, and all ſuch like Sins declared to be abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Favor of of God: They muſt therefore neceſſarily take one or other of theſe Methods: Either look upon it as an unreaſonable Reſtraint upon the natural Liberties of Mankind, and ſo to be renounced as a Syſtem of ſpiritual Tyranny: Or,

having

having their Minds engroſſed with worldly Cares and Pleaſures, they muſt put off ſuch ſerious Matters to ſome future, and more convenient Seaſon: Or, they muſt grant that it is indeed the Word of God; and endeavor with all their Powers to believe, and live, and obey, as the bible requires. Then, and then only, they can read it with Pleaſure and with Comfort. Then, and then only, they can have a rational, well-grounded Aſſurance, Repoſe, and Satisfaction.

Much might be ſaid, my Brethren, in Favor of this invaluable, though too frequently diſpiſed Book, the Bible. It comes recommended to us by all the Marks of Divinity, of which any Thing of the Kind is capable. It carries the Stamp of Heaven upon it. Its Predictions, its Miracles, its Doctrines, its Language; all proclaim its Divine Original. But inſtead of inſiſting upon Evidence of this Kind, permit me to lay before you the Sentiments and Opinions of ſome of the moſt illuſtrious Perſons, who have had Occaſion to ſpeak, or write upon the Subject. This Kind of Evidence ſeems better a-

dapted

dapted to the Capacities of the Bulk of the Congregation; and, if I miſtake not, will afford a Degree of Conviction, to the ſerious and unprejudiced Mind, not eaſy to be reſiſted. *

" *Who hath Ears to hear, let him hear*".

JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of Man, commands, " Search the Scriptures; for in them, ſays he, ye think ye have eternal Life; and they are they which teſtify of me". And after his Reſurrection, " Beginning at *Moſes*, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto his Diſciples in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himſelf; " and aſſured them at the ſame Time, " That all Things were to be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of *Moſes*, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms concerning him". Taking for granted the Truth of the New Teſtament, as we do at preſent, theſe Teſtimonies by Jeſus Chriſt, are a perfect

* If any of my Readers wiſh to ſee Evidence of a different Kind for the Truth of the Bible, they may be amply ſatisfied by reading diligently the following Books: (viz) *Baxter*'s Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion: *Grotius* on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion: Biſhop *Newton* on the Prophecies: *Butler*'s Analogy: *Clarke* on the Truth and Certainty of the Chriſtian Revelation: And *Doddridge's* three Sermons on the Evidence of the Goſpel.

Eulogium upon the Old. They are more than Ten Thouſand Witneſſes of an inferior Kind.

MOSES, the moſt antient of Hiſtorians, and wiſeſt of Legiſlators, thus enjoins every Individual of the Jewiſh Nation: " Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might. And theſe Words which I command thee this Day ſhall be in thine Heart. And thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. And thou ſhalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hand, and they ſhall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes. And thou ſhalt write them upon the Poſts of thy Houſe, and on thy Gates".

Such were the Injunctions, ſuch the Commands, which *Moſes*, the Man of God, laid upon the Jews. And we need but read their Hiſtory to ſee, That when they obeyed theſe Injunctions, they were happy and proſperous:

When

When they disobeyed, they were wretched, and sold into the Hands of their Enemies.

GOD ALMIGHTY HIMSELF, after the Death of *Moses*, in this animating Manner addresses his valiant Successor: " Be strong and of a good Courage; for unto this People shalt thou divide for an Inheritance the Land which I sware unto their Fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very couragious, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law, which *Moses* my Servant commanded thee: Turn not from it to the Right Hand, or to the Left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: For then thou shalt make thy Way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good Success".

Here, you see again, we are in the most positive Manner assured by the Lord *Jehovah* Himself, That the whole Success of *Joshua*'s Arms depended upon his paying an implicit Regard

to the Law of God, as contained in the Five Books of *Moſes*. *Joſhua* was obedient; he did as the Lord commanded him; and he ſucceeded, he flouriſhed, he proſpered, wherefoever he went. "There was not a Man able to ſtand before him all the Days of his Life: As God was with *Moſes*, ſo he was with him: He did not fail him, nor forſake him".

KING DAVID alſo, the greateſt of Warriors, the ſublimeſt of Poets, the moſt ſeraphic of Muſicians, thus ſweetly ſings: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the Simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart: The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be deſired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold: Sweeter alſo than Honey, and the Honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy Servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great Reward".

If you look into the 119 Pſalm, we ſhall find

it

it intirely a Collection of Verſes and Sentiments in Praiſe of the Law, the Statutes, the Precepts, the Teſtimonies, the Commandments, the Judgments, and the Ordinances of God.

The thirteenth Part is beautiful: "O how I love thy Law! It is my Meditation all the Day. Thou through thy Commandments haſt made me wiſer than mine Enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more Underſtanding than all my Teachers: For thy Teſtimonies are my Meditation. I underſtand more than the Antients; becauſe I keep thy Precepts. How ſweet are thy Words to my Taſte! Yea, ſweeter than Honey to my Mouth. Through thy Precepts I get Underſtanding: Therefore I hate every falſe Way".

THE GREAT APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES gives us his Opinion of the Bible in theſe ſtrong Expreſſions: "All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God; and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good Works". And again: "Let the Word of Chriſt dwellin you richly, in all Wiſdom". St.

St. PETER likewiſe, the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, informs us, " That the Prophesy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of GOD ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt".

It may be objected: "Theſe Teſtimonies in "Favor of the Bible, are all taken from the Bible "itſelf, and are not therefore, in this Caſe, to "be depended upon".

True; Unbelievers may argue thus if they pleaſe; may call them ſuſpected Witneſſes, and not altogether to be relied upon when they bear Witneſs to themſelves: But we have a Cloud of Witneſſes to the ſame Thing, moſt of which are not liable to the ſame Objection.

In the Sixth and Seventh Articles of Religion (to the Truth of which all the Archbiſhops, Biſhops, and Clergy of *England* and *Ireland* have ſubſcribed) our pious Reformers have given it as their Opinion, " That the Holy "Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament "contain all Things neceſſary to Salvation, and "that the Old Teſtament is not contrary to "the New".

The

The first Homily is all to the same Purpose, containing a warm Exhortation to the reading and studying of the Holy Scriptures.

"Unto a Christian Man there can be No-
"thing either more necessary or profitable than
"the Knowledge of Holy Scripture; for as
"much as in it is contained God's true Word,
"setting forth his Glory, and also Man's Duty.
"And there is no Truth or Doctrine necessary
"for our Justification and everlasting Salvati-
"on, but may be drawn out of that Fountain
"and Well of Truth. Therefore as many as
"are desirous to enter into the right and per-
"fect Way unto God, must apply their Minds
"to know the Holy Scripture; without which,
"they can neither sufficiently know God and
"his Will, neither their Office and Duty. And
"as Drink is pleasant to them that be dry,
"and Meat to them that are hungry; so is the
"reading, hearing, searching and studying of
"Holy Scripture to them that are desirous to
"know God and themselves, and to do his Will.
"And those Persons only do loath and abhor
"the heavenly Knowledge and Food of God's
Word,

" Word, that are ſo drowned in worldly Buſi-
" neſs and Vanities, that they neither ſavor
" God, nor any Godlineſs: For that is the
" Cauſe why they deſire ſuch Vanities, rather
" than the true Knowledge of God.

" As they that are ſick of a Fever, whatſoe-
" ver they eat, though it be never ſo pleaſant in
" itſelf, yet it is bitter and nauſeous to them
" as Wormwood; not becauſe of the Bitterneſs
" of the Meat; but becauſe of the corrupt and
" bitter Humor that is in their own Mouth
" and Stomach: Even ſo is the Sweetneſs of
" God's Word bitter, not of itſelf, but only un-
" to them that have their Minds corrupted with
" long Cuſtom of Sin, and Love of the World.
" Therefore, forſaking the corrupt Judg-
" ment of carnal and worldly-minded People,
" let us reverently hear and read Holy Scrip-
" ture, which is the Food of the Soul. For in
" Holy Scripture is fully contained, what we
" ought to do, and what to avoid; what to be-
" lieve, what to love, and what to expect in
" the World to come".

Such are the Sentiments, and ſuch the Ex-

hortations

hortations of *Cranmer*, *Latimer*, *Ridley*, and others, who ſealed the Truth with their Blood. Such are the Sentiments, the openly avowed Sentiments, of all the Clergy of the Church of *England* at this Time, and in every Age ſince the Reformation from Popery. Nay, ſuch likewiſe are the Sentiments of the Church of *Scotland*, and of all the Proteſtant Churches, of every Sect and Denomination, throughout the known World. However they may differ in other Matters of leſs Importance, they all agree in this, with one Mouth, with one Conſent, That the Bible contains the Mind and Will of God; that we ought to be ruled and guided by it in all our Conduct; that we are to be judged by it at the laſt Day; and that we are to be eternally happy, or eternally miſerable, according as the Bible acquits, or condemns us. I ſay, All Nations, profeſſing Chriſtianity, agree in this, That the Bible is the Word of God; that we ought to be ruled and governed by it here; that we muſt be tried and judged by it at the laſt Day; conſequently, that it is of infinite and everlaſting Importance to every Soul of us, whether

ther it is for us, or againſt us; whether it aquits, or condemns us. This is no Principle peculiar to a Churchman, Methodiſt, or Diſſenter; 'tis a Principle common to them all: They are all agreed in this fundamental Point, The Bible is the Word of God: By its Deciſion we muſt ſtand, or fall.

It may be again objected, "That the Clergy "in all Ages and Nations have agreed to eſta- "bliſh the Bible as the Word of God from lu- "crative Views; for the ſake of the Emoluments "ariſing from the Church; and the Eaſe and "Honor conferred on that Order of Men".

It is but too true, that Prieſt-Craft has not a little prevailed in every Nation and Period of the Chriſtian Church. Men of corrupt Minds, and covetous Diſpoſitions, have crept into the ſacred Office for the Sake of the Loaves and the Fiſhes. "Put me into the Prieſt's Office that I may get a Piece of Bread", has too often been the Cry, to the great Scandal and Diſgrace of the Church of Chriſt. But this has not always been the Caſe. Thouſands and Ten Thouſands there have been, who have un-

dertaken

dertaken the laborious Task of Preaching the Gospel from generous and disinterested Motives; and who would not contribute to maintain a System of spiritual Tyranny for all the Gold of the *Indies*.

But supposing this was not the Case; are there none besides the Clergy, who have asserted, proved, and gloried in the Divine Authority of the Bible? Yes: To the Confusion of Immorality, Vice, and Infidelity, many are the Champions of the Cause of God and Truth, who have had no worldly Interest to advance thereby. What if a *Bolingbrooke* and a *Hume* were Infidels? Shall their Sophistry and false Wit, overturn the eternal Truths of the Law and Gospel? And what if the Bible is reviled by some amongst us, and neglected by others: Is it therefore false, and not worthy of our serious Regard and highest Estimation? It condemns their loose, licentious Principles; it condemns their dissolute, immoral Conduct; and therefore, at all Adventures, it must, if possible, be driven out of the World. "They love Darkness rather than Light": Why? "Because their Deeds are evil".

 But

But notwithſtanding all the Wit and Sophiſtry ſo plentifully made uſe of upon this Occaſion; it will be found true at laſt, when Wit will not ſtand for Reaſon, nor Sophiſtry for Argument, " That he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; he that believeth not ſhall be damned".

We ſaid there were many others beſides the Clergy, who had aſſerted, proved, and gloried in the Bible as the Word of God. Take the following Inſtances:

Mr. *Lock* obſerves, " That Morality be-
" comes a Gentleman, not barely as a Man, but
" in order to his Buſineſs as a Gentleman; and
" the Morality of the Goſpel of Chriſt, ſays he,
" doth ſo excel that of other Books, that to
" give a Man a full Knowledge of true Mora-
" lity, he need read no other Book but the New
" Teſtament".

In another Place He has theſe remarkable
" Words: " The Credit and Authority our Sa-
" viour and his Apoſtles had over the Minds
" of Men, by the Miracles they did, tempted
" them not to mix any Conceits, any wrong

"Rules

" Rules, any Thing tending to their own By-
" Intereſt, or that of a Party, in their Morality.
" No Tang of Prepoſſeſſion or Fancy; no Foot-
" ſteps of Pride or Vanity; no Touch of Oſ-
" tentation or Ambition appears to have a
" Hand in it. It is all pure, all ſincere; No-
" thing too mnch, Nothing wanting; but ſuch
" a complete Rule of Life as the wiſeſt Men
" muſt acknowledge, tends entirely to the Good
" of Mankind; and that all would be happy,
" if all would practice it".

It is ſaid of the great Sir *Iſaac Newton*,
" That though he entered farther into the
" Depths of Philoſophy, than ever Mortal did
" before him, yet he accounted the Scriptures
" of God to be the moſt ſublime Philoſophy".

That great Scholar, *Salmaſius*, after all his Study and Labor, went out of the World with this ſorrowful Reflection: " Oh! I have loſt a
" World of Time: Of Time the moſt precious
" Thing in the World; whereof had I but one
" Year longer, it ſhould all be ſpent in *David*'s
" Pſalms, and *Paul*'s Epiſtles".

Shall we produce any more Teſtimonies to the ſame Purpoſe? The

The Honorable *Robert Boyle*, that Truly Christian Philosopher, stiles the Bible, "That Matchless Book": And says, "It needs but to be "sufficiently understood, to be highly venerated; and that it is impossible we can study it "too much, or esteem it too highly".

Take the Opinion of Mr. *Selden* likewise. He was one of the greatest Scholars of the Age in which he lived, and had made one of the most valuable Collections of Books and Manuscripts in *Europe*; and yet he professed to Archbishop *Usher*, a little before he died, "That "notwithstanding he had possessed himself of "such a vast Treasure of Books and Manuscripts, yet he could rest his Soul on none "but the Scriptures".

Shall we then be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? Shall we be afraid openly to acknowledge our Belief in, and Dependance upon, that gracious and glorious Scheme of Redemption and Salvation, which it exhibits? What though the Redeemer, in whom we make our Boast, was the Son of a poor Virgin? What though a Stable was his House and a Manger

his

his Cradle? What though he earned his Bread by the Sweat of his Brow, and had not where to lay his Head? What though he was dispised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief? What though he was persecuted, betrayed, condemned, and forsaken of all his Friends; and even of his God and Father too? What though he was scourged, buffited, crowned with Thorns, and crucified as a Slave and a Malefactor? Yet notwithstanding all these ignominious Circumstances, so invincible is the Evidence for the Divine Authority of his Doctrine and Mission, That "we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Yea, we glory in it, and count all Things but Loss and Dung that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having our own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith".

He was born of a poor Virgin it is true: But then the God of Heaven was his Father and his Friend. A Stable was his Dwelling where Oxen fed on Hay: But to this he con-

descended

deſcended to procure eternal Manſions for us in the Regions of Bliſs and Immortality. He had none of the Sons of Grandeur to welcome his Approach into the World: But an Archangel foretold; an Hoſt of Angels celebrated; and a Star was commiſſioned to point out the Place of his Birth! He was deſtitute of Habitation, Riches, and Honors: Even the pious Women, his Followers, adminiſtred to his daily Neceſſities: Notwithſtanding this, He had an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. All Nature was at his Command. He fed the Hungry, healed the Sick, caſt out Devils, and raiſed the Dead. No Pomp of Attendance was there to commit his precious Body to the ſilent Grave: But then all Nature was moved at the Sight: The Sun withdrew his Shining; the Rocks rent; the Dead aroſe; and Angels left their golden Harps unſtrung, entered the Grave, and attended him among the Dead. In ſhort: Though he was lower than the loweſt of the Sons of Men; yet was he, "The Mighty God, The Everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace; The Creator, The Preſerver, and The Redeemer of the World".

Well

Well might the Apoſtle ſay, "I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt". Why was he not aſhamed? "Becauſe", ſays he, "it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth". A Divine Energy had been exerted in Conſequence of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, and the Apoſtle had experienced its transforming Influence. Hence he glories in the Goſpel as the Means of his Salvation.

Whether what has been ſaid will have any Effect in making you prize, and more highly eſteem the Book of God, I know not. This however we know, You will be happy in Proportion as you love, honor, read, ſtudy and obey it. In Theory, I believe, the Generality of us entertain a very high Opinion of the Bible: But is That all that's required? Has it a Practical Influence alſo upon us? Do you make it the Study of your Life, to know, and do the Will of God as therein contained? Is the Goſpel become the Power of God unto your Converſion and Salvation? Notwithſtanding all your Profeſſions of Faith in Chriſt, are you not living in the allowed Tranſgreſſion of his ſacred

Laws? Does not That Gospel, of which you say you are not ashamed, condemn you? Alas, Alas! "Why call ye Christ, Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which he says"? Be assured, it is not every one that makes great Professions of Religion; that talks of inward Joys and Sins forgiven, that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but they, and they alone, who Steadily, Regularly, and Uniformly, DO the Will of GOD, as contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Well, Christians; you have seen what are the Sentiments and Opinions of those Persons, in different Ages of the Church, who have been most worthy of Credit and Regard, concerning the Inspired Volume.

GOD HIMSELF commands *Joshua* to read and meditate upon his Law, by Day and by Night.

JESUS CHRIST has left upon Record, that we must, if we value eternal Life, search, examine, and scrutinize the Scriptures.

MOSES, DAVID, PETER and PAUL, have all agreed that the Bible is the Food of the Soul, the Bread of Life; and that whosoever

ſoever reads, hears, ſtudies and obeys That Word, ſhall live forever.

OUR PIOUS REFORMERS, who ſealed the Truth with their Blood: All the Clergy of the Church of *England*: Nay, all the Clergy in all Ages and Nations, of every Sect and Denomination, though they differ ever ſo widely in other Matters, yet agree in this, That the Bible is to be received as the Word of God; the Book by which we are to be judged at the laſt Day.

PRIVATE PERSONS, of the ſtricteſt Integrity, the greateſt Abilities, and the freeſt from Enthuſiaſm and Prieſt-Craft, have examined the Matter with the utmoſt Impartiality and Care; andthey ſtill agree, The Bible is attended with the moſt invincible Evidence, of which the Subject is capable, that it is, The Word of God.

I beſeech you then, Sirs, be not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Mind not the Cavils of a few pretended Rationaliſts. Look at their Lives and Conduct, and you will ſee the Reaſon why they endeavor to miſrepreſent and cry down the Bible. It is their Intereſt; for if it is true, they are well aware, they cannot e-

ſcape the Damnation of Hell. Regard them not therefore; but laying aſide all unneceſſary Cares and Concerns, betake yourſelves to read, ſtudy and meditate upon, the Word of God. Its Promiſes are large and full; its Threats infinitely awful; and its Precepts divinely pure. Study to conform your whole Life to its Directions. Jeſus Chriſt you will find to be the Sum and Subſtance of it; the *Alpha* and *Omega*; the *Beginning* and the *End*. His Obedience and Sufferings are therein repreſented as the alone meritorious Cauſe of a Sinner's Salvation. His Death the Ranſom of the World. Faith is repreſented as an Hand, or Inſtrument, with which to lay hold on, or receive, the Merits of the Redeemer: And Duty, Love, and Gratitude, as uniting their joint Influence, to produce future Obedience. The Holy Spirit is repreſented as the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood; and, at the ſame Time, as the ſole Author of Converſion, Regeneration, Repentance, Faith and Holineſs.

O that we could prevail with you, my Brethren, to ſet about reading the Bible with a becoming

coming Serioufnefs and Attention: Sin would flee before you, "and we fhould fee *Satan* fall from Heaven as Lightning". It is the Devil's Artifice to keep the Bible from the Common People. He knows, he well knows, that his Kingdom cannot ftand, if Mankind in general could be prevailed upon to ftudy and regard the Sacred Writings. O therefore get Bibles; Young and Old, get Bibles. Read them with humble, earneft Prayer to God for the enlightening Influences of his Holy Spirit to enable you to underftand them. Read to practice; read to obey. Read to mend the Heart; not merely to fill the Head. There; there you will find eternal Torments; endlefs Horror and amazing Woe, laid up for the Drunkard, the Whoremonger, the Swearer, the Extortioner, the Unjuft, the Covetous, the Proud, the Unconverted. There you will difcover, that the True Chriftian is a very different Character from what the World generally calls, "A Good Sort of Man". According to the Bible, The True Chriftian is poor in Spirit; meek and lowly in Heart: He mourns under a Senfe of

his

his Imperfections; he hungers and thirſts after Righteouſneſs; he is merciful; he is peaceable; he is pure in Heart: He ſeeks in the firſt Place, and above all other Things, the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof; and having his Treaſure in Heaven, his Heart, his Affections, his Deſires, are there alſo. He is diligent in Buſineſs; yet anxiouſly careful for Nothing. He has been converted from the Error of his Ways: He has experienced "a Death unto Sin, and a New Birth unto Righteouſneſs". He believes in Chriſt; reſts his Soul upon Him, and upon Him alone, for Salvation and Acceptance with God; and he is holy in all Manner of Converſation.

The True Chriſtian is no Drunkard; no Swearer; no Sabbath-Breaker; no Whoremonger; no Extortioner; no Liar and Slanderer; no Backbiter; no Evil Speaker: Theſe, with many other ſuch like, the Bible abſolutely declares to be inconſiſtent with the Character of a Chriſtian, and with a State of Favor and Acceptance with God.

But, are we all ſuch Chriſtians? Are not ſe-

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veral of you Gentlemen of the Club, in particular, guilty of many wicked Practices? Are not Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Whoredom, and ſuch like Crimes, the very Things in which you glory? Yet, does not your 18th. Article ſay, That no ſcandalous Perſon ſhall be admitted, or continued in your Society? Now is not a common Drunkard, a prophane Swearer, and ſuch like, a ſcandalous Perſon? And if you have ſuch Perſons among you, does it not become the Clerk, Warden, and ſtewards, to enquire into the Matter, and to exclude ſuch ſcandalous Members? Want of Diſcipline is the Ruin of all Societies. I beſeech you therefore, if you wiſh to ſee your Society flouriſh and proſper, put your Laws in Execution. Encourage the good, reprove the bad, and exclude the ſcandalous Members: So ſhall you grow and increaſe, and the Bleſſing of God will be upon you.

But, O Sirs! I would gladly recommend the Goſpel of Chriſt to your ſerious Notice and Regard. You are careful, you are laudably careful, to make Proviſion for your Bodies: Be not leſs careful concerning your immortal Part.

A Stock you are laying up againſt Sickneſs and Death: O lay up a Stock alſo againſt Judgment and Eternity: Then, then all human Expedients will fail; and they, and they alone, who are Chriſtians indeed, ſhall find Salvation with God. "Lay not up then for yourſelves Treaſures upon Earth, where Moth and Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and ſteal: But lay up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal. Dare to be ſingularly virtuous: Run counter to a vain, infatuated World: Heaven will make Amends for all your Trials here below. "Jeſus, will preſent you faultleſs before the Throne of God, and we ſhall ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that ſitteth on the Throne ſhall dwell among us. We ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more"; neither ſhall the Wicked any more annoy us. "For the Lamb which is in the Midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed us, and lead us unto living Fountains of Waters; and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes. Fight then the good Fight of Faith; lay hold on eternal Life".

"Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the Only Wiſe God, be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen".

The OFFICE and DUTY of a MINISTER of the GOSPEL:

A

SERMON

First preached, and now publiſhed,

With Deſign

To obviate ſome Objections

Made to the AUTHOR

For uſing too much Diligence

In the WORK of the

MINISTRY.

" I neither envy nor diſpiſe any that are of the ſame Function with me. Nay, I know many among the Clergy to whom I think myſelf unworthy to do the meaneſt Service. But I know many likewiſe, whoſe Converſation is not at all conformable to the Pattern Chriſt hath ſet us. And for thoſe I heartily pray that GOD would ſhew them the Things that belong to their eternal Peace. Neither is my Heart in the leaſt incenſed againſt them that moſt unjuſtly ſlander and reproach me. But I compaſſionate them, ſince we muſt all one Day appear before the ſame Judge. For my Part I cannot call Black White; nor take him for a Follower of Chriſt, and a Pattern of his Flock, in whom I find Nothing of the Mind that was in Chriſt.

PROFESSOR FRANK.

A Prayer before Sermon.

"GRANT, O Lord, that all thoſe who de-
" dicate themſelves to the Service of thy
" Altar, may be inwardly moved by thy Holy
" Spirit to take upon them that ſacred Miniſ-
" tration; that their Conſciences may teſtify to
" them, that having engaged in this holy Call-
" ing, their chief Deſign is to ſerve and pro-
" mote thy Glory, and edify thy People. Grant
" that we may neither be led by Ambition nor
" Covetouſneſs; that neither the Honors, nor
" the Revenues that are annexed to our Profeſ-
" ſion, may have any Competition in our
" Minds with a mighty Zeal for thy Glory, and
" a Deſire to promote the Salvation of Souls.
" To this End, O Lord, grant that we may
" make thy holy Writ the chief Subject of all
" our Studies; that we may from thence in-
" ſtruct thy People committed to our Charge,
" and ſilence Gainſayers; that we may faithful-
" ly and diligently adminiſter thy holy Sacra-
" ments; that we may labor in Seaſon and out
" of Seaſon, by private and publick Admoniti-
" ons

" ons and Exhortations; that we may maintain
" Peace and Love among all Chriſtians, and
" frame ourſelves and all our Diſcourſes accord-
" ing to the Precepts and Doctrines of thy ho-
" ly Goſpel. Finally, O God, we beſeech Thee
" ſend down upon our Biſhops and Clergy, and
" all Congregations of Chriſtian People, the
" healthful Spirit of thy Grace; and that they
" may truly pleaſe Thee, pour upon them the
" continual Dew of thy Bleſſing. Grant this, O
" Lord, for the Honor of our Advocate and
" Mediator Jeſus Chriſt".

Our Father &c.

ISAIAH lxii. 6. 7.

I have ſet Watchmen upon thy Walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold their Peace Day nor Night: Ye that make Mention of the Lord, keep not Silence, and give him no Reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a Praiſe in the Earth.

BEAUTIFUL indeed is the Addreſs of the Evangelical Prophet in theſe Words; Firſt, to the Church; and then, to the Miniſters of the Church. To the Church he is communicating glad Tidings; "I have ſet Watchmen upon thy Walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold their Peace Day nor Night": To the Miniſters of the Church; "Ye that make Mention of the Lord, keep not Silence, and give him no Reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a Praiſe in the Earth".

Earth". As if he had ſaid; "O my People and Nation, of which Jeruſalem is my pleaſant Dwelling-Place, I have raiſed up, and ſet over you, Paſtors and Magiſtrates clothed with Righteouſneſs; Men, who will above all Things be careful to promote the Intereſt and Happineſs of my People; Men, who will never hold their Peace; but by Day will be inſtructing, exhorting, and warning; by Night interceding, and offering up Prayers and Supplications for the World in general; for the People committed to their Care in particular. Yes, O ye Prieſts, that make Mention of the Lord; ye Ambaſſadors of God; ye Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts, keep not Silence; cry aloud and ſpare not; give Almighty no Reſt, Eaſe, or Peace, by your Prayers and Entreaties, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem, his Church, a Name, and a Praiſe, and a Glory, throughout the whole Earth".

I have choſen theſe Words for a Text, becauſe it is our Deſign to ſpeak chiefly upon the Office and Duty of a Clergyman; not aiming hereby to depreciate any of our Brethren in Office

fice (for whom I have the moſt cordial Eſteem) but ſimply to lay before you the indiſpenſable Obligations we are under to a diligent Diſcharge of our Duty in the arduous Work of the Miniſtry. This is the more neceſſary, becauſe through our own Negligence, Indolence, or bad Examples, the Prieſt's Office is ſunk into general Contempt. Miniſters themſelves are looked upon as covetous, crafty, deſigning Men; as Men who ſay and do not; and who lay Burdens upon other Men's Shoulders, which they themſelves will not touch with one of their Fingers. Let thoſe who are guilty bear the Blame: But let not a whole Body of Men be condemned for the Sins and Failings of the Unworthy. Some there are whoſe Lives and whoſe Labors teſtify they are in earneſt. Some there are who dare to ſtand forth in the Cauſe of God and Truth, and ſtem the Torrent of Sin, Depravity, and Corruption. May the Number be abundantly increaſed. May Watchmen be ſet upon the Walls of our Jeruſalem, which will never hold their Peace Day nor Night, till God eſtabliſh, and till he make the Church of Chriſt to flouriſh

and

and bloſſom in all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, and to extend her Borders unto the Ends of the Earth.

JESUS CHRIST is the Great Author of the Goſpel Miniſtry. His Doctrine, and his Example, are allowed on all Hands to be the beſt Pattern for Chriſtians to follow. The only Sermon of any conſiderable Length he has left behind him, we have recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th, Chapters of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel. His Doctrine is comforting, cheering, animating. He inſtructs, he cautions, he warns. To the True Chriſtian he opens the Gate of Heaven. The ſelf-deceived Hypocrite, the openly Profane, and the lukewarm Formaliſt, he dooms to eternal Diſpair. Let us examine this inimitable Diſcourſe a little more minutely.

Multitudes of People are following the Redeemer from Place to Place. He aſcends a Mountain; ſits down; the People draw near: Silence being made, he opens his Mouth, and inſtructs the attentive Audience: "Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Bleſſed are they that Mourn; for they

ſhall

ſhall be comforted. Bleſſed are the Meek; for they ſhall inherit the Earth. Bleſſed are they who do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled. Bleſſed are the Merciful; for they ſhall obtain Mercy. Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart; for they ſhall ſee God. Bleſſed are the Peace-Makers; for they ſhall be called the Children of God. Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all Manner of Evil againſt you falſely for my Sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you".

The Divine Teacher goes on, and levels his Diſcourſe againſt a great Variety of Sins, which he knew the People to be guilty of. He warns them againſt the Doctrines of the Scribes and Phariſees; againſt Murder, Anger, and paſſionate Reſentment. Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, and profane Swearing, he expoſes as Sins, which will ruin and deſtroy the Soul. Render-

ing Evil for Evil; litigious Law-Suits, and warm Contentions, he aſſures us, are inconſiſtent with the Character of True Chriſtians.

We cannot go through the whole Sermon, it will take up too much of our Time; but would moſt heartily recommend it to your future and ſerious Conſideration. The Concluſion however we may obſerve is very awful and alarming: "Enter ye in at the ſtrait Gate: For wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat; becauſe ſtrait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.

"Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord! Lord! ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that DOTH the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven. Many will ſay unto me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have caſt out Devils? And in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity".

Now,

Now, ſays he, " Whoſoever heareth theſe Sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe Man, which built his Houſe upon a Rock: And the Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that Houſe; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a Rock. And every one that heareth theſe Sayings of mine, and doth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh Man, which built his Houſe upon the Sand: And the Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that Houſe; and it fell, and great was the Fall of it". That is: He whoſe Life, Conduct, and Character, is ſuch as I have now laid before you, ſhall moſt aſſuredly be ſaved: He whoſe Life, Conduct, and Character, is not ſuch as I have now laid before you, ſhall moſt aſſuredly be damned.

Such is the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt. But was his own Example agreeable to his Preaching? Was his Life unblamable, as his Precepts were pure? Yes: He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners. He was poor in Spirit; meek and lowly in Heart; a

Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief. He was merciful; he was a Peace-Maker; he was Pure in Heart. He was kind, gentle, friendly, compaſſionate. He was a ſevere Rebuker of Sin in others; yet upon proper Occaſions he was affable, free, cheerful and eaſy. Whole Days he ſpent in Faſting; whole Nights in Prayer. To do the Will of God was his Meat and his Drink. Yea, ſo zealous was he in preaching, and doing Good, that even his Friends thought him mad and out of his right Mind. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe amiable, theſe heavenly Qualities, he was perſecuted, he was reviled. His Character was traduced; his Doctrine perverted, miſrepreſented. He was buffited, ſcourged, condemned, crucified.

Such is the Doctrine, ſuch the Example, and ſuch the Treatment of the Saviour of the World!

Now I think you muſt allow, O Chriſtians, that the nearer any Miniſter of the Goſpel comes to theſe Doctrines, and this Example of Jeſus Chriſt, the more he ought to be eſteemed and regarded. But alas! Experience has in all

Ages

Ages ſhewed us quite the contrary. The Life and Doctrine of ſuch a Man are a continual Reproof to the Sons and Daughters of Mirth, Gaity and Pleaſure. The more holy any Man is, the more he is devoted to the Service of God, the more will his Conduct and Principles condemn the Cuſtoms and Maxims of the World. The more his Conduct and Principles condemn the Cuſtoms and Maxims of the World, the more will he be diſpiſed by the Men of the World. This Truth, this melancholy Truth, has been confirmed to us, not only by the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt; but likewiſe by thoſe of the Prophets, Martyrs, and Apoſtles; and by the Hiſtory of almoſt every zealous Chriſtian, who has eminently diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a warm and active Love for the Cauſe of the Goſpel.

Nay, *Socrates* himſelf, who was an Heathen Philoſopher, teaches us the ſame Doctrine. His Words are to this Purpoſe. "That Man muſt "undoubtedly be the moſt virtuous, upon whom "his Virtue, by its Perfection, draws the Envy "of all Men; inſomuch that he hath Nothing on his

"his Side, but his Conſcience; and ſees himſelf "expoſed to all Manner of Injuries, ſo as even "to be nailed to the Croſs, without his Virtue "being able to afford him the poor Aſſiſtance of "exempting him from ſuch a Puniſhment". Theſe are ſtrange Words in the Mouth of an Heathen! Would not one think that God Almighty had put this wonderful Idea of Religion into the Mind of this virtuous Philoſopher in order to have it made manifeſt in the Perſon of his Son? Does not this View of Religion, and the cruel Treatment the beſt of Men in all Ages have met with, prove to a Demonſtration, that the Righteous have another Glory, another Reſt, another Happineſs, ſuperior, far ſuperior, to all the Delights of this vain Scene of Things?

Marvel not therefore, my Brethren, nor be diſcouraged, if the World hate you: Ye know that it hated Chriſt before it hated you. If ye were of the World, and lived according to its Maxims and Cuſtoms, the World would love and careſs you; but becauſe ye are not of the World, but your Lives, Conduct, and Principles,

ples, are contrary to, and condemn the World, therefore the World hateth you.

The Office and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel is likewise admirably set forth in the Person and Doctrine of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. His three Epistles to Timothy and Titus are Directions how they must preach, and how they must labor, if they would approve themselves unto the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls. Let us see then what Advice he gives them.

To *Timothy*, who was a young Minister, he writes thus:

"A Bishop, or Overseer of Souls, must be blameless, vigilent, sober, of good Behavior, given to Hospitality, apt to teach; not given to Wine, no Striker, not greedy of filthy Lucre, but patient; not a Brawler, not covetous; grave, not double tongued; holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience".

This is what a Clergyman ought to be in the Opinion of St. *Paul*. And after having informed *Timothy* what a Minister of the Gospel ought to be, he exhorts him in the warmest

Terms

Terms to aim at that Character: "Be thou an Example of the Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity. Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine. Meditate upon theſe Things; give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy Profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto Thyſelf, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee".

The Apoſtle goes on ſtill farther in a moſt ſublime and ſtriking Manner:

"They that will be rich fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition. For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil: Which, while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many Sorrows. But thou, O Man of God, flee theſe Things; and follow after Righteouſneſs, Godlineſs, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekneſs. Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal Life. I give thee Charge, O *Timothy*, in the Sight of God, and

and of Jesus Christ, that thou keep this Commandment, without Spot, unrebukable, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, says he, I charge thee, once more, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the Word; be instant in Season, out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine".

Such is the Advice; such are the solemn Charges given to *Timothy*, and to every Minister of the Gospel.

But was the Apostle's own Example agreeable to this? Did he lay himself out in preaching the Gospel as he recommends, and exhorts others to do? Or was he in the Number of those full-fed Shepherds,

"Who, when they list, their lean and flashy Songs
"Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched Straw"?

No, my Brethren, you well know that he labored more abundantly than perhaps any other Man ever did. Take his own Words,

"In Labors more abundant; in Stripes above Measure; in Prisons more frequent; in

Deaths oft. Five Times of the Jews received I 40 Stripes ſave one. Thrice was I beaten with Rods; once was I ſtoned; thrice I ſuffered Ship-Wreck; a Night and a Day I have been in the Deep. In Journeyings often, in Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils by mine own Country-Men; in Perils by the Heathen; in Perils in the City; in Perils in the Wilderneſs; in Perils in the Sea; in Perils among falſe Brethren: In Wearineſs and Painfulneſs; in Watchings often; in Hunger and Thirſt; in Faſtings often; in Cold and Nakedneſs. Beſides thoſe Things that are without; that which cometh upon me daily, the Care of all the Churches".

Such were the Labors, the unparalleled Labors, of the great Apoſtle, St. *Paul*.

Take alſo the Opinion of an eminent and approved Biſhop of our own Church, who has wrote expreſsly upon the Duty and Office of a Miniſter of the Goſpel.

"A Clergyman, by his Character and De-
"ſign of Life, ought to be a Man ſeparated
"from the Cares and Concerns of this World,
"and

" and dedicated to the Study and Meditation
" of divine Matters. His Converſation ought
" to be a Pattern for others; a conſtant
" Preaching to his People. He ought to of-
" fer up the Prayers of the People in their
" Name, and as their Mouth to God. He
" ought to be praying and interceding for
" them in Secret, as well as officiating among
" them in Publick. He ought to be deſtribu-
" ting among them the Bread of Life, the
" Word of God; and diſpenſing among them
" the ſacred Rites, which are the Badges, the
" Union, and the Supports of Chriſtians. He
" ought to admoniſh, to reprove, and to com-
" fort them, not only by his general Doctrine
" in his Sermons, but from Houſe to Houſe;
" that ſo he may do theſe Things more home
" and effectually, than can be done from the
" Pulpit. He is to watch over their Souls, to
" keep them from Error, and to alarm them
" out of their Sins by giving them Warning of
" the Judgments of God; to viſit the Sick,
" and to prepare them for the Judgment and
" Life to come.

"A Clergyman ought to behave himſelf ſo "well, that his own Converſation may not on- "ly be without Offence; but it ought to be "ſo exemplary, that his People may have Rea- "ſon to conclude, that he himſelf does firmly "believe all thoſe Things which he propoſes "to them; that he thinks himſelf bound to "follow all thoſe Rules that he ſets them; "and that they may ſee ſuch a ſerious Spirit of "Devotion in him, that from thence they may "be induced to believe, that his chief Deſign "among them is to do them Good, and to "ſave their Souls.

"He muſt employ himſelf ſo well in his "private Studies, that from thence he may be "furniſhed with ſuch a Variety of lively "Thoughts, divine Meditations, and proper "and noble Expreſſions, as may enable him "to diſcharge every Part of his Duty in a "Manner worthy of God. He ought not on- "ly to abſtain from groſs Scandals, but keep "at the fartheſt Diſtance from them. Such "Diverſions as his Health may require, ought "to be manly, decent and grave. He ought

"to

" to avoid too much Familiarity with bad Peo-
" ple, and the squandering away his Time in
" vain and idle Discourse. His Cheerfulness
" ought to be frank; but neither excessive, nor
" licentious. His Friends and his Garden
" ought to be his chief Diversions. His Study
" and his Parish his chief Employments.

" A Clergyman ought to have in himself a
" deep Sense of the Truth and Power of Reli-
" gion. He must have a Life and Flame in his
" Thoughts. He must have felt himself, those
" Things which he intends to explain and re-
" commend to others. He must observe nar-
" rowly the Motions of his own Mind; that
" so he may have a lively Heat in himself
" when he speaks of them. He ought to
" preach in such a lively and sensible Manner,
" as that it may be almost felt he speaks from
" the Heart".

This is the Character of a true Minister of Jesus Christ, as drawn by the pious and learned Bishop of *Sarum*.

As we wish, O Christians, to give you just Ideas, as well concerning the proper Manner

of

of Preaching, as the Duty and Office of a Clergyman; that you may not through Ignorance commend what is wrong and improper, or condemn what is right and becoming; you will excuſe me if I treſpaſs a few Minutes longer upon your Time and Patience for this Purpoſe.

Preaching the Goſpel is undoubtedly of divine Appointment. Mankind being all by Nature dead and ſecure in Sin; thoughtleſs, careleſs, giddy; loſt in Buſineſs, Pleaſure and Amuſement; it is the Deſign of Preaching to awaken them to a Senſe of their Guilt and Danger; to point out to them a Method of Salvation, honorable for God, and ſafe for the Sinner; and to entreat them by all the Bowels of tender Compaſſion not to neglect their own Mercies. It is deſigned to reclaim Mankind; to make them juſt, good, holy, virtuous, happy. "'Tis to open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified by Faith that is in

Chriſt

Chriſt Jeſus". It is to make the Drunkard, ſober; the Whoremonger, chaſte; the Covetous, liberal; the Proud and High-Minded, humble, meek and lowly; the Careleſs, thoughtful, ſerious; the Idle and Indolent, active and diligent; the Wrathful and Paſſionate, mild and gentle as Lambs: It is to make the Extortioner and Unjuſt, refund their ill-gotten Gain; the Tradeſman, honeſt; the Maſter, kind; the Servant, faithful; the Huſband, loving; the Wife, ſubmiſſive; the Father, tender; the Child, obedient; and God in all Things to be glorified through Chriſt Jeſus. Or, in the fine Language of St. *Paul:* "The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World. Becauſe we are aſſured, that the great God, even our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, gave himſelf for us, with this expreſs and direct Deſign, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works".

This,

This, and this alone, is the true End and Design of Preaching. And That Minister is the best Preacher, by what Name soever he is distinguished and called, who is made most effectual for these invaluable Purposes. If Sinners are converted, Souls saved, and God glorified, by our Preaching, it is well: If not, we loose our Labor; our Hearers will die in their Sins; and if we have not made use of every Endeavor in our Power to prevent it, their Blood will be required at our Hands.

"Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them Warning from me. When I say unto the Wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not Warning; nor speakest to warn the Wicked from his wicked Way to save his Life: The same wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thine Hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his Wickedness, nor from his wicked Way, he shall die in his Iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy Soul".

That

That Manner of Preaching then, which is beſt calculated to anſwer theſe Ends; (viz) the Conviction, Converſion, Sanctification, and Salvation of the Hearers, muſt certainly be That, which Miniſters ſhould follow, and People approve.

Give me your Attention ſtill farther till we conſider the Manner of Preaching which others by Precept or Example have recommended.

If we may form any Judgment of Jeſus Chriſt's Manner from the Opinions of thoſe who heard him, and the Diſcourſes, which he has left upon Record for the Inſtruction and Salvation of the World, it ſeems to have been wonderfully ſtriking and pathetick: Grave, ſerious, ſimple, ſublime. "He ſpoke as one having Authority". The People flocked around him from all Quarters: "They hung upon his Lips": They were all Attention. Nay, even his Enemies being Judges, "He ſpake as never Man ſpake".

Agreeable to this moſt perfect Pattern for Preachers to follow, is the Advice of St. *Paul*

to *Titus*: "In all Things ſhewing thyſelf a Pattern of good Works: In Doctrine ſhewing Uncorruptneſs, Gravity, Sincerity: Sound Speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary Part, may be aſhamed, having no evil Thing to ſay of you".

Very judiciouſly has the learned and pious Biſhop before mentioned, treated upon this Subject. You will pardon the Number and Length of Quotations, as they ſeem to have greater Weight and Influence than any Thing that could poſſibly be advanced of private Authority; and as I would not wiſh you to imagine that I am advancing my own Sentiments merely; but the Sentiments of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; of all good Men in general, and of the Church of England in particular.

His Words are theſe:

"Care muſt be taken that the Application of "Sermons be uſeful and proper; that it make "the Hearers apprehend ſome of their Sins "and Defects, and ſee how to perform their "Duty; that it awaken them to it, and direct "them in it. It muſt be clear and ſhort; very

weighty.

weighty, and free of every Thing that looks
" like the Affections of Wit and Eloquence.
" Here the Preacher muſt be all Heart and
" Soul, deſigning the Good of the People. He
" muſt employ all his Eloquence in giving
" ſometimes ſuch tender Touches, as may ſoft-
" en; and deeper Gaſhes, ſuch as may awaken
" his Hearers. Such an Eloquence as makes
" the Hearers look grave, and as it were out
" of Countenance, is the propereſt. That
" which makes them look lively, and as it
" were ſmile upon one another, may be pretty;
" but it only tickles the Imagination, and
" pleaſes the Ear: Whereas that which goes to
" the Heart, and wounds it, makes the Hear-
" er rather look down, and turns his Thoughts
" inward, upon himſelf: For it is certain that
" a Sermon, the Concluſion whereof, makes
" the Auditory look pleaſed, and ſets them all
" a talking one with another, was either not
" right ſpoken, or not right heard; it has been
" fine, and has probably delighted the Con-
" gregation, rather than edified it. But that
" Sermon which makes every one go away ſi-

"lent and grave, and haſtening to be alone, "to meditate or pray over the Matter of it in "Secret, has had its true Effect".

To the ſame purpoſe are the Words of St. *Jerome* to *Nepotian:* "When you teach in the "Church, do not endeavor to draw Applauſe, "but rather Sighs and Groans from the Peo-"ple: Let their Tears praiſe you. The Diſ-"courſes of a Clergyman ſhould be full of the "the Holy Scripture. Be not a Declaimer, "but a true Teacher of the Myſteries of God".

A remarkable Inſtance of this Kind of Eloquence was the famous *French* Preacher *Pere Maſſillon.* "After having heard him, the Peo-"ple did not ſtop by the Way, to extol or to "criticiſe the Sermon: The Hearer retired "from him in awful ſolemn Silence, with pen-"ſive Air, with Eyes caſt down, with Recol-"lection ſtamped on the Countenance, bear-"ing away the Sting left by the Chriſtian O-"rator in the Heart". Hence, when *P. Maſſillon* had preached ſome Sundays before *Lewis* the 14th, King of *France*, the King addreſſed him in theſe remarkable Words: "My Father, I have

"heard

"heard many great Orators in my Chapel; "and have been very well ſatisfied with them: "But as to You, every Time that I have heard "You, I have been very much diſſatisfied "with Myſelf"! One knows not which to admire moſt; the Piety and good Senſe of the King; or the Abilities of the Preacher!

To produce many Inſtances of thoſe eminent Perſons, who have in their publick Miniſtrations proceeded with uncommon Succeſs, and everlaſting Advantage to the Hearers, upon the Principles above laid down, would take up too much of our Time, and weary your Attention. One however I cannot forbear mentioning, becauſe it contains an Example truly worthy of Imitation by all the Sons of Men.

"Dr. *Leighton*, ſays the ſame Biſhop, had "the greateſt Elevation of Soul, the largeſt "Compaſs of Knowledge, the moſt mortified "and heavenly Diſpoſition that I ever yet ſaw in "Mortal. He had the greateſt Parts, as well as "Virtue, the perfecteſt Humility I ever ſaw "in Man. He had a ſublime Strain in Preach-"ing, with ſo grave a Geſture, and ſuch a

"Majeſty

"Majesty both of Thought and Language, and "of Pronunciation, that I never once saw a "wandering Eye where he preached, and have "seen whole Congregations often melt into "Tears before him. I can say of him with "the greatest Truth, that in a free and fre-"quent Conversation with him for above 22 "Years I never knew him say an idle Word, "that had not a direct Tendency to Edificati-"on: And I never once saw him in any other "Temper, but that which I wished to be in, "in the last Moments of my Life".

To corroborate what has been already advanced, permit me to lay before you the solemn Engagement every Clergyman in the Establishment enters into when he is ordained.

The first Question the Bishop puts is this: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved "by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this "Office and Ministration, to serve God for "the Promotion of his Glory and the Edifying "of his People"?

The Person to be ordained answers, "I trust "so." The Bishop enquires again. "Will you "be

"be ready with all faithful Diligence to banish "and drive away all erroneous and strange "Doctrines, contrary to God's Word? and "use both publick and private Admonitions "and Exhortations, as well to the Sick as to "Whole, as Need shall require, and Occasi-"on shall be given"?

The Person answers, "I will, the Lord being my Helper".

The Bishop asks again: "Will you be dili-"gent in Prayer and in Reading of the Holy "Scriptures, and in such Studies as help to "the Knowledge of the same, laying aside the "Study of the World and the Flesh"?

The Person answers, "I will endeavor my-"self so to do, the Lord being my Helper".

Afterwards the following most awful and solemn Exhortation is given by the Bishop to the Ministers ordained.

"I exhort you in the Name of our Lord "Jesus Christ, that you have in Remembrance "into how high a Dignity, to how weighty an "Office and Charge ye are called. Ye are call-"ed to be Watchmen, Messengers, and Ste-

"wards

"wards of the Lord. Ye are called to teach "and to admonish, to feed and provide for, the "Lord's Family. Ye are called to seek for "Christ's Sheep that are scattered abroad, and "for his Children, who are in the Midst of "this naughty World, that they may be saved "through Christ for ever.

"The Church and Congregation whom you "must serve is the Spouse and Body of Christ. "And if it shall happen that the same Church, "or any Member thereof, shall take any Hurt "or Hinderance by Reason of your Negligence, "you know the Greatness of the Fault, and "also the horrible Punishment that will fol-"low. See therefore that you never cease your "Labor, your Care and Diligence, until you "have done all that lieth in you, to bring all "such as are committed to your Charge unto "that Agreement in the Faith and Knowledge "of God, and to that Ripeness and Perfect-"ness of Age in Christ, that there be no Place "left among you, either for Error in Religi-"on, or for Viciousness in Life".

Such are the solemn Vows every Clergyman takes

takes upon him when he is ordained. I don't know, my Brethren, what you may think concerning theſe Things. As to my own Part, I am ready to exclaim with St. *Paul*, "Who is ſufficient for theſe Things"? And I tremble for myſelf, "leſt after having preached the Goſpel to others, I myſelf ſhould be a Caſtaway".

We have laid the ſacred Duty and Office before you in this full, and perhaps tedious, Manner, in order to ſhew you that every Clergyman is bound by all poſſible Ties to be warm, zealous and active, in preaching the everlaſting Goſpel. We are bound by the Doctrine and Example of Jeſus Chriſt, the Judge of Quick and Dead: We are bound by the Doctrine and Example of all the Apoſtles: We are bound by the Opinions and Practices of all true Goſpel Miniſters: We are bound by our own moſt ſolemn Promiſes and Vows: We are bound by Love to God, to Chriſt, and our Fellow-Creatures: We are bound by the higheſt Degree of Self-Intereſt poſſible; for the Salvation of our own Souls

is at Stake. Theſe Things confidered, 'tis really amazing we are not Ten Thouſand Times more lively, more zealous, and more active.

" Awake my dormant Zeal! Forever flame
" With gen'rous Ardors for immortal Souls;
" And may my Head, and Tongue, and Heart, and All,
" Spend and be ſpent in Service ſo divine"

This, my Brethren, is our ſole Intention. Having ſuch illuſtrious Examples, and being bound in ſuch ſolemn Engagements, by the Grace of God, we will not keep ſilence, we will give him no Reſt, till this our Church and Jeruſalem ſhall become a Name and a Praiſe in the World.

" For this let Men revile my Name;
" I ſhun no Croſs, I fear no Shame;
" All hail, Reproach!

We have no other Deſign in preaching, we have no other Deſign in living, but to ſave our own Soul, and the Souls of them that hear us. Now Salvation conſiſts not merely in an Exemption from Sufferings, or a Redemption from future Torments; but in being delivered likewiſe from all thoſe Tempers and Diſpoſi-

tions,

tions, which are contrary to the Will, or Word of God; or to the Mind that was in Christ Jesus. "His Name shall be called Jesus, said the Angel, for he shall save his People from their Sins". Christ is the great Exemplar, or Pattern of a Christian. He not only "hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, but hath set us an Example that we should follow his Steps". And a most amiable Example it was!

In doing good, he was unwearied: In his Life and Actions, he was unblamable and inoffensive: Towards Distress and Misery, he was always compassionate. In his Conversation, he was holy; in his Sufferings, patient; in private Prayer and Praise, frequent; in publick Worship, zealous. In short: The Life of Christ comprehends the Whole of Gospel Obedience. And he has declared that we shall be judged at the last Day according to our Imitation of him in doing Good.

This then, O Christians, is the Picture we shall ever hold up for your Example and Imitation. So far as we resemble it, we are Christians: So far as we are contrary to it, we

partake of the Nature of the Spirits reprobate. "A true Chriſtian is the higheſt Stile of Man". He has ſublime Ideas of the Supreme Being, juſt Views of Duty, and a proper Temper and Conduct both towards God and towards Man. He is a conſtant and devout Worſhipper of the God of Heaven; a firm and ſteady Believer in his Son; and lives in humble Dependence upon the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit. He is juſt and liberal; temperate and ſober; tender and compaſſionate; meek and humble; gentle and peaceable, and in all Things conſcientious. Yes: The Goſpel of Chriſt, if it has a ſaving Effect upon us, will make us better Parents, better Children; better Maſters, better Servants; better Husbands, better Wives; more faithful Friends, more obliging Neighbors, more loyal Subjects.

This, my Brethren, this is what we want you all to become. Have you any Objection to ſuch a Character? Are we become your Enemy becauſe we tell you the Truth, and labor to advance the Kingdom of God among you. Imagine for a Moment that every Perſon

in

in this populous Place was the Chriſtian now diſcribed: What an happy People ſhould we be! We ſhould have a Paradice; we ſhould have a little Heaven upon Earth! Drinking, Gaming, vitious Pleaſure and Debauchery; Pride, Injuſtice, Evil-ſpeaking, Lying and Slandering; Deadneſs, Formality and Lukewarmneſs, together with all the long Catalogue of Hell-born Crimes, wou'd hide their impious Heads. Repentance, Faith, and Holineſs; Juſtice, Peace and Truth; Charity, Friendſhip and Benevolence; theſe, and ſuch as theſe, would flouriſh and bloſſom as the Roſe.

For this we will labor; for this we will ſtudy; for this we will preach; for this we will pray. By his Grace enabling us, we will give the Redeemer no Reſt, till he make this our Jeruſalem, this our Church, a Name and a Praiſe in the Earth. And when that happy Event is accompliſhed, we will contentedly take up the dying Words of good old *Simeon*: "Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant "depart in Peace; for mine Eyes have ſeen "thy Salvation".

The Harmony of the Divine Attributes in the Salvation of Man displayed:

A

S E R M O N.

" Mercy pleads, If Man be ruined, the Creation is in " vain: Juſtice pleads, If Man be not ſentenced, the Law " is vain. Truth backs Juſtice, and Grace abets Mercy. " What ſhall be done in this ſeeming Contradiction? Mer- " cy is not manifeſted, if Man be not pardoned; Juſtice will " complain, if Man be not puniſhed.

" An Expedient is found out by the Wiſdom of God to " anſwer theſe Demands, and adjuſt the Difference between " them. The Pleas of Juſtice are ſatisfied in Puniſhing, " and the Pleas of Mercy received in Pardoning. The Rights " of both are preſerved, and the Demands of both amicably " accorded in Puniſhment and Pardon, by transfering the " Puniſhment of our Crimes upon a Suerty; exacting a Re- " compence from his Blood by Juſtice, and confering Life " and Salvation upon us by Mercy, without the Expence of " one Drop of our own. Thus is Juſtice ſatisfied in its Se- " verities, and Mercy in its Indulgencies. Thus is God " righteous without being cruel, and merciful without being " unjuſt."

CHARNOCK.

The Prayer before Sermon.

O THOU that art the King eternal, immortal and invisible, vouchsafe to look down from Heaven, the Habitation of thine Holiness and Glory, upon us thine unworthy Servants. Thou hast been pleased to cause all holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning and Instruction; give us Grace so to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and the Comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life. Open the Eyes of all our Understandings to see, and know, and experience, the Truth as it is in Jesus. Dispel from our Minds the Clouds and Mists of Darkness, Ignorance, Error, and Delusion. Turn us, O turn us from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan unto God. Enable us to see, and ever to bear in Mind, That it will not profit us, if we should gain the whole World, with all its Riches, with all its Pleasures, and with all its Charms, if we loose our Souls, and are cast away. Graft

therefore, O Lord, in all our Hearts the Love of thy Name; increaſe in us true Religion; nouriſh us with all Goodneſs, and of thy great Mercy ever keep us in the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, in whoſe all-prevailing Name, and comprehenſive Form of Words, we further pray:

Our Father &c.

PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together: Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.

RIGHTLY to diſcover how much we are indebted to the Riches of Divine Grace, it is neceſſary we ſhould take into Conſideration what would have been the Condition of our World, without that Love of GOD, which was manifeſted to us by the Sending of Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis through a Want of due Attention to this, that the natural Powers of Man are frequently exalted at ſo extravagant a Rate, beyond all the Bounds of Truth; and the Aids and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, looked upon as unneceſſary in the Working out of our Salvation. But if we look back into the firſt Ages, and conſider what was the State of the World juſt before the Flood, when the Spirit of GOD ceaſed to ſtrive with Man, you will gain ſome obſcure Idea of what we ſhould have

have been, without Jesus, the Saviour, and the Spirit, the Sanctifier. To strengthen and confirm that Idea, cast your Eyes upon the Heathen Nations, of antient, or modern Times: Let your Thoughts range through the Woods of *America*, and the Wilds of *Africa*: These wretched Creatures are but too just Resemblances of what we should have been, without that Sun of Righteousness, who by his Word, Spirit, or Providence, enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World.

To make the Idea still stronger, and nearer the Truth of the Case, view in the Glass of the Gospel, the Condition of the Fallen Angels: They transgressed against the Sovran Ruler of the Skies: And what was the Consequence? They were thrown (to use the Words of *Milton*)

" They were hurl'd headlong flaming from th' etherial Sky,
" With hidious Ruin and Combustion, down
" To bottomless Perdition, there to dwell
" In adamantine Chains and penal Fire.

Or, in the infallible Language of Inspiration: " The Angels which kept not their first Estate,"

but

but left their own Habitation, God hath reſerved in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day".

Now, we have tranſgreſſed againſt the ſame Sovran Ruler: We have offended the ſame God: We have rebelled againſt the ſame Supreme Authority: Yet Mercy comes, unprevented, unimplor'd, unſought!

But let us imagine for a Moment that we had been left to the natural Conſequence of our Tranſgreſſions, as the Fallen Angels have been: Exclude from your Thoughts the very Notion of a Saviour; and we ſhall diſcover a Scene, horrid, and extremely awful to behold! A World of Rebels! Sinners from Generation to Generation! Hateful and hating one another! Helpleſs! Hopeleſs! Lingering out a wretched Life under all the Terrors of a guilty Conſcience! Dying! Yet dying to live for ever in Pain!

This would have been the Condition of our World in general, and of this Congregation in particular, had it not been for that Jeſus, who died to redeem it: And yet, be aſtoniſhed,

O Heavens! In this very World he is rejected and dispised!

The whole New Testament turns upon this Hinge. It supposes us to be lost, undone, ruined, guilty, fallen Creatures. It takes for granted; nay, it asserts in plain Terms, that the Wrath of God, by Nature, considered in and of ourselves, abideth on us; and that there is no escaping the Divine Condemnation but by believing in, and cordially embracing the Redeemer, as he is offered in the Gospel. Hence, Jesus Christ says of Himself; "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost: I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance: He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already". Upon this Principle proceeds the possitive Declaration of John the Baptist; "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life": But suppose any Man does not believe on the Son, what is to be the Consequence? "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him", St. *Paul* also to the

same

ſame Purpoſe aſſures us, "This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave Sinners". This was his Errand, his Deſign. It was the Whole of his Undertaking. For Guilt, not Innocence, the Saviour died. 'Twas That alone could juſtify his Death. And if this is not laid down as a firſt Principle, the whole Scheme of Salvation revealed in the Goſpel, muſt appear dark and unintelligible, if not totally unneceſſary.

"But, it may be ſaid, If the World was in "this loſt, ruinous Condition, why could not "God pardon the Sins of Men, and admit "them into Favor, without the Expence of his "Son's Blood? Why was it not done as a mere "Act of Grace, without any Satisfaction"?

If Men could have been pardoned and admitted into Favor without a Satisfaction, conſiſtent with the Honor and Dignity of the moral Perfections and Government of God; the eſſential Goodneſs of the Divine Nature leaves us no Room to doubt but it would have been done, without that amazing Scheme of Re-

demption and Salvation which the Gospel exhibits. God is not prodigal of his Gifts; much less would he be prodigal of the Sufferings and Death of his divinest, dearest Son. If all the Cattle on a Thousand Hills; if Thousands of Rams, or ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil; if our First-born could have satisfied for our Transgressions, or the Fruit of our Bodies for the Sin of our Souls; if the Cherubim and Seraphim, which adore and burn before the Throne of God; if any, or if all of these, could have paid the mighty Sum our Ransom demanded: Yea, if there had not been a real Necessity for an infinite Satisfaction to Divine Justice; not to *make* God propitious, or merciful (for that He is essentially) but to *make Way* for the honorable Exercise and Display of his pardoning Love and Mercy: I say, if there had not been a real Necessity for such a Satisfaction, we may be sure it would not have been required.

But since infinite Wisdom, in Concurrence with infinite Goodness, did really require that Jesus should give his Life a Ransom for many,

we

we may be very confident, that the Perfection of the Divine Nature and Government made it abſolutely neceſſary.

A private Perſon is at Liberty to forgive Injuries as often as he pleaſes; nay, it is his Duty ſo to do; and it is ſcarce poſſible to offend by an Exceſs of the generous Virtues of Mercy, Compaſſion, and Forgiveneſs: But a Magiſtrate muſt conſult, not merely the gentle Feelings of his own compaſſionate Breaſt; but the Honor and Dignity of his Office, Character, and Government. For a private Perſon to pardon Injuries, even beyond Seventy Times Seven, is Heroic, is God-like: But for a Magiſtrate to carry his Lenity to the ſame Extent, is Tameneſs rather than Benignity. No Government upon Earth could long ſubſiſt upon ſuch Principles of exceſſive Indulgence.

Apply this Obſervation to the Caſe before us, and you will ſee how neceſſary it is, that the ſupreme Magiſtrate of the Univerſe ſhould demand Satisfaction for the Diſhonor done to his Government by the Apoſtacy of Man. That Man ſhould be ſaved was not neceſſary;

Juſtice might have been ſuffered to take Place upon us. That God ſhould both be, and appear to be, holy and juſt, is abſolutely neceſſary. And this ought to be well conſidered by thoſe Perſons, who repreſent God as a Being of infinite Mercy and Compaſſion, to the Excluſion of his other moral Perfections; and hence take the Liberty of indulging themſelves in their audacious Sins. In ſhort: Moſt of the Errors in the Study of Theology, ariſe from conſidering God as the tender and indulgent Father of his Creatures, without reflecting that he is at the ſame Time, the moral Governor of the World. As He is the Father of his Creatures, He *muſt* be tender and compaſſionate: As He is the moral Governor of the World, He *muſt* render to every Man according to his Works; He *muſt* treat every intelligent Being, according to the Excellence, or Depravity, of its moral Character.

"But how is it conſiſtent with diſtributive "Juſtice, that Man ſhould ſin, and Jeſus die? "Is it not neceſſary in the very Nature of

"Things,

" Things, that the Soul that ſinneth ſhould " die, and not one that is innocent"?

If a Being can be found, who has a perfect Command over his own Life: If he willingly ſubſtitute himſelf in the Place of Sinners: If his Subſtitution will anſwer all the Ends of the Divine Government: And if God is pleaſed to accept ſuch Being in the Room and Stead of the Rebellious: Then it is no longer neceſſary Man ſhould be left to the dreadful Conſequences of his own Tranſgreſſion. But if ſuch a Being could not be found, it appears to us impoſſible that Man could be ſaved. For ſooner ſhall we be left to periſh, as the Fallen Angels, than Jehovah ſuffer his Laws, which are eternal in their Obligation, to be violated with Impunity.

" But ſing, O Heavens, and be joyful, O Earth, and break forth into Singing, O Mountains, for the Lord hath viſited and redeemed his People; he hath found a Ranſom". Jeſus is a Perſon every Way equal to the mighty Taſk. " He hath trodden the Wine-Preſs of his Father's Wrath alone, and of the People there was none with him. He is a Perſon, who

who hath Life in himſelf, even as the Father hath Life in himſelf". He willingly ſubſtituted himſelf in the Place of Sinners: "I come, ſays he, to do thy Will, O God; I am content to do it, yea, thy Law is within my Heart". His Subſtitution in the Place of Sinners gives a brighter and more illuſtrious Diſplay of the Perfection of the Divine Nature, and moral Government of God, than though Man in his own Perſon had endured the Penalty. And we are not left to conjecture whether the Plan is agreeable to the Father, ſince he more than once declared himſelf well pleaſed in the Undertaking of his Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed".

The World then in general, and We in particular, without a Saviour, are in a loſt, helpleſs, hopeleſs Condition. It was not conſiſtent with the Perfection of the Divine Nature and Government, to pardon and receive us to Favor without a Satisfaction. Jeſus is a Perſon every Way equal to the arduous Taſk. Willingly he undertook to redeem his People.

And

And the Father has declared himſelf well pleaſed in the Undertaking of his Son.

"It may be aſked how, or in what Manner, "did this adorable Saviour accompliſh the "Work of Redemption"?

In order to this, two Things were more eſpecially neceſſary. Man had tranſgreſſed the holy, juſt, and good Law of God: That therefore the Saviour muſt perfectly fulfil. Man had done an infinite Diſhonor to the Divine Nature and Government: An infinite Satisfaction, or a Satisfaction of infinite Value, muſt therefore be paid. For we muſt ever remember, that the Diſhonor done to any Governor by diſobeying his Laws, and treating his Authority with Contempt, is always in Proportion to the Eminence and Dignity of that Governor: And conſequently, the Satisfaction neceſſary to maintain the Honor of his Government, muſt alſo be in the ſame Proportion.

For Inſtance: If an Offence is committed againſt the Perſon of the King's Majeſty, the Crime is deemed High-Treaſon, and the unhappy

happy Perſon forfeits his Lands and Goods, together with Life. If the ſame Offence is committed againſt a private Character, the Perſon guilty endures an inferior Puniſhment.

But the Being againſt whom we have tranſgreſſed, is the great I AM; the infinite, ſelf-exiſtent, JEHOVAH; the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: Therefore the Satisfaction requiſite to maintain the Dignity of his Law and Government muſt likewiſe be an infinite Satisfaction.

Now in order to obey the Law for Man, and alſo to pay the Penalty incurred by our Tranſgreſſion, it was neceſſary the Saviour ſhould be in the ſame Nature. A Body therefore he took, and was in all Reſpects like unto us, Sin alone excepted. But to give an infinite Dignity to his Obedience and Sufferings, it was neceſſary he ſhould be a Being of infinite Majeſty and Glory. And to our unſpeakable Satisfacton, we are informed in the Volume of Divine Revelation, that the Redeemer of the World is God and Man united in one Perſon: Man, that he might obey and ſuffer: God

God, that his Obedience and Sufferings might become meritorious. For if he were a mere created Being, though of the moſt exalted Nature, his Obedience, however perfect, even according to the unchangable Nature of Things, was due, all due, for himſelf, and could not poſſibly be available for the ſmalleſt Demerit of the guilty Sons of Men.

Pertinently does the Apoſtle reaſon upon theſe two diſtinct Natures of the Redeemer, in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. After having aſſured us that Jeſus Chriſt, is, with Reſpect to his Divine, Pre-exiſtent Nature, " the Brightneſs of God's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon; and that He in the Beginning laid the Foundation of the Earth; that the Heavens are the Works of his Hands, and that He upholds all Things by the Word of his Power ", fails not to inform us, that all this Dignity, all this Honor, all this ſurpaſſing Majeſty and Glory, was vailed, was put off, was laid aſide. Why? Becauſe, if he would be a Mediator ſuch as Man ſtood in Need off, he muſt be clothed in the ſame identical Nature.

Not in the Divine ſimply; not in the Angelic; but in the very Nature and Image of thoſe Creatures he came to redeem. Hear the Apoſtle:

"Foraſmuch as the Children are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took Part of the ſame; that through Death he might deſtroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Life-Time ſubject to Bondage. For verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels; but he took on him the Seed of *Abraham*. Wherefore in *all Things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren*; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Prieſt, in Things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People: For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.

How the Divine and Human Natures of Jeſus Chriſt were united; or, in what Manner the three Perſons of the Godhead exiſt in Unity, are Depths unfathomable by the ſhort

Line

Line of human Reaſon. Nor is it inconſiſtent with rational Enquiry to receive theſe incomprehenſible Doctrines upon the Credit of the Revealer. That our Reaſon is not the univerſal Standard of Truth, is evident from a Variety of Experiments both in the natural and moral World. That there is a God, few, perhaps none, deny: Yet how he fills all Things with the Immenſity of his Preſence, who can tell? That the human Soul is united to the Body, we are convinced by daily Experience: Yet how it is united, or where it reſides, the Wiſeſt are at a Loſs to know. That the Blood circulates in our Bodies, as well upwards as downwards, contrary to all the Laws of Motion, we are well convinced: Yet Reaſon, "that Column of true Majeſty in Man"; Reaſon fails in its Inquiries, and reſolves it into the Will of the Creator. Before then we can conſiſtently act the Sceptic concerning the incomprehenſible Doctrines contained in the Scheme of Chriſtianity, we muſt renounce the name of Philoſophers, and reject the Syſtem of Nature. But the Thought be

far from us. For as we ſee many Things in the Works of Nature, which we are obliged to own as Matters of Fact; and concerning the Nature of which nevertheleſs our rational Powers can give no ſatisfactory Account: So in the Book of Divine Revelation we read of a Plurality of Perſons in the Godhead, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Reſurrection of the Dead, as ſo many Matters of Fact, which we are obliged to receive upon the Credit of the Revealer, and yet we are by no Means able, with all our boaſted Sagacity, to account for the Mode, or Manner of their Exiſtence and Operation. The Book of Nature has its Incomprehenſibles, as well as the Book of Revelation. The former, not even a Newton's Genius could explore; the latter, not an Angel's. Both with intenſe Deſire deſire to look into them. Both are loſt in Depths unfathomable. Both deſiſt, believe, love, wonder, and adore!

There is Nothing unreaſonable then in ſaying, That Jeſus Chriſt was God and Man united in one Mediator. For as the Apoſtle divinely

divinely argues, "Though he was above Law, yet was he made under the Law, that he might redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons".

Need we follow this Lamb of God through the various Scenes of Life and Death? Is it neceſſary to call to your Remembrance how he loved and obeyed; how he ſuffered and died? Would you know if his Obedience was perfect, and adequate to the Demands of the Law? Hear him challenging his very Enemies; "Which of you convinceth me of Sin"? Would you learn his own Sentiments concerning this Obedience? Hear him aſſert; "I do always the Things which pleaſe the Father". Are we deſirous of knowing the Opinion of inſpired Apoſtles? "He did no Sin, ſays One: He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled and ſeparate from Sinners, ſays another. Would you know if his Sufferings and Death were a Price adequate to the Diſhonor done to Divine Government by the Apoſtacy of Man? Let us conſider, in the Language of Inſpiration, the Dignity of his Perſon: "The

mighty

mighty God; the everlasting Father; the Prince of Peace: JEHOVAH our Righteousness; the Man who is GOD's Equal, and GOD's Fellow: He whom Angels worship and Seraphim adore! He who is the Image of the invisible GOD; the First-born of every Creature: He by whom all Things were created that are in Heaven, and that are on Earth, visible and invisible; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: He for whom, and by whom, all things were created: He who is before all Things, and by whom all Things consist: He who is over all, GOD blessed forever".

This, my Brethren, even this is the Being who undertook to redeem Mankind.

And if such was the Dignity of his Person, how amazing the Degree of his Humiliation!

"He made himself of no Reputation; he took upon him the Form of a Servant; he was made in the Likeness of Men; and being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross".

Let

Let us examine more particularly the various Steps of his painful Obedience. See how he weeps in Bethlehem; toils in Gethſemane; and groans on Calvery! What was the Cauſe? Sins of his own he'd none: Yet was he oppreſſed and afflicted till Sweat, like Blood, diſtilled from every Pore. Was it a Fore-ſight of his approaching Sufferings and Death? His Courage and Fortitude then ſunk beneath that of Martyrs; many of whom have ſung in the Midſt of Flames. No: 'Twas a Senſe of his awful Father's Indignation againſt Sinners, in whoſe Place he now appeared.

Follow the Royal Sufferer to the Judgment-Hall: There you ſee his Innocence acknowledged by his very Judge: Yet there alas! You ſee him condemned, ſcourged, buffited, ſpit upon! Follow him ſtill further, and you'll behold him crowned with ſharp, pungent Thorns; cloathed in a ſcarlet Robe; a mock Sceptre in his Hand; and ſarcaſtically ſaluted with, Hail, King of the Jews! But, "like as a Sheep before its Shearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his Mouth".

Accompany

Accompany this Man of Sorrows in your Thoughts to the curſed Tree: There you behold him hanging between Heaven and Earth, a Spectacle to the World, to Angels, and to Men! There you ſee the Prince of Peace in all the Greatneſs of Diſgrace! Hark! He cries, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me"? His very Murderers partake of his dying Prayers; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Again he cries aloud, "It is finiſhed":

"Salvation's glorious Work is done;
"The Battle's fought; the Victory's won"!

With this he breathed out his righteous Soul into the Hands of his everlaſting Father. The Sun, ſtruck with Amazement, withdrew his ſhining Rays! The Earth quaked; the Rocks rent; the Dead aroſe; all Nature felt the Stroke!

Say now, O Chriſtians, ſay if theſe Sufferings, conſidered in Conjunction with the Dignity of the Perſon ſuffering, contain not Balm enough to heal the Wounds of a dying World?

If

If a King was to ſtoop from his Throne, and give his Life a Ranſom for the nobleſt and braveſt of his Subjects; who would not be ſtruck with Amazement at the generous Deed? Surely then when the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ſtoops from the higheſt Heavens, and bleeds, not for faithful Subjects, but for the Rebellious; not for Angels, but for Men; even for us Men, and for our Salvation; what Heart but burns with Love! What Heart but glows with Gratitude! What Heart but vows eternal Obedience!

Go, Sirs; you that make a Mock at Sin, go and learn its Nature at the Croſs of Chriſt! See what it coſt to redeem One Soul! The only Inſtance of Pardon in our World is bought with the Blood of a Perſon higher than the Heavens! If then ſuch were the Sufferings of Him, who knew no Sin, but by Imputation, what ſhall the End be of daring Offenders? What ſhall the End be of thoſe, who obey not the Goſpel of Chriſt? "If theſe Things be done in the green Tree, what ſhall be done in the dry"? O the Miſery and Un-

happineſs of that Man, who rejects this laſt, beſt Gift of GOD to a guilty World! "Good had it been for him, if he had never been born"! Surely, my Brethren, none of you are in that wretched Number. O if you die, you die from between the extended Arms of Mercy! You die ſurrounded with Streams of Salvation! And your Doom will be no common Doom: Your Damnation no common Damnation. Hear the Declaration of an inſpired Apoſtle: "If we ſin wilfully after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful Looking-for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries". And again: "The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them *that know not GOD*, and that *obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord and from the Glory of his Power".

From what has been advanced it appears that a Way is laid open by the perfect Obedi-

ence

ence, and infinitely meritorious Sufferings of Jesus Christ, whereby God can pardon, and receive to Favor, Sinners of Adam's Race, and yet maintain the Honor and Dignity of his Law and Government. The moral Law has received a perfect Obedience; "it is magnified and made honorable", which it could never have been, if Man had not been redeemed. Justice has received an infinite Satisfaction, which Man could never have paid, without being for ever miserable. And God, the eternal God, appears in all his unclouded Majesty and Glory, as a Being of infinite Holiness, infinite Mercy, and infinite Justice. These seemingly jaring Attributes are no longer at Variance; but sweetly mingle their Beams to display the Glory of God, and promote the Happiness of Man. Jesus appears in all his Mediatorial Dignity. And Man, ungrateful Man, enjoys an unspeakable Salvation. So true it is, "That Mercy and Truth conspire together: Righteousness and Peace embrace each other", in the Redemption of the World by the Obedience and Sufferings of Jesus Christ. "God

is juſt, and yet the Juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus".

" But if this is the Caſe, what is there to " hinder us from ruſhing to Heaven promiſ- " cuouſly? If the Work is finiſhed, the Law " fulfilled, and the Ranſom paid, what can " prevent our taking Poſſeſſion"?

I anſwer: Our own Conſent is neceſſary. God will not ſave us whether we will or no. We are not Machines, but rational, accountable, Creatures. " He that believeth ſhall be ſaved": Yet notwithſtanding all that the Saviour has done and ſuffered, " he that believeth not ſhall be damned". And if this is duly conſidered, it will appear in the higheſt Degree reaſonable. For after all that has been ſaid, or all that can be ſaid upon the Nature of ſaving Faith; it certainly contains, includes, or implies, an hearty Approbation of the Way of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, as revealed in the Goſpel. I ſay, an hearty Approbation. For you are not to imagine, my Brethren, that Faith is merely an empty Notion ſwimming in the Head, that there once lived ſuch a Perſon

as

as Jesus Christ. No: It includes this and far more. It implies a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness; a total Renunciation of Self-Righteousness; and a firm Trust, Reliance, or Recumbancy upon the Redeemer in all his saving Offices.

And in what Breast soever this living Faith dwells; there it purifies the Heart; there it works by Love; there it overcomes the World; there it displays its inward Power, by its outward Operation: It counteracts all the Workings of Sin in the Members; it promotes Holiness in all Manner of Conversation; it realizes unseen and eternal Things, according to the famous Definition of the Apostle; "Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen".

Now this Faith is the Bond of Union between Christ and the Believer. For, before the Merits of Jesus Christ can be of any avail to our Justification before God, it is necessary that his Righteousness should be so far ours, as to answer the Demands of the Law, and procure, in a legal Way, the Favor of God for us.

Before

Before this can be done, we muſt be looked upon as one Perſon in the Eye of the Law, or as one legal Perſon. Nor is this unprecedented. Before two Perſons are joined together in Matrimony, they are each of them anſwerable for their own Debts; and each of them poſſeſs their own Privileges. But the Moment the Marriage Ceremony is performed, the Huſbands Honor and Dignity devolve upon the Wife, and the Wife's Debts upon the Huſband. They are no longer looked upon as two, but as one Perſon in the Eye of the Law, or as one legal Perſon.

So it is in the Caſe before us. Jeſus is the illuſtrious Bridegroom of his Church and People. Before a Perſon is made with the Heart, with the Heart, I ſay, to believe in Jeſus, he is anſwerable to the Law for his own Sins. But when once he is united to the Redeemer by a true and living Faith, by a cordial Surrender of himſelf into his Hands for Strength and Salvation, he is no longer conſidered as anſwerable in his own Perſon; but his Debts devolve upon the Saviour; and the Saviour's

Honor

Honor and Dignity devolve upon ſuch an happy Believer. Hence theſe Words in the Communion Office; "We are one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with us". Hence too St. Paul; "We are Members of his Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones. We are Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Chriſt". Or, in the Words of Jeſus in his laſt ſolemn Prayer; "Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their Word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they all may be one in us; that the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me. And the Glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the World may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me".

What ſtrange condeſcending Words are theſe! Who would not devoutly wiſh to have an Intereſt in Prayers and Privileges ſo divine! "Happy are the People that are in ſuch a

Caſe;

Caſe; yea, bleſſed are the People that have the Lord for their God! Such Honor have all his Saints"!

I think it appears that the Gift of Jeſus Chriſt to our World was a moſt wonderful Diſplay of the Love of God. In the Works of Creation we trace his eternal Power, Wiſdom, and Godhead. But in the Scheme of Redemption, Love and Mercy brighteſt ſhine. In this above all other Things "was manifeſted the Love of God towards us, becauſe that he ſent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him". Jeſus has obeyed the Law; Jeſus has endured the Penalty: "He has brought in an everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and made Atonement for Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin", and every one that believeth in him ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting Salvation. "Go ye, ſays Chriſt to his Diſciples, into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature: He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved: He that believeth not ſhall be damned".

But here, my Brethren, it becomes us to be

exceeding

exceedingly cautious left we be deceived. We are born of Parents, who call themſelves Chriſtians; and being baptized in Infancy, we take it for granted that we are already Believers, and in a ſtate of Salvation, without conſidering whether we have all thoſe Qualifications, which the Scripture makes abſolutely neceſſary to a State of Favor and Acceptance with God. 'Tis evident from the above Declaration of our Lord's, that Faith and Salvation are inſeparably united. "He that believeth ſhall be ſaved". But then what is this Faith? We have ſaid before, It is not an empty Notion ſwimming in the Head, that there once lived ſuch a Perſon as Jeſus Chriſt. Nor is it a mere Conviction in the Underſtanding, founded upon proper Evidence, that he is the alone Saviour of Men. Neither a full Perſuaſion that he will ſave me in particular. None of theſe will do. They are all conſiſtent with a prevailing State of Rebellion againſt God. But in what Breaſt ſoever that Faith, which accompanies Salvation, dwells, there is, Firſt, A Conviction, an abiding Con-

viction in the Mind, that we are loſt, and in Want of a Saviour: Secondly, That Jeſus Chriſt is the Perſon ordained of God for this Purpoſe: Thirdly, "That he is able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all thoſe who come unto God by him": And Fourthly, An actual Surrender of ourſelves into his Hands, to be ſaved by his Merits, and ruled by his Laws.

To be ſaved by his Merits we all expect: Few are ſo involved in Sin and carnal Security as not to ſee their own Guilt and Unworthineſs. But at the ſame Time that we profeſs an Affiance upon the Merits of the Redeemer, are we ruled, guided, and governed by his Laws? I am much afraid this is not the Caſe. I am much afraid there are many, very many, in ſo large a Congregation, who are living Day by Day in Diſobedience. Let me appeal however to the Bible and your own Judgments.

It is true, that Jeſus Chriſt has reconciled by his Death the ſeemingly jaring Attributes of Juſtice and Mercy. It is true alſo, "that

he has brought in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and made Atonement for Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin". It is equally true, "that whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting Life". But notwithſtanding all this, we are aſſured by him that cannot lie, that "except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God". And that we may not miſtake what is meant by being born again, the Apoſtle *John* deſcribes the Nature of that inward Change, by its outward Effects: "Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God".

Not leſs poſſitive is St. *Paul*. "If ye live after the Fleſh ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live. Now the Works of the Fleſh, which, at the Peril of our Salvation, we are commanded to mortify, are theſe; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, En-

vyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like ".

If then all that believe ſhall certainly be ſaved; and if ſuch Chriſtians as are guilty of theſe Things ſhall not be ſaved; it is an incontrovertable Concluſion, that they are not Believers, in the Scriptural and ſaving Senſe of the Word, whatever they may pretend.

Come then, my dear Fellow-Chriſtians, come and let us turn unto the Lord with all our Hearts. No longer walk in the Way of Sin and Death, but turn you here and live. Renounce your Sins; renounce Self-Righteouſneſs, and come and buy Wine and Milk, even all the Bleſſings of Grace and Glory, without Money and without Price. Think not of ſharing the Honor of Salvation with the Redeemer. The Bleſſing be yours; the Glory be his.

"Brethren, ſays St. *Paul* to the Jews, my Hearts Deſire and Prayer to God for Iſrael, is, that they might be ſaved. For I bare them record that they have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge. For they being igno-

rant

rant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God. For Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth".

Let us then, O let us embrace him as "the Lord our Righteousness. Let us, O let us kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so we perish from the right Way. Blessed are all they that put their Trust in him". This, this is the Way to triumph over all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. This is the Way to give that truly heroic Challenge, "Death, where is thy Sting, Grave where is thy Victory"! This, and this alone is the Way to reign in Bliss and Immortality.

Forgive me, O Christians, for speaking with so much Warmth and Earnestness upon this pleasing Theme. 'Tis a Matter of infinite Importance. Let Sceptres, Crowns, and Kingdoms be neglected, but I beseech you neglect not the Gospel Salvation. O that I had the Zeal of a *Paul*, and the Eloquence of an *Apollos*: O that I had an Angel's Voice, and a Zeraph's Fire

Fire, to pierce, and enter, and take Poſſeſſion of your Souls: Then, then would I compel you to come in, and partake of the Bleſſings of rich, redeeming Love! Remember, Sirs, that the Night of this World is far ſpent; and the bright and glorious Day of Eternity is near at hand. "Let us therefore caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and let us put on the Armour of Light. Let us provoke one another to Love and good Works. Let us walk honeſtly as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs; not in Chambering and Wantonneſs; not in Strife and Envy: But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in all his holy Tempers and Diſpoſitions, and make not Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof".

"We believe, O Jeſus, that thou ſhalt come "to be our Judge: We therefore pray Thee "help thy Servants, whom thou haſt redeemed, "with thy moſt precious Blood: And make "them to be numbered with thy Saints in "Glory everlaſting." AMEN.

The Method of Salvation revealed in the Gospel:

A

SERMON.

" We had revolted from the Lord of all Lords, and broke
" his holy Commandments. The Son of God, infinitely
" compassionate, vouchsafes to become our Mediator.
" That Nothing might be wanting to render his Mediation
" successful, he places himself in our Stead. The Punish-
" ment, which We deserved, He endures. The Obedi-
" ence, which We owed, He fulfils. Both which, be-
" ing imputed to us, and accepted for us, are the Found-
" ation of our Pardon, are the procuring Cause of our
" Justification.

HERVEY.

" The Law of God exact he shall fulfil,
" Both by Obedience and by Love; though Love
" Alone fulfil the Law: Thy Punishment
" He shall endure, by coming in the Flesh
" To a reproachful Life and cursed Death;
" Proclaiming Life to all who shall believe
" In his Redemption".

MILTON.

The Prayer before Sermon.

O ALMIGHTY Lord and everlasting God, give us Grace that we may cast away the Works of Darkness, and put upon us the Armour of Light, now in the Time of this mortal Life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great Humility. Send out thy Light and thy Truth, which may lead us, and conduct us to thy holy Hill, and to thy dwelling Place. Pity and have Mercy upon all those who are dead and secure in Sin, and enable them to flee from the Wrath to come. Remember us, O Lord, remember us with the Favor that thou bearest unto thy People; O visit us with thy precious Salvation. May we see the Good of thy Chosen: May we rejoice with the Gladness of thy People: May we glory with thine Inheritance. Succeed our present Assembling in thine House to the Turning of the Hearts of the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just; that in the last Day,

when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come again in his glorious Majeſty, to judge both the Quick and Dead, we may riſe to the Life immortal, through Him, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt now and ever. AMEN.

Our Father &c.

MEN and BRETHREN,

I am about to lead your Meditations to a Subject, which contains the Eſſence and Marrow of the Goſpel. 'Tis not a Matter of Indifference whether we regard it or not: All that is dear to us in the eternal World depends upon our being right. Be ſerious therefore and give me your Attention. And if what is delivered is important, intelligible, and agreeable to the Word of God, I hope you will not diſregard it upon Account of the Plainneſs of the Language, or the Unworthineſs of the Speaker. If it is not important; if it is not eaſy to be underſtood; if it is not agreeable to the unerring Word of God; I wiſh you moſt ſeriouſly not to be influenced by it. To your candid Judgments I make my Appeal.

ROMANS iii. 23, 24, 25, and 26.

For all have ſinned and come ſhort of the Glory of God; being juſtified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus: Whom God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt, through the Forbearance of God; to declare, I ſay, at this Time his Righteouſneſs; that he might be juſt, and the Juſtifier of him, which believeth in Jeſus.

ST. PAUL's Epiſtle to the *Romans* contains the compleateſt Body of Divinity the World ever ſaw. The Doctrines of Grace are therein taught with a Perſpecuity and Strength of Argument, peculiar to the great Apoſtle. Like a wiſe Maſter-Builder he lays the Foundation of the whole Goſpel Scheme in the fallen Condition of Man. The firſt Chapter undeniably proves to us, that the whole

Gentile

Gentile World were under Sin; and consequently in a State of Condemnation: "For the Wages of Sin is Death". In the second and third Chapters the zealous Apostle turns the Sword of the Spirit against his Countrymen, the Jews; and proves from their own received Scriptures, that they too, as well as the despised Gentiles, were under Sin, and in a State of Condemnation.

Now since the whole World of reasonable Creatures, at the Time this Epistle was wrote, consisted of Jews and Gentiles alone, it is manifest, that when he had proved those two grand Divisions of Mankind to be without Exception in a State of Sin and Condemnation, he had proved the whole World to be so. Therefore it is he draws this general Conclusion; "We know that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World become guilty before God. Therefore by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight; for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin". That is: The

Law

Law of God is so far from justifying, or acquiting the Transgressors thereof, that it discovers them to be Sinners, and as such, denounces a Sentence of Condemnation against them.

After the Apostle had proved the whole World to be in a State of Sin, and consequently incapable of being justified by the Law of Works, he proceeds in the Words of our Text, to shew in what Manner, and by what Means, we are, and must be justified. "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God". What then must be done? Must we sink under the Penalty of the Law? No: Though this is what we might justly expect, yet through the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, "we are justified freely by his Grace through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. In what Manner? God hath set Him forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare His Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past through the Forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this Time His Righteousness. Why? That he

might

might be juſt, and the Juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus".

Let us now conſider more particularly the Method of Salvation revealed in the Goſpel.

When God Almighty firſt created Man, he inſcribed upon his Heart a general Law, which was to be the Rule of his Nature and Actions. This is called the Law of Nature. And when he was placed in the Garden of Eden God gave him a more particular one, which was deſigned as the Teſt, or Trial of his preſent Obedience. This particular, or, as it is ſometimes called, this ſymbolical Law, was enforced with a Sanction peculiarly awful: "In the Day thou eateſt of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt ſurely die". Need we aſk if *Adam* diſobeyed? The Experience of near 6000 Years may teſtify. "His Poſterity lie in the Grave like ſheep, Death gnaweth upon them",

The Law of God being thus preſumptuouſly broken, Man muſt either undergo the Penalty, which was Death in its moſt extenſive Latitude, or God's Law muſt be violated with

Impunity,

Impunity, and his inflexible Juſtice injured by his Creatures.

"Die he or Juſtice muſt; unleſs for him
"Some other able, and as willing, pay
"The rigid Satisfaction, Death for Death".

Here then is an Expedient worthy of infinite Wiſdom! When none beſide in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, could help us, the Almighty Father found out a Way of tempering Mercy and Juſtice in ſuch a Manner, as to vindicate the Honors of the Divine Government, and ſave rebellious Man.

Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, hymned and adored by all the Hoſts of Heaven, offered himſelf to vindicate the Rights of Government, and reſcue the Sons of Men. He became the Mediator between God and Man; the Surety, the Subſtitute, the Undertaker for his People. "Lo I come, ſays he, to do thy Will, O God; I am content to do it, yea thy Law is within my Heart". Or in the fine Language of *Milton*:

—— Man dead in Sins and loſt;
"Atonement for himſelf or Offering meet,

 "Indebted

" Indebted and undone, hath none to bring:
" Behold me then, ſays the Son; me for him, Life for Life
" I offer; on me let thine Anger fall;
" Account me Man; I for his Sake will leave
" Thy Boſom, and this Glory next to Thee
" Freely put off, and for him laſtly die
" Well pleaſed; on me let Death wreck all his Rage ".

Accordingly, in the Fulneſs of Time, that is, at the Time appointed of God, and foretold in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, the Son of God, infinitely compaſſionate, laid aſide his Glory, took upon him the Form of a Servant, lived a Life of extreme Poverty, and died a Death of Ignominy and Diſgrace. Man had violated the "holy, juſt, and good Law" of God: Jeſus undertook to magnify and make it honorable, by paying that Obedience which it required. "It became him, as the Saviour of Man, to fulfil all Righteouſneſs", ceremonial and moral.

Now to our unſpeakable Satisfaction, we are informed in the Bible that his whole Life was a Courſe of unintermitted Obedience to his Father's Law. "He did always the Things that pleaſed God. He was holy, harmleſs, and

ſeparate

ſeparate from Sinners. He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth". He was emphatically, " The Righteous, the Holy, the Juſt One ".

This Obedience, this perfect Obedience, to the Divine Law, is in various Parts of Scripture called, *His Righteouſneſs*, or, *The Righteouſneſs of God.* Thus St. *Paul*: " In the Goſpel is revealed *the Righteouſneſs of God* from Faith to Faith. And again: For they being ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to *the Righteouſneſs of God*". The Prophet *Daniel* ſpeaking of the Obedience of the Meſſiah to the Law of God, calls it, *An everlaſting Righteouſneſs.* " Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City, to finiſh the Tranſgreſſion, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in *everlaſting Righteouſneſs. Jeremiah* alſo when ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, as the Law-Fulfiller of his People, calls him, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs.*

From theſe Paſſages it manifeſtly ap-

pears that a perfect Obedience to the Divine Law was an essential Part of the Saviour's Office in the Redemption of Man.

But this is not all.

The Divine Law was not only violated, but the moral Government of God beclouded and dishonored. Jesus Christ, in the Capacity of Mediator, had fulfilled the Law; who shall atone, or make Satisfaction, for the Transgressions of his Creatures? Suppose we could live without Sin for the Time to come, who shall satisfy the injured Majesty of Heaven for those already committed?

This likewise has the Redeemer accomplished. The Sins of Believers were laid upon, or imputed to, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he bore the Punishment due unto them, in such a Sense as to answer all the Purposes of the Divine Government. On the contrary, Christ's Righteousness, Obedience, or Merits, call it which you please, is imputed to all true Believers, in such a Sense, as to answer all the Purposes of Justification and Salvation.

Let us consider this matter more particularly,

ly. The Doctrine of the Imputation of the Sins of Men to the Saviour was clearly shadowed forth in the Mosaic Law. On the Day of solemn Expiation, when Atonement was made for the Sins of the People and Nation, the High-Priest was commanded to take two Goats; one of which he offered for a Sin-Offering, and the other was kept alive. Upon the Head of the living Goat the Priest laid his Hand, confessed the Sins of all the People, and then sent the Goat away by the Hands of a fit Man into the Wilderness.

These two Goats are generally looked upon as typical of Jesus Christ. The slain Goat represents him dying, the living Goat represents him rising again. The Sins of the People were confessed over the Head of the living Goat: This might be to represent to us how the Sins of all true Believers are imputed to, or laid upon, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Goat knew no Sin. It was incapable of moral Depravity. And yet, when the Sins of the People were confessed over it, they were imputed to it; and it was treated in all Respects as though it had been guilty. Thus

Thus it was with the Mediator between God and Man. He knew no Sin; yet as ſoon as he became Surety for his People; as ſoon as he had put himſelf in the Place of Sinners, though innocent in himſelf, he was treated as guilty. "Awake, O Sword, againſt my Shepherd, againſt the Man that is my Fellow, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts".

Now we all know there are but two poſſible Ways of being guilty of Sin; either inherently, that is, by actual Tranſgreſſion; or imputatively, that is, by having the Sins of others laid to our Charge. But it is allowed on all hands that Jeſus Chriſt was free from actual Tranſgreſſion. It is evident alſo, that through the whole Courſe of his Life and Death he was treated as a Sinner: Either therefore the Sins of his People were imputed to him, or laid to his Charge, or God takes Pleaſure in afflicting an innocent, holy Creature. The latter Suppoſition is inconſiſtent with all the Notions we have of the Nature of God; the former muſt therefore be granted, (viz) That the Sins of the World were imputed

ted to, laid to the Charge of, and punifhed in, the Lord Jefus Chrift.

The Bible is very pofitive upon this important Subject. We are told by the Prophet *Daniel*, that "Meffiah fhould be cut off, but not for himfelf". If he is not cut off for himfelf, for whom is he cut off then? The Prophet *Ifaiah* fhall anfwer, "For the Tranfgreffion of my People was he ftricken". This whole 53d. Chapter is a Prophecy of what we are endeavoring to eftablifh: "He was wounded for our Tranfgreffions, he was bruifed for our Iniquities: The Chaftifement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone aftray: We have turned every one to his own Way": Pray take Notice of what follows; "And the Lord hath laid upon him the Iniquity of us all". How was our Iniquity laid upon him? It muft be by Imputation, fince there is no other Way.

Hitherto we have only attempted to prove our Point from the Old Teftament; but the New fpeaks the fame uniform Language.

"I

"I am the good Shepherd, ſays Chriſt: The good Shepherd gives his Life for the Sheep". He dies; they are reſcued, ſaved, delivered. "He was made Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him, ſays St. *Paul*. The Apoſtle of the Circumciſion maintains the ſame in the ſtrongeſt Terms poſſible: "Who his own ſelf bare our Sins on his own Body on the Tree". The Author to the Hebrews aſſures us, that "Chriſt made Reconciliation for the Sins of the People. Jeſus Chriſt, ſays St. *John*, is the Propitiation for our Sins. He loved us and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood". And the Words of our Text declare, "that God hath ſet forth Jeſus to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood".

Theſe Expreſſions are all uſed with a Reference to the Sacrifices under the Moſaic Diſpenſation. What they did typically and emblematically, Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour of the World, has done in Reality. They were the Types, Chriſt and his Sufferings were the Things typified. They were the Shadow—He was the

Subſtance.

Subſtance. and when the Subſtance came, the Shadows vaniſhed away.

This then is the Manner in which Jeſus Chriſt accompliſhed the Redemption of loſt, ſinful Man. The Divine Law he fulfilled in his Life, and made a true and proper Atonement for the Sins of the World by his Sufferings and Death.

Clearly is this expreſſed by our pious Reformers in the Homily on the Salvation of Man:

"Chriſt is the Righteouſneſs of all them "that do truly believe. He for them paid "their Ranſom by his Death. He for them "fulfilled the Law in his Life: So that now, "in Him, and by Him, every true Chriſtian "Man may be called a Fulfiller of the Law; "foraſmuch as what their Infirmity lacked, "Chriſt's Righteouſneſs hath ſupplied".

Another Clauſe in the ſame Homily is very expreſſive of their Sentiments:

"The Apoſtle toucheth three Things, which "muſt go together in our Juſtification. On "God's Part, his great Mercy and Grace: On "Chriſt's Part, the Satisfaction of God's Juſ-

" tice, or the Price of our Redemption, by
" the Offering of his Body, and Shedding of
" his Blood, with Fulfilling of the Law per-
" fectly. On our Part, true and lively Faith
" in the Merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is
" not ours, but by God's Working in us".

A Variety of Passages might be produced from the Writings of the Fathers in the best and purest Ages of the Christian Church, to shew in what Sense they understood the Scriptures with Respect to the Method of Salvation therein revealed. But this would be tedious, and take up too much of the present Opportunity. Shall beg Leave however to give you the Opinion of an incomparable Writer of more modern Date. *Michael*, the Archangel, relating to *Adam* how Man should be redeemed, thus speaks;

——————— Thy Death's Wound,
" Which he who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
" Not by destroying Satan, but his Works
" In Thee and in thy Seed: Nor can this be,
" But by fulfilling That which thou didst want,
" Obedience to the Law of God, impos'd
" On Penalty of Death, and suffering Death

" The

" The Penalty to thy Transgression due,
" And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
" *So only* can high Justice rest appaid ".

Nay, Dr. *Clarke* himself assures us, " That " the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, which " is the Foundation of God's accepting our " Repentance, consistently with the Honors of " his Divine Laws, was inestimably the great- " est Blessing that ever was confer'd on the " Sons of Men; yea, the Fountain and Spring, " and the original Foundation of all other " Blessings ". To these Words from that great Man I subscribe with Hand and Heart.

And has Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, done all this for us, and have we no Returns of Gratitude to make? Has he fulfilled the Law in his Life, and made Satisfaction to Divine Justice by his Death, and yet is he slighted and disregarded by sinful Mortals? Shall we thro' Pride of Heart disclaim the Redeemer's Merits and trust to our own imperfect Services as our justifying Righteousness? O the Baseness, the Blindness, and Infatuation of Man! Well might the Apostle say, " If any Man love not the

Lord Jesus Christ let him be accursed". Just and proper indeed will be your Condemnation and mine, if this adorable Saviour is slighted by us. Awake, O Christians, awake, and don't by your careless Disregard crucify to yourselves the Son of God afresh! O drive not the Nails still deeper; force not the Spear still farther into his bleeding Side! "He himself bore our Sins on his own Body on the Tree". O then add not to the too, too heavy Load, by continuing in open Rebellion, or by indulging a secret Alienation of Mind. Be ye reconciled unto him. Seek him with your whole Hearts. Love him fervently. Serve him faithfully. And tell of his Salvation from Day to Day.

But if the Salvation revealed in the Gospel is so exceeding precious; if it is of such infinite Importance to our Happiness beyond the Grave, methinks we should be desirous of enquiring how we must be made Partakers of the Benefits thereof? Is it any where said that all the Sons of *Adam* shall be saved? No: The Scripture is most clear to the contrary.

How

How then are Chriſt's Merits made ours? How do we obtain an Intereſt therein?

By Faith: When properly underſtood, by Faith alone, without the Deeds of the Law. Or, in other Words, By our *cordial* Acceptance. Seventeen Hundred Years ago Jeſus Chriſt brought in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and made Atonement for Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin; and Faith, like an Hand, or Inſtrument, receives, accepts, relies upon, and rejoices in this full, free Salvation. This Truth is of the very laſt Importance in the Goſpel Scheme. With ſtrict Propriety it is called, The Mark of a ſtanding, or falling Church, and the grand Bulwark againſt the Errors of the Church of *Rome*. Let us then coolly conſider whether it is a Doctrine of Scripture, or not. If it is true and important, it muſt be clearly revealed, and eaſy to be underſtood, by a Mind that is humbly and earneſtly ſeeking after Nothing but the Truth as it is in Jeſus. For God expects no Impoſſibilities from his Creatures. If at any Time he requires our Belief of Things hard to be underſtood, he gives us E-

vidence

vidence for that Belief. If he commands us to do what we are naturally incapable of doing, he promiſes, if we will aſk, the Aid and Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit to enable us to perform what he commands. Thus ſhall every one, who falls ſhort of Salvation, be rendered inexcuſable at the laſt Day. Every Mouth ſhall be ſtopped.

To the Point.

After St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, had proved the whole World, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to be under Sin, he draws this Concluſion; " Therefore by the Deeds of the Law there ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in his Sight ". And having, in the following Verſes, ſhewed how we are and muſt be juſtified, he again draws this Concluſion; " Therefore we conclude that a Man is juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law ".

If there is any Meaning in the Apoſtle's Reaſoning theſe Concluſions aſſert the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone in the Blood of Chriſt. The one is negative, the other is poſſitive. The one ſays, We are not juſtified

justified by Works; the other says, We are justified by Faith. The one rejects the false Foundation; the other establishes the true one.

"It is commonly objected, that by the Deeds "of the Law, the Apostle means the Deeds of "the ceremonial Law".

If we attend to his Chain of Reasoning without Partiality and Prejudice, we shall soon discover that he excludes the Works of the moral, as well as the Deeds of the ceremonial Law, in the Affair of a Sinner's Justification before God. In shewing how the *Gentiles* were to be justified and saved, he could not with any Propriety appeal to, or from, the ceremonial Law of the *Jews*, because they were never under it's Power and Dominion. And therefore we find him accusing them of Breaches of the moral Law, the Law of Nature, the Law of the Ten Commandments, which are common to, and equally binding upon, every Son and Daughter of *Adam*. Take his own melancholy Catalogue of Heathenish; Of Heathenish did I say? Of Christian Crimes: "And even as they did not like to retain God

in

in their Knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, to do those Things which are not convenient: Being filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity; Whisperers, Backbiters, Haters of God, dispiteful, proud, Boasters, Inventers of evil Things, disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant-breakers, without natural Affection, implacable, unmerciful".

Now if the *Gentiles* were never under the ceremonial Law, and if in these Words they are only charged with Transgressions against the moral Law, we must allow, that if they were justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law, it must be by Faith without the Deeds of the moral Law. So much for the *Gentiles*.

Let us next consider the State of the *Jews*. If the Apostle appeals to the Law of the Ten Commandments: If he repeatedly charges them with Breaches of That, and of That alone: If he never once mentions, when speaking of the Nature of Justification, the ceremonial Law:

And

And if the *Jews* were generally very obſervant of the ceremonial, and very negligent in the moral: Then I think it muſt be allowed, that the Apoſtle means to eſtabliſh the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt, without the Deeds of the moral, or any other Law whatever. Take his own Words:

"Behold, thou art called a *Jew*, and reſteſt in the Law, and makeſt thy Boaſt of God; and knoweſt his Will, and approveſt the Things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the Law, and art confident that thou thyſelf art a Guide of the Blind, a Light of them that are in Darkneſs, an Inſtructer of the Fooliſh, a Teacher of Babes, which haſt the Form of Knowledge and of the Truth in the Law. Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? Thou that preacheſt, a Man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? Thou that ſayeſt, a Man ſhould not commit Adultery, doſt thou commit Adultery? Thou that abhorreſt Idols, doſt thou commit Sacrilege?

Nothing can be more evident than that the

Apoſtle makes his Appeal in all theſe Interrogations to the moral Law of God, and not to the Ceremonial.

Again. "We have before proved both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they are all under Sin". What Sin? Sins of the ceremonial Law? No: Under Sins of the moral. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: Their Throat is an open Sepulchre: With their Tongues they have uſed Deceit; the Poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips: Whoſe Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs: Their Feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood: There is no Fear of God before their Eyes".

This is alſo the moral Law, or the Law of the Ten Commandments. He then proceeds: "Now we know that what Things ſoever the Law ſaith": What Law? The moral Law juſt mentioned: "It ſaith to them that are under the Law; that every Mouth may be ſtopped, and all the World become guilty before God. Therefore by the Deeds of the Law, there ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in his Sight": For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin.

Now

Now can it be ſaid that by the ceremonial Law is the Knowledge of Sin? By the Moral it may.

The Apoſtle finiſhes his Argument with theſe remarkable Words: "Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid: Yea, we eſtabliſh the Law". What Law did he eſtabliſh? The ceremonial Law? Not the ceremonial, but the moral: For the ceremonial Law, upon the Coming of Chriſt, was fulfilled and aboliſhed; but the moral Law is eternal in its Obligations and ſhall never be aboliſhed. I conclude therefore with the Apoſtle, that we are juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the moral, as well as the ceremonial, Law.

"It is more than probable that ſome Perſons may object, that St. *James* affirms quite the contrary to what I have been endeavoring to eſtabliſh?

His Words are theſe: "What doth it profit, my Brethren, though a Man ſay he hath Faith and hath not Works? Can Faith ſave him? If a Brother or Siſter be naked and deſ-

titute of daily Food; and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in Peace, be you warmed, and filled: Notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe Things which are needful to the Body; what doth it profit? Even ſo Faith, if it hath not Works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a Man may ſay, Thou haſt Faith, and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works. Thou believeſt that there is one God; thou doſt well: The Devils alſo believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead? Was not *Abraham*, our Father, juſtified by Works, when he had offered *Iſaac*, his Son, upon the Altar? Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which ſaith, *Abraham* believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteouſneſs: And he was called the Friend of God. Ye ſee then how that by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith only.

Here is, without Doubt, a *ſeeming* Contradiction between the two Apoſtles. St. *Paul* af-

firms

firms that a Man is juſtified by Faith alone, without the Deeds of the Law. St. *James* affirms that a Man is juſtified by Works, and not by Faith only. Now if we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, we are ſure one Part muſt be conſiſtent with another. For the Spirit of Truth cannot be the Author of Contradictions. How then ſhall we make them both ſpeak the ſame glorious and harmonious Truth? How ſhall we reconcile the apparent Contradiction?

Thus. St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, diſputeth againſt thoſe who attribute Juſtification to Works alone, or partly to Faith, and partly to Works. St. *James* diſputeth againſt thoſe who condemn good Works, as the neceſſary Fruits of ſaving Faith. St. *Paul* ſheweth the Cauſes of Juſtification: St. *James* the Effects. St. *Paul* declares how we are juſtified: St. *James* how we are known to be juſtified. St. *Paul* excludes Works as the Cauſe, the meritorious Cauſe, of Juſtification: St. *James* proves good Works to be the neceſſary Effects of Juſtification. St. *Paul* proves

that

that good Works do not preceed, or go before Juſtification: St. *James* proves that good Works neceſſarily follow in all them that are juſtified.

I take this to be the true State of the Caſe between the two Apoſtles; if ſo, the Objection vaniſhes, and St. *James* as well as St. *Paul*, becomes an Advocate for that good old Way, Faith in Chriſt, as the alone Cauſe of our Juſtification and eternal Salvation.

One other Argument from the Abſurdity of the Thing itſelf may determine the Point concerning the Nature of Juſtification. To juſtify is an Act of God, whereby a Perſon is pardoned and received into the Divine Favor. Before Juſtification then, a Perſon's Sins are not pardoned, nor is he in Favor with God. And if his Sins are not pardoned, nor his Perſon in Favor with God, to be ſure his Actions can't be pleaſing and acceptable to God: They cannot be legally good Works: They are like the Actions of a Man under Sentence of Condemnation, who is dead in Law. To talk therefore of being juſtified by

Works

Works, when we muſt be juſtified before we can do an Action legally good, involves an Abſurdity. It is to make the Tree bare good Fruit, while the Tree itſelf is bad.

To the above Reaſons we may add the following Examples.

The Thief upon the Croſs had been notorious for his Villanies. He had tranſgreſſed, not only the Laws of his God, but alſo the Laws of his Country, inſomuch that public Juſtice demanded Satisfaction. He was apprehended, arraigned at the Bar, found guilty, and condemned to be crucified. As he hung bleeding upon the Croſs he cries out to Jeſus, "Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom". What Anſwer does the expiring Saviour make? "To day, ſays he, ſhalt thou be with me in Paradice". Now the Criminal was either ſaved, or he was not: If he was not ſaved, the Words of Jeſus were falſe: If he was ſaved, it was either by Faith, or by Works: And if he had no boaſted good Works to produce, as from the Circumſtances of the Story it appears he had not, then

then he muſt be juſtified and ſaved by Faith alone in Jeſus, the Redeemer. Faith was the Inſtrumental, the Death of Chriſt was the alone meritorious Cauſe of his Salvation.

Another Inſtance of the ſame Kind we have in the 16th. Chapter of *Acts*.

When *Paul* and *Silas* were at *Philipi* preaching the Goſpel, the Multitude roſe againſt them, took and carried them before the Magiſtrates, who ordered them to be ſcourged and caſt into Priſon. At Midnight, as *Paul* and *Silas* prayed and ſang Praiſes unto God, ſuddenly a great Earthquake ſhook the Foundation of the Priſon, threw open the Doors, and looſed the Chains of the Priſoners. The Jailor awaking from his Sleep, and ſeeing the Priſon Doors open, thought the Priſoners had made their Eſcape: Whereupon he drew his Sword, and was going to kill himſelf; when *Paul*, admoniſhed by the Spirit, cried with a loud Voice, "Do thy ſelf no Harm, we are all here". Immediately the Jailor called for a Light, ſprang in, came trembling, and falling down before *Paul* and *Silas*, cried out, "Sirs, what

what muſt I do to be ſaved"?

What Anſwer does the Apoſtle give him? Does he bid him go and perform a Round of religious Duties, as the Foundation of his Pardon and Acceptance? This would have been ſmall Comfort to an awakened Conſcience. Does he bid him give all his Goods to feed the Poor, and then he ſhould be ſaved? No: Like a wiſe Maſter-builder, he lays the Foundation of his Salvation upon Faith in Chriſt, and then rears the beautiful Fabrick of good Works, and evangelical Obedience. "Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thine Houſe".

After the Apoſtles had given him this Anſwer, they ſpake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in the Houſe. They inſtructed the Family, no doubt, in the whole Nature of the Method of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt. "And the Jailor took the Apoſtles the ſame Hour of the Night, and waſhed their Stripes, and was baptiſed, he and all his, ſtraightway. And when he had brought them into his Houſe, he ſet Meat before them, and

rejoiced, believing in God with all his House". See how his Faith wrought by Love, "and by Works was Faith made perfect! Faith without Works is dead, being alone".

Let us now suppose the Jailor had died soon after he was baptized: Either he would have been saved, or he would not. If he would not have been saved, the Apostle's Declaration to him was false. If he would have been saved, it was either by Faith, or by Works. It could not be by good Works, since he was so far from being a good Man, that he had but a little before been guilty of Scourging the Servants of the living God, and of intentional Self Murder. He must therefore have been justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law. Agreeable to this View of the Nature of Justification are the Words of the Apostle: "By Grace ye are saved, through Faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of God: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast: For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained that we should

ſhould walk in them". And again: "Now to him that worketh, is the Reward not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteouſneſs".

If any Perſon ſhould doubt whether this View of the Nature of Juſtification and Salvation, which I have given, is agreeable to the Doctrines of the Eſtabliſhment, let him turn to the eleventh Article of Religion, and he will read thus: "We are accounted righteous "before God, only for the Merit of our Lord "and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, by Faith, and not "for our own Works, or Deſervings. Where-"fore that we are juſtified by Faith only, is "a moſt wholſome Doctrine, and very full of "Comfort".

The Homily on Juſtification ſpeaks the ſame Language, only more clear, if poſſible, than the Article already read.

"This is the Ordinance, or Appointment of "God, that they who believe in Chriſt ſhould "be ſaved without Works, by Faith only, free-

"ly receiving Remiſſion of their Sins. Con-
"ſider diligently theſe Words; Without
"Works, by Faith only, freely we receive
"Remiſſion of our Sins. What can be ſpo-
"ken more plainly, than to ſay, That freely,
"without Works, by Faith only, we obtain
"Remiſſion of our Sins? Theſe, and other
"like Sentences, that we be juſtified by Faith
"only, freely, and without Works, we do of-
"tentimes read in the beſt and moſt antient
"Authors".

Theſe Words are very ſtrong; much like to thoſe of the Apoſtle *Paul* above quoted; and are certainly not meant to exclude good Works as unneceſſary in any View, but ſimply as the Cauſe meritorious of our Juſtification and Salvation.

The Subſtance of what has been ſaid is this: We are all Sinners, and conſequently in a State of Condemnation. Jeſus Chriſt has fulfilled the Law of God in his Life, and made Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice for our Tranſgreſſions by his Sufferings and Death: "By
"the Myſtery of his holy Incarnation, by his
"holy

"holy Nativity and Circumcision; by his Bap-
"tism, Fasting, and Temptation; by his Ago-
"ny and bloody Sweat; by his Cross and Pas-
"sion; by his precious Death and Burial; by
"his glorious Resurrection and Ascension";
even by all these together, considered as one grand Aggregate, Jesus Christ has accomplished the Salvation of Mankind, and the Merits hereof are made ours by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.

This is what we have endeavored to prove; whether we have succeeded or not, is left to the Judgments of this candid and impartial Audience.

Men, Brethren and Fathers, I beseech you give me your Attention a little longer, till we apply the Doctrine to practical Purposes. Though Jesus Christ has wrought out an everlasting Salvation for his People: Though he has long since finished the Work God gave him to do, and is now exalted at the right Hand of the Majesty on high; yet all is not done. Though the Work is done for us, there remains Something to be done in us. Though,

when

when Jesus bowed his sacred Head, and cried aloud, "It is finished"; though then the Law was fulfilled, and Justice satisfied: Yet 'tis the Office of the Holy Spirit to sanctify all the Children of God. His Office it is, to enlighten our Understandings, to subdue our unruly Wills, and to mortify our corrupt and depraved Affections. His Office it is, to convince us of Sin, and to convert us unto Righteousness; to take of the Things of Jesus, and shew them unto us. His Office it is to work in us true Repentence, to regenerate our Souls, to Strengthen us for all holy Obedience, and in short, to make us meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

May I suppose that this is already done? Being I am almost a Stranger amongst you, does Charity oblige me to take for granted that every Person in this Assembly is a true Believer? In so numerous a Congregation, is there no one that is ignorant of the hidden Life of a Christian? Alas! we know Mankind too well: The utmost Stretch of rational Charity cannot think it. If therefore, Brethren, there are any

of

of you, who have never been ſo far convinced of Sin, as to come to God, as repenting Criminals, as returning Prodigals, or as the humble Publican, crying, "God be merciful unto me a Sinner"; aſſure yourſelves, you have, as yet, neither Part nor Lot in the Salvation of the Redeemer. None but the weary and heavy laden want, ſeek, or find, Reſt. None but thoſe that are Sick apply in Earneſt to the Phyſician: And none but thoſe that are deeply convinced of Sin, will ever ſubmit to be ſaved upon the Terms of the Goſpel. The moſt moral Profeſſor, and the moſt abandoned Debauchee ſtand upon the ſame Terms of Acceptance with God. All have ſinned; and all that are ſaved, muſt be ſaved exactly in the ſame Way and Manner. The moral Chriſtian, it is true, will not have to anſwer for the Sins of the lewd Profeſſor: But then, in Point of Acceptance with God, the one muſt renounce his Righteouſneſs, the other his Sins, and come, as Criminals, for a free Pardon.

Brethren, ſuffer the Word of Exhortation. Excuſe us if we are earneſt and importunate

with

with you. We feel a ſincere and hearty Concern for the Happineſs and Salvation of our Fellow Creatures. If Jeſus thought even his own Life not too much to give for our Ranſom, ſurely it becomes us to lay it to Heart, and give it ſome ſerious Thought and Conſideration. If we were not redeemed with corruptable Things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb, without Blemiſh and without Spot; ſurely we are called upon to uſe every Endeavor to make our Calling and Election ſure.

If, notwithſtanding all that has been done to ſave Mankind, the Righteous ſcarcely are ſaved, O where ſhall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear!

If the Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget God; ſurely, Sirs, we ſhould examine whether we are not in that unhappy Number.

If we are each of us born in Sin, and by Nature Children of Wrath: If we are depraved, fallen Creatures, and utterly unable to help ourſelves, ſurely it highly concerns us, to

cry

cry mightily unto God for his Holy Spirit, to renew and ſanctify our fallen Natures.

If Death is coming on apace: If we muſt each of us ſhortly pay the Debt of Nature: If within a very little Time we muſt be doomed to our everlaſting, unchangable State; to eternal Happineſs, or endleſs Woe; then ſurely it is the higheſt Wiſdom to ſeek for, and ſecure an Intereſt in, the Salvation of Jeſus. In him there is plenteous Redemption; "and whoſoever will, may come and take it freely, without Money and without Price". Let me entreat you then by all that is dear; by all that is dear in Time, or in Eternity, let me beſeech you, not to reject your own Mercies. We may live thoughtleſs and unconcerned; but thoughtleſs and unconcerned we ſhall not die. Be ſerious then in Time. Live like the Redeemed of the Lord. In all your Diſtreſs look unto Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith. Let his Obedience be your juſtifying Righteouſneſs: His Death, your Ranſom: His Example, your Pattern, whereby to live and converſe among Men.

There is a ſtrange Sort of Halting between

two Opinions among the Generality of Chriſtians. Religion does not ſeem to poſſeſs the whole Man, even of thoſe who profeſs themſelves religious. But how is this conſiſtent with Reaſon, with Sincerity, or with the following Paſſages of Holy Writ? "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Mind, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength. Strive, i. e. agonize, contend, ſtruggle, to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave, whither thou goeſt. Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. I beſeech you by the Mercies of God that you preſent Yourſelves a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reaſonable Service".

Now if theſe Texts of Scripture have any Meaning in them, they imply an earneſt, ſteady, vigorous Endeavor", to add to our Faith, Virtue, and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge,

Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, Brotherly-Kindneſs; and to Brotherly-Kindneſs, Charity".

Let then the gay, unthinking Sons and Daughters of Pleaſure content themſelves with their Tinſel and their Plumes; let them enjoy the Things of Senſe and Time; let them neglect and diſpiſe a little longer the ſublime Delights of "Righteouſneſs, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt": We know that "God is not mocked, and whatſoever a Man ſows, that ſhall he alſo reap: He that ſows to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption: But he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting".

Wherefore, my dear Brethren, "gird up the Loins of your Mind"; lay aſide every Incumbrance; "be ſober and hope to the End, for the Grace and mighty Glory, that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: As obedient Children, not faſhioning yourſelves according to your former Luſts and Inclinations in the State of your Ignorance

ance and Hardneſs of Heart; but as He, which hath called you is holy; ſo be ye holy in all Manner of Converſation: Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy".

The Nature and Neceſſity of REGENERATION:

A

SERMON.

" We ſhall gain Nothing by our Applaudings and Praiſes " of Chriſt, without a renewed Nature. *Nicodemus* comes " with much Reverence; gives Chriſt the Title of *Rabbi*; " confeſſeth him to be ſent of GOD; owns the Divinity of " his Miracles. Chriſt doth not compliment him again; " takes no Notice of his Civility, but falls roundly to his " Work; acquaints him with the Neceſſity of Regenerati- " on, without which he could not ſee the Kingdom of " GOD, notwithſtanding all his fine Praiſes of him. A " glavering, reverential Religion is inſignificant with Chriſt. " A new Birth, a Likeneſs to Chriſt in Nature, a Con- " formity to him, is accounted by Chriſt an higher Eſti- " mation of him, than all external Applauſes given to him.

" No natural Privilege under Heaven can entitle us to the " Kingdom of Grace or Glory. 'Tis not our carnal " Traduction from the beſt Man. 'Tis no natural Birth, " with the choiceſt Privileges, gives us a Right to either " of them. 'Tis a Birth of a higher Strain, from an " higher Principle; a Change of Nature, and a Removal " from the old Stock ". CHARNOCK.

The Prayer before Sermon.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, the Fountain of all Wiſdom, who knoweſt our Neceſſities before we aſk, and our Ignorance in Aſking; grant that we being regenerate, and made thy Children by Adoption and Grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit. Have Compaſſion upon our manifold Infirmities, and diſpoſe the Way of thy Servants towards the Attainment of everlaſting Salvation. Bid Pleaſure, Diſſipation, and worldly Care depart; and cauſe a ſolemn Serioufneſs to poſſeſs all our Minds. O may we ever be mindful, that we are bound by all the Ties of Duty, Love, and Gratitude, to obey, implicitely to obey, thy holy, juſt and good Commands. May thy Preſence be with us; may thy Bleſſing be upon us, and attend the Word now to be ſpoken: And may it pleaſe Thee to cleanſe and purify the Thoughts and Inclinations of all our Hearts, by the Inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled perfectly to love Thee, and worthily to magnify thy holy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Our Father &c.

MEN, BRETHREN, and FATHERS,

I AM about to lead your Meditations to a Subject of infinite Importance: To a Subject as clearly revealed in the Bible, as any within the Compaſs of the Chriſtian Scheme: To a Subject, which right Reaſon, and all good Men hold to be neceſſary: And yet to a Subject highly diſagreeable to the Generality, and peculiarly obnoxious to the Wicked, the Formal, and Profane. Favor me then, with your ſerious, impartial, and candid Attention, ſo long, and ſo long only, as I ſpeak the Words of Truth and Soberneſs. " Who hath Ears to hear, let him hear ".

JOHN iii. 1—12.

There was a Man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a Ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by Night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God; for no Man can do these Miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a Man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second Time into his Mother's Womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these Things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these Things?

JESUS CHRIST, as the Mediator between GOD and Man, sustains the three important Offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King.

As a Prophet, he has inſtructed the World in the Knowledge of the Mind and Will of God.

As a Prieſt, he offered his own Body a Sacrifice for Sin, and now in Heaven is making Interceſſion for Tranſgreſſors.

As a King, he guides, protects, and rules over, his myſtical Body, the Church.

In the Diſcourſe before us, he acts in the Capacity of a Prophet. And the Converſation itſelf is perhaps one of the moſt memorable and important any where to be met with upon Record.

The Occaſion of it was this.

Jeſus Chriſt had now arrived at 30 Years of Age, and entered upon his publick Miniſtry. He taught the People the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and wrought an amazing Variety of Miracles in Confirmation of his Doctrine and Miſſion. He healed the Sick, fed the Hungry, cured the Blind, reſtored the Lame, and raiſed the Dead. Theſe wonderful Works wrought by his Hands, together with his ſublime and pathetic Manner of Preaching, raiſed and excited

cited the Curiosity and Attention of the Populous. The common People, we are told, heard him gladly, and followed him in Multitudes from Place to Place.

At length his Fame reached the Ears of the Rulers of the Jewish Nation. They knew, from the Prophecies in the Old Testament, that the Time was near at Hand, when the Messiah should appear, and therefore were very attentive to the Things, which were told them. His mean Appearance, Conduct and Behaviour however, not suiting with those Notions of Power, Conquest, and Grandeur, which they had formed, they almost universally rejected him as an Impostor and Deceiver.

Nicodemus, more serious, more candid, and more in Earnest about the Favor of God and the Salvation of his Soul, than his Brethren, was not willing to rest satisfied with the Reports brought him by others: He therefore resolves upon a personal Interview. Like a Man of Sense and Discernment he would hear both Sides of the Question, and then judge for himself. But knowing at the same Time the

inveterate

inveterate Prejudices of the Pharisees, and in what Contempt Jesus was held by the Rich, the Learned, and the Rulers of the Nation, he was ashamed and afraid to come in an open, generous Manner; and therefore determined to visit him in the Night, when no Man might see him.

Our Text is a Part of the Conversation which passed between them. Consider, my Brethren, more particularly the Circumstances attending it.

Here is Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the Judge of Quick and Dead, sent into the World upon the Errand of Man's Salvation. While He is busily engaged in making known his benevolent and God-like Design, here is a Ruler of the Jewish Nation, *Nicodemus* by Name; an aged, learned, serious-thinking Man, comes to converse with him concerning the Nature of his Doctrine, Mission, and Kingdom. The Discourse, which passed between them, is recorded for our Instruction, and for the Instruction and Edification of all future Ages of the Church.

Methinks

Methinks I ſee the Redeemer retired in the Houſe of one of his pious Followers: Dignity, Majeſty, and Serious-Thoughtfulneſs; Meekneſs, Goodneſs, Humility and Benevolence, ſhine conſpicuous in his ſacred Perſon.

Methinks I ſee too the Ruler of the Jewiſh Nation. His Phylacteries are broad; the Borders of his Garments enlarged. With much Form and Ceremony he is introduced, and thus addreſſes the Redeemer:

"*Rabbi*, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: For no Man can do thoſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him".

Without ſtanding to pay him a Variety of unmeaning Compliments, the Saviour of the World replies:

"Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God".

Nicodemus, ſtruck with Surprize at the Expreſſion, *Being born again*, with ſome Degree of Emotion made Anſwer, "How can a Man be born when he is old? Can he enter the ſecond

cond Time into his Mother's Womb and be born?"

Jesus Christ, finding that *Nicodemus* did not understand the Meaning of the Expression, informs him that he did not intend by it any Thing outward, or natural; but an inward, holy Change, wrought in the Mind by the gentle Influences of the Divine Spirit.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again".

Having insisted upon the Doctrine, explained its Meaning, and shewn its Reasonableness, he proceeds to illustrate what he had said by a Similitude:

"The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but can'st not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus, not understanding what he aim-

ed

ed at, ſaid unto him, " How can theſe Things be? "

Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, " Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael;" art thou a Teacher of others; haſt thou read the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, " and knoweſt not theſe Things? Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, we ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen, and ye receive not our Witneſs. If I have told you of earthly Things and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly Things? "

You will pleaſe to obſerve, my Brethren, that this is the firſt Part of a plain, ſimple Conference. Here is no Art, no Diſguiſe, no Sophiſtry. They each of them ſpeak the Language and Sentiments of their Hearts.

Now this Paſſage of Scripture, as all others, muſt either have ſome Meaning, or it muſt have none. If it has none, the Wiſdom of our Saviour muſt be called in Queſtion, and the Language of Mortals rendered vain and inſignificant. Some Meaning therefore it has. And whatever its Meaning be, you muſt al-

low it is neceſſary to be known and experienced, if ever we hope to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. "Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he *cannot* ſee the Kingdom of God".

What then can the Meaning be? Have you thoroughly and ſeriouſly weighed and conſidered it? Give me Leave, my Brethren (as we are upon a Point of the greateſt Conſequence to every one of us) to aſk again, whether you have duly weighed and conſidered the Meaning and Importance of this Paſſage of Holy Writ?

It is Truth, it is Truth alone, we all ought to have in View: And any partial Repreſentations of it, will only lull us aſleep in carnal Security, and prevent us from giving "Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure". If we could perſuade ourſelves that the Bible in general is falſe; that Perſuaſion will not make it ſo, neither would it be of long Continuance. We ſhould find it true to our eternal Shame and everlaſting Contempt. In the ſame Manner, if you could perſuade

Yourſelves

Yourſelves that this particular Paſſage of Scripture is falſe; that it has no Meaning; or that it has no Meaning but what is common to all who have been baptized, i. e. to the Drunkard, the Whoremonger, and the true Chriſtian: This falſe Perſuaſion will not make it ſo, nor at all contribute to your Safety and Salvation. Truth will be Truth, and the Words of Chriſt will have their Accompliſhment, however you or I, may ſtudy to evade their Force, and explain away their Meaning.

I beſeech you then, O Chriſtians, lay aſide all Prejudice, Bigotry, and Party-Spirit. Examine diligently for the Truth, and for the Experience of the Truth. Don't be aſhamed of the Bible, its Doctrines, and Expreſſions. Dare to contend earneſtly for the Truth, like a *Noah*, or the good Prophets of old, or the firſt Teachers of our holy Religion, though all around you ſhould oppoſe its Progreſs. And be aſſured for your Comfort, that though Error, Sin and Deluſion may abound, Truth is ſtrong and ſhall at laſt prevail. " All Fleſh is as Graſs, and all the Glory of Man as

the Flower of Grafs, the Grafs withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." Heaven and Earth may and fhall pafs away, but the Words of Chrift are Faithfulnefs and Truth, and fhall never pafs away.

The Point now to be fettled, is, What is meant by being born again? I have more than once fpoken upon this Subject; but as the Experience of it is abfolutely and effentially neceffary to Salvation, we think it our Duty often to bring it to your Remembrance; often to ftir up your Minds; and at the fame Time, to fet the important Truth in different Points of View.

Now, a being born again, fignifies, An inward Change, a Renewal of the Soul "in Knowledge, Righteoufnefs, and true Holinefs", after the Image of God. We being all the degenerate Children of a degenerate Parent; being all born with Difpofitions corrupted, depraved, and viciated in their moral Tendencies; "dead in Sin, and by Nature Children of Wrath"; to be born again, fignifies, The Reftoring,

Restoring, the Renewing, the Recovery of our Souls from this State of Sin and moral Depravity, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, to a new, heavenly, holy, and divine Life. In other Words; Regeneration, or the New Birth, is the Change of a Person, whatever his Character has been before, into a thoughtful, serious, holy, charitable, tender-hearted, conscientious, dutiful, and obedient Servant of God. The Nature, Process and Effects of which Divine Change may be more clearly discovered by what follows:

The Person, who has experienced what it is to be born again, whether a formal Professor, or an openly profane Sinner, is first convinced of Sin, and awakened to a deep, feeling Sense of his Guilt and Danger. "He acknowledges "and bewails his manifold Sins and Wicked-"ness, which he from Time to Time most "grievously hath committed, by Thought, "Word and Deed, against the Divine Majesty. "He earnestly repents, and is heartily sorry "for all his Misdoings. The Remembrance "of them is grievous unto him, the Burden

"of

" of them is intolerable." Thus, " weary and heavy laden " he betakes himſelf to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, " and being juſtified by Faith he has Peace with God, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt". Nor ſtops he here, but " gives all Diligence to make his Calling and Election ſure, and works out his Salvation with Fear and with Trembling. He counts all Things but Droſs and Dung that he may win Chriſt and be found in him, not having his own Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt, even the Righteouſneſs, which is of God, by Faith." " It is his Meat and his Drink ", it is the Delight of his Soul, " to do the Will of God ". Yea, whether he is in high or in low Eſtate, he knows that " the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men ", with this expreſs Deſign, (viz) to teach us, " that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world ". Impreſt with theſe Evangelical Views, " he gives all Diligence, and adds to his Faith, Virtue; and to

Virtue,

Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, Brotherly-Kindneſs; and to Brotherly-Kindneſs, Charity";—Not that blind, irrational Charity of the World, which "calls Evil Good, and Good Evil; which puts Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; which puts Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter;"—But *that* Divine Charity, Love and Benevolence, "which ſuffereth long and is kind; that Charity which envieth not, which vaunteth not itſelf, and is not puffed up; that Charity, which doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, which ſeeketh not her own, which is not eaſily provoked, and thinketh no Evil; that Charity, which rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; which beareth all Things, believeth all Things hopeth all Things, endureth all Things". The Perſon that is thus born again of the Spirit, "walks religiouſly in all good Works", the Light of his amiable Example ſhines before Men, "and at length, by God's Mercy, he attains everlaſting Felicity"; is received into

into the Realms of Bliſs with an, Euge! "Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! Thou haſt been faithful unto Death, I now beſtow upon thee a Crown of Life. Be thou rewarded according to thy Works."

"To what has been ſaid it is commonly ob-
"jected, that Baptiſm is Regeneration, or the
"New Birth; and ſince we have all been bap-
"tized, it is an obvious Concluſion that we
"have all been regenerate, or born again, and
"therefore need give ourſelves no farther
"Thought and Concern about it".

I am well aware that this is a common Objection, and therefore will endeavor impartially to conſider it. For when Mankind are taught that the Whole of that Regeneration, or New Birth, which the Scripture requires as abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, means no more than being ſprinkled with Water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: And when they who have been baptized are taught to think, that they have no more to do with Regeneration, the

Error

Error ſeems too groſs, and too dangerous to be paſſed over in Silence.

To this Objection then I anſwer:

That Baptiſm is not Regeneration, or the New Birth, in the Scripture Senſe of the Word, is as clear as any mathematical Demonſtration, from the following Argument. "If Baptiſm is preciſely the ſame, in the Scrip-"ture Senſe of the Word, with Regeneration, "or the New Birth, then the ſame Things "may be affirmed of Baptiſm, that are affirm-"ed of Regeneration, or the New Birth". Now what ſays the Scripture concerning thoſe Perſons who have been born again?

St. *John* tells us, "Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God". Now let us ſee if this will hold true when applied to Baptiſm. Whoſoever is baptized doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot Sin, becauſe he is baptized. Judge for yourſelves, Brethren, whether this Repreſentation is agreeable to Ttuth and Experience.

Again: "Whatſoever is born of God overcometh the World". But will it, or can it, be ſaid, that whoſoever is baptized overcometh the World? No: Where are there ſuch worldly-minded, ſuch openly profane, ſuch daring Tranſgreſſors of the pure Laws of the Goſpel, as many of thoſe who have been baptized? Where are there ſuch daring Rebels againſt the Divine Majeſty as many of us who call ourſelves Chriſtians? But if whoſoever is born of God doth not, cannot, continue in the Commiſſion of known Sin; and if being born of God and Baptiſm be the ſame Thing; then whoſoever is baptized doth not, cannot, continue in the Commiſſion of known Sin. This being directly contrary to our moſt candid and charitable Obſervations upon the State of the World; it follows as a neceſſary Conſequence, that Baptiſm and the New Birth, are not one and the ſame Thing. Let no Man therefore, O Chriſtians, deceive you with vain Words. Truſt not to the Gifts and Endowments of Nature, or to the outward Sprinkling with Water in Baptiſm. Baptiſm is allowed

to

to be of Divine Appointment. But if we truſt to the "outward and viſible Sign", without experiencing "the inward and ſpiritual Grace", we ſhall find ourſelves miſerably diſappointed at the great Day. "That which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh. And they that are in the Fleſh", unrenewed and unchanged by the Divine Spirit, "cannot pleaſe God", how orthodoxly ſoever they may have been ſprinkled with Water. Tis then, and then alone, my Brethren, when God does accompany "the outward and viſible Sign, with the inward and ſpiritual Grace", that there is Regeneration in a *ſaving* Senſe. And the Perſon who is thus baptized and born again, "follows the Example of our Saviour Chriſt, and "is made like unto him. That as Chriſt died "and roſe again for us: So does he who is "thus baptized, die from Sin, and riſe again "unto Righteouſneſs. He is continually "mortifying all his evil and corrupt Affecti-"ons, and daily proceeding in all Virtue and "Godlineſs of Living".

But ſhall we ſay that this is the Caſe with

every Perſon that is baptized? Alas, Alas, the Tempers, Diſpoſitions, and Conduct of Thouſands and Tens of Thouſands would give ſuch Aſſertion the Lie!

"But if Baptiſm and Regeneration be not "the ſame Thing, why do we thank God "when we baptize a Child, that he has rege-"nerated that Child by the Holy Ghoſt?"

I anſwer:

Water in Baptiſm is the Sign of the New Birth. Or rather, Water repreſents the Holy Spirit, which is the Author of that Divine Change. As it is the Property of Water to purify the Body; ſo it is the Property and Office of the Spirit, to purge, cleanſe, and purify the Soul. Now ſince Water is the well-known Emblem of the Spirit; ſince Jeſus Chriſt himſelf inſtituted the Ordinance of Baptiſm; and ſince he has promiſed the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him, we may charitably hope, till we ſee Reaſon to think the contrary, that the outward Sprinkling with Water, is accompanied with the inward Waſhing and Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.

"Being

"Being born again is only a figurative Ex-
"preſſion for Moral-Honeſty, Goodneſs of
"Heart, and the like".

We acknowledge it to be a figurative Expreſſion, and ſo are all the Expreſſions made uſe of when we ſpeak concerning the Soul, or any of its Operations. While we are in the Body, we muſt ſpeak in a Language adapted to the Organs of the Body. And whenever we have Occaſion to ſpeak of the Soul, or any other ſpiritual and immaterial Being, we are obliged to take our Expreſſions from the known Operations of the Body, and apply them to the Soul, or to thoſe other ſpiritual and immaterial Subſtances, of which we are ſpeaking. Thus, in Condeſcenſion to our Infirmities, the Bible every where ſpeaks of God, as having a Body, Arms, Eyes, Ears, Noſtrils &c; whereas it is a certain Truth, that He exiſts in a Manner totally different from any Thing that we can even conceive.

Thus, in the Caſe before us, ſpeaking of a Change wrought upon, or effected in the Soul, our Saviour calls it, A being born again; taking

taking his Expreſſion from the common and well known Operation in Nature, A Childs being born into the World. Now when a Child is born, it undergoes a very great and important Change. It exiſts in a Manner totally different from its former Self: So the Perſon, who is born again of the Spirit, experiences a very great Change in his Soul; has very different Views and Senſations from thoſe he was conſcious of before that Change took Place.

Nor will it be ſufficient to anſwer, "How can theſe Things be? How can a man be born when he is old"? Theſe Queſtions of *Nicodemus*, you will obſerve, did not contain a Refutation of the Redeemer's Doctrine, but only a Diſplay of his own Blindneſs, Ignorance, and Unbelief.

We acknowledge and contend that Morality is neceſſary; Goodneſs of Heart is neceſſary; and let your Morality and Goodneſs of Heart be ſuch as the Goſpel of Chriſt requires, and we are agreed. But let us beware of ſubſtituting Names for Things; Shadows for Subſtan-

ces;

ees; and a Sort of good-natured, inoffenſive, inactive Character, or, what is worſe, a Worldly Spirit, for the pure and genuine Religion of the New Teſtament. Thoſe who talk moſt about Moral-Honeſty and Goodneſs of Heart, are generally the moſt careleſs of Chriſtians, the moſt formal and lukewarm of Profeſſors, and the moſt daring of Offenders. Let them be taken upon their own Principles, reaſoned with juſtly, and t'will be eaſy to condemn them out of their own Mouth.

"Another Objection more powerful with "bigoted, narrow-minded People than all "the former, is, That none but Methodiſts "and Enthuſiaſts preach up the Neceſſity of "being regenerate and born again".

To this it is anſwered: If the Doctrine is not a Doctrine of Reaſon and Scripture, let it be given up. But if it is, We are bold to contend for it, though all the World ſhould call us Enthuſiaſts. Party Names, and ill-natured Diſtinctions, are with us of very ſmall Weight. "He that does the will of my Father which is in Heaven", according to the

Doctrine

Doctrine of the Saviour of the World, "the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother", by what Name ſoever he is diſtinguiſhed and called. We muſt ever believe that an humble, ſincere, pious, Churchman, is much higher in the Favor of God, than an hypocritical, or profane Methodiſt, or Diſſenter. And on the contrary, that an humble, ſincere, pious Methodiſt, or Diſſenter, is much more acceptable to the God of Heaven, than an hypocritical, or profane Churchman. Names change not the Nature of Things. A good Man is a good Man, though all the Sons and Daughters of diſſolute Mirth, Gaity and Pleaſure, conſpire together to call him, by Way of Reproach, an Enthuſiaſt, or Methodiſt. And a pious, well-meaning Enthuſiaſt, though there may be ſeveral Things in his Conduct and Principles weak and indefenſible, will always have a Preference in the Eyes of impartial Intelligence, to a Man, however learned, polite and honorable, who makes not a Conſcience of living to the Glory of God in all his Actions.

The Queſtion then with a Chriſtian ought not

not to be, whether the New Birth is a Doctrine of the Methodiſts, but whether it is a Doctrine of the Bible, and whether it ought not to be a Doctrine of all thoſe, who boaſt themſelves the Members of the Church of England. If it is a Doctrine of the Bible, no Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed of it; no Miniſter ought to deny, or conceal it. 'Tis at the Peril of our own Salvation.

Now this obnoxious Tenet is revealed to us in the Bible by a great Variety of Expreſſions, moſt of which convey the Idea of a Change in the human Soul, not in the Power of Man, unaſſiſted by the Spirit of God, to accompliſh. Take the following Paſſages, and judge for yourſelves.

" And now, Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, to keep the Commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes which I command thee this Day for thy Good? Circumciſe therefore the Foreſkin of your

 Heart,

Heart, and be no more ſtiff-necked".—"And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart and with all thy Soul".—"Thus ſaith the Lord, Break up your Fallow-Grounds, and ſow not among Thorns: Circumciſe yourſelves to the Lord, and take away the Foreſkin of your Heart". "—O Jeruſalem, waſh thine Heart from Wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved".

"Then will I ſprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: From all your Filthineſs, and from all your Idols will I cleanſe you. A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh, and I will give you an Heart of Fleſh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes, and ye ſhall keep my Judgments and do them".—"And I will give them one Heart, and I will put my Spirit within you; and I will take the ſtony Heart out of their Fleſh, and will give them an Heart of Fleſh; that they may

walk in my Statutes, and keep mine Ordinances and do them ".—" I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts ".—" I will give them one Heart and one Way, that they may fear me forever ".

" I indeed baptize you with Water, but he that cometh after me ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire ".—" Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ".—" Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God ".—" Not by Works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy he ſaves us, by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt ".—" Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth ".—" And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins ".—" We are his Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works ".—

Theſe multiplied Paſſages, under different Modes of Speaking, all bear Witneſs to the Doctrine of the New Birth, the Nature and

Neceſſity of which, we have been endeavoring to explain and eſtabliſh. They all expreſs, or imply, an inward Change, wrought upon, or effected in, the Soul by the Power of the Divine Spirit.

It is called, The Circumciſion of the Heart: —A Waſhing of the Heart from Wickedneſs: —A Taking away the ſtony Heart, and giving an Heart of Fleſh:—A Putting God's Spirit within us:—A Putting his Law in our inward Parts, and writing it on our Hearts.—It is called, Converſion, Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt:—And the Perſons who have experienced this Change, are ſaid to be begotten of God:—To be new Creatures:—To be created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works:—And to be holy in all Manner of Converſation.

"But you will perhaps further object, that I "am miſtaken in the Meaning of all thoſe figu-"rative Expreſſions; that none but Enthuſi-"aſts ever put ſuch an Interpretation upon "them".

Hard Names having a good while been our Portion, we have learnt to bear them without

Reſentment;

Resentment; nay, we esteem them our Glory and our Joy. But suppose it should appear that you yourselves have often prayed to Almighty God to bestow upon you those very spiritual Blessings, which are, in our Day, treated as the sure Characteristics of Methodism and Enthusiasm? Would this convince you, that the Doctrine of Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, is a Doctrine you ought to espouse and contend for? What mean all these Addresses and Petitions in the Prayer-Book?

"Let us beseech him to grant us true Re-"pentance and his Holy Spirit":— "O God, "make clean our Hearts within us, and take "not thy Holy Spirit from us":—"So replenish "him with the Grace of thy Holy Spirit":— "Endue them with thine Holy Spirit":— "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and "the Love of God, and the Fellowship", Com-"munion, or Communication, "of the Holy "Ghost, be with us all evermore":— "Cleanse the Thoughts of our Hearts by the "Inspiration of thy Holy Spirit":— "Grant

"that

"that we being regenerate and made thy "Children by Adoption and Grace, may daily "be renewed by thy Holy Spirit":— "Send "thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts "that most excellent Gift of Charity":

"Come Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire,
"And lighten with cælestial Fire.
"Thy blessed Unction from above,
"Is Comfort, Life, and Fire of Love".

Now all these Petitions, which we, as Members of the Church of England, put up to Almighty God at different Times, must either have some Meaning, or they have none. If they have none, our Prayers must be highly displeasing to God, and must call down a Curse, and not a Blessing. If they have any Meaning, 'tis evident the Holy Spirit of God is the Thing desired. And why is the Holy Spirit thus earnestly requested? To work this New Birth in our Souls, and to carry on a Work of Sanctification by his Divine Power. Shall we then pray for the Holy Spirit in the Church, and as soon as we leave that sacred Place, deny that there is any such Thing,

or

or that his Assistance is necessary? Such Prayers must be an Abomination. Shall we pray for the Holy Spirit in the Reading-Desk, and then ascend the Pulpit, and preach against it, and say there is no such Thing, 'tis all Enthusiasm? Let others be guilty of such preposterous, inconsistent Conduct, we cannot, we must not, we dare not.

"The Compilers of our Liturgy, say our "Opponents, were pious well-meaning Men, "and this enthusiastic Doctrine might pass "in those dark Ages: But Mankind are now "grown wiser, and better informed upon "those Subjects".

The Doctrine of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, has in every Age of the Church been a Subject of Redicule to the Formal, the Careless, and the Profane. No Wonder! These are Things they intermeddle not with. But the truly pious, learned, and sober-minded, have always contended, that an experimental Acquaintance with it is essentially necessary to Salvation. And I beseech you, who is likely to be the best Judge of the Meaning of God's

Word?

Word? Thoſe whoſe Lives, in one View or other, are a continual Contradiction to the plaineſt Precepts of the Goſpel; or thoſe whoſe Lives are a continual Imitation of the Example of Chriſt? Which would a wiſe Man, in this Caſe, give Credit to? The World ſay, the Doctrine of the New Birth is an enthuſiaſtic Doctrine. The pious and learned, of every Perſuaſion, aſſure us there is no Salvation without it. Out of many take the few following Teſtimonies.

"Earthly Privilege, Pedigree and Birth, will "not ſerve our Turn. We muſt be born "from above, by a new and ſupernatural "Birth, or elſe we cannot ſee the Kingdom of "God". LIGHTFOOT.

"Except a Man be born of the Spirit, en-"tering on a new, pure, ſpiritual Life, by the "Holy Ghoſt's Deſcending upon him, he can-"not enter the Kingdom of God". HAMMOND.

"Except a Man be born again, i. e. renew-"ed in his Mind, Will, and Affections, by the "Operation of the Holy Spirit, and ſo become

"a

" a new Creature, he cannot ſee, or enjoy, the " Bleſſings of the Kingdom of God ".

WHITBY.

" We muſt be thoroughly and univerſally " changed, the Underſtanding by Illuminati- " on, the Will by Renovation, the Affections " by Sanctification, the Life by Reformation, " or we can never come at Heaven. — The re- " generating Change is wrought in the Soul " by the Spirit of God, which purifies it from " its natural Defilement, and renews it after " the divine Likeneſs and Image ".

BURKITT.

" Whoſoever would become a regular Mem- " ber of the Kingdom of God, muſt not only " be baptized, but as ever he deſires to ſhare " in its ſpiritual, and eternal Bleſſings, he " muſt experience the renewing and ſanctify- " ing Influences of the Holy Spirit on his " Soul, to cleanſe it from the Power of Cor- " ruption, and to animate it to a divine and " ſpiritual Life ". — " There muſt be a new " Nature implanted, a new Creation formed " in our Souls, by the almighty Energy of the

 " eternal

" eternal Spirit, or it had been better for us
" that we had never been born at all ".

DODDRIDGE.

" By *being born of the Spirit*, may be under-
" ſtood *the learning to do well*, by the Aſſiſtance
" of the Holy Spirit; the receiving of the re-
" newing and ſanctifying Influences of the
" Holy Ghoſt into the Soul, to cleanſe it
" from the Power of Corruption, and to ani-
" mate it to a divine and ſpiritual Life ".

ILLUSTRATION.

" Where the Holy Ghoſt worketh, there
" Nothing is impoſſible; as may appear by
" the inward Regeneration and Sanctification
" of Mankind. When Chriſt ſaid to *Nico-*
" *demus*, Unleſs a Man be born anew of Wa-
" ter and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the
" Kingdom of GOD, he was greatly amazed
" in his Mind, and began to reaſon with
" Chriſt, demanding how a Man might be
" born which was old? Can he enter, ſaith
" he, into his Mother's Womb again, and ſo
" be born anew? Behold a lively Pattern of a
" fleſhly and carnal Man: He hath little or no

" Intelligence

"Intelligence of the Holy Ghoſt, and there-
"fore he goeth bluntly to work, and aſketh
"how this Thing were poſſible to be true?
"Whereas otherwiſe if he had known the
"great Power of the Holy Ghoſt in this Be-
"half, that it is he which inwardly worketh
"the Regeneration and New Birth of Man-
"kind, he would never have marvelled at
"Chriſt's Words, but would rather have
"taken Occaſion thereby to praiſe and glorify
"God. For as there are three ſeveral and
"ſundry Perſons in the Deity; ſo have they
"three ſeveral and ſundry Offices proper unto
"each of them: The Father to create; the
"Son to redeem; and the Holy Ghoſt to ſancti-
"fy and regenerate".

HOMILIES.

What ſhall we ſay to theſe Things? Are they true, or are they falſe? If they are true, they are important, and ought to be attended to. If they are falſe, let them be given up, let them be diſregarded. But, O my Brethren, you cannot ſeriouſly conclude that they are either falſe, or unimportant: Here is too much

Evidence to the Contrary. Lay aſide then all Prejudice and Party-Spirit, and follow witherſoever Religion and Truth lead the Way. Examine whether you have ever experienced this divine Change, or not. If you have, give God the Glory. If you have not, ſet about the Work without Delay. We want you to be happy; we want you to be ſaved; we want you to go to Heaven, when you die. But ſo ſure as God is true, you can't be happy, you can't be ſaved, you can't go to Heaven, without this "Death unto Sin, and New Birth unto Righteouſneſs". I beſeech you therefore, O Chriſtians, by the Mercies of God, to lay theſe Things ſeriouſly to Heart. Let no Man deceive you; let no Man laugh and ridicule you out of your Salvation. Dare to ſtep aſide, and judge for yourſelves. If your Friends and Neighbors have ſuch mean, earthly, groveling Souls, as to be altogether chained down to the Things of this vain World, that's no Reaſon why you ſhould ſubmit to ſuch beſotted Slavery. Aſſert, my Brethren, aſſert your native Liberty. Shake off the Yoke of Sin

and

and Satan, and dare to become Chriſtians indeed. Call down divine Aids. Mount aloft on the Wings of Prayer, and leave the World behind. Heaven will make Amends for all your Struggles in the Service of your Saviour and your God. "Fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life". Be firſt in every Thing that is amiable, ornamental and praiſeworthy; and though the World will not imitate, they'll ſecretly admire your ſuperior Virtues. "See that you walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe, redeeming the Time", becauſe you know not when the final Hour will come. In ſhort, walk as Chriſt walked; live as he lived; tread in his very Footſteps; "ſo ſhall you find Favor and good Underſtanding in the Sight of God and of all good Men".

It is for Want of this inward Change, this Renewal of the Soul, this divine Operation, that we ſee ſuch ſtrange inconſiſtent Characters among Chriſtians. Sometimes they have the Appearance of being good and religious: At other Times you'll obſerve them quite the

Contrary.

Contrary. There is no Confiſtency, or Uniformity, in their religious Conduct. Sometimes they'll put on a ſanctified Countenance, come to Church and Sacrament, and you would conclude they are about to commence very pious. But wait a little, and you ſhall ſee them acting their Part in very different Scenes: Gay, giddy, thoughtleſs; purſuing the wanton Delights of Bacchus and Venus, or ſquandering their golden Hours at Balls, Aſſemblies, or Card Tables. Strange inconſiſtent Character's indeed! Equally as ſtrange as though you ſhould ſee "a Fountain ſending forth ſweet Water and bitter, or a Fig-tree producing Olive Berries, and a Vine Figs".

Nay, my Brethren, be aſſured of this, that the "ſame Fountain cannot yield both ſalt Water and freſh". "Either make the Tree good, and its Fruit good, or elſe the Tree corrupt, and its Fruit corrupt". Either ſerve God wholly and conſiſtently, or the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, wholly and conſiſtently. "I know thy Works", ſaid the Redeemer to the Church of Laodicea, "that thou art neither

ther cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, becauſe thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will ſpue thee out of my Mouth".—"Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon". Neither can ye unite Chriſt and Belial. "If the Lord be God ſerve him": If the World, carnal Pleaſures, and vain Amuſements, ſerve them. But O remember! "If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live".

Such a motly Mixture of ſerving God and Mammon; ſuch a praying and ſinning, and repenting and ſinning, and ſinning and repenting again, is a ſure Indication you have never experienced the divine Change, called, A being born again. For if you had, you would think it as eaſy to pluck the Sun from the Firmament, and to change the whole Frame of Nature, as to go to Heaven, while living ſuch a Courſe of Life. You would ſee the Evil of Sin, of all Sin, of every Sin, in ſuch a ſtriking Point of View, that you would hate and deteſt it, and flee even from the Appearance, as from the Face of a Serpent.

Thoſe

Thoſe Things which now ſeem pleaſing, the Joy, the Comfort, the Satisfaction, and the Delight of your Life, would then loſe their infatuating Charms, and Holineſs, Happineſs and Heaven, take Poſſeſſion of your Souls.

A good natural Diſpoſition, ſome Shreds and Appearances of Morality and Goodneſs, you may have without it; but you never will be conſiſtently and uniformly, inwardly and outwardly religious, till this divine Change has taken Place in your Minds. You may "make clean the Outſide of the Cup and the Platter" without it; but then only, and not till then, you will be cleanſed from inward Impieties. Then and then alone you will be enabled "to offer up your Bodies a living Sacrifice", and to be "holy in all Manner of Converſation". Yet this, you muſt allow, is "our reaſonable Service".

Come then, my Brethren and Fellow-Probationers for Eternity, let us ſet about this great Work in Earneſt. Think me not your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth in this plain Manner. If you are rich, your Rich-

es

es will not ſave you; if you are poor, your Poverty will not excuſe you; you muſt be born again of the Spirit; you muſt be renewed in the Image of your Minds; you muſt become new Creatures; you muſt lay aſide every Weight, and perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God, or good had it been for you that you had never been born; you'll ſink lower than the Grave.

If you are in the Number of thoſe who profeſs to have experienced this Change, let us ſee it; ſhew it by your Conduct, your Tempers, your Diſpoſitions, your Actions. Let the Light of your good Works, and praiſeworthy Example ſhine before Men. All the Profeſſions in the World, without this living Evidence, will not ſatisfy Us, and ought not to ſatisfy You.

If you are ſtill in Doubt whether the Doctrine is true, or whether it is of any conſiderable Importance in the Chriſtian Scheme; and if you are in Earneſt about Salvation upon any Plan whatever, let this be the conſtant Prayer and Language of your Heart;

 "If

"If I am right, Lord, teach my Heart
"Still in the Right to ſtay:
"If I am wrong, thy Grace impart
"To find the better Way".

If you are convinced of the Neceſſity and Importance of this Renewal of the inner Man, and if you are yet Strangers to the experimental Knowledge of it, take the Advice, and believe the Declaration, of the compaſſionate Saviour of the World: "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. If a Son ſhall aſk Bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a Stone? Or if he aſk a Fiſh, will he for a Fiſh give him a Serpent? Or if he ſhall aſk an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?"

I have now declared my Sentiments upon this very important Subject with all Freedom, Simplicity, and Zeal. I hope the Light in which we have conſidered it is juſt, and the Evidence ſuch as ought to command Attention. It now remains with you, my Brethren, to give it that Reception you are perſuaded it deſerves.

Sentiments like theſe are by no means calculated to procure the Favor, the Preferment, and the Honor of this World. This we know, and have made our Account off. "But —none of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my Courſe with Joy, and the Miniſtry, which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God".

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy; to him be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all Ages, World without End.

Amen.

In this and the foregoing SERMONS the READER is desired to correct and excuse the following ERRATA.

Page 9 for cavelling read cavilling. Page 10 et alibi for possitive read positive. Page 11 et alibi for incontrovertable read incontrovertible. Page 13 et alibi for redicule read ridicule. Page 19 for couragious read courageous. Page 13 et alibi, for buffited read buffeted. Page 41 et alibi for dispise read despise. Page 48 for dispair read despair. Page 53 et alibi for Gaity read Gaiety. Page 59 for destributing read distributing. Page 64 for loose read lose. Page 77 for discribed read described. Page 77 et alibi for Paradice read Paradise. Page 79 for Suerty read Surety. Page 84 for hidious read hideous. Page 95 et alibi for unchangeble read unchangeable. Page 101 for Calvery read Calvary. Page 107 for Recumbancy read Recumbency. Page 108 for Husbands read Husband's. Page 108 for considered read considered. Page 110 for beliveth read believeth. Page 114 et alibi for bare read bear. Page 115 for Zeraphs read Seraphs. Page 125 for acquiting read acquitting. Page 136 for shall beg Leave read, I shall beg Leave. Page 142 for dispiteful read despiteful. Page 148 for preceed read precede. Page 161 for Incumbrance read Encumbrance. Page 187 for Noral-Honesty read Moral-Honesty.

Marriage honorable, Whoredom damnable:

A

S E R M O N.

" A happy Marriage has in it all the Pleasures of Friend-
" ship, all the Enjoyments of Sense and Reason, and in-
" deed, all the Sweets of Life. Nothing is a greater
" Mark of a degenerate and vicious Age, than the com-
" mon Ridicule which passes on this State of Life. It
" is, indeed, only happy in those who can look down
" with Scorn or Neglect on the Impieties of the Times,
" and tread the Paths of Life together in a constant uni-
" form Course of Virtue. SPECTATOR.

" All Bread is sweet to a Whoremonger; he will not leave
" off till he die. A Man that breaketh Wedlock, saying
" thus in his Heart, Who seeth me? I am compassed
" about with Darkness, the Walls cover me, and no
" Body seeth me, what need I to fear, the Most-High
" will not remember my Sins? Such a Man only fear-
" eth the Eyes of Men, and knoweth not that the Eyes of
" the Lord are ten thousand Times brighter than the
" Sun, beholding all the Ways of Men, and considering
" the most secret Parts ".

WISE SON OF SIRACH.

The Prayer before Sermon.

O Almighty Lord and Everlasting God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God, and Heirs of eternal Life; grant us we beseech thee, that having this Hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with Power and great Glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious Kingdom. To this End succeed the Means of Grace we now enjoy. Inspire our Breasts with an earnest Desire of knowing and of doing thy whole Will. Fill our Minds with just, loyal, and honorable Thoughts of God; and with Harmony, Peace, and Good-Will towards one another. May Swearing, Adultery, Fornication, Lying and Slandering, cease from among us. May Extortion, unjust Dealing, and Excess in all its Kinds, be known no more. And may Truth, Justice, Integrity and Uprightness, reign, prevail and flourish. May we live as the Re-

deemed of the Lord, and when we die, may we die the Death of the Righteous. Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs, pure and unſpotted, before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, be Honor and Dominion, Majeſty and Power, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father &c.

HEBREWS 13. 4.

Marriage is honorable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.

I am very ſenſible, O Chriſtians, that the Subject theſe Words lead us to treat upon is rather of a delicate Nature. To inſiſt upon it, is, in our Opinion, neceſſary; but to ſpeak in ſuch a Manner as not to give juſt Offence to the Ear of Chaſtity; Matter of Ridicule to the unclean and brutiſh Soul; and ſo as may be of Uſe to the Congregation in general; is not ſo eaſy as by ſome may be imagined. This one Thing however we would aſſure you off, and it is what we would wiſh you ever to retain in Memory, That all our Diſcourſes are meant to do good; to convince the ſtraying Soul of it's Danger; to awaken the Formaliſt to ſee the Folly of his ſelf-righteous

teous Dependance; to comfort, caution, encourage, and lead forward the true Believer in the narrow, peaceful Way of Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs; and thus, at laſt, to preſent you pure, ſpotleſs, faultleſs, before the Preſence of the divine Glory, with exceeding Joy.

This, my Brethren, this is our ſole Deſign in preaching the Goſpel among you. For this, for this alone, in a public Capacity, we deſire to live. To this, by the Grace of God, all other Things do and ſhall give way. For your Sakes we deſire to ſpend and be ſpent, though we are well perſuaded, the more Pains we are at for your Salvation, the leſs ſhall we be eſteemed by many. But, Thanks be to God, "none of theſe Things move us, neither count we our Lives dear unto ourſelves, ſo that we may finiſh our Courſe with Joy, and the Miniſtery, which we have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God".

Chriſtianity is by no Means confined to one partial View of Things. No: It contains a complete

complete and finiſhed Syſtem of Doctrines and Morals. All that is neceſſary to be believed; whatever is neceſſary to be done, is taught with a Perſpecuity and Plainneſs levelled to the meaneſt Capacity.

The Doctrine contained in the Text is entirely of a practical Nature, and by no Means of the leaſt Importance among thoſe made known to us in the Pages of Inſpiration. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.

I have not choſen theſe Words out of an idle Curioſity of ſaying Something from them out of the common Way; but becauſe I am fully convinced there is great Need, upon this, as well as upon other Subjects, "to cry aloud and not to ſpare; to lift up our Voice like a Trumpet, and to ſhew you your Tranſgreſſions", in this Reſpect as well as others, "and to point out to you your Sins".

Let us enter upon the Subject.

When God Almighty created the Angelic World he was pleaſed to form at firſt, perhaps an

an innumerable Multitude, thouſands of thouſands, and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand. And this becauſe they were created with Natures incapable of propagating their own Kind. But when the ſame all-powerful Being ſpoke our World into Exiſtence, he was pleaſed to proceed in a ſomewhat different Manner. Inſtead of forming at firſt a countleſs Number of rational Beings, he made but two, the Male and his Female; Each of them with rational Souls endowed; each of them perfectly of the ſame Nature, Species, or Kind; but varying in their Formation for the ſole Purpoſe of propagating the human Race.

So formed was the firſt happy Pair; ſo formed have ſince been all their Sons and Daughters, that Nature ſecretly, yet powerfully, conſtrains them to ſeek the Gratification of Deſire. Such however is the Wiſdom, and ſuch the ſupreme Goodneſs of our Creator and Governor, that he has made ſufficient Proviſion by which even theſe may be gratified, in perfect Harmony with the Will of God, the Good of Society, and the Happineſs of all the Individuals of the Sons of Men. [Having

Having formed our firſt Parents in a State of comparative Perfection, God was pleaſed to inſtitute the Ordinance of Matrimony. The Woman, we are aſſured, "is Bone of Man's Bones, and Fleſh of his Fleſh, and was called Woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of Man. Therefore ſhall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and ſhall cleave unto his Wife; and they ſhall be one Fleſh." This is the original Inſtitution. And it is worth while to obſerve, that Jeſus Chriſt is ſo far from oppoſing, or altering the ſame, that he explains and confirms it in the cleareſt Terms. "The Phariſees came unto him, tempting him and ſaying, Is it lawful for a Man to put away his Wife for every Cauſe? He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read that he who made them at the Beginning, made them Male and Female? And ſaid, For this Cauſe ſhall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and ſhall cleave to his Wife; and they twain ſhall be one Fleſh. Wherefore they are no more twain but one Fleſh.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not Man put aſunder".

Theſe Words of our Saviour, together with his Preſence and Conduct at the Marriage of Cana in Galilee, contain the ſtrongeſt Approbation and Confirmation of the firſt matrimonial Inſtitution. Nor is any Perſon, or any Set of People upon Earth, excluded this Privilege, by the divine Laws, unleſs they chooſe to abſtain from Principle of Conſcience, or from Motives peculiar to themſelves. Yea, we are informed by the Apoſtle *Paul*, that it was to be one of the diſtinguiſhing Characteriſtics of Antichriſt, and of the grand Apoſtacy of the laſt Times from the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel, to forbid Obedience to this divine Appointment. "Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſſly, that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils; ſpeaking Lies in Hypocriſy, having their Conſcience ſeared with a hot Iron; *forbidding to marry*".

This was to be the Doctrine of falſe Teachers;

ers; and at this Day is the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, and of no other Christian Church whatever; so that the Prophecy of the inspired Apostle is fulfilled, with an indubitable Application, before our Eyes.

But notwithstanding all the false Glosses and Perversions of mistaken, or designing Men, the Law of Nature, the Law of God, the Laws of all well regulated Societies, abundantly assure us, That Marriage is honorable in all Persons, of every Rank and Denomination, when conjugal Fidelity is preserved pure and inviolate.

"Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true Source
"Of human Offspring, sole Propriety
"In Paradise of all Things common else.
"By thee adult'rous Lust was driv'n from Men
"Among the bestial Herds to range; by thee
"Founded in Reason, loyal, just, and pure,
"Relations dear, and all the Charities
"Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known.

———

"Perpetual Fountain of domestic Sweets,
"Whose Bed is undefil'd and chaste pronounc'd
"Present, or past, as Saints and Patriarchs us'd,
"Here Love his golden Shafts employs, here lights

"His conſtant Lamp, and waves his purple Wings,
"Reigns here and revels; not in the bought Smile
"Of Harlots, loveleſs, joyleſs, unindear'd,
"Caſual Fruition".———

Thoſe Perſons then, who, under proper Circumſtances, comply with the Inſtitution, act perfectly agreeable both to Nature, and to divine and human Laws. Thoſe who ſeek the Gratification of their Deſires in any other Way, act inconſiſtent with the Law of God; inconſiſtent with the Good of Society; inconſiſtent with the Dictates of Reaſon and Conſcience; inconſiſtent with human Laws; and quite contrary to the Cuſtoms and Practice of even the more enlightened Heathens.—But—"Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge"!

Theſe awful Words are added as a Guard or Defence of the matrimonial Inſtitution. For though the free Uſe of a Variety of Women was winked at, and overlooked, becauſe of the Groſsneſs and Hardneſs of the People's Hearts, during the Patriarchal and Moſaical Diſpenſations; yet ſuch a Liberty was entirely

inconſiſtent

inconſiſtent with the Deſign of the original Inſtitution, and is no longer permitted under the greater Light and Purity of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. So that all who indulge to the Gratification of their carnal Inclinations, in in any other Way, than that of legal Matrimony, are guilty of Uncleanneſs, Adultery, or Fornication. And we are aſſured in the moſt ſolemn, ſerious, and poſitive Manner, in different Parts of the Word of God, that none ſuch have any Share, or Inheritance, in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God.

Let us con-ſider a little further what the Scripture advances upon this Subject.

The ſeventh Commandment is well known. "Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery". This Precept, as explained by an infallible Expoſitor, does not merely extend to the outward Act, but even to the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart. "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old Time, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.—But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh on a Woman to luſt

after

after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart".

St. *Paul* to the Corinthians and Galatians is positive, that Uncleanneſs, in all it's various Kinds, excludes the Soul from the Favor of God, and the Joys of Heaven. "Know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God".—"Now the Works of the Fleſh are theſe; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs &c. of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in Times paſt, that they who do ſuch Things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God".

O Sirs, look not I beſeech you upon theſe Things as light Matters. To be excluded, eternally excluded the only Happineſs in the Univerſe ſuitable to your immortal Nature, will be no ſmall Evil. The ſtill ſmall Voice of

of Reaſon, Religion, and Conſcience, may be overcome for a Time by the Countenance of the World, and the Craving of the Paſſions, but it will be heard; the Time is coming when it will be heard. "Fornication therefore, and all Uncleanneſs, or Covetouſneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh Saints. Neither Filthineſs nor fooliſh Talking, nor Jeſting, which are not convenient, or becoming. For this ye know that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Perſon, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God".

Next Time then, O Sinner, next Time you are guilty of any criminal Indulgence; next Time, and every Time you commit the unclean Act; next Time you pollute your Body, or defile your Lips with fooliſh, impure, unchriſtian, unmanly Converſation (and how common is this even among thoſe who affect to call themſelves Gentlemen!) Remember, O remember, that the drawn Sword of divine Juſtice is ſuſpended over your guilty Head. Remember, that you are ſelling your All,

your

your eternal All—for what? The Gratification of a vile Luſt. Remember that you are plunging yourſelf in endleſs Miſery and Ruin —for what? Alas, for what! 'Tis a Shame even to mention what!

As we have too much Reaſon to fear theſe Charges will find many guilty, there will of Conſequence be many Advocates among us for theſe criminal Indulgences. "Some will "be ready to object againſt what has been "advanced, the gentle treatment of our Savi- "our to the Woman who was taken in Adul- "tery".

I anſwer: If you have been guilty in the ſame, or in ſimilar Reſpects, I would ſay to you as was ſaid to her, "Go your Way and ſin no more". Thus, and thus alone you will find Mercy. But if, perverting this and ſuch like Paſſages of Scripture, you perſiſt in any of theſe carnal Indulgences, and yet expect to find Mercy, you will find yourſelves groſſly and eternally diſappointed. For whatever our overweening and deceitful Hearts may ſuggeſt to the Contrary, "Whoremongers

and

and Adulterers God will judge," and condemn.

It is needleſs to inform you, my Brethren, that Scores of the young Women in this Town, have, at different Times, fallen a Prey to the deceitful Arts of lewd, wicked, and deſigning Men. For ſome Time we have obſerved this deſtructive Evil with deep Concern. What is ſtill more to be lamented, it ſeems to grow and increaſe more and more. The Infection ſpreads, rages, prevails. And though ſuch Enemies of God, and of all virtuous Society, can by no Means fully juſtify their immoral Conduct; yet a thouſand Arts are tried; the poiſonous and deſtructive Pill is carefully gilded over; the almoſt-yielding Fair-One is read a Lecture upon the Nature of Man, and the boundleſs Mercy of God.

"God is merciful. He is ſo good, ſo amia-
"ble, ſo gracious and benevolent a Being,
"that he will never damn his Creatures for
"the Enjoyment of a Little forbidden Pleaſure
"ſometimes. Beſides, Jeſus Chriſt hath died
"for Mankind; we are all imperfect Crea-

"tures: God has made us with Propenſities "of various Kinds; and why, if not to be in-"dulged? And after all, if there ſhould be "any Harm, there is Time enough hereafter "to repent and amend".

With ſuch Sophiſtry as this, their conſcientious Scruples are lulled to ſleep. An horrid Victory is obtained over Virtue, Modeſty, Reaſon, Religion. "With her much fair Speech ſhe cauſed him to yield, with the Flattering of her Lips ſhe forced him. He goeth after her ſtraightway as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks: Till a Dart ſtrike through his Liver, as a Bird haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.—Her Houſe is the Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death".

Nay perhaps, as is common with People of Circumſtance, thoſe who are living in unlawful Commerce, will take another, and more plauſable Method of ſtilling the Qualms of, at leaſt, their own guilty Fears. Their Bounty, their Charity, their Humanity to the Diſtreſſ-

ed,

ed, their Underſtanding, their Learning, their good Senſe, ſhall make Amends for this favorite, this darling, this boſom Sin. They will flatter themſelves that toſſing Half-a-Crown now and then to a poor Perſon, will readily ſet all to rights. Hence they conclude themſelves at Liberty to debauch the Young, the Simple, and Unwary. Hence Parents go mourning to their Graves for their unhappy Children. Hence Women, who are made after the Image and Similitude of God, are treated as the mere Conveniences of an Hour.—O my female Friends, methinks your Hearts ſhould burn with generous Indignation againſt the Man, whoſe mean and ſordid Soul is capable of covering you with Shame, Reproach, and everlaſting Contempt!—Hence Jelouſy, Miſery, and Unhappineſs in Families. Hence Children are diſowned, neglected, and forſaken of their reputed Parents. Hence Ignorance, Debauchery and Wretchedneſs are propagated from Age to Age. Hence divine Judgments are inflicted upon Account of our

national and crying Sins. Hence the Ruin and Deſtruction of my Country!

Nor let this ſeem too bold an Aſſertion. The Hiſtory of Mankind is an undeniable Confirmation of the melancholy Truth. This has been the Caſe in all the great Empires of the World. Succeſs in War and proſperous Trade, beget Riches and Eaſe. Riches and Eaſe beget Luxury. Luxury begets Debauchery and Degeneracy of Manners. Debauchery and Degeneracy of Manners beget divine Judgments. And divine Judgments beget among Mankind, Weeping and Mourning, Lamentation and Woe.

Oh Chriſtians, "is there not ſome choſen "Curſe, Some hidden Thunder in the Stores "of Heav'n, Red with uncommon Wrath, to "blaſt the Man", who riots on the Spoils of injured Innocence, ſports with the Miſeries of his Fellow-Creatures, and tempts his Country's Ruin?

Marriage, we have ſeen, is the only divinely appointed Means for the Prevention of Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanneſs.

And

And every allowed Violation of Chaſtity expoſes the Violator to the Indignation of Almighty God.

" But—The Expences attending a married " State are ſo conſiderable that they do not " ſuit your Fortune and Income; and there- " fore you are under the diſagreeable Neceſſi- " ty of living criminally ".

This Objection is founded in Pride of Heart, a Diſtruſt of God's Providence, and a Deſire of appearing ſuperior to what you really are. It becomes ſuch Perſons to lower their Expences, and to ſubmit to live according to their Income, however ſmall that Income may be. No Man, in this happy Country, is obliged to live in Sin. No Man need want Food and Raiment, and all that is neceſſary for Life and Godlineſs. And be it ever remembered, that Bread and Water, with Peace, Love, Harmony and Innocence, is better, even in this World far better, than all the Splendors of Royalty, with the Diſpleaſure of God, and a guilty accuſing Conſcience. But if you had rather live criminally, with Eaſe and Affluence, than marry and live virtuouſly in a more humble Sphere; take this

this along with you—" Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge".

Some who pride themſelves much upon their Birth, Rank, and Family, may probably look down with Contempt upon the ignoble Vulgar, and object,—" That there is no great " Harm in corrupting and debauching the " Daughter of a poor Perſon, whoſe Family " and Connections make no great Figure in " the World:—If it were a young Lady of " Family and Fortune that was to be ſeduced, " the Affair would then be of a very ſerious " Nature".

We grant, that to ſeduce a Perſon of Family and Fortune may be more deſtructive in its Conſequences to Society and good Morals, becauſe the Example of ſuch an one is more extenſive in its Influence. Beſides, it might expoſe the baſe Violator of female Modeſty to the faſhionable Mode of making Satisfaction at the Hazard of his Life—All which, he flatters himſelf, are avoided in Attempts upon Perſons of more obſcure Characters. But give me Leave to aſk;—Is not a poor perſons

Daughter,

Daughter equally valuable in the Eyes of an indulgent, though poor Parent, and equally precious in the impartial Eyes of Heaven? May we not further aſk ſuch ſophiſtical ſelf-deceived Gentlemen, how they would bear to have a Wife, or a Daughter, of their own ſeduced, allured, undone? Ah Sirs! Such boaſted Superiority of Birth, Family, Riches, Honors, Reaſon, Learning and Underſtanding, is cheap, very cheap, in the Eyes of God, the ſupreme Intelligence. Better indeed is the humble Cottage-Swain, who lives in Innocence, Obſcurity, and ſweet Simplicity, and who loves, obeys, and worſhips his God, than all the Sons and Daughters of Pleaſure, Family and Reputation, who, by their private or public Vices, render themſelves the Scourge of Mankind, and the Peſts of all virtuous Society.

You that are Fathers, you that are Mothers, you that are Parents to a riſing, blooming, beautiful Offspring, forgive me for ſpeaking ſo plainly upon this delicate, yet important, Subject. My Heart pities your Diſtreſſes, and partakes of your Anxieties. One fatal Snare,

on

one unguarded Moment, may prove the Ruin of your favorite Child; the Diſgrace of your virtuous Family. Men there are, who, for a momentary Gratification, would rejoice to pluck the blowing Roſe of Virgin-Modeſty; —to cloth your Children with Shame, Reproach, and Bluſhing;— todrag them down to the Pit of Deſtruction;—and to ſend you your-ſelves with Tears and Mourning, prematurely, to your Graves.

Say, my Brethren, are theſe, and ſuch as theſe, the Favorites of Heaven, and the Friends of Man? Many other Qualities they may have that are truly amiable and praiſe-worthy:—But ſhall thoſe atone for Crimes like theſe? The better their Underſtanding; —the more extenſive their Learning;—the more conſpicuous their Rank;—the greater the Crimes by them committed, and the more deteſtable the Men.—O ye Parents, value, you can't too highly value, the Modeſty, the Innocence, the Virtue of your Children. While their Virtue, their Modeſty, their Innocence, coupled with Humility, are preſerved,

they

they are, beyond Compare, the faireſt and moſt lovely Part of Creation. But theſe once betrayed—all is loſt. This World affords no Reparation. 'Twill be their higheſt Wiſdom, in a peculiar Senſe, to ſeek the Applauſe, the Approbation, and the Happineſs of Heaven.

And to you, my young female Friends, what ſhall I more ſay? O prize your Innocence. Keep at the greateſt Diſtance from all looſe, immodeſt Behavior. Allow no Man to treat you with an unbecoming Familiarity. Withſtand the Beginnings. The ſmalleſt Liberties are but ſo many Preludes to your future Ruin. An immodeſt Woman, is, of all God's Creatures, the moſt contemptible. And the Man who attempts your Innocence, (and this is always done under the higheſt Profeſſions of Love and Regard) attempts to rob you of what, with every virtuous Woman, is dearer than Life. O then, my female Friends, prize your Innocence as the firſt Ornament of your Sex. Prize your Innocence.

But--you have been already guilty; and the Crimes that have been committed, cannot be

 recalled.

recalled. What then muſt be done? Is your Caſe deſperate? Is there no Remedy? Is there no Place for Pity; none for Pardon left? Yes: The Favor of God,—the Happineſs of Heaven,—and a peaceful Conſcience may ſtill be obtained. The Blood of Jeſus Chriſt is of ſovran Virtue, it cleanſes from all Sin. He has lived;—he has died;—he interceeds on high;—he ſends his Spirit down, for theſe very Purpoſes. Seek then, O ſeek to be found in him; "not having your own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith. "Renounce", in Point of Merit, "your own both righteous and unrighteous Deeds", and truſt on him alone.—"Waſh you,—make you clean,—put away the Evil of your Doings,—ceaſe to do evil,—learn to do well;—and though your Sins may have been as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow; though they may have been red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool".—Repent like David;—weep like Peter;—love like Magdalene;—live like the Redeemer of the World.

but

But if inſtead of this you harden your Neck, perſiſt in your unclean Courſes, and live in Contempt both of divine and human Laws, your Caſe is deſperate. You will live pitied and deſpiſed by the Virtuous and the Good: You will die in Diſgrace: You will riſe in Shame: You will be ſtruck with ten-fold Confuſion before the Bar of God. "Be not deceived therefore; God is not mocked: For whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. For he that ſoweth to his Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption: But he that ſoweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting".