



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>

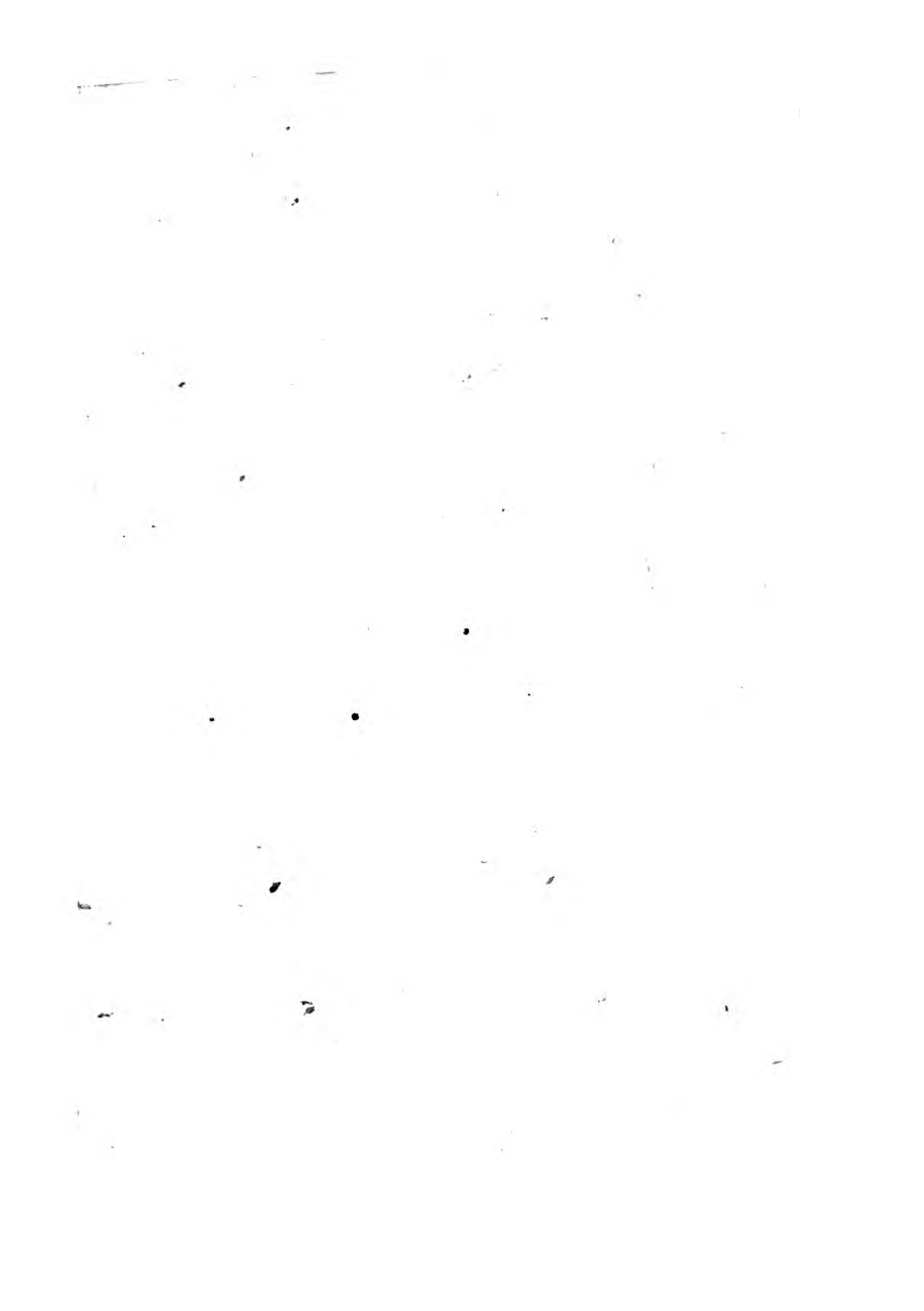


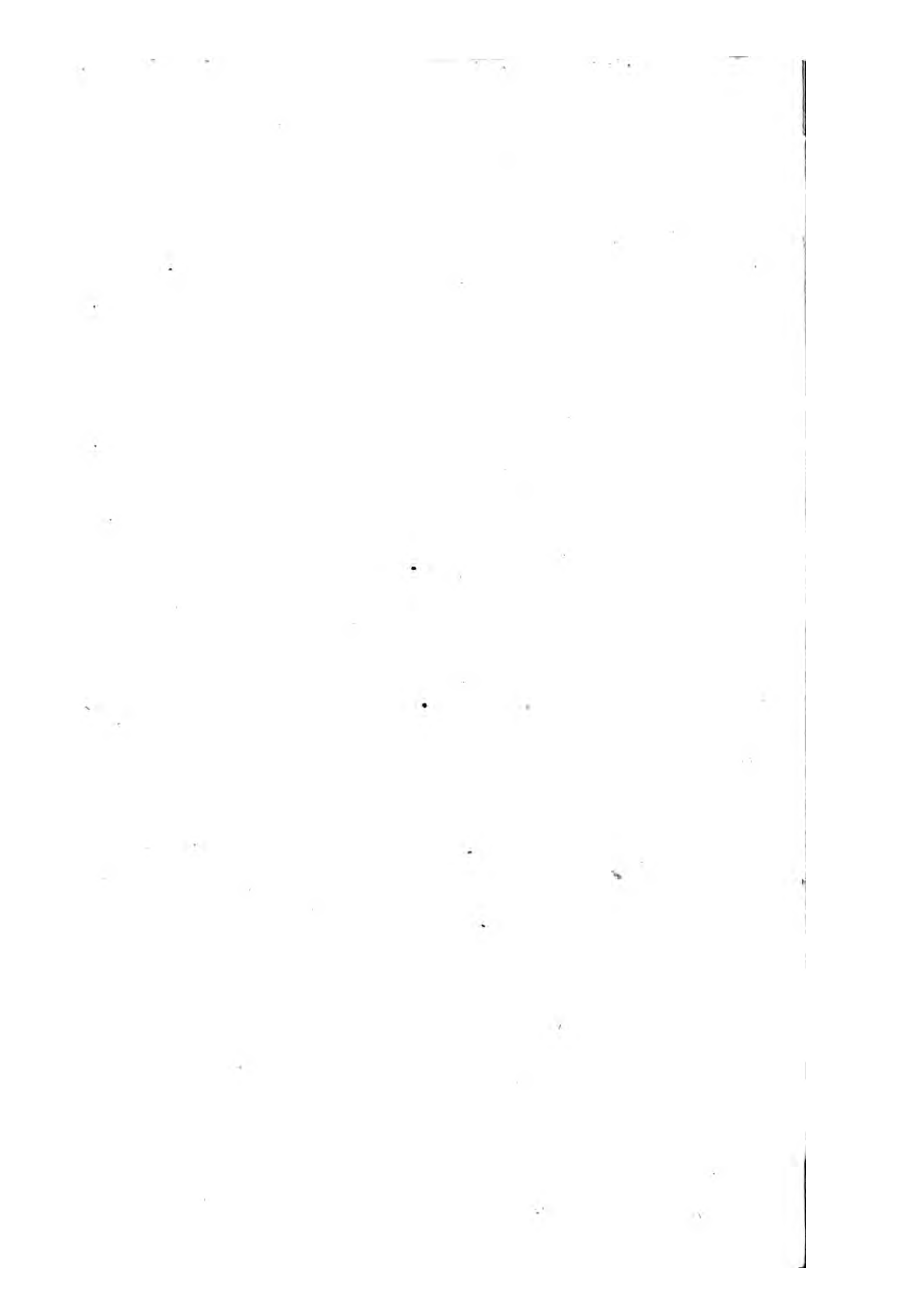
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



Godw. 160
Subt.

10









F I F T E E N
S E R M O N S

Preached at the
ROLLS CHAPEL

Upon the following Subjects.

Upon Humane Nature.	Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.
Upon the Government of the Tongue.	Upon Self-Deceit.
Upon Compassion.	Upon the Love of our Neigh- bour.
Upon the Character of <i>Balaam</i> .	Upon the Love of God.
Upon Resentment.	Upon the Ignorance of Man.

By *JOSEPH BUTLER*, L. L. B.
Preacher at the *Rolls*, and Rector of *Stan-
hope* in the Bishoprick of *Durham*.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *W. Botham*, for JAMES and JOHN
KNAPTON, at the *Crown* in *St. Paul's Church-
Yard*. M D C C X X V I.





To the Right Honourable

Sir JOSEPH JEK YLL,

Master of the ROLLS, &c.

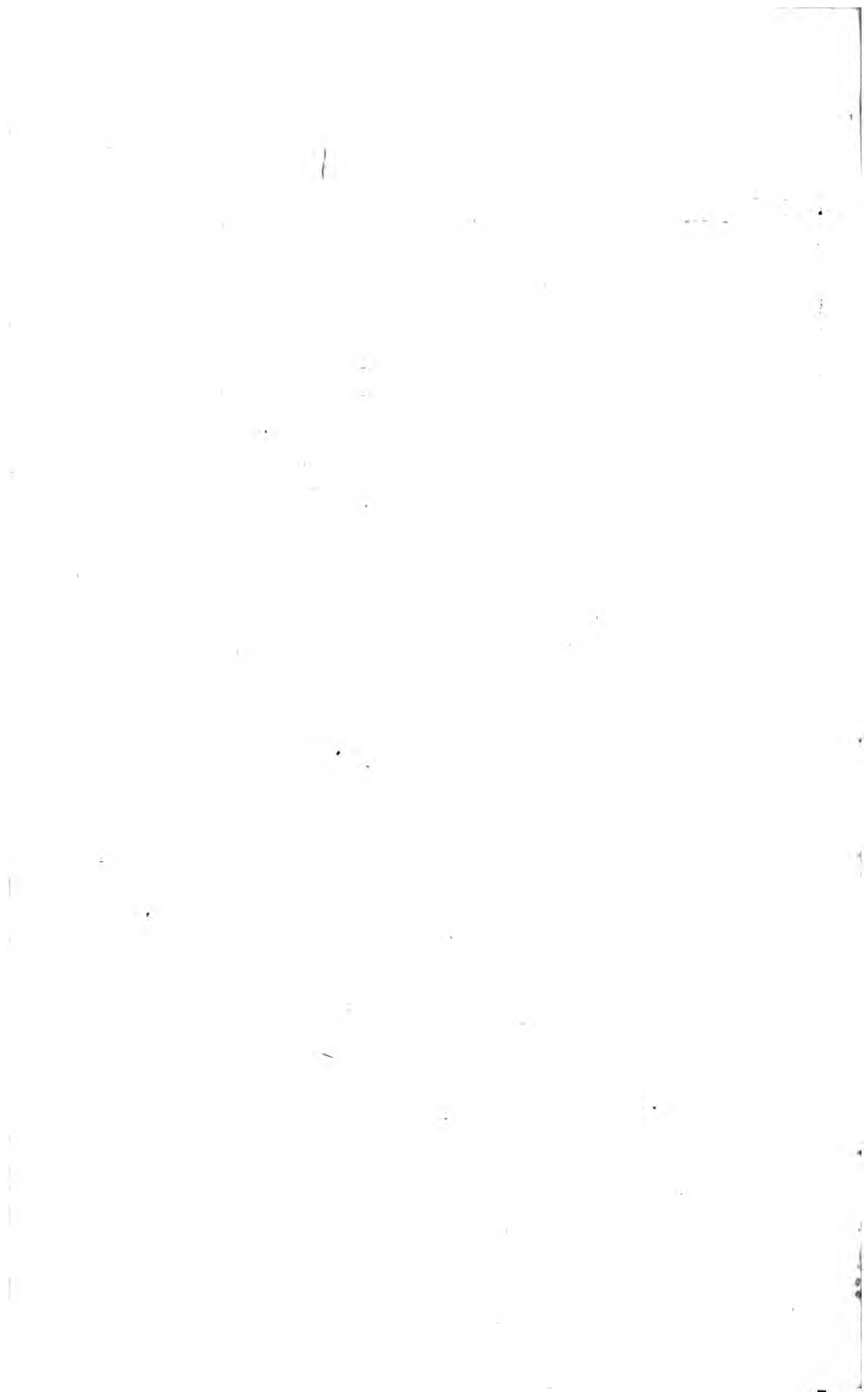
The following S E R M O N S,
preached in his Chapel,
are with all Humility De-
dicated,

B T

his most dutiful, and

most obedient Servant,

JOSEPH BUTLER.



CONTENTS.

SERM. I. II. III. Upon Humane Nature,
or Man considered as a Moral Agent.

SERM. I. Upon the Social Nature of Man.

ROM. xii. 4, 5.

For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: So we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another, Page 1

SERM. II. III. Upon the natural Supremacy of Conscience.

ROM. ii. 14.

For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, p. 25. 44

SERM. IV. Upon the Government of the Tongue.

JAMES i. 26.

If any Man among you seem to be religious, and

CONTENTS.

*and bridletb not his Tongue, but deceiveth
his own Heart, this Man's Religion is
vain,* 57

SERM. V. VI. Upon Compassion.

ROM. xii. 15.

*Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and
weep with them that weep,* 79, 99

SERM. VII. Upon the Character of Ba-
laam.

NUMB. xxiii. 10.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous,
and let my last End be like his,* 117

SERM. VIII. IX. Upon Resentment,
and Forgiveness of Injuries.

MATTH. v. 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou
shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine
Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your
Enemies, bles them that curse you, do
good to them that hate you, and pray
fort hem which dispitefully use you and
persecute you.* 137, 155

SERM.

CONTENTS.

S E R M. X. Upon Self-Deceit.

2 S A M. xii. 7.

*And Nathan said to David, Thou art the
Man.* 179

S E R M. XI. XII. Upon the Love of our
Neighbour.

R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment,
it is briefly comprehended in this Saying,
namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour
as thy self.* 201, 227

S E R M. XIII. XIV. Upon Piety, or the
Love of God.

M A T T H. xxii. 37.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all
thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and
with all thy Mind.* 255, 273

S E R M. XV. Upon the Ignorance of Man.

E C C L E S. viii. 16, 17.

*When I applied mine Heart to know Wis-
dom, and to see the Business that is done
upon the Earth: Then I beheld all the
Work of God, that a Man cannot find
out*

CONTENTS.

*out the Work that is done under the Sun:
Because though a Man labour to seek it
out, yet he shall not find it; yea fur-
ther, though a wise Man think to know
it, yet shall he not be able to find it. 293*

S E R M -

S E R M O N I.

Upon Humane Nature.

R O M. xii. 4, 5.

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



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

B


so

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

* 1 Cor. xii.

upon Humane Nature.

3


tries of all around them, and their ill Treat-
ment, were taught to consider themselves Serm. I.
as not of the World in which they lived, 
but as a distinct Society of themselves, with
Laws, and Ends, and Principles of Life and
Action, quite contrary to those which the
World profess'd themselves at that Time
influenced by. Hence the Relation of a
Christian was by them considered as nearer
than that of Affinity and Blood, and they
almost literally esteemed themselves as Mem-
bers one of another. It cannot indeed pos-
sibly be denied, that our being God's Crea-
tures, and Virtue being the natural Law we
are born under, and the whole Constituti-
on of Man being plainly adapted to it, are
prior Obligations to Piety and Virtue, than
the Consideration that God sent his Son in-
to the World to save it, and the Motives
which arise from the peculiar Relation of
Christians, as Members one of another un-
der Christ our Head. Yet its manifest, that
though all this be allowed, as it expressly
is by the inspired Writers; yet Christians at
the Time of the Revelation, and immedi-
ately after, could not but insist mostly up-
on Considerations of this latter Kind.

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

The Relation which the several Parts or Members of the natural Body have to each other and to the whole Body, is here compared to the Relation which each particular Person in Society has to other particular Persons, and to the whole Society; and the latter is intended to be illustrated by the former. And if there be a Likeness between these two Relations, the Consequence is obvious: that the latter shows us it is our Duty to do good to others, as the former shows us that we are to take Care of our own private Interest. But as there is scarce any Ground for a Comparison between Society and the mere material Body, this without the Mind being a dead unactive Thing; much less can the Comparison be carried to any length. And since the Apostle speaks of the several Members as having distinct Offices, which implies the Mind; It cannot be thought an unallowable

upon Humane Nature.

5

able Liberty, instead of the *Body* and *its* Serm. I.
Members, to substitute the *whole Nature of* 
Man, and *all the variety of internal Prin-*
ciples which belong to it. And then the
Comparison will be between the Nature of
Man as respecting Self, and tending to pri-
vate Good, his own Preservation and Happi-
ness; and the Nature of Man as having re-
spect to Society, and tending to promote
publick Good, the Happiness of that Society.
These Ends do indeed perfectly coincide;
and to aim at publick and private Good are so
far from being inconsistent, that they mutu-
ally promote each other: Yet in the follow-
ing Discourse they must be considered as en-
tirely distinct; otherwise the Nature of
Man, as tending to one or the other, cannot
be compared. There can no Comparison
be made, without considering the Things
compared as distinct and different.

From this Review and Comparison of the
Nature of Man as respecting Self, and as re-
specting Society, it will plainly appear, that
there are as real and the same kind of Indi-
cations in Humane Nature, that we were
made for Society and to do good to our Fel-
low-creatures, as that we were intended to

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

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

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

upon Humane Nature.

7

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

B 4

is

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

If any Person can in earnest doubt whether there be such a thing as Good-will in one Man towards another, (for the
Question

Serm. I. is momentary Love ; if there be any such thing as the paternal or filial Affections ; if there be any Affection in Human Nature, the Object and End of which is the Good of another, this is itself Benevolence,
or

Question is not concerning either the Degree or Extensiveness of it, but concerning the Affection itself,) let it be observed, that *Whether Man be thus or otherwise constituted, What is the inward Frame in this Particular,* is a meer Question of Fact or natural History, not proveable immediately by Reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other Facts or Historical Matters are: By appealing to the external Senses, or inward Perceptions, respectively, as the Matter under Consideration is cognizable by one or the other ; By arguing from acknowledged Facts and Actions, inquiring whether these do not suppose and prove the Matter in question so far as it is capable of Proof; And lastly, by the Testimony of Mankind. Now that there is some Degree of Benevolence amongst Men, may be as strongly and plainly proved in all these Ways, as it could possibly be proved, supposing there was this Affection in our Nature. And should any one think fit to assert, that Resentment in the Mind of Man was absolutely nothing but reasonable Concern for our own Safety; the Falsity of this, and what is the real Nature of that Passion, could be shewn in no other Ways than those in which it may be shewn, that there is such a thing in *some Degree* as *real* Good-will in Man towards Man. It is sufficient that the Seeds of it be implanted in our Nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own Heart and Temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform Manner. This is our Work: This is Virtue and Religion.

or the Love of another. Be it ever so Serm. I.
short, be it in ever so low a Degree, or e-
ver so unhappily confined, it proves the
Assertion, and points out what we were
designed for, as really as though it were in
a higher Degree and more extensive. I
must however remind you, that though Be-
nevolence and Self-love are different; that
though the former tends most directly to
publick Good, and the latter to private:
Yet they are so perfectly coincident, that
the greatest Satisfactions to our selves de-
pend upon our having the former in a due
Degree; and that the latter is one chief
Security of our right Behaviour towards So-
ciety. It may be added, that their mutual
coinciding, so that we can scarce promote
one without the other, is equally a Proof
that we were made for both.

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

* Every Body makes a Distinction between Self-love,
and the several particular Passions, Appetites, and Affecti-
ons in Humane Nature, and yet they are often confounded
again. That they are totally different will be seen by any
who

Serm. I. nevolence and Self-love, do in general contribute and lead us to *publick* Good, as really
as

who will distinguish between the Passions and Appetites *themselves*, and *endeavouring* after the Means of their Gratification. Consider the Appetite of Hunger, and the Desire of Esteem: These being the Occasion both of Pleasure and Pain, the coolest *Self-love*, as well as the Appetites and Passions themselves, may put us upon making Use of the *proper Methods of obtaining* that Pleasure, and avoiding that Pain; but the *Feelings themselves*, the Pain of Hunger and Shame, the Delight from Esteem, are no more Self-love than they are any thing in the World. If a Man hated himself he would as much feel the Pain of Hunger as he would that of the Gout; and it is plainly supposable there may be Creatures with Self-love in them to the highest Degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as Men in some Cases are) to the Contempt and Esteem of those upon whom their Happiness does not in some further Respects depend. And as Self-love and the several particular Passions and Appetites are in themselves totally different, so that some Actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable Cases. One Man rushes upon certain Ruin for the Gratification of a present Desire: No Body will call the Principle of this Action Self-love. Suppose another Man to go through some laborious Work upon Promise of a great Reward, without any distinct Knowledge what the Reward will be: This Course of Action cannot be ascribed to any particular Passion. The former of these Actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular Passion or Affection, the latter as plainly to the general Affection or Principle of Self-love. That there are some particular Pursuits or Actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the
other,

upon Humane Nature,

II

as to *private*. It may be thought too minute and particular, and would carry us too great a length, to distinguish between and compare together the several Passions or Appetites (distinct from Benevolence) whose primary Use and Intention is the Security and Good of Society, and the Passions (distinct from Self-love) whose primary Intention and Design is the Security and Good of the Individual *. It is enough to the present Argument, that Desire of Esteem from others, Contempt and Esteem of them, Love
of

Serm. I.

other, proceeds from our not being able to distinguish exactly enough between two Principles which are frequently mixt together, and which run up into each other. This Distinction is further explained in the Eleventh Sermon.


* If any desire to see this Distinction and Comparison made in a particular Instance, the Appetite and Passion now mentioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be considered as a private Appetite, because the End for which it was given us is the Preservation of the Individual. Desire of Esteem is a publick Passion, because the End for which it was given us is to regulate our Behaviour towards Society. The respect which This has to private Good is as remote as the respect That has to publick Good, and the Appetite is no more Self-love than the Passion is Benevolence. The Object and End of the the former is meerly Food, the Object and End of the latter is meerly Esteem; but the latter can no more be gratified without contributing to the Good of Society, than the former can be gratified without contributing to the Preservation of the Individual.

Serm. I. of Society as distinct from Affection to the
 ~~~~~ Good of it, Indignation against successful  
 Vice, that these are publick Affections or  
 Passions, have an immediate respect to o-  
 thers, naturally lead us to regulate our Be-  
 haviour in such a Manner as will be of Ser-  
 vice to our Fellow-Creatures. If any or all  
 of these may be considered likewise as pri-  
 vate Affections, as tending to private Good;  
 this does not hinder them from being pub-  
 lick Affections too, or destroy the good In-  
 fluence of them upon Society, and their  
 Tendency to publick Good. It may be ad-  
 ded, that as Persons without any Convicti-  
 on from Reason of the desirableness of  
 Life, would yet of Course preserve it meerly  
 from the Appetite of Hunger; so by acting  
 meerly from Regard (suppose) to Reputati-  
 on, without any Consideration of the Good  
 of others, Men often contribute to publick  
 Good: In both these Instances they are  
 plainly Instruments in the Hands of ano-  
 ther, in the Hands of Providence, to carry  
 on Ends, the Preservation of the Individu-  
 al and Good of Society, which they them-  
 selves have not in their View or Intention.  
 The Sum is, Men have various Appetites,  
 Passions,

Passions, and particular Affections, quite Serm. I.  
distinct both from Self-love, and from Bene-  
volence: All of these have a tendency to  
promote both publick and private Good,  
and may be considered as respecting others  
and ourselves equally and in common: But  
some of them seem most immediately to  
respect others, or tend to publick Good; o-  
thers of them most immediately to respect  
Self, or tend to private Good: As the for-  
mer are not Benevolence, so the latter are  
not Self-love: Neither are Instances of our  
Love either to ourselves or others; but  
only Instances of our Maker's Care and  
Love both of the Individual and the Spe-  
cies, and Proofs that he intended we should  
be Instruments of Good to each other, as  
that we should be so to our selves.

*Thirdly,* There is a Principle of Reflecti-  
on in Men, by which they distinguish be-  
tween, approve, and disapprove their own  
Actions. We are plainly constituted such  
sort of Creatures as to reflect upon our  
own Nature: The Mind can take a View of  
what passes within itself, its Propensions,  
Aversions, Passions, Affections, as respect-  
ing such Objects, and in such Degrees; and  
of


Serm. I. of the several Actions consequent thereupon. In this Survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This Principle in Man, by which he approves or disapproves his Heart, Temper, and Actions, is Conscience; (which Word is used in different Senses, but often in this :) and that it tends to restrain Men from doing Mischief to each other, and leads them to do good, is too manifest to need being insisted upon. Thus a Parent has the Affection of Love to his Children; this leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due Provision for them; the natural Affection leads to this: But the Reflection that it is his proper Business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do; this added to the Affection, becomes a much more settled Principle, and carries him on through more Labour and Difficulties for the sake of his Children, than he would undergo from that Affection alone, if he thought it, and the Course of Action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This indeed is impossible, to do that which is good and not  
to

to approve of it ; for which reason they are Serm. I.  
frequently not considered as distinct, though   
they really are : For Men often approve of  
the Actions of others, which they will not  
imitate, and likewise do that which they  
allow not. It cannot possibly be denied  
that there is this Principle of Reflection or  
Conscience in Humane Nature. Suppose a  
Man to relieve an innocent Person in great  
Distress ; suppose the same Man afterwards,  
in the Fury of Anger, to do the greatest  
Mischief to a Person who had given no just  
Cause of Offence ; to aggravate the Injury,  
add the Circumstances of former Friendship,  
and Obligation from the injured Person ;  
let the Man who is supposed to have done  
these two different Actions, coolly reflect  
upon them afterwards, without regard to  
their Consequences to himself : To assert  
that any common Man would be affected  
in the same Way towards these different  
Actions, that he would make no Distinction  
between them, but approve or disap-  
prove them equally, is too glaring a Falsity  
to need being confuted. There is therefore  
this Principle of Reflection or Conscience  
in Mankind. It is needless to compare the  
Respect

Serm. I. Respect it has to private Good, with the Re-  
 spect it has to publick, since it plainly tends  
 as much to the latter as to the former, and is  
 commonly thought to tend chiefly to the lat-  
 ter. This Faculty is now mentioned meerly as  
 another Part in the inward Frame of Man,  
 pointing out to us in some Degree what we are  
 intended for, and as what will naturally and  
 of course have some Influence. The parti-  
 cular Place assigned to it by Nature, what Au-  
 thority it has, and how great Influence it  
 ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.

From this Comparison of Benevolence  
 and Self-love, of our publick and private  
 Affections, of the Courses of Life they lead  
 to, approved by the Principle of Reflection  
 or Conscience, it is as manifest, that *we*  
*were made for Society, and to promote the*  
*Happiness of it, as that we were intend-*  
*ed to take Care of our own Life, and*  
*Health, and private Good.*

And from this whole Review must be gi-  
 ven a different Draught of Humane Nature  
 from what we are often presented with.  
 Mankind are by Nature so closely united,  
 there is such a Correspondence between the  
 inward Sensations of one Man and those of  
 another,

another, that Disgrace is as much avoided Serm. I.  
as bodily Pain, and to be the Object of   
Esteem and Love as much desired as any  
external Goods: And in many particular  
Cases, Persons are carried on to do good  
to others, as the End their Affection tends  
to and rests in, and manifest that they find  
real Satisfaction and Enjoyment in this  
Course of Behaviour. There is such a na-  
tural Principle of Attraction in Man to-  
wards Man, that having trod the same Tract  
of Land, having breathed in the same Cli-  
mate, barely having been born in the same  
artificial District or Division, becomes the  
Occasion of contracting Acquaintances and  
Familiarities many Years after; for any thing  
may serve the Purpose. Thus Relations meer-  
ly nominal are sought and invented, not by  
Governors, but by the lowest of the Peo-  
ple, which are found sufficient to hold  
Mankind together in little Fraternities and  
Copartnerships: Weak Ties indeed, and  
what may afford Fund enough for Ridicule,  
if they are absurdly considered as the real  
Principles of that Union; but they are  
in Truth meerly the Occasions, as any thing  
may be of any thing, upon which our Na-  
ture carries us on according to its own



Serm. I. previous Bent and Bias; which Occasions  
 therefore would be nothing at all were there  
 not this prior Disposition and Bias of Nature. Men are so much one Body, that in a peculiar Manner they feel for each other, Shame, sudden Danger, Resentment, Honour, Prosperity, Distress; one or another, or all of these, from the social Nature in general, from Benevolence, upon the Occasion of natural Relation, Acquaintance, Protection, Dependance; each of these being distinct Cements of Society. And therefore to have no restraint from, no regard to others in our Behaviour, is the speculative Absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independant, as having nothing in our Nature which has respect to our Fellow-Creatures, reduced to Action and Practice. And this is the same Absurdity as to suppose an Hand, or any one Part, to have no natural Respect to any other, or to the whole Body.

But allowing all this, it may be asked, Has not Man Dispositions and Principles within, which lead him to do Evil as well as to do Good? Whence come the many Miseries else which Men are the Authors and Instruments of to each other? These  
 Questions,

Questions, so far as they relate to the fore-<sup>Serm. I.</sup>going Discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not Man also Dispositions and Principles within, which lead him to do Evil to himself as well as good? Whence come the many Miseries else, Sicknes, Pain and Death, which Men are the Instruments and Authors of to themselves? But as it may be thought more easy to answer some of these Questions than others, though the Answer to all of them is really the same, it may be proper to add, that there is not at all any such thing as Ill-will in one Man towards another, Emulation and Resentment being away, whereas there is plainly Benevolence or Good-will: There is no such thing as Love of Injustice, Oppression, Treachery, Ingratitude, but only eager Desires after such and such external Goods; which according to a very ancient Observation, the most abandoned would choose to obtain by innocent Means, if they were as easy and as effectual to their End: That even Emulation and Resentment, by any one who will consider what these Passions really are in Nature \*, will be found nothing to

C 2

the

\* Emulation is meerly the Desire and Hope of Equality with or Superiority over others, with whom we compare  
our

Serm. I. the Purpose of this Objection: And that  
 ~~~~~ the Principles and Passions in the Mind of  
 Man, which are distinct both from Self-
 love and Benevolence, primarily and most
 directly lead to right Behaviour, and only
 secondarily and more remotely to what is
 Evil. Thus though Men to avoid the Shame
 of one Villany are sometimes guilty of a
 greater, yet it is easy to see, that the ori-
 ginal Tendency of Shame is to prevent the
 doing of shameful Actions; and its leading
 Men to conceal such Actions when done,
 is only in consequence of their being done,
i. e. of the Passion not having answered
 its first End.


If it be said that there are Persons in
 the World, who are in great Measure with-
 out the natural Affections towards their
 Fellow-

our selves. There does not appear to be any *other Grief*
 in the natural Passion, but only *that Want* which is implied
 in Desire. However this may be so strong as to be the Oc-
 casion of great *Grief*. To desire the attainment of this E-
 quality or Superiority by the *particular Means* of others be-
 ing brought down to our own Level, or below it, is, I
 think, the distinct Notion of Envy. From whence it is easy
 to see, that the real End, which the natural Passion Emulation,
 and which the unlawful one Envy aims at, is exactly
 the same; namely, that Equality or Superiority: And con-
 sequently, that to do Mischief is not the End of Envy, but
 merely the Means it makes use of to attain its End. As to
 Resentment, see the Eighth Sermon.

Fellow-Creatures: There are likewise In-
stances of Persons without the due natural Serm. I.
Affections to themselves; but the Nature of
Man is not to be judged of by either of
these, but by what appears in the common
World, in the Bulk of Mankind.

I am afraid it would be thought very
strange, if to confirm the Truth of this Ac-
count of Humane Nature, and make out
the Justness of the foregoing Comparison, it
should be added, that from what appears,
Men in Fact as much and as often contradict
that *Part* of their Nature which respects
Self, and which leads them to their *own*
private Good and Happiness; as they con-
tradict that *Part* of it which respects *So-*
ciety, and tends to *publick* Good: That there
are as few Persons, who attain the greatest
Satisfaction and Enjoyment which they
might attain in the present World; as who
do the greatest Good to others which they
might do: Nay, that there are as few who
can be said really and in earnest to aim at
one, as at the other. Take a Survey of Man-
kind: The World in general, the Good and
Bad, almost without Exception, equally are
agreed, that Religion being out of the Case,
the Happiness of the present Life consists in

Serm. I. a Manner wholly in Riches, Honours, sensual Gratifications; infomuch that one scarce hears a Reflection made upon Prudence, Life, Conduct, but upon this Supposition. Yet on the contrary, that Persons in the greatest Affluence of Fortune, are no happier than such as have only a Competency; that the Cares and Disappointments of Ambition for the most Part far exceed the Satisfaction of it; as also the miserable Intervals of Intemperance and Excess, and the many untimely Deaths occasioned by a dissolute Course of Life: These things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged; but are thought no Objections against, though they expressly contradict, this universal Principle, that the Happiness of the present Life consists in one or other of them. Whence is all this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is not the middle Way obvious? Can any thing be more manifest, than that the Happiness of Life consists in These possessed and enjoyed only to a certain Degree; that to pursue them beyond this Degree, is always attended with more Inconvenience than Advantage to a Man's self, and often with extream Misery and Unhappiness. Whence then, I say, is all
 this

this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is it really Serm. I.
the Result of Consideration in Mankind, 
how they may become most easy to them-
selves, most free from Care, and enjoy the
chief Happiness attainable in this World?
Or is it not manifestly owing either to this,
that they have not cool and reasonable Con-
cern enough for themselves, to consider
wherein their chief Happiness in the present
Life consists; or else if they do consider
it, that they will not act conformably to
what is the Result of that Consideration:
i. e. reasonable Concern for themselves, or
cool Self-love is prevailed over by Passion
and Appetite. So that from what appears,
there is no Ground to assert that cool Self-
love has any more Influence upon the Acti-
ons of Men, than the Principles of Virtue
and Benevolence have.

The Sum of the whole is plainly this.
The Nature of Man considered in his sin-
gle Capacity, and with respect only to the
present World, is adapted and leads him to
attain the greatest Happiness he can for him-
self in the present World. The Nature of
Man considered in his publick or social Ca-
pacity leads him to a right Behaviour in So-
ciety, to that Course of Life which we call

Serm. I. Virtue. Men follow or obey their Nature in both these Capacities and Respects to a certain Degree, but not intirely: Their Actions do not come up to the whole of what their Nature leads them to in either of these Capacities or Respects; and they often violate their Nature in both. *i. e.* As they neglect the Duties they owe to their Fellow-Creatures, to which their Nature leads them; and are injurious, to which their Nature is abhorrent: So there is a manifest Negligence in Men of their real Happiness or Interest in the present World, when that Interest is inconsistent with a present Gratification; for the sake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly are the Authors and Instruments of their own Misery and Ruin. Thus they are as often unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most Part are equally so to both by the same Actions.

S E R M O N II.

Upon Humane Nature.

R O M. ii. 14.

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

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

Ser. II.
is,

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

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


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

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

But it may be said, “ What is all this,
 “ though true, to the Purpose of Virtue
 “ and Religion? These require, not only
 “ that we do good to others when we are
 “ led this Way, by Benevolence or Re-
 “ flection,

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

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

“ not the Man of Virtue take upon him Ser. II.
“ to blame the Ambitious, the Covetous, 
“ the Dissolute; since these equally with
“ him obey and follow their Nature. Thus
“ as in some Cases we follow our Nature
“ in doing the *Works contained in the Law,*
“ so in other Cases we follow Nature in
“ doing contrary.

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

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

because from thence it will appear that in Ser. II. some Senses of the Word, *Nature* cannot be, but that in another Sense it manifestly is, a Law to us.

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

II. *Nature* is frequently spoken of as consisting in those Passions which are strongest, and most influence the Actions; which being vicious ones, Mankind is in this Sense naturally vicious, or vicious by Nature. Thus St. *Paul* says of the *Gentiles*, *who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, and walked according to the Spirit of Disobedience*, Ephes. ii. 3. *that they were by Nature the Children of Wrath*. They could be no otherwise Children of Wrath

D

by

Ser. II. by Nature, than they were vicious by Nature.

Here then are two different Senses of the Word *Nature*, in neither of which Men can at all be said to be a Law to themselves: They are mentioned only to be excluded, to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the Objection, with another Sense of it, which is now to be inquired after, and explained.

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

ing

ing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean Ser. II.
while accusing or else excusing one another. ~~~~~

If there be a Distinction to be made between the *Works written in their Hearts*, and the *Witness of Conscience*; by the former must be meant the natural Dispositions to Kindness and Compassion, to do what is of good Report, to which this Apostle often refers: That Part of the Nature of Man, treated of in the foregoing Discourse, which with very little Reflection and of Course leads him to Society, and by means of which he naturally acts a just and good Part in it, unless other Passions or Interest lead him astray. Yet since other Passions, and Regards to private Interest, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) astray, are themselves in a Degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no Method of seeing the particular Degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by Nature; it is plain the former, considered meerly as natural, good and right as they are, can no more be a Law to us than the latter. But there is a superior Principle of Reflection or Conscience in every Man, which distinguisheth between the internal Principles of his Heart, as well

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

Conformity or Disobedience to which Law Ser. II. of our Nature renders their Actions in the highest and most proper Sense natural or unnatural; it is fit it be further explained to you: And I hope it will be so, if you will attend to the following Reflections.

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

Ser. II. in its *Consequences*; but from *Comparison* of it with the Nature of the Agent. And since such an Action is utterly disproportionate to the Nature of Man, it is in the strictest and most proper Sense unnatural, this Word expressing that Disproportion. Therefore instead of the Words *Disproportionate to his Nature*, the Word *Unnatural* may now be put, this being more familiar to us: But let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely. Now what is it which renders such a rash Action unnatural? Is it that he went against the Principle of reasonable and cool Self-love, considered *meerly* as a Part of his Nature? No; for if he had acted the contrary Way, he would equally have gone against a Principle or Part of his Nature, Passion or Appetite. But to deny a present Appetite, from Foresight that the Gratification of it would end in immediate Ruin or extream Misery, is by no Means an unnatural Action: Whereas to contradict or go against cool Self-love for the sake of such Gratification, is so in the Instance before us. Such an Action then being unnatural, and its being so not arising from a Man's going against a Principle or Desire barely, nor in going against that


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

Let us now take a View of the Nature
of Man, as consisting of various Appetites,


Ser. II. Passions, Affections, together with the Principle of Reflection or Conscience, leaving quite out all Consideration of the different Degrees of Strength in which either of them prevail. The former implies a direct simple Tendency towards such and such Objects, without Distinction of the Means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently from the former, Appetite or Passion, there will be a Desire of particular Objects, in Cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest Injury to others. Reflection or Conscience comes in, and disapproves the Pursuit of them in these Circumstances; but the Desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, Appetite or Reflection? Cannot this Question be answered from the Oeconomy and Constitution of Humane Nature meerly, without saying which is strongest? Or need this at all come into Consideration? Would not the Question be *intelligibly* and fully answered by saying, that the Principle of Reflection or Conscience being compar'd with the various Appetites, Passions, and Affections in Men, the former is manifestly superiour and chief, without regard to Strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is
meer

meer *Usurpation* : The former remains in Ser. II.
Nature and in Kind its Superiour ; and e-
very Instance of such Prevalence of the
latter is an Instance of breaking in upon and
Violation of the Constitution of Man.

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

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

Let us now turn this whole Matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural Supremacy of Conscience, that there was no Distinction to be made between one inward Principle
and

and another, but only that of Strength; Ser. II.
and see what would be the Consequence. 

Consider then what is the Latitude and Com-
pafs of Humane Actions; what are their
Bounds, besides that of our natural Power?

The Bounds are plainly no other than these :

With respect to the Individual, No Man seeks
Misery as such for himself; and with re-

spect to Society, No one unprovoked does
Mischief for its own sake. For in every

Degree within these Bounds, Mankind know-
ingly from Passion or Wantonness bring

Ruin and Misery upon themselves and o-
thers. And with respect to the supream

Being, there is absolutely no Bound at all
to Prophaneness; I mean, what every one

would call so who believeth the Being of
God: Men blaspheme the Author of Na-

ture, formally and in Words renounce their
Allegiance to their Creator. Put an In-

stance with respect to any one of these
three. Suppose a Man guilty of Parricide,

with all the Circumstances of Cruelty which
such an Action can admit of. This Action

is done in Consequence of its Principle
being for the present strongest; and if there

be no Difference between inward Principles
but only that of Strength, the Strength be-

ing

Ser. II. ing given, you have the whole Nature of the Man given so far as it relates to this Matter. The Action plainly corresponds to the Principle, the Principle being in that Degree of Strength it was ; it therefore corresponds to the whole Nature of the Man. Upon comparing the Action and the whole Nature, there arises no Disproportion, there appears no unsuitableness between them. Thus the *Murder of a Father* and the *Nature of Man* correspond to each other, as the same Nature and an act of filial Duty. If there be no Difference between inward Principles but only that of Strength, we can make no Distinction between these two Actions, considered as the Actions of such a Creature ; but in our coolest Hours must approve or disapprove them equally : Than which nothing can be reduced to a greater Absurdity.

Ser. III. The natural Supremacy of Reflection or Conscience being thus established, we may from it form a distinct Notion of what is meant by *Humane Nature*, when Virtue is said to consist in following, and Vice in deviating from it. As the Idea of a Civil Constitution implies in it united Strength,
various

various Subordinations, under one Directi- Ser. III.
on, that of the supream Authority ; the dif-
ferent Strength of each particular Member
of the Society not coming into the Idea,
whereas if you leave out the Subordination,
the Union and the one Direction, you destroy
and lose it : So Reason, several Appetites,
Passions and Affections, prevailing in diffe-
rent Degrees of Strength, is not *that* Idea
or Notion of *Humane Nature* ; but *that*
Nature consists in these several Principles
considered as having a natural Respect to
each other, in the several Passions being na-
turally subordinate to the one superior Prin-
ciple of Reflection or Conscience. Every
Bias, Instinct, Propension within, is a real
Part of our Nature, but not the Whole :
Add to these the superiour Faculty, whose
Office it is to adjust, manage and preside o-
ver them, and you compleat the Idea of
Humane Nature. And as in Civil Govern-
ment the Constitution is broken in upon
and violated by Power and Strength pre-
vailing over Authority ; so the Constitution
of Man is broken in upon and violated by
the lower Faculties or Principles within
prevailing over that which is in its Nature
supream over them all. Thus when it is said

by

Ser. III. by ancient Writers, that Tortures and Death are not so contrary to Humane Nature as Injustice; by this to be sure is not meant, that the Aversion to the former in Mankind is less strong and prevalent than their Aversion to the latter: But that the former is only contrary to our Nature considered in a partial View, and which takes in only the lowest Part of it, that which we have in common with the Brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our Nature, considered in a higher Sense, as a System and Constitution, contrary to the whole Oeconomy of Man *. And from all these things put together,


* Every Man in his physical Nature is one individual single Agent. He has likewise Properties and Principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without Regard to the Respects which they have to each other. Neither of these are the Nature we are taking a View of. But it is the inward Frame of Man considered as a *System or Constitution*: Whose several Parts are united, not by a physical Principle of Individuation, but by the Respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the Subjection which the Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections have to the one supream Principle of Reflection or Conscience. The System or Constitution is formed by and consists in these Respects and this Subjection. Thus the Body is a *System or Constitution*: So is a Tree: So is every Machine. Consider all the several Parts of a Tree without the natural Respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the Idea of a Tree; but add these Respects, and this gives you the Idea.

gether, nothing can be more evident than Ser. III. that, exclusive of Revelation, Mankind cannot be considered as a Creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the Extent of his natural Power, as Passion, Humour, Wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the Condition brute
Creatures

Idea. The Body may be impaired by Sickness, a Tree may decay, a Machine be out of Order, and yet the System and Constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral Constitution of Man. Whoever will consider his own Nature, will see that the several Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, have different Respects amongst themselves. They are Restraints upon, and are in a Proportion to each other. This Proportion is just and perfect, when all those under Principles are perfectly coincident with Conscience; when Passion and Appetite leads us to exactly the same Course with Reflection and Judgment. The least Excess or Defect, the least Alteration of the due Proportions amongst themselves, or of their Co-incidence with Conscience, though not proceeding into Action, is some Degree of Disorder in the moral Constitution. But Perfection, though plainly intelligible and supposeable, was never attained by any Man. If the higher Principle of Reflection maintains its Place, and as much as it can corrects that Disorder, and hinders it from breaking out into Action, this is all that can be expected in such a Creature as Man. And though the Appetites and Passions have not their exact due Proportion to each other; though they often strive for Mastery with Judgment or Reflection; yet, since the Superiority of this Principle to all others is the chief Respect which forms the Constitution, so far as this Superiority is maintained, the Character, the Man, is good, worthy, virtuous.

Ser. III. Creatures are in : But that *from his Make,*
 ~~~~~ *Constitution, or Nature, he is in the strict-*  
*est and most proper Sense a Law to him-*  
*self.* He hath the Rule of Right within :  
 What is wanting is only that he honestly at-  
 tend to it.

The Inquiries which have been made by Men of Leisure after some general Rule, the Conformity to, or Disagreement from which, should denominate our Actions Good or Evil, are in many Respects of great Service : Yet let any plain honest Man, before he engages in any Course of Action, ask himself, Is this I am going about Right, or is it Wrong ? Is it Good, or is it Evil ? I do not in the least doubt but this Question would be answered agreeably to Truth and Virtue, by almost any fair Man in almost any Circumstance. Neither do there appear any Cases which look like Exceptions to this, but those of Superstition and Partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an Exception ; but Partiality to ourselves is not, this being itself Dishonesty. For Man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right Part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another, this is plain  
 Vice,

Vice, and can proceed only from great Un- Ser. III.  
fairness of Mind. 

But allowing that Mankind hath the Rule of Right within himself, yet it may be asked, What Obligations are we under to attend to and follow it? I answer; It has been proved that Man by his Nature is a Law to himself, without the particular distinct Consideration of the positive Sanctions of that Law, the Rewards and Punishments which from the Light of Reason we have ground to believe are annexed to it. The Question then carries its own Answer along with it. Your Obligation to obey this Law, is its being the Law of your Nature. That your Conscience approves of and attests to such a Course of Action, is itself alone an Obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to shew us the Way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own Authority with it, that it is our natural Guide, the Guide assigned us by the Author of our Nature: It therefore belongs to our Condition of Being, it is our Duty, to walk in that Path and follow this Guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with Impunity. However, let us hear what is to be said against


E obeying



Ser. III. obeying this Law of our Nature. And the  
 ~~~~~ Sum is no more than this. “ Why should  
 “ we be concerned about any thing out of
 “ and beyond ourselves? If we do find with-
 “ in ourselves Regards to others, and Re-
 “ straints of we know not how many dif-
 “ ferent Kinds, yet these being Embaras-
 “ ments, and hindering us from going the
 “ nearest Way to our own Good, why
 “ should we not endeavour to suppress and
 “ get over them? ”. Thus People go on
 with Words, which when applied to Hu-
 mane Nature, and the Condition in which
 it is placed in this World, have really no
 Meaning. For does not all this kind of
 Talk go upon Supposition, that our Hap-
 piness in this World consists in somewhat
 quite distinct from Regards to others; and
 that it is the Priviledge of Vice to be with-
 out Restraint or Confinement? Whereas on
 the contrary the Enjoyments, in a Manner
 all the common Enjoyments of Life, even
 the Pleasures of Vice, depend upon these
 Regards of one Kind or another to our
 Fellow-Creatures. Throw off all Regards
 to others, and we should be quite indiffe-
 rent to Infamy and to Honour; there could
 be no such thing at all as Ambition; and
 scarce

scarce any such thing as Covetousness; Ser. III.
for we should likewise be equally indiffe-
rent to the Disgrace of Poverty, and to the
Reputation of Riches. Neither is Restraint
by any means peculiar to one Course of
Life; but our very Nature, exclusive of Con-
science, and our Condition lays us under an
absolute Necessity of it. We cannot gain
any End whatever without being confined
to the proper Means, which is often the
most painful and uneasy Confinement.
And in numberless Instances a present Ap-
petite cannot be gratified without such ap-
parent and immediate Ruin and Misery,
that the most dissolute Man in the World
chooses to forego the Pleasure, rather than
endure the Pain. Is the Meaning then to
indulge those Regards to our Fellow-Crea-
tures, and submit to those Restraints, which
upon the whole are attended with more Sa-
tisfaction than Uneasiness, and get over on-
ly those which bring more Uneasiness and
Inconvenience than Satisfaction? "Doubtless
this was our Meaning." You have changed
Sides then: Keep to this, be consistent with
yourselves, and you and the Men of Virtue
are *in general* perfectly agreed. But let us
take Care and avoid Mistakes. Let it not be

Ser. III. taken for granted that the Temper of Envy, Rage, Resentment, yields greater Delight than Meekness, Forgiveness, Compassion, and Good-will: Especially when it is acknowledged that Rage, Envy, Resentment, are in themselves meer Misery, and the Satisfaction arising from the Indulgence of them is little more than Relief from that Misery; whereas the Temper of Compassion and Benevolence is itself delightful, and the Indulgence of it, by doing Good, affords new positive Delight and Enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the Satisfaction arising from the Reputation of Riches and Power however obtained, is greater than the Satisfaction arising from the Reputation of Justice, Honesty, Charity. And if it be doubtful which of these Satisfaction is the greatest, as there are Persons who think neither of them very considerable, yet there can be no doubt concerning Ambition and Covetousness, Virtue and a good Mind, considered in themselves, and as leading to different Courses of Life; there can, I say, be no doubt, which Temper and which Course is attended with most Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, which with most Perplexity, Vexation and Inconvenience. And both
the

the Virtues and Vices which have been now Ser. III.
mentioned, do in a Manner equally imply 
in them Regards of one Kind or another to
our Fellow-Creatures. And with respect
to Restraint and Confinement; whoever
will consider the Restraints from Fear and
Shame, the Dissimulation, mean Arts of
Concealment, servile Compliances, one or
other of which belong to almost every
Course of Vice, will soon be convinced
that the Man of Virtue is by no Means upon
a Disadvantage in this Respect. How ma-
ny Instances are there in which Men feel
and own and cry aloud under the Chains
of Vice with which they are enthrall'd, and
which yet they will not shake off? How
many Instances, in which Persons mani-
festly go through more Pains and Self-
denial to gratify a vicious Passion, than
would have been necessary to the Conquest
of it? To this is to be added, that when
Virtue is become habitual, when the Tem-
per of it is acquir'd, what was before Con-
finement ceases to be so, by becoming
Choice and Delight. Whatever Restraint
and Guard upon ourselves may be needful
to unlearn any unnatural Distortion or odd
Gesture, yet in all Propriety of Speech na-

Ser. III. tural Behaviour must be the most easy and unrestrained. It is manifest that, in the common Course of Life, there is seldom any Inconsistency between our Duty and what is *called* Interest: It is much seldomer that there is an Inconsistency between Duty and what is really our present Interest; meaning by Interest, Happiness and Satisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the Interest of the present World, does in general perfectly coincide with Virtue, and leads us to one and the same Course of Life. But whatever Exceptions there are to this, which are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all shall be set right at the final Distribution of things. It is a manifest Absurdity to suppose Evil prevailing finally over Good, under the Conduct and Administration of a perfect Mind.

The whole Argument I have been now insisting upon may be thus summed up and given you in one View. The Nature of Man is adapted to some Course of Action or other. Upon comparing some Actions with this Nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: From Comparison of other Actions with the same Nature, there arises to our View some Unsuitableness or Dispro-

Disproportion. The Correspondence of Ser. III. Actions to the Nature of the Agent renders them natural; their Disproportion to it, unnatural. That an Action is correspondent to the Nature of the Agent, does not arise from its being agreeable to the Principle which happens to be strongest; for it may be so, and yet be quite disproportionate to the Nature of the Agent. The Correspondence therefore, or Disproportion, arises from somewhat else. This can be nothing but a Difference in Nature and Kind, (altogether distinct from Strength) between the inward Principles. Some then are in Nature and Kind superior to others: And the Correspondence arises from the Action being conformable to the higher Principle; and the Unsuitableness, from its being contrary to it. Reasonable Self-love and Conscience are the chief or superior Principles in the Nature of Man: Because an Action may be suitable to this Nature, though all other Principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of those are. Conscience and Self-love, if we understand our true Happiness, always lead us the same Way: Duty and Interest are perfectly coincident; for the most Part in this World, but intirely and in every In-

Ser. III. stance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the Notion of a good and perfect Administration of things. Thus they who have been so wise in their Generation as to regard only their own supposed Interest, at the Expence and to the Injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the Advantages of the present World, rather than violate his Conscience and the Relations of Life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own Interest and Happiness.

S E R M O N I V.

*Upon the Government of the
Tongue.*

J A M E S i. 26.

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

TH E Translation of this Text would Ser. IV.
be more determinate if it were rendered more literally thus: *If any Man among you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his Tongue, but deceiving his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.* This determines that the Words, *but deceiveth his own Heart*, are not put in Opposition to *seemeth to be religious*, but to *bridleth not his Tongue.* The certain determinate


Scr. IV. terminate Meaning of the Text then being
 ~~~~~ that he who seemeth to be religious, and brid-  
 leth not his Tongue, but in that particular  
 deceiveth his own Heart, this Man's Religi-  
 on is vain; we may observe somewhat ve-  
 ry forcible and expressive in these Words  
 of St. *James*: As if the Apostle had said,  
 No Man surely can make any Pretences to  
 Religion, who does not at least believe that  
 he bridleth his Tongue; if he puts on any  
 Appearance or Face of Religion, and yet  
 does not govern his Tongue, he must sure-  
 ly deceive himself in that particular, and  
 think he does: And whoever is so unhappy  
 as to deceive himself in this, to imagine he  
 keeps that unruly Faculty in due Subjeçti-  
 on, when indeed he does not, whatever the  
 other Part of his Life be, his Religion is  
 vain; the Government of the Tongue be-  
 ing a most material Restraint which Virtue  
 lays us under, without which no Man can  
 be truly religious.

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

*First*, What is the general Vice or Fault  
 here referred to; or what Disposition in Men  
 is supposed in Moral Reflections and Pre-  
 cepts concerning bridling the Tongue.

*Secondly*,

## *Government of the Tongue.* 59

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

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

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

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

## *Government of the Tongue.* 61

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

The Subject then before us, though it does run up into, and can scarce be treated

ed

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

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

*Government of the Tongue.* 63

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

And

64      *A S E R M O N upon the*

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

Government of the Tongue. 65

Body, setteth on Fire the Course of Ser. IV.
Nature, and is itself set on Fire of Hell. ~~~

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

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

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

F equally

66 *A SERMON upon the*

Ser. IV. equally adapted to both, there is no Doubt but

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

Government of the Tongue. 67

ness and Affairs does not properly belong Ser. IV
to the Subject now before us: Though one ~.
may just mention that Multitude, that endless Number of Words with which Business is perplexed, when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the Purpose; but this must be left to those who understand the Matter. The Government of the Tongue, considered as a Subject of itself, relates chiefly to Conversation; to that Kind of Discourse which usually fills up the Time spent in friendly Meetings, and Visits of Civility: And the Danger is, lest Persons entertain themselves and others at the Expence of their Wisdom and their Virtue, and to the Injury or Offence of their Neighbour. If they will take heed and keep clear of These, they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved, as they can desire. The Cautions to be given for avoiding them, and to render Conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following Particulars: Silence; Talking of indifferent things; and, which makes up too great a Part of Conversation, Giving of Characters, Speaking well or evil of others.

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

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

* Job xiii.

Government of the Tongue. 69

one would think it should be obvious to e-Ser. IV.
every one, that when they are in Compa-
ny with their Superiours of any Kind, in
Years, Knowledge and Experience; when
proper and useful Subjects are discoursed of,
which they cannot bear a Part in; that these
are Times for Silence: when they should learn
to hear and be attentive; at least in their turn.
It is indeed a very unhappy Way these Peo-
ple are in; they in a Manner cut themselves
out from all Advantage of Conversation,
except that of being entertained with their
own Talk: Their Business in coming into
Company not being at all to be informed,
to hear, to learn; but to display them-
selves, or rather to exert their Faculty,
and talk without any Design at all. And
if we consider Conversation as an Enter-
tainment, as somewhat to unbend the Mind;
as a Diversion from the Cares, the Business,
and the Sorrows of Life; it is of the very
Nature of it, that the Discourse be mutual.
This, I say, is implied in the very Notion
of what we distinguish by Conversation, or
being in Company. Attention to the con-
tinued Discourse of one alone grows more
painful often, than the Cares and Business
we come to be diverted from. He there-

Ser. IV. fore who imposes this upon us, is guilty of a double Offence; by arbitrarily enjoining Silence upon all the rest, and likewise by obliging them to this painful Attention. I am sensible these things are apt to be passed over, as too little to come into a serious Discourse: But in reality Men are obliged, even in Point of Morality and Virtue, to observe all the Decencies of Behaviour. The greatest Evils in Life have had their Rise from somewhat, which was thought of too little Importance to be attended to. And as to the Matter we are now upon, it is absolutely necessary to be considered: For if People will not maintain a due Government over themselves, in regarding proper Times and Seasons for Silence, but *will* be talking; they certainly, whether they Design it or not at first, will go on to Scandal and Evil-speaking, and divulging Secrets. If it were needful to say any thing further to persuade Men to learn this Lesson of Silence, one might put them in Mind how insignificant they render themselves by this excessive Talkativeness; insomuch that if they do chance to say any thing which deserves to be attended to and regarded, it is lost in the Variety and Abundance which they

Government of the Tongue. 71

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

As to the Government of the Tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent Subjects: After what has been said concerning the due Government of it in respect to the Occasions and Times for Silence, there is little more necessary, than only to caution Men to be fully satisfied, that the Subjects are

F 4

indeed

* Eccles. x. 3.

† Prov. x. 19.

Ser. IV. indeed of an indifferent Nature; and not
 to spend too much Time in Conversation
 of this Kind. But Persons must be sure to
 take heed that the Subject of their Dis-
 course be at least of an indifferent Nature;
 that it be no way offensive to Virtue, Reli-
 gion, or good Manners; that it be not of
 a licentious dissolute Sort, this leaving al-
 ways ill Impressions upon the Mind; that
 it be no way injurious or vexatious to o-
 thers; and that too much Time be not
 spent this way, to the neglect of those Du-
 ties and Offices of Life which belong to
 their Station and Condition in the World.
 But though there is not any Necessity, that
 Men should aim at being important and
 weighty in every Sentence they speak: Yet
 since useful Subjects, at least of some Kinds,
 are as entertaining as others; a wise Man,
 even when he desires to unbend his Mind
 from Business, would choose that the Con-
 versation might turn upon somewhat in-
 structive.

The last Thing is, the Government of the
 Tongue as relating to Discourse of the Af-
 fairs of others, and giving of Characters.
 These are in a Manner the same; and one
 can scarce call it an indifferent Subject, be-
 cause

Government of the Tongue. 73

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

Ser. IV.




74 *A SERMON upon the*

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

This

Government of the Tongue. 75

This therefore makes a wide Difference; Ser. IV.
and gives us in Point of Virtue much greater 
Latitude in speaking well, than ill, of others.

Secondly, A good Man is friendly to his Fellow-creatures, and a Lover of Mankind; and so will upon every Occasion, and often without any, say all the Good he can of every Body: But so far as he is Good, will never be disposed to speak Evil of any, unless there be some other Reason for it, besides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill Character, he will scarce think it a sufficient Justification of himself to say it was a true one; unless he can also give some farther Account how he came to do so: A just Indignation against particular Instances of Villany, where they are great and scandalous; or to prevent an innocent Man from being deceived and betray'd, when he has great Trust and Confidence in one who does not deserve it. Justice must be done to every Part of a Subject when we are considering it. If there be a Man who bears a fair Character in the World, whom yet we know to be without Faith or Honesty, to be really an ill Man; it must be allowed in general, that we shall do a Piece of Service to Society
by

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

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

Upon the whole Matter, if People would observe the obvious Occasions of Silence, if they would subdue the Inclination to Tale-bearing, and that eager Desire to engage Attention, which is an Original Disease in some Minds; they would be in little Danger of offending with their Tongue, and would in a moral and religious Sense have due Government over it. I will conclude with some Precepts and Reflections of the Son of *Sirach* upon this Subject. *Be swift to hear, and if thou hast Understanding, answer thy Neighbour; if not, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth. Honour and Shame is in Talk. A Man of an ill Tongue is dangerous in his City, and he that is rash in his Talk shall be hated. A wise Man will hold his Tongue, till he see Opportunity; but a Bab-*

* Mark xii. 38, 40.

Government of the Tongue. 77

*a Babler and a Fool will regard no Time. Ser. IV.
A back-biting Tongue hath disquieted many; strong Cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the Houses of great Men. The Tongue of a Man is his fall; but if thou love to hear, thou shalt receive Understanding.*

S E R M O N V.

Upon Compassion.

R O M. xii. 15.

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


EVERY Man is to be considered in ^{Ser. V.} two Capacities, the Private and Publick; as designed to pursue his own Interest, and likewise to contribute to the Good of others. Whoever will consider, may see, that in general there is no Contrariety between these; but that from the original Constitution of Man, and the Circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But amongst the great Variety of Affections or Principles of Action in our Nature, some in their primary Intention and Design seem to belong to the single or private,

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

Of

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

For


Of these two, Delight in the Prosperity Ser. V.
of others and Compassion for their Distresses, 
the

For does not every Body by Compassion mean, an Affection the Object of which is Another in Distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an Affection or Passion, the Object of which is our selves, or Danger to ourselves. *Hobbs* defines *Pity, Imagination, or Fiction of future Calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the Sense* (he means Sight or Knowledge) *of another Man's Calamity*. Thus Fear and Compassion are the same Idea, and a fearful and a compassionate Man the same Character. Further, Compassion and Mercy are often seen without any thing of that Weakness, the Idea of which the Word Pity sometimes raises to our Thoughts. Now to those who give any Scope to their Affections, there is no Perception or inward Feeling more universal than this; that one who, without that Weakness, has been merciful and compassionate throughout the Course of his Behaviour, should himself be treated with Kindness, if he happens to fall into Circumstances of Distress. Is Fear then or Cowardice so great a Recommendation to the Favour of the Bulk of Mankind? Or is it not plain, that meer Fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is one of the most popular Qualifications? This shews that it is contrary to the common Sense of Mankind, to suppose Compassion to be the same as Fear.

Nothing would more expose such Accounts as these of the Affections which are favourable and friendly to our Fellow-creatures, than to substitute the Definitions which this Author, and others who follow his Steps, give of such Affections, instead of the Words by which they are commonly expressed. *Hobbs*, after having laid down that Pity or Compassion is only Fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the Reason, why we pity our Friends in Distress more than others. Now substitute the *Definition* instead of Word *Pity* in this Place, and the Inquiry will be, why we fear our

Ser. V. the last is felt much more generally than
 ~~~~~ the former. Though Men do not univer-  
 fally

Friends, &c. which Words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no Question or Sentence at all. So that common Language, the Words *to Compassionate, to Pity*, cannot be accommodated to his Account of Compassion. The very joining of the Words *to Pity our Friends*, is a direct Contradiction to his Definition of Pity: Because those Words so joined, necessarily express that our Friends are the Objects of the Passion; whereas his Definition of it asserts, that ourselves, or Danger to ourselves are the only Objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this Absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to Account for; namely, why the Sight of the Innocent, or of our Friends in Distress, raises greater Fear for ourselves than the Sight of other Persons in Distress. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the Fact itself would have been doubted; that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Fear for ourselves, than the Sight of others in Distress*. And in the next Place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the Fact now mentioned, which at least is *doubtful*, whether true or false, was not the same with this Fact, which no-body ever doubted, that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Compassion than the Sight of others in Distress*: Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the *same*, but *two different* Inquiries; and consequently, that Fear and Compassion are not the same. Suppose a Person to be in real Danger, and by some Means or other to have forgot it; any trifling Accident, any Sound might alarm him, recall the Danger to his Remembrance, and renew his Fear: But it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an Absurdity) to speak of that Sound or Accident as an Object of Compassion; and yet according to Mr. *Hobbs*, our greatest Friend in Distress is no more to us, no more the Object of Compassion or of any Affection in our Heart. Neither the one or the other raises any  
 Emotion

fully rejoyce with all whom they see re-Ser. V.  
joyce, yet accidental Obstacles removed,   
they

Emotion in our Mind, but only the Thoughts of our liableness to Calamity, and the Fear of it; and both equally do this. It is fit such sort of Accounts of Humane Nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general Scheme which undermines the whole Foundation of common Justice and Honesty. *Hobbs of Hum. Nat. c. 9. §. 10.*

There are often three distinct Perceptions or inward Feelings upon Sight of Persons in Distress: Real Sorrow and Concern for the Misery of our Fellow-creatures; some Degree of Satisfaction from a Consciousness of our Freedom from that Misery; and as the Mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an Occasion to reflect upon our own Liableness to the same or other Calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first *only* which is properly Compassion, of which the Distressed are the Objects, and which directly carries us with Calmness and Thought to their Assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated Reasons, may in particular Cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, Instances where the bare *Sight* of Distress, without our feeling any Compassion for it, may be the Occasion of either or both of the two latter. One might add, that if there be really any such thing as the Fiction or Imagination of Danger to ourselves from Sight of the Miseries of others, which *Hobbs* speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of Compassion; if there be any thing of this Sort common to Mankind, distinct from the Reflection of Reason, it would be a most remarkable Instance of what was furthest from his Thoughts, namely, of a mutual Sympathy between each Particular of the Species, a Fellow-feeling common to Mankind. It would not indeed be an Example of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an Example of our substituting ourselves for others. And as it would not be an Instance of Benevolence, so neither

Ser. V. they naturally compassionate all in some Degree whom they see in Distress, so far as they have any real Perception or Sense of that Distress: Insomuch that Words expressing this latter, Pity, Compassion, frequently occur; whereas we have scarce any single one by which the former is distinctly express'd. Congratulation indeed answers Condoleance; but both these Words are intended to signify certain Forms of Civility, rather than any inward Sensation or Feeling. This Difference or Inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider Compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular Affection in Humane Nature; whereas to rejoyce in the Good of others, is only a Consequence of the general Affection of Love and Good-will to them. The Reason and Account of which Matter is this. When a Man has obtained any particular Advantage or Felicity, his End is gained, and he does not in that particular want the Assistance of another; there was therefore no need of a distinct Affection towards

would it be any Instance of Self-love; for this Phantom of Danger to ourselves naturally rising to View upon Sight of the Distresses of others, would be no more an Instance of Love to ourselves, than the Pain of Hunger is.

wards that Felicity of another already obtained, neither would such Affection directly carry him on to do Good to that Person : Whereas Men in Distress want Assistance, and Compassion leads us directly to assist them. The Object of the former is the present Felicity of another ; the Object of the latter is the present Misery of another : It is easy to see that the latter wants a particular Affection, and that the former does not. And upon Supposition of a distinct Affection in both Cases, the one must rest in the Exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain ; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the Distressed.

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

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

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

Scr. V. fection of any fort, but only this, that the  
 ~~~~~ Constitution of Nature according to which  
 God has made us is fuch as to require them.
 And it is fo far from being true, that a wife
 Man muft intirely fuppreff Compassion,
 and all Fellow-feeling for others, as a
 Weaknefs; and truft to Reason alone, to
 teach and enforce upon him the Practice
 of the feveral Charities we owe to our
 Kind; that on the contrary, even the Ex-
 ercife of fuch Affections would be for the
 Good and Happinefs of the World; and
 the Imperfection of the higher Principles of
 Reason and Religion, and the Strength and
 Prevalency of contrary ones, plainly require
 thefe Affections to be a ReftRAINT upon thefe
 latter, and a Supply to the Deficiencies of
 the former.

First, The Exercife of thefe Affections,
 in a juft and reasonable Manner and De-
 gree, would upon the whole increafe the
 Satisfactions, and leffen the Miferies of
 Life. It is the Tendency and Bufinefs of
 Virtue and Religion to procure, as much
 as may be, univerfal Good-will, Truft and
 Friendship amongst Mankind. If this could
 be brought to obtain, and each Man enjoy-
 ed the Happinefs of others, as every one
 does

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

But since in such a Creature as Man,
Compassion or Sorrow for the Distress of
others, seems necessarily connected with
Joy in their Prosperity; there cannot be
this Delight or Satisfaction which appears
to be so considerable, without the Inconve-
nencies, whatever they are, of Compassion.

However, without considering this Con-
nection, there is no doubt but that more
Good than Evil, more Delight than Sorrow,
arises from Compassion itself; there being
so

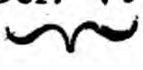
Ser. V. so many things which ballance the Sorrow of it. There is first the Relief which the distressed feel from this Affection in others towards them. There is likewise the Additional Misery which they would feel from the Reflection that no one commiserated their Case. It is indeed true, that any Disposition, prevailing beyond a certain Degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and we have ways of speaking, which though they do not directly express that Excess, yet always lead our Thoughts to it, and give us the Notion of it. Thus when mention is made of Delight in being pitied, this always conveys to our Mind the Notion of somewhat which is really a Weakness: The Manner of speaking, I say, implies a certain Weakness and Feebleness of Mind, which is and ought to be disapproved. But Men of the greatest Fortitude would in Distress feel Uneasiness, from knowing that no Person in the World had any sort of Compassion or real Concern for them. Over against the Sorrow of Compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar calm Kind of Satisfaction, which accompanies it when the Affection does not rise too high; for this is a Weakness, and what ought

ought to be corrected. That Tranquillity or Ser. V. calm Satisfaction proceeds, partly from Con-
sciousness of a right Affection and Temper
of Mind, and partly from a Sense of our
own Freedom from the Misery we compas-
sionate. This last may possibly appear to
some at first sight faulty, but it really is not
so. It is the same with that positive En-
joyment, which sudden Ease from Pain for
the present affords, arising from a real Sense
of Misery, joined with a Sense of our Free-
dom from it; which in all cases must afford
some Degree of Satisfaction.

To these things must be added, the Ob-
servation, which respects both the Affections
we are considering; that they who have
got over all Fellow-feeling for others, have
withal contracted a certain Callousness of
Heart, which renders them insensible to most
other Satisfactions, but those of the grossest
kind.

Secondly, Without the Exercise of these
Affections, Men would certainly be much
more wanting in the Offices of Charity they
owe to each other, and likewise more cruel
and injurious, than they are at present. The
private Interest of the Individual would not
be sufficiently provided for by reasonable
and


Ser. V. and cool Self-Love alone; therefore the
 ~~~~~ Appetites and Passions, are placed within as  
 a Guard and further Security, without which  
 it would not be taken due Care of. It is  
 manifest our Life would be neglected, were  
 it not for the Calls of Hunger, and Thirst,  
 and Weariness; notwithstanding that with-  
 out them Reason would assure us, that the  
 Recruits of Food and Sleep are the neces-  
 sary means of our Preservation. It is there-  
 fore absurd to imagine, that without Af-  
 fection, the same Reason alone would be  
 more effectual to engage us to perform the  
 Duties we owe to our Fellow-Creatures. One  
 of this Make would be as defective, as much  
 wanting, considered with respect to Socie-  
 ty; as one of the former Make would be  
 defective, or wanting, considered as an In-  
 dividual, or in his private Capacity. Is it  
 possible any can in earnest think, that a  
 Publick Spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable  
 Principle of Benevolence to Mankind, is  
 so prevalent and strong in the Species, as  
 that we may venture to throw off the under  
 Affections, which are its Assistance, carry  
 it forward and mark out particular Courses  
 for it; Family, Friends, Neighbourhood,  
 the Distressed, our Country? The common  
 Joys

Joys and the common Sorrows, which be- Ser. V.  
long to these Relations and Circumstances,   
are as plainly useful to Society ; as the Pain  
and Pleasure belonging to Hunger, Thirst,  
and Weariness, are of Service to the Indivi-  
dual. In Defect of that higher Principle of  
Reason, Compassion is often the only Way  
by which the Indigent can have access to us :  
And therefore to eradicate this, though it is  
not indeed formally to deny them that Af-  
sistance which is their Due, yet it is to cut  
them off from that which is too frequently  
their only way of obtaining it. And as for  
those who have shut up this Door against  
the Complaints of the Miserable, and con-  
quered this Affection in themselves ; even  
these Persons will be under great Restraints  
from the same Affection in others. Thus  
a Man who has himself no Sense of Injus-  
tice, Cruelty, Oppression, will be kept from  
running the utmost Lengths of Wickedness,  
by fear of that Detestation, and even Re-  
sentment of Inhumanity, in many particu-  
lar Instances of it, which Compassion for  
the Object, towards whom such Inhumani-  
ty is exercised, excites in the Bulk of Man-  
kind. And this is frequently the chief Dan-  
ger, and the chief Restraint which Tyrants  
and

Ser. V. and the great Oppressours of the World feel.

~ In general, Experience will shew, that as want of natural Appetite to Food, supposes and proceeds from some bodily Disease; so the Apathy the Stoicks talk of as much supposes or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the Moral Character, in that which is the Health of the Mind. Those who formerly aimed at this, upon the Foot of Philosophy, appear to have had better Success in eradicating the Affections of Tendernefs and Compassion, than they had with the Passions of Envy, Pride, and Resentment; these latter at best were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this Observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural Impulses of their Affections, in order to form themselves for Business and the World, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any Capacity or Relation to be named, in which Men ought to be entirely deaf to the Calls of Affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

And as to those who are commonly called the Men of Pleasure, it is manifest that the Reason they set up for Hardness of Heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their Course,  
by

by the Ruin and Misery they are the Anthors Ser. V.  
of : Neither are Persons of this Character   
always the most free from the Impotencies  
of Envy and Resentment. What may Men  
at last bring themselves to, by suppressing  
their Passions and Affections of one Kind,  
and leaving those of the other in their full  
Strength? But surely it might be expected,  
that Persons who make Pleasure their Study  
and their Business, if they understood what  
they profess, would reflect, how many of  
the Entertainments of Life, how many of  
those Kind of Amusements which seem pe-  
culiarly to belong to Men of Leisure and  
Education, they become insensible to by  
this acquired Hardness of Heart.

I shall close these Reflections with bare-  
ly mentioning the Behaviour of that Divine  
Person, who was the Example of all Perfec-  
tion in Human Nature, as represented in  
the Gospels mourning, and even, in a litte-  
ral Sense, weeping over the Distresses of his  
Creatures.

The Observation already made, that of  
the two Affections mentioned in the Text,  
the latter exerts itself much more than the  
former; that from the Original Constituti-  
on of Human Nature we much more ge-  
nerally

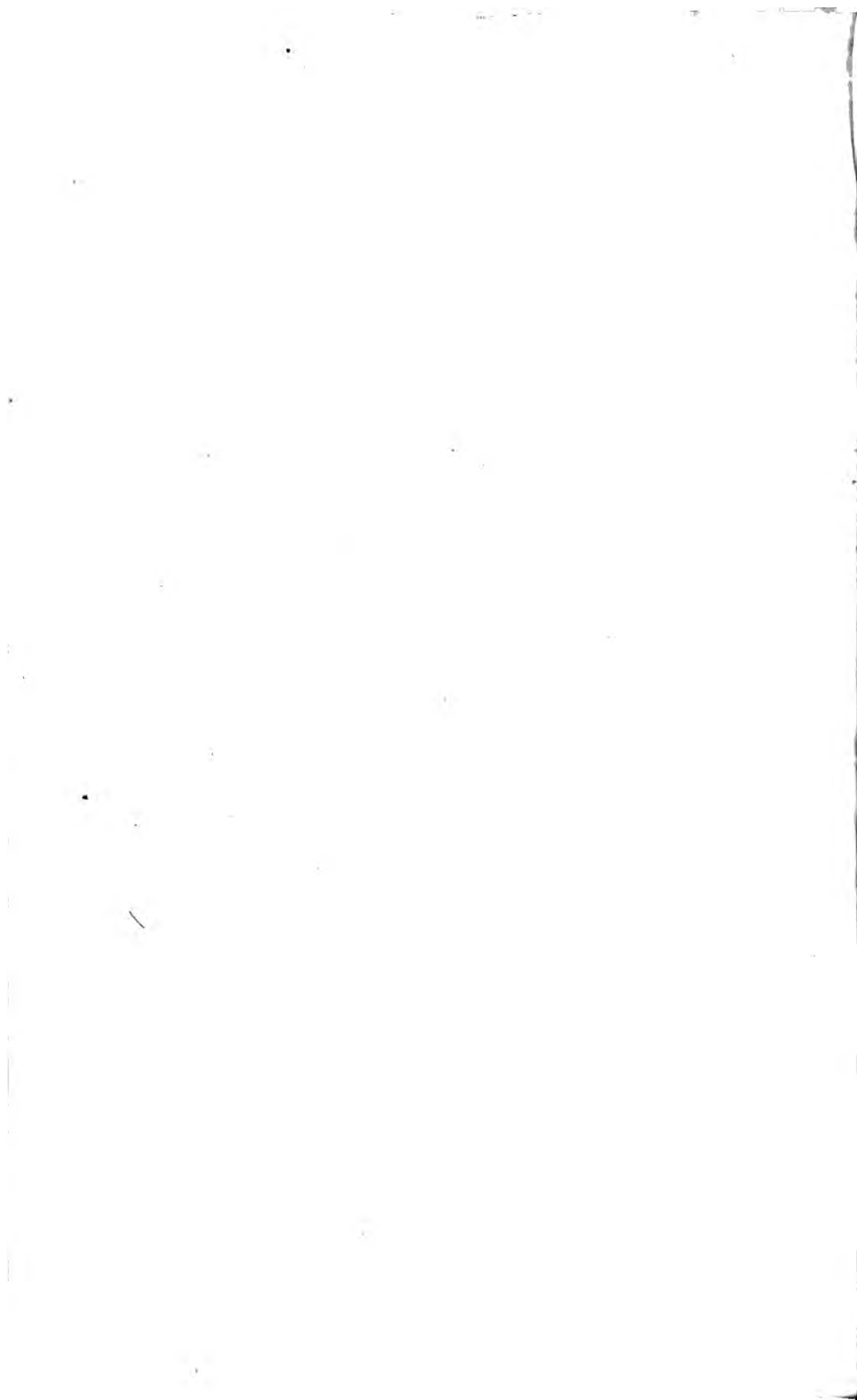
Ser. V. nerally and sensibly compassionate the Distressed, than rejoice with the Prosperous, requires to be particularly considered: This Observation therefore, with the Reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our Thoughts to, shall be the Subject of another Discourse.

For the Conclusion of This, let me just take Notice of the Danger of over-great Refinements, of going besides or beyond the plain obvious first Appearances of Things, upon the Subject of Morals and Religion. The least Observation will show, how little the Generality of Men are capable of Speculations. Therefore Morality and Religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood; it must appeal to what we call plain common Sense, as distinguished from superiour Capacity and Improvement; because it appeals to Mankind. Persons of superior Capacity and Improvement have often fallen into Errors, which no one of meer common Understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter Character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such thing in Mankind as Affection to the Good of others; suppose of Parents to their Children,

Children, or that what he felt upon seeing a Friend in Distress, was only Fear for himself; or upon Supposition of the Affections of Kindness and Compassion, that it was the Business of Wisdom and Virtue to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest Contradictions to Nature has been laid down by Men of Speculation, as a Discovery in moral Philosophy, which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious Appearances to the contrary. This Reflection may be extended further. The Extravagancies of Enthusiasm and Superstition do not at all lie in the Road of common Sense; and therefore, so far as they are *original Mistakes*, must be owing to going beside or beyond it. Now since Inquiry and Examination can relate only to Things so obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of it, and to Persons who are capable of it; the proper Advice to be given to plain honest Men, to secure them from the Extreams both of Superstition and Irreligion, is that of the Son of *Sirach*: *In every good Work trust thy own Soul; for this is the keeping of the Commandment* \*.

\* Ecclus. xxxii. 23.





---

---

# S E R M O N VI.

## *Upon Compassion.*

Preached the first Sunday in *Lent*.

---

R O M. xii. 15.

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

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

H 2


Man,

\* Ecclus. xlii. 24.

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

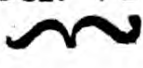
Suppose Humane Nature capable of Happiness and of Misery in Degrees equally intense and extream, it is capable of the latter for a much longer Time beyond all Comparison. We see Men in the Torments of Pain for Hours, Days, and, excepting the short Suspensions of Sleep, for
 Months

Months together without Intermission; to Ser. VI. which no Enjoyments of Life do in Degree and Continuance bear any sort of Proportion. And such is our Make and that of the World about us, that any thing may become the Instrument of Pain and Sorrow to us. Thus almost any one Man is capable of doing Mischief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him Good; and if he be capable of doing him some Good, he is capable of doing him more Evil: And it is in numberless Cases much more in our Power to lessen the Miseries of others, than to promote their positive Happiness, any otherwise than as the former often includes the latter; Ease from Misery occasioning for some time the greatest positive Enjoyment. This Constitution of Nature, namely, that it is so much more in our Power to occasion and likewise to lessen Misery, than to promote positive Happiness, plainly required a particular Affection to hinder us from abusing, and to incline us to make a right Use of the former Powers, *i. e.* the Powers both to occasion and to lessen Misery; over and above what was necessary to induce us to make a right Use of the latter Power, that of promoting positive

Ser. VI. Happiness: The Power we have over the  Misery of our Fellow-creatures (to occasion or lessen it) being a more important Trust, than the Power we have of promoting their positive Happiness. The former requires and has a further, an additional Security and Guard against its being violated, beyond and over and above what the latter has. The social Nature of Man, and general Good-will to his Species, lead him to all three of these equally; equally prevent him from doing Evil, incline him to relieve the Distressed, and to promote the positive Happiness of his Fellow-creatures: But Compassion only restrains from the first, and carries him to the second; it hath nothing to do with the third.

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

As to the former, this Affection may plainly be a Restraint upon Resentment, Envy, unreasonable Self-love; *i. e.* upon all the Principles from which Men do Evil to one another. Let us instance only in Resentment. It seldom happens in regulated Societies, that Men have an Enemy so intirely in their Power, as to be able to satiate their Resentment with Safety: But if
we

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

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

Ser. VI. rity of God, and our State of Dependance.

~ This holds in respect to far the greatest Part of the Evils of Life; I suppose, in some Degree, as to Pain and Sicknes. Now this Part of the Constitution or Make of Man, considered as some Relief to Misery, and not as Provision for positive Happiness, is, if I may so speak, an Instance of Nature's Compassion for us; and every natural Remedy or Relief to Misery, may be considered in the same View,

But since, in many Cases, it is very much in our Power to alleviate the Miseries of each other; and Benevolence, though natural in Man to Man, yet is in a very low Degree, kept down by Interest and Competitions; and Men, for the most Part, are so engaged in the Business and Pleasures of the World, as to overlook and turn away from Objects of Misery; which are plainly considered as Interruptions to them in their Way, as Intruders upon their Business, their Gaiety and Mirth: Compassion is an Advocate within us in their behalf, to gain the Unhappy Admittance and Access, to make their Case attended to. If it sometimes serves a contrary Purpose, and makes Men industriously turn away from the Miserable,

ferable, these are only Instances of Abuse Ser. VI.
and Perversion; for the End for which the Affection was given us, most certainly is not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to the Objects of it. And if Men would only resolve to allow thus much to it; let it bring before their View, the View of their Mind, the Miseries of their Fellow-creatures; let it gain for them that their Case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real Objects of Charity would pass unrelieved. Pain and Sorrow and Misery have a Right to our Assistance: Compassion puts us in Mind of the Debt, and that we owe it to ourselves as well as to the Distressed. For to endeavour to get rid of the Sorrow of Compassion, by turning from the Wretched, when yet it is in our Power to relieve them, is as unnatural as to endeavour to get rid of the Pain of Hunger by keeping from the Sight of Food. That we can do one with greater Success than we can the other, is no Proof that one is less a Violation of Nature than the other. Compassion is a Call, a Demand of Nature, to relieve the Unhappy; as Hunger is a natural Call for Food. This Affection plainly gives
the

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

these Circumstances of Disadvantage, which Ser. VI. are usually thought a sufficient Reason for Neglect, and overlooking a Person, as a Motive for helping him forward: This is the Course of Benevolence which Compassion marks out and directs us to; This is that Humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our Nature and Circumstances in this World.

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

Ser. VI. digent, and that produced by doing the  
 same Favour to one in easie Circumstances?  
 It is manifest, that the Addition of a very  
 large Estate to one who before had an Af-  
 fluence, will in many Instances yield him  
 less new Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than  
 an ordinary Charity would yield to a  
 necessitous Person. So that it is not only  
 true, that our Nature, *i. e.* the Voice of  
 God within us, requires the Exercise of  
 Charity and Benevolence in the Way of  
 Compassion or Mercy, preferably to any o-  
 ther Way; but there is also manifestly much  
 more Good done by the former; or, if you  
 will allow me the Expressions, more Mis-  
 ery annihilated, and Happiness created. If  
 Charity and Benevolence, and endeavour-  
 ing to do Good to our Fellow-creatures,  
 be any thing, this Observation deserves to  
 be most seriously considered by all who  
 have to bestow. And it holds with great  
 Exactness, when applied to the several De-  
 grees of greater and less Indigency, through-  
 out the various Ranks in Humane Life; the  
 Happiness or Good produced not being in  
 Proportion to what is bestowed, but in Pro-  
 portion to this joined with the Need there  
 was of it.

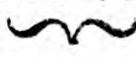
It

It may perhaps be expected, that upon Ser. VI. this Subject Notice should be taken of Occasions, Circumstances, and Characters, which seem at once to call forth Affections of different Sorts: Thus Vice may be thought the Object both of Pity and Indignation; Folly, of Pity and of Laughter. How far this is strictly true, I shall not inquire; but only observe upon the Appearance, how much more Humane it is to yield and give Scope to Affections, which are most directly in Favour of, and friendly towards our Fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly much less Danger of being led wrong by these, than by the other.

But notwithstanding all that has been said in Recommendation of Compassion, that it is most aimable, most becoming Humane Nature, and most useful to the World; yet it must be owned, that every Affection, as distinct from a Principle of Reason, may rise too high, and be beyond its just Proportion: And by means of this one carried too far, a Man throughout his Life is subject to much more Uneasiness than belongs to his Share; and in particular Instances, it may be in such a Degree, as to incapacitate  
him


Ser. VI. him from assisting the very Person who is  
 ~~~~~ the Object of it. But as there are some  
 who upon Principle set up for suppressing
 this Affection itself as Weakness, there is
 also I know not what of Fashion on this
 Side; and by some Means or other, the
 whole World almost is run into the Ex-
 tremes of Insensibility towards the Di-
 stresses of their Fellow-creatures: So that
 general Rules and Exhortations must always
 be on the other Side.

And now to go on to the Uses we should
 make of the foregoing Reflections, the fur-
 ther ones they lead to, and the general
 Temper they have a Tendency to beget in
 in us. There being that distinct Affection
 implanted in the Nature of Man, tending
 to lessen the Miseries of Life, that particu-
 lar Provision made for 'abating its Sorrows,
 more than for increasing its positive Happi-
 ness, as before explained; this may suggest
 to us what should be our general Aim re-
 specting ourselves, in our Passage through
 this World: Namely, to endeavour chiefly
 to escape Misery, keep free from Uneasi-
 ness, Pain, and Sorrow, or to get Relief
 and Mitigation of them; to propose to our-
 selves

felves Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, rather than pursue after high Enjoyments.  Ser. VI.
This is what the Constitution of Nature, before explained, marks out as the Course we should follow, and the End we should aim at. To make Pleasure and Mirth and Jollity our Business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay Amusement, some new Gratification of Sense or Appetite, to those who will consider the Nature of Man and our Condition in this World, will appear the most romantick Scheme of Life that ever entered into Thought. And yet how many are there who go on in this Course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly Disappointments, Listlessness and Satiety, which accompany this fashionable Method of wasting away their Days?

The Subject we have been insisting upon would lead us into the same kind of Reflections, by a different Connection. The Miseries of Life brought home to ourselves by Compassion, viewed through this Affection considered as the Sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that Moderation, Humility, and Soberness of Mind,
which


Ser. VI. which has been now recommended; and
 which peculiarly belongs to a Season of
 Recollection, the only Purpose of which
 is to bring us to a just Sense of Things, to
 recover us out of that Forgetfulness of our
 selves, and our true State, which it is ma-
 nifest for the greatest Part of Men pass their
 whole Life in. Upon this Account *Solo-*
mon says, that *it is better to go to the*
House of mourning, than to go to the
House of feasting. i. e. It is more to a Man's
 Advantage to turn his Eyes towards Objects
 of Distress, to recall sometimes to his Re-
 membrance the Occasions of Sorrow, than
 to pass all his Days in thoughtless Mirth
 and Gaiety. And he represents the Wise as
 choosing to frequent the former of these
 Places, to be sure not for its own Sake, but
 because *by the sadness of the Countenance*
the Heart is made better. Every one ob-
 serves, how temperate and reasonable Men
 are when humbled and brought low by Af-
 flictions, in comparison of what they are
 in high Prosperity. By this voluntary Re-
 sort to the House of Mourning which is
 here recommended, we might learn all those
 useful Instructions which Calamities teach,
 without

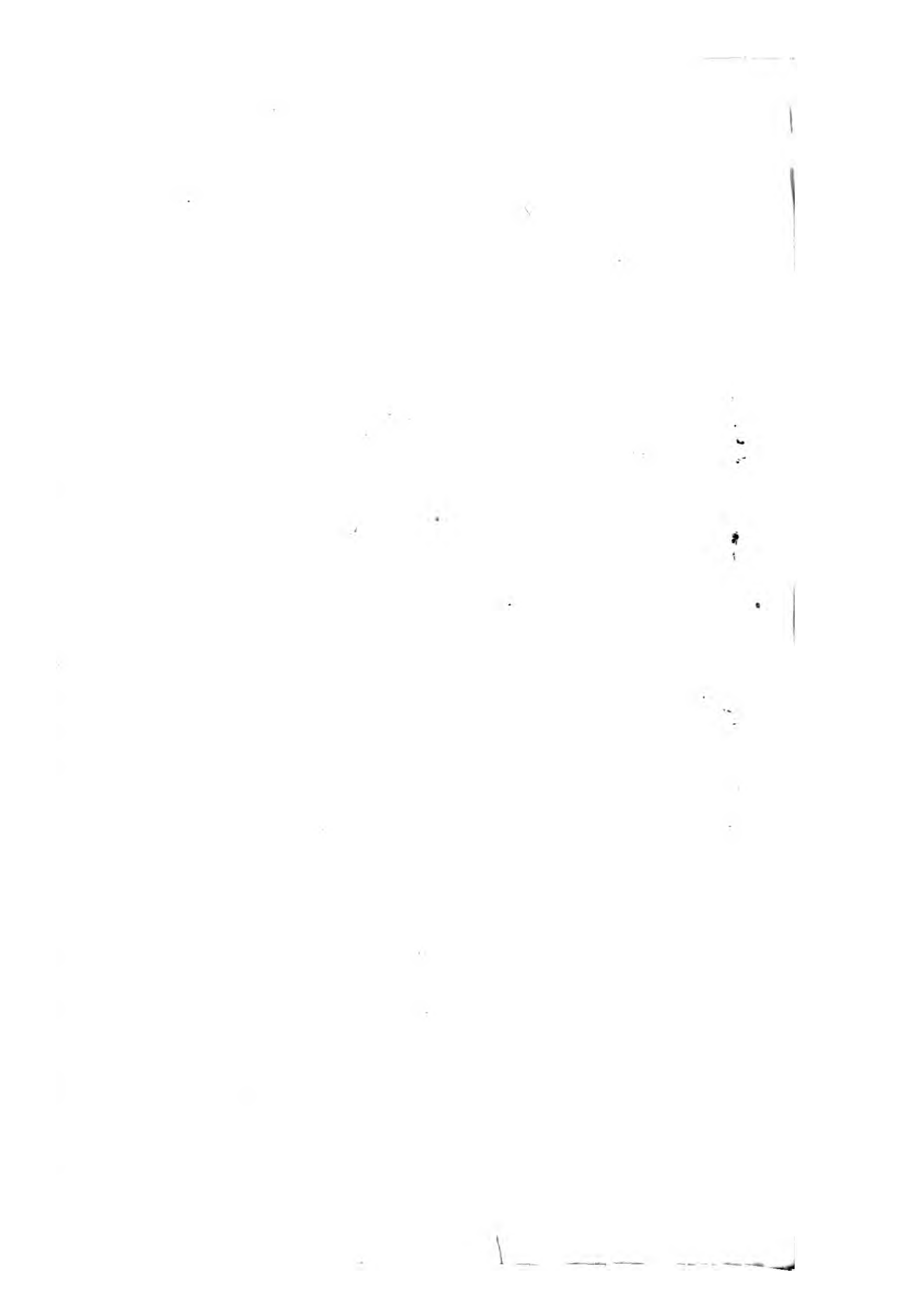
without undergoing them ourselves; and Ser. VI.
grow wiser and better at a more easy Rate 
than Men commonly do. The Objects
themselves, which in that Place of Sorrow
lie before our View, naturally give us a Se-
riousness and Attention, check that Wan-
tonness which is the Growth of Prosperi-
ty and Ease, and lead us to reflect upon
the Deficiencies of Humane Life itself; that
*every Man at his best Estate is altogether
Vanity.* This would correct the florid and
gaudy Prospects and Expectations which we
are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower
our Notions of Happiness and Enjoyment,
bring them down to the Reality of things,
to what is attainable, to what the Frailty of
our Condition will admit of, which, for
any Continuance, is only Tranquillity,
Ease, and moderate Satisfaction. Thus we
might at once become Proof against the
Temptations, with which the whole World
almost is carried away; since it is plain,
that not only what is called a Life of Plea-
sure, but also vicious Pursuits in general,
aim at somewhat besides and beyond these
moderate Satisfaction.

And as to that Obstinacy and Wilfulness,
which renders Men so insensible to the Mo-

Ser. VI. tives of Religion, this right Sense of ourselves and of the World about us would bend the stubborn Mind, soften the Heart, and make it more apt to receive Impression; and this is the proper Temper in which to call our Ways to Remembrance, to review and set home upon ourselves the Miscalriages of our past Life. In such a compliant State of Mind, Reason and Conscience will have a fair Hearing; which is the Preparation for, or rather the Beginning of that Repentance, the outward show of which we all put on at this Season.

Lastly, The various Miseries of Life which lie before us, wherever we turn our Eyes, the Frailty of this mortal State we are passing through, may put us in Mind that the present World is not our Home; that we are meerly Strangers and Travelers in it, as all our Fathers were. It is therefore to be considered as a foreign Country, in which our Poverty and Wants, and the insufficient Supplies of them, were designed to turn our Views to that higher and better State we are Heirs to: A State where will be no Follies to be overlooked, no Miseries to be pitied, no Wants to
be

be relieved ; where the Affection we have Ser. VI.
been now treating of will happily be lost, 
as there will be no Objects to exercise it
upon ; for *God shall wipe away all Tears
from their Eyes, and there shall be no more
Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, nei-
ther shall there be any more Pain ; for the
former things are passed away.*



S E R M O N VII:

Upon the Character of Balaam.

Preached the second Sunday after *Easter.*

NUMB. xxiii. 10.

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

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


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

Ser.VII. wicked, *i. e.* having lived righteously or
 ~~~~~ wickedly ; a Comparison of them in their  
 Lives also might come into Consideration  
 from such a single View of the Words them-  
 selves. But my present Design is, to consi-  
 der them with a particular Reference or Re-  
 spect to him who spoke them ; which Re-  
 ference, if you please to attend, you will  
 see. And if what shall be offered to your  
 Consideration at this Time be thought a  
 Discourse upon the whole History of this  
 Man, rather than upon the particular Words  
 I have read, this is of no Consequence ; it  
 is sufficient, if it afford Reflection of Use  
 and Service to ourselves.

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

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

## Character of Balaam. 119

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

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

I 4

*Balaam*

\* Ver 4, 5.

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

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

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

\* Ver. 6.

† *Micah* vi.

## Character of Balaam.

121

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



122 *A SERMON upon the*

Ser. VII. tious Man. No Words can more strongly  
 exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart,  
 than *doing Justice*, and *loving Mercy*: And  
 both these, as well as *walking humbly with  
 God*, are put in Opposition to those cere-  
 monial Methods of Recommendation, which  
*Balak* hoped might have served the Turn.  
 From hence appears what he meant by the  
*Righteous*, whose *Death* he desires to  
 die.

Whether it was his own Character shall  
 now be inquired: And in order to deter-  
 mine it, we must take a View of his whole  
 Behaviour upon this Occasion. When the  
 Elders of *Moab* came to him, though he  
 appears to have been much allured with  
 the Rewards offered, yet he had such Regard  
 to the Authority of God, as to keep the  
 Messengers in Suspence until he had con-  
 sulted his Will. *And God said to him, \*  
 Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not  
 curse the People, for they are blessed.* Up-  
 on this he dismisseth the Ambassadors, with  
 an absolute refusal of accompanying them  
 back to their King. Thus far his Regards  
 to his Duty prevailed, neither does there  
 any

\* Chap. xxii. 12.

## Character of Balaam. 123

any thing appear as yet amiss in his Conduct. His Answer being reported to the King of *Moab*, a more honourable Embassy is immediately dispatched, and greater Rewards proposed. Then the Iniquity of his Heart began to disclose itself. A thorough honest Man would without Hesitation have repeated his former Answer, that he could not be guilty of so infamous a Prostitution of the sacred Character with which he was invested, as in the Name of a Prophet to curse those, whom he knew to be blessed. But instead of this, which was the only honest Part in these Circumstances that lay before him, he desires the Princes of *Moab* to tarry that Night with him also; and deliberates, whether by some Means or other he might not be able to obtain leave, for the sake of the Reward, to curse *Israel*; to do that, which had been before revealed to him to be contrary to the Will of God, which yet he resolves not to do without that Permission. Upon which, as when this Nation afterwards rejected God from reigning over them, he gave them a King in his Anger, in the same Way he gives *Balaam* the Permission he desired: For this is the most natural Sense of the Words. Arriving

124      *A S E R M O N upon the*

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

Character of Balaam. 125

not intirely get over; he therefore casts a-^{Scr.VII.} Ser.VII. bout for Ways to reconcile this Wickedness with his Duty. How great a Paradox foever this may appear, as it is indeed a Contradiction in Terms, it is the very Account which the Scripture gives us of him.

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

126 A S E R M O N upon the


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

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

So that the Object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the World : A very wicked Man, under a deep Sense of God and Religion, persisting still in his
Wicked-

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

Character of Balaam. 127

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

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


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

Character of Balaam. 129

ly heightened. Now when Men go against Ser. VII. their Reason, and contradict a more important Interest at a Distance, for one nearer, though of less Consideration; if this be the Whole of the Case, all that can be said is, that strong Passions, some kind of brute Force within, prevails over the Principle of Rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full and distinct View of the Truth of Things, then it is doing the utmost Violence to Themselves, acting in Contradiction to their very Nature: But if there be any such thing in Mankind, as putting Half-deceits upon themselves; which there plainly is, either by avoiding Reflection; or if they do reflect, by religious Equivocation, Subterfuges, and palliating Matters to themselves; by these Means Conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a Course of Wickedness with less Disturbance. All the various Turns, Doubles and Intricacies in a dishonest Heart cannot be unfolded or laid open; but that there is somewhat of that kind is manifest, be it to be called Self-deceit, or by any other Name. *Balaam* had before his Eyes the Authority of God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for the Sake of a Reward, had the strongest Inclination

K

130 A SERMON upon the

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

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

Character of Balaam. 131

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

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

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

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

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

Besides these, there are also Persons, who from a more just way of considering things see the infinite Absurdity of this, of substituting Sacrifice instead of Obedience; There are Persons far enough from Superstition

Character of Balaam. 133

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

134. *A* S E R M O N *upon the*

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

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

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

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

136 *A SERMON upon the*

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


S E R M O N

S E R M O N V I I I .

Upon Resentment.

MATTH. V. 43, 44.

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

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

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

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

Serm.

VIII.

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

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

Resentment is of two Kinds; *hasty and
 sudden, or settled and deliberate*. The for-
 mer is called Anger, and often *Passion*;
 which, though a general Word, is frequent-
 ly appropriated and confined to the particu-
 lar Feeling, sudden Anger, as distinct from
 deliberate Resentment, Malice and Revenge.
 In all these Words is usually implied some-
 what vicious; somewhat unreasonable as to
 the Occasion of the Passion, or immoderate
 as to the Degree or Duration of it. But that
 the natural Passion itself is indifferent, St.
Paul has asserted in that Precept, *Be ye an-
 gry*

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

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

* Ephes. iv. 26.

Serm. ance of Injury, as distinct from Hurt or Pain.

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

The Reason and End, for which Man was  
 made thus liable to this Passion, is, that he  
 might be better qualified to prevent, and like-  
 wise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat,  
 sudden Force, Violence and Opposition, consi-  
 dered meerly as such, and without Regard to  
 the Fault or Demerit of him who is the Au-  
 thor of them. Yet since Violence may be  
 considered in this other, and further View,  
 as implying Fault; and since Injury, as distinct  
 from Harm may raise sudden Anger;  
 sudden Anger may likewise accidentally serve  
 to prevent, or remedy, such Fault and Injury.  
 But considered as distinct from settled Anger,  
 it

it stands in our Nature for Self-defence, and not for the Administration of Justice. There are plainly Cases, and, where regular Governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no Time for Consideration, and yet to be passive is certain Destruction; in which, sudden Resistance is the only Security.

Serm.  
VIII.

But from *This, deliberate Anger or Resentment* is essentially distinguished, both by the Occasions which excite it, and by the natural and proper End for which it serves. And in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural Object and Occasion of such Resentment; let us reflect upon the Manner in which we are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned Story of Baseness and Villany, properly worked up to move our Passions. This immediately raises Indignation, somewhat of a Desire that it should be punished. And though the designed Injury be prevented, yet that it was designed is sufficient to raise this inward Feeling. Suppose the Story true, this inward Feeling would be as natural and as just: And one may venture to affirm, that there is scarce a Man in the World, but would have it upon some Occasions. It seems *in us* plainly connected with

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

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

L

indeed



Serm. indeed resent what is occasioned through  
 VIII. Carelessness: But then that Carelessness is  
 considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that  
 they resent more strongly an Injury done,  
 than one which, though designed, was pre-  
 vented, in Cases where the Guilt is perhaps  
 the same: The Reason however is, not that  
 bare Pain or Loss raises Resentment, but,  
 that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, ad-  
 ditional Sense of the Injury or Injustice. Ac-  
 cording to the natural Course of the Passi-  
 ons, the Degrees of Resentment are in Pro-  
 portion, not only to the Degree of Design  
 and Deliberation in the injurious Person;  
 but in Proportion to this, joined with the  
 Degree of the Evil designed or premedita-  
 ted; since this likewise comes in to make  
 the Injustice greater or less. And the Evil or  
 Harm will appear greater when they feel it,  
 than when they only reflect upon it; so  
 likewise will the Injury: So therefore will  
 the Resentment be greater.

The natural Object, or Occasion, of settled  
 Resentment then being Injury, as distinct  
 from Pain or Loss; it is easy to see, that  
 to prevent and to remedy such Injury, and  
 the Miseries arising from it, is the End for  
 which this Passion was implanted in Man.

It

It is to be considered as a Weapon, put in-  
to our Hands by Nature, against Injury, In-  
justice and Cruelty : How it may be inno-  
cently employed and made use of, shall pre-  
sently be mentioned.

Serm.  
VIII.



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

Serm. neither increased by Indulgence, nor corrected by Virtue, nor prevailed over by other Passions, or particular Habits of Life.

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

and languidly discharges itself upon every Sermon. thing which comes in its Way; the same VIII. Principle, in a Temper of greater Force and stronger Passions, becomes Rage and Fury. In one, the Humour discharges itself at once; in the other, it is continually discharging. This is the Account of *Passion* and *Peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different Persons. It is no Objection against the Truth of it, that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same Person.

With respect to deliberate Resentment, the chief Instances of Abuse are: When, from Partiality to ourselves, we imagine an Injury done us, when there is none: When this Partiality represents it to us greater than it really is: When we fall into that extravagant and monstrous Kind of Resentment, towards one who has innocently been the Occasion of Evil to us; that is, Resentment upon Account of Pain or Inconvenience, without Injury; which is the same Absurdity, as settled Anger at a thing that is inanimate: When the Indignation against Injury and Injustice rises too high, and is beyond Proportion to the particular ill Action it is exercised upon: Or lastly, when Pain or Harm of any Kind is inflicted

Serm. merely in Consequence of, and to gratify, that Resentment, though naturally raised.

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

But notwithstanding all these Abuses; Is not just Indignation against Cruelty and Wrong, one of the *Instruments of Death* which the Author of our Nature hath provided?

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

Serm.

VIII.



Serm. and is really in a very low Degree, that Men  
 VIII. are in great Measure insensible to the Happi-  
 ness of their Fellow-creatures; yet they are  
 not insensible to their Misery, but are very  
 strongly moved with it: Insomuch that there  
 plainly is Occasion for that Feeling which is  
 raised by Guilt and Demerit, as a Ballance to  
 That of Compassion.

As to the Effect and Influence, which this  
 Passion of Resentment has in Fact upon the  
 Affairs of the World: Men are plainly re-  
 strained from injuring their Fellow-creatures  
 by Fear of their Resentment; and it is very  
 happy that they are so, when they would not  
 be restrained by a Principle of Virtue. And  
 after an Injury is done, and there is a Necessi-  
 ty that the Offender should be brought to  
 Justice; The cool Consideration, that the Se-  
 curity and Peace of Society requires Exam-  
 ples of Justice should be made, might indeed  
 be sufficient to procure Laws to be enacted,  
 and Sentence pass'd But is it that cool Re-  
 flection in the injured Person, which, for the  
 most Part, brings the Offender to Justice? Or  
 is it not Resentment and Indignation against  
 the Injury and the Author of it? I am afraid  
 there is no Doubt, which is commonly the  
 Case.

The


The Account now given of the Passion of Resentment, as distinct from all the Abuses of it, may suggest to our Thoughts the following Reflections. Serm. VIII.

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

*Secondly,* That we should learn to be cautious lest we *charge God foolishly*, by ascribing That to him, or the Nature He has given us, which is owing wholly to our own Abuse of it. Men may speak of the Degeneracy and Corruption of the World, according to the Experience they have had of it; but Human Nature, considered as the divine Workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred: For *in the Image of God made He Man.* That Passion, from whence Men take



154      *A* S E R M O N *upon*

Serm. Occasion to run into the dreadful Vices of  
VIII. Malice and Revenge; even That Passion, as  
 implanted in our Nature by God, is not only  
innocent, but a generous Movement of  
Mind. It is in itself, and in its Original, no  
more than Indignation against Injury and  
Wickedness; That which is the only Deformity  
in the Creation, and the only moral  
Object of Dislike. How manifold Evidence  
have we of the divine Wisdom and Goodness,  
when even Pain in the natural World,  
and the Passion, we have been now considering,  
in the Moral, come out Instances of it!

---

S E R M O N

---

---

# S E R M O N IX.

*Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.*

---

MATTH. V. 43, 44.

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

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

Serm.  
IX.



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

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

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 157

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

Serm.

IX.



Serm. Retaliation, do so plainly in the very Terms  
IX. exprefs somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate and absurd, as to admit of no Pretence or Shadow of Justification.

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

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

*First,* Let us begin with the Supposition of That being innocent, which is pleaded for, and which shall be shewn to be altogether vicious,

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 159

cious, that we were allowed to *render Evil for Evil*, and see what would be the Consequence. Malice or Resentment towards any Man hath plainly a Tendency to beget the same Passion in him who is the Object of it; and this again increases it in the other: For it is of the very Nature of this Vice to propagate itself, not only by way of Example, which it does in common with other Vices, but in a way peculiar to itself. Put the Case then that the Law of Retaliation was universally received, and allowed, as an innocent Rule of Life, by all; and the Observance of it thought by many, (and then it would soon come to be thought by all,) a Point of Honour: This supposes every Man in private Cases to pass Sentence in his own Cause; and likewise, that Anger or Resentment is to be the Judge. Thus, from the numberless Partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when He was not: and in most Cases would represent an Injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined Dignity of the Person offended would scarce ever fail to magnifie the Offence. And if bare Retaliation, or returning just the Mischief received, always begets Resentment in  
the

Serm.  
IX.



Serm. the Person upon whom we retaliate, what  
 IX. would that Excess do? Add to this, that he  
 likewise has his Partialities—There is no  
 going on to represent this Scene of Rage  
 and Madnes: It is manifest there would be  
 no Bounds, nor any End. *If the Beginning  
 of Strife is as when one letteth out Water,*  
 what would it come to when allowed this  
 free and unrestrained Course? *As Coals are  
 to burning Coals, or Wood to Fire; so would  
 these contentious Men be to kindle Strife* \*.  
 And since the Indulgence of Revenge hath  
 manifestly this Tendency, and does actually  
 produce these Effects in Proportion as it is al-  
 lowed; a Passion of so dangerous a Nature  
 ought not to be indulged, were there no o-  
 ther Reason against it.

*Secondly,* It hath been shewn that the  
 Passion of Resentment was placed in Man,  
 upon Supposition of, and as a Prevention or  
 Remedy to Irregularity and Disorder. Now  
 whether it be allowed or not, that the Passi-  
 on itself and the Gratification of it joined to-  
 gether are painful to the malicious Person;  
 it must however be so with Respect to the  
 Person towards whom it is exercised, and  
 upon

\* Prov. xxvi. 21.

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 161

upon whom the Revenge is taken. Now, if Serm.  
we consider Mankind, according to that IX.  
fine Allusion of St. *Paul*, as *one Body, and*  
*every one Members one of another*; it must  
be allowed that Resentment is, with Re-  
spect to Society, a painful Remedy. Thus  
then the very Notion or Idea of this Passion,  
as a Remedy or Prevention of Evil, and as  
in itself a painful Means, plainly shews that  
it ought never to be made use of, but only  
in order to produce some greater Good.

It is to be observed, that this Argument  
is not founded upon an Allusion or Simile;  
but that it is drawn from the very Nature  
of the Passion itself, and the End for which  
it was given us. We are obliged to make  
use of Words taken from sensible things,  
to explain what is the most remote from  
them: And every one sees, from whence  
the Words Prevention and Remedy are taken.  
But if you please, let these Words be drop-  
ped; the thing itself, I suppose, may be ex-  
press'd without them.

That Mankind is a Community, that we  
all stand in a Relation to each other, that  
there is a publick Interest of Society which  
each Particular is obliged to promote, is the  
Sum of Morals. Consider then the Passi-



Serm. on of Resentment, as given to this one Bo-  
 IX. dy, as given to Society. Nothing can be  
 more manifest, than that Resentment is to  
 be considered as a secondary Passion, placed  
 in us upon Supposition, upon Account of,  
 and with Regard to Injury; not, to be sure,  
 to promote and further it, but to render it,  
 and the Inconveniencies and Miseries arising  
 from it, less and fewer than they would be  
 without this Passion. It is as manifest, that  
 the Indulgence of it is, with Regard to So-  
 ciety, a painful Means of obtaining these  
 Ends. Considered in itself, it is very unde-  
 sirable, and what Society must very much  
 wish to be without. It is in every Instance  
 absolutely an Evil in itself; because it implies  
 producing Misery: And consequently must  
 never be indulged or gratified for itself,  
 by any one who considers Mankind as a  
 Community or Family, and himself as a  
 Member of it.

Let us now take this in another View.  
 Every natural Appetite, Passion and Affecti-  
 on, may be gratified in particular Instances,  
 without being subservient to the particular  
 chief End, for which these several Princi-  
 ples were respectively implanted in our Na-  
 ture. And, if neither this End, nor any  
 other

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 163

other moral Obligation be contradicted, Sermon. such Gratification is innocent. Thus, I IX. suppose, there are Cases in which each of these Principles, this one of Resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main End of it: That is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that End, or any other Obligation. But the Gratification of Resentment, if it be not conducive to the End for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general Obligation to Benevolence, but likewise that particular End itself. The End, for which it was given, is to prevent or remedy Injury; *i. e.* the Misery occasioned by Injury; *i. e.* Misery itself: And the Gratification of it consists in producing Misery; *i. e.* in contradicting the End, for which it was implanted in our Nature.

This whole Reasoning is built upon the Difference there is between this Passion and all others. No other Principle, or Passion, aims at the Misery of our Fellow-creatures, as its End. But Malice and Revenge meditates Evil itself; and to do Mischief, to be the Author of Misery, is the very Thing

164      *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. which gratifies the Passion: This is what it  
IX. directly tends towards, as its proper Design.

Other Vices eventually do Mischief: This alone aims at it as an End.

As to any thing which can be urged in Justification of Revenge, from the Effects which the Indulgence of it were before mentioned \* to have upon the Affairs of the World, it cannot be to the Purpose; because, though it be a remarkable Instance of the Wisdom of Providence to bring Good out of Evil, yet Vice is Vice to him who is guilty of it. “ But suppose these good “ Effects are foreseen :” That is, Suppose Reason in a particular Case leads a Man the same Way as Passion? Why then, to be sure, he should follow his Reason, in this as well as in all other Cases. So that, turn the Matter which way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this Passion, than what hath been already †.

As to that Love of our Enemies, which is commanded, this supposes the general Obligation to Benevolence or Good-will towards Mankind; and this being supposed, that Precept is no more than to forgive Injuries;

\* Serm. VIII. p. 152.

† Serm. VIII. p. 151,

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 165

juries; that is, to keep clear of those Abuses before mentioned: Because that we have the habitual Temper of Benevolence, is taken for granted. Serm.  
IX.

Resentment is not inconsistent with Goodwill: For we often see both together in very high Degrees; not only in Parents towards their Children, but in Cases of Friendship and Dependance, where there is no natural Relation. These contrary Passions, though they may lessen, do not necessarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our Enemy, and yet have Resentment against him for his injurious Behaviour towards us: But when this Resentment intirely destroys our natural Benevolence towards him, it is excessive, and becomes Malice or Revenge: The Command, to prevent its having this Effect, *i. e.* to forgive Injuries, is the same as to love our Enemies; because that Love is always supposed, unless destroyed by Resentment.

But though Mankind is the natural Object of Benevolence, yet may it not be lessened upon Vice, *i. e.* Injury? Allowed: But if every Degree of Vice or Injury must destroy that Benevolence, then no Man is

Serm. the Object of our Love ; for no Man is with-  
IX. out Faults.

But if lower Instances of Injury may lessen our Benevolence, why may not higher, or the highest, destroy it? The Answer is obvious. It is not Man's being a social Creature, much less his being a moral Agent, from whence *alone* our Obligations to Good-will towards him arise. There is an Obligation to it prior to either of these, arising from his being a sensible Creature; that is, capable of Happiness or Misery. Now this Obligation cannot be superseded by his moral Character. What justifies publick Executions is, not that the Guilt or Demerit of the Criminal dispenses with the Obligation of Good-will, neither would this justify any Severity; but, that his Life is inconsistent with the Quiet and Happiness of the World: That is, a general and more enlarged Obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same Kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt or Injury then does not dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

Neither does that Self-partiality, which was before allowed to be natural \* to Man-kind,

\* Serm. VIII. p. 144.

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 167

kind, dispense with it: Because that can no way innocently heighten our Resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our Sense of the Injury or Guilt; and Guilt, though in the highest Degree, does not, as hath been shewn, dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

Serm.  
IX.

If all this be true, what can a Man say, who will dispute the Reasonableness, or the Possibility, of obeying the divine Precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak. “Mankind, *i. e.* a Creature defective and faulty, is the proper Object of Good-will, whatever his Faults are, when they respect others; but not when they respect me myself”. That Men should be *affected* in this Manner, and *act* accordingly, is to be accounted for like other Vices; but to *assert* that it *ought*, and *must* be thus, is Self-partiality possess’d of the very Understanding.

Thus Love to our Enemies, and those who have been injurious to us, is so far from being a *Rant*, as it has been prophanelly called, that it is in Truth the Law of our Na-

Serm. ture; and what every one must see and own,  
IX. who is not quite blinded with Self-love.

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

Now what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is indeed no more than that we should not indulge a Passion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itself so as almost to lay waste the World: That we should suppress that partial, that false Self-love, which is the Weakness of our Nature: That Uneasiness and Misery should not be produced, without any good Purpose to be served by it: And that we should not be affected towards Persons differently

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 169

ferently from what their Nature and Character require. Serm.  
IX.

But since to be convinced that any Temper of Mind, and Course of Behaviour, is our Duty, and the contrary vitious, hath but a distant Influence upon our Temper and Actions; let me add some few Reflections, which may have a more direct Tendency to subdue those Vices in the Heart, to beget in us this right Temper, and lead us to a right Behaviour towards those who have offended us: Which Reflections however shall be such as will further shew the Obligations we are under to it.

No one, I suppose, would choose to have an Indignity put upon him, or to be injuriously treated. If then there be any Probability of a Misunderstanding in the Case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the Injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an Intimation of this Sort might be kindly received, and that People would be glad to find the Injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing Particulars, I take upon me to assure all Persons who think they have received Indignities or injurious Treatment, that



Serm. that they may depend upon it, as in a Man-  
 IX. ner certain, that the Offence is not so great  
 as they themselves imagine. We are in  
 such a peculiar Situation, with respect to  
 Injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce  
 any more see them as they really are, than  
 our Eye can see itself. If we could place  
 ourselves at a due Distance, *i. e.* be really  
 unprejudiced, we should frequently discern  
 That to be in reality Inadvertence and Mi-  
 stake in our Enemy, which we now fancy we  
 see to be Malice or Scorn. From this proper  
 point of View, we should likewise in all  
 Probability see something of these latter in  
 ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of  
 the former. Thus the Indignity or Injury  
 would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps  
 at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-  
 love is a Medium of a peculiar Kind : In  
 these Cases it magnifies every thing which is  
 amiss in others, at the same time that it les-  
 sens every thing amiss in ourselves. In ge-  
 neral, there are very few Instances of En-  
 mity carried to any Length, but Inadver-  
 tence or Misunderstanding, on one Side at  
 least, if not on both, have a great Share in  
 it. Neither is it at all uncommon, to see  
 Persons, in the Progress of Strife and Va-  
 riance

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 171

riance, change Parts; and Him, who was at first the injured Person, become more injurious and blameable than the Aggressor.

Serm.  
IX.  
~

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

If these things were attended to, these Ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good Men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all. And one would hope they might be attended to; for all that these Cautions come to is really no more than desiring, that Things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves,

Serm. selves; that we should have an Eye to, and be-  
 IX. ware of, what would otherwise lead us into  
 Mistakes. So that to make Allowances for In-  
 advertence, Misunderstanding, for the Par-  
 tialities of Self-love, and the false Light which  
 Anger sets things in; I say, to make Allow-  
 ances for these, is not to be spoken of as an  
 Instance of Humbleness of Mind, or Meek-  
 ness and Moderation of Temper; but as  
 what common Sense should suggest, to avoid  
 judging wrong of a Matter before us, though  
 Virtue and Morals were out of the Case:  
 And therefore it as much belongs to ill Men,  
 who will indulge the Vice I have been argu-  
 ing against; as to good Men, who endeavour  
 to subdue it in themselves. In a word, all  
 these Cautions, concerning Anger and Self-  
 love, are no more than desiring a Man, who  
 was looking through a Glass which either  
 magnified or lessened, to take Notice, that  
 the Objects are not in themselves what they  
 appear through that Medium.

To all these Things one might add, that,  
 Resentment being out of the Case, there is  
 not properly speaking any such Thing as di-  
 rect Ill-will in one Man towards another:  
 Therefore the first Indignity or Injury, if it  
 be not owing to Inadvertence or Misunder-  
 standing,

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 173

standing, may however be resolved into the *Serm.*  
Principle of Self-love or Passion: *IX.*  
Principles quite distinct from Ill-will, and which  
we ought all to be disposed to excuse in o-  
thers, from experiencing so much of them in  
ourselves. A great Man of Antiquity is re-  
ported to have said, that as He never was in-  
dulgent to any one Fault in himself, He could  
not excuse those of others. This Sentence  
could scarce with Decency come out of the  
Mouth of any humane Creature. But if we  
invert the former Part, and put it thus ; that  
He was indulgent to many Faults, in himself,  
as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet  
was implacable ; how monstrous would such  
an Assertion appear ? And this is the Case in  
Respect to every humane Creature, who is  
without the forgiving Spirit I have been re-  
commending.


Further, Tho' Injury, Injustice, Oppressi-  
on, the Baseness of Ingratitude, are the na-  
tural Objects of Indignation, or if you please  
of Resentment, as before explained ; yet  
they are likewise the Objects of Compassion,  
as they are their own Punishment, and with-  
out Repentance will for ever be so. No one  
ever did a designed Injury to another, but at  
the same time He did a much greater to him-  
self.

174      *A* S E R M O N *upon*

Serm. self. If therefore we would consider things  
 IX. justly, such an one is according to the natu-  
 ral Course of our Affections an Object of  
 Compassion, as well as of Displeasure: And  
 to be affected really in this manner, I say re-  
 ally, in Opposition to Show and Pretence,  
 argues the true Greatness of Mind. We  
 have an Example of Forgiveness in this  
 Way in its utmost Perfection, and which in-  
 deed includes in it all that is Good, in that  
 Prayer of our Blessed Saviour on the Cross:  
*Father, forgive them; for they know not  
 what they do.*

But *Lastly*, The Offences which we are  
 all guilty of against God, and the Injuries  
 which Men do to each other, are often men-  
 tioned together: And, making Allowances  
 for the infinite Distance between the Majesty  
 of Heaven and a frail Mortal, and likewise  
 for this, that He cannot possibly be affected or  
 moved as we are; Offences committed by o-  
 thers against ourselves, and the Manner in  
 which we are apt to be affected with them,  
 give a real Occasion for calling to Mind our  
 own Sins against God. Now there is an Ap-  
 prehension and Pre-sentiment natural to  
 Mankind, that we ourselves shall one Time  
 or other be dealt with, as we deal with others;  
 and

## Forgiveness of Injuries. 175

and a peculiar Acquiescence in, and Feeling Serm.<sup>1</sup>  
of the Equity and Justice of this equal Distri- IX.  
bution. This natural Notion of Equity the   
Son of *Sirach* has put in the strongest way. \*  
*He that revengeth shall find Vengeance from*  
*the Lord, and he will surely keep his Sins in*  
*Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the*  
*Hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy*  
*Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One*  
*Man beareth Hatred against another, and*  
*doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He*  
*sheweth no Mercy to a man which is like him-*  
*self; and doth He ask Forgiveness of his*  
*own Sins?* Let any one read our Saviour's  
Parable of *the King who took Account of his*  
*Servants* †: And the Equity and Rightness  
of the Sentence, which was pass'd upon  
him who was unmerciful to his Fellow-Ser-  
vant, will be felt. There is somewhat in  
Humane Nature, which accords to, and falls  
in with that Method of Determination. Let  
us then place before our Eyes the Time which  
is represented in the Parable; That of our  
own Death, or the final Judgment. Suppose  
your selves under the Apprehensions of ap-  
proaching Death; that you were just going  
to

\* Ecclus. xxviii. 1-4.

† Matth. xviii.

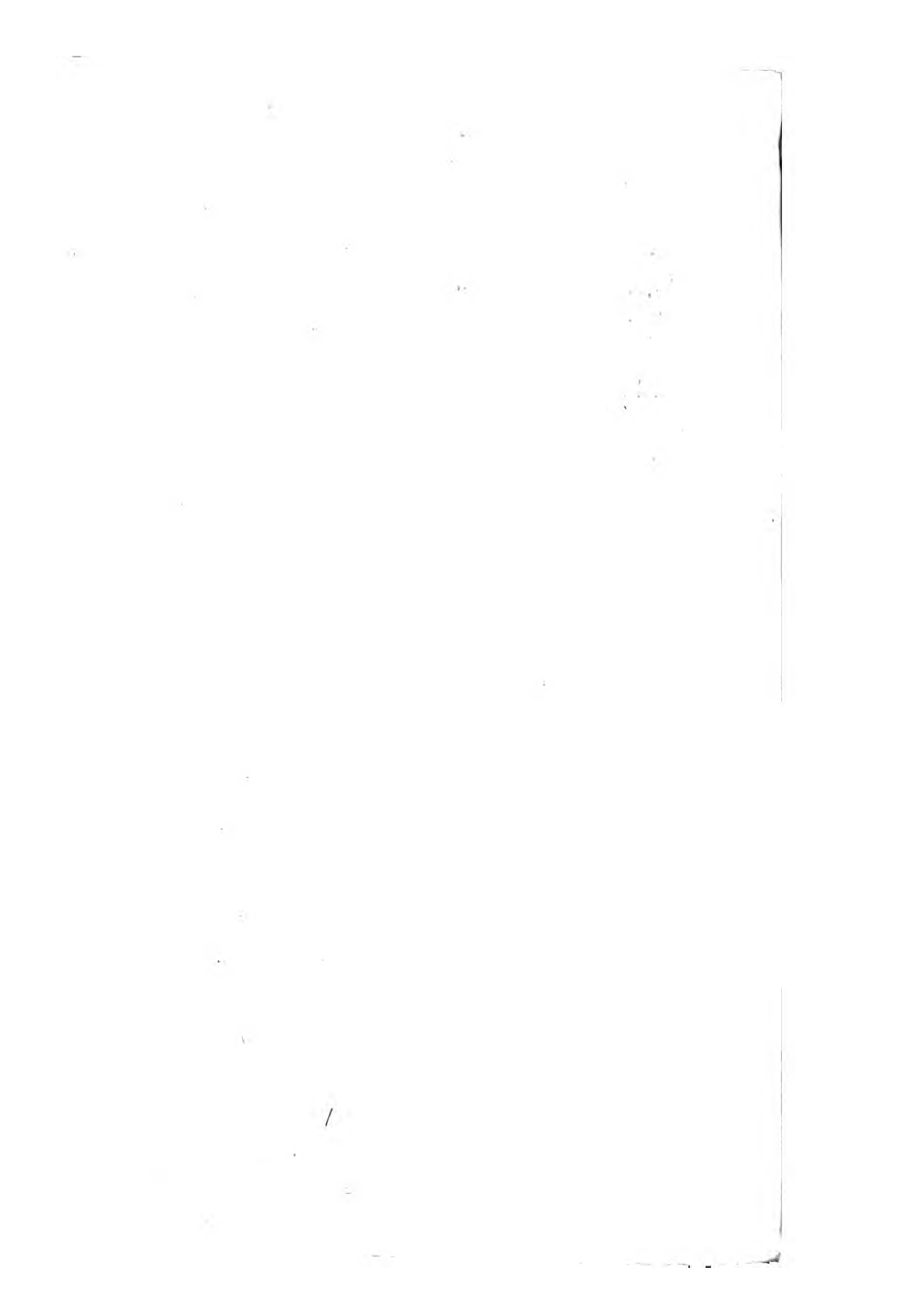
Serm. to appear naked and without Disguise before  
 IX. the Judge of all the Earth, to give an Account of your Behaviour towards your Fellow-creatures: Could any thing raise more dreadful Apprehensions of that Judgment, than the Reflection that you had been implacable, and without Mercy towards those who had offended you; without that forgiving Spirit towards others, which that it may now be exercised towards yourselves, is your only hope? And these natural Apprehensions are authorised by our Saviour's Application of the Parable: *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.* On the other hand, suppose a good Man in the same Circumstance, in the last Part and Close of Life; conscious of many Frailties, as the best are, but conscious too that He had been meek, forgiving and merciful; that He had in Simplicity of Heart been ready to pass over Offences against himself: The having felt this good Spirit will give him, not only a full View of the Amiability of it, but the surest Hope that He shall meet with it in his Judge. This likewise is confirmed by his own Declaration: *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly*

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 177

*venly Father will likewise forgive you.* Sermon.

IX.  
And that we might have a constant Sense of it upon our Mind, the Condition is express'd in our daily Prayer. A forgiving Spirit is therefore absolutely necessary, as ever we hope for Pardon of our own Sins; as ever we hope for Peace of Mind in our dying Moments, or for the divine Mercy at that Day when we shall most stand in need of it.





---

---

# S E R M O N X.

*Upon Self-Deceit.*

---

2 S A M. xii. 7.

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

**T**H E S E Words are the Application Serm.  
X.  
of *Nathan's* Parable to *David*, upon Occasion of his Adultery with *Bathsbeba*, and the Murder of *Uriah* her Husband. The Parable, which is related in the most beautiful Simplicity, is this.  
\* *There were two Men in one City; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds: But the poor Man had nothing save one little Ew-Lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: And it grew up together with him,*

N 2

and

\* Ver. 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

is to be alledged on the other. Though a Man hath the best Eyes in the World, he cannot see any Way but that which he turns them. Thus these Persons, without passing over the least, the most minute Thing which can possibly be urged in Favour of themselves, shall overlook intirely the plainest and most obvious Things on the other Side. And whilst they are under the Power of this Temper, Thought and Consideration upon the Matter before them has scarce any Tendency to set them right: Because they are engaged; and their Deliberation concerning an Action to be done, or Reflection upon it afterwards, is not to see whether it be right, but to find out Reasons to justify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themselves. In some there is to be observed a general Ignorance of themselves, and wrong Way of thinking and judging in every thing relating to themselves; their Fortune, Reputation, every thing in which Self can come in: And this perhaps attended with the rightest Judgment in all other Matters. In others this Partiality is not so general, has not taken hold of the whole Man, but is confined to some particular favourite Passion, Interest or Pursuit; suppose Ambition, Covetousness, or any other:

Serm.

X.





Serm. other: And these Persons may probably  
 X. judge and determine what is perfectly just and  
 proper, even in Things in which they themselves are concerned, if these things have no Relation to their particular favourite Passion or Pursuit. Hence arises that amazing Incongruity, and seeming Inconsistency of Character, from whence slight Observers take it for granted, that the Whole is hypocritical and false; not being able otherwise to reconcile the several Parts: Whereas in Truth there is real Honesty, so far as it goes. There is such a thing as Men's being honest to such a Degree, and in such Respects, but no farther. And this, as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be taken Notice of, and allowed them; such general and undistinguishing Censure of their whole Character, as designing and false, being one main thing which confirms them in their Self-deceit. They know that the whole Censure is not true; and so take for granted that no Part of it is. But to go on with the Explanation of the thing itself: Vice in general consists in having an unreasonable and too great Regard to ourselves, in Comparison of others. Robbery and Murder is never from the Love of Injustice or Cruelty, but to gratify

tify some other Passion, to gain some supposed Advantage; and it is false Selfishness alone, whether cool or passionate, which makes a Man resolutely pursue that End, be it ever so much to the Injury of another. But whereas, in common and ordinary Wickedness, this Partiality and Selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to the Temper and Passions; in the Characters we are now considering, it reaches to the Understanding, and influences the very Judgment \*. And besides that general

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

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

This seems to be in a good Measure the Account of Self-partiality and Self-deceit, when traced up to its original. Whether it be, or be not thought satisfactory, That there is such a thing is manifest; and that it is the Occasion of great Part of the unreasonable Behaviour of Men towards each other: That by means of it they palliate their Vices and Follies to themselves; and that it prevents their applying to themselves those Reproofs and Instructions, which they meet with

and Excess, and is like all other Excesses its own Disappointment: For scarce any show themselves to Advantage, who are over sollicitous of doing so.

with either in Scripture or in moral and religious Discourses, though exactly suitable to the State of their own Mind, and the Course of their Behaviour. There is one thing further to be added here, that the Temper we distinguish by Hardness of Heart with respect to others, joined with this Self-partiality, will carry a Man almost any Lengths of Wickedness, in the Way of Oppression, hard Usage of others, and even to plain Injustice; without his having, from what appears, any real Sense at all of it. This indeed was not the Case of *David*; for he plainly gave Scope to the Affections of Compassion and Good-will, as well as to his Passions of another Kind.

As to the Occasions upon which this Self-deceit chiefly comes in and influences the Behaviour of Men; It is to be observed, that as there are express determinate Acts of Wickedness, such as Murder, Adultery, Theft: So on the other hand, there are numberless Cases in which the Vice and Wickedness cannot be exactly defined; but consists in a certain general Temper and Course of Action, or in the neglect of some Duty, suppose Charity or any other, whose Bounds and Degrees are not fixed. This is the very Province  
of

Serm.

X.



Serm. of Self-deceit and Self-partiality: Here it governs without Check or Controul. For what Commandment is there broken? Is there a Transgression where there is no Law? a Vice which cannot be defined? Whoever will consider the whole Commerce of Humane Life, will see that a great Part, perhaps the greatest Part, of the Intercourse amongst Mankind, cannot be reduced to fixed determinate Rules. Yet in these Cases there is a Right and a Wrong: A merciful, a liberal, a kind and compassionate Behaviour, which surely is our Duty; and an unmerciful, contracted Spirit, an hard and oppressive Course of Behaviour, which is most certainly immoral and vitious. But who can define precisely, wherein that contracted Spirit and hard Usage of others consist, as Murder and Theft may be defined? There is not a Word in our Language, which expresseth more detestable Wickedness than *Oppression*; yet the Nature of this Vice cannot be so exactly stated, nor the Bounds of it so determinately marked, as that we shall be able to say in all Instances, where rigid Right and Justice ends, and Oppression begins. In these Cases there is great Latitude to be left, for every one to determine for, and consequently to deceive himself.

himself. It is chiefly in these Cases that Self-  
deceit comes in; as every one must see that  
there is much larger Scope for it here, than  
in exprefs, fingle, determinate Acts of Wick-  
edness. However it comes in with respect  
to the *Circumstances* attending the most grofs  
and determinate Acts of Wickedness. Of  
this, the Story of *David*, now before us,  
affords the most astonishing Instance. It is  
really prodigious to see a Man, before fo  
remarkable for Virtue and Piety, going on  
deliberately from Adultery to Murder, with  
the fame cool Contrivance, and, from what  
appears, with as little Disturbance, as a Man  
would endeavour to prevent the ill Conse-  
quences of a Mistake he had made in any  
common Matter. That total Insensibility  
of Mind with respect to those horrid Crimes,  
after the Commission of them, manifestly  
shews that he did some way or other delude  
himself: And this could not be with respect  
to the Crimes themselves, for they were of  
the grossest Kind. What the particular Cir-  
cumstances were, with which he extenuated  
them, and quieted and deceived himself, is  
not related.

Having thus explained the Nature of in-  
ternal Hypocrisy and Self-deceit, and remark-  
ed,

Serm.  
X.  
~

Serm. ed the Occasions upon which it exerts itself;  
 X. there are several Things further to be observed concerning it: That all of the Sources to which it was traced up are sometimes observable together in one and the same Person; But that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher Degree in some, and others of them are so in others: That in general it is a complicated Thing; and may be in all different Degrees and Kinds: That the Temper itself is essentially in its own Nature vitious and immoral. It is Unfairness; it is Dishonesty; it is Falseness of Heart: And is therefore so far from extenuating Guilt, that it is itself the greatest of all Guilt in Proportion to the Degree it prevails; for it is a Corruption of the whole moral Character in its Principle. Our Understanding, and Sense of Good and Evil, is the Light and Guide of Life: *If therefore this Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* \*. For this Reason our Saviour puts an *evil Eye* as the direct opposite to a *single Eye*; the Absence of that Simplicity, which these last Words imply, being itself evil and vitious. And whilst Men are under  
 the

\* Matth. vi. 23.

the Power of this Temper, in Proportion Sermon.  
still to the Degree they are so, they are forti- X.  
fied on every Side against Conviction: And  
when they hear the Vice and Folly of what  
is in Truth their own Course of Life, ex-  
posed in the justest and strongest Manner,  
they will often assent to it, and even carry  
the Matter further; persuading themselves one  
does not know how, but some Way or other  
persuading themselves, that they are out of  
the Case, and that it hath no Relation to  
them. Yet notwithstanding this there *fre-*  
*quently appears* a Suspicion, that all is not  
right, and as it should be; and perhaps there  
*is always* at bottom somewhat of this Sort.  
Truth, and real good Sense, and thorough  
Integrity, carry along with them a peculiar  
Consciousness of their own Genuineness:  
There is a Feeling belonging to them, which  
does not accompany their Counterfeits, Er-  
ror, Folly, Half-Honesty. And if this be  
the Case; it is much the same, as if we  
should suppose a Man to have had a general  
View of some Scene, enough to satisfy him  
that it was very disagreeable, and then should  
shut his Eyes, that he might not have a par-  
ticular or distinct View of its several Deformi-  
ties. It is as easy to close the Eyes of  
O the



194      *A SERMON upon*

Serm. the Mind, as those of the Body : And the  
 X. former is more frequently done with Wilful-  
 ness, and yet not attended to, than the lat-  
 ter ; the Actions of the Mind being more  
 quick and transient, than those of the Senses.  
 This may be illustrated by another Compari-  
 son. It is not uncommon for Persons, who  
 run out their Fortunes, to be intirely negli-  
 gent of their Accounts ; and this from a ge-  
 neral Knowledge, that the Condition of their  
 Affairs is bad. These extravagant People  
 are perpetually ruined before they them-  
 selves expected it ; and they tell you for an  
 Excuse, and tell you truely, that they did  
 not think they were so much in Debt, or  
 that their Expences so far exceeded their  
 Income. And yet no one will take this for  
 an Excuse, who is sensible that their Igno-  
 rance of their particular Circumstances was  
 owing to their general Knowledge of them ;  
 that is, their general Knowledge, that Matters  
 were not well with them, prevented their  
 looking into Particulars. There is some-  
 what of the like Kind with this, in Respect  
 to Morals, Virtue, and Religion. Men find  
 that the Survey of themselves, their own  
 Heart and Temper, their own Life and Be-  
 haviour, doth not afford them Satisfaction ;  
 things

things are not as they should be: Therefore they turn away, will not go over Particulars, or look deeper, least they should find more amiss. For who would choose to be put out of Humour with himself? No one surely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be more thoroughly, and better pleased with himself for the future.

Serm.  
X.

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

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

O 2

others,

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

of Course make great Allowances for his Serm. having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every Man can think himself an Exception, and that he is free from this Self-partiality. The direct contrary is the Truth. Every Man may take for granted that he has a great deal of it, till, from the strictest Observation upon himself, he finds particular Reason to think otherwise.

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

Serm. of himself, answer this Question, What is  
 X. that ill Thing, that faulty Behaviour, which  
 I am apprehensive an Enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my Charge, and which the World would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a Man may not be guilty in that Respect. All that I say is, let him in Plainness and Honesty fix upon that Part of his Character for a particular Survey and Reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that Respect, and how far he is one or the other. There are doubtless many Instances of the Ambitious, the Revengeful, the Covetous, and those whom, with too great Indulgence, we only call the Men of Pleasure, who will not allow themselves to think how guilty they are, who explain and argue away their Guilt to themselves: And though they do perhaps really impose upon themselves in some Measure, yet there is none of them but have, if not a proper Knowledge, yet at least, an implicit Suspicion where the Weakness lies, and what Part of their Behaviour they have Reason to wish unknown or forgotten for ever.

*Thirdly*, It would very much prevent our being misled by this Self-partiality, to re-  
 duce

duce that practical Rule of our Saviour, Serm. *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, even so do unto them,* to our Judgment, and Way of thinking. This Rule, you see, consists of two Parts. One is, to substitute another for yourself, when you take a Survey of any Part of your Behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any Occasion: The other Part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another, consider yourself as the Person affected by such a Behaviour, or towards whom such an Action is done: And then you would not only see, but likewise feel, the Reasonableness or Unreasonableness of such an Action or Behaviour. But alas, the Rule itself may be dishonestly applied: There are Persons, who have not Impartiality enough with respect to themselves, nor regard enough for others, to be able to make a just Application of it. This just Application, if Men would honestly make it, is in Effect all that I have been recommending; it is the whole Thing, the direct contrary to that inward Dishonesty as respecting our Intercourse with our Fellow-creatures.

Upon the whole it is manifest, that there is such a thing as this Self-partiality and

Serm. Self-deceit: That in some Persons it is to  
 X. a Degree which would be thought incredible, were not the Instances before our Eyes; of which the Behaviour of *David* is perhaps the highest possible one, in a single particular Case; for there is not the least Appearance, that it reached his general Character: That we are almost all of us influenced by it in some Degree, and in some Respects: That therefore every one ought to have an Eye to and beware of it. And all that I have further to add upon this Subject is; that either there is a Difference between Right and Wrong, or there is not: Religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is no Reason for any Concern about it: But if it be true, it requires real Fairness of Mind and Honesty of Heart. And if People will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vitious Passions without such Refinements, than from this deep and calm Source of Delusion; which undermines the whole Principle of Good; darkens that Light, that *Candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct our Steps; and corrupts Conscience, which is the Guide of Life.

S E R M O N

---

---

# S E R M O N XI.


*Upon the LOVE of our  
Neighbour.*

Preached on *Advent* Sunday.

---

R O M. xiii. 9.

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

**I**T is commonly observed, that there is Serm.  
a Disposition in Men to complain of XI.  
the Vitiousness and Corruption of the   
Age in which they live, as greater than that  
of former ones; which Observation is usu-  
ally followed with this further one, that  
Mankind has been in that respect much the  
same in all Times. Now not to determine,  
whether



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

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

*Love of our Neighbour.* 203

real Good-will to our Fellow-creatures; it Serm.  
will be necessary to *inquire what Respect* XI.  
*Benevolence hath to Self-love, and the Pur-*  
*suit of private Interest, to the Pursuit of*  
*publick:* Or whether there be any thing of  
that peculiar Inconsistence and Contrariety  
between them, over and above what there  
is between Self-love and other Passions and  
particular Affections, and their respective  
Pursuits.

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

In order to this, as well as to determine  
the forementioned Questions, it will be ne-  
cessary to consider the Nature, the Object  
and End of that Self-love, as distinguished  
from other Principles or Affections in the  
Mind, and their respective Objects. Every  
Man hath a general Desire of his own Hap-  
piness; and likewise a Variety of particu-  
lar Affections, Passions, and Appetites to  
particular external Objects. The former pro-  
ceeds from, or is Self-love; and seems in-  
separable

204 *A SERMON upon the*

Serm. separable from all sensible Creatures, who  
XI. can reflect upon themselves: What is to  
be said of the latter is, that they proceed  
from, or together make up that particular  
Nature, according to which Man is made.  
The Object the former pursues is some-  
what internal, our own Happiness, Enjoy-  
ment, Satisfaction; whether we have, or  
have not a distinct particular Perception what  
it is, or wherein it consists: The Objects of  
the latter are this or that particular exter-  
nal Thing, which the Affections tend to-  
wards, and of which it hath always a par-  
ticular Idea or Perception. The Principle  
we call Self-love never seeks any Thing ex-  
ternal for the sake of the Thing, but only  
as a Means of Happiness or Good: Particu-  
lar Affections rest in the external Things  
themselves. One belongs to Man as a rea-  
sonable Creature: The other, though quite  
distinct from Reason, is as much a Part of  
Humane Nature. That all particular Ap-  
petites and Passions are towards external  
*Things themselves*, distinct from the *Plea-  
sure arising from them*, is manifest from  
hence; that there could not be this Pleasure,  
were it not for that prior Suitableness be-  
tween the Object and the Passion: There  
could

*Love of our Neighbour.* 205

could be no Enjoyment or Delight from one thing more than another, from eating Food more than from swallowing a Stone, if there were not an Affection or Appetite to one thing more than another. Every particular Affection, even the Love of our Neighbour, is as really our own Affection, as Self-love; and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification is as much my own Pleasure, as the Pleasure Self-love would have, from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own Pleasure. And if, because every particular Affection is a Man's own, and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification his own Pleasure, or Pleasure to himself, such particular Affection must be called Self-love; according to this way of speaking, no Creature whatever can possibly act but meerly from Self-love; and every Action and every Affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one Principle. But then this is not the Language of Mankind: Or if it were, we should want Words to express the Difference, between the Principle of an Action, proceeding from cool Consideration that it will be to my own Advantage; and an Action, suppose of Revenge, or of Friendship, by which a Man runs upon certain

Serm.

XI.



Serm. tain Ruin, to do Evil or Good to another.

XI. It is manifest the Principles of these Actions are totally different, and so want different Words to be distinguished by: All that they agree in is, that they both proceed from, and are done to gratify an Inclination in a Man's self. But the Principle or Inclination in one Case is Self-love; in the other, Hatred or Love of another. There is then a Distinction between the cool Principle of Self-love, or general Desire of our own Happiness, as one Part of our Nature, and one Principle of Action; and the particular Affections towards particular external Objects, as another Part of our Nature, and another Principle of Action. How much soever therefore is to be allowed to Self-love, yet it cannot be allowed to be the Whole of our inward Constitution; because, you see, there are other Parts or Principles which come into it. Further, private Happiness or Good is all which Self-love can make us desire, or be concerned about; in having this consists its Gratification: It is an Affection to ourselves, a Regard to our own Interest, Happiness, and private Good; and in the Proportion a Man hath this, he is interested, or a Lover of himself.

*Love of our Neighbour.* 207

himself. Let this be kept in Mind; be- Serm.  
cause there is commonly, as I shall present- XI.  
ly have Occasion to observe, another Sense  
put upon these Words. On the other  
Hand, particular Affections tend towards  
particular external things: These are their  
Objects: Having these is their End: In this  
consists their Gratification: No Matter whe-  
ther it be, or be not, upon the Whole, our  
Interest or Happiness. An Action done  
from the former of these Principles is cal-  
led an interested Action. An Action pro-  
ceeding from any of the latter has its De-  
nomination of passionate, ambitious, friend-  
ly, revengeful, or any other, from the par-  
ticular Appetite or Affection from which  
it proceeds. Thus Self-love as one Part of  
Humane Nature, and the several particular  
Principles as the other Part, are, themselves,  
their Objects and Ends, stated and shewn.

From hence it is easy to see, how far, and  
in what Ways, each of these can contribute  
and be subservient to the private Good of  
the Individual. Happiness does not consist  
in Self-love. The Desire of Happiness is  
no more the Thing itself, than the Desire of  
Riches is the Possession or Enjoyment of  
them. People may love themselves with  
the

208      *A S E R M O N upon the*

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

*Love of our Neighbour.* 209

engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay Sermon. XI.  
further, the private and contracted Affection may, for any thing that appears, have a direct contrary Tendency and Effect. And if we will consider the Matter, we shall see that it often really has. *Disengagement* is absolutely necessary to Enjoyment: And a Person may have so steady and fixed an Eye upon his own Interest, whatever he places it in, as may give him great and unnecessary Sollicitude and Anxiety; and hinder him from *attending* to many Gratifications within his reach, which others have their Minds *free* and *open* to. Over-fondness for a Child is not generally thought to be for its Advantage: And if there be any Guess to be made from Appearances, surely that Character we call Selfish is not the most promising for Happiness. Such a Temper may plainly be and exert itself in a Degree and Manner, which may prevent obtaining the Means and Materials of Enjoyment, as well as the making use of them. Immoderate Self-love does very ill consult its own Interests; and, how much soever a Paradox it may appear, it is certainly true, that even from Self-love we should endeavour to get over all inordinate Regard to, and Consideration



210      *A* S E R M O N *upon the*

Serm. of ourselves.      Every one of our Faculties  
 XI.      has its Stint and Bound: Our Enjoyments  
 can be but in a determinate Measure and  
 Degree.      The Principle of Self-love, so far  
 as it sets us on Work to gain and make use  
 of the Materials of Satisfaction, may be to  
 our real Advantage; but beyond or besides  
 this, it is in several Respects an Inconve-  
 nience and Disadvantage.      Thus it appears,  
 that private Interest is so far from being like-  
 ly to be promoted in Proportion to the De-  
 gree in which Self-love engrosses us, and  
 prevails over all other Principles; that *the*  
*contracted Affection may be so prevalent as*  
*to disappoint itself, and even contradict its*  
*own End, private Good.*

“ But who, except the most fordidly Co-  
 “ vetous, ever thought there was any Ri-  
 “ valship between the Love of Greatness,  
 “ Honour, Power, or sensual Appetites, and  
 “ Self-love? No, there is a perfect Harmo-  
 “ ny between them.      It is by means of  
 “ these particular Appetites and Affections  
 “ that Self-love is gratified in Enjoyment,  
 “ Happiness, and Satisfaction.      The Com-  
 “ petition and Rivalship is between Self-  
 “ love, and the Love of our Neighbour:  
 “ That Affection which leads us out of our-  
 “ selves,

*Love of our Neighbour.* 211

“ selves, makes us regardless of our own  
“ Interest, and substitute that of another in  
“ its stead.” Whether there be any pecu-  
liar Competition and Contrariety in this  
Case, shall now be considered. Self-love  
and Interestedness was stated to consist in or  
be an Affection to ourselves, a Regard to  
our own private Good : It is therefore di-  
stinct from Benevolence, which is an Af-  
fection to the Good of our Fellow-crea-  
tures. But that Benevolence is distinct from,  
that is, not the same thing with Self-love,  
is no Reason for its being looked upon  
with any peculiar Suspicion ; because every  
Principle whatever, by means of which that  
Self-love is gratified, is distinct from it : And  
all things which are distinct from each other,  
are equally so. A Man has an Affection or  
Aversion to another : That one of these  
tends to and is gratified by doing Good,  
that the other tends to and is gratified by  
doing Harm, does not in the least alter the  
Respect which either one or the other of  
these inward Feelings has to Self-love. We  
use the Word *Property* so as to exclude a-  
ny other Persons having an Interest in that  
of which we say a particular Man has the  
Property. And we often use the Word


Serm.  
XI.  
~

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

Serm. *Selſiſh* ſo as to exclude all Regards to the  
XI. Good of others. And as it is taken for granted in the former Caſe, that the external Good, in which we have a Property excluſive of all others, muſt for this Reaſon have a nearer and greater Reſpect to private Intereſt, than it would have if it were enjoyed in common with others; ſo likewiſe it is taken for granted, that the Principle of an Action, which does not proceed from Reſpect to the Good of others, has a nearer and greater Reſpect to Self-love, or is leſs diſtant from it. But whoever will at all attend to the thing, will ſee that theſe Conſequences do not follow. For as the Enjoyment of the Air in which we breath is juſt as much our private Intereſt and Advantage now, as it would be if none but ourſelves had the Benefit of it; ſo Love of our Neighbour has juſt the ſame Reſpect to, is no more diſtant from Self-love, than Hatred of our Neighbour, or than Love or Hatred of any thing elſe. Thus the Principles, from which Men ruſh upon certain Ruin for the Deſtruction of an Enemy, and for the Preſervation of a Friend, have the ſame Reſpect to the private Affection, and are equally intereſted, or equally diſintereſted:

And

*Love of our Neighbour.* 213

And it is of no Avail, whether they are said Serm.  
to be one or the other. Therefore to those XI.  
who are shocked to hear Virtue spoken of   
as disinterested, it may be allowed that it is  
indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless  
Hatred, several particular Instances of Vice,  
and all the common Affections and Aver-  
sions in Mankind, are acknowledged to be  
disinterested too. Is there any less Inconsist-  
ence, between the Love of inanimate Things,  
or of Creatures meerly sensitive, and Self-love;  
than between Self-love, and the Love of our  
Neighbour? Is Desire of and Delight in the  
Happiness of another any more a Diminu-  
tion of Self-love, than Desire of and De-  
light in the Esteem of another? They are  
both equally Desire of and Delight in some-  
what external to ourselves; either both or  
neither are so. The Object of Self-love is  
expressed in the Term, Self; and every Ap-  
petite of Sense, and every particular Affecti-  
on of the Heart, are equally interested or  
disinterested, because the Objects of them all  
are equally Self or somewhat else. What-  
ever Ridicule therefore the mention of a  
disinterested Principle or Action may be sup-  
posed to lie open to, must, upon the Mat-  
ter being thus stated, relate to Ambition,

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

Serm. and every Appetite and particular Affection, as much as to Benevolence. And indeed all the Ridicule, and all the grave Perplexity, of which this Subject hath had its full Share, is meerly from Words. The most intelligible Way of speaking of it seems to be this: That Self-love, and the Actions done in consequence of it, are interested; that particular Affections towards external Objects, and the Actions done in consequence of those Affections, are not so. But every one is at Liberty to use Words as he pleases. All that is here insisted upon is, that Ambition, Revenge, Benevolence, all particular Passions whatever, and the Actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested.

But since Self-love is not private Good, since Interestedness is not Interest; let us now see whether Benevolence has not the same Respect to, the same Tendency toward promoting, private Good and Interest, with the other particular Passions; as it hath been already shewn, that they have all in common the same Respect to Self-love and Interestedness. One Man's Affection is to Honour as his End; in order to obtain which, he thinks no Pains too great. Suppose another

*Love of our Neighbour.* 215

other with such a Singularity of Mind, as Serm. to have the same Affection to publick Good XI. as his End, which he endeavours with the same Labour to obtain. In Case of Success, surely the Man of Benevolence hath as great Enjoyment as the Man of Ambition; they both equally having the End their Affections, in the same Degree, tended to: But in Case of Disappointment, the benevolent Man has clearly the Advantage; since Benevolence, considered as a Principle of Virtue, is gratified by its own Consciousness, *i. e.* is in a Degree its own Reward.

And as to these two, or any other particular Passions, considered in a further View, as forming a general Temper, which more or less disposes us for Enjoyment of all the common Blessings of Life, distinct from their own Gratification: Does the benevolent Man appear less easy with himself, from his Love to his Neighbour? Does he less relish his Being? Is there any peculiar Gloom seated on his Face? Is his Mind less open to Entertainment, to any particular Gratification? Nothing is more manifest, than that being in Good-humour, which is Benevolence whilst it lasts, is itself the Temper of Satisfaction and Enjoyment.

216 A SERMON upon the

Serm. XI. Suppose then a Man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest Pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural Happiness. This can only consist in the Enjoyment of those Objects, which are by Nature adapted to our several Faculties. These particular Enjoyments make up the Sum Total of our Happiness: And they are supposed to arise from Riches, Honours, and the Gratification of sensual Appetites. Be it so: Yet none profess themselves so compleatly happy in these Enjoyments, but that there is room left in the Mind for others, if they were presented to them: Nay these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that Humane Nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been Persons in all Ages, who have profess'd that they found Satisfaction in the Exercise of Charity, in the Love of their Neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the Happiness of all they had to do with, and in the Pursuit of what is just and right and good, as the general Bent of their Mind, and End of their Life; and that doing an Action of Baseness or Cruelty, would be as great Violence to *their* Self, as much breaking in upon their Nature,

*Love of our Neighbour.* 217

Nature, as any external Force. Persons of Serm.  
this Character would add, if they might be XI.  
heard, that they consider themselves as act-  
ing in the View of an infinite Being, who  
is in a much higher Sense the Object of Re-  
verence and of Love, than all the World be-  
sides; and therefore they could have no more  
Enjoyment from a wicked Action done un-  
der his Eye, than the Persons to whom they  
are making their Apology could, if all Man-  
kind were the Spectators of it; and that the  
Satisfaction of approving themselves to His  
unerring Judgment, to whom they thus re-  
fer all their Actions, is a more continued set-  
tled Satisfaction than any this World can af-  
ford. And if we go no further, does there  
appear any Absurdity in this? Will any one  
take upon him to say, that a Man cannot  
find his Account in this general Course of  
Life, as much as in the most unbounded  
Ambition, and the Excesses of Pleasure? Or  
that such a Person has not consulted so well  
for Himself, for the Satisfaction and Peace of  
his own Mind, as the ambitious or dissolute  
Man? And though the Consideration, that  
God himself will in the End justify their Taste,  
and support their Cause, is not formally to  
be insisted upon here; yet thus much comes  
in,



Serm. in, that all Enjoyments whatever are much  
 XI. more clear and unmixt from the Assurance  
 ~~~~~ that they will end well. Is it certain then  
 that there is nothing in these Pretensions
 to Happiness? especially when there are not
 wanting Persons, who have supported them-
 selves with Satisfaction of this Kind in Sick-
 ness, Poverty, Disgrace, and in the very
 Pangs of Death; whereas it is manifest all
 other Enjoyments fail in these Circumstances.
 This surely looks suspicious of having some-
 what in it. Self-love methinks should be a-
 larmed. May she not possibly pass over
 greater Pleasures, than those she is so wholly
 taken up with?

The short of the Matter is no more than
 this. Happiness consists in the Gratification
 of certain Affections, Appetites, Passions,
 with Objects which are by Nature adapted
 to them. Self-love may indeed set us on
 work to gratify these; but Happiness or
 Enjoyment has no immediate Connection
 with Self-love, but arises from such Grati-
 fication alone. Love of our Neighbour is
 one of those Affections. This, considered
 as a *virtuous Principle*, is gratified by a Con-
 sciousness of *endeavouring* to promote the
 Good of others; but considered as a natu-
 ral

Love of our Neighbour. 219

ral Affection, its Gratification consists in the actual Accomplishment of this Endeavour. Serm. XI.

Now Indulgence of this Affection, whether in that Consciousness, or this Accomplishment, has the same Respect to Interest, as Indulgence of any other Affection; they equally proceed from or do not proceed from Self-love, they equally include or equally exclude this Principle. Thus it appears, that *Benevolence and the Pursuit of publick Good hath just the same Respect to Self-love and the Pursuit of private Good, with all other particular Passions, and their respective Pursuits.*

Neither is Covetousness, whether as a Temper or Pursuit, any Exception to this. For if by Covetousness is meant the Desire and Pursuit of Riches for their own Sake, without any Regard to, or Consideration of the Uses of them; this hath as little to do with Self-love, as Benevolence hath. But by this Word is usually meant, not such Madness and total Distraction of Mind, but immoderate Affection to and Pursuit of Riches as Possessions in order to some further End, namely, Satisfaction, Interest, or Good. This therefore is not a particular Affection, or particular Pursuit, but it is the general Principle

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

Serm. Principle of Self-love, and the general Pursuit of our own Interest; for which Reason the Word, Selfish, is by every one appropriated to this Temper and Pursuit. Now as it is ridiculous to assert, that Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour are the same; so neither is it asserted, that following these different Affections hath the same Tendency and Respect to our own Interest. The Comparison is not between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour; between Pursuit of our own Interest, and the Interest of others: But between the several particular Affections in Humane Nature towards external Objects, as one Part of the Comparison; and the one particular Affection to the Good of our Neighbour, as the other Part of it: And it has been shewn, that all these have the same Respect to Self-love and private Interest.

There is indeed frequently an Inconsistence or Interfering, between Self-love or private Interest, and the several particular Appetites, Passions, Affections, or the Pursuits they lead to. But this Competition or Interfering is meerly accidental; and happens much oftener between Pride, Revenge, sensual Gratifications, and private Interest, than

Love of our Neighbour. 221


than between private Interest and Benevo- Sermon.
lence. For nothing is more common, than XI.
to see Men give themselves up to a Passion
or an Affection to their known Prejudice
and Ruin, and in direct contradiction to ma-
nifest and real Interest, and the loudest Calls
of Self-love. But the seeming Competiti-
ons and Interfering, between Benevolence
and private Interest, relate much more to
the Materials or Means of Enjoyment, than
to Enjoyment itself. There is often an in-
terfering in the former, when there is none
in the latter. Thus as to Riches: So much
Money as a Man gives away, so much less
will remain in his Possession. Here is a real
interfering. But though a Man cannot possi-
bly give without lessening his Fortune, yet
there are Multitudes might give without les-
sening their own Enjoyment; because they
may have more than they can turn to any
real Use or Advantage to themselves. Thus
the more Thought and Time any one em-
ploys about the Interests and Good of others,
he must necessarily have less to attend his
own; but he may have so ready and large
a Supply of his own Wants, that such
Thought might be really useless to himself,
though

Serm. though of great Service and Assistance to
 XI. others.

~ The Occasion of the general Mistake, that there is some greater Inconsistence between endeavouring to promote the Good of another and Self-Interest, than between Self-interest and pursuing any thing else, is this, which hath been already hinted; that Men consider the Means and Materials of Enjoyment, not the Enjoyment of them, as what constitutes Interest and Happiness. It is the Possession, having the Property of Riches, Houses, Lands, Gardens, in which our Interest or Good is supposed to consist. Now if Riches and Happiness are identical Terms, it may well be thought, that, as by bestowing Riches on another you lessen your own, so also by promoting the Happiness of another you lessen your own. And thus there would be a real Inconsistence and Contrariety between private and publick Good. But whatever occasioned the Mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one.

And to all these Things may be added, that Religion is so far from disowning the Principle of Self-love, that on the contrary it addresseth itself to us in that State of Mind when Reason presides; and there can

Love of our Neighbour. 223

no Access be had to the Understanding, but Serm.
by convincing Men, that the Course of XI.
Life we would persuade them to is for their 
Interest. It may be allowed, without any
Prejudice to the Cause of Virtue and Reli-
gion, that our Ideas of Happiness and Mi-
sery are of all our Ideas the nearest and
most important to us; that they will, nay,
if you please, that they ought to prevail over
those of Order, and Beauty, and Harmony,
and Proportion, if there should ever be, as
it is impossible there ever should be, any In-
consistence between them: Though these
last too, as expressing the Fitness of Acti-
ons, are real as Truth itself. Let it be al-
lowed, though Virtue or moral Rectitude
does indeed consist in Affection to and Pur-
suit of what is Right and Good, as such;
yet, that when we sit down in a cool Hour,
we can neither justify to ourselves this or
any other Pursuit, but from a Conviction
that it will be for our Happiness.

Common Reason and Humanity will have
some Influence upon Mankind, whatever be-
comes of Speculations: But, so far as the
Interests of Virtue depend upon the The-
ory of it being secured from open Scorn,
so far its very Being in the World depends
upon


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

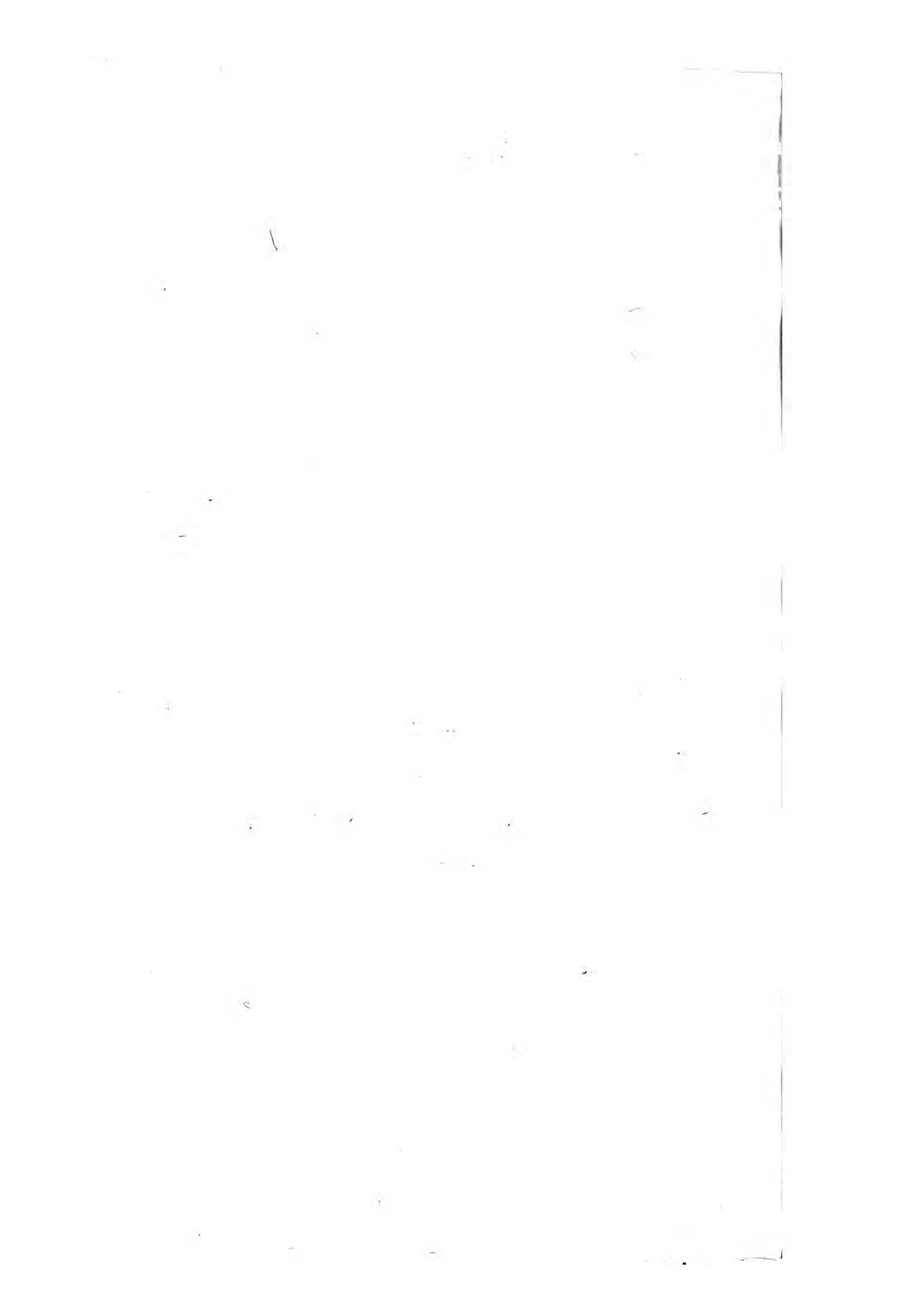
Serm. upon its appearing to have no Contrariety to

XI. private Interest and Self-love. The foregoing
 Observations therefore, it is hoped, may have gained a little Ground in Favour of the Precept before us; the particular Explanation of which, shall be the Subject of the next Discourse.

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

Love of our Neighbour. 225

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



S E R M O N XII.

*Upon the LOVE of our
Neighbour.*

ROM. xiii. 9.

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

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

Serm.
XII.

Q 2

I. The

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

Serm. I. The Objects and due Extent of this Affection will be understood by attending to the Nature of it, and to the Nature and Circumstances of Mankind in this World. The Love of our Neighbour is the same with Charity, Benevolence, or Good-will: It is an Affection to the Good and Happiness of our Fellow-creatures. This implies in it a Disposition to produce Happiness: And this is the simple Notion of Goodness, which appears so aimable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the Perfection of Goodness consists in Love to the whole Universe. Thus we are commanded to be *perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect* *; i. e. perfect in Goodness or Benevolence, as the preceding Words determine the Sense to be; to make the Object of this Affection as general and extensive, as we are able.

But as Man is so much limited in his Capacity, as so small a Part of [the Creation comes under his Notice and Influence, and as we are not used to consider things in so general a Way; it is not to be thought of, that the Universe should be the Object of Benevolence

* Matth. v. 48.

Love of our Neighbour. 229

Benevolence to such Creatures as we are. Serm.
Moral Writers have therefore substituted one XII.
less general, Mankind. But this likewise
is an Object too general, and very much
out of our View. Therefore Persons more
practical have, instead of Mankind, put our
Country; and made the Principle of Vir-
tue, of Humane Virtue, to consist in the
intire uniform Love of our Country: And
this is what we call a publick Spirit; which
in Men of publick Stations is the Character
of a Patriot. But this is speaking to the up-
per Part of the World. Kingdoms and
Governments are large; and the Sphere of
Action of far the greatest Part of Man-
kind is much narrower than the Govern-
ment they live under: Or however, com-
mon Men do not consider their Actions as
affecting the whole Community of which
they are Members. There plainly is want-
ing a less general and nearer Object of Be-
nevolence for the Bulk of Men, than that
of their Country. Therefore the Scripture,
not being a Book of Theory and Speculati-
on, but a plain Rule of Life for Mankind,
has with the utmost possible Propriety put
the Principle of Virtue upon the Love of
our Neighbour; which is that Part of the

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

Serm. Universe, that Part of Mankind, that Part
 XII. of our Country, which comes under our
 ~~~~~ immediate Notice, Acquaintance and In-  
 fluence, and with which we have to do.

This is plainly the true Account or Reason, why our Saviour places the Principle of Virtue in the Love of our *Neighbour*; and the Account itself shows who are comprehended under that Relation.

II. Let us now consider in what Sense we are commanded to love our Neighbour *as ourselves*. This Precept, in its first Delivery by our Saviour, is thus introduced: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thy self*. These very different Manners of Expression do not lead our Thoughts to the same Measure or Degree of Love, common to both Objects; but to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then, which is to be supposed, a distinct Meaning and Propriety in the Words, *as thy self*; the Precept we are considering will admit of any of these Senses: That we bear the *same Kind* of Affection to our Neighbour, as we do to ourselves: Or, that the Love we bear to our Neighbour should have *some certain Proportion or other* to Self-love:

*Love of our Neighbour.* 231

love : Or, lastly, that it should bear the particular Proportion of *Equality*, that *it be in the same Degree.* Sermon. XII.

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

Serm. ving a real Share in his Happiness. Thus  
 XII. the Principle of Benevolence would be an  
 Advocate within our own Breasts, to take  
 care of the Interests of our Fellow-Crea-  
 tures in all the interfering and Competiti-  
 ons which cannot but be, from the Imper-  
 fection of our Nature, and the State we are  
 in. It would likewise, in some Measure,  
 lessen that interfering; and hinder Men from  
 forming so strong a Notion of private Good,  
 exclusive of the Good of others, as we com-  
 monly do. Thus, as the private Affection  
 makes us in a peculiar Manner sensible of  
 Humanity, Justice, or Injustice, when ex-  
 exercised towards ourselves; Love of our  
 Neighbour would give us the same Kind of  
 Sensibility in his Behalf. This would be the  
 greatest Security of our uniform Obedience  
 to that most equitable Rule; *Whatsoever ye  
 would that Men should do unto you, do ye  
 even so unto them.*

All this is indeed no more than that we  
 should have a real Love to our Neighbour:  
 But then, which is to be observed, the  
 Words, *as thy self*, express this in the most  
 distinct Manner, and determine the Precept to  
 relate to the Affection itself. The Advantage,  
 which this Principle of Benevolence has o-

*Love of our Neighbour.* 233

ver other remote Considerations, is that it is itself the Temper of Virtue; and likewise, that it is the chief, nay the only effectual Security of our performing the several Offices of Kindness, we owe to our Fellow-creatures. When from distant Considerations Men resolve upon any thing to which they have no liking, or perhaps an Averseness, they are perpetually finding out Evasions and Excuses; which need never be wanting, if People look for them: And they equivocate with themselves in the plainest Cases in the World. This may be in respect to single determinate Acts of Virtue: But it comes in much more, where the Obligation is to a general Course of Behaviour; and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate Rules. This Observation may account for the Diversity of the Expression, in that known Passage of the Prophet *Micah*: *To do justly, and to love Mercy.* A Man's Heart must be formed to Humanity and Benevolence, he must *love Mercy*, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled Course of Behaviour. As Consideration of the future Sanctions of Religion is our only Security of persevering in our Duty, in Cases of great Temptation; so

Serm.  
XII.





234      *A S E R M O N upon the*

Serm. so to get our Heart and Temper formed to  
 XII. a Love and Liking of what is Good, is ab-  
 ~~~~~ solutely necessary in order to our behaving  
 rightly in the familiar and daily Intercourses
 amongst Mankind.

Secondly, The Precept before us may be understood to require, that we love our Neighbour in some certain *Proportion* or other, *according as* we love ourselves. And indeed a Man's Character cannot be determined by the Love he bears to his Neighbour, considered absolutely: But the Proportion which this bears to Self-love, whether it be attended to or not, is the chief thing which forms the Character, and influences the Actions. For, as the Form of the Body is a Composition of various Parts; so likewise our inward Structure is not simple or uniform, but a Composition of various Passions, Appetites, Affections, together with Rationality; including in this last both the Discernment of what is right, and a Disposition to regulate ourselves by it. There is greater Variety of Parts in what we call a Character, than there are Features in a Face; and the Morality of That is no more determined by one Part, than the Beauty or Deformity of This is by one single Feature:

Each

Love of our Neighbour. 235

Each is to be judged of by all the Parts or Features, not taken singly, but together. In the inward Frame the various Passions, Appetites, Affections, stand in different Respects to each other. The Principles in our Mind may be contradictory, or Checks and Allays only, or Incentives and Assistants to each other. And Principles, which in their Nature have no Kind of Contrariety or Affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's Allays or Incentives. From hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward Contexture of the Heart, and see with the greatest Exactness in what Degree any one Principle is in a particular Man; we could not from thence determine, how far that Principle would go towards forming the Character, or what Influence it would have upon the Actions; unless we could likewise discern what other Principles prevailed in him, and see the Proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two Men should have the Affection of Compassion in the same Degree exactly; yet one may have the Principle of Resentment, or of Ambition so strong in him, as to prevail over that of Compassion, and prevent its having any Influence upon his Acti-

ONS;

Serm.

XII.



236 *A SERMON upon the*

Serm. ons; so that he may deserve the Character
 XII. of an hard or cruel Man: Whereas the other,
 having Compassion in just the same Degree
 only, yet having Resentment or Ambition
 in a lower Degree, his Compassion may pre-
 vail over them, so as to Influence his Acti-
 ons, and to denominate his Temper com-
 passionate. So that, how strange soever it
 may appear to People who do not attend to
 the thing, yet it is quite manifest, that, when
 we say one Man is more Resenting or Com-
 passionate than another, this does not ne-
 cessarily imply that one has the Principle
 of Resentment or of Compassion stronger
 than the other. For if the Proportion, which
 Resentment or Compassion bears to other
 inward Principles, is greater in one than in
 the other; this is itself sufficient to denomi-
 nate one more Resenting or Compassionate
 than the other. Further, the whole System
 as I may speak, of Affections (including
 Rationality) which constitute the Heart, as
 this Word is used in Scripture and on moral
 Subjects, are each and all of them stronger
 in some than in others. Now the Propor-
 tion which the two general Affections, Be-
 nevolence and Self-love, bear to each other,
 according to this Interpretation of the Text,
 denominates

Love of our Neighbour. 237

denominates Men's Character as to Virtue. **Serm.**
Suppose then one Man to have the Princi- **XII.**
ple of Benevolence in an higher Degree than
another: It will not follow from hence, that
his general Temper or Character or Actions
will be more Benevolent than the others.
For he may have Self-love, as well as other
Passions, in such a Degree as quite to pre-
vail over Benevolence; so that it may have
no Influence at all upon his Actions: Where-
as Benevolence in the other Person, though
in a lower Degree, may yet be the strongest
Principle in his Heart; and strong enough
to be the Guide of his Actions, so as to de-
nominate him a good and virtuous Man.
The Case is here as in Scales: It is not one
Weight, considered in itself, which deter-
mines whether the Scale shall ascend or de-
scend; but this depends upon the Propor-
tion, which that one Weight hath to the o-
ther. Love of our Neighbour then must
bear some Proportion to Self-love, and Vir-
tue to be sure consists in the due Proportion.
What this due Proportion is, whether as a
Principle in the Mind, or as exerted in Acti-
ons, can be judged of only from our Na-
ture and Condition in this World. Of the
Degree in which Affections and the Princi-
ples

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

Serm. ples of Action, considered in themselves,
 XII. prevail, we have no Measure: Let us then
 proceed to the Course of Behaviour, the
 Actions they produce.

Both our Nature and Condition require, that each particular Man should make particular Provision for himself: And the Inquiry, what Proportion Benevolence should have to Self-love, when brought down to Practice, will be, what is a competent Care and Provision for ourselves. And how certain soever it be, that each Man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be, for any to attempt to determine it for another; yet it is to be observed, that the Proportion is real; and that a competent Provision has a Bound; and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our Grasp, without legal Injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in, Vanity, Supplies for what is called a Life of Pleasure, Covetousness, or imaginary Notions of Superiority over others, to determine this Question: But every one, who desires to act a proper Part in Society, would do well to consider, how far any of them come in to determine it, in the Way of Moral Consideration. All that

Love of our Neighbour. 239

that can be said is, supposing, what, as the Sermon. XII. World goes, is so much to be supposed that 'tis scarce to be mentioned, that Persons do not neglect what they really owe to Themselves; the more of their Care and Thought, and of their Fortune they employ in doing Good to their Fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the Law of Perfection, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.*

A Comparison being made in the Text between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour; and it being evident, that the Love of Others which includes in it all Virtues, must necessarily be in due Proportion to the Love of ourselves; these joint Considerations afforded sufficient Occasion for treating here of that Proportion: It is plainly implied in the Precept, though it should not be thought the exact Sense of the Words, *as thy self.*

Thirdly, If the Words, *as thy self,* were to be understood of an Equality of Affection; it would not be attended with those Consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a Person to have the same settled Regard to Others, as to Himself; that in every deliberate Scheme or Pursuit He took their Interest into the Account
in

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

Serm. in the same Degree as his own, so far as an

XII. Equality of Affection would produce this :
 Yet He would in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about Himself, and his own Concerns ; than about Others, and their Interests. For, besides the one common Affection toward Himself and his Neighbour, He would have several other particular Affections, Passions, Appetites ; which he could not possibly feel in common both for Himself and others : Now these Sensations themselves very much employ us ; and have perhaps as great Influence, as Self-love. So far indeed as Self-love, and cool Reflection upon what is for our Interest, would set us on work to gain a Supply of our own several Wants ; so far the Love of our Neighbour would make us do the same for him : But the Degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the Means of Gratification, by the feeling of those Affections, Appetites and Passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves.

That there are particular Passions, (suppose Shame, Resentment) which Men seem to have, and feel in common both for Themselves and Others, makes no Alteration in Respect to those Passions and Appetites
 which

Love of our Neighbour. 241

which cannot possibly be thus felt in com-
mon. From hence, (and perhaps more
things of the like Kind might be mentioned,)
it follows, that though there were an Equa-
lity of Affection to both, yet Regards to Our-
selves would be more prevalent than Atten-
tion to the Concerns of Others.

And from moral Considerations it ought
to be so, supposing still the Equality of Affe-
ction commanded; because we are in a pecu-
liar manner, as I may speak, entrusted with
ourselves; and therefore Care of our own In-
terests, as well as of our Conduct, particu-
ly belongs to us.

To these things must be added, that moral
Obligations can extend no further than to na-
tural Possibilities. Now we have a Percep-
tion of our own Interests, like Consciousness
of our own Existence, which we always car-
ry about with us; and which, in its Continu-
ation, Kind, and Degree, seems impossible
to be felt in respect to the Interests of o-
thers.

From all these Things it fully appears, that
though we were to love our Neighbour in
the same Degree as we love ourselves, so far
as this is possible; yet the Care of ourselves,
of the Individual, would not be neglected;

R

the

Serm.

XII.



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

Serm. the apprehended Danger of which seems to
 XII. be the only Objection against understanding
 the Precept in this strict Sense.

III. The general Temper of Mind which the due Love of our Neighbour would form us to, and the Influence it would have upon our Behaviour in Life, is now to be considered. The Temper and Behaviour of Charity is explained at large, in that known Passage of *St. Paul* * : *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. As to the Meaning of the Expressions, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, believeth all things; however those Expressions may be explained away, this Meekness, and, in some Degree, Easiness of Temper, Readiness to forego our Right for the Sake of Peace as well as in the Way of Compassion, Freedom from Mistrust, and Disposition to believe well of our Neighbour, this general Temper, I say, accompanies and is plainly the Effect of Love and Good-will. And though such is the World in which we live,*
 that

* 1 Cor. xiii.

Love of our Neighbour. 243

that Experience and Knowledge of it, not only may, but must beget in us greater Regard to ourselves, and Doubtfulness of the Characters of others, than is natural to Mankind; yet these ought not to be carried further than the Nature and Course of things make necessary. It is still true, even in the present State of things, bad as it is, that a real good Man had rather be deceived, than be suspicious; had rather forego his known Right, than run the Venture of doing even a hard thing. This is the general Temper of that Charity, of which the Apostle asserts, that if he had it not, giving his *Body to be burned would avail him nothing*; and which, he says, *shall never fail*.


The happy Influence of this Temper extends to every different Relation and Circumstance in Humane Life. It plainly renders a Man better, more to be desired, as to all the Respects and Relations we can stand in to each other. The benevolent Man is disposed to make use of all external Advantages in such a Manner, as shall contribute to the Good of others, as well as to his own Satisfaction. His own Satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind

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

Serm. to his Dependants, compassionate to the
 XII. Poor and Distressed, friendly to all with
 whom he has to do. This includes the good
 Parent, Master, Magistrate: And such a Be-
 haviour would plainly make Dependance,
 Inferiority, and even Servitude, easy. So that
 a good or charitable Man of superiour Rank
 in Wisdom, Fortune, Authority, is a com-
 mon Blessing to the Place he lives in; Hap-
 piness grows under his Influence. This
 good Principle in Inferiours would disco-
 ver itself in paying Respect, Gratitude, Obe-
 dience, as due. It were therefore methinks
 one just way of trying one's own Character,
 to ask ourselves, Am I in reality a better
 Master or Servant, a better Friend, a better
 Neighbour, than such and such Persons;
 whom, perhaps I may think, not to deserve
 the Character of Virtue and Religion so
 much as my self?

And as to the Spirit of Party, which un-
 happily prevails amongst Mankind, what-
 ever are the Distinctions which serve for a
 Supply to it, some or other of which have
 obtained in all Ages and Countries; one,
 who is thus friendly to his Kind, will im-
 mediately make due Allowances for it, as
 what cannot but be amongst such Creatures

Love of our Neighbour. 245

as Men, in such a World as this. And as Serm.
Wrath and Fury and Overbearing upon these XII.
Occasions proceed, as I may speak, from 
Men's feeling only on their own Side; so
a common Feeling, for others as well as for
ourselves, would render us sensible to this
Truth, which it is strange can have so lit-
tle Influence; that we ourselves differ from
others, just as much as they do from us. I
put the Matter in this Way, because it can
scarce be expected that the Generality of Men
should see, that those things, which are made
the Occasions of Dissention and fomenting
the Party-Spirit, are really nothing at all;
But it may be expected from all People,
how much soever they are in earnest about
their respective Peculiarities, that Human-
ity, and common Good-will to their Fellow-
creatures, should moderate and restrain that
wretched Spirit.

This good Temper of Charity likewise
would prevent Strife and Enmity arising from
other Occasions: It would prevent our giving
just Cause of Offence, and our taking it
without Cause. And in Cases of real In-
jury, a good Man will make all the Allow-
ances which are to be made; and, without
any Attempts of Retaliation, he will only

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

Serm. XII. consult his own Security for the future, against Injustice and Wrong.

IV. I proceed to consider lastly, what is affirmed of the Precept now explained, that it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.* that to love our Neighbour as ourselves includes in it all Virtues. Now the Way in which every Maxim of Conduct, or general Speculative Assertion, when it is to be explained at large, should be treated, is, to show what are the particular Truths which were designed to be comprehended under such a general Observation, how far it is strictly true; and then the Limitations, Restrictions, and Exceptions, if there be Exceptions, with which it is to be understood. But it is only the former of these, namely, how far the Assertion in the Text holds, and the Ground of the Pre-eminence assigned to the Precept of it, which in strictness comes into our present Consideration.

However, in almost every thing that is said, there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of Course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a Restriction or Limitation. Thus, when Benevolence is said to be the Sum of Virtue, it is not
spoken

Love of our Neighbour. 247

spoken of as a blind Propension, but as a Serm. Principle in reasonable Creatures, and so XII. to be directed by their Reason: For Reason and Reflection comes into our Notion of a moral Agent. And That will lead us to consider distant Consequences, as well as the immediate Tendency of an Action: It will teach us, that the Care of some Persons, suppose Children and Families, is particularly committed to our Charge by Nature and Providence; as also that there are other Circumstances, suppose Friendship or former Obligations, which require that we do good to some, preferably to others. Reason, considered merely as subservient to Benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest Good, will teach us to have particular Regard to these Relations and Circumstances; because it is plainly for the Good of the World that they should be regarded. And as there are numberless Cases, in which, notwithstanding Appearances, we are not competent Judges, whether a particular Action will upon the Whole do Good or Harm; Reason in the same Way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these Cases of Uncertainty. It will suggest to our Consideration, which is the safer Side; how lia-

248 *A SERMON upon the*

Serm. ble we are to be led wrong by Passion and
 XII. private Interest; and what Regard is due
 to Laws, and the Judgment of Mankind. All these things must come into Consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest Good. Thus, upon Supposition that it were in the strictest Sense true, without Limitation, that Benevolence includes in it all Virtues; yet Reason must come in as its Guide and Director, in order to attain its own End, the End of Benevolence, the greatest publick Good. Reason then being thus included, let us now consider the Truth of the Assertion itself.

First, It is manifest that nothing can be of Consequence to Mankind or any Creature, but Happiness. This then is all which any Person can, in strictness of speaking, be said to have a Right to. We can therefore *owe no Man any thing*, but only to further and promote his Happiness, according to our Abilities. And therefore a Disposition and Endeavour to do Good to all with whom we have to do, in the Degree and Manner which the different Relations we stand in to them require, is a Discharge

Love of our Neighbour. 249

charge of all the Obligations we are under to them. Sermon.
XII.

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

And so far as Temperance, Sobriety, and Moderation in sensual Pleasures, and the contrary Vices, have any Respect to our Fellow-creatures, any Influence upon their Quiet, Welfare, and Happiness; (as they always have a real, and often a near Influence upon it;) so far it is manifest those Virtues may be produced by the Love of our Neighbour, and that the contrary Vices would

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

Serm. would be prevented by it. Indeed, if
 XII. Men's Regard to themselves will not restrain
 them from Excess; it may be thought little
 probable, that their Love to others will be
 sufficient: But the Reason is, that their Love
 to others is not, any more than their Regard
 to themselves, just, and in its due Degree.
 There are manifest Instances of Persons kept
 sober and temperate from Regard to their
 Affairs, and the Welfare of those who de-
 pend upon them. And it is obvious to e-
 very one, that habitual Excess, a dissolute
 Course of Life, implies a general neglect
 of the Duties we owe to our Friends, our
 Families and our Country.

From hence it is manifest that the com-
 mon Virtues, and the common Vices of
 Mankind, may be traced up to Benevolence,
 or the want of it. And this intitles the
 Precept, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as
 thy self*, to the Preeminence given to it;
 and is a Justification of the Apostles Affir-
 mation, that all other Commandments are
 comprehended in it; whatever Cautions
 and Restrictions * there are, which might
 require

* For Instance: As we are not competent Judges, what is
 upon the whole for the Good of the World; there may be
 other

Love of our Neighbour. 251

require to be considered, if we were to Serm.
state particularly and at length, what is XII.

Virtue 

other immediate Ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing Good, or producing Happiness. Though the Good of the Creation be the only End of the Author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular Obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a Perception, that the Observance or Violation of them is for the Happiness or Misery of our Fellow-creatures. And this is in Fact the Case. For there are certain Dispositions of Mind, and certain Actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by Mankind, abstracted from the Consideration of their Tendency to the Happiness or Misery of the World; approved or disapproved by Reflection, by that Principle within which is the Guide of Life, the Judge of Right and Wrong. Numberless Instances of this Kind might be mentioned. There are Pieces of Treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are Actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general Name given them than Indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to Humane Nature. There is such a thing as Meanness, a little Mind; which, as it is quite distinct from Incapacity, so it raises a Dislike and Disapprobation quite different from that Contempt, which Men are too apt to have, of meer Folly. On the other Hand; what we call Greatness of Mind, is the Object of another Sort of Approbation, than superiour Understanding. Fidelity, Honour, strict Justice, are also themselves approved, abstracted from Consideration of their Tendency. Now, whether it be thought that each of these contributes to the Good or Misery of the World, and so would be produced or prevented by Benevolence; or that they are connected with it in our Nature; or whether some of them be considered as an inferiour Kind of Virtues and Vices, somewhat like natural Beauties and Deformities; or lastly, as plain Exceptions to the general

XII. But,



Secondly, It might be added, that in a higher and more general Way of Consideration, leaving out the particular Nature of Creatures, and the particular Circumstances in which they are placed, Benevolence in the strictest Sense includes in it all that is Good and Worthy; all that is Good, which we have any Notion of. We have no Conception of any moral Attribute in the supream Being, but what may be resolved up into Goodness. And if we consider a reasonable Creature or moral Agent, without Regard to the particular Relations and Circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive any thing else to come in, towards determining whether he is to be ranked in an higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, but the higher or lower Degree in which that Principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

That which we more strictly call Piety, or the Love of God, and which is an essential
Part

ral Rule; thus much however is certain, that the things now instanced in, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by Mankind in general, in quite another View than as conducive to the Happiness or Misery of the World.

Love of our Neighbour. 253

Part of a right Temper, some may perhaps imagine no Way connected with Benevolence: Yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in Being an Object infinitely Good. Humane Nature is so constituted, that every good Affection implies the Love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the Object of a new Affection in the same Person. Thus, to be righteous implies in it the Love of Righteousness; to be benevolent the Love of Benevolence; to be good the Love of Goodness; whether this Righteousness, Benevolence, or Goodness, be viewed as in our own Mind, or in another's: And the Love of God as a Being perfectly Good, is the Love of perfect Goodness contemplated in a Being or Person. Thus Morality and Religion, Virtue and Piety, will at last necessarily co-incide, run up into one and the same Point, and *Love* will be in all Senses *the End of the Commandment.*

O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine Principle; kill in us all the Seeds of Envy and Ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the Love of our Neighbour, to improve in the Love of Thee.
Thou



A SERMON upon, &c.

Thou hast placed us in various Kindreds, Friendships, and Relations, as the School of Discipline for our Affections: Help us, by the due Exercise of them, to improve to Perfection; till all partial Affection be lost in that intire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all.

SERMON XIII.

Upon the Love of God.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

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

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

Serm. XIII.

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

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

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

the Love of G O D. 257

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

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

S applica-

258 *A S E R M O N upon*

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

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

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

the Love of G O D. 259

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

Serm.
XIII.



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

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

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

Of the several Affections, or inward Sen-
sations, which particular Objects excite in
Man, there are some, the having of which
implies the Love of them, when they are

Serm. reflected upon. This cannot be said of all
 XIII. our Affections, Principles, and Motives of
 ~~~~~ Action. It were ridiculous to assert, that a  
 Man upon Reflection hath the same Kind of  
 Approbation of the Appetite of Hunger, or  
 the Passion of Fear, as he hath of Good-will  
 to his Fellow-creatures. To be a just, a  
 good, a righteous Man, plainly carries with  
 it a peculiar Affection to, or Love of Justice,  
 Goodness, Righteousness, when these Prin-  
 ciples are the Objects of Contemplation.  
 Now if a Man approves of, or hath an Af-  
 fection to, any Principle in and for itself; in-  
 cidental things allowed for, it will be the  
 same whether he views it in his own Mind  
 or in another; in himself, or in his Neigh-  
 bour. This is the Account of our Approbati-  
 on of, our moral Love and Affection to good  
 Characters; which cannot but be in those  
 who have any Degrees of real Goodness in  
 themselves, and who discern and take No-  
 tice of the same Principle in others.

From Observation of what passeth with-  
 in ourselves, our own Actions, and the Be-  
 haviour of others, the Mind may carry on  
 its Reflections as far as it pleases; much be-  
 yond what we experience in ourselves, or  
 discern in our Fellow-creatures. It may go  
 on

on, and consider Goodness as become an uniform continued Principle of Action, as conducted by Reason, and forming a Temper and Character absolutely good and perfect, which is in a higher Sense excellent, and proportionably the Object of Love and Approbation. Serm. XIII.

Let us then suppose a Creature perfect according to his created Nature : Let his Form be Humane, and his Capacities no more than equal to those of the Chief of Men : Goodness shall be his proper Character ; with Wisdom to direct it, and Power within some certain determined Sphere of Action to exert it. But Goodness must be the simple actuating Principle within him ; this being the moral Quality which is amiable, or the immediate Object of Love as distinct from other Affections of Approbation. Here then is a finite Object for our Mind to tend towards, to exercise itself upon : A Creature, perfect according to his Capacity, fixt, steady, equally unmoved by weak Pity or more weak Fury and Resentment ; forming the justest Scheme of Conduct ; going on undisturbed in the Execution of it, through the several Methods of Severity and Reward, towards his End, namely, the general Happiness of all with whom he hath to do, as

264 *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. in itself right and valuable. This Character,  
 XIII. though uniform in itself, in its Principle, yet  
 exerting itself in different Ways, or considered in different Views, may by its appearing Variety move different Affections. Thus, the Severity of Justice would not affect us in the same Way, as an Act of Mercy: The adventitious Qualities of Wisdom and Power may be considered in themselves: And even the Strength of Mind, which this immovable Goodness supposes, may likewise be viewed as an Object of Contemplation, distinct from the Goodness itself. Superiour Excellence of any Kind, as well as superior Wisdom and Power, is the Object of Awe and Reverence to all Creatures, whatever their moral Character be: But so far as Creatures of the lowest Rank were good, so far the View of this Character, as simply good, must appear amiable to them, be the Object of, or beget Love. Further, suppose we were conscious, that this superior Person so far approved of us, that we had nothing servilely to fear from him; that he was really our Friend, and kind and good to us in particular, as he had occasionally Intercourse with us: We must be other Creatures than we are, or we could not but feel the same  
 Kind

*the Love of G O D.* 265

Kind of Satisfaction and Enjoyment (what-  
ever would be the Degree of it) from this  
higher Acquaintance, as we feel from com-  
mon Friendships ; the Intercourse being real,  
and the Persons equally present, in both Cases.  
We should have a more ardent Desire to be  
approved by his better Judgment, and a higher  
Satisfaction in that Approbation, than any  
thing of this Sort which could be felt in re-  
spect to common Persons, or be wrought in  
us by their Presence. Let us now raise the  
Character, and suppose this Creature, for  
we are still going on with the Supposition  
of a Creature, our proper Guardian and Go-  
vernour ; that we were in a Progress of Be-  
ing towards somewhat further ; and that his  
Scheme of Government was too vast for our  
Capacities to comprehend ; remembering  
still that he is perfectly Good. Wisdom,  
Power, Goodness, accidentally viewed any  
where, would inspire Reverence, Awe, Love :  
And as these Affections would be raised in  
higher or lower Degrees, in Proportion as  
we had occasionally more or less Intercourse  
with the Creature endued with those Qua-  
lities ; so this further Consideration and  
Knowledge, that he was our proper Guardi-  
an and Governor, would much more bring  
these

Serm.  
XIII.





Serm. these Objects and Qualities home to our-  
 XIII. selves, teach us they had a greater respect to  
 us in particular, that we had an higher Interest in that Wisdom and Power and Goodness. We should, with Joy, Gratitude, Reverence, Love, Trust, and Dependance, appropriate the Character, as what we had a right in; and make our Boast in such our Relation to it. And the Conclusion of the whole would be, that we should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and cast ourselves intirely upon him. As the whole Attention of Life should be to obey his Commands; so the highest Enjoyment of it must arise from a Conscioufness of his Favour and Approbation; from the Contemplation of this Character, and our Relation to it. A Being who hath these Attributes, who stands in this Relation, and is thus sensibly present to the Mind, must necessarily be the Object of these Affections: There is as real a Correspondence between them, as between the lowest Appetite of Sense and its Object.

That this Being is not a Creature, but the Almighty God; that he is of infinite Power and Wisdom and Goodness, does not render him less the Object of Reverence and Love, than he would be if he had those Attributes

*the Love of G O D.* 267


tributes only in a limited Degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we intirely depend, is the Object of some Regards. He hath given us certain Affections of Mind, which correspond to Wisdom, Power, Goodness, *i. e.* which are raised upon View of those Qualities. If then he be indeed wise, powerful, good; he is the natural Object of those Affections, which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those Attributes. That he is infinite in Power, perfect in Wisdom and Goodness, makes no Alteration, but only that he is the object of those Affections raised to the highest Pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our Senses. *I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his Seat!* \* But is He indeed afar off? Does he not fill Heaven and Earth with his Presence? The Presence of our Fellow-creatures affects our Senses, and our Senses give us the Knowledge of their Presence; which hath different

Serm.  
XIII.  
~

\* Job xxii.

Serm. rent Kinds of Influence upon us; Love, Joy,  
 XIII. Sorrow, Restraint, Encouragement, Reve-  
 ~~~~~  
 rence. However this Influence is not immediately from our Senses, but from that Knowledge. Thus suppose a Person neither to see nor hear Another, not to know by any of his Senses, but yet certainly to know, that Another was with him; this Knowledge might, and in many Cases would, have one or more of the Effects before-mentioned. It is therefore not only reasonable, but also natural, to be affected with a Presence, though it be not the Object of our Senses: Whether it be, or be not, is merely an accidental Circumstance, which needs not come into Consideration: It is the Certainty that He is with us, and we with him, which hath the Influence. We consider Persons then as present, not only when they are within Reach of our Senses, but also when we are assured by any other Means that They are within such a Nearness; nay, if they are not, we can recall them to our Mind, and be moved towards them as present: And must He, who is so much more intimately with us, that *in Him we live and move and have our Being*, be thought too distant to be the Object of our Affections? We own and feel the Force
 of

the Love of G O D. 269


of amiable and worthy Qualities in our Fel- Serm.
low-creatures : And can we be insensible to XIII.
the Contemplation of perfect Goodness? 
Do we reverence the Shadows of Greatness
here below, are we solicitous about Honour
and Esteem and the Opinion of the World :
And shall we not feel the same with respect
to Him, whose are Wisdom and Power in
their Original, who *is the God of Judgment
by whom Actions are weighed?* Thus Love,
Reverence, Desire of Esteem, every Facul-
ty, every Affection, tends towards, and is
employed about its respective Object in
common Cases : And must the Exercise of
them be suspended with Regard to Him a-
lone, who is an Object, an infinitely more
than adequate Object, to our most exalted
Faculties ; Him, *of whom, and through
whom, and to whom are all things?*

As we cannot remove from this Earth, or
change our general Business on it ; so neither
can we alter our real Nature. Therefore no
Exercise of the Mind can be recommended,
but only the Exercise of those Faculties you
are conscious of. Religion does not de-
mand new Affections, but only claims the
Direction of those you already have, those
Affections you daily feel ; though unhappily
confined

Serm. confined to Objects, not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate Objects of those very Faculties and Affections. Let the Man of Ambition go on still to consider Disgrace as the greatest Evil; Honour, as his chief Good. But Disgrace, in whose Estimation? Honour, in whose Judgment? This is the only Question. If Shame and Delight in Esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled Ground of Pain or Pleasure; both these must be in Proportion to the supposed Wisdom and Worth of him, by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical, to speak of a Sensibility of this Sort, which shall have respect to an unerring Judgment, to infinite Wisdom; when we are assured That unerring Judgment, This infinite Wisdom does observe upon our Actions?

'Tis the same with respect to the Love of God in the strictest and most confined Sense. We only offer and represent the highest Object of an Affection, supposed already in your Mind. Some Degree of Goodness must be previously supposed: This always implies the Love of itself, an Affection to Goodness: The highest, the adequate Object
of

the Love of G O D. 271

of this Affection, is perfect Goodness; which Serm.
XIII.
therefore we are to *love with all our Heart,*
with all our Soul, and with all our Strength. 

“ Must we then, forgetting our own Interest,
“ as it were go out of our selves, and love God
“ for his own Sake?” No more forget your
own Interest, no more go out of yourselves,
than when you prefer one Place, one Prospect,
the Conversation of one Man to that of Another.
Does not every Affection necessarily
imply, that the Object of it be itself loved?
If it be not, 'tis not the Object of the Affec-
tion. You may and ought if you can, but it
is a great Mistake to think you can, love
or fear or hate any Thing, from Consi-
deration that such Love or Fear or Hatred
may be a Means of obtaining Good or avoid-
ing Evil. But the Question, whether we
ought to love God for his Sake or for our
own, being a mere Mistake in Language;
the real Question, which this is mistaken for,
will, I suppose, be answered by observing,
that the Goodness of God already exercised
towards us, our present Dependance upon
him, and our Expectation of future Benefits,
ought, and have a natural Tendency, to beget
in us the Affection of Gratitude, and great-
er Love towards Him, than the same Good-
ness

Serm. nefs exercised towards others ; were it only
 XIII. for this Reason, that every Affection is moved in Proportion to the Sense we have of the Object of it ; and we cannot but have a more lively Sense of Goodness, when exercised towards ourselves, than when exercised towards others. I added Expectation of future Benefits, because the Ground of that Expectation is present Goodness.

Thus Almighty God is, and must necessarily be, the Object of different Affections to all Creatures who cannot but consider Him in partial and different Views. He is in Himself one uniform Being, simply one, and for ever the same without *Variableness* or *Shadow of Turning* : But his infinite Greatness, His Goodness, His Wisdom, are different Objects to our Mind. To which is to be added, that from the Changes in our own Characters together with his Unchangeableness, we cannot but consider ourselves as more or less the Objects of His Approbation, and really be so. For if He approves what is Good ; He cannot, meerly from the Unchangeableness of his Nature, approve what is Evil. Hence must arise more various Movements of Mind, more different Kinds of Affections : And this greater Variety also
 is

the Love of G O D. 273

is just and reasonable in such Creatures as we are, though it respects a Being simply one, good and perfect. As some of these Affections are most particularly suitable to so imperfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal State we are passing through ; so there may be other Exercises of Mind, or some of these in higher Degrees, our Employment and Happiness in a State of Perfection. Serm. XIII.

Consider then our Ignorance, the Imperfection of our Nature, our Virtue and our Condition in this World, with respect to an infinitely good and just Being, our Creator and Governour ; and you will see what religious Affections of Mind are most particularly suitable to this mortal State we are passing through. Serm. XIV.

Though we are not affected with any thing so strongly, as what we discern with our Senses ; and though our Nature and Condition require, that we be much taken up about sensible things ; yet our Reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the Effects of his Goodness : He is therefore the Object of some Regards. The Imperfection of our Virtue, joined with the Consideration of his absolute Rectitude

T

or

274 *A SERMON upon*

Serm. or Holiness, will scarce permit that Perfection of Love, which intirely casts out all Fear: Yet Consciousness of a real Endeavour to approve ourselves to Him, joined with the Consideration of his Goodness, as it quite excludes servile Dread and Horror, so it is plainly a reasonable Ground for Hope of his Favour; and That Goodness is the Object of Love. Neither Fear, nor Hope, nor Love then are excluded: And one or another of these will prevail, according to the different Views we have of God; and ought to prevail, according to the Changes we find in our own Character. There is a Temper of Mind made up of, or which follows from all three, Fear, Hope, Love; namely, Resignation to the Divine Will, which is the general Temper belonging to this State; which ought to be the habitual Frame of our Mind and Heart, and to be exercised at proper Seasons more distinctly, in Acts of Devotion.

Resignation to the Will of God is the whole of Piety; it includes in it all that is good, and is a Source of the most settled Quiet and Composure of Mind. There is the general Principle of Submission in our Nature. Man is not so constituted as to desire

fire Things, and be uneasy in the want of them, in Proportion to their known Value: Many other Considerations come in to determine the Degrees of Desire; particularly, whether the Advantage we take a View of be within the Sphere of our Rank. Who ever felt Uneasiness, upon observing any of the Advantages Brute Creatures have over us? And yet it is plain they have several. It is the same with respect to Advantages belonging to Creatures of a superior Order. Thus, though we see a Thing to be highly valuable, yet that it does not belong to our Condition of Being, is sufficient to suspend our Desires after it, to make us rest satisfied without such Advantage. Now there is just the same Reason for quiet Resignation in the Want of every Thing equally unattainable, and out of our Reach in particular, though others of our Species be possessed of it. All this may be applied to the Whole of Life; to positive Inconveniences as well as Wants; not indeed to the Sensations of Pain and Sorrow, but to all the Uneasinesses of Reflection, Murmuring and Discontent. Thus is Humane Nature formed to Compliance, Yielding, Submission of Temper. We find the Principles of it within us; and eve-

Serm. ry one exercifes it towards some Objects or
 XIV. other; *i. e.* feels it with Regard to some
 Persons, and some Circumstances. Now
 this is an excellent Foundation of a reason-
 able and religious Resignation. Nature
 teaches and inclines us to take up with our
 Lot: The Consideration, that the Course
 of Things is unalterable, hath a Tendency
 to quiet the Mind under it, to beget a Sub-
 mission of Temper to it. But when we
 can add, that this unalterable Course is ap-
 pointed and continued by infinite Wisdom
 and Goodness; how absolute should be our
 Submission, how intire our Trust and De-
 pendance? This would reconcile us to our
 Condition; prevent all the supernumerary
 Troubles arising from Imagination, distant
 Fears, Impatience; all Uneasiness, except
 that which necessarily arises from the Cala-
 mities themselves we may be under. How
 many of our Cares should we by this Means
 be disburthened of? Cares not properly our
 own, how apt soever they may be to intrude
 upon us, and we to admit them; the Anxi-
 eties of Expectation, Sollicitude about Suc-
 cess and Disappointment, which in Truth are
 none of our Concern. How open to eve-
 ry Gratification would that Mind be, which
 was

the Love of G O D. 277

was clear of these Incumbrances? Our Re-
signation to the Will of God may be said
to be perfect, when our Will is lost and
resolved up into His; when we rest in his
Will as our End, as being itself most just,
and right, and good. And where is the Im-
possibility of such an Affection to what is
just, and right, and good, such a Loyalty of
Heart to the Governour of the Universe, as
shall prevail over all sinister indirect Desires
of our own? Neither is this at bottom any
thing more than Faith, and Honesty, and
Fairness of Mind; in a more enlarged Sense
indeed, than those Words are commonly u-
fed. And as, in common Cases, Fear and
Hope and other Passions are raised in us
by their respective Objects; so this Submissi-
on of Heart and Soul and Mind, this reli-
gious Resignation, would be as naturally
produced by our having just Conceptions of
Almighty God, and a real Sense of his Pre-
sence with us. In how low a Degree so-
ever this Temper usually prevails amongst
Men, yet it is a Temper right in itself;
it is what we owe to our Creator; it is
particularly suitable to our mortal Con-
dition, and what we should endeavour af-
ter for our own Sakes in our Passage through

Serm.
XIV.
~~~~~

Serm. such a World as this; where is nothing  
 XIV. upon which we can rest or depend; no-  
 thing, but what we are liable to be decei-  
 ved and disappointed in. Thus we might  
*acquaint ourselves with God and be at  
 Peace.* This is Piety and Religion in the  
 strictest Sense, considered as an Habit of  
 Mind: An habitual Sense of God's Presence  
 with us; being affected towards him, as  
 present, in the Manner his superiour Nature  
 requires from such a Creature as Man: This  
 is to *walk with God.*

Little more need be said of Devotion,  
 or religious Worship, than that it is this  
 Temper exerted into Act. The Nature of it  
 consists in the actual Exercise of those Affecti-  
 ons towards God, which are supposed habi-  
 tual in good Men. He is always equally pre-  
 sent with us: But we are so much taken up  
 with sensible things, that, *Lo, He goeth by us,  
 and we see Him not: He passeth on also,  
 but we perceive Him not* \*. Devotion is  
 Retirement, from the World he has made,  
 to Him alone: It is to withdraw from the  
 Avocations of Sense, to yield ourselves up  
 to the Influence of the Divine Presence,  
 and

\* Job ix. 11.

and to give full Scope to the Affections of Serm. XIV.  
Gratitude, Love, Reverence, Trust and Dependance; of which infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, is the natural and only adequate Object. We may apply to the whole of Devotion these Words of the Son of *Sirach*: *When you glorifie the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough* \*. Our most raised Affections of every Kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate, when an infinite Being is the Object of them. This is the highest Exercise and Employment of Mind, that a Creature is capable of.

Thus you see the Temper of Mind respecting God, which is particularly suitable to a State of Imperfection; to Creatures in a Progress of Being towards somewhat further. Suppose now this something further attained; that we were arrived at it: What a Perception will it be, to see and know and feel that our Trust was not vain, our Dependance not groundless? That the Issue, Event and Con-

T 4

summa-

\* Ecclus. xliii. 30.

Serm. summation came out such as fully to justify and answer that Resignation? If the obscure View of the divine Perfection, which we have in this World, ought in just consequence to beget an intire Resignation; what will this Resignation be exalted into, when we shall *see Face to Face, and know as we are known*? If we cannot form any distinct Notion of that Perfection of the Love of God, which *casts out all Fear*; of that Enjoyment of him, which will be the Happiness of good Men hereafter; the Consideration of our Wants and Capacities of Happiness, and that He will be an adequate Supply to them, must serve us instead of such distinct Conception of the particular Happiness itself.

Let us then suppose a Man intirely disengaged from Business and Pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure to reflect upon himself and his own Condition of Being. He would immediately feel that he was by no means compleat of himself, but totally insufficient for his own Happiness. One may venture to affirm that every Man hath felt this, whether He hath again reflected upon it or not. It is feeling this Deficiency, which makes Men look out for Assistance from abroad; and which has given Rise to various Kinds of Amuse-

amusements, altogether needless any other-  
wise than as they serve to fill up the Blank  
Spaces of Time, and so hinder their feeling  
this Deficiency, and being uneasy with  
Themselves. Now, if these external Things  
we take up with were really an adequate Sup-  
ply to this Deficiency of Humane Nature, if by  
their Means our Capacities and Desires were  
all satisfied and filled up ; then it might be tru-  
ly said, that we had found out the proper Hap-  
piness of Man ; and so might sit down satisfied,  
and be at Rest in the Enjoyment of it. But if  
it appears that the Amusements, which Men  
usually pass their Time in, are so far from co-  
ming up to, or answering our Notions and  
Desires of Happiness or Good, that they are  
really no more than what they are commonly  
called, somewhat to pass away the Time,  
*i. e.* somewhat which serves to turn us aside  
from, and prevent our attending to this our in-  
ternal Poverty and Want ; if they serve only,  
or chiefly, to suspend, instead of satisfying our  
Conceptions and Desires of Happiness ; if the  
Want remains, and we have found out little  
more than barely the Means of making it  
less sensible ; then are we still to seek for  
somewhat to be an adequate Supply to it. It  
is plain that there is a Capacity in the Nature  
of



Serm. of Man, which neither Riches, nor Ho-  
 XIV. nours, nor sensual Gratifications, nor any  
 ~~~~~ thing in this World can perfectly fill up, or  
 satisfy: There is a deeper and more essential
 Want, than any of these Things can be the
 Supply of. Yet surely there is a Possibility
 of Somewhat, which may fill up all our Ca-
 pacities of Happiness; Somewhat, in which
 our Souls may find Rest; Somewhat, which
 may be to us that satisfactory Good we are in-
 quiring after. But it cannot be any Thing
 which is valuable only as it tends to some
 further End. Those therefore who have got
 this World so much into their Hearts, as not
 to be able to consider Happiness as consisting
 in any Thing but Property and Possessions,
 which are only valuable as the Means to
 somewhat else, cannot have the least Glimpse
 of the Subject before us; which is the End,
 not the Means; the Thing itself, not some-
 what in order to it. But if you can lay aside
 that general, confused, undeterminate No-
 tion of Happiness, as consisting in such Pos-
 sessions; and fix in your Thoughts, that it re-
 ally can consist in Nothing but in a Facul-
 ty's having its proper Object; you will clear-
 ly see, that in the coolest way of Considera-
 on, without either the Heat of fanciful En-
 thusiasm,

thusiasm, or the Warmth of real Devotion, Sermon.
nothing is more certain than that an infinite Being XIV.
may Himself be, if He pleases, the Supply to all the Capacities of our Nature. All the common Enjoyments of Life are from the Faculties He hath endued us with, and the Objects He hath made suitable to them. He may Himself be to us infinitely more than all these : He may be to us all that we want. As our Understanding can contemplate itself, and our Affections be exercised upon themselves by Reflection : So the Author and Cause of all Things may be an adequate Supply to both these Faculties ; a Subject to our Understanding, and an Object to our Affections.

Consider then : When we shall have put off this mortal Body, when we shall be devided of sensual Appetites, and those Possessions which are now the Means of Gratification shall be of no Avail ; when this restless Scene of Business and vain Pleasures, which now diverts us from ourselves, shall be all over ; We, our proper self, shall still remain : We shall still continue the same Creatures we are, with Wants to be supplied, and Capacities of Happiness. We must have Faculties of Perception, though not sensitive ones ;

284 *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. ones; and Pleasure or Uneasiness from our
XIV. Perceptions, as now we have.

There are certain Ideas, which we express by the Words, Order, Harmony, Proportion, Beauty, the furthest removed from any thing sensual. Now what is there in those intellectual Images, Forms, or Ideas, which begets that Approbation, Love, Delight, and even Rapture, which is seen in some Persons Faces upon having those Objects present to their Minds? — Mere Enthusiasm! — Be it what it will: there are Objects, Works of Nature and of Art, which all Mankind have Delight from, quite distinct from their affording Gratification to sensual Appetites; and from quite another View of them, than as being for their Interest and further Advantage. The Faculties from which we are capable of these Pleasures, and the Pleasures themselves, are as natural, and as much to be accounted for, as any sensual Appetite whatever, and the Pleasure from its Gratification. Words to be sure are wanting upon this Subject: To say, that every thing of Grace and Beauty throughout the whole of Nature, every thing excellent and amiable shared in differently lower Degrees by the whole Creation, meet in the Author and Cause of all Things;

the Love of G O D. 285

Things ; this is an inadequate, and perhaps Serm.
XIV.
improper Way of speaking of the Divine Nature : But 'tis manifest that absolute Rectitude, the Perfection of Being, must be in all Senses, and in every Respect the highest Object to the Mind.

In this World it is only the Effects of Wisdom and Power and Greatness, which we discern : It is not impossible, that hereafter the Qualities Themselves in the supream Being may be the immediate Object of Contemplation. What amazing Wonders are opened to View by late Improvements ! What an Object is the Universe to a Creature, if there be a Creature who can comprehend its System ! But it must be an infinitely higher Exercise of the Understanding, to view the Scheme of it in that Mind, which projected it, before its Foundations were laid. And surely we have Meaning to the Words, when we speak of going further ; and viewing not only this System in His Mind, but the Wisdom and Intelligence itself from whence it proceeded. The same may be said of Power. But since Wisdom and Power are not God, He is a wise, a powerful Being ; the Divine Nature may therefore be a further Object to the Understanding. It is nothing

286 *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. to observe that our Senses give us but an im-
 XIV. perfect Knowledge of Things : Effects them-
 ~~~~~ selves, if we knew them thoroughly, would  
 give us but imperfect Notions of Wisdom  
 and Power ; much less of his Being, in whom  
 they reside. I am not speaking of any fan-  
 ciful Notion of seeing all Things in God ;  
 but only representing to you, how much an  
 higher Object to the Understanding an infi-  
 nite Being himself is, than the Things which  
 He has made : And this is no more than say-  
 ing, that the Creator is superior to the  
 Works of his Hands.

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

But

*the Love of G O D.* 287

But whoever considers distinctly what the Serm. Delight of Knowledge is, will see Reason XIV. to doubt whether that be the chief Good of Man: All this, as it is applicable, so it was mentioned with Regard to the Attribute of Goodness. I say, Goodness. Our Being and all our Enjoyments are the Effects of it: Just Men bear its Resemblance: But how little do we know of the Original, of what it is in itself? Recall what was before observed concerning the Affection to moral Characters; which, in how low a Degree soever, yet is plainly natural to Man, and the most excellent Part of his Nature: Suppose this improved, as it may be improved to any Degree whatever, in the *Spirits of just Men made perfect*; and then suppose that they had a real View of that *Righteousness, which is an everlasting Righteousness*; of the Conformity of the Divine Will to the *Law of Truth*, in which the moral Attributes of God consist; of that Goodness in the Sovereign Mind, which gave Birth to the Universe; Add, what will be true of all good Men hereafter, a Consciousness of having an Interest in what they are contemplating; Suppose them able to say, *This God is our God for ever and ever*: Would they be any longer to seek

Serm. seek for what was their chief Happiness,  
 XIV. their final Good? Could the utmost Stretch  
 of their Capacities look further? Would  
 not infinite perfect Goodness be their very  
 End, the last End and Object of their Affections;  
 beyond which they could neither have,  
 nor desire; beyond which they could not form  
 a Wish or Thought?

Consider wherein that Presence of a  
 Friend consists, which has often so strong an  
 Effect, as wholly to possess the Mind, and  
 intirely suspend all other Affections and Re-  
 gards; and which itself affords the highest  
 Satisfaction and Enjoyment. He is within  
 Reach of the Senses. Now, as our Capacities  
 of Perception improve, we shall have,  
 perhaps by some Faculty intirely new, a Per-  
 ception of God's Presence with us in a near-  
 er and stricter way; since it is certain He is  
 more intimately present with us, than any  
 Thing else can be. Proof of the Existence  
 and Presence of any Being is quite different  
 from the immediate Perception, the Consci-  
 ousness of it. What then will be the Joy of  
 Heart, which His Presence, and *the Light of  
 His Countenance* will inspire, who is the Life  
 of the Universe; when they shall have a  
 Sensation, that He is the Sustainer of their  
 Being

*the Love of G O D.* 289

Being, that they exist in him ; when they shall feel his Influence to cheer and enliven and support their Frame, in a Manner of which we have now no Conception? He will be in a literal Sense their Strength and their Portion for ever.

Serm.  
XIV.

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

To conclude : Let us suppose a Person tired with Care and Sorrow, and the Repetition of vain Delights which fill up the Round of

U

Life ;

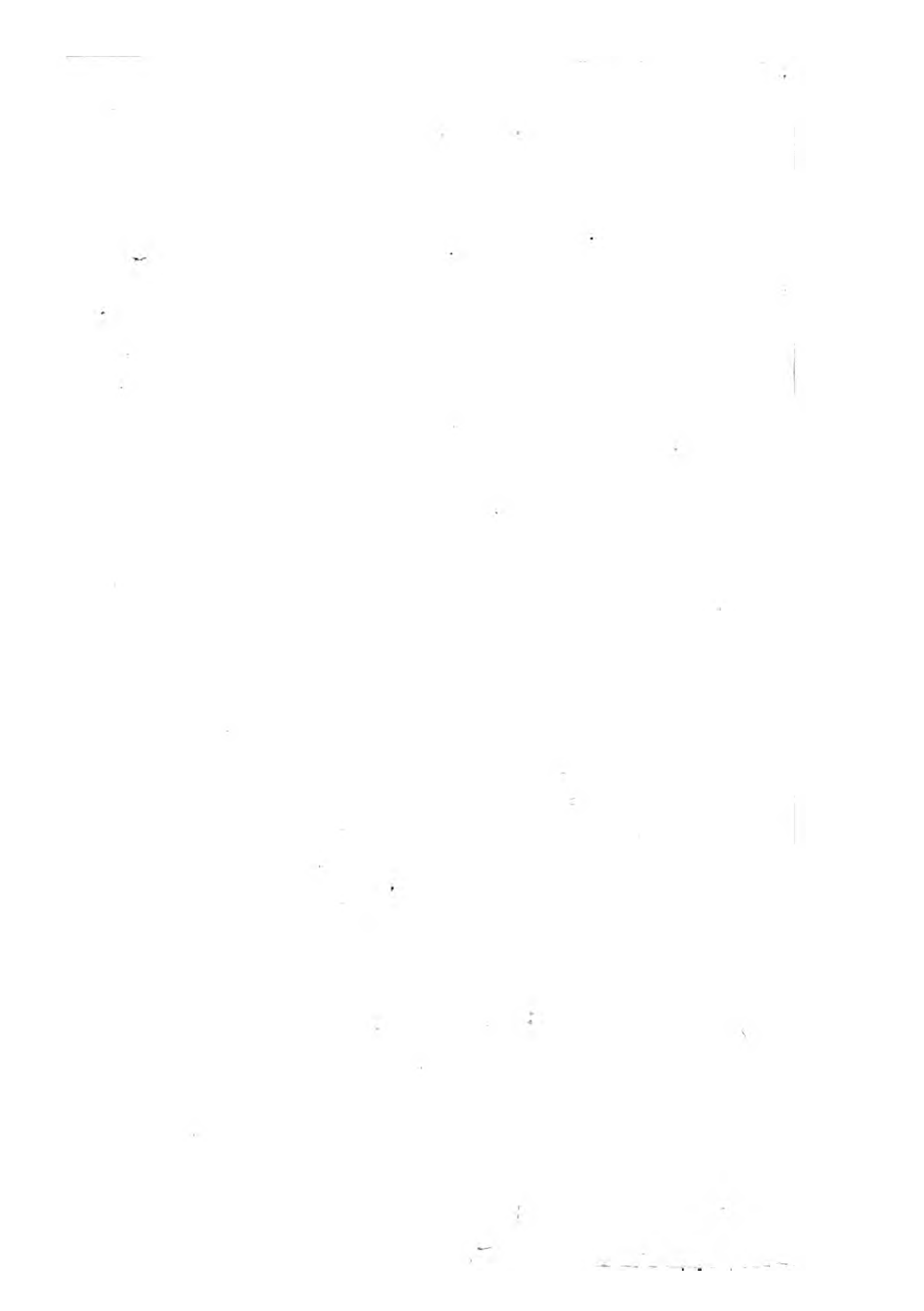


290 *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. Life; sensible that every thing here below in  
 XIV. its best Estate is altogether Vanity. Suppose  
 ~~~~~ him to feel that Deficiency of Humane Nature, before taken Notice of; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate Supply to it. What could be more applicable to a good Man, in this State of Mind; or better express his present Wants and distant Hopes, his Passage through this World as a Progress towards a State of Perfection, than the following Passages in the Devotions of the Royal Prophet? They are plainly in an higher and more proper Sense applicable to This, than they could be to any Thing else. *I have seen an end of all Perfection. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of Thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth: but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. Like as the Hart desireth the Water-Brooks: so longeth my Soul after Thee, O God. My Soul is a-thirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before Him? How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, O God! and the Children of Men shall put their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings. They shall be satisfied with the Plenteousness*

the Love of G O D. 291

ness of thy House : and Thou shalt give them Serm.
Drink of thy Pleasures, as out of the River. XIV.
For with Thee is the Well of Life : And in
thy Light shall we see Light. Blessed is the
Man whom thou chooshest, and receivest unto
Thee : he shall dwell in thy Court, and shall
be satisfied with the Pleasures of thy House,
even of thy holy Temple. Blessed is the
People, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee :
they shall walk in the Light of thy Counte-
nance. Their delight shall be daily in thy Name
and in thy Righteousness shall they make
their Boast. For thou art the Glory of their
Strength : and in thy Loving-kindness They
shall be exalted. As for me, I will behold
thy Presence in Righteousness : and when I
awake up after thy Likeness, I shall be sa-
tisfied with it. Thou shalt shew me the
Path of Life ; in thy Presence is the Full-
ness of Joy, and at thy right Hand there is
Pleasure for evermore.



S E R M O N XV.

Upon the Ignorance of Man.

ECCLES. viii. 16, 17.

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

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

Serm.
XV.


294 *A S E R M O N upon*

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

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

II. What

the Ignorance of Man. 295

II. What are the just Consequences of Serm.
this Observation and Knowledge of our own XV.
Ignorance, and the Reflections which it leads
us to. 

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

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

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

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

*the Ignorance of Man.* 297

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


Serm.  
XV.



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

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

the Ignorance of Man. 299

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

And as the Works of God, and his Scheme
of Government, are above our Capacities
thoroughly to comprehend; so our Igno-
rance should teach us, that there may be
Reasons which originally made it fit, that
many things should be concealed from us,
which we have perhaps natural Capacities of
understanding; many things concerning the
Designs, Methods, and Ends of Divine Pro-
vidence in the Government of the World.
There is no Manner of Absurdity in suppo-
sing a Veil on Purpose drawn over some
Scenes of infinite Power, Wisdom, and
Goodness, the Sight of which might some
Way or other strike us too strongly; or that
better Ends are designed and served by their
being

Serm. being concealed, than could be by their
 XV. being exposed to our Knowledge. The Al-
 mighty may cast Clouds and Darkneſs round
 about him, for Reaſons and Purpoſes of which
 we have not the leaſt Glimpſe or Concepti-
 on.

However, it is ſurely reaſonable, and what
 might have been expected, that Creatures in
 ſome Stage of their Being, ſuppoſe in the In-
 fancy of it, ſhould be placed in a State of Diſci-
 pline and Improvement, where their Patience
 and Submiſſion is to be tried by Afflictions,
 where Temptations are to be reſiſted, and
 Difficulties gone through in the Diſcharge
 of their Duty. Now if the greateſt Plea-
 ſures and Pains of the preſent Life may be
 overcome and ſuſpended, as they manifeſtly
 may, by Hope and Fear, and other Paſſions
 and Affections; then the Evidence of Re-
 ligion, and the Senſe of the Conſequences
 of Virtue and Vice, might have been ſuch,
 as intirely in all Caſes to prevail over thoſe
 Afflictions, Difficulties, and Temptations;
 prevail over them ſo, as to render them
 abſolutely none at all. But the very Noti-
 on itſelf, now mentioned, of a State of
 Diſcipline and Improvement, neceſſarily ex-
 cludes ſuch ſenſible Evidence and Conviſi-

the Ignorance of Man. 301

on of Religion, and of the Consequences of Serm.
Virtue and Vice. Religion consists in Sub- XV.
mission and Resignation to the Divine Will. ~~~~~
Our Condition in this World is a School
of Exercise for this Temper: And our Ig-
norance, the Shallowness of our Reason,
the Temptations, Difficulties, Afflictions,
which we are exposed to, all equally con-
tribute to make it so. The general Obser-
vation may be carried on; and whoever will
attend to the thing will plainly see, that less
sensible Evidence, with less Difficulty in
Practice, is the same, as more sensible Evi-
dence, with greater Difficulty in Practice.
Therefore Difficulties in Speculation as much
come into the Notion of a State of Disci-
pline, as Difficulties in Practice; and so the
same Reason or Account is to be given of
both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to
talk of the greater Merit of Assent, upon
little or no Evidence, than upon Demonstra-
tion; yet the strict Discharge of our Duty,
with less sensible Evidence, does imply in
it a better Character, than the same Diligence
in the Discharge of it, upon more sensible
Evidence. This fully accounts for and ex-
plains that Assertion of our Saviour, * *Bles-
sed*

* John xx. 29.

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

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

the Ignorance of Man. 303

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

II. Let us then consider, what are the Consequences of this Knowledge and Observation of our own Ignorance, and the Reflections it leads us to.

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

He should before-hand expect Things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the Bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive View of the whole Subject, clear of Difficulties and Objections, is to forget our Nature and Condition; neither of which admit of such Knowledge with Respect to any Science whatever. And to inquire with this Expectation, is not to inquire as a Man, but as one of another Order of Creatures.

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

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

the Ignorance of Man. 305

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

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

X

Whole

306 *A S E R M O N upon*

Serm. Whole ; it follows, that however perfect
 XV. Things are, they must even necessarily appear
 to us otherwise, less perfect than they are *.

Thirdly,

* Suppose some very *complicated Peice of Work*, some *System* or *Constitution*, formed for some *general End*, to which each of the *Parts* had a *Reference*. The Perfection or Justness of this Work or Constitution would consist in the Reference and Respect, which the several Parts have to the general Design. This Reference of Parts to the general Design may be infinitely various, both in Degree and Kind. Thus one Part may only contribute and be subservient to another ; this to a third ; and so on through a long Series, the last Part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general Design. Or a Part may have this distant Reference to the general Design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For Instance, if the general Design or End, for which the complicated Frame of Nature was brought into Being, is Happiness ; whatever affords present Satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the Course of Things, hath this double Respect to the general Design. Now suppose a Spectator of that Work or Constitution was in a great Measure ignorant of this Reference ; and that, upon a very slight and partial View which he had of the Work, several Things appeared to his Eye disproportionate and wrong ; others, just and beautiful : What would a reasonable Man gather from these Appearances ? He would immediately conclude there was a Probability, if he could see the whole Reference of the Parts appearing wrong to the general Design, that this would destroy the Appearance of Wrongness and Disproportion : But there is no Probability, that the Reference would destroy the particular right Appearances ; though that Reference might shew the things already appearing just, to be so likewise in an higher Degree or another Manner. There is a Probability, that the right Appearances were intended ; there is no Probability, that the wrong Appearances were. We cannot suspect Irregularity and Disorder to be designed. The Pillars of a Building appear beautiful ; but their

the Ignorance of Man. 307

Thirdly, Since the Constitution of Nature, and the Methods and Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, are above our Comprehension, we should acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with our Ignorance; turns our Thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our Capacities, and which is our real Business and Concern. Knowledge is not the proper Happiness of Humane Nature: Whoever will in the least attend to the thing will see, that 'tis the Gaining, not the Having of it, which is the Entertainment of the Mind. Indeed, if the proper Happiness of Man consisted in Knowledge considered as a Possession or Treasure, Men who are possessed of the largest Share would have a very ill Time of it; as they would be infinitely more sensible than others, of their Poverty in this Respect. Thus *He who increases Knowledge would eminently increase Sorrow.* Men of deep Research and curious Inquiry should just be put in Mind, not to mistake what they are doing. If their Discoveries

X 2

Serm.
XV.
veries

their being likewise its Support does not destroy that Beauty: There still remains a Reason to believe that the Architect intended the beautiful Appearance, after we have found out the Reference, Support. It would be reasonable for a Man of himself to think thus, upon the first Piece of Architecture he ever saw.

Serm. veries serve the Cause of Virtue and Religion,
 XV. in the way of Proof, Motive to Practice, or
 Assistance in it; or if they tend to render
 Life less unhappy, and promote its Satisfactions; then they are most usefully employed: But bringing Things to Light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of Use, any otherwise than as an Entertainment or Diversion. Neither is This at all amiss, if it does not take up the Time which should be employed in better Work. But it is evident that there is another Mark set up for us to aim at; another End appointed us to direct our Lives to: An End, which the most Knowing may fail of, and the most Ignorant arrive at. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law.* Which Reflection of *Moses*, put in general Terms, is, that the only Knowledge, which is of any Avail to us, is that which teaches us our Duty, or assists us in the Discharge of it. The Oeconomy of the Universe, the Course of Nature, Almighty Power exerted in the Creation and Government of the World, is out of our Reach: What would be the Consequence if we could really get an Insight into these

the Ignorance of Man. 309

these Things is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or divert us from what we have to do in this present State. If then there be a Sphere of Knowledge, of Contemplation and Employment, level to our Capacities, and of the utmost Importance to us; we ought surely to apply ourselves with all Diligence to This our proper Business, and esteem every thing else nothing, nothing as to us, in Comparison of it. Thus *Job*, discoursing of natural Knowledge, how much it is above us, and of Wisdom in general, says, *God understandeth the Way thereof, and He knoweth the Place thereof. And unto Man He said, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* Other Orders of Creatures may perhaps be let into the secret Counsels of Heaven, and have the Designs and Methods of Providence in the Creation and Government of the World communicated to them; but this does not belong to our Rank or Condition. *The Fear of the Lord, and to depart from Evil,* is the only Wisdom which Man should aspire after, as His Work and Business. The same is said, and with the same Connection and Context, in the Conclusion of the Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Our Ignorance,

Serm.

XV.



Serm. rance, and the little we can know of other
 XV. Things, affords a Reason why we should not
 perplex ourselves about them; but no way
 invalidates that which is the *Conclusion of the
 whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Com-
 mandments; for this is the whole Concern
 of Man.* So that *Socrates* was not the first
 who endeavoured to draw Men off from la-
 bouring after, and laying Strefs upon other
 Knowledge, in Comparison of that which
 related to Morals. Our Province is Virtue
 and Religion, Life and Manners; the Sci-
 ence of improving the Temper, and making
 the Heart better. This is the Field assigned us
 to cultivate: How much it has lain neglected
 is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstra-
 bly the Happiness of Man: It consists in good
 Actions proceeding from a good Principle,
 Temper or Heart. Overt-Acts are intirely
 in our Power: What remains is, that we
 learn to *keep our Heart*; to govern and re-
 gulate our Passions, Mind, Affections; that
 so we may be free from the Impotencies of
 Fear, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, Ambi-
 tion; that we may be clear of these, consider-
 ed as Vices seated in the Heart, considered as
 constituting a general wrong Temper; from
 which general wrong Frame of Mind, all
 the

the Ignorance of Man. 311

the Mistaken Pursuits, and far the greatest Part of the Unhappiness of Life, proceed. He, who should find out one Rule to assist us in this Work, would deserve infinitely better of Mankind, than all the Improvers of other Knowledge put together.

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

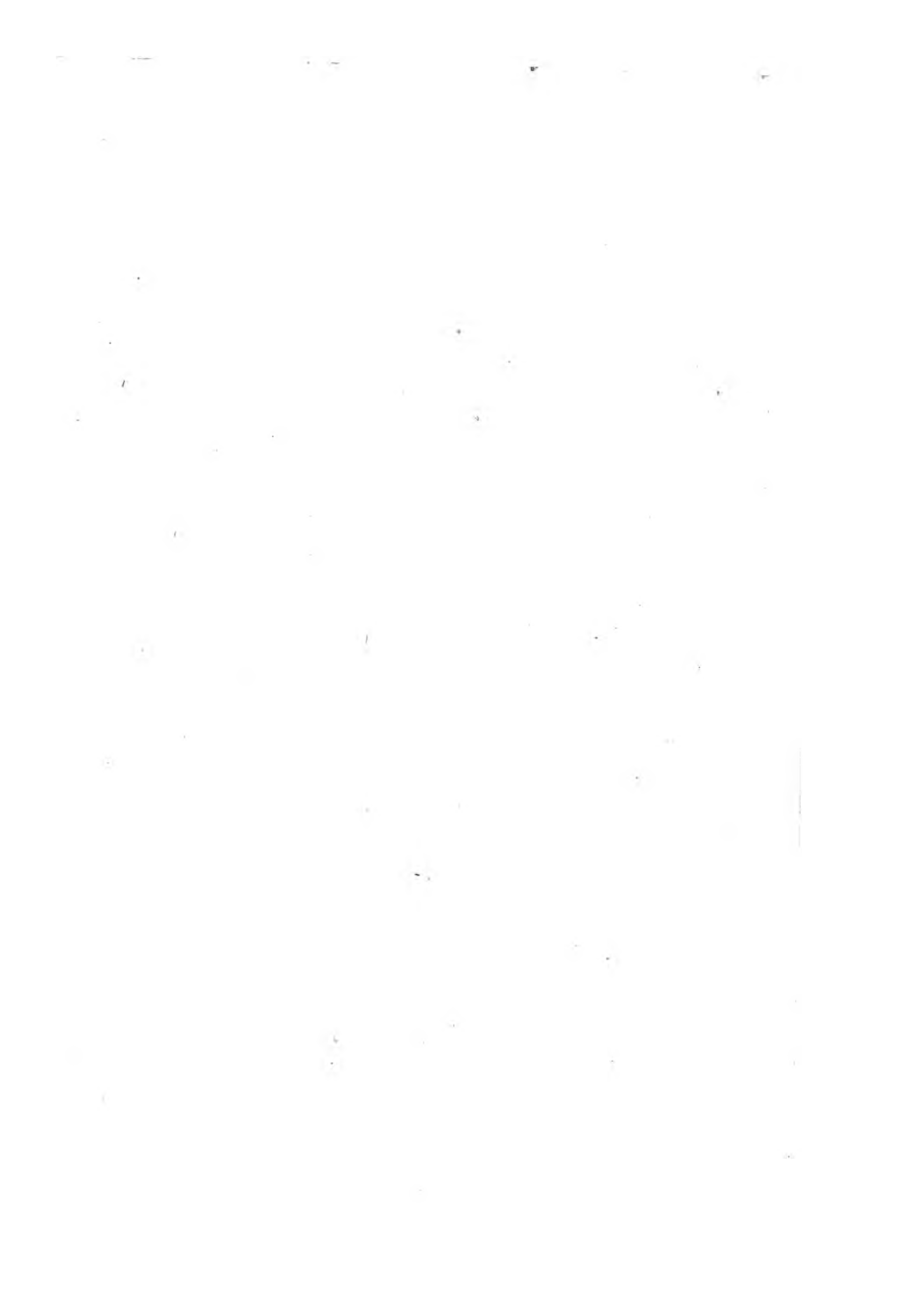
Serm.

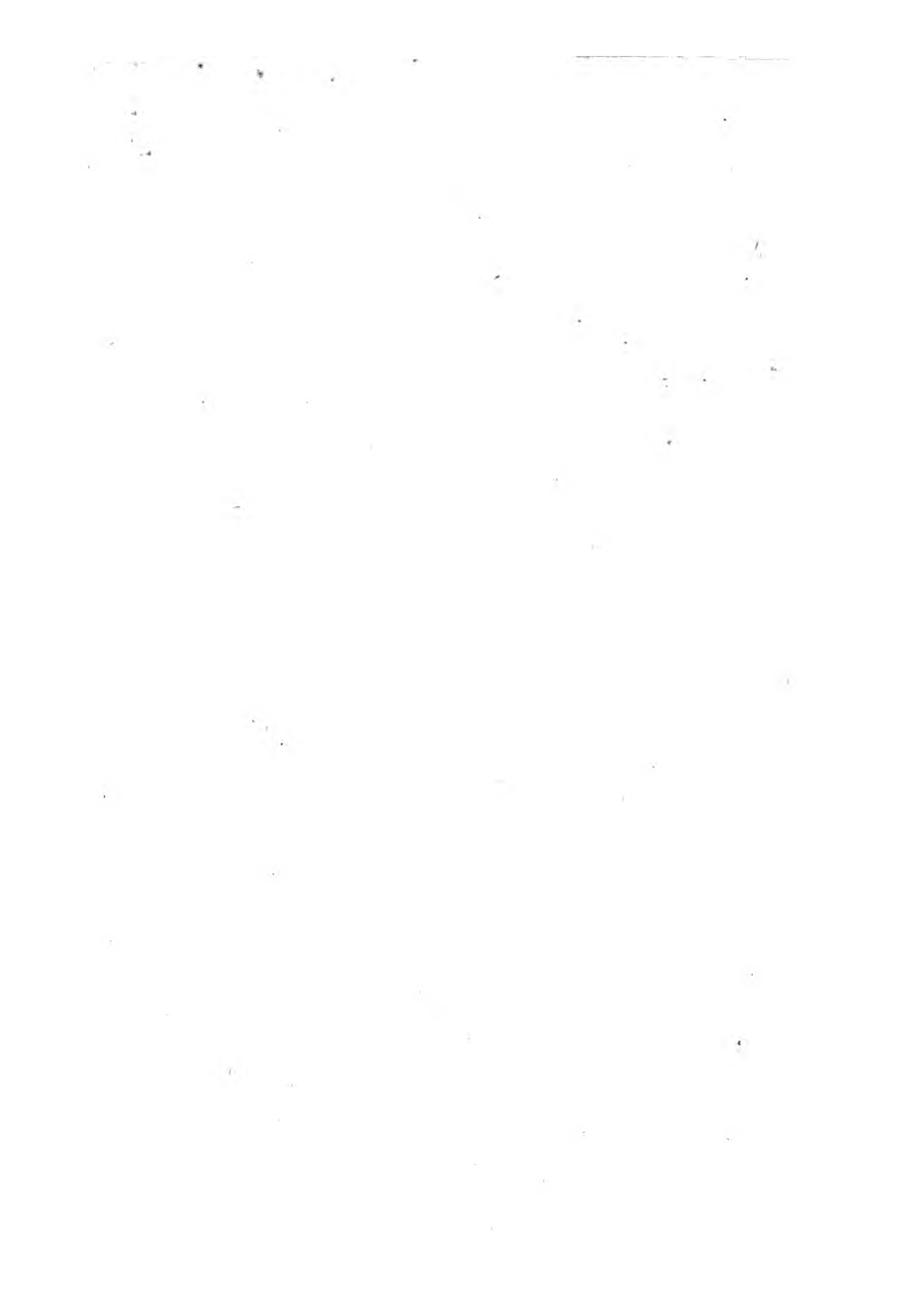
XV.

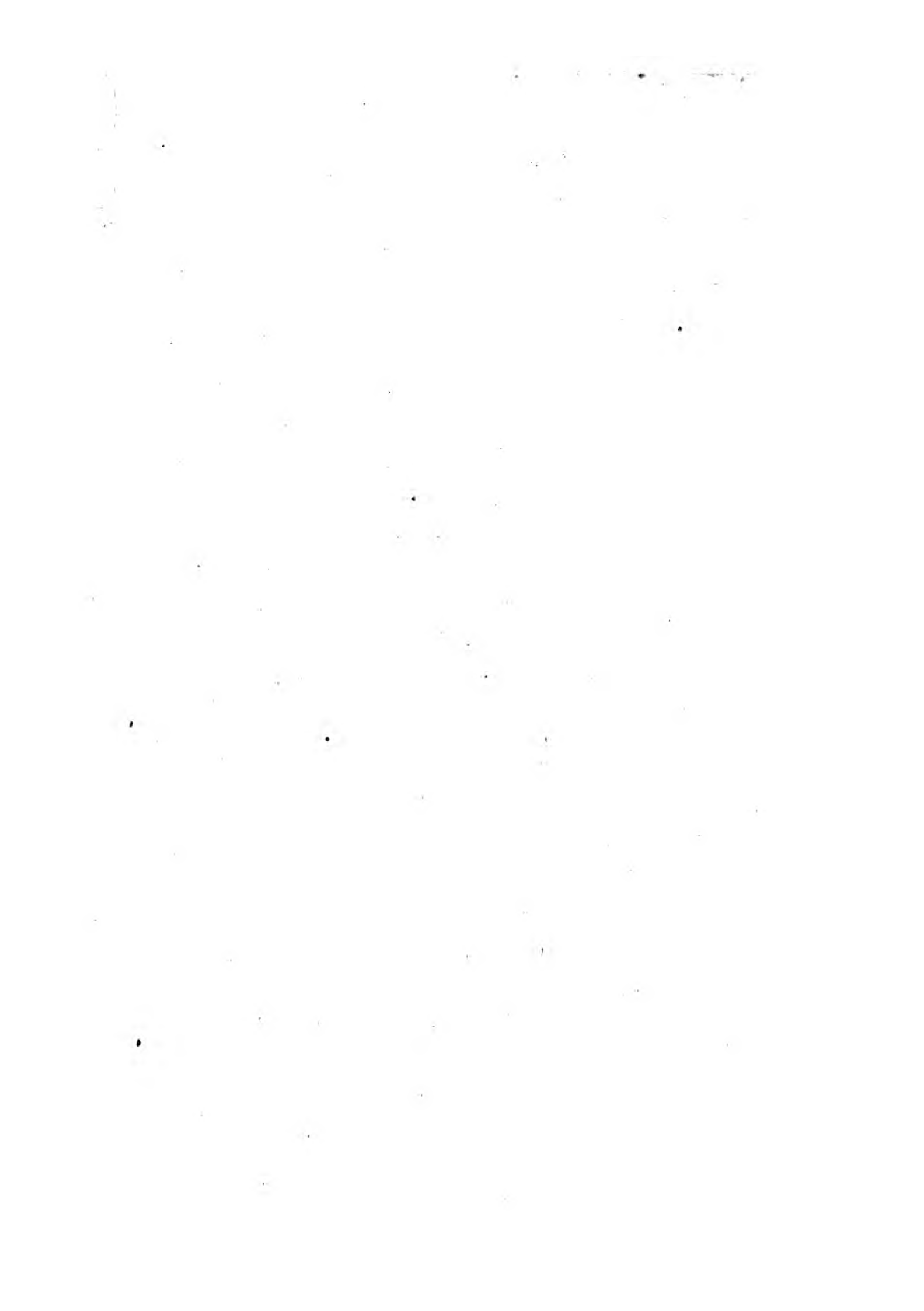
Serm. *and weigheth the Mountains in Scales, and XV. the Hills in a Ballance.* And when we have recounted all the Appearances which come within our View, we must add, *Lo, these are Part of His ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the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

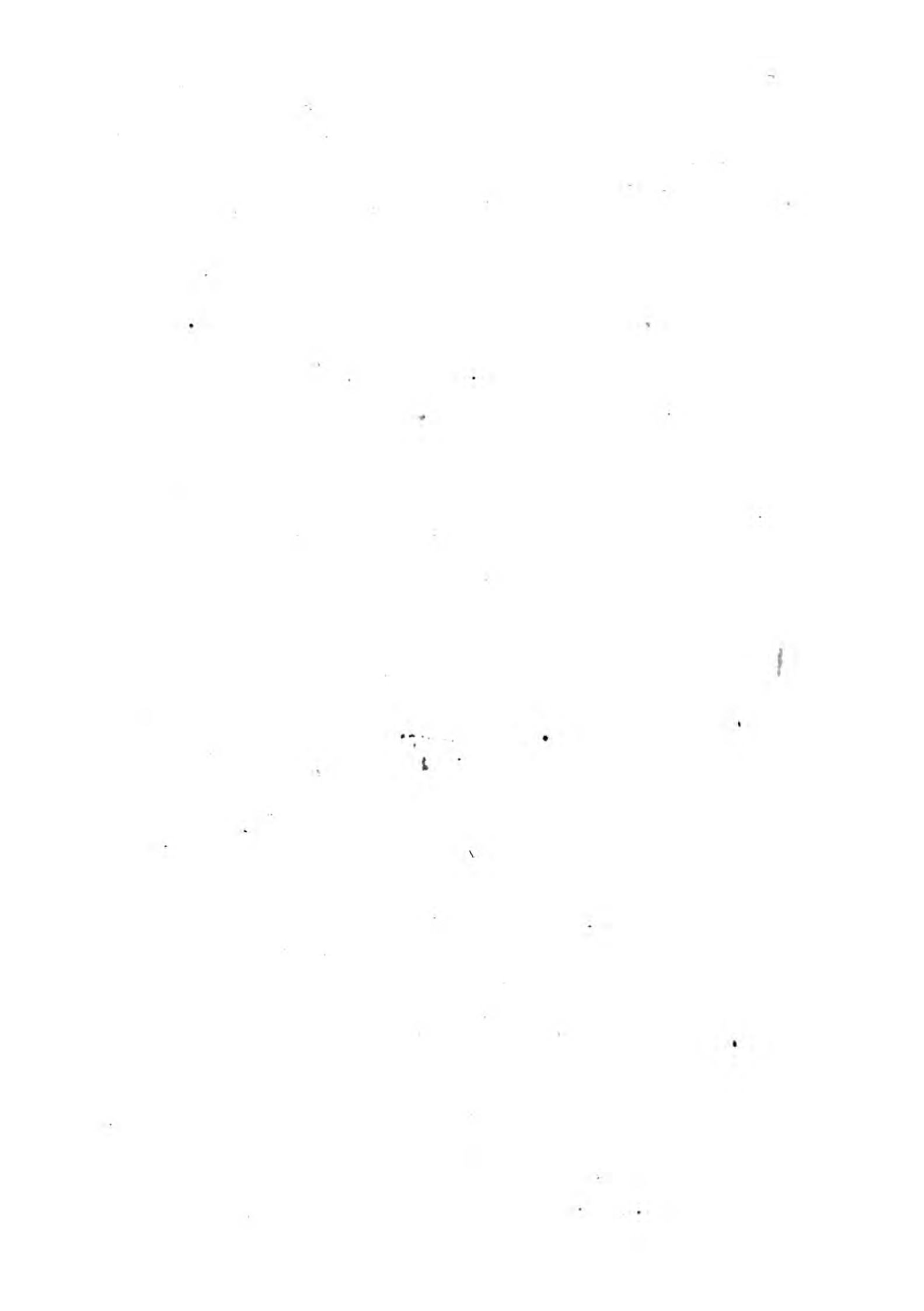
The Conclusion is, that in all Lowliness of Mind we set lightly by Ourselves: That we form our Temper to an implicit Submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute Resignation to all the Methods of his Providence in his Dealings with the Children of Men: That in the deepest Humility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

F I N I S.









$$\frac{d}{i}$$

