



# 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>



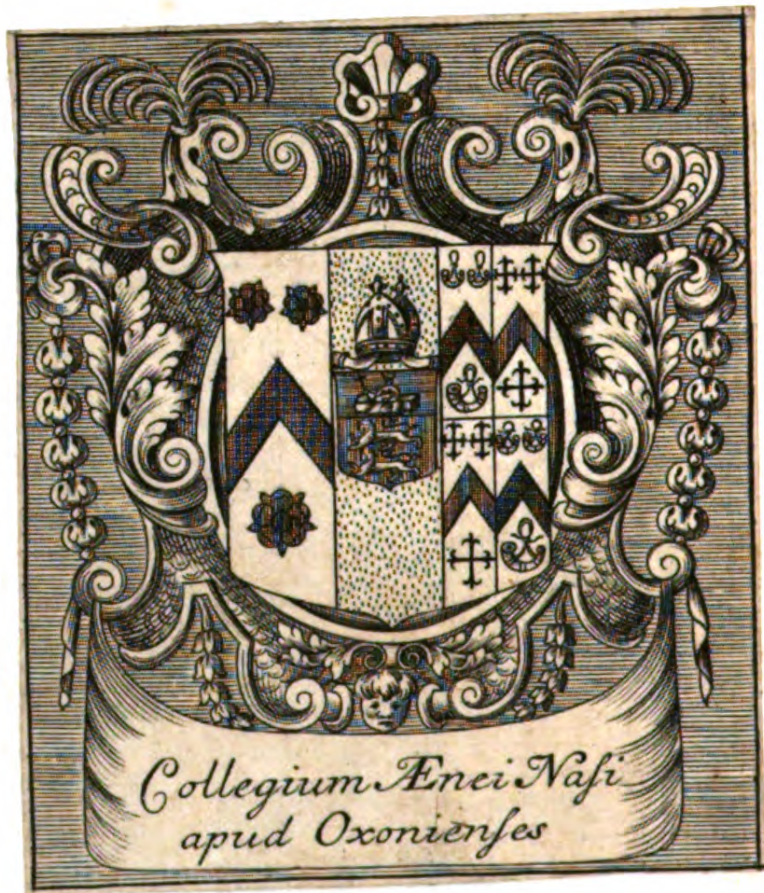
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



1292.



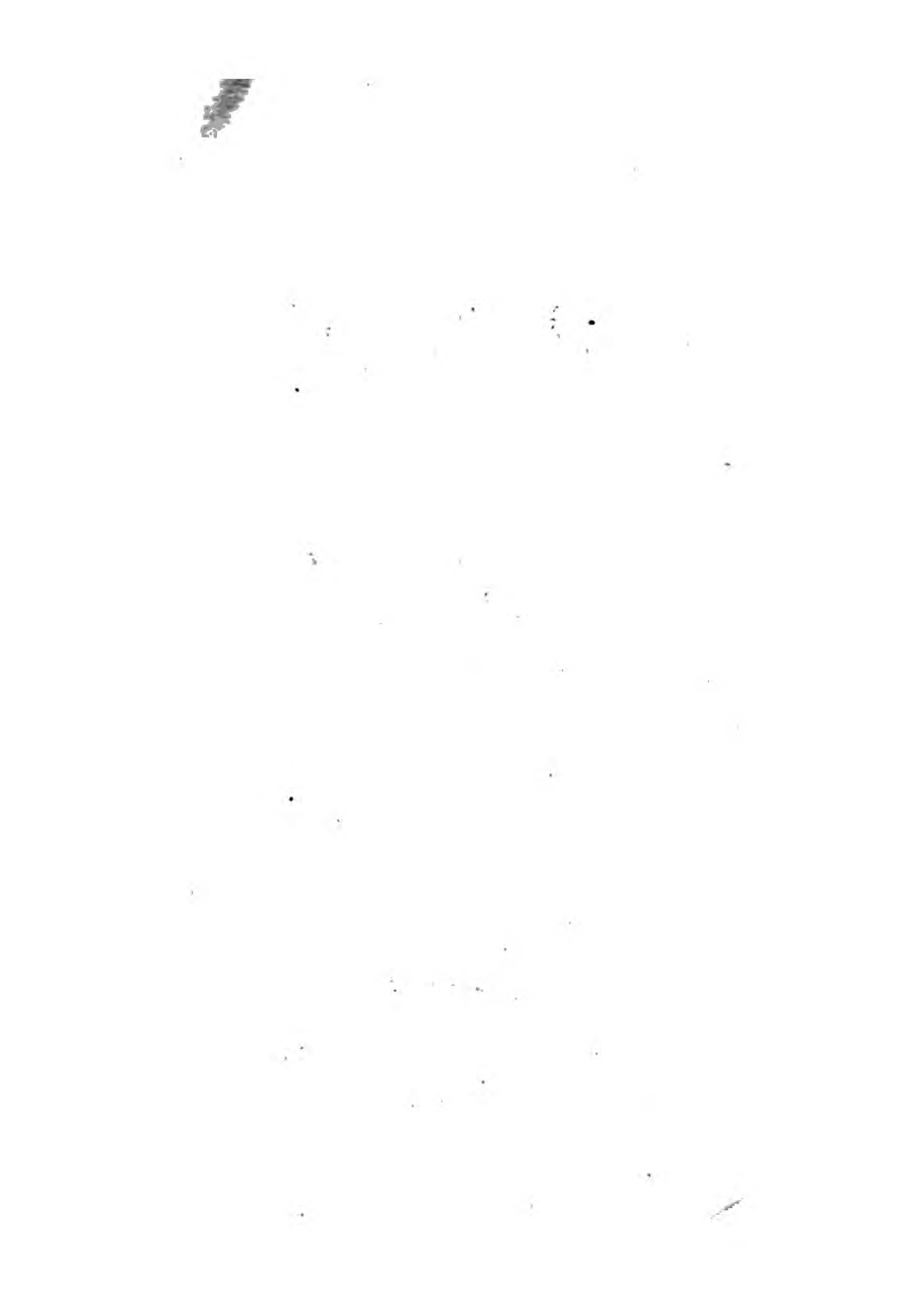
D. 8. 14

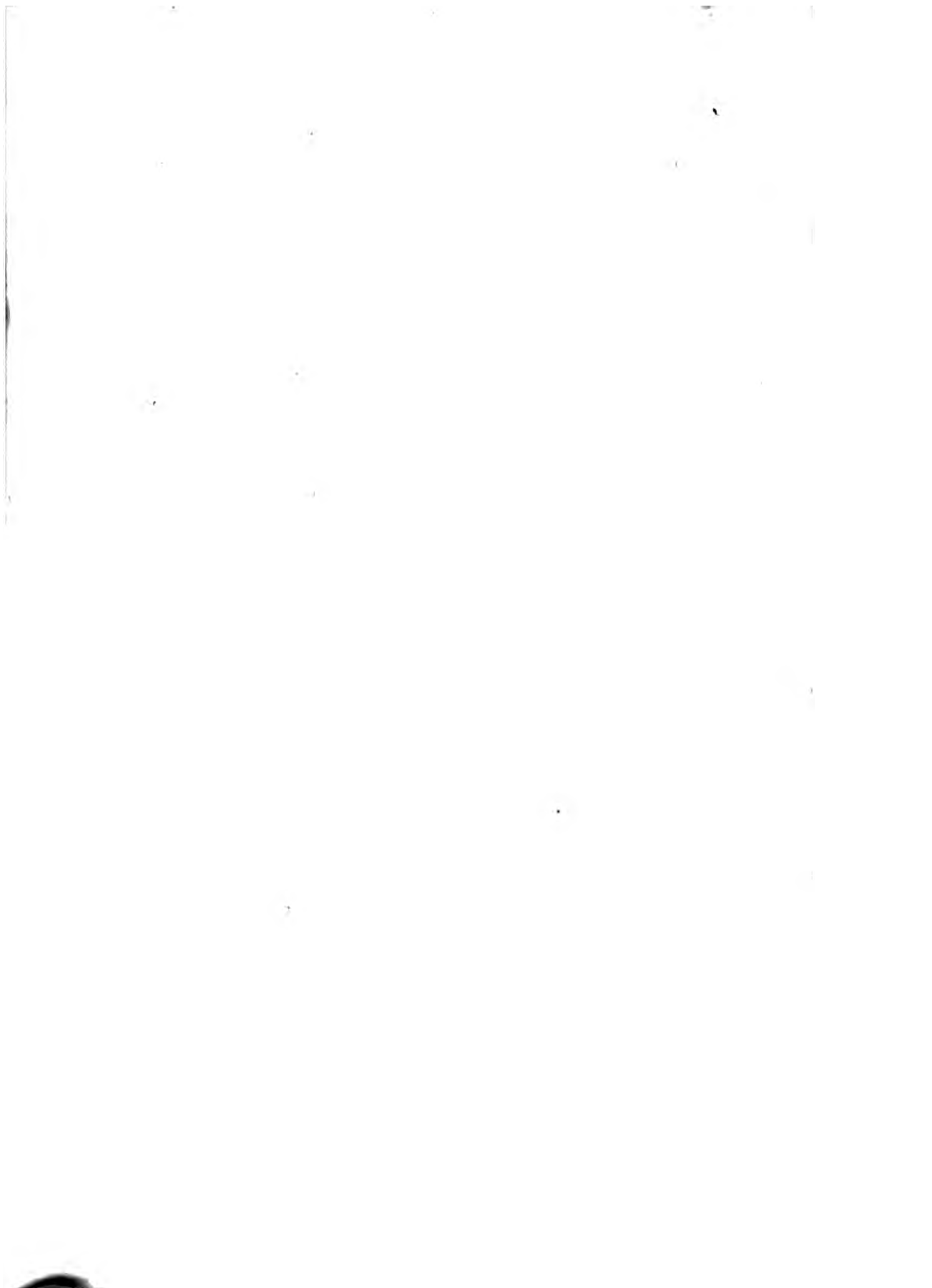


Latham E. 6

REMOVED  
FROM  
B. N. C. LIBRARY  
BY ORDER OF  
COLI

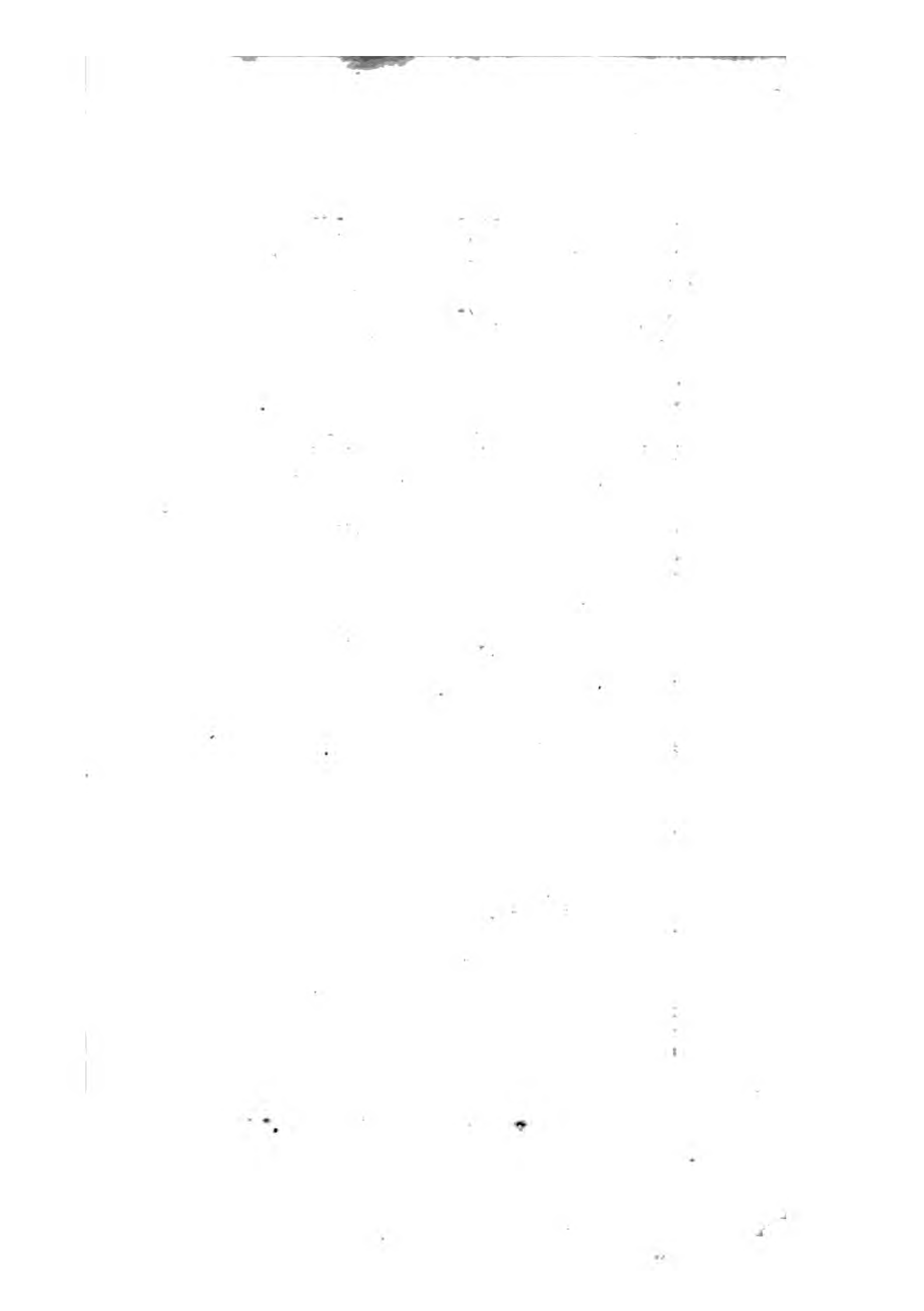
2 220















*Steph. Weston, S. T. P. Episc. Exon. AD 1731*

# SERMONS

ON

## Various Subjects,

*Moral and Theological.*

---

In Two Volumes.

---

BY

The Right Reverend

STEPHEN WESTON, D. D.

late Bishop of EXETER.

---

Now first published from the AUTHOR'S  
Original MANUSCRIPTS.

---

VOL. I.

CONTAINING,

*His Practical Discourses.*

---

LONDON:

Printed by E. OWEN in *Warwick-Lane.*

MDCCLXVII.

BODILY INJURY  
25%  
ONCE ONLY

RECEIVED  
1974



TO THE  
READER.



THE Acquaintance  
and Friendship which  
I had with the late  
Right Reverend Au-  
thor of the following Discourses,  
and the Respect I was known to  
bear to his Memory, induced  
his Relations to put these Ser-  
mons into my Hands, with an



Inclination expressed to have them published.

I came to the reading of them under two Prejudices against sending them to the Press ; one was, That the printing posthumous Works was too great a Liberty taken with the Reputation of an Author, and oftentimes injurious to it : But this was removed by seeing that the Bishop had prepared the Sermons himself for the Press, and had expressed his Intention to have them published, by writing on the Back of the most Part, *Publish.*

Another Prejudice was, That the World abounded with Sermons,  
and

*To the Reader.*

v

and that there was little Occasion to add to the Number. But finding these Discourses to be the Effect of much Study, Application and Judgment, and grounded upon an intimate Acquaintance with the Scriptures, I thought they might, in some Sense, pass as Originals, and not be lost in the Crowd.

There may perhaps arise another Prejudice in the Minds of many, even from the great Reputation, and confessed Abilities of the Author in another Way. It is well known, that great Part of his Life was spent in conducting one of the greatest Schools in the Kingdom.

A 3

Those

Those who remember with what Application and Success he attended that Business ; how able he was in all the Parts of Learning that had Relation to it, and consider how much Time was necessarily employed in acquiring it, will be apt to imagine, that Nothing uncommon is to be expected from him in Divinity.

The Sermons themselves will furnish the best Answer to this Prejudice, and will shew, that he knew how to make the true Use of human Learning, by applying it to the best Purpose, in the Discharge of his Duty as a Minister of the Gospel.

The

*To the Reader.*      vii

The Style of these Discourses is strong, and expressive : But the best *Greek* and *Roman* Writers were so familiar to him, that it leads him frequently into their Manner of Construction, and Expression, which will require, sometimes, the Attention of the *English* Reader.

What is most to be valued in these Compositions, is, the Author's comprehensive View of the important Subjects of which he treats, the Soundness of his Judgment, and above all, the proper Application of the Scriptures to confirm, or to illustrate his Subject. You will



viii *To the Reader.*

meet here but little in the Essay-  
Way ; little of mere Metaphy-  
sical Speculations ; He thought it  
his Business, and it was his Pur-  
pose, to speak as a Minister of  
CHRIST JESUS.

THO. SARUM.



The

---

---

THE  
CONTENTS  
OF THE  
FIRST VOLUME.

S E R M. I. Page 1

OF the Distinction between Moral  
and Positive Duties. Part I.

M A T. ix. 13. *But go ye and learn what  
this meaneth, I will have Mercy, and  
not Sacrifice.*

S E R M. II. 28

Of the Distinction between Moral and  
Positive Duties. Part II.

M A T. xii. 7. *But if ye had known what  
that meaneth, I will have Mercy, and  
not Sacrifice, ye would not have condem-  
ned the Guiltless.*

S E R M.

# The CONTENTS.

S E R M. III.	58
The Sin, Folly, and Danger of Delaying Repentance. Part I.	
<i>P S A L. cxix. 60. I made Haste, and de- layed not to keep thy Commandments.</i>	
P A R T II.	80
S E R M. IV.	97
Of Repentance, and its proper Fruits. Part I.	
<i>M A T. iii. 8. Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.</i>	
S E R M. V.	120
Of Repentance, and its proper Fruits. Part II.	
<i>M A T. iii. 8. Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.</i>	
S E R M. VI.	148
Of the Reason and Use of Prayer.	
<i>L U K E xi. 9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall</i>	

## The CONTENTS.

*shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

S E R M. VII. 169

Of Praying in the Name of Christ. Part I.

*JOHN xvi. 23. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

S E R M. VIII. 189

Of Praying in the Name of Christ. Part II.

*JOHN xvi. 23. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

S E R M. IX. 211

Of the Forgiveness of Injuries. Part I.

*LUKE xvii. 4. — If he trespass against thee seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.*

S E R M. X. 234

Of the Forgiveness of Injuries. Part II.

LUKE

## The CONTENTS.

LUKE xvii. 4. — *If he trespass against thee seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.*

S E R M. XI 259

Of giving Scandal.

MARK ix. 42. *Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in Me, it is better for him that a Milstone were hanged about his Neck, and he were cast into the Sea.*

S E R M. XII. 287

Of taking Scandal.

MARK ix. 43, — 48. *And if thy Hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into Life maimed, than having two Hands to go into Hell, into the Fire that never shall be quenched.*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

*And if thy Foot offend thee, cut it off ; it is better for thee to enter halt into Life, than*

## The CONTENTS.

*than having two Feet to be cast into Hell,  
into the Fire that never shall be quenched.*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire  
is not quenched :*

*And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out ;  
it is better for thee to enter into the King-  
dom of God with one Eye, than having  
two Eyes to be cast into Hell Fire :*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire  
is not quenched.*

S E R M. XIII. 306

Of Christian Charity. Part I.

*I T I M. i. 5. Now the End of the Com-  
mandment is Charity, out of a pure  
Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of  
Faith unfeigned.*

S E R M. XIV. 333

Of Christian Charity. Part II.

*I T I M. i. 5. Now the End of the Com-  
mandment is Charity, out of a pure  
Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of  
Faith unfeigned.*

S E R M.

## The CONTENTS.

S E R M. XV. 354  
An Exposition of our Saviour's Sermon on  
the Mount. Part I.

*Of the Perfection of the Christian Law  
above the Jewish.*

M A T. v. 20. *For I say unto you, that  
except your Righteousness shall exceed the  
Righteousness of the Scribes and Phari-  
sees, ye shall in no case enter into the  
Kingdom of Heaven.*

S E R M. XVI. 377  
An Exposition of our Saviour's Sermon  
on the Mount. Part II.

*Of the corrupt Behaviour of the Scribes  
and Pharisees.*

M A T. v. 20. *I say unto you, that ex-  
cept your Righteousness shall exceed the  
Righteousness of the Scribes and Phari-  
sees, ye shall in no case enter into the  
Kingdom of Heaven.*

S E R M. XVII. 402  
The Reasonableness of curbing Fleshly  
Appetite. Part I.

I P E T.

## The CONTENTS.

**I P E T.** ii. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

**S E R M. XVIII.** 427

The Reasonableness of curbing Fleshly Appetite. Part II.

**I P E T.** ii. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

**S E R M. XIX.** 453

Of Mortification.

**M A T.** v. 29, 30. *If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee : For it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell.*

*And if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell.*

**S E R M.**



# The CONTENTS.

S E R M. XX. 481

Of the Love of God.

I Cor. xiii. 3. *And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me Nothing.*



## E R R A T A.

Page 11. Line 6. for is, read are. p. 91 lin. 3. for decline r. declining. p. 138. lin. 12. for have, r. has. p. 368. lin. antepenult. for prejudial, r. prejudicial. p. 381. lin. 6. for indeed, r. instead. p. 459. lin. 15. after parts, r. of.



# SERMON I.

Of the Distinction between Moral  
and Positive Duties.

PART I.



MATT. IX. 13.

*But go ye and learn what that  
meaneth, I will have Mercy, and  
not Sacrifice.*



**L**T was a miserable Cor-  
ruption of Religion, pro-  
ductive of the vilest Con-  
sequences, which many  
of the Heathen of Old  
fell into, when they per-  
suaded themselves, that the Deity received  
a sensible Satisfaction from their Gifts and

SERM.  
I.  
~

VOL. I.

B

Sacrifices;

SERM. Sacrifices; was fairly repaid by them for

I. Favours already done; or else indebted to his Worshipper, and obliged to bestow new ones on him to clear the Score: A Folly that falls below that of Atheism, with a Pride surpassing all other Blasphemies! Such Delusions are the just Objects of our greatest Pity and Indignation at once: For we see some Christians approach with equal Steps, to their Idolatry, and to this absurd and pernicious Imagination bred out of it. Indeed so it has ever proved, that such as communicate to Creatures the Honour which God has reserved to himself, communicate again to him in their Imaginations (I speak of the Generality) the Imperfections and Infirmities of the Creature. And though they do not with the *wicked* Man in the 50th Psalm, *think Him altogether such an one as themselves*; yet with his Substitutes or Favourites they will be more free, and (whatever may be said to the contrary) suppose them still, in many Respects, *Men of like Passions*. Hence springs a corrupt Hope, ruinous to all the Ends of Religion, of pleasing whom they invoke by infinite Services and Submissions,

Submissions, instead of Repentance and a good Life, and so obtaining the blessed Rewards of Obedience and Righteousness without the Practice. SERM.  
I.  
~

But instead of reproaching these, let us rather praise God for his Mercy, that hath restored, and preserves to us the Purity of Religion; keeping us undefiled in the true Notion of Himself and his Worship, the very Fountain of all moral Goodness, all Justice and Mercy amongst Mankind. For our one Lord and only Worship, that in the Beginning made, and now fills Heaven and Earth, we can never suppose to receive any Addition from his own Creatures. We never can suppose, that he needs, or designs, or gains any Thing to himself from ought in the Universe; who is the Creator, Upholder, Disposer, and everlasting Sovereign Proprietor of all Things and all Persons therein. His Laws therefore are not like those of earthly Superiors, intending the common Benefit of Governor and Subject, but are framed and given for the sole Benefit of the latter. For, *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy Transgressions be*  
B a *multiply'd,*

SERM. multiply'd, what dost thou unto him? If

I. *thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy Wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man; as ye read, Job xxxv. 6, 7, 8.* Whatsoever accordingly he hath appointed by any Revelation of his Will to be offer'd or done in his Service; was and is merely for the Advantage of the Doers and Givers: For so he innobles them by his Condescension; accepting his own as theirs, and styling their Use and Service his own. For it is not to be imagined, that any Oblation, Worship, or Praise contributes in any other Sense to the Glory of God, than as it includes the Understanding of his Goodness to us, and making it understood by others, and so serves to render it the more diffusive and effectual.

But if such Appointments are by false Opinions perverted from their End, or become unfruitful to it, through the Prevalence of Immorality, so that they no longer serve to fix and quicken Men in their Obedience to his everlasting Laws of Justice

*Moral and Positive Duties.*

5

Justice and Mercy; then he himself, who SERM.  
enjoin'd them, with the greatest Solemnity L  
declares them not only vain but abominable; an Aggravation instead of an Attonement for other Transgressions. So the Prophet *Amos*, Ch. v. 21, and the following Verses; *I hate, I despise your Feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn Assemblies. Though ye offer me Burnt-Offerings, and your Meat-Offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the Peace-Offerings of your fat Beasts. Take thou away from me the Noise of thy Songs; for I will not bear the Melody of thy Viols. But (observe this) let Judgment run down as Water, and Righteousness as a mighty Stream. And Isaiah, in his 1st Chapter, parallels him exactly, where after reproaching the People of Judah with their Corruptions and Stubbornness under Correction, he adds from the 10th to the 18th Verse. To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the Burnt-Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts; and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats. When ye come to*

B 3

appear

SERM. appear before me, Who hath required this  
 I. at your Hand to tread my Courts? Bring  
 no more vain Oblations: Incense is an  
 Abomination unto me; the new Moons and  
 Sabbaths, the Calling of Assemblies, I can-  
 not away with; it is Iniquity, even the  
 solemn Meeting. Your new Moons and your  
 appointed Feasts my Soul hateth: They are  
 a Trouble unto me; I am weary to bear  
 them. And when ye spread forth your  
 Hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you;  
 yea, when ye make many Prayers, I will  
 not hear. (Now follow the Reasons of all  
 this, with the Remedy,) Your Hands are  
 full of Blood: Wash ye, make you clean,  
 put away the Evil of your Doings from be-  
 fore mine Eyes: Cease to do Evil, learn to  
 do well: Seek Judgment, relieve the Op-  
 pressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the  
 Widow. Many more Places of like Na-  
 ture might be alledg'd out of the *Psalms*,  
 and this and other Prophets; but these  
 are sufficient to shew what I have cited  
 them for, and in general to facilitate the  
 Understanding of my Text.

The more numerous and clear such  
 Testimonies are found, the more blame-  
 able

*Moral and Positive Duties.*

7

able appears the Prejudice which hinder'd the Pharisees from learning their just Consequences; particularly of that in *Hosea*, (to which our Lord sends them once and again) the 6th Chapter and 5th Verse; *I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God more than Burnt-Offerings.* These Men, notwithstanding their boasted Skill, (for want of understanding this Scripture) censured the Innocent, and even the Praise-worthy; as the Instance in the Text shews, and that in the 12th Chapter of the same Evangelist. There our Lord defends the Necessity of his Disciples in breaking the Sabbath, as he does here his own Charity in conversing with Publicans, alledging the same Proof for both Purposes, Verse 7. *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the Guiltless.*

Now because it is very necessary to distinguish the several Ranks and Limitations of Duty, not only to do Right (as you see) to others, but to govern ourselves with the Prudence as well as Zeal of Religion; let us consider, what Measures

SERM.

I.





SERM. we may take, from the Words before us,  
 I. for that Purpose, as the Occasions they  
 are apply'd to here, and the Doctrine of  
 like Places in the *Old Testament*, and the  
 Reason of the Thing itself explain them.  
 And this we shall be able to do with  
 Clearness and Satisfaction, if we first com-  
 prehend, what is the full Extent, in these  
 Scriptures, of the Word *Sacrifice*, and  
 what of the Word *Mercy*: For in them  
 will be seen the Nature and Kinds of the  
 Religious Performances that are to be  
 preferr'd, and that are to be postponed.

*First* then, as to *Sacrifice*, it will ap-  
 pear, that the Prophet intended we should  
 by that Term understand, not only what  
 of itself it expresses, the Slaying of Beasts  
 and other Oblations at God's Altar. In-  
 deed, if that were the Case, this Enquiry  
 could be of little Use after the Abo-  
 lishing of that whole Manner of Wor-  
 ship in vertue of our Lord's one perfect  
 Oblation. Nor yet is it enough to com-  
 prise under it (which is its next Enlarge-  
 ment of Signification) all Gifts whatsoever  
 dedicated to Divine Service, to the Ho-  
 nour and Use of the publick Worship.  
 But

But the *Jews* were, if they would have SERM.  
 consider'd, plainly taught by that Text of I.  
*Hosea*, (and so are we and they by these  
 of *St. Matthew* also) that all Sacrifices and  
 Offerings, and every Honour we can do  
 to the Lord with our Substance, nay, and  
 each Circumstance and Article of Wor-  
 ship, with the several Observances and  
 Restraints imposed for the Sake of it, must,  
 when there is not Room for both, give  
 Place to the weightier Matters of the Law,  
*Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* This, I  
 say, will appear, first, by the Cases our  
 Saviour applies the Words to; one of  
 which could have but an indirect Rela-  
 tion to them, and the other none at all,  
 if taken in a stricter Sense.

The former immediately precedes the  
 Text, beginning at the 9th Verse: — *As*  
*Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a*  
*Man named Matthew, sitting at the Re-*  
*ceipt of Custom; and he saith unto him,*  
*follow me. And he arose, and follow'd*  
*him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at*  
*Meat in the House, behold, many Publicans*  
*and Sinners came and sat down with him*  
*and his Disciples. And when the Pharisees*  
*saw*

SERM. *saw it, they said unto his Disciples, Why*  
 I. *eateth your Master with Publicans and*  
*Sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he*  
*said unto them, They that be whole need not*  
*a Physician, but they that are sick. To*  
 which he subjoins, in farther Vindication  
 of that Practice, and Reproof of their Ig-  
 norance and Uncharitableness; *But go ye*  
*and learn what that meaneth, I will have*  
*Mercy and not Sacrifice; for I am not*  
*come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to*  
*Repentance.* I will endeavour to explain  
 the Matter, and give its just Weight to  
 the Objection of the Pharisees, which some  
 overlook, and so lessen the Use and Im-  
 portance of the Answer.

The *Jews* were forbidden generally by  
 their Law, rightly so interpreted, to con-  
 verse familiarly with, to use the House  
 or Table of, the Gentiles. To this Effect  
 the Words of St. *Peter* to *Cornelius* and  
 his *Roman* Friends, are express; *Ye know*  
*how that it is an unlawful Thing for a*  
*Man that is a Jew to keep Company with*  
*or come unto one of another Nation,* Acts x.  
 28. God indeed had then shew'd him in  
 a *Vision*, and confirm'd it by a Command  
 of

of the Spirit, that this Law did no longer SERM.  
oblige; and therefore he was to be blamed, I.  
when afterwards he declined eating with  
the Gentiles, and withdrew and separated  
himself, fearing them which were of the  
Circumcision. But there is no Footsteps  
of any Censure upon this Practice, as su-  
perstitious or unnecessary, while the Jewish  
OEconomy stood. And agreeable here-  
unto was the Behaviour of Daniel \* and  
the three Children, with respect to the  
Meat and Drink of the King of Babylon's  
Table. † But I forbear to argue from that,  
or other Instances of Scripture, because I  
take the first-mention'd to be plain and  
full enough. The Ground of this, taken  
from that Law, will open us the Conse-  
quence whereby the Conversation with  
Publicans is involved in the same Prohi-  
bition.


Now the Ground was, the Avoiding of  
that Uncleanness or Defilement, (and the  
Exclusion from Divine Service consequent  
thereupon) which they incurr'd that ap-  
proach'd the Unclean: And such were  
all the Gentiles by their promiscuous Use  
of

\* See Thorndike's *Forbear. or Penalt.* p. 52.

† Daniel i. 8.

SERM. of Meats, and other legal Pollutions, not


I. to mention their common Disorders of Lewdness, and universal Idolatry. So *Isaiab lii. 1.* — *Put on thy beautiful Garments, O Jerufalem the holy City; for henceforth shall no more come into thee the Uncircumcised and the Unclean.* Now it is known, that the *Romans* collected the Duties imposed upon Goods by Undertakers of their own Nation, that farm'd them as well in the Provinces as at Home. The Publicans here mention'd are their Servants and Deputies, *Jews* who accepted Employments under them; and some of them, it is likely, had Shares with them; and so were obliged continually to converse with them and their Slaves, in the Dispatch and Accounts of Business, notwithstanding their Uncircumcision and Uncleanness. But the Law says, *Numb. xix. 22.* *Whatsoever the unclean Person toucheth, shall be unclean; and the Soul, that toucheth it, shall be unclean.* From whence it is evident, that these Publicans were as much to be avoided with regard to the Law, as their Principals and Masters the *Heathen Romans* themselves. And even

even our Lord seems to approve, for the SERM.  
Time, such avoiding them as upon the L.  
same Level, where he says, *St. Matt. xviii.*   
*17. If he neglect to hear the Church, let*  
*him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a*  
*Publican.* And some think, that here  
also they are join'd together in the Ob-  
jection of the Pharisees, *Why eateth your*  
*Master with Publicans and Sinners?* for  
they interpret *Sinners* by *Heathens*, ac-  
cording to that of *St. Paul* to the *Gala-*  
*tians; We who are Jews by Nature, and*  
*not Sinners of the Gentiles;* and *St. Luke,*  
*the Son of Man must be deliver'd into the*  
*Hands of sinful Men.* But it seems, I con-  
fess, to signify no more in this Place than  
an Aggravation of the Charge of Con-  
versing with the Publicans, as if it were  
said, *sinful wicked Publicans.* For this  
agrees best with the Reply our Saviour  
makes, in which he opposes to *Sinners*  
the *Righteous;* and besides, it is probable  
from divers Passages of the Gospels, that  
this was a common Addition of Reproach  
to those Men from the *Jews;* and it must  
be acknowledged, that they generally well  
deserved it: For it appears from History,  
that

SERM. that they were intolerable Oppressors even

I. at Home, much more in *Judea* and the other Provinces, far from following the *Baptist's* Rule of *exacting no more than that which was appointed them*. But however that Word be taken, the Strength of the Objection will remain to this Effect: Wherefore does your Master transgress the Law of God, which hath forbidden the Society of these Men, as polluted and polluting those that approach them? Now therefore let us look back again to those Words of the Answer; — *go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, and we shall see they must mean, (as our Lord by thus using them hath taught us) that the Occasions of Charity, the Opportunities of doing Good to our Neighbour, are an actual Dispensation to any Positive Law, though of God's Appointment, relating to his Honour and Service, or the external Government of his People; and if so, that no Regulations of this Sort are to be held with such Rigour as would be inconsistent with the Duties or Privileges deducible

deducible from the Everlasting Rules of SERM.  
Justice and Goodness, Mercy and Truth. I.

But the same will be still more evident   
against all Exception from the *second* Ap-  
plication of these Words in the 12th of  
*St. Matthew*; by which Christ vindicates  
his Disciples against the same Objectors,  
when charging them with the Breach of  
the *Sabbath*. There likewise may be seen  
the Divine Authority instituting the Sab-  
bath acknowledged, and the Transgression  
of that Commandment directly confess'd;  
and yet a Justification insisted upon from  
the Necessity of *Hunger*, and the general  
Indulgence of God's Mercy to his Crea-  
tures; and that too founded on the same  
Place of *Hosea*, *I will have Mercy, and  
not sacrifice*. This, I say, confirms what  
I have propounded, how large the Ac-  
ceptation of the Word *Sacrifice* in the  
Text, or (which is all one) the immediate  
Inference from it ought to be.

And now that is stated, there needs the  
less to be said concerning *Mercy*; because  
it is so obvious, that since it is opposed to  
*Sacrifice*, both the Nature of Expression  
and of the Thing gives it a Sense of an  
Extent



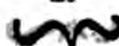
SERM. Extent proportionable to that ; and that  
 I. as one, because it is a principal Part of  
 External Honour and Worship, serves to  
 denote all the rest of its own Kind ; for  
 does the other, for the like Reason, all  
 Actions flowing from Internal Holiness ;  
 that is, our Obedience to God in the  
 Practice of every Moral Virtue. But be-  
 cause this Sort of Proof is reciprocal, here  
 we may remember the Sentences I before  
 alledged out of the Prophets *Amos* and  
*Isaiab*, when I proposed at first the gene-  
 ral State of the Matter ; where these Vir-  
 tues are enumerated, and their Value  
 raised far above all Oblations and Ceremo-  
 nial Services. For such Passages do not  
 only prove the Thing itself, but give a  
 great Inducement to take the Words, which  
 they appear to parallel, in the same Lati-  
 tude of Signification. For which Reason  
 I shall add yet one more, as I might di-  
 vers of the like Nature. It is the 3d  
 Verse of the 21st of *Proverbs*, *To do  
 Justice and Judgment is more acceptable to  
 the Lord than Sacrifice.* Nor was this  
 Doctrine unacknowledged by the *Jewish*  
 Masters themselves, however they were  
 blind

blind to the just Application of it, in particular Cases, where Envy and Jealousy excluded the Means of Conviction: An Example whereof we have in the *discreet Answer* of that Scribe to our Lord's Declaration of the two great Commandments, St. Mark xii. 32, 33. *Well, Master, thou hast said the Truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the Heart, and with all the Understanding, and with all the Soul, and with all the Strength; and to love his Neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt Offerings and Sacrifices.*

Therefore, *thirdly*, to confirm our Proposition, and facilitate such Applications, let us consider how the Reason of the Thing it self agrees with the one and leads to the other. Now the Nature of religious Duties appears to be twofold; Necessary and Unchangeable; or Arbitrary (with respect to the Law-giver) and Changeable; and the latter Sort to hold the Rank of Means only, as the former does that of the End, which gives those Means their Value and Sanctity. The Love of God and of our Neighbour, rightly understood,

SERM. comprehends the more excellent Sort ;  
 I. and the inferior consists of Preliminaries,  
 and Instruments, and Modes of Worship,  
 and every Part, Condition, or Circum-  
 stance appointed ; as it did likewise, when  
 it pleased God to govern a Nation by a  
 political Law of his own giving, of the  
 particular Rules and Methods of doing or  
 receiving Justice, and restraining Impiety  
 and other Crimes, express'd in that Law.  
 Now if the whole Kind of these is mu-  
 table, and the other (from their Nature  
 likewise) not mutable ; it will give us a  
 good Reason, why one is dispensable for  
 the Sake of the other ; why God, who  
 hath indeed enjoined them both, will ra-  
 ther have Justice or Mercy shewed to his  
 Creature, than Sacrifice, or any other ex-  
 ternal Service paid himself.

To prove that these last are changeable,  
 it must be sufficient to shew that they  
 have been in Fact changed ; that we can  
 assign the Times *before*, and the Times  
*when* they were commanded, with those  
 of their Continuance in Force, and of  
 their Abrogation. Thus we find in Scrip-  
 ture the Dates of almost every Institution  
 of

of that Kind, the Circumcision, and Pas- SERM.  
sover, the other Festivals, and Oblations, I  
Abstinences, Purifications, and all the  
Rites of the Ark and Temple-Service;   
and find also, that the Patriarchs in elder  
Times served God acceptably without the  
Use or Knowledge of them. The same  
Scripture informs us, when these were  
abolished, and the Sacraments of the Chri-  
stian Church, and whatever there is new  
and positive in our Oeconomy, introduced  
in their Room, and promulged to the  
whole Earth. But the Fear of God, Ju-  
stice, and Charity, were the Duties of  
Mankind before the Flood as well as  
now; and *Violence* and *Corruption* of  
Manners were the Crimes that brought  
it. These Things were ever held of the  
same Account, both in the Sight of God,  
and the Judgment of the Reason he hath  
given to Men. As to *them*, the Old  
World and the New differ not in the Ob-  
ligations Men were under; but the Laws  
of Nature, and of *Moses*, and the Gos-  
pel it self, are one; and *Noah* and our  
Lord Jesus Christ were *Preachers* of the  
same *Righteousness*.

SERM. The Conclusion from the first Part of  
 I. this Remark is certain ; that the actual  
 Change of external Injunctions in Religion shews them to be of a changeable Nature. From the latter it is only very probable, that because the Obligations to Virtue, on the contrary, never were altered, neither can they ever be. And therefore a further Reason is required for the Proof of it, which may be derived from the Divine Nature and Attributes. The Perfection of God sheweth his Immutability ; and our natural Understanding, as well as the Scriptures, will assure us, that *with him is no Variableness, neither Shadow of Turning.* His Grace and Mercy, his Justice and Truth, are no less certain from the same Testimonies ; And indeed without the Knowledge of them, there would be little Ground for any Religion at all. An indispenfable, everlasting Part of it, therefore, we may conclude to be, the Imitation of those Attributes of our Father which is in Heaven, since he is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and the Righteous Lord cannot but love Righteousness.*

And,

And, to add *another* Proof, every Man feels that in this Respect he hath *created us in his own Image*; and implanted in our Breasts a Principle, that witnesses and declares against Injustice and Cruelty in ourselves as well as others; and applauds and rejoices in the Actions of Uprightness and Beneficence in others as well as our selves.

SERM.  
I.  
~

A *third* Argument, if needful, might be urged from the Condition of Mankind; that without these Offices of Equity and Charity the World could not subsist, but Violence and Fraud must overflow all, and leave both Publick and Private to lye in Misery and Confusion.

When these Things are laid together, that the two great Commandments of loving God and our Neighbour, as they were from the Beginning, have ever remained the same; that the latter (to which my Argument confines me) is founded on the Necessity of human Condition, and in the Nature of God, and of Man; that the other Part of Religion is, on the contrary, of itself subject to Alteration, and hath been introduced and abrogated at known

SERM. Periods of Time ; and that the Duties of  
 I. it, tho' enjoined by God's Authority also,  
 ~~~~~ are never acceptable to him, unless in  
 Conjunction with those of the higher  
 Rank : It may be justly inferred likewise  
 (what I propounded before) that these of  
 the positive Kind were not instituted for  
 their own Sakes, but as Means, Helps and  
 Guards for obtaining and preserving their  
 End, (of everlasting Obligation) the Fear  
 of God, and Justice and Charity to Man.  
 And if it were consistent with the Com-  
 pass of this Discourse, I might still make  
 it more evident, by observing to you, how  
 each Point of these Institutions is and was  
 adapted by the Divine Wisdom to serve  
 those great Ends : How the Observation  
 of them is framed to withdraw and deter  
 from Vice ; and lead, and admonish and  
 inflame both our own and others Hearts  
 to the Love of all Virtue and Goodness.

Now this Explanation of the Text, and  
 these Reasons for it, lead me to offer you  
 some Inferences or Cautions, that relate  
 to them, and flow from them.

The *First* is, that we suffer no Pretences  
 of Sanctity to mislead us in judging  
 meanly

meanly of moral Virtue. We see of what SERM.  
*Price it is in the Sight of God ; so great,* I.  
that other Duties are valuable for *the Sake*  
of it. How dangerous then must it be  
to distinguish between Religion and Mora-  
lity ; when it is plain, that Morality is of  
the principal and indispensable Part of Re-  
ligion ? Ought we not rather to say, in-  
stead of slighting the Attainments of the  
moral Man, that who so is not *such*, how-  
ever enlightened and zealous and reli-  
gious he appear, *this Man's Religion is*  
*vain* ? To be just and liberal, and sober,  
are Things that severally cross the Inclina-  
tions and Interests of our corrupt Nature ;  
and to gratify these Inclinations and Interests  
are those false Schemes baited, which set up  
external Services and Splendor, or the Exer-  
cises of Devotion and Austerities, or a deceit-  
ful Trust built upon scholastic Notions, in-  
stead of the Mortification of our Pride, or  
Covetousness, or Intemperance. For to save  
these Darlings, what Absurdities do we  
not close with as probable and even cer-  
tain ? This has invented and recommend-  
ed infinite Superstitions of false Religion,  
and too many Corruptions of the true ; a



SERMON. Desire of keeping our Sins, and silencing the Reproach of Conscience; nay, and approving ourselves to God's Acceptance, at the same Time. But alas! these Devices are so far from producing that Effect, that those very Services, which otherwise he receives as Worship and Honour from such Hands, are rejected as Indignities and Profanations; for *the Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xv. 8. So that without Honesty there can be no Religion. *Hypocrisy*, (or at best, *Superstition*) is the true Name of all Pretensions and Performances which are destitute of it.

But *Secondly*, in handling this Subject, the Works of Mercy and Charity are in a special Manner to be recommended. The Words of the Text cannot but put us in Mind, that *with such Sacrifices God ever was and still is well-pleas'd*. And as they signify that the Offerings he receives from the Hands of the Poor have in all Times been most acceptable to him; so they suggest a particular Argument, why we Christians are more obliged to *abound in this Grace*. That is, the Freedom God has

has graciously indulged to us, above his SERM.  
ancient People, from the Cost and Care I.  
of the various Sacrifices they were bound ~  
to, with the long and frequent Journeys,  
and other very burthensome Circumstances  
required to that Purpose. Such Ease  
gives us the more Scope for Beneficence,  
and prompts our Gratitude to a more  
cheerful Application to that rational, vo-  
luntary, noble Service ; in which the  
Duty of the first and greatest Command-  
ment, and of the second, (which is like  
unto it,) is eminently united, and dischar-  
ged by the very same Acts, and *all the*  
*Law fulfilled in one Word.* So excellent  
and comprehensive is Charity.

*Thirdly,* I would remark the lamentable  
Absurdity of the Hope of those who would  
reconcile themselves to the Favour of God  
by dedicating some of the Fruits of their  
Fraud or Violence to him. Perhaps many  
rich Endowments and magnificent Struc-  
tures have owed their Foundation to this  
Thought. But the Divine Justice will  
not regard these Peace-Offerings. Repen-  
tance, Reformation, and Restitution, are  
what it insists upon : Nor is that *Charity,*  
which

SERM. which proceeds not *out of a pure Heart and a good Conscience.* And if any Doctrine favours the contrary Persuasion, it is interested and deceitful, cherishes the Body and wounds the Soul of Religion; which must abhor all such tithing and consecrating of Mens Sins. And so God declares by the Prophet *Isaiab, I the Lord love Judgment: I hate Robbery for Burnt-Offering.*

*Lastly,* Let no Man make a wrong Use of what hath been said, to encourage himself in a Conclusion which does not follow from it. For there may be some, that because Justice and Charity, and Sobriety, (they see) have Right to the principal Place, would therefore allow none at all to the other Offices of Religion and Piety. They would reckon, that holding the substantial Part by the Conviction and Strength of Reason, they may exempt themselves from the Trouble of observing what has been instituted as Helps and Incitements for the Service of weaker People. But there is nothing vainer than this philosophizing; which would make Man wiser than God, who  
surely

surely knows the Weakness of his Crea- SERM.  
ture, has appointed these Assistances for I.  
all, and will himself assist them only in  
the Use of his own Appointments. And  
where the Presumption I speak of obtains,  
I fear it is a common Case (and what  
Wonder ? ) that these wise Men find their  
Endeavours of keeping the Command-  
ments in their own Way ineffectual ; and  
so throw up one Part of their Duty after  
the other, as impossible to be performed.

The true Conclusion therefore of the  
whole Matter is : We prefer the End to  
the Means ; and nevertheless embrace the  
Means (with great Thankfulness to the  
gracious Appointment,) that we may ob-  
tain the End : For, according to our  
Lord's Decision, one *ought to be Done,*  
*and the other not to be left Undone.*

And because in his Person and Sufferings  
alone both Obedience and Sacrifice have  
been united and perfected, Let us pray, that  
our Services of either Kind may for the  
Sake of them find Acceptance : And to  
Him for the same, with the Father and  
the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory  
World without End.



## S E R M O N II.

Of the Distinction between Moral  
and Positive Duties.

PART II.



M A T T. xii. 7.

*But if ye had known what this  
meaneth, I will have Mercy, and  
not Sacrifice, ye would not have  
condemned the Guiltless.*

SERM.  
II.



THESE Words, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, (which are cited from the vith Chapter and same Verse of *Hofea*) I consider'd in my last Discourse on the ixth and the 13th of this Evangelist; where our Lord alledged them on a different Occasion. I then endeavour'd

vour'd to shew, from the Sentence itself, SERM.  
explain'd by correspondent Places in the II.  
*Old Testament*; and from the two several  
Applications of it in *St. Matthew*: That  
by *Sacrifice*, because it was a principal  
Part of External Honour and Wor-  
ship, the Prophet intended to express all  
the Conditions and Circumstances of them;  
whatever was to be done or refrain'd in  
Pursuance of Ceremonial Institutions; and  
by *Mercy*, (for a like Reason) the whole  
Kind of Moral Duties, both Justice and  
Charity, and all the Dictates of the uni-  
form and everlasting Law. This I sup-  
ported by the Reason of the Thing; and  
made it appear, that the Nature of the  
latter was unchangeable, but the former  
subjected to Change; and never acceptable  
to the Lawgiver himself, unless in Con-  
junction with the latter, to which they  
were design'd as Helps and Means, and  
derived their whole Value from answering  
that End. And upon this Examination it  
fell in our Way to observe, that the Ju-  
dicial or Political Constitutions were of  
the same Nature, and upon the same  
Foot with the Ceremonial; ow'd their  
Establish-

**SERM.** Establishment to their Utility, and could  
**H.** claim at the utmost but an equal Sanctity  
 and Reverence. The Conclusion was, our  
 Instruction from the Lesson in the Text,  
 to hold no Rule of any Positive or Tem-  
 porary Law of God, whether relating to  
 his Honour and Service, or to the exter-  
 nal Government of his People, with such  
 Strictness as would not consist with the  
 Duties or Privileges which flow from the  
 Nature of Mercy, Goodness, Truth, and  
 Justice. At that Time I only *named* our  
 own Privileges, and prosecuted the Argu-  
 ment as it relates to our Neighbours Be-  
 nefit and our Obligation. To which I  
 was determin'd, by the State of the Case  
 which introduced that Text, whereby our  
 Lord acquitted himself of the Injunction  
 to abstain from the Company of Publicans  
 and Sinners, only that he might be at Li-  
 berty to labour for the Advantage of their  
 Souls. Accordingly I insisted upon those  
 Dispensations to Lower Services, which a  
 Call to the Higher gives; and contented  
 myself with setting forth, how the Works  
 of Justice and Charity, in Favour to other  
 Men, took Place upon every Competition  
 of

of the Circumstantial and Secondary Part **SERM.**  
of Religious Appointments. **II.**

But the Use our Lord makes of those same Words in my present Text calls upon me to pursue what was omitted concerning Privileges, the Relaxation of such Laws for our own Sakes, and in *Mercy* to ourselves. Indeed one seems to follow from, or rather to be contain'd in the other; since Almighty God is equal to All, and what Liberty he grants to my Neighbour, he grants to me. My Love to myself is made the Standard of my Love to him; and then how should I not have the Liberty on my own Account, which I am bound to use on his? Therefore, as you have seen in the ixth of St. *Matthew*, that a Positive Law of God was well broken by our Saviour, out of Charity to the Souls of the Publicans: Here in the xiith you will see, that another was well broken by his Disciples in Charity to their own Bodies; and learn to apply to both (and many like) Cases one common Vindication, *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.*

But



SERM. . But before I proceed to the full Proof  
 II. and further Handling of this Matter, I  
 would premise some Considerations of the  
 Use and Necessity of opening such a Sub-  
 ject. For some will say, What Need is  
 there to talk to People of their Liberties  
 or Indulgences in Religious Duties? Are  
 they not even too quick-sighted at espying  
 them, too favourable Casuists to them-  
 selves, and need no Prompting to under-  
 stand the Privilege of their Necessities?  
 Let us rather extend the Limits of Duty  
 something farther, and bind it on some-  
 thing streighter than the Rule itself hath  
 done, to obtain the utmost that's possible;  
 for after all, Mankind will without doubt  
 in Practice fall too too short of their Ob-  
 ligations. But this Reasoning ought not  
 to deter us altogether, though it be some-  
 what specious in itself, and rise from a  
 good Intention and Zeal of Piety. For it  
 is not only without any Foundation in the  
 Word of God, but rather by its own Na-  
 ture contrary to it. And then, for the  
 Consequences of such a Proceeding, there  
 is cause enough to apprehend, they may  
 be

be very pernicious, as well in Belief as Practice. SERM.  
II.

The *First* and most general of these is, the falling from one Error to another. If People are taught wrong, or must not be untaught their Misconceptions concerning the Bounds of Christian Duty and Liberty; who knows if the Matter will stop where they that cherish such Mistake would have it? It is a common Observation, that Error is of a fruitful Nature; and most Men understand, that possibly, from one false Conclusion allow'd, a Hundred more may be imposed upon them. And therefore, strictly speaking, we cannot admit the vulgar Phrase of an *innocent* Error. It may indeed be innocent *now*, and to *this Man*, and yet be full of infinite Mischiefs to other People, or another Age. Of this they that have any Knowledge in the History of Mankind, or of the Church alone, can give lamentable and numerous Instances; where the wary Silence of some, giving Way to the unhappy Warmth of others, THAT has gain'd an Establishment, which in a few Years establish'd something else of such a

SERM. Nature as neither dreamt of, but would  
 II. have given their Lives to prevent. Let  
 us therefore not forget that of *Solomon*,  
*Buy the Truth, and sell it not*; since with-  
 out a Spirit of Prophecy we are not able  
 to comprehend the Value of what we sell,  
 and how dearly ourselves or Posterity may  
 pay for the Advantage we now exchange  
 it with.

But though nothing of this should fol-  
 low, yet the Straining of any Duty above  
 its true Pitch, and excluding the Indul-  
 gence which our Lord allows, is apt of  
 itself to create divers Mischiefs very pre-  
 judicial, if not ruinous, to our Christian  
 Course. For in the first Place, while  
 some (as in all Probability many will) un-  
 derstand their Liberty, and act according-  
 ly, which others look upon as a meer Li-  
 cence of Impiety; what a Scandal and  
 Breach of Charity; what Reproaches and  
 Divisions may we not apprehend? And  
 would to God we could only reason to  
 this Purpose, and that his Church did not  
 even now feel and labour under these too  
 certain Consequences.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Another Evil, I fear, there arises from the same Cause, (and not uncommonly) though of a Nature less apparent to Experience and outward Observation (but it is fatal) the Casting off in Despair all Endeavour of keeping the Commandments. When Men are possess'd with an Opinion, that they require or prohibit certain Things which they do *not*, it happens at some Times, and to certain Persons, that those Things prove extremely difficult, and (it may be) impossible for their Constancy to perform or forbear. And for supernatural Assistance, Who can warrant *that*, for the Doing any Thing but what is indeed our Duty. I am sure History shews us, that the *Jews*, in a like Case, found none, when on several Occasions they forbore, out of a mistaken Interpretation of the Fourth Commandment, to defend themselves against their Enemies on the *Sabbath* Days. Nevertheless, the Conscience of those Men being ill inform'd, is as much wounded and laid Waste by these supposed Breaches of its Rule, as by real ones; and is thereupon in the same Danger of falling into Insensibility

SERM.  
II.  
}

SERM. fibility, and deserting its Office altogether. And here enters that fullen, atheistic Desperation, which quits at once all Obligations ; in a Conceit, that it is impossible for our weak Nature to bear the Burden of Christianity.

II.  


But *lastly*, (for I must only touch upon these Considerations) if such a Misapprehension work not its Mischief that Way ; yet it is obvious that it may, and often does, another, (though very contrary) by inducing People to lay as much too little Weight upon some Branches of Duty, as they do too great a one upon others ; and so putting them into an easy and satisfied State upon very ill Grounds. This Variety of Effects is owing to the different Natures and Dispositions of Men. But the last is very general ; and we see it in secular as well as religious Affairs. He that is over-nice and exact in one Point ; is commonly noted for a proportionable Negligence and Unconcernedness in some other, (perhaps) of ten Times the real Importance. At least so it proves in Religion ; and the Scripture hath given us an eminent Instance in  
the

the Practice of the *Pharisees*. Nor has the exposing them there, prevented the Imitation of other Ages ; but it is a continued Complaint down to ours, that the same Men, who *strain at Gnats, swallow Camels*. In the Leaders and Teachers indeed, we may well ascribe this Corruption rather to Artifice and Diffimulation, than the Power and Tendency of their false Doctrine : But of the Mass of the People that follow them, we cannot reasonably pronounce in the same Manner, and conclude them likewise under the Guilt of a known and self-condemned Hypocrisy. They rather appear to become cold in Affection to acknowledged Duties, because their Zeal has been misdirected, and is quite spent upon contested and imaginary ones. For it follows naturally from the Narrowness of human Powers, that if they are exerted this Way to an Excess, they fall short on that : And since the real Law of God is much adapted to our Capacity ; he that refuses us the Liberties which it grants, thrusts us into the dangerous Way of taking some that it denies.

SERM.  
II.  
~

SERM. Now having premised some Reasons for  
 II. handling this Subject, I return to state the  
 Doctrine contained in the Text. It is,  
 That God is pleased, in Favour of human Necessities, to dispense, when they require it, with his positive Laws ; that is, all such as are not of a necessary and eternal Nature, but were appointed in Time, for the Method and Security of Divine Worship, and the orderly Government of his People. For these are denoted or designed by that one Word *Sacrifice*, as was proved in my former Discourse. Therefore, whereas, when the Question is of adhering to the Profession of true Religion, or a Matter of Justice, Charity, or any Virtue, we are to yield to no Terror or Suffering ; in other Ordinances, (which were made for the Sake of them) a real and innocent Necessity will justify our Non-observance ; as the Disciples Hunger, did their Breach of the Sabbath ; and that of *David* and his Men, the Priests giving, and their eating, the Shew-bread.

To prove that this is the Sense of the Text ; we must consider the Occasion of  
 the

the Words, express'd in the foregoing Ver-  
ses, together with the Reason subjoined  
whereby the Application of them is justified,  
and the Light we may gain from the Ac-  
count of the same Thing in other Evan-  
gelists. I must therefore read to you from  
the Beginning of the Chapter, the xiith of  
St. *Matthew*. *At that Time Jesus went  
on the Sabbath-day through the Corn; and  
his Disciples were an hungred, and began  
to pluck the Ears of Corn, and to eat. But  
when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto  
him, Behold thy Disciples do that which is  
not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day. But  
he said unto them, Have ye not read what  
David did when he was an hungred, and  
they that were with him, How he entred  
into the House of God, and did eat the  
Shew-bread, which it was not lawful for  
him to eat, neither for them which were  
with him, but only for the Priests? Or  
have ye not read in the Law, how that on  
the Sabbath-days the Priests in the Temple  
profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?  
But I say unto you, that in this Place is  
one greater than the Temple. But if ye  
had known what this meaneth, I will have*

S E R M.  
II.  




SERM. *Mercy, and not Sacrifice, ye would not have*  
 II. *condemned the Guiltless. For the Son of*  
*Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day.*  
 Christ's Disciples followed their Lord, whithersoever he went, that they might hear from him *the Words of eternal Life*: And as his, and their, Poverty, had no regular Establishment for common Necessaries, (which were furnished but occasionally by those that *minister'd to him*) nor any certain Place of Reception and Abode, (according to that of our Saviour, *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head*) it is no Wonder, if sometimes they forgot, or had no Opportunity, to take Bread, and so were surprized by Hunger, while they *laboured not for the Meat which perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life*. This once happened to them on a Sabbath-day; when passing through a Field of ripe Corn, they therefore *plucked the Ears, rubbing them in their Hands*, to satisfy that Necessity. Now though this may seem to us a light Matter, yet there is no Question but it was a Breach of the  
 Sab-

Sabbatical Law ; by which the Jews were bound (according to the Example in the gathering a double Portion of *Manna*) to provide on the sixth Day their Food for the Use of the seventh. And the Solemnity of Argument by which our Lord excuses this Action, shews no less. The *Pharisees*, (those great Patrons of ritual Commandments, and as great Neglecters of the moral) fail not to seize the Occasion to reproach the Disciples and their Master, with doing and suffering that which it was *not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day*. He answers them, and shews by *three* several Allegations out of Scripture, That the Transgression of a positive Law was no Crime in such Circumstances ; but that they gave every Man an actual Dispensation to it. The *first* and *second* consist of Examples, where the same Necessity justified a like Liberty, as in the Case of the Shew-bread ; or, as in that of the Priests, a like Necessity justified the same Liberty that they blamed in the Disciples : And the *third* is a general Rule and Argument to shew and vindicate the whole Extent and Kind of these Liberties,


SERM.

II.

SERM. Liberties, built upon the different Nature  
 II. of the Commandments, and the Design  
 and declared Will of him that gave them.

*First*, then, the Objectors Ignorance in the Scriptures is rebuked for overlooking the Instance of *David*, so very apposite to the Question in Hand. Not that there is any Doubt of their being, as they boasted themselves, well-read Men in the Law ; but the Prepossession of wrong Opinions, with which and for which they read, left them as dark in certain Occasions, as if they had never opened the Book. So that, *Have ye not read*, is a Reproach indeed of something worse than Ignorance. The History in the 20th and 21st Chapters of the first Book of *Samuel* sets forth this unreproved Example of the *Man after God's own Heart*. He was flying for his Life, upon sudden Warning, from the Rage of *Saul* ; and so found himself distressed for Provisions in the Journey for his own Subsistence and the Subsistence of his Associates. He set out from the Spot on which *Jonathan* had informed him of his Danger ; and durst not see his House first, or take any thing from thence ; so that he had not so much as a Sword.

This


This was the *real* Occasion of *David's* SERM.  
Hunger ; and that of his *entering into* II.  
*the House of God, and eating the Shew-*   
*bread.* But the Occasion which the High-  
Priest apprehended, who gave it him and  
his Company, nay, offered it, (for *his*  
Part of the Example is of some Weight  
too) was hardly of equal Urgency. No-  
thing but an important Commission from  
the King, to be executed with a sudden  
Dispatch and great Secrecy. Either Way,  
it was no more than an honest unaffected  
Necessity, and not the very Extremity of  
*that* ; but such as is exactly match'd by  
the Case of our Lord's Disciples, and, in  
Effect, by such as occur in Life on fre-  
quent Occasions. What therefore was the  
Institution of the Shew-bread, or the Ho-  
liness of it, that could, without any Crime,  
be trespassed upon out of Regard to a  
Distress of this Nature ? We have it most  
at large in the xxivth of *Leviticus*, and the  
5th and following Verses ; *Thou shalt take  
fine Flour, and bake twelve Cakes thereof :*  
*Two tenth Deals shall be in one Cake. And  
thou shalt set them in two Rows, six on a  
Row, upon the pure Table, before the Lord.*  
*And*

SERM. *And thou shalt put pure Frankincense upon*  
 II. *each Row, that it may be on the Bread for*  
*a Memorial, even an Offering made by Fire*  
*unto the Lord. Every Sabbath he shall set*  
*it in order before the Lord continually, being*  
*taken from the Children of Israel by an*  
*everlasting Covenant. And it shall be*  
*Aaron's and his Sons : and they shall eat it*  
*in the holy Place : for it is most holy unto*  
*him, of the Offerings of the Lord made by*  
*Fire, by a perpetual Statute. You see, it*  
*was most holy ; most strictly separated from*  
*common Use, and of very great Dignity*  
*and Reverence, as so many Circumstances*  
*declare ; particularly that Service of solemn*  
*Religion it was dedicated to, being offered*  
*and accepted in no meaner Quality, than*  
*of the Weekly Sacrifice and Homage, to*  
*Almighty God, of his Twelve Tribes of*  
*Israel. We may therefore justly rank this*  
*with the most venerable of the Ceremonial*  
*Constitutions, as our Saviour equals its*  
*Sanctity with that of the Sabbath, which*  
*Nothing exceeded. And, as his Justifi-*  
*cation of his Disciples is clear upon the*  
*Comparison, we must conclude of the*  
*whole Kind of those Constitutions, That*  
 God

God authorizes, where-ever there is like SERM.  
Reason, a like Dispensation. Thus the II.  
*first* Argument amounts to a full Proof of  
the Doctrine I propounded; That positive  
Laws yield to the Necessities of Mankind,  
not only for the Behoof of our Neighbour  
for the sake of Justice and Charity, but  
likewise our own, in order to Self-pref-  
ervation.

The *Second*, which claims the same Ex-  
emption for Christ's Attendants, by rea-  
son of the Dignity of his Person and Of-  
fice, as the Priests had upon account of  
the Temple-service, being more peculiar-  
ly adapted to their Case, I shall pass over,  
as not applicable to general Use, at least in  
the Way of the Subject I am treating.

And so we come to the *Third*, wherein  
my Text is contained; which I explain  
thus: If your particular Byass for the rigid  
literal Observance of external Things in  
Religion could have suffered you to un-  
derstand the Extent and necessary Conse-  
quence of God's Declaration by the Pro-  
phet *Hosea*, *I will have Mercy, and not  
Sacrifice*; ye would not have condemned  
condemned my Disciples, who, by virtue  
of

SERM. of an Indulgence to the Distresses of Nature contained in it, have contracted no  
 II.  Guilt from breaking the Sabbath in their Condition. For though the Sabbath be enjoined by God with eminent Strictness, yet it is evidently of the same Rank and Nature as *Sacrifice*, and the rest of the external Services ; with which he has by that Declaration given Man Authority to dispense, for the necessary Good of his Kind, of himself, or Neighbour. And therefore, as he is (for his true Benefit) Lord or Arbitrator over them, he must have the same Authority as to the Sabbath. *For the Son of Man is even Lord of the Sabbath ; or, more plainly, ALSO of the Sabbath-day.* This Sentence of the 8th Verse is to be considered, because the Connection of it with the Precedent by the Particle *for*, determines me to that Sense of it which I have now opened ; as the Want of Attention to the same, appears the Occasion of Expositors going another Way.

*First* then, WHO is *the Son of Man* ?  
 Our *Saviour*, (as usually in other Places ?)  
 or mortal Man *at large*, so that we may  
 apprehend


apprehend this Thought couch'd in the Ex-  
pression, " Though God Almighty be the  
" Legislator, he allows his poor Creature  
" Man to be a Dispenser ?" The *latter* as is  
evident to any that will turn to the Parallel,  
the iid of St. *Mark*, and the last Verses ;  
*The Sabbath was made for Man, and not*  
*Man for the Sabbath : Therefore the Son of*  
*Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.*

SERM.  
II.  
~

In the next Place, What is it to be  
LORD of the Sabbath, or any other Insti-  
tution ? And surely it cannot be the ha-  
ving Leave to transgress it for the Service  
of *others* only ; for that is no Power or  
Liberty indeed, but the Change of one  
Obligation and Service for another. But  
the Argument we may draw from the  
Contexts of the forementioned Place of  
St. *Mark*, and 6th of St. *Luke*, seems de-  
monstrative that they understood those  
Terms of a Freedom to exempt *ourselves*  
from the Rigour of such Laws, in Con-  
sideration of our own Necessities. For in  
neither of those Evangelists is there pre-  
mised any Word that gives the least  
Handle to construe them the other Way ;  
but *the Son of Man's* being *Lord also of the*  
*Sabbath*



SERM. *Sabbath* is immediately subjoined to the Example of *David's* Necessity, and that of the *Priests* officiating in the Temple, entirely omitted. It is from that Argument, of the *Priests* profaning the Sabbath by Works of publick Religion, and our Lord's being greater than the Temple, (interfered in St. *Matthew*) that some Men infer, the Words of my Text excuse the Disciples *only* in Consideration of their being employ'd, together with their Master, in teaching and *doing Good* to the People. To which, (omitting all other Answers,) I would give this plain one: That this is to make the Words depend on that, whereto in the Context there is not a Tittle that necessarily connects them, and at the same Time leave them incoherent with what follows, and to which we read them most strongly united, thus — *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the Guiltless: For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath Day.* We may therefore repeat our Interpretation, and reinforce it with the Argument added in St. *Mark*; — *God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice;*

*Sacrifice*; and thereby has pronounced **SERM.**  
guiltless as many as are driven by a just **II.**  
Necessity to break any of his Ordinances,   
that are of a mutable, and therefore dispensable Nature. The Reason is, the Intention of his *Mercy* to Man, when he first gave those Laws, to leave him the Power of judging when an urgent Cause should require their Relaxation. And the Reason why he hath thus made him *Lord of them*, and not of the *rest*, is, because they had not been given at all, but as Instruments to promote *his Good*; and therefore it were absurd they should bind to his *Destruction*. The Laws we speak of are not of the very Substance of Piety and Virtue, but Incitements and Helps, Fences and Guards to it. All their Goodness lies in their Subserviency to those Purposes; which suffer no Detriment when they are omitted, rather than the Man himself, for whose Conduct in Life they were framed, should hazard Perishing. Man was made before them; and they made for *him*, not he for *them*. *The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.*

SERM. There is no Need to add any Thing to  
 II. this Scripture Proof; especially after what  
 has been offer'd at the Beginning of this  
 Discourse, by way of Recapitulation and  
 Connexion of Argument with my former.  
 I shall therefore apply the rest of the Time  
 to answer, what I foresee may be oppos'd  
 to our Conclusion; and withal introduce  
 some of the Cautions necessary to prevent  
 wrong Inferences from it.

The first Difficulty may be propos'd  
 thus: — If for the Avoiding great Hard-  
 ships or Mischiefs, the external and auxi-  
 liary Duties and Services may be inter-  
 mitted; how comes it to pass that we  
 find *Daniel* in the Lyon's Den upon one  
 of those Points; and so many glorious  
 Confessors and Martyrs, after his Example,  
 exposing themselves to every Cruelty ra-  
 ther than *forsake their assembling together*  
 for publick Worship and Service? I reply;  
 that the Circumstances must often deter-  
 mine the Nature of the Action; and in  
 the Circumstances that Prophet and those  
 Saints found themselves, the total For-  
 bearing such outward Services, had been,  
 in the Account of Mankind (not what of  
 itself

*Moral and Positive Duties.*

51

itself it imports, but) a *Disowning* of their whole Religion, as effectual, as if they had abjur'd it in plain Words. But our publick Adherence to the Truth of God and his Obedience is utterly indispensable and absolutely necessary for ourselves and others: It is Religion ITSELF. Therefore, if Tyrants or Persecutors would oblige us to omit the least Article of Religious Observance, as a Token of our Apostacy; or, if any such Omission is universally construed a Declaration of the same; we can at no Rate yield to do it. The Thing has changed its Nature. Custom and Consent, which gives Meaning to Language, does the same to Actions: And so a Liberty, which (otherwise) had been lawful on a less Necessity, comes now to be the greatest Crime, when it signifies no less, than if it were pronounced or written, *I am no Believer.*

*Secondly,* It will be objected, that this Principle goes great Lengths, and, particularly, enters into Matters both of Ecclesiastical and Civil Government, either directly, or by an unavoidable Parity of Reason; and that therefore the Consequence



SERM. quence of allowing every Man to judge  
 II. and dispense for himself in these Things is  
 ~~~~~ intolerable. In Answer to which, in the  
 first Place, I acknowledge the large Ex-  
 tent and Use of this Principle; and like-  
 wise the possible, nay common Abuse of it,  
 But the Abuse or perverting of a Doctrine  
 is so far from a *Proof* of its Falsehood,  
 that it is not so much as any *Sign* of it.  
 For considering Men tell us, that most  
 of the absurdest Notions and corruptest  
 Morals owe themselves to the Misapplica-  
 tion of sound and noble Principles. How  
 indeed should Men mislead themselves or  
 others, if they did not set out with some-  
 thing of Truth, and universal Esteem?

But let us come nearer the Particularity  
 of this Objection, the Inconvenience of  
 private Powers for Dispensing; which may  
 likewise be extended to any dispensing  
 with Rules at all by a less Authority than  
 that which made them. And to avoid  
 Mistakes we say previously, that no Abro-  
 gation or Annuling is intended or inferr'd  
 by this Argument, but a Relaxation alone  
 in single Instances, proportion'd to the  
 Exigence and Duration of each Necessity.

Then

Then with regard to the Absurdity al-  
ledg'd, of a lower Authority than the  
Legislative itself dispensing with Laws, as  
in our Case Human with Divine ; I must  
repeat what I have already intimated, that  
these Liberties stand upon no other Bot-  
tom than the declared Will of God him-  
self the Legislator ; and the Exercise of  
them is vested in us merely by a derived  
Authority and Commission from him ; so  
that the Honour of his Laws can suffer  
no Diminution this Way, seeing the In-  
dulgence to Mankind, for their dispensing  
with some of them, is also itself one of  
his Laws. But lastly, great Inconveni-  
ences, say they, will arise from granting  
such an Allowance of each Man's judging  
for himself ; and it might be enough to  
say again, that, where it is well used,  
none will ; and that as great or greater  
must be the Effect of denying it. But  
farther, if libertine or seditious Spirits pre-  
tend to justify themselves upon this Prin-  
ciple ; What then ? Does it justify them ?  
No, that cannot be said ; for they use it  
not with a good Conscience ; but plead  
false Necessities, or take Liberties that bear

SERM.

II.



SERM. no reasonable Proportion to the True.

II. Still, it serves to colour their Proceedings; which must be admitted; and is indeed a Token of its Truth, rather than an Objection. And if it be made an Occasion of their deceiving themselves as well as others, there is nothing in it extraordinary. The whole Scheme of Religion and Morality is full of Points liable to Misconstruction; and no Wonder, since the present State is not form'd for *Certainty*, but *Tryal*. Accordingly, in such Matters our Diligence and Sincerity pass their Probation; and Men must judge unprejudicedly at their Peril. Private Judgment occasions infinite Errors and Calamities in the World; it is true: And yet it shews no more, than that the weak and corrupt Nature of Man occasions them. And can that be helped? Mankind is made up of Particulars; every one of which must be govern'd by his own Judgment, (which is private) or by none at all. For Example; a Man embraces Religion itself, either because he finds it reasonable to believe the particular Inducements to it, which he understands through-

throughout ; or, if he does not, because he finds it reasonable to believe those that assure him they do, and know them to be convincing ; or, lastly, (which is most common,) partly for one Reason, and partly for the other. Now every Way this is but private Judgment ; for still, either the Things, or the Persons, or both, are judged of by each Believer. And I think we must be content with the same Judgment in particular Points of Religion, to which we are obliged to leave the Choice of the Whole ; even as *he, that made Man from the Beginning, left him in the Hand of his own Counsel.*

SERM.

II.

In the mean Time, when we say, a Man in these Things may and must judge *for* himself ; there is no Need he should also judge *by* himself ; much less, if he be able so to do, is any Patronage intended for Temerity and Presumption in Determining. Reverence and Sincerity will engage a Man to a considerate Caution in assuming the Privileges we speak of. Nor can they subsist without seeking Advice where it is wanted ; as we see a real Concern compels all People to do in the Case



SERM. of their Bodies, and their Estates: Other-  
 II. wise he will sin grievously against the Pub-  
 lick and his own Soul, by the Breach of  
 Positive, as well as any other Laws; and  
 a like Vengeance ought to be feared. For  
 though the Disciples were guiltless in  
 breaking the Sabbath for a Necessity in-  
 nocently contracted; yet we know the  
 Man, that without any such Necessity  
*gather'd Sticks* upon the Sabbath-day, was  
 condemn'd and ston'd to Death by the  
 Sentence of God himself.

But it remaineth, that we praise him  
 for the *Mercy*, which we see *is over* his  
 Laws, as well as *all his* other *Works*:  
 That we address our Endeavours chear-  
 fully to his *Service*, which recommends  
 itself as entirely *reasonable*; laying Weight  
 on every Thing only according to its ori-  
 ginal Necessity and intrinsick Goodness, or  
 Utility, worthy of his own Bounty, and  
 exactly suited to the Benefit of our Na-  
 ture, and Satisfaction of our Understand-  
 ing. For we have the Comfort of in-  
 ferring from this Argument, that the Di-  
 vine Benignity neither requires nor ac-  
 cepts any Thing at our Hands, meerly  
 because

because it is difficult, whether in Suffering or Restraint. Many have dream'd of that in all Ages and Religions almost; and still in the Monkish Rules one sees the same Imagination of Severity for Severities Sake, recommending us to God; which employs and torments a blind Zeal, or serves an ostentatious Hypocrisy. For this Suggestion must be rather from the Destroyer and Enemy of Mankind, than from him, who *doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*; who proclaimed, but a few Lines before my Text, that his *Yoke was easy, and his Burthen was light*. And to him therefore be all Honour and Glory, and Thanksgiving and Obedience, now and evermore.

SERM.  
II.  
~





## S E R M O N III

The Sin, Folly, and Danger of De-  
laying Repentance.

PART I.



P S A L M CXIX. 60.

*I made Haste, and delayed not to  
keep thy Commandments.*

SERM.  
III.  
~



THE Psalmist declaring sufficiently his own pious Practice in the former Part of these Words, *I made Haste to keep thy Commandments*; we may well conclude, that in adding the latter, *and delayed not*, he would intimate a contrary Management that Men were ordinarily disposed to fall into. That Foolishness

ness and Corruption of Heart, which now SERM.  
rebels against brighter Light and stronger III.  
Motives, no Doubt was in elder Times  
likewise an ample Subject for Complaint  
against the Grofs of Mankind. But the  
Commonness of the Fault cannot make it  
less ; only increases the Necessity of ex-  
posing it. Indeed it is so great and appa-  
rent, that if a Man could blot out of his  
Memory his own and others Guilt in this  
Matter, and then sit down and consider of  
the Thing in itself, it would seem almost  
impossible for any reasonable Creature to  
act so weak, perverse, and ruinous a Part.  
In worldly Affairs, such People, as con-  
vinced of the Necessity, and resolved on  
the Execution of a Thing to be done, yet  
without Cause delay it, are the just Sub-  
jects of our severest Ridicule. But the  
Aggravations of this Folly in spiritual Af-  
fairs, in our eternal Concern, are so nu-  
merous and heavy, that, as I have said,  
were it not for sad Experience, the Fact  
might appear incredible.

A Man is convinced of the Reason and  
Necessity of keeping God's Command-  
ments. He sees how beneficial and well-  
adapted

**SERM.** adapted the Practice is to his own Nature  
**III.** and present Condition in this World ; how  
 unworthy, absurd, and ruinous the Neglect. He acknowledges the infinite Power of his Creator and Preserver ; the full Authority of his Creator and Law-giver ; and the perfect Justice and Holiness of his Judge and eternal Rewarder or Avenger. And, above all, he knows the aggravating Load which must be added to his Disobedience and Damnation, by Ingratitude to the incomprehensible Love and Goodness of his Redeemer. Whilst a Man is under these Impressions, the Tempter is too subtle to plead directly against what is thus incontestable, but turns off the present Effect and Conclusion of such invincible Arguments by an oblique Stroke. He dares not say even to the Heart much prepared for his Deceivings, that the Laws of Almighty God, who hath made and redeemed, who preserves and governs, and who will reward or punish Mankind, are not to be obeyed. That were too gross and insupportable. What then is the Suggestion, and where the Artifice, to decline the Force of religious Truth, and Persua-  
 sion

tion arm'd from Heaven? Why, it is no more than this *Whisper*, You shall obey, but not *just now*: You will consider, repent, and reform, though not this Day or this Week: This evil Practice you are resolv'd to break off, and that good Work to take in Hand; but *either* at a more convenient Opportunity.

SERM.  
III.



This at the very first View is wretchedly poor and weak, and childish. They that act or forbear on no better Excuse, will be ashamed to avow it: And to argue against it seriously, may appear shameful too, like the labouring with much Force and Preparation to push that down which of itself cannot stand. But what is to be done? Altho' the Devil with all his Craft, aided by our own Lusts, has nothing but this very sorry Shift to offer to a Man persuad'd of religious Truth; yet it prevails, with the general Success of a good Argument. Through our monstrous Partiality it serves the Turn; and that with the great and experienced, and wise Men of this World, as well as the mean, the young, and the simple.

The

SERM. . . . The great *Felix*, Governor of *Judea*,  
 III. gives but an Example of common Practice.  
 ~~~~~ His Education and Business in the greatest  
 Court upon Earth ; his Dexterity and perpetual  
 Dealing in high Affairs ; all his  
 Craft, Industry, and Greatness, could  
 furnish no wiser Answer to the Apostle's  
 powerful *Reasonings concerning Righteous-*  
*ness, Temperance, and Judgment to come ;*  
 (nor to his own *trembling Heart and Con-*  
*science*) than that senseless Put-off, *Go thy*  
*Way for this Time ; when I have a conve-*  
*nient Season, I will call for thee.* Since  
 then so many People have no better *Rea-*  
*sonings* for their Continuance in an impenitent  
 State, we must combat such as they  
 have. If, perhaps, I may so awaken any  
 from their Acquiescence in a Delay of  
 their Duty, I will endeavour to represent  
 the Nature and Effects of such Delay ;  
 how absurd, how criminal, how fatally  
 pernicious it is to our everlasting Interest.  
 As to the Nature of it ; the least *Re-*  
*fection* will shew it to be a direct *Disobe-*  
*dience.* No doubt but they that suffer  
 themselves to think only on one Side, fancy  
 that Putting-off for a Time is not a flat  
 Refusal

Refusal and Rejection of their Duty to God; but a Kind of Temper or Middle-way between Obedience and Disobedience. But the Divine Commandments, it is plain, speak to every Man for his *present* Compliance, and require the Service of that very Hour they reach his Ears; and he that *now* delays it, is *now* disobedient and rebellious, *now* therefore immediately obnoxious to the Divine Wrath and Indignation. If there is any Part of our Life, any Moment, wherein we are our own; can subsist without the Blessings of the Almighty, or not instantly perish under his Displeasure; then may there also be so much Time, in which the Delay of keeping his Commandments should not be an ungrateful and desperate Provocation of his Majesty. But the State of Mankind is, (and a happy State for them) that *in him* they *live and move and have their Being*. Their Life is originally his Gift. The Continuance of it depends minutely on his preserving Power, and every Enjoyment of it on his bountiful Hand. We are also purchased by his gracious Redemption before our Birth, and from our Birth  
vow'd

SERM.

III



SERM. vow'd and dedicated in Baptism to his  
 III. holy Service. By so many Bonds do we  
 stand accountable for every Particle of  
 our whole Age ; and in the Behaviour of  
 every Day are furnishing the Matter for  
 our Salvation or our Damnation in the  
 last. Evident therefore is the Impiety of  
 delaying our Reformation, and shutting  
 our Ears against that Call from Heaven,  
*To Day, if you will hear his Voice.*

*Secondly,* Let us consider a just Aggra-  
 vation of this Sin ; that it is perfectly wil-  
 ful, acted in Despight of Conscience and  
 Conviction. The Man that adjourns his  
 Repentance, or the performing any pre-  
 sent Duty, to a further Time, has thereby  
 acknowledged his Obligation, and stands  
 without Shelter from Doubt or Ignorance,  
 being condemned within his own Breast ;  
 where no Question remains, but whether  
 he shall obey his God, or Satan ; which he  
 determines on the Side of the Enemy of  
 his Soul and everlasting Peace.

But further, it is to be remember'd ;  
 since the Sinner, in this Case, by the Na-  
 ture of his Action, must be understood to  
 offend against better Light ; that such  
 Light

Light is no less than a Ray of Divine SERM.  
Goodness. The Nature of Man is so III.  
weakened and corrupted, his Faculties so  
alienated and darken'd, that of himself he  
neither distinguishes clearly the Particulars,  
nor solidly forms any Conclusion in spiri-  
tual Matters. If then he gains a true Sight  
of his Condition, his Guilt and Misery,  
and the Cure ; it is not merely from his  
natural Powers without the Gift and  
Work of God. He convicts the Con-  
science, illuminates the Understanding, and  
teaches the Heart. The Man therefore  
whose Eyes are opened to see his Duty,  
and instead of embracing it joyfully, thrusts  
it from him, and shifts it off to a longer  
Day, does not offend only against the Di-  
vine Authority by his wilful Transgres-  
sion, does not only break the Laws of  
God, but likewise resists his immediate  
Operation.

This is the Nature of the Practice so  
common of delaying our Return to God ;  
it is to reject the blessed Opportunity by  
him put into our Hands, to refuse the  
Guidance of his Holy Spirit, and perversely  
frustrate his Work begun within our Hearts.

SERM. Nothing can be more heinous than this  
 III. Provocation ; nothing more dreadful than  
 the Consequence most justly threaten'd,  
 even to be rejected by Him whom we re-  
 ject.

Now, *Thirdly*, We may weigh another Aggravation of this Impiety, and at once further expose the true Nature of it. And thus it appears : Although the Course we speak of be in itself and at the Foot of the Account extremely trifling and foolish, yet is it mix'd with a Presumption of Craft and Over-reaching. And the Meaning of it is no other, (though horrible to mention) than to counterwork the Counsel of God, and gain an Advantage against his declared Will. The Will of God appears in the Scripture to be this ; that to lead his human Creature through Virtue to Happiness, the Length of this Life should be the Space of our Trial, and Eternity given in Reward to them that are found sincere. Precepts are accordingly delivered for our Conduct in every Stage of Life, from Childhood to Death. And how beneficial even *now*, by Way of Advance, is the Obedience to us ? And if it were not,

not, if it be not ; What is the Obedience SERM.  
of all our Days on Earth to the Obligation III.  
we owe our Creator and Redeemer ?  
What to the Days of Eternity, the Hea-  
venly Crown of this Obedience ? Now,  
see the Carriage of the Person that will not  
obey for the present, but says he shall here-  
after ; and his vain Cunning is discernible  
enough. He reckons to lengthen out the  
Enjoyments of Sin, and make short of the  
Time for serving God and Goodness ; and  
yet, in the Conclusion, secure himself of  
that eternal Life. What though this ap-  
pear opposite to the whole Scope of the  
Divine Pleasure concerning us ? He has  
heard that God is merciful, and will re-  
ceive penitent Sinners ; and upon that re-  
solves before-hand to take the Satisfaction  
of Sinning on yet a while, and to repent,  
doubtless, and amend, all in good Time.  
This is the crafty Thought I spoke of ; the  
Subtlety of making void, in great Mea-  
sure, the Law of God ; escaping the Pe-  
nalty ; while we transgress the Precept,  
and despise the Sanction ; the reconciling  
the Difficulty (as it may be, and too often  
is carried so far,) to live the Life of the

SERM. Wicked, and yet *die the Death of the*  
 III. *Righteous.* And since there is something  
 of this Thought in all Resolutions to de-  
 lay our Repentance ; let every one judge  
 for himself, if it be not a dreadful Aggra-  
 vation of the Guilt. Can this Imagina-  
 tion prosper ? or sinful Man be wiser than  
 his Maker ; and frustrate, with Success,  
 the Purposes of his Holiness ? Shall he  
 ever elude his Justice by the wilful and  
 premeditate Abuse of his Mercy ? It is  
 past all peradventure impossible. Hear  
 therefore the Advice and Warning of the  
 Son of *Sirach : Concerning Propitiation,*  
*be not without Fear to add Sin unto Sin :*  
*And say not, His Mercy is great, he will*  
*be pacified for the Multitude of my Sins :*  
*For Mercy and Wrath come from him, and*  
*his Indignation resteth upon Sinners. Make*  
*no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put*  
*not off from Day to Day : For suddenly*  
*shall the Wrath of the Lord come forth,*  
*and in thy Security thou shalt be destroyed,*  
*and perish in the Day of Vengeance.*

Now let us proceed, after so much said  
 concerning the Nature of this Evil, to  
 consider likewise of the Effects and Con-  
 sequences.

sequences. The *first* is certain and im-  
mediate, that we continue by it so much  
the longer in a wrong State and absurd  
Behaviour ; absurd and wrong in the  
greatest Concern, and with Circumstances  
most scandalous to a rational Agent. In-  
deed the other Consequences, highly pro-  
bable, though not of absolute Certainty,  
carry such a flaming Terror with them,  
that it may seem this I have proposed is  
comparatively scarce worth insisting on,  
as likely to have much smaller Influence  
on the Minds of the Persons concern'd.  
But though the Representation of right  
and wrong, worthy and base, reason-  
able and absurd, should have no Influence  
at all upon sunk degenerate Souls ; yet  
would I not forbear to urge those Topicks,  
depending upon it that some hear me  
with whom they will have their Weight ;  
such as retain the Sense of Fit and Pro-  
per and Grateful, and the Spirit to be  
concern'd for the Dignity of Reason and  
human Nature. Now since it is evident  
that the Soul of Man owes its Being and  
all its Powers to God, and depends upon  
him for the Continuation of that Being,

SERM.

III.



SERM. all its Enjoyments present, and Hopes of  
 III. Perfection, to which it naturally and  
 strongly aspires : It is impossible this Spirit of ours should be in any natural, just, or worthy State, but while it is in Conformity and *Subjection to the Father of Spirits*. It cannot act in Disobedience to his Laws, and hold that Course with Deliberation for a Day or an Hour, without debasing and perverting itself, and sinking into Meanness, Dishonour and Self-Reprouch. The Voice of Reason and Religion is the same ; and how then is it that a reasonable Creature can be one Moment at Ease under the Guilt of Rebellion, against that Voice sounding from Heaven, and repeated from his own Breast ? For whence should a Man fetch his Support or Satisfaction, that is contrary to himself, under the Displeasure and Condemnation of his own Heart ? Or what Confidence of Spirit, what Enjoyment of Life, can a depending Creature entertain for all the Time, how short or long soever, that he knows himself remaining under the Indignation of his Creator, and the Forfeiture of his all-necessary

ecessary Protection? But this is the very State he chuses to be in, that puts off the Amendment of his Life to a further Day; and this is the immediate Consequence and present Fruit of that wicked Choice. A State it is, that if it were possible for any Power to impose upon us, it would be judged the most cruel and devilish above all Tyrannies; to separate the Soul from its Reason and its God, in a Condition unnaturally vile and full of Disingenuity, Shame, and Ingratitude. On the other Hand; consider the inward Effect of an innocent and Religious Conduct; how calm, and firm and erect our Souls will bear themselves, when instead of that wretched Degeneracy they are sustained by a Sense of their true Proceeding in the Ways to their own Perfection and Happiness: What Comfort, Strength, and lively Hope the Conscience still ministers, when it bears Witness of faithful Obedience and Integrity, and promises the Approbation, Favour, Protection, and Reward of our Heavenly Lord and Master.

But the present Loss of so much Good, and the present Suffering so much Evil,



SERM. are not the only certain Consequences of  
 III. protracting our Reformation : For, *second-*  
 ~~~~~  
*ly*, it has likewise an immediate powerful  
 Operation to fix us down irrecoverable un-  
 der that Loss, and inslave us, beyond Re-  
 demption, to that Evil, still increasing and  
 overwhelming us to a greater Depth. Men  
 find themselves fondly disposed to their  
 Vices, and loth to engage in the difficult  
 and unpleasant Task of breaking from  
 them ; and fancy they may be in a better  
 Mind for it at some Distance of Time ; or  
 at worst, that it will be the same Thing ;  
 and that when they please they can exert a  
 Resolution, and overcome the Enemy just  
 as well as now. But the Truth of the  
 Case is far otherwise : The Enemy grows  
 daily stronger, and the Spirit and Power  
 to resist him daily weaker. Natural Mo-  
 desty is worn off by sinful Practice ; the  
 Considerations of spiritual Matters grow  
 tasteless and irksome ; all Regard to good  
 Motions and Occasions languishes ; and the  
 Conscience itself contracts a Hardness and  
 Insensibility : On the other Part, our Pas-  
 sions grow more imperious, and vile Ap-  
 petites bolder, as they are still gratified  
 with

with less Reluctance, and after a While with perfect Frankness and Unconcern : The Suggestions and Infusions of Satan, at first horrible to our Thoughts, we are by quick Degrees reconciled to ; and every natural Byass to Evil is by Custom improved in its Weight, and carries us forcibly off from the Course of Righteousness. And lastly, as Men are naturally impatient of being in the Wrong, they fall in with the utmost Partiality to all the corrupt Principles and false Arguments that wicked Company can offer to justify them in their Iniquity ; and so, instead of forsaking their Sins, as they lately promised themselves soon to do, come to defend and maintain them ; and perhaps at Length commence Teachers of Impiety to others, which is the most dreadful State of Alienation from God and Goodness. But if this last Effect follow not ; yet the rest, which are morally certain and universal, leave little Hope of Recovery under such deplorable Symptoms. The Man is arrived at the Condition the Prophet *Jeremiab* reproaches ; so fallen, so perverted, as to have wrought his vicious Practices

SERM.

III.



SERM. Practices into a Kind of natural Necessity.

III. *Can the Ethiopian, saith he, change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also do Good, that are accustomed to do Evil.* Neither can this appear at all strange to any Observer of the ordinary Force of Custom; how it renders difficult Things easy, those indifferent necessary, and even the odious grateful: How it gains Ground perpetually by an insensible Advance in wonderful Instances, till at last it establish an undisputed Power, and this against the Opposition of the Senses themselves. But how much more powerfully and certainly does the Effect follow, where Nature is too much predisposed the same Way that Custom drives into. Corrupt Nature in us conspires to introduce the vitious Habit; and sure THAT is done effectually, when a Power sufficient to prevail *against* Nature is *assisted* by her to bring it to pass.

And here now appears the lamentable, and yet ridiculous, Folly of the Man that goes on still in his Wickedness, convinced of the infinite Reasons to forsake it, and yet forbearing the Execution, till an ima-  
gin'd

gin'd Season of more agreeable Opportu- **SERM.**  
nity. The Difficulty of the Work, (which **III.**  
he acknowledges he must, and is resolved  
one Day to set about) is the Reason,  
doubtless, why he does not, in this In-  
stant, set about it. But how well is this  
consider'd? How carefully is a Thing of  
so much Moment reason'd about? Truly  
no more than thus — I find or fancy it  
now hard, and will therefore stay till it is  
easier. So Difficulty is the Cause for Stay-  
ing; when that Stay, instead of diminish-  
ing, causes the Difficulty to increase; per-  
haps makes that really difficult, which was  
before so only in Imagination. Continu-  
ance in Evil-doing estranges from Good-  
ness, and indears Vice and Folly by a  
constant Progression, which will soon car-  
ry a Man surprising Lengths. Every Day  
of Disobedience something is added to the  
Burthen, and as much every Day taken  
from our Strength: **THAT** Strength we  
chose wisely not to employ sooner, as too  
little; and **THAT** Burthen we could not  
take upon us, as too great. This is just  
as if one under indispensable Obligation to  
perform a considerable Journey, should  
defer

SERM. defer his setting out under Pretence of  
 III. present Weakness; and, in the mean Time,  
 should every Day travel a good Number  
 of Miles the just contrary Way. Thus do  
 Men frustrate the gracious Favour of  
 Christ's Institution, who hath appointed  
 them an *easy Yoke and light Burthen*;  
 which yet, by their affected Backward-  
 ness in submitting, are render'd to THEM  
 of a contrary Nature: Thus while they  
 undutifully and preposterously seek for  
 Ease, they augment the Task; which  
 must however be accomplish'd with pre-  
 sent Struggles and Painfulness, or declined  
 with everlasting Misery.

But the younger Part of those concern'd  
 in this Practice may presume their Case to  
 be different, and offer at a Defence for  
 their Proceeding, to this Effect: That  
 according to the Sentiment of the Phi-  
 losopher, they reckon themselves no  
 proper Disciples of Morality, but hope to  
 be qualified at a due Age, when once the  
 Fervour of Youth shall be abated, and a  
 maturer Judgment established: That they  
 expect the Season of more moderate and  
 tractable Passions, and Appetites of them-  
 selves

felves less keen, or sated by Indulgence ; SERM.  
wherein to apply their Endeavours suc- III.  
cessfully to keeping the strict and self-  
denying Laws of Temperance and Virtue.  
The Insufficiency of this Excuse may ap-  
pear from the general Arguments already  
used to evince the Evil of this Course, to  
which it makes no Answer ; and will fur-  
ther appear, when hereafter I come to  
speak of the horrible and imminent Dan-  
ger attending the same Course. But be-  
cause it is the only tolerable Thing said  
on that Side, it shall now be answer'd also  
directly.

And *first*, they ought to remember that  
the Law of God does by no Means ex-  
empt that Age from the Obligation of  
Obedience to it. Whence the Conclusion  
is indisputable, that to suppose it inca-  
pable of performing the Obedience, is a  
false and impious Supposition. It is pos-  
sible for tyrannical Men to give Laws,  
which their Subjects cannot obey : But  
THAT can never be imputed to the Divine  
Wisdom and Goodness ; for by them the  
Laws of Righteousness were framed, and  
by them our Faculties, to comply with  
those

SERM. those Laws, created, and by them are all  
 III. the Circumstances of human Life modified and governed. But you know the Commandments are so far from excusing the younger Sort from their Injunctions, that they are, in several Places of Scripture, press'd upon them with particular Exhortation.

*Secondly,* The Judgment of wise Men is unanimous for the early Dedications of ourselves to the Divine Service, as the only hopeful Way for securing particular Persons to the Interests of Religion, (that is their own,) and for obtaining any considerable Reformation of the corrupt and degenerate State we labour under: And herein they tell us they are confirm'd by long Observations, how many, form'd betimes to the Sense and Practice of Virtue, do persevere to the End; and how very few, after running through the first Stage of Life in Irreligion, ever effectually turn the Reins, and recover the Ways of Truth and Integrity. A Number, indeed, as they grow in Years, may put on a kind of prudential Modesty, finding it not so discreet and consistent with some Interests they

they now pursue, to follow openly their Inclinations : But a real and thorough Change of the Man and his Practices, it is a Rarity, and even a Wonder, to meet with. And the Truth of this very ~~fact~~ Observation is notably attested by the universal Practice of People of ordinary Prudence, never to trust an old Offender in the Point where his Vice is concerned. The Truth is ; among the many Kinds of Immorality to which Men sell themselves, there may be one, (or it may be, a second) found, from which Length of Years, we might think, (considering only original Nature) would in Probability set them at Liberty. • But even this very poor Hope, (for it is but the Departure of Vice, not the Departure from Vice) commonly fails us too. For if the Body and Substance of *that* do go off before the Man, yet the Shadow and Ghost *still* walk and govern him in his Weakness : A false and illusive Desire, (the Creature of a deprav'd Imagination) and the old Habitude to Sin, is now strong enough to tempt him, in the room of the native and real Appetite, which

SERM.

III.





SERM. which ceases any longer to mislead, or to  
 III. excuse him.

W

And this shall suffice concerning the certain ill Effects of not *making haste*, but *delaying to keep the Commandments of God*. There remains yet a *probable* one, (highly and sadly probable) no less than final Impenitence, and the Fruit of it, final Destruction.

But THAT can at present only be mentioned. Yet in Consequence of what has been said, let us *seek Wisdom early*, lest it soon prove too late to *find her*: and apply every Man to himself that of the Apostle: *Behold, Now is the accepted Time; Behold, Now is the Day of Salvation*. And herein, I beseech you, let us be *warn'd effectually to flee from the Wrath to come*.



P A R T II.

**B**EFORE I proceed in the Method entered upon in my former Discourse, I am persuaded it may be useful to remove a Mistake that has since occurred to me in meditating on this Subject;

as

as it appears to influence many Persons to be at present Ease, while they *delay to keep the Commandments* of God. Many, especially of those above the lowest Ranks, have entertained a Notion, that they cannot serve God acceptably, till they have done with the Affairs of this World. The necessary Employment of Time and Thought on the Business of their Professions and Engagements, is taken to be inconsistent with performing the Duties of Religion to any worthy Degree : So they look forward, and imagine some distant Scene of Life, when they shall have found a Retreat, in Freedom and Quiet from their present Hurries and Confinement. Then they propose to apply their Minds, without Interruption, to rectify the Errors of the Life past, and prepare for a happy Passage to another.

When this Conceit hath settled itself in the Mind, a natural Effect is, that the Guilt of omitting religious Duties is borne with little Remorse or Concern ; and, in a while, the Offences of Commission, (which ever follow the other apace,) come to sit as easy upon their Spirits. Their



SERM. present Circumstances are set down as im-

III. proper for undertaking effectually the Work of Reformation; and more undisturb'd and happy Days are reckoned upon to be entirely dedicated to that Service. By this Account do Men spend their Lives with little Regard to Religion; which has only assign'd to it an imagin'd vacant Space, at which, generally, they never arrive; and of those few that do, very few can or will employ it, as they have so long promised to God and themselves. Such is the Mischief of this specious Pretext. Men have, it seems, high and awful Thoughts of Religion, and therefore hold it best not to engage in it, till they can absolutely devote themselves, for which they expect a purer and less incumber'd State; and thus with much Respect and Reverence, order Matters so, as never to approach it at all.


But, What, will they say, must be done? Should they immediately abandon the Service of their Prince and Country, their Professions, Interests, and Families? Yes, doubtless, (if the Matter were as they suppose) they *should*. If those Services were in-

incompatible with that of God; they should immediately quit the secular Condition of Life, and enter upon such a one as the Name of *Religious* is appropriated to in the Church of *Rome*. Indeed, the magnifying of the *Monkish* State, and their pretended Retirement from the World, as the only spiritual, sublime, and sanctify'd Way, has been the main Occasion of this Mistake. But the Truth of the Matter is just contrary: Those Services perform'd in the Manner, and with the Mind they ought to be, are so far from incompatible with serving God, that they are themselves the Service of God. And he that has the largest Compass of Business, publick or private, is answerable for the greatest Number of Opportunities to do Good, and prevent Evil; to promote, for God's Sake, the Ends of Justice and Charity, and that exemplarily. And are not these the Ends of his Creation, and of the Divine Providence that hath placed him in such a Station, and therefore surely the serving them an acceptable Service to the Divine Majesty?

SERM.  
III.  
}

SERM. Thus is the Man, that alledges such

III. Employments, to excuse his delaying the  
 Work of good Life, only the more guilty  
 and the more inexcuseable for the very  
 Matter of his Plea. But lest it should  
 seem strange to any one, that the labour-  
 ing in worldly Affairs, (where the Matter  
 is lawful and the Intention pure) should  
 be doing the Work and Will of God, as  
 well as the Exercise of Prayers, and Praises,  
 and Meditations ; let him hear what St.  
*Paul* says concerning the Employment  
 even of Servants under Bondage, *Eph. v.*  
*6, &c. Servants, be obedient to them that*  
*are your Masters according to the Flesh,*  
*with Fear and Trembling, in Singleness of*  
*your Heart, as unto Christ ; not with Eye-*  
*Service, as Men-pleasers, but as the Ser-*  
*vants of Christ, doing the Will of God*  
*from the Heart ; with Good-will doing Ser-*  
*vice, as to the Lord, and not to Men ; know-*  
*ing that whatsoever good Thing any Man*  
*doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord,*  
*whether he be bond or free. And again, to*  
 the same Effect, and in Expressions little  
 different, *Colos. iii. 21.* Now if the faith-  
 ful Industry of a Man under Servitude, in  
 performing

performing the Commands of his Master, SERM.  
have such a Character of Holiness, and III.  
Promise of Reward; without Question,   
that which we are obliged to exert with  
regard to our Posts, Professions, and Fami-  
lies, is capable of the same; far from pol-  
luting and excluding us from Religion,  
unless by our own Excesses and Misappli-  
cations. How much soever therefore we  
do or ought to admire the contemplative  
Life, since Providence has destin'd the  
Generality of Mankind to the active; let  
them immediately resolve to serve God in  
it and by it, and not delay the Reforma-  
tion of any Error of Life till they shall re-  
linquish that State, for which they have  
neither the Necessity of Obligation, nor  
Probability of Event.

Now I have dispatch'd the Refutation  
of this too vulgar Error, I will give some  
Abstract of the Observations in my former  
Sermon upon the Wickedness and Mischief  
of retarding the Amendment of our Lives;  
and then proceed to the Remainder.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

SERM.

III.

The Remainder is a Consequence of our evil Behaviour in this Case, which I am now to treat of; not absolutely certain indeed, as the former, but highly probable, and such as, if it arrive, brings upon us Destruction past all Remedy. And this is dying impenitent. There are many Ways, by which, or one of them, it is likely, THAT will be the last End of such as, from Time to Time, neglect to make Use of their present Conviction, and flatter their Souls with the Presumption of doing it hereafter. Some of them I shall mention. The *first*, that of sudden Death.

That Event is well known to be frequent, and may be now making near Approaches to the very securest of us all. The Seeds, the Causes, and Instruments, are scatter'd thick throughout the World. They lurk in all our Paths unobserved, and even in our Houses, and our Food, and our very Bodies. The Young are, by manifold Experience, found no more exempt than the Aged, the Robust than the Infirm and Sickly. He that abounds in the Necessaries of Life, loses it as soon or sooner than he that wants them; and the Cautious

tious perisheth as well as the Bold, and often by his Caution itself. Troops of sharp Diseases, known and nameless, lye in Wait for us ; and outward Violence, both from the Sword, and from Accidents not to be number'd nor imagin'd, is still ready to cut us off. How then is any Man secure of the Morrow ? How is the wicked Man, whose Wickedness, his Injustice, or Intemperance, do naturally expose him more than others to such Destruction ? This, indeed, must appear a Consideration that deserves to be insisted on, if we observe the dangerous and wild Excesses of such Peoples ordinary Practice. But a much stronger Enforcement of this Hazard will be seen, when we say, How of all Men can the Wicked live in Security from the infinite Threatenings of sudden Death : He that throws himself out of the Protection of the only Guard, the Favour of a watchful Providence, nay, provokes the Divine Indignation to send its secret Arrows against him ? What can he expect but to *bring upon himself swift Destruction* ? Surely while he lingers long and sleeps over his everlasting Concern,



SERM. there is abundant Reason to fear, that his  
 III. *Judgment now of a long Time lingreth not,*  
 ~~~~~ *and his Damnation slumbreth not.* For is  
 it not as just as terrible, if his affected  
 and abusive Delay meet with a sudden  
 Vengeance? Or what can more directly  
 provoke and hasten *the Day of Wrath,*  
 than to presume upon *the Forbearance and*  
*Long-suffering* of God; to *despise* it, to  
 make it an Occasion of Wantonness, in-  
 stead of the *Repentance* to which it *leads?*  
 Indeed this very Thing is threaten'd, St.  
*Matth, xxiv. 48, &c. If that evil Servant*  
*shall say in his Heart, My Lord delayeth*  
*his Coming; and shall begin to smite his*  
*Fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with*  
*the Drunken: The Lord of that Servant*  
*shall come in a Day when he looketh not for*  
*him, and in an Hour that he is not ware*  
*of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint*  
*him his Portion with the Hypocrites; there*  
*shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth,*

But though this be the *Condemnation;*  
 yet is it not actually executed upon all  
 that are thus guilty. Nevertheless, it is to  
 be consider'd farther, that they commonly  
 so order Matters, as in Effect to execute

it

It upon themselves. For what will it SERM. avail these Offenders, if through Divine III. Clemency, they have large Warning of their approaching Diffolution, either by Length of Days, or by a leisurely Growth of Indisposition; while they alone are insensible to it, as if they were resolved to be surprized. And this is their Case. They have been long accustomed to put far from them the evil Day, which is, *with them*, the Time of *becoming Good*; and have as great a Facility of doing that yet a little longer, as a settled Aversion to the Work they ever shrunk from. In this Posture, how ready and common a Thing is it to disbelieve what we dislike? And accordingly, how many of these People are the very last to apprehend the Nearness of their own Change? *It is not yet necessary* to do so disagreeable a Thing as to amend a corrupt Life, has been the grateful Determination so long, that any Thought of the Contrary is become insupportable: So, *it is not yet necessary*, holds till it is grown *impossible*. The End of Life prevents the Beginning (to any Purpose) of its Amendment; and Death, how

SERM. how late soever, is, to such Men, still a

III. Surprize, as great and fatal as if they were judicially snatch'd away by an Act of Divine Vengeance.

*Thirdly*, The Danger of Dying as they have chosen to live, that is impenitent, will appear yet more threatening, if we consider the Provocation, by that Course given to the Spirit of Grace, to depart finally from them. Without the Influence of THAT there can be no perfect spiritual Life, of which it is the Principle; nor therefore any Spiritual Acts, to which also it must concur. In this Case, a Man's everlasting State is as much determined, as if he were already dead. So nothing can be said to aggravate the Desperateness of it.

But let us weigh the Reasons for apprehending such a State may be the Lot of these Trusters to a late Repentance. The *first* Reason is from their Behaviour. If we recollect what has been observed of it, that it is not only sinful, and wilfully so; and does therefore resist and reject the Operations of Divine Grace: But that all this is heighten'd with a Presumption of eluding

eluding the Purpose and Commands of **SERM.**  
God for a good Life, and yet cunningly **III.**  
decline the Vengeance he threatens to a  
bad one. Upon this Recollection, I say,  
it is seen, nothing can be more provoking  
of the Majesty and Purity of God to take  
his Holy Spirit from them. In Special;  
can we be without Fear, that they who  
make *the long-suffering of God to wait*, re-  
fusing the offer'd Assistance of his Hea-  
venly Grace, and upon this very impious  
Thought, that it shall attend their future  
Disposition long hence, when the evil  
Days come; can we (I say) be with-  
out Fear, that these should be denied that  
Grace, by themselves so long denied, and,  
instead of Repentance, made an Encou-  
ragement for bolder Impiety? Surely the  
Punishment is very much suited to the  
Crime. And whoever reads the Scrip-  
tures must see, how perpetually the Di-  
vine Justice triumphs, as it were, in adapt-  
ing the Sufferings of wicked Men to the Na-  
ture of their Provocation. Indeed, the very  
Case now under our Consideration, seems  
to be handled in this Manner in the 1st of  
*Proverbs*. There the Divine *Wisdom* cries  
to

SERM. to dilatory Sinners, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love Simplicity? and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you at my Reproof: Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my Words unto you.* But this Exhortation (in the 22d and 23d Verses) proving ineffectual, hear what follows: *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated Knowledge, and did not choose the Fear of the Lord. They would none of my Counsel, they despised all my Reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the Fruit of their own Way, and be filled with their own Devices.* I must say, these Words, if they do not point out the very  
 Punishment

Punishment we are considering of, yet by Parity of Reason from temporal to spiritual Matters, give the utmost Cause to apprehend it.

SERM.  
III.


*Secondly*, Let us consider on the Part of the Divine Majesty, in what Manner his Justice proceeds, by several known Cases ; and our Apprehension of his punishing thus Impenitence with Impenitence, will be much confirmed.

The *first* shall be that of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness ; of whom, and the Judgments upon them, *St. Paul* hath said, *All these Things happen'd unto them for Ensamples ; and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come.* These Men, for their repeated Transgressions and Hardness of Heart, were by an Oath excluded the Land of *Canaan*. Their Lives, meanwhile, were prolong'd, and their Pilgrimage many Years continued, but without all Possibility of entering into the holy Place of Rest. And ought not we to fear being put under a like Incapacity, and *exhort one another daily*, as the Apostle infers from this Example, *while it is called To-day ;*

SERM. *day; lest any of us be harden'd through the*

III. *Deceitfulness of Sin?* Yes surely, they that provoke it must with justice dread a Sentence of Exclusion from the Heavenly *Canaan*, even while they are to Appearance in the State of Travellers thither.

Another Instance to this Purpose may be found in God's Dealing with *Pharaoh*. His History in *Exodus* shews, that after repeated Hardenings of his Heart, he was judicially harden'd; not destroy'd immediately, but reserv'd incurable to the Day of Destruction; so that *Moses* could say to him, when he promised Obedience, *As for thee and thy Servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God: And to the same Purpose in the Name of God, In very deed for this Cause have I raised thee up* [or as the most ancient Translation renders it, *hast thou been preserv'd*] *for to shew in thee my Power; and that my Name may be declared throughout all the Earth. He was preserv'd alive, not for his own Behoof, but repriev'd only for a Time to answer certain Ends of Providence. And now consider, if all that will be like him, that will not bear the Voice of the Lord*  
while

while it is called To-day, but still barden **SERM.**  
their Hearts; should not tremble, lest they **III.**  
be made like him in Condemnation; be   
struck with spiritual Death, irrecoverable,  
before the natural, if that be delay'd.

The Conclusion is, that a Period may be fixed in the Divine Judgment, beyond which no Grace, no Place of Repentance shall be found; that though Vengeance be not then immediately executed, yet after Mens Iniquities are full, they may remain seal'd up against the Time of it, after the Example of the Doom of Jerusalem, declar'd by our Lord; which well deserves a Recital on this Occasion; *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thy Eyes. For the Days shall come upon thee, that thine Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every Side, and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another.* Now attend to the Reason that closes all this; *Because thou knewest not the Time of thy Visitation.*

Upon



96 *The Sin, Folly, and Danger, &c.*

SERM. Upon the whole Matter, let us apply  
III. therefore to ourselves that of the Apostle,  
*Behold, Now is the accepted Time ; behold, now is the Day of Salvation : Let us seek Wisdom early, lest it soon prove too late to find her. And for those, who are still for delaying to keep the Commandments ; let them at least hear the sarcastick and menacing Concession of the Angel in the Revelation ; The Time is at Hand : He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*



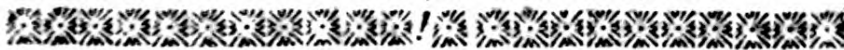
SERMON IV.



S E R M O N IV.

Of Repentance, and its proper Fruits.

PART I.



MATTH iii. 8.

*Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.*



REPENTANCE signifies at large, our Change of Sentiments, together with that Regret, whereby we disapprove what was before freely done, or spoken, or permitted by us; or reject any Design that we had embrac'd to be put in Practice hereafter: And it is the same, where it condemns the Neglect or Forbearance

SERM.  
IV.



SERM. of acting, speaking, allowing, or resolving. Agreeably to which, when it is  
 IV. apply'd to the Matter of Religion, it signifies the Grief of Soul, and Resolution of contrary Conduct, entertained by a Sinner, with regard to his Breaches of God's Law, either omitting what it requir'd, or committing what it prohibited. Then, (because as soon as a Man is convinced of, and detests the Evil of his Ways, and so resolves upon a new Course ; if he does shew himself a Man, and act rationally ; he pursues that Course, and keeps clear of his former Miscarriages ;) this Word, *Repentance*, is often put for the *Amendment* itself, as well as the *Resolution* of it. Many such Places are found in the Scripture ; as where Repentance is the *sole* Condition mentioned of our escaping Destruction, or attaining Divine Favour and Salvation. And this enlarg'd Sense of the Word in those Passages, some Men, (loth finally to part with their Corruptions,) will not see ; but would fain persuade themselves, that a transient Sorrow, a Confession of Words, and Promises without Performance ; may find Acceptance with the God of Truth  
 and

and Righteousness. Neither is there any **SERM.**  
Excuse for so absurd a Conceit from the **IV.**  
Darkness of that Way of speaking : Since  
all considering Men must allow it to be  
ordinary, as well in the Scripture, as in  
common Discourse, to use the Names of  
the *Dispositions* and *Habits* of our Mind  
to express also their just and natural *Conse-*  
*quences*. Thus we find *Faith, Love, Know-*  
*ledge, Ignorance,* put for the *Life* and the  
*Actions*, which they should in all Reason  
produce. And when those fail, and the  
contrary appear ; he that *knows* is reproach-  
ed as *ignorant* ; he that *loves*, as *hating* ;  
and the *Believer*, as *destitute* of *Faith*.  
Now when we say, if such a one would  
but *believe* his Friends, or *repent* of his  
Follies, or *open* his Eyes, he would be  
safe, or happy ; there is no body but un-  
derstands our Meaning perfectly well.  
How then is it, that many mistake the  
Scripture Expressions ; and put any  
Confidence in the *Faith* of a Christian  
with the *Life* of an Infidel ; or in that  
*Repentance* (to our Purpose) which bears  
no other Fruit but *new Repentance* ? 'Tis  
enough to say, that few could judge so

SERM. strangely, if they were not *bribed* by their  
 IV. Passions. However ; in the Place before  
 us, such Errors are directly obviated. Here  
*Repentance* is taken in a more strict and  
 proper Sense, and distinguished from its  
*Fruits* : And the *Baptist* warns his Peni-  
 tents, that those *Fruits* are equally neces-  
 sary with the *Repentance* which ought to  
 yield them.

And with that *Necessity* I will begin :  
 For you cannot be without a general No-  
 tion of the *Nature* (which I have already  
 intimated also) of the *good Fruits* requir'd,  
 Therefore you shall hear, I say, in the first  
 Place, how indispensably they are requir'd  
 by most express Scripture, and by evident  
 Reason, with the Answer to some object-  
 ed Cases. And after that, I hope, to dis-  
 course particularly of the *Fruits* themselves,  
 and find you prepared for a serious Atten-  
 tion to the Subject, being convinced of  
 the universal and infinite Importance of it.  
 First, then ; the Text plainly teaches  
 the Necessity of producing the *Fruits* of  
*Repentance*. *Bring forth therefore Fruits*  
*meet for Repentance*. You will see the  
 Force and Cogency of that Word, there-  
 fore,

fore, by looking into the foregoing Verse. SERM.  
*John the Baptist, when he saw many of the* IV.  
*Pharisees and Sadducees come to his Bap-*  
*tism, said unto them, O Generation of Vi-*  
*pers, who hath warned you to flee from the*  
*Wrath to come? The Baptist, you see, ad-*  
 mires at these Mens turning from their evil  
 Course. Yet it is not strange for great  
 Sinners to repent; since their Doings are  
 plainly contrary to Reason and their true  
 Interest; and it is not a little Time that  
 can intirely stupify the Conscience. But  
 here appears to have been a special Cause  
 for despairing of *their* Conversion; and  
 that is, that their Principles were as cor-  
 rupt as their Practices. The Custom of  
 Sinning, join'd with such Opinions as ren-  
 der Repentance unnecessary, serve to in-  
 trench Men doubly in their Vices, and fix  
 them in a deep and fatal Security. The  
*Pharisees* false Interpretations of the Law,  
 and the *Sadducees* Unbelief of the Resur-  
 rection, and the fond Conceit entertained  
 by both, of God's partial Favour to them  
 as the Children of *Abraham*, serv'd pow-  
 erfully to this Purpose. These were the  
 Sources of their Immorality and Hypo-  
 crisy,

SERM. crisy, and Pride, the greatest Enemies to

IV. Repentance. Here was the Poyson of the

*Viper.* This made the Preacher cry out,

as amaz'd ; Who could open your Eyes,

and make you see the only Way to escape

the Wrath to come ? Then he subjoins,

*Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Re-*

*pentance.* As if he had said, “ 'Tis a won-

“ derful Power of Divine Grace that has

“ awaken'd Men, in all Appearance dead

“ and buried in Sin, and given them a Sense

“ of the Vengeance that awaits them. Such

“ Grace was not to be expected ; frustrate it

“ not ; expect it not a second Time ; but

“ be sure to go on in the new Way you are

“ led into ; and see you add to your

“ Confession and Sorrow an effectual Refor-

“ mation of your Lives ; otherwise, it is in

“ vain that you are shew'd that Way ; and

“ still worse than in vain : Your going so far

“ in it is also vain, because you go no far-

“ ther. The Warning puts you in Motion,

“ and ye begin to flee ; and it is well : But

“ continue therefore your Flight, or else the

“ Wrath to come will still overtake you.”

This is evidently the Force of *Bring forth*

*therefore Fruits meet for Repentance ;* which

shew'd

shew'd them, and now shews us the Necessity of those Fruits. SERM.  
IV.

*Secondly,* The same Thing appears by reading what follows the Text: For the 9th Verse, (being the very next Words) says, *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abraham.* THERE is the Excuse taken away, which they were apt enough to frame for themselves. They are taught, (and in them any other that may in like Manner be deluded) that the Privilege of being the chosen People, or the adopted Children of God, gives no Immunity from the Duties of these good Fruits; so far from it, that without them the Privilege itself is lost and forfeited. So there is no Hope for any Creature to obtain the Divine Rewards, or escape the Punishments, unless they obey the Divine Laws. Then the 10th Verse expresses directly the Fate of a barren Repentance. *And now also the Ax is laid unto the Root of the Trees; therefore every Tree, which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into*





SERM. *the Fire.* He does not say, Every Tree

IV. that beareth not *Buds*, or *Leaves*, or *Blossoms*; nor (which is more) every Tree that forms not the *Beginning* and *Rudiments*, or shews not the *Appearance* and *Ornament* of Fruit. No; it is the Bearing of *Good*, that is, *true* and *lasting*, *found* and *mature* Fruits, only, that can save any Tree from the Ax and Flames. Accordingly, let us say to ourselves: We shall escape everlasting Destruction not if we *sigh* or *weep* only; not if we *confess* our *Sins*, and even *resolve* to forsake them: No, nor yet if we *begin* to do *Good*; but our *Goodness* be *as a Morning Cloud*, and *as the early Dew*. But, if that which is confess'd and lamented be indeed *forsaken*, and that which is warmly resolved warily and *steadily executed*: But, if the *Beginnings* of *Good* become effectual and complete, by our *Perseverance*, *Progress*, and *Abounding*. And this Evidence the Text itself gives us, and indeed a very sufficient Proof, of the Necessity to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*.

But lest any one should imagine that this Doctrine was somewhat peculiar to  
that

that Time, and the Occasion of St. *John's* Mission, to prepare the Way of the Lord; I will in the next Place shew, that the Doctrine of our Lord himself and his Apostles is the very same. And because it would be long to recite all that might be alledged, I shall single out a Place or two, where the Expressions also, as well as the Matter, are the same with the *Baptist's* here.

SERM.  
IV.

For the *first*, consult the xiiiith of St. *Luke*; where you may find at the 3d and 5th Verses, this repeated Asseveration of our Lord, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And that under the Word *repent* is comprehended there the *Fruits* of Repentance, *Amendment* of *Life*, (as I observed before of many like Places) will appear by the Parable immediately following the 6th and next Verses. *He spake also this Parable: A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the Ground?*

SERM. Ground? And he answering, said unto him,

IV. *Lord, let it alone this Year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear Fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.* The Representation agrees perfectly with the Text. There is no Place in the Vineyard of the Lord for unfruitful Plants. But the Ax must be continually expected; and after that you know what follows.

A second Passage of Scripture shall shew you the exact Conformity of St. Paul's Doctrine. It is in the 26th of *the Acts of the Apostles*. He had insisted in his noble Defence there before *Festus* and *Agrippa*, on his Commission from Heaven to preach the Gospel; of which he makes this the Sum at the 19th and 20th Verses: *Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the Coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles; (he makes, I say, the Sum and Substance of Christ's Gospel THIS) that they should repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance.* Now who is there

there but must discern *St. Paul's Works* to be the same with *St. John's Fruits*, meet for Repentance? Or, who can be true to himself, and hope that one should be accepted without the other?

SERM.  
IV.

However, in the *next Place*, (for more abundant Conviction,) the Reason of the Thing may be consider'd; wherein I will confine myself to the Nature of the Actions themselves, without arguing at large from the whole Frame of our Religion.

The Person that repents is sensible he has done amiss; is grieved for it; is resolved, and engages himself, to act quite otherwise for the Future. Now, suppose he stops here; does not after all act otherwise; makes no Use of the just Sense he was come to of Right and Wrong; but breaks his Engagements and Resolutions. What is there in this Proceeding, but may rather be adjudged a *new Provocation of Divine Displeasure*, than the Performance of an acceptable Condition, in order to Reconcilement and Pardon? What Character can it give the Offender? What Virtue, or Value, or Hope do we collect from it? I see nothing but that he is careless

SERM. less and fickle, and faithless, and still the  
 IV. same Offender. If one of our Brethren,  
 that had been injurious to us, should deal  
 in this Manner; I need not ask, how much  
 the better we should think of him? Or,  
 what Favour a disobedient Subject would  
 find at the Hands of his Prince, if treated  
 by him in this Manner? And surely we  
 may conclude, that the Behaviour, which  
 the common Sense of Men judges no bet-  
 ter than foolish and incorrigible; is not  
 proper to obtain Grace and Attonement  
 with the Majesty of God. For by such  
 Considerations he teaches us to understand  
 what will be pleasing or displeasing in his  
 Sight: Witness the Words of *Malachi*, i. 8.  
 in a like Instance of offering maimed and  
 vile Sacrifices; *Offer it now unto thy Go-*  
*vernour: Will he be pleased with thee, or*  
*accept thy Person? saith the Lord of*  
*Hosts.*

The Substance of the Matter is this:  
 Every body, that is not unwilling, sees  
 that to disapprove our ill Practices is good  
 for nothing, but to determine us to leave  
 them; that to promise and vow to do it,  
 is good for nothing, but to tie us to Per-  
 formance;

formance : That one is the *Means*, and the other the *End*; and therefore he only that can think the *Means precious*, and the *End* for which they were ordain'd *needless*; may also hope, that *Repentance* without *Amendment* may be available to his Salvation.

SERM.  
IV.  
~

Now I come to certain Cases that may be objected to this Doctrine; which are not only to be consider'd in themselves, but likewise with regard to the ill Use made of them by perverse Inferences. The Cases are, where Men do repent, but are prevented from doing the Works or producing the Fruits of Repentance, either by Death, or Loss of Understanding. Shall we despair of God's Mercy to these Men? And if not, where is the Necessity of such Fruits or Works? To make a sufficient and proper Answer, I will *first* (because the Matter is of the last Importance) state the Cases put more fully and exactly. *Secondly*, shew what appears to be the true Doctrine concerning them; and, *thirdly*, guard against the unreasonable and pernicious Consequences that some may form to themselves from thence.

*First,*

SERM.

IV.

*First*, Let it be suppos'd, that a Person is sensible of his Offences against God; is sorry he has committed them for Fear of Punishment, and begs vehemently to be forgiven; but is not so averse yet from those Courses, as to be entirely resolv'd and fully prepared to forsake them. This Man's Heart is not *chang'd*; 'tis not true that he *repents*; nor has he any Title to *Hope*. Nay, if he should be so dispos'd to forsake all his Sins but *one*, it makes no Difference; he has neither true Repentance nor reasonable Hope. Again, suppose him to have the full Preparation of Mind to abandon his Crimes; but not an absolute Determination, however, to throw up the unjust Advantages he has gained by them, and to repair all Wrongs in his present or future Power: This is likewise no Case to be consider'd; he is no *real Penitent*, since he is not sincere to do that which is lawful and right. Once more; (for I labour to be plain in such a Matter;) though all the Points before be rightly answer'd, it remains still, that he hath fram'd his Heart to the doing of *Good*, as well as the quitting of *Evil*. Else if the Soul be not possess'd

fers'd with the Choice of Religion and Virtue, to *walk in those good Works which God hath ordained*, and so much the more, as they have been before neglected ; I say, the Rejection of Vice and Wickedness is insufficient ; and the Conversion, which must be Positive, as well as Negative, left unfinished ; so that there can be no Question of such a one's State : It is the State of an impenitent Man.

These Things I have particulariz'd, lest it should be imagin'd, that the Repentance of an habitual Sinner is an easy and short Work, such as may certainly be dispatch'd at any the worst of Times. And now let us put the Case *truly* ; That a wicked Man has entertained such a perfect Conviction of the Evil of his Ways, that his Heart detests them all, and embraces all good, and all the Methods and Labours of Perseverance in it ; in short, is indeed become a *New Creature*. It cannot be denied, that this *Tree* has the Principles prepared and stor'd within it to bear *good Fruit* : If therefore it pleases the Almighty Lord of the Vineyard, who needeth not the Fruit, to cut it down, or otherwise by  
his

SERM.  
IV.  




SERM. his Hand disable it ; do his Laws adjudgē

IV. it to the Fire ? And we do say, we *hope* otherwise ; we *believe* otherwise. It is true ; some Men of great Consideration make a Difference, and think that if the Sinner have long neglected the Opportunities of Conviction and Repentance, his future State is no better than *doubtful*. And their Reasons are not contemptible. But the Reasons, on the other Hand, namely, that the Prayers of such a true Penitent for Pardon will be heard, appear conclusive. The *first* is, that the Scripture hath limited no Time as absolutely too late for Repentance, but proposes God's Mercy in general Terms to the returning Sinner. The *second* is, that the Work we have supposed of making a new Heart, cannot be ever accomplished without the Operation of Divine Grace. And where it is true, that a Man co-operates with that Grace to his Power *sincerely*, we cannot think or say, it is *in vain*.

And now consider, how foolishly Men are in haste to make this Consequence, that the Truth of the latter Doctrine overthrows that of the former. No, surely, the Rule that

that Repentance without meet Fruits is not accepted, stands good ; and the Exception I have admitted does not take away its Truth or Usefulness. Consider that this Exception is grounded on Nothing lower than a *Case of Impossibility* ; an Excuse, that when truly alledged, is received against the Severity of all Laws whatsoever. Here then lies our View of the Matter : A repentant Sinner being cut off by meer Want of Time from all Possibility of doing the Works of Repentance, to which he was hastening with great Zeal and full Desire, is found capable of Pardon from the Divine Grace ; therefore another, that wants no Time, may neglect those Works, to which he has no Desire, and yet hope for equal Grace. There is no Fear, I hope, that we should so impose upon ourselves.

But the Thing is cast into a new Shape, and a Scheme artificially form'd for Impiety and Impunity ; which, it is said, many have flatter'd and undone themselves with. The Contrivance is not to repent till Death appears near at Hand ; and by that Means to obtain the Excuse of Im-



SERM. possibility to bring forth the Fruits; and  
 IV. so avoid at once the Fatigue of a good  
 Life, and the Punishment of a bad one.  
 If this Thought were as cunning as it is foolish, yet being so desperately wicked, I should take it for certain, it could not succeed; though I were not able to point out the Ways by which it would miscarry. As it is, see some of the Particulars by which a Judgment may be form'd of the Matter.

There are, indeed, many Things, which must all meet together to produce the Repentance, which this wicked Man supposes he shall not want, upon the Approach of his last Hour; but supposes in gross, not much troubling himself to number them, or know them. I will mention only those, which are allowed by all to be necessary for that End, and appear to all of a Nature not certainly to be procured at Pleasure. And some of these depend altogether on the Providence of God, and others partly on the Man himself.

The *first* Things presum'd are, that he shall not be cut off, either from Life or Understanding, by any sudden Stroke;  
 and


and that he shall be visited by such a Di-  
stemper, as shall neither by its Violence too  
much discompose, nor yet by any Malig-  
nity stupify the Faculties ; but leave them  
to operate with Strength and Sedateness.  
For if he lose his Memory unawares, which  
is moral Death ; or be overtaken by the  
natural in any Way of sudden Violence,  
from within or from without, as Millions  
are ; 'tis confess'd then he is without Plea,  
and lost for ever. And again, if he be  
exercised with torturing Pains ; or if the  
Spirits be seiz'd and consume with a slower  
Poyson ; one or other of which is the Case  
of vast Numbers daily ; still it must be ac-  
knowledged, here wants the vigorous and  
yet calm and connected Thought ; without  
which, 'tis impossible for a Man to unra-  
vel his past Life and Sentiments, and frame  
the Resolutions and the Order of a new  
one. This will be allowed, at first Sight,  
a Work not to be compleated by him that  
lies half asleep, nor by him that is still  
awake distracted with Torments. So the  
Conclusion is the same, the Repentance is  
as impossible as the Fruits ; and the Sinner  
dies the same Man he liv'd.

SERM.

IV.



SERM. But farther ; let it be consider'd, who

IV.  this Person is, that presumes upon so very favourable a Providence towards him, and to that Degree, as to stake his Eternity upon it. Is it not the same, that lives in a premeditated resolved Course of Disobedience to the Lord of that Providence, and multiplies the Provocations which the Scripture threatens every-where with sudden Destruction ? And if, contrary to all reasonable Expectation, that be not the Lot of some few ; yet it is likely to be all one with regard to our Purpose : For such Men, by Reason of an habitual Loathsness to all good Thoughts, are very apt to put from them the Apprehension of their End ; and so, though it should approach leisurely, it proves to them surprising ; and they perish finally, as they began, making no more Use of the last Opportunity than they had done of all the rest. And this is an Impediment on the Part of the Man himself, and a very common one, as Experience shews.

But there remains one yet stronger, and which is alone to my Apprehension almost, if not altogether, insuperable ; even  
the

the settled inveterate Judgment of Things and whole Train of Thinking, full contrary to that which he must have, and with perfect Conviction too, that would be esteem'd a true Penitent. But they that resolve to be wicked as long as they can, and repent, to be sure, at last, seldom take the Pains to learn, what it indeed is to repent ; and only resolve upon they know not what. Else, they would be sensible that their Measures in the most serious Affair of the World, are ridiculous and impracticable, and nearly contradictory. For the Determination truly explain'd is, to hold an Opinion and Practice all one's Life ; and to be sure to detest them heartily, and to be sincerely afflicted for holding them a little before the End of it. Most expressly we find it the Duty of Religion, not to delay our Amendment, but to turn early to God, and dedicate to him the Service of our best and all our Days. The Man we speak of still thinks otherwise, still acts otherwise. His Heart therefore is not reform'd ; he is therefore, I say, impenitent, till he repent of this very Thing,


SERM.

IV.



SERM. and can truly wish, that he were to begin  
 IV. his Course anew ; and can, in that Case,  
 truly declare, that it should be directed by  
 quite contrary Principles, and proceed to as  
 contrary Practices. This no Man that con-  
 siders can expect, nor believe, will come  
 to pass. It is to say, upon the Whole,  
 (for I desire to repeat it) I do now hold  
 reasonable, and will adhere to as the Rule  
 of my Life, the same Thing, that I will  
 at last think the most unreasonable, and  
 reject with the utmost Abhorrence. This  
 perfect Change of Heart against all Rea-  
 son, I will depend upon, and adventure  
 my everlasting Concern upon the Suc-  
 cesss !

Thus I have endeavour'd to shew,  
 though I fear too briefly, that the Death-  
 bed Repentance, which they talk of, is a  
 Work, that with respect to the ordinary  
 Course of Things, and the particular Pro-  
 vidence of God towards wilful Offenders,  
 it is very probable there will never be  
 any Time to set about ; and if there should,  
 it is yet very probable it will never be  
 made Use of ; and lastly, that although it  
 should be set about also, yet, according to  
 all

all Appearance from the Consideration of SERM.  
our Moral Disposition, it never will be IV.  
truly effected. 

And this Discourse may prevent the ill  
Consequence that vitious and foolish Peo-  
ple would make from the Doctrine before  
allow'd ; and maintain the Truth and  
Usefulness of the Rule insisted upon ne-  
vertheless, That we must *bring forth*  
*Fruits meet for Repentance.* And now I  
should speak particularly of those Fruits ;  
but it must be deferr'd to another Time.







# S E R M O N V.

Of Repentance, and its proper  
Fruits.

PART II.



M A T T. iii. 8.

*Bring forth therefore Fruits meet  
for Repentance.*

SERM.  
V.



IN my former Discourse on these Words, after explaining the Signification of *Repentance* in Scripture, I proved the Necessity of *bringing forth Fruits meet for it* by all Penitents, as well as those the *Baptist* spake to, that will to Purpose *flee from the Wrath to come*. And then I answered certain Objections, and

and opened in particular, the desperate Folly of delaying Repentance to the End of our Days. The *Fruits* were understood to be *Amendment of Life* by the Rule of God's Commandments ; as appeared all along, and is indeed evident to common Sense.

SERM.  
V.

Now I come to apply that general Notion, by shewing the Nature of some principal *Fruits* or *Works of Repentance*, and how they *are* and *must* be produced and wrought by it. For I do not intend to insist on the Virtues required by our holy Religion to be exercised, and the Vices to be avoided, one by one. *That* would be too great a Compass ; and 'tis sufficient to my Purpose, that we are convinced from the Nature of Repentance, before explained, that it must respect, (in one Word) our Breaches of every Law of Christ ; and the Fruits of it therefore can be no less than a diligent Obedience, not of *some*, but *all* his Laws. But Mens Disobedience runs very different Courses, as their various Passions and Temptations lead it. And so each Penitent must by himself consider, what Fruits he has been most barren in,  
and

SERM. and then apply his chief Labour to cut off  
 V. and root out the particular Vices that in-  
 cumber him, and to cultivate the particu-  
 lar Virtues in which he is most defective,  
 that he may abound proportionably. This  
 Discourse can only extend to some select  
 Observations, such as may be of the most  
 common Use : Which will be best an-  
 swered by treating of those *Works meet for*  
*Repentance*, which Men are, commonly,  
 most averse from performing, by reason of  
 the Strength of Temptation to the contrary,  
 or their not believing them to be such  
 Works ; a Thing that often happens thro'  
 Want of Attention, or the Subterfuge of  
 specious Distinctions, owing their Original  
 to the same Temptation. For where a  
 Man is strongly set against a Business, there  
 he will be generally found slow in appre-  
 hending its Necessity, and quick at coining  
 or receiving Excuses to lay it aside.

Now it is plain, that any Person, whose  
 Heart is full of Conviction and Sorrow for  
 the Vileness and Mischief of a wicked  
 Course, reviews his past Actions, which  
 are the immediate Cause of his Concern ;  
 and looks forwards, and designs a different  
 Conduct

Conduct for the future : So, the *first* Ob-  
servations shall be of something necessary  
with respect to Actions *past*, and the *second*  
Part shall be to direct and strengthen the  
*new Course*.

SERM.

V.

With regard to the *former*, a Man's  
Offences past ; you know one great Branch  
of Repentance consists in the Examination,  
Confession, and Remorse for those com-  
mitted against other Men, the Breach of  
that great Commandment, *Thou shalt love  
thy Neighbour as thy self*. And here the  
Fruit, which the Penitent obliges himself  
to bring forth, is *Restitution*, and, in ge-  
neral, all the Reparation in his Power for  
the Wrongs done. And he that does not  
immediately fall upon this Work, is in no  
State of Salvation ; but the *Ax* lies con-  
tinually at his *Root* : His Repentance is  
but Flattery to himself, and accounted for  
Hypocrisy before God. This is a Matter  
evident enough of itself, and clearly agreed  
in by all sober Teachers of Religion. Ne-  
vertheless, I fear Multitudes of particular  
Christians are not so fully convinced of it,  
as it is requisite they should for their eter-  
nal *Welfare*. For, do we not see the  
World

SERM. World filled with Injustice, Frauds, Breaches of Trust, Violence, and Oppression ;  
 V. and yet hear of very few Restitutions, very few Reparations of Injury ? And can we reasonably suppose that such Numbers as fail in this Duty, leave the World with their Eyes open, in an *Atheistical* Defiance of God's Command ? No, I cannot doubt but they delude themselves (inexcusably indeed) by some false Conceits, though to their corrupt Minds plausible.

Now if I can guess aright at any of these, and convince any body that leans to them, or prevent others from so doing, the Time will not be ill spent. However, while I answer those Pretences or Objections against the Doctrine, I shall find Place to insert the full positive Proofs of its Truth, and indispenfable Obligation.

The Excuses I take to be such as these : We do repent, they will say, of the Wrongs done ; and, if undone, would not now do them ; and will no more do the like, but rather, something contrary : But to *restore*, and make *Satisfaction*, is an exceeding great Difficulty, and may ruin our Reputation, or will ruin our Family ;  
 and

and that sure were unjust. Then, Par-  
don, they hope, will clear them ; else,  
where is the Pardon, if the Rigour of  
Amends be insisted on ? They forgive  
others, and trust others are bound to for-  
give them. *Lastly*, in many Cases, it is  
thought enough, that the wrong'd Party  
wants not the Compensation ; but is in  
greater Plenty than the Wrong-doer.

SERM.


V.




*First* then, we suppose an unjust Pos-  
sessor, or other Transgressor against his  
Neighbour, pretends, without repairing  
his Faults, to be sorry for their Commis-  
sion, which he reckons Repentance ; and  
to be resolved not to repeat such Actions,  
but rather to do those of contrary Nature ;  
which he reckons for the Fruits of Re-  
pentance. But it must be answer'd, Here  
is no Repentance ; and therefore no Occa-  
sion to dispute the Fruits of it. Any Per-  
son, under Remorse of Mind for his Sins,  
wishes he had never committed them ; and  
would certainly, if it were not impossible,  
have them *not-committed* : Else, where is  
the Change of Heart and Judgment ? Of  
Necessity therefore he cannot (acting ra-  
tionally and sincerely) refuse the Undoing,

as

SERM. as far as is possible, all his evil Deeds.


V.  The Deed past cannot be recalled ; but the Malignity of it (as in our Case) may be corrected, the Injustice cured, the Mischief removed. But this Man is much afflicted for the Act itself, which *cannot* be remedy'd ; but the Injuriousness of it, that is, the Sinfulness, which he *can*, will not remedy. How sincerely does he therefore detest his Actions, while he hugs and enjoys the Evil that tempted him to them ? The Substance of his Repentance is ; he is truly sorry that Injustice is a Sin ; but he finds it very convenient for him. But all whose Eyes are not blinded by the God of this World, will call it by another Name than Repentance ; and see that the first, the very first Work or Fruit of Repentance must be Restitution, and the giving up all the Fruits of Unrighteousness.

*Secondly*, Say, that this Man comforts himself in the Purpose or Practice of doing some Acts of Beneficence or Charity, to serve as a *Compensation* for his Frauds or Oppressions. Neither is this of any Service to him, except in one Case ; which is, if there be no *Possibility*, (as indeed it may

often happen,) to make Satisfaction to the SERM.  
Persons wrong'd, or those that claim un- V.  
der them. *Then* indeed, it is rational and   
necessary, and all that can be done, to  
repay to the Publick, or the Part of it  
that wants most, what is due to Particu-  
lars that are lost or unknown. But then  
the Repayment must be full, and the Of-  
fender must know it to be no more than  
meer Repayment. His Deeds of Charity  
or Bounty are not to be the fewer for it :  
For this is not one of that Sort. But where  
it is not impossible to make our Restitution  
directly and properly, that is, to those *in-*  
*titled* to it, no other Way can be an Equi-  
valent. *There*, to be sure, 'tis vain to talk  
of Charity, till Justice be first done.  
When we ought to be glad (though with  
Shame) to do the Right of *Debtors*, we  
shall very absurdly pretend to the Honour  
of *Benefactors*. So this Hold will surely  
fail, since neither is the Divine Pardon to  
be sold ; nor, if it were, could we hope to  
purchase it with what is none of our own ;  
or make our *Robbery*, which God *hates*,  
an acceptable *Burnt Offering*.



SERM. In the *next* Place ; If the *Difficulty* of  
 V. Performance be pleaded, it cannot excuse,  
 though true ; because it is a Difficulty of  
 our own contracting. No doubt, it is  
 harder, on many Accounts, to part with  
 unjust Acquisitions, than to have always  
 lived without them : And the very Man-  
 ner of making Reparation is sometimes  
 difficult enough to contrive. But in that,  
 if we find Need, the Advice of a discreet  
 and religious Friend may be called in to  
 our Assistance. The Direction of such a  
 Guide must indeed be recurred to in Ca-  
 ses of particular Difficulty ; for it would  
 be endless, and, it may be, useless, to put  
 them and resolve them in this Place. But  
 the general Difficulty, which Men, to be  
 sure, find greatest, makes a special Plea  
 against this Duty ; the reducing themselves  
 and Dependents to a streighter Condition,  
 and, it may be, to a poor one ; which  
 they are ready to call *wronging their Fa-  
 mily*. But Justice cannot be contrary to  
 itself ; nor can there be any Wrong in do-  
 ing Right. If there appear in this a ter-  
 rible Severity, let the proper Use be made  
 of it ; to deter Men from enriching them-  
 selves


selves by unrighteous Means ; since the SERM.  
 best End of it is thus miserable in the pre- V.  
 sent Life ; and if that be not submitted to,   
 one a thousand Times more miserable in  
 the future. For the Truth is ; the *Fear*  
 of Poverty falls so short of a just Excuse  
 from Refunding, that Inability *itself* can ex-  
 cuse no further than it goes ; and even af-  
 ter Answer is made to the Proportion of  
 present Ability, Men are still bound to en-  
 deavour making up the rest by the In-  
 dustry of their remaining Life. *St. Paul,*  
 you know, exhorts, *Ephes. iv. 28. to la-*  
 *bour, even working with the Hands, that*  
 *one may have to give to him that needeth :*  
 And if this be a Duty for the Sake of Cha-  
 rity ; how much more must it be so for  
 the Sake of Justice ? I believe, indeed we  
 must confess, that this Age is fruitful ra-  
 ther in Examples, of Men living in Ease  
 and Plenty, without any Thought of Sa-  
 tisfaction to those that have suffered by  
 their Frauds, or Negligence, or Extrava-  
 gance ; and relying, it may be, on the  
 pretended Excuse we speak of. But the  
 Frequency of the Practice amounts to no-  
 thing, but to bring a Scandal upon Chri-  
 VOL. I. K stianity.

SERM. ftianity. The true Penitent does, and  
 V. must go on in the narrow Way. For, do  
 but consider this ; the most innocent Man  
 alive, when the Course of the World calls  
 him to it, is obliged, only for a Witness to  
 Religion and Truth, to *take joyfully the  
 spoiling of his Goods* ; nay, and to *give his  
 Body to be burned*. And shall he, that has  
 by his Crimes contracted the Obligation to  
 satisfy for them, draw back and be excu-  
 sed, because it would disfurnish him of  
 Goods not his own ? No, certainly ; tho'  
 it brought him to the most necessitous  
 Condition. And now I need not speak to  
 the Danger of *Reputation*, which may, for  
 the most Part, be avoided ; and if it  
 cannot ; and if there be not a Probability  
 of reaping Honour rather by Performance  
 of this Duty : However, it is but a little  
 and light Matter, in Comparison of solid  
 Profit. So if that be given up to the Rea-  
 sons alledged, this will not be disputed,  
 especially by Men, that (we may conclude)  
 are more tender of Wealth than Fame.

I proceed therefore, to *another* suppos'd  
 Mistake. They that will not be induced  
 to compensate for Offences against their  
 Neigh-

Neighbour, may depend on the Freedom SERM.  
and Graciousness of God's Pardon to Sin- V.  
ners through Christ ; and think it no W  
Pardon, at least not a gracious and free  
Pardon, if not had without answering and  
discharging *themselves*, the Debts and Da-  
mages they have incurred. Now it is  
true and certain, that the Grace of our  
God and Saviour towards lost Mankind, is  
a Subject of perpetual Wonder ; and the  
Bounty of it to be reach'd, neither by the  
Tongue of Men nor Angels. But unless  
People will pervert so great Salvation, and  
work their Destruction out of it ; they  
must know, that it is not without *Condi-*  
*tion*. And it is obvious to conceive, that  
it was unworthy of God's Majesty and  
Righteousness, that it *should* be without  
Condition. The Terms are prescribed by  
HIM, which the *penitent* will most thank-  
fully submit to. All Cavilling, on their  
Part, would manifestly be senseless and  
ungrateful. Let us appeal therefore to  
Scripture, to find, if Restitution and Re-  
paration of Injury be not one of those  
Terms on which God grants his Par-  
don.

SERM. The Old Law says, *Levit. vi. 2, &c.*  
 V. *If a Soul sin, and commit a Trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his Neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in Fellowship, or in a Thing taken away by Violence, or hath deceived his Neighbour, or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely: in any of all these that a Man doth, sinning therein; then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the Thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost Thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the Principal, and shall add the fifth Part more thereto, and give unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the Day of his Trespass Offering. Then follow the Offerings, ver. 6. and the seventh concludes, and it shall be forgiven. And the same Condition of Forgiveness you may find required in the vth of Numbers. Here I must desire you to observe, that I do not cite the Laws of restoring double, and four, and five-fold, which took Place upon Prosecution*

secution and the Conviction before a Judge ; SERM.  
but only the Rule of what was prescribed V.  
as necessary for quieting the Conscience,   
and Reconcilement with God, to be per-  
formed voluntarily, none accusing the  
Criminal but himself. And therefore, no  
Doubt can be made of the Perpetuity of  
this Law, as to the Substance of it.

The next Testimony may be taken from  
the Prophet *Ezekiel*. He deduces very  
distinctly the established Conditions and  
Causes of keeping and losing, and regain-  
ing the Divine Favour ; as elsewhere, so  
in the xxxiiiid Chapter, where at the 14th  
and following Verses, is shewed, upon  
what Foot God has, in Justice and Mer-  
cy, fixed his receiving wicked Men to  
Grace ; thus ; *Again, when I say unto the  
Wicked, Thou shalt surely die : if he turn  
from his Sin, and do that which is lawful  
and right ; if the Wicked restore the Pledge,  
give again that he had robbed, walk in  
the Statutes of Life without committing  
Iniquity ; he shall surely live, he shall not  
die. None of his Sins that he hath commit-  
ted shall be mentioned unto him ; he hath*

SERM. *done that which is lawful and right ; he shall  
V. surely live.*

In the *third* Place, you may see, that our Lord confirms the Law and the Prophets in this Point, by his full Acceptance of *Zaccheus's* Declaration, *Luke xix. 8, 9.* *And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor : and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This Day is Salvation come to this House, for so much as he also is the Son of Abraham.* It is true, this good Publican carries his Restitution, as well as his Charity, to a noble Pitch ; and out of Zeal and Humility condemns himself, though a voluntary Confessor and Restorer, to the same Penalty that the Law did a prosecuted and convicted Criminal. Yet the Argument is but so much the stronger for our Lord's approving of Restitution in general, (*single* Restitution at least) as an Ingredient to Repentance, required in them that mean to obtain Salvation, and the spiritual Privilege of *Abraham's* Sons. But what Need is there to labour this particular  
Proof,

Proof, when either of those so well known Texts, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*; and, *All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them*; when either of these, I say, must evince the Obligation we speak of; unless it can be supposed, that Men are generally willing to be refused Justice, or that the Not-repairing Injuries is an Evidence of our Love.

SERM.  
V.

The Conclusions are; *Such is the Condition of Pardon limited by God*; and for any body to except against it, with those in *Ezekiel*, in the Place quoted, that said, *The Way of the Lord is not equal*, were as contrary to common Sense, as Christian Piety. Indeed, besides the Evidence now given from Scripture that so it is, we may add another Consideration that it could not be otherwise. For if a Man were pardoned for Wrongs done, without the Reparation in his Power; this would be rather a Licence to persist in Iniquity, than a Pardon. And how contrary is that, not only to the Design and whole Tenour of the Gospel, but even to the Rectitude of the Divine Nature itself? For either



SERM. Injustice is no Sin ; or he, that will not  
 V. pay the Debts he has contracted by inju-  
 ring others, does obstinately and impeni-  
 tently continue in Sin ; And such Religion  
 cannot save, unless that could be called  
 Religion that destroys the Honour of God,  
 and corrupts directly, instead of reforming,  
 the Manners of Men.

And now there remains little more to  
 be said on this Head. For what I men-  
 tioned, of hoping that Men are bound to  
 forgive those that have offended, will soon  
 appear to be ill apply'd to our Case. We  
 are bound, no doubt, to forgive our of-  
 fending Brother ; but the Law that binds  
 us, adds, *If he turn again, if he repent.*  
 Therefore, if he turn not, nor repent, but  
 persist in his Injury ; the Divine Laws ob-  
 lige us no more than the Human, to give  
 up our just Satisfaction, and make a Gift  
 of our Right to his injurious and obdurate  
 Temper. It is true, some special Cases  
 do happen, wherein the Meekness of a  
 good Man must determine him to acquit  
 a just Demand for the Sake of Peace, and  
 the Honour of Religion : But they are  
 left to Christian Discretion. To make such  
 an

an Obligation general is without Founda-  
tion, and overthrows the Property of Man-  
kind, leaving it a Prey to Avarice and Ra-  
pine.

SERM.

V.

Then for the *last* Excuse, that the injured Party wants not the Compensation so much as the Injurious wants to detain it; it is so weak that I would not have named it, had I not been sensible, that, as weak as it is, it goes a great Way with too many People. By this Consideration (if it may be called so) many encourage themselves not to satisfy for their Breaches of Trust, and other wicked Advantages made upon their Neighbours; as they are likewise daily encouraged by the same to commit such Crimes at the first. And yet there appears no Place for Argument to be used with these weak and wilful People, that make themselves wiser than all the Laws of God and Man. *They* make no Difference, nor *suffer* any to be made, between the Rights of Men, because of their Wealth or of their Poverty; but as *they* have the same Nature and Original, that is just Acquisition, establish one Sanction and one Treatment for both.

That

SERM. That the Rule of the Governors of the  
 V. World is so, no body can be ignorant; and *that* of the Sovereign of it, from whom we hold all our Possessions and Rights, is seen *Exod. xxiii. 3. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor Man in his Cause.* But the Poor that we speak of will be even *Judges* in their own Cause; which yet nothing can be brought to favour but the levelling Principles, that pretend no better than the Ruin of the State Providence have established Mankind in, and are, in the Upshot, after much Mischief, still found impracticable. These must therefore be rejected; and the Injuries done by the Poor to the Rich, must be repaired no less than those by the Rich to the Poor: Else *the Judge of all the Earth* will certain'y *do Right*, and condemn those wicked Men, who, through meer Partiality, thrust out of their Minds the natural Notions of Right and Wrong.


And thus I have said as much as appear'd at this Time necessary, to evince the Insufficiency of such Excuses as Men are apt to frame and alledge to exempt themselves from the Duty of Restitution; and

and have likewise, on the Occasion, produced positive and full Proofs of its being absolutely required as a natural necessary Fruit, a First-Fruit of sincere Repentance.

SERM.  
V.  
~

Now to make the utmost Improvement of what has been said, I would mention several important Articles, wherein many offend, and which fall under the general Nature of Reparation of Injury, if not of direct Restitution; and affect us in the Concern of Repentance by most of the same Rules and Reasons that have been given to justify THAT. The Cause why I would name them is, that they seem not enough attended to; which is very dangerous, since arising with the rest, from the Nature of Justice, they are bound upon us no less indispensably.


The *first* of these Branches shall be, the Repairing, to our Power, all Wrongs done to the *Reputation* of our Neighbour. The great Commonness of the Fault at this Day, when Opposites are treated as if they had lost all Right to Truth, is my only Reason for naming this Case as not enough apprehended. For in itself it must

SERM. must be confess'd to be sufficiently plain ;  
 V.  most Men believing, and indeed feeling,  
 that they may suffer as much by the Loss  
 of their Credit, as of their Lands or Trea-  
 sure. Accordingly, our utmost Power  
 must be exerted no less in Undoing the  
 one than the other Wrong. If in one Case  
 we are to sacrifice our Wealth, in the  
 other we are to venture our own Reputa-  
 tion to redress the Damage done our  
 Neighbour's ; and that under the same  
 Strictness. That which will not bear  
 this Fruit also, is in Effect no Repen-  
 tance.

The *second* Observation may be of the  
 Neglect of our *Posts*, with respect to any  
 Obligation they give of providing for the  
 Instruction or Government of others. Such  
 are very various, and placed remote from  
 each other. But there is one, that of a  
 Parent, or Master and Mistress of a Fa-  
 mily, which is found every where. There-  
 fore it may be of Use to say, that who-  
 soever has neglected the Duty to his  
 Charge, has not taken the Cares for their  
 Improvement, Manners, and Happiness,  
 incumbent upon him, is tied to make the  
 Defect

Defect good, if possible, by future Appli- SERM.  
cation. He has with-held a due Debt, and V.  
of a precious Kind; and therefore can-  
not be discharged before the Righteous  
Judge, unless he strain his Thought, and  
labour to satisfy for it; no more than a  
Guardian, that has defrauded his Pupil,  
and will not restore his less valuable  
Right.

*Thirdly,* It must not be forgot, that  
Men are to repair, as far as practicable,  
the Injuries they may have done by giving  
*Scandal*. This likewise is a Wrong to the  
Souls of our Brethren. By it they are  
robb'd of their Christian Persuasion, of  
their Modesty, or of their Innocence. And  
do not these call for Satisfaction equally  
at least with our temporal Goods? It is  
true, the Way to make it is not so certain  
many Times: But Men must be true to  
what is in their Skill and Power. Your  
Advantage in Wit, or Age, or Wealth,  
or Quality, has been employ'd to the  
Destruction, instead of the Edification, of  
your Neighbour. If then you repent in-  
deed, Shall not all these be engaged on the  
right Side, that have served the Adversary  
but

SERM. but too long? And shall they not, in the  
 V. first Place, be applied to the freeing and  
 Restoring those they have intangled and  
 overthrown? Or if they be not; can any  
 one, or the Person himself, think, that  
 he can be received as truly turn'd to God,  
 and come over to the Cause of his holy  
 Religion.

The *last* Article I have now to offer, is  
 of *Charity* to the Poor neglected by the  
 Penitent. And concerning that, he ought  
 to consider his Deficiencies (I must affirm  
 it) in no lower a Rank than of Debts to  
 be paid. It will not be enough, that, for  
 the Remainder of his Life, he have a  
 due Regard to Objects of Charity, in Pro-  
 portion to other good Christians of like  
 Ability. He must also look backwards,  
 and see to make *Amends* by the Abun-  
 dance of these good Fruits now, for the  
 Years of Barrenness that are past. If a  
 Man's Steward convert to his own Use,  
 what should have made the *Payments* ap-  
 pointed by his Lord, it is confess'd he  
 must answer it to those he has so de-  
 frauded. And where is the Difference?  
 Are we not all, that have Ability in the  
 State

State of Stewardship, and our Goods committed to us under the Trust (amongst other Things) of providing for the Necessities of the Poor? Surely therefore, he that repents cannot be excused from amending the Neglects of this Kind: No, those Arrears must be clear'd, if he would ever hope for the Discharge of, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, from the Lord of all, at his great and final Audit.

SERM.  
V.  


Now I have ended the Observations I had to offer at present, to represent to you divers Works or Fruits of Repentance, which a Man will find absolutely necessary, if he discern he has fail'd in them, upon a Survey of his Life past; all comprehended under the general Head of *Reparation of Injuries*.

The *next* Thing I proposed was, to consider the penitent Person as looking *forward* to the Conduct of himself *hereafter*, and to remark some special Fruits of his Repentance, necessary to him in that View. These will appear best, upon first exposing the common Error.

A Man sensible of his wicked and ruinous Course, makes a clear and strong Resolution



**SERM.** Resolution to avoid his Faults, and perform his Duties; and this he binds, it may be, with the most religious and awful Vows. His Sincerity he is conscious of; and so reckons upon the Work as finish'd. But when he returns from his Retirement into the Midst of former Temptations, they, by insensible Degrees, steal from him the Strength of his Resolution, and betray him after a Time to shameful Relapses. Nevertheless, his Fear and Conviction and Sorrow are renewed: He questions (though without Cause) his former Sincerity, and labours to resolve yet more strongly, and vow more fervently. But again the Success proves as before. And the Consequence, after repeating these Attempts divers Times, is too commonly this fatal one, even a Despair of keeping God's Commandments, as a Thing impossible to all his Endeavours, and then the abandoning himself to the Ways of his own Heart without Remorse.

The Mistake and Fault of this Conduct lies in this; that we do not so earnestly consider of these as of our temporal Affairs; else we should not so much overlook

look the Means and Helps, and yet depend upon the End. The Resolution we speak of is good and necessary ; but if a Man resolves to go a long Journey, and sets forth without taking any Order for the needful Provisions, he will soon resolve to come back again. The Observation therefore is, that whosoever would repent to Purpose, and so do the consequent Works, is obliged to make a particular Study of the Method and the Assistances, by which, in Probability, he may be supported and guided in his new Course. The Bodies of Animals cannot grow without Nourishment, nor the Fruits of the Earth ordinarily without cultivating ; nor the Fruits of Repentance without Discipline. The Manners of Children are formed by the careful and constant Hand of their Parents or Masters ; and Men, whose habitual Disorders make it necessary theirs should be formed anew, must be Masters to themselves ; and their Hours of Care and Thoughtfulness should prescribe the general Employment to all the rest. It is true, the Means and Helps to a holy Life are prescribed in the Scripture ; but then, some

SERM.

V.



SERM. of them are not enjoyn'd, but in certain  
 V. Circumstances; and the Measure and Fre-  
 quency of some others may be adapted  
 variously to Variety of Circumstances;  
 and some again are so general, that they  
 require every Man's Thought and Discre-  
 tion to apply them usefully to his own  
 Case. 'Tis apparent therefore, that a right  
 Conduct in this Affair is naturally the  
 Fruit of serious and repeated Deliberations,  
 and faithful Searches into the Constitutions  
 and Habits of our Mind, and all Things  
 indeed within and round about us. There-  
 upon our Reason will form Resolutions as  
 strong for the necessary Means, as for the  
 End itself. Without the wise Choice  
 and constant Use of which Means, it is as  
 weak to hope for the Reformation of vi-  
 cious Habits by the Force of a general Re-  
 solution, as it would be to cure a chronical  
 Distemper that had corrupted the Mass of  
 our Blood by one single Dose of Physick.

The endless Variety of Mens Circum-  
 stances makes it necessary to forbear parti-  
 cular Rules. Every one must study and  
 determine for *himself*, with Diligence and  
 Impartiality, with regard to his Aversions

or

or Fondnesses; or consult also with such SERM.  
as he has Reason to think best quali- V.  
fied to advise him; which last (by the way) }  
should be well considered; since it is evi-  
dent, there are Cases and Persons, not a  
few, where it is no less necessary to procure  
others to think for them, than generally  
it is for all Men to think for themselves.

I have no more now to add, but the  
naming to you the principal of these Helps  
and Instruments to conduct and support  
Men in a holy Life: The *first* is, *Medi-*  
*tation*, or *Reading*, and *Hearing* of our  
Duties, and the Motives to them. The  
*second*, *Prayer*, and other Acts of *Devo-*  
*tion*. The *third*, Acts of *Mortification*  
and *Self-denial*: And the *last*, (which yet  
is a Branch of the former) the *Withdraw-*  
*ing* from all the *Occasions* and *Incentives* of  
our Evil-doing.

God grant that we may discern wisely,  
and use faithfully the Means necessary for  
every one of us in particular; and bless  
them to the Production of *Fruits meet for*  
*Repentance*, that so we may *flee*, by that  
only *Way*, and be *delivered from the*  
*Wrath to come*, through Jesus Christ.



## S E R M O N VI.

Of the Reason and Use of Prayer.



St. LUKE xi. 9.

*And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

SERM.  
VI.



THE Beginning of the Chapter, you will find our Lord, at the Request of one of his Disciples, teaches them a Form of Prayer for their Use, the same which has been just now repeated. To THAT, for their Encouragement in the Duty, he subjoins the following Parable, the 5th and next Verses, *Which of you shall*

*shall have a Friend, and shall go unto him at Midnight, and say unto him; Friend, lend me three Loaves, for a Friend of mine in his Journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him: And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the Door is now shut, and my Children are with me in Bed: I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his Friend; yet because of his Importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. Then follow the Words of my Text, as the Instruction of the Parable; And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

Doubtless a Man, considering the Majesty, Holiness, and Goodness of Almighty God, will be surprized at first with the Matter and Application of this Parable, and that of the *unjust Judge*, in the xviiiith Chapter, *which feared not God, neither regarded Man*. But when he shall likewise have considered the Perfection and Wisdom of the Teacher, *like whom never Man spake*, he will only admire the gra-

SERM. cious Condescension which would come  
 VI. down to such Comparisons, that every  
 ~~~~~ body might, in the plainest and strongest  
 Manner, be assur'd of the Necessity and  
 Efficacy of Prayer before the Throne of  
 God.

THAT is the Doctrine of my Text, introduc'd as you have seen ; that to receive from the Divine Bounty those good Things we stand in Need of ; the Application by Prayer, and even frequent and earnest Prayer is required. That accordingly, although a Man be possess'd of the other Qualifications which would render him accepted with God, yet shall they not prevail, (no more than the Justice of the Widow's Cause in one Parable, or the Friendship of the Borrower in the other) till the Force of his Prayers be superadded ; and on the contrary, where that Course is taken, the Result shall be as express'd in the Verse next after my Text ; *Every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*

Now that we may gain the more distinct Sense of the Divine Wisdom, in  
 teaching

teaching us this in Terms (as I have already observed) so extraordinarily familiar and strong, 'tis requisite we search for the special Reason in the Nature of the Doctrine. THAT, upon full Consideration, we shall find not altogether evident to our Reason by natural Light : And although knowing Men had very sufficient Cause, from the general Practice of Mankind, to conclude it flowed from the Revelation of God to the ancient Patriarchs, directing or approving their Conduct herein ; yet is the Use of an *express* Declaration of the Will of God upon this Subject still signally great : Because since his Pleasure could not before with absolute Certainty be collected from the Reason of Things, Men of different Sorts were not wanting, who set at nought the Tradition of their Ancestors, and persuaded People, some, to the total *Disuse* of Prayer, others, to a gross *Corruption* in the Use. The *Corruption* lay in, changing the immediate Object of our Vows, carrying Men off from the Supreme, Him that indeed *bear-eth the Prayer*, to Mediators or Deputies, invented and ranged subordinately for the

SERM.

VI.





SERM.

VI.

Purpose. The Divine Nature itself, they argued, was too pure, too exalted for the Approach of Mortals; and under that Colour of the profoundest Veneration, cut off all direct Commerce between Man and his Creator and Governor. Where this obtain'd thus totally, the Worship and Trust of People became entirely idolatrous, and a spreading Flagitioufness of Manners wanted not the Protection of corrupted Principles; and the Nations that received it in Part only, yet *worshiped the Creature more than the Creator*, and abandoned themselves, in Proportion, to other Immorality and Abominations.

This was the Error of the *Abuse*, indeed is still in many Parts of the World. The other I mentioned is of the *Disuse* of Prayer; into which Error, though not apt (as the former) to grow national, by Reason of a strong Disposition in most Men to the contrary, yet Particulars are in Danger to be mislead. The Patrons of it, both of old and in our Days, have not been sparing of their vain Wit in ridiculing the Devotion of Mankind; and, which only is worth our Notice, pretend likewise to  
set

set it aside by Force of accurate Reasoning. SERM.  
For, say they, since all our Necessities, VI.  
and every Circumstance that is good or  
evil to us, are known to God, and even  
better than to ourselves; and since the  
Qualifications too of each Person that may  
render him acceptable, always appear in  
his Sight; and his immense Goodness  
besides is of itself perpetually ready to give  
and order what is best and fittest; to what  
End can Prayers serve? Not to inform  
him, who is omniscient; nor to prevail  
on him, whose Bounty needs no Sollicita-  
tion, and whose Wisdom is incapable of  
being mov'd by it.

This is the Substance of their Argu-  
ment; and the Answer to it is now short  
and plain, That God himself has appoint-  
ed the Method which they decry: In him  
alone it evidently rests to settle, as he  
pleases, the Ways and Conditions of his  
Creatures receiving good Things at his  
Hands. And the Condition of Prayer he  
has settled, and in the Doctrine of my  
Text declared to us. And if such Objec-  
tors insist against it, as weak and impro-  
per, we may satisfy ourselves, if not them,  
that

SERM. that *the Foolishness of God is wiser than*  
 VI. *Men, and the Weakness of God is stronger*  
 than Men.

From what has been said, may appear the Goodness and the Wisdom of the Divine Teaching, to set this Truth of our Duty in so strong a Light; that it might stand absolutely guarded against those pernicious Misconstructions and Perversions, which would otherwise carry a Strength sufficient to mislead great Numbers. For if we consider but a little of the ever-dependent and hazardous State of Mortality; of our Wants and Distresses, our Weakness and Blindness, spiritual and temporal; what is there that we can be more dangerously, more fatally ignorant of, than the true Course of obtaining and preserving the Divine Favour, Pardon, Grace, and Protection.

But there is no Need we should rest this Matter here: It is indeed sufficient for rejecting all Opposition of Arguments, and determining our Practice, to know that such is the Will of God. Yet our Satisfaction will be improved, and our Gratitude excited, if we see (as there is large  
 Room

Room to shew it) that this Way of Prayer SERM.  
is not only instituted of God, but most VI.  
*worthy* of his Institution, and most excel-  
lently and powerfully adapted in its Nature  
to promote our Interest, and procure with  
Effect what his Goodness would confer.  
THAT Goodness magnifies itself, not only  
in bestowing good Things, but in making  
the Receivers themselves good, to their  
utmost Measure; which is surely the no-  
blest Beneficence. In order to that, it  
confines, of Necessity, for the present, its  
own Overflowings, so as to make a Di-  
stinction between the Good and the Evil,  
and require certain Qualities in all that would  
surely partake of it. Now if it be found,  
that the Obligation and Exercise of Prayer  
do above all Things operate towards the  
forming those requisite Qualities; the  
Proof is made, that such Appointment is  
both wise and gracious; indeed to Admi-  
ration so, requiring a Condition in itself  
apparently easy, and yet effectual to ac-  
complish with itself all the other most dif-  
ficult Conditions. The Business then be-  
fore us is, to enquire what are these Con-  
ditions qualifying Men to become the  
Subjects

SERM. Subjects of Divine Bounty ; and to observe how the Use of Devotion suffers us not to be unfurnished with them.

VI.  


If we take along with us that Divine Purpose, of making Men the better by the Dispensation of his Gifts, it will lead us to those Qualities, and shew they must be, the Knowledge or Belief of God, and the Endeavour of obeying his Will ; and by Consequence, where Men have failed of that Endeavour and Obedience, a serious Return to them. Without these, it is plain, no solid Foundation can be laid of any Morality, Virtue, Goodness, or Praise. These, therefore, we may be sure, (consequently to that excellent Purpose,) God will require to capacitate Men for his Favour. True it is, however, that he does give many Things to many not so capacitated. But my Meaning is only, that such have no *Title* to any of his Gifts, and are utterly excluded from the most perfect and important of them. We have therefore to consider of, as propos'd, these *three* Things, *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Obedience* ; and remark how they are promoted

ted

ted and inforced by the Obligation and Practice of Prayer to God. SERM.  
VI.

Concerning the *first*; the Necessity of *Faith* to find any Favour with God, and the *Evidence* of the Necessity is such, that the Apostle makes the Record of *Enoch's* having *pleased God*, a certain Proof of his Faith, and of obtaining, *by Faith*, what he obtained at his Hands, even his *Translation*, the glorious Mark of Divine Acceptance almost peculiar to himself. And that *it is*, (as he argues) *impossible without Faith to please God*, appears from the Nature of all Actions, whence they are accounted and named good or evil, either in general, or with Regard to particular Persons. The Intent of the Heart, and not the Thing done, or its Consequence, gives the Diversity. I may receive the greatest Benefit from an Action, and yet owe Nothing to the Doer; and so I may the greatest Detriment, without any Disobligation from him; and, strictly speaking, no *Deed* in itself is better or worse than a mechanick Motion: But the *Mind* and *Purpose* of the Agent gives it Life and Quality. So for Goodness of any human  
Action

SERM. Action in general, without a Consideration  
 VI. and View, immediate or habitual, of our Duty to God, it can have no Subsistence in Nature. And if we should suppose a Man to observe in his Life the Matter of the Divine Law, but not from any Regard to the Lawgiver; his Doings will be only accidental and indifferent, utterly void of all Value or Probity. But then to *believe* in God is evidently the first and necessary Step to be made. Nothing can be done or forborn for his Sake whom we know not. Men have indeed talked of a Morality independent of Faith; but it is a vain Pretence, and must fall to-pieces, wanting both the Foundation of Duty, and the Ties of Reward and Punishment.

Now see, how this main Principle of all Virtue, our *Faith* in God is preserved and kept fresh in our Minds, by the Obligation of perpetual Access to his Majesty. 'Tis apparent, as soon as mentioned, that the Impression of our great Lord and Governor must be daily renewed and inculcated by the solemn Offering of our Petitions in his Presence. And as our particular Wants are numetous, our Dangers known or unknown,

known, infinite, and our Dependance never ceasing for a Moment; the daily and hourly Application to his Goodness and Protection, fills our Hearts with the continual and lively Idea of the Divine Being, the Creator and Preserver of Men.

SERM.  
VI.

Neither is this Idea imperfect or confused, representing in general a vast Superiority; but exhibits distinctly and strongly the glorious Perfections by which the Divine Majesty must be apprehended. To instance: When we by Voice or Thought indifferently send forth our Desires to God, at all Seasons, and from every Place, and upon every Emergence, and future View likewise; and know that the same is practising (as enjoin'd) by the infinite Multitude of his Worshipers in the Nations throughout the Universe: This fixes in all Minds a right Notion of his *Knowledge* unlimited, and *Comprehension* undisturbed, and *Presence* filling *Heaven and Earth*. Then, that which results from these, the *Wisdom* of God; how is it evidenced to us, while we make ourselves a Part of those endless Numbers, who are still recommending and referring their various



SERM. rious Interests to him, and acknowledge  
 VI. accordingly his all-wise Controll upon the  
 Order of human Events; and are more-  
 over for the Confusion and Darkness of  
 their own Minds and Understandings, im-  
 ploring his sure Guidance and Illumina-  
 tion!

Let me now stop a little, and ask: If these Things are true and certain; if they are necessary for the Religion and the Honesty of Mankind to be understood by every Soul; What Course could be taken, equal to this of Prayer, for the Teaching and the Keeping them up in full Force and Brightness over the whole World? Could any Disputation or Reasoning, any Proof or Demonstration, so convey and infuse the Sense of them into Hearts the most ignorant and brutish, or perpetually revive it with the most Forgetful, or so practically apply its Force upon the Thoughtless and Unattentive? And who is there, how wise and abstracted soever, but must confess his Want of Thought and Attention in Spiritual Matters, and, if Pride hinder not, acknowledge himself a Debtor to these Quicknings?

And

And now we go on to reflect upon other the transcendent Excellencies of the Divine Nature, in what a Manner the Practice of Devotion renders the Apprehension of them also familiar and rooted in every Breast. Infirmity and Obnoxiousness extend throughout the human Race. They find themselves unable continually to compass or hold the Good they desire, and is necessary for them; or to put by the Evil that afflicts and that threatens them. Here we have a large Foundation, and the main Subject of Men's Supplications. But when all the Blessings and Enjoyments, all the Miseries and Distresses, the Hopes and Fears of the Inhabitants of the Earth, are assembled together to be averted every Day, or to be obtain'd; to whom can we conceive they are presented, but to *Omnipotence*? See what a Preservative of true Religion God has herein provided us with, (but Men labour to corrupt it,) since from revering the Greatness and Power, we proceed with full Certainty to acknowledge also the *Unity* of the Godhead.

Again, if we look to the *Benignity* of  
 VOL. I. M our

SERM.

VI.

SERM. our Maker, it will be clear this same

VI. Practice is built upon it; without ceasing  
 acknowledges and celebrates it; and in  
 Spight of Stupidity, keeps warm the Gra-  
 titude it both requires and rewards. The  
 necessary Gradation thus appears: The Sup-  
 plicant (that he may be so) is first convin-  
 ced of the *Knowledge* of the Superior he  
 adores, that he may understand his Con-  
 dition; then of his *Wisdom*, that he may  
 take the right Measures for his true Ad-  
 vantage; thirdly, of his *Power*, lest he  
 should not be able to execute the Methods  
 he has judged proper for the Case under-  
 stood by him: But still, lastly, he must  
 believe his *Liberality*, or else he sees he  
 should go in vain to the Knowing, the  
 Wise, and the Powerful. The Benefit  
 hence accruing to Religion, the Spiritual  
 Improvement to the World, is seen in one  
 Word; since, as the former Sentiments  
 of the Divine Nature fill us with Fear and  
 Wonder, this last of its *Beneficence* brings  
 us nearer, and adds Love to our Adora-  
 tion.

There are yet remaining to be in-  
 stanced, the *Justice* and the *Mercy* of God.

The

The Prosperity and Power of many wicked People, got and held, and exercised, it may be, with Violence and Wrong, are apt to shock those that enter not into the Depths of Providence; for as much as they see all Power must be of the Gift of God, or at least the Permission: But the Belief of his Justice is, in the mean while, declared and supported by the Recourse of all injured Sufferers to his Audience and Tribunal. The Appeal we are taught to make thither, suspends the Force of the Objection; and the Cries, to Heaven, of the Oppressed maintain the Hope and Faith of Divine Justice in themselves and By-standers, and at the same Time terrify their Oppressors with the Apprehension of its Approach. Lastly; as the general Condition and Behaviour of Men in their present wretched State, is such, that all must be conscious of their Unworthiness and Guilt; and rarely one can be so brutish as to beg any Thing of God, without also begging his Forgiveness; the Sense of Heavenly Mercy, and the Acknowledgment of our Souls to it, is every Day re-kindled, while we comply with the Duty

SERM. prescribed us, of bringing our Requests  
 VI. before the Throne of Grace. And our  
 Persuasion upon this Article, of *Mercy* with God, is so essential to Religion in general, that it cannot otherwise at all subsist, but would be swallow'd up in Desperation.


But with respect to our Christian Revelation, the same Duty has a special and excellent Use, serving to admonish us of the glorious Mysteries of that Mercy revealed and offered to us in the blessed Sacrifice and Mediation of Jesus Christ; for as much as no Petition pretends to Admittance, but as it is stamped and protected with his Name and Merits, and Intercession.

So far we have been considering of the Efficacy of Prayer to promote and establish *Faith* in God, and have thereby vindicated the Institution itself, and put upon it the high Value that arises from compassing an End of that vast Importance and indispensable Necessity. Now we are to speak of *Repentance* and *Obedience*, as promoted by the same Means.

The Man that knows his Guilt in the wilful

wilful Breach of God's Commandments, and is obliged to come before him to present his Supplications, What can he ask? Any Evil to be removed, any Blessing to be conferred? His Conscience must retort the Presumption in his Face, till he has first asked for Pardon, and sued for Reconciliation. But how can he ask THAT, but upon the Terms prescribed by God for obtaining it? They, manifestly, are Repentance for the Offences past, and a full Determination of future Obedience. If his Offence had been against a Superior on Earth, the Fact might be unknown, or the Doer, or the Intent with which it was done; and so he might have approach'd him boldly, and, while an Enemy, have hoped to gain, as many do, the Favours of a Friend. But here, as we have already seen, he is convinced, that the Thing, and the Person, and his Heart, are all open and undisguisable to the perfect Knowledge of him with whom he hath to do. In the former Case, though his Guilt were apparent, yet a feigned Sorrow and false Promises of another Conduct might prevail for Remission; whereas

SERM. before the Searcher of Hearts those Methods can have no Effect, but that of a fresh Provocation. Again; with *us*, after Men's Crimes are known, and their Continuance too in the same evil Disposition; still the Necessity of Affairs, the Defect of Power, and sometimes of Justice, secures them a Connivance. But the Criminal that stands before GOD cannot, as we have shewn, but be a Believer in the Holiness of his Justice, and in his Omnipotence to give it certain Execution. And can he then offer himself as the Object of his Favour, being conscious he is only qualified for that of his Vengeance? Every Call therefore to the Duty of Prayer, from the Sense of his Necessities, or the publick Order and Example, is a fresh and forcible Admonition to repent of his Wickedness, and form the Resolves and Methods of reforming his Life. And these Admonitions carry with them a Terror, such as one should think would never suffer the Man to take any Rest, till he had complied with their Demand. Is he not in the State of an Enemy and Rebel, known and obstinate; as to his Cause, self-condemn'd;

demn'd; and to the Issue, desperate; and SERM.  
yet refusing the Terms, the only possible VI.  
Terms of Forgiveness and Reconciliation? 

And in this Condition does he, without Horror, enter into the House of his Lord, and appear in the Midst of his faithful Servants, and assume a Share in their Hopes and Requests, their Services and Adorations? Very stupid, or very desperate, indeed he must be, that does. The just Construction upon such a Proceeding being so terrible and so obvious, that it partakes of Hypocrisy, and Neglect, and Indignity towards God; before whom he behaves as if he had bribed his Justice, or dared to defy his Power, or would dissemble with his Omniscience. There is but one Way for a Person in these Circumstances to turn himself. He cannot lay aside the Duty of Prayer: *That* were to renounce all Interest in Heaven, and remain abandon'd and destitute in the Midst of this World of Dangers, and consign'd to eternal Misery in that which is to come. And yet, as we have shew'd, he cannot continue that Duty; such an Impenitent, every Time *he bows the*



SERM. *Knee before* Almighty God, imitating in  
 VI. Effect the Pattern of the Soldiers who  
 mock'd our blessed Saviour. What re-  
 mains? God and his Laws are immu-  
 table: The MAN then must be changed,  
 and the Impediment removed, THAT  
 SIN PERSISTED IN, which disqualifies  
 him from all Intercourse with Heaven,  
 but that of a mad Provocation here, and  
 thence a suitable Retribution. This is  
 the natural Force of the enjoin'd Exer-  
 cise of Prayer to compel our Repentance  
 and Obedience: It is working incessant-  
 ly; and to People, that have not thrown  
 from them all their Reason, irresistible.  
 May it have that Effect upon us.

And let us magnify our Heavenly Fa-  
 ther, for his wise and gracious Appoint-  
 ment, perverted and objected to only for  
 its infinite Condescension. Let us make  
 a reverent and assiduous Use of it; and  
 the blessed Success will answer the Pro-  
 mise: Let us *ask, and it shall be given*  
*us; seek, and we shall find; knock, and it*  
*shall be open'd unto us.*



# S E R M O N VII.

Of Praying in the Name of Christ.

PART I.



J O H N. xvi. 23.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*



**W**HEN our Lord, *knowing* SERM. VII. *that his Hour was come,* had declared to his Apostles, that he should be with them yet but a little while ; we read their *Heart was troubled, and fill'd with Sorrow.* Indeed it could be no otherwise : The Apprehension of their Master's Suffering, and their own Orphan State, amidst the Hatred of the World, after the glorious

SERM.  
VII.



rious Hopes they had conceived, must have overwhelmed them with an extreme Weight of Grief, and Fear, and Disappointment. He therefore, ever full of a compassionate Regard to his Servants, we find, applies himself throughout this and the two foregoing Chapters, to provide them with the strongest Supports, and most suitable Comforts. To which Effect, we have here published several Points of his *Revelation* reserv'd to this Time ; and others repeated, reinforced, and applied. One of these, of very great Account, is found in my Text, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.* Ye see how proper and full a Consolation it ministers : All Wants answered by being express'd ; and in particular, the lamented Absence of their Lord supplied by the Power of his Name. Of these, the former, indeed, the general Efficacy of Prayer, we meet with in other Discourses of our Saviour, and in the *Old Testament* likewise ; but the latter is first opened in these Chapters, that the Apostles might sustain themselves with Assurance of being ever heard thro' the

the Interest and Virtue of his Name, who had *chosen* them, and whom they had *loved* and *believed*. SERM.  
VII.  
~

Nevertheless, this and other Declarations were <sup>not</sup> only thus *tim'd* for their Sakes, but *made* with a common Regard to the Direction and Benefit of all other Persons and Ages of the Church they were to establish; which Thing appears from the Prayer contained in the following Chapter, (the xviith.) wherein our Lord most solemnly commending the Disciples, after his Departure, to the Protection and Sanctification of his Father; explains his Will to place all future Christians also in the like Degree of Divine Love, and an equal Hope of Communication of Divine Blessings. Verse 20, and 21. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their Word: that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.* Accordingly, we see, the Christian Church embraces the Direction above, and in her *Litany* closes all Addresses to the Throne of Grace with the prevailing Name of her Lord Jesus Christ.

And

SERM. And, I would to God, every Part and  
 VII. Member of it had contented themselves  
 with this all-sufficient Pledge for obtaining  
 their Petitions; had not dishonour'd THAT,  
 and weaken'd their Interest, instead of fo-  
 tifying it, with other Names and Medi-  
 ations. But the excellent Use of that  
 Form, prescrib'd by God, which shews  
 itself in directing the Matter of Prayer,  
 qualifying the Petitioner, and securing the  
 Success, will best infer, how absurd in it-  
 self, pernicious to real Piety, and injurious  
 to our ONE Lord, this other Practice of  
 human Invention deserves to be esteemed.

The Consideration of the Promise, made  
 in the Text, will lead us to the Use I  
 have mentioned. Every reasonable Man,  
 upon View of the Generality of that, or  
 any other like Proposition, immediately  
 enquires, if there be not some Limitations  
 included or intended, though not directly  
 express'd. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Fa-  
 ther in my Name, he will give it you.* The  
 common Sense of a moral Man will con-  
 fine the Interpretation to Things fit to be  
 asked by the one, and given by the other:  
 And the Knowledge of a Christian Man  
 in-

instructs him from other Scriptures, what are the Particulars necessary to be observ'd, as well in the Subject Matter of the Petition, as in the Person and Spirit of him that makes it. And if our asking *in the Name* of Christ, serves naturally as a perpetual Monitor, and most powerful Regulator to those Purposes, the Excellency of the Appointment will thereby appear; which I design for the *first* Part of this Discourse; as I do for the *latter*, the comfortable and evident Assurance of Success, which undeniably springs from the same.

SERM.  
VII.  
~

The principal Limitations to the Promise, *Whatsoever ye shall ask*, we shall find to be, *first*, that we ask Things good, and to good Ends: *secondly*, that we be ourselves in a State of Repentance, and Disposition of Obedience: and *thirdly*, that we ask in Faith and full Trust on the Divine Goodness. The several Proofs of these Points, from Reason and Revelation, being first touch'd, I shall insist upon the same Consequence as maintain'd with a special Force and Effect, by the Christian Manner of Praying recommended in the Text.

The

SERM.

VII.



The *first* Limitations concern, as I said, the *Things* prayed for; that they be themselves good, and sought by the Supplicant for good Ends. In the former Part, as far as we ourselves are alone concerned, there would be no Need of the Rule, were it not for our Ignorance of the Matter; for no Man can desire nor ask for what he knows to be immediately prejudicial to himself; yet in Fact we are sure there is great Need of it. But how can it be apply'd, since our Ignorance is such, that unless we forbear almost all particular Petitions, especially in Things temporal, we shall most frequently fall into the Absurdity of praying against ourselves? Reason prescribes the Remedy; that these Requests must ever be accompanied with that Exception, express'd, or lodg'd in the Habit of our Minds; *if the All-seeing Eye discerns it to be finally good for us.* And hereby we do not only avoid the Evil we pray for, but obtain the Good we pray *not* for; the Goodness of our *Father, which is in Heaven, giving us upon this Condition, Bread, when we ask Stones, and Fish, when we ask Serpents.*

But

But it is more to our Design to prove, *secondly*, That in all Things which may concern others, we are confined to give a Place among our Petitions, to those only, which promote, or at least are not inconsistent with, their Benefit and Happiness. And this goes a great Way; because we can ask few Things for ourselves, wherein others are not, or may not also be concerned. God hath taught us, by the Light of Nature, and of his Word, that he is our common Father, the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of all Men. And therefore, altho' we had not, as we have, an express Command, not to curse, even our Enemies; yet it must appear injurious to God's Fatherly Goodness, to seek of him our own Satisfaction at the Expence of any other of his Children. It cannot be done without a Supposition of Partiality, which blasphemes the Divine Justice. To this I need not add the apparent Breach of the Charity we owe to our Brethren. Indeed, in the Contentions, which God, for wise and righteous Ends, suffers in this World, we do and may pray to him for Success against Violence and Oppression. But



**SERM.** when we implore his Aid for Victory over  
**VII.** our Enemies, which cannot be without  
 great Loss and Destruction of them ; it is  
 always understood to be done only upon  
 this Supposal and Condition, *If it please*  
*him not*, OTHERWISE to defeat their Malice,  
 and reconcile them to us and Justice : For  
 THAT we ought, in the first Place, to desire,  
 though, by the ordinary Course of Provi-  
 dence, we have little Ground to expect,  
 and therefore do not always express. Now  
 though all this be clear and absolutely con-  
 vincing in its own Nature, yet it is no less  
 evident, that a great Proportion of Man-  
 kind, (indeed, at some Time or other, al-  
 most every one,) through Levity, Self-  
 love, and various Passions, suffer it to slip  
 or be driven out of their Minds. And then  
 it is, the Throne of Justice and Majesty is  
 dishonour'd with foolish and uncharitable  
 Petitions, the religious Action profan'd, and  
 our *Prayers turned into Sin*. Neither will  
 Words alone secure a Man ; for the very  
 same which are innocent and acceptable  
 from one, may be criminal and irreligious in  
 another, that shuts out of his Heart the  
 Submission to the Divine Will, and the Ex-  
 ceptions

ceptions of brotherly Love, which ought ever to accompany and interpret them.

SERM.  
VII.  
~

Let us therefore see what Remedy for this Blindness and Intemperance of Spirit, we may draw from the Name of our Lord, which, by his Appointment, is added to all our Christian Devotions. As to the *former* Part, which immediately concerns our *own* Interests, little need be said. The Point is a perfect Resignation of our Desires to the Will of God. And since the Benevolence of his Will, even the Love of God to the World, has appear'd infinitely beyond all other Declarations of it, in the Person of Christ; the Mention of his Name, and the Hope of being heard for its Sake, admonish us most powerfully to give up all our Interests to the Disposal of that Love. It moderates all Inclinations, and cuts off all peremptory Choices of our own; that we may not lose the Benefit of his all-wise chusing for us, whose Goodness we can never forget, as we acknowledge we can never comprehend, while we name the Name of *Jesus Christ*.

Then if we proceed to the *other* Part,  
VOL. I. N the

SERM. the Obligation to pray for nothing prejudicial to our Neighbour ; that blessed  
 VII. Name will be found also to suggest the most lively and effectual Arguments to enforce it, and quicken the Sense of it upon our Minds. Our Lord hath redeemed us all from the deepest Misery, by a Transaction of wonderful Mercy and Condescension ; he hath given us by his regenerating Spirit the glorious Adoption of Sons of God, and consequently the blessed Hope of an eternal Inheritance in Heaven. From hence results a Union of the dearest Brotherhood, more than sufficient to root out of our Hearts all Malice and Selfishness, and to implant and cultivate the most enlarged and tender Benevolence, Affection, and Charity. Notwithstanding, lest any Man's private Interest should render him stupid to all this ; the same Lord hath made and declared the Effect of that Redemption, the Privileges of that Adoption, and the Possession of that Inheritance, to depend entirely upon the Condition of Charity, even his new Commandment of loving one another as he hath loved us all. Now let it be consider'd,

sider'd, whether any one that thinks at all can offer a Petition inconsistent with this Duty to his Brother in Christ, which must be clos'd with his Name, and will be received only for his Sake. Nothing can be propounded more absurd, undutiful, and shocking; and nothing therefore can be more powerful than that Form of Prayer, to make us, in this Point, either innocent or inexcusable.

SERM.  
VII.  
W

The *second* Caution, without observing which the general Promise of being heard for Christ's Sake will fail us, is that we design the Things ask'd to just and virtuous Ends. This St. *James* has intimated in his Reproof of some that did the contrary, Ch. iv. 3. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your Lusts.* If therefore the secret Purpose of our Heart be to make an ill Use of what we would receive, either to hurt ourselves by Intemperance, or our Neighbour by Injustice; we all know, *first*, that nothing can be Good with an evil Intention; and, *secondly*, that no such Intention can be hid from him we call upon, the

SERM. Searcher of Hearts. The Consequence is  
VII. plain.

Indeed this Point, though for the greater Clearness I have stated it by itself, is comprehended both under the foregoing and the following ones ; for every Thing is Evil to the Person that will make an evil Use of it ; and every Person is evil and impenitent, that desires or designs the Opportunity of doing Evil. So far in Truth is he from the State of Penitence ; that he is under the Love of Sin and Hope of Disobeying. For these Reasons, what I have already said of the Substance of our Prayers, and what I am to say of the Qualities required in him that makes them, may be sufficient for this Point also, without any particular Application of it to the Text.

The *next* Consideration then is of the *personal Qualifications* requisite to make our Devotions acceptable and efficacious. *Repentance* and *Faith* express them : The *former* I have proposed to speak of first ; as indeed the *second* cannot subsist without that Foundation ; but there must, instead of Christian Faith, be found only a vain  
Hope

Hope and ungodly Confidence. Now that SERM.  
*Repentance* (which cannot be less than VII.  
Humiliation for past Offences, and a full  
and immediate Purpose of future Reformation) is a Condition imply'd in every Promise of hearing our Prayers, may be thus collected by our own Reasoning. The Divine Laws are perfectly conformable to the Rectitude of the Divine Nature, from which they flow; and are built upon necessary and infallible Grounds for procuring the Good of those to whom they are given; from which Purpose the Benignity also of the Divine Nature can never recede. Upon these Accounts it must be judged, that the wilful Breach of those Laws will ever displease and provoke the Gracious and Holy Lord and Law-giver; and that every Person guilty of it, and persisting therein, must appear as rebellious and abominable in his Sight. The Laws of Men are far from that Justice and Purity; and so is their Observation from that Necessity or certain Benefit to the Subjects. Nevertheless, the presumptuous Breach of these is rarely dispensed with; and the Criminal has something

SERM. else to ask of his Governor than Favours  
 VII. and Largeffes. And, in the other Case ;  
 ~~~~~ How shall such a one appear in the Pre-  
 sence of God to ask any Thing but *Par-*  
*don* ? Or how shall he ask even *that*,  
 without a Resolution of Obedience for the  
 Time to come ? Otherwise, see what he  
 asks ; if it be not a Dissolution of that  
 inviolable and perfect Law for his private  
 Sake. And what Answer must such a  
 Petitioner expect ? Of Men indeed we  
 have seen the greatest Favours sued for,  
 and obtain'd by their greatest Enemies,  
 that have done them, and still mean them  
 the greatest Mischief. For either the  
 Doer of such Mischief has not been  
 known ; or his Intention, or the Nature  
 of the Thing itself have been disguised ;  
 or, notwithstanding, he has reconciled  
 himself by feign'd Repentance and Sub-  
 missions. But for such treacherous Ser-  
 vants there is no possible Place with our  
 Heavenly Master. No Act, no Intention,  
 can be misunderstood by him, or con-  
 cealed from him ; and the Hypocrisy of a  
 feign'd Repentance, instead of procuring  
 any Grace, does more ascertain and aug-  
 ment


ment his Vengeance. Reason therefore will conclude, that they call upon him in vain, that will not apply their Hearts to keep his Commandments; nay, and worse than in vain, since their Action carries the Nature of a Contempt, and seems to question the Knowledge, or the Holiness of God. And Scripture frequently and fully witnesses the same. But to our Purpose the Words in one Chapter, *Prov. xv.* will be enough; Verse 29. *The Lord is far from the Wicked; but he heareth the Prayer of the Righteous.* And Verse 8. with greater Force of Expression and Matter both, *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord; but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight.*

SERM.  
VII.  
~

Now to our principal Intent: To remark the Force of our Redeemer's Name, wherein we Christians offer up all our Prayers, for obliging and quickening us to perform this necessary Condition. The World was fallen under the Displeasure of Almighty God, by the Sin of our common Parent, and his whole Race; and at the same Time into great Darknes and Ignorance of his Will. It pleased him, in



SERM. his infinite Wisdom and Mercy, to appoint  
 VII. an Expiation in order to the Pardon of all  
 our Sins; and to send forth his Light and  
 his Truth to lead and regulate, for the  
 Future, those that would be purged and  
 reconciled. Accordingly, of these two  
 Parts mainly consists the Gospel or *Word  
 of Reconciliation*; which teaches, that *our  
 Saviour gave himself for us, that he might  
 redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify  
 unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of  
 good Works*. For the same Person was  
 charged with both Functions, invested  
 with both Offices; of a Lawgiver, to  
 teach and encourage our observing the  
 perfect Will of God; and of a Priest, to  
 make a Propitiation for the Breaches of it.  
 Judge then, if these Things, which *God  
 hath thus joined together*, be not insepa-  
 rable; if it is possible for him to have any  
 Benefit of the Pardon, that persists in his  
 Rebellion; or be saved by the Merits and  
 Intercession of the Priest, that despises the  
 Authority of the Lawgiver, even the same  
 Jesus Christ. And again judge, with what  
 Hope or Effect we can use his Name to  
 recommend any of our Necessities to the  
 Divine

Divine Favour, while we frustrate his SERM.  
 whole Ministry, and will be prevailed up- VII.  
 on ourselves neither by his Love nor his   
 Commands.

That this may have its proper Weight, we may add to our own natural Conception of the Case, the just Construction of it in the Holy Scripture ; where it is not treated as meer Disobedience, but Enmity, and malicious ingrateful Enmity. So the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, vi. 6. says of such Men, *They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open Shame.* And the xth Chapter, the 26th and following Verses, more largely ; *If we sin wilfully after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries. He that despised Moses Law, died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses : Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God ; and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy Thing ; and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace ?*

SERM. *Grace?* Here then offers itself the Use of  
 VII. our Manner of Praying, *Let every one that*  
 ~~~~~ *nameth the Name of Christ, depart from*  
*Iniquity.* And this is continually inforced  
 upon our Thoughts every Time we open  
 our Lips to beg or acknowledge the daily  
 Gifts of Heaven ; and the Extremity of  
 the contrary Abuse presses it with unde-  
 niable Conviction, and a Vehemence ir-  
 resistible. For what does the Prayer of  
 the impenitent, unreform'd Sinner, ac-  
 cording to the Scriptures just cited, but  
 plead the Merits of that Blood which he  
 daily profanes ; and offer to propitiate  
 God by the Mediation of his Son, whom  
 he hath trodden under Foot ?

The *last* Condition we are obliged to,  
 if we would have our Prayers and the  
 Promises made to them available, is  
*Faith* ; that is, we are to depend on the  
 Truth and on the Goodness of God, that,  
 we performing our Parts before laid down,  
 he will grant us, either what we direct-  
 ly ask, or what is yet more beneficial.  
 This appears in the Words of our Lord,  
*St. Matthew xxi. 21, 22. Verily I say unto*  
*you, If you have FAITH, and doubt not,*  
 ye

ye shall not only do this which is done to the *Fig-tree*; but also, if ye shall say unto this *Mountain*, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the Sea; it shall be done. And all Things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive. To which we may add those of *St. James*, since it will be plain by the former, that they are equally applicable to all Petitions.—Let him, saith he, i. 6, 7. ask in FAITH, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a Wave of the Sea, driven with the Wind and tossed. For let not that Man think, that he shall receive any Thing of the Lord. The Ground of this, in the Reason of the Thing, seems to be two-fold. The first Part this; that all Want of Trust in the Goodness of God, and the Security of his Promises, puts Men in the Rank of great Offenders, that of Dishonourers of God; and so renders them unworthy of his Goodness, and incapacitates them to claim any Benefit by those Promises. The second Part is, that the same Distrust is destructive of a main End of Prayer, namely, to keep us ever sensible of our perpetual Dependance on the Sovereign

SERM.  
VII.

SERM. VII. **vereign Power and Bounty of our Creator and Preserver.** This indeed is the surest Foundation of all Religious Worship ; from which we may be convinced, how reasonably and necessarily that which is inconsistent with it, will render our pretended Devotions vain and unacceptable.

Now I should proceed to shew, what Powers there are in the Method of the Text to cure this Defect ; what Encouragement and enlivening must accrue to our Faith from the Name of the Great *Author and Finisher* of it. But since this falls in with what I propounded for my *Second* Part of this Discourse, that is the evident Assurance of obtaining our Petitions, which springs from the gracious Appointment of making them in so prevailing a Name ; and since the Time is near spent, I shall refer them both together to the Opportunity of another Day.





## S E R M O N VIII.

Of Praying in the Name of Christ.

PART II.



J O H N xvi. 23.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*



Spoke the last Lord's-  
Day to the particular Oc-  
casion of these Words,  
which was to support the  
Hearts of the Disciples rea-  
dy to sink under the Ap-  
prehension of their Lord's Departure ; and  
proceeded to the general Application of  
them, no less intended, for the Benefit of  
all

SERM.  
VIII.



SERM. all their Successors in the Faith of Christ.

VIII. Whereupon, because the Promise is made  
 in the largest Terms, without expressing  
 any Conditions; and yet common Sense,  
 as well as Religion, teaches that the whole  
 Effect of it depends upon certain Con-  
 ditions, which they likewise teach; I spe-  
 cify'd and confirm'd the same from both  
 Authorities, and shew'd upon each of  
 them, that the Name of Jesus Christ,  
 which he himself hath encouraged his  
 Church to accompany all their Prayers  
 with, is fruitful of Reflections the most  
 adapted and powerful to excite and com-  
 pel Men to the Performing those Con-  
 ditions.

They were (you may remember) *first*,  
 of the Requests themselves, that they be  
 made for Things good, and design'd to good  
 Ends; and, *secondly*, that they who ap-  
 proach with them, lift up pure Hearts and  
 holy Hands, sustain'd by a full Assurance  
 of Faith in the Divine Goodness. I endea-  
 vour'd to prove, that the Resignation and  
 Charity comprehended in the former Part,  
 and the Repentance and Reformation in  
 the latter, were as strongly, as perpetually,  
 awaken'd

awaken'd and inforced by that *holy and* SERM.  
*reverend Name.* And upon the Whole it VIII.  
might appear, that the Inserting of it in  
every Petition is a Suggestion of the Terms  
on which alone they can be heard, evi-  
dent enough to supply the Want of their  
being annex'd to the Promise in Words at  
Length. Only as to the Duty and Limi-  
tation of Faith, how *that* is directed and  
influenced thereby, I deferred to explain,  
because of its Coincidence with the Af-  
surance of Success; which I propounded  
to treat of at large, as a very considerable  
Benefit and Effect of our Lord's Appoint-  
ment in my Text; *Whatsoever ye shall*  
*ask the Father in my Name, he will give*  
*it you.*

This indeed is the direct and most ob-  
vious Use of it: But it was necessary to  
treat of the Conditions upon which the  
Whole depends in the first Place, that we  
might embrace the Consolation there of-  
fer'd upon sure Grounds, having taken the  
due Care that both our Petitions and our  
Persons should be such as the Promise is  
alone made to. After that, our Security  
of the Performance is built on the Con-  
sideration



SERM. consideration of the Truth of him that hath  
 VIII engaged it ; (for that supposes the Power ;)   
 and we know that *He is faithful that hath promised.* But since that general Argument arises equally from many other Places of Scripture, I shall confine my Discourse to what is more peculiar to that before us, and shew the *Faith* wherewith we are encouraged and obliged to plead the Name of our Lord in every Prayer that we send up.

In order to this, let it be considered, what is the chief Ground, whereupon Mankind harbours any Distrust of averting Evil, or receiving Good at the Hand of God. We shall find it, the Conscience of Guilt. Our Nature deprav'd, and continual Transgression of his Laws, gives a Dread of his Purity and Justice: And when we would present ourselves as Objects of his Favour and Bounty, our Minds condemn us as more reasonably those of his Displeasure and Vengeance. This Fear hath lain heavy upon the Hearts of Men in all Ages of Darkness, and damp'd any chearful Confidence in approaching to God, and run them into absurd and superstitious

perstitious Devotions to escape from it. Indeed, when they consider'd the Author of their own Being, and of all the good Things in the World ; when they reason'd on the Perfectness of his Nature, and entire Exemption from all Weakness, (whence alone Evil can spring ;) they were led to admire and trust in his Bounty to his Creatures. But when they reflected on the Holiness of his Laws, and Immutability of his Justice, Self-accusations and Despondency succeeded : Many Marks of his Indignation appeared in the Course of Things ; and their own Breasts perpetually suggested and acknowledged the Reason. Neither could they sufficiently satisfy their Doubts, or quiet their Fears with Repentance and Endeavours of returning and keeping to their Duty. For still it remained, that *that* Obedience was equally due in the Time past, when it was not paid ; as at the present, and for the future, when it might be endeavour'd. And besides, they were sadly conscious of the Imperfection of those Endeavours ; and even of frequent Relapses. What Sacrifice therefore could at-

SERM.  
VIII.  
~

SERM. tone for long Habits of Disobedience ; or  
 VIII. what Merit render acceptable such im-  
 ~~~~~ perfect Service, and procure Grace to par-  
 don and raise them up anew after the Pro-  
 vocations of repeated Backslidings ? *Where-*  
*with* should they *come before the Lord,*  
*and bow themselves before the high God ?*  
 The deep Concern of Mankind on this  
 Head exposed them to the Pretences of  
 Impostors, who by their Devices brought  
 them into the Condition of a still greater  
 Guilt and juster Despair.

But no true, no full Remedy was found,  
 till *the Sun of Righteousness arose with*  
*Healing in his Wings.* The great Work  
 of Expiation was above human Power to  
 execute, or even Capacity to propose. God  
 alone knew what Satisfaction was sufficient  
 and proper for the Violation of his Laws :  
 And this he himself hath provided, and  
 accepted in the Person and Sufferings of  
 Jesus Christ. He made the Declaration  
 and Promise in my Text to his Disciples,  
 and in them to All, just before he was  
 going to finish that great Work of Attone-  
 ment and Restitution of the World to the  
 Divine Favour. Then he shewed them  
 the

the Grace and Privilege purchased for them by his Ransom now to be paid down ; that they might ever find a Patronage to their Weakness, and Supply to their Wants, from the Fountain of all Goodness so propitiated. Hereupon the dark Cloud of their old Fears and Doubts was dissipated. Henceforth Sinners might see, that although they were sometime alienated, and Enemies in their Mind by wicked Works, yet now God had reconciled them ; and give therefore Glory to Him in the Highest for this Peace of his on Earth, and Good-will towards Men. And here therefore commenced the new Style of Prayers in his Name, who was the meritorious Cause of this blessed Renovation of our State ; which gives them an Efficacy that can never fail the Necessities of his faithful Disciples. They are heard with a paternal Tenderness, all Impediments to the Exercise of it being remov'd ; their old Offences pardon'd, their continual Infirmities heal'd, or consider'd and Means of Recovery afforded, even after the more wilful Falls. This Condition is equal in Advantages, nay, superior, all Things consider'd,

SERM.  
VIII.  


SERM. to that of the first Man in his Integrity ;  
 VIII. and nothing remains to hinder their receiving from their *Heavenly Father* the *good Things* which they *ask*, but a Resolution to be still disobedient Children.

But all this will be yet more comfortably evident, if we review the particular Steps that were taken to accomplish the Work of Reconciliation ; for they will appear so many abundant Proofs of the Greatness of God's Love to Mankind, and the perfect Fulness of his Reconciliation. The high Excellence of the Divine Majesty, and the infinite Aggravation of our Offences against it, are apt to renew Mens Apprehensions ; but they must be appeas'd upon duly considering these Arguments of his Goodness and Mercy, and the Merits of the Expiation, which are also infinite.

The *first* Remark shall be of the *Beginning* of this Transaction. It moved from the free Bounty of God, which prevented any Reformation or Submission of his rebellious Subjects. They were generally thoughtless both of their Misery and their Duty, when the Blessing of a Saviour surpris'd them by an astonishing Condescension.

sion. The Greatness of the Grace, and the infallible Inference to our Comfort, will be seen best in the Words of St. Paul to the Romans, in the vth Chapter, the 6th, and following Verses. *When we were yet without Strength, in due Time Christ died for the Ungodly. For scarcely for a Righteous Man will one die: yet peradventure for a good Man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. For if, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his Life.* What then shall be denied to the humble Desires of purify'd and adopted Children, by that Goodness, which unask'd, hath sent Salvation itself to Strangers and Criminals? He that was found of them that sought him not; that was made manifest unto them that asked not after him; What Benefits will he not pour on the same so much more endeard, now asking and seeking, as entitled.

SERM.

VIII.



SERM. tled and commanded, *in the Name* of his  
VIII. Son Jesus Christ ?

Secondly, The *Method* and *Means*, whereby God was pleased to reconcile us to himself, are a further Demonstration of the Love that designed and executed them. They are found principally, *first*, in the *Incarnation*; next in the *Crucifixion* of our Lord. The *former* represents him to our Minds descending from the Throne of his Glory; and submitting himself to be cloth'd with our vile Flesh, and encompass'd with the poor Infirmities and Necessities of it, Hunger and Thirst, Heat and Cold, Weariness, Pain, and Distemper, and (the extreme of them all) Mortality. And to these we are to add, the Weakness and Passions incident to the human Soul, as Desire, Fear, Doubt, Dejection, Distress, and Sorrow; both the one and the other more low and much more miserable than *the Nature of Angels*; (though that *itself* is infinitely beneath the *Divine*;) which nevertheless *he took not on him, but the Seed of Abraham, and the Form of a Servant*. Now there can be no Doubt, but this *first* Humiliation was chiefly designed to  
render

render him capable of the *last*; this *Body prepar'd* him in order to be slain and offered up in Sacrifice, that the same Nature, which had offended, might suffer. And this is an Addition to our Confidence in the Atonement, which we see procur'd by so just and adapted an Expiation. Nevertheless the Apostle teaches us, to make also another Use of it to our further Consolation, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, ii. 17, 18.—*In all Things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in Things pertaining to God; to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

So low has the Love of God descended to his Creatures, as even to familiarize itself, and meet with their weakest Objections and Diffidences, in a Way tenderly suited to the unhappiest Tempers and meanest Capacities. We have therefore but to remember, who it is that is thus *mEEK and lowly in Heart*; who it is that is *not ashamed to call us Brethren*; and our Hearts and our Prayers must surely

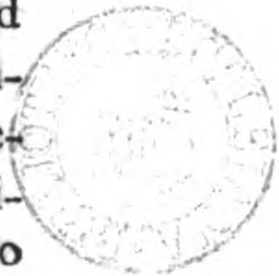


SERM. ly be filled with Faith and Joy; we shall  
 VIII. *rejoyce in his Salvation, and triumph in the*  
 Name of the Lord our God; for the Sake  
 whereof we know the Lord will perform  
 all our Petitions. For see, if the same  
 Apostle makes not this very Conclusion of  
 the Matter, at the End of the ivth Chap-  
 ter of that Epistle, and if we ought not  
 to say with him, and exhort one another  
 in like Assurance; *Let us therefore come*  
*boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we*  
*may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help*  
*in Time of Need.*

The last Particular is our Lord's *Cruci-*  
*fixion.* The Consideration of this ascer-  
 tains us, that the Price of our Redemption  
 is paid; a Price that approves its Sufficiency  
 for the great Purpose, by the perfect In-  
 nocence, and infinite Dignity, of the Per-  
 son from whose Sufferings it resulted. For  
 these two Things place it far above all  
 Estimation. And so we find St. Peter  
 magnifying it by joining them together,  
*Ephes. i. 18, 19. Ye were not redeemed*  
*with corruptible Things, as Silver and*  
*Gold, — but with the precious Blood of*  
*Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and*  
*without*

*without Spot.* Nevertheless there is to be added to these, the Greatness of the Suffering it self, to be collected not only from the long and exquisite Torments, but the prodigious Indignity, with respect both to the Manner, and the Hands which procured it; and above all, the precedent and attending Agonies altogether inexpressible. The Meditation upon all these will convince us of the Love of God and our Saviour, who have *made Peace through the Blood of the Cross*; and of our Happiness upon this Reconciliation, which has removed all Bars to the Bounty of our Heavenly Father, and encourages us to look for Effects of it, in this Life and the next, proportioned to the inexhaustible Cause and Fountain itself. Only let not so great Encouragement induce a *Presumption* destructive of Christian Life: For Impenitence does indeed vacate all this; since no Redemption can avail those that will not be redeemed, but prefer the Servitude of Sin to *the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.* Otherwise, we may and ought with Gratitude and Cheerfulness to embrace and depend upon the Promise in my  
Text,

SERM.  
VIII.



SERM. Text, as finding ourselves, through the  
 VIII. propitiatory Sacrifice of him that made it,  
 advanced to that high Privilege ; *Ask, and  
 it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ;  
 knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* For  
 doubtless we may close our Thoughts up-  
 on this Article with that most just one of  
 St. Paul, Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not  
 his own Son, but delivered him up for us  
 all ; how shall he not with him also freely  
 give us all Things ?*

Now I have laid open to you these  
 Grounds for the Prayer of Faith in the  
 Name of our blessed Reconciler, from the  
 Reconciliation itself, and the particular  
 Steps taken to effect it ; it remains that I  
 shew, the *Ransom* and *Sacrifice* above, to  
 have been actually accepted by God to the  
 Purpose for which they were paid and  
 offered up ; which may satisfy not only  
 the Doubts of humble Christians, but the  
 Cavils of others, who pretend to reason  
 against the Propriety or Validity of them.  
 For surely, it is as weak as presumptuous,  
 for Men to question the Fitness and Value  
 of what the Divine Acceptance has ratified  
 as sufficient and efficacious. And this may  
 indeed

indeed be collected from many Things already alledg'd. But I come to direct Proofs of Scripture, as most unexceptionable in Things so much above us. The Epistle to the *Ephesians*, the last Verse of the ivth Chapter, tells them, that *God for Christ's Sake hath forgiven them*; and the 2d of the next expresses the Ground of it, the Acceptableness of his Sacrifice, in these Words, *Christ hath given himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour*. And in the xth to the *Hebrews*, after shewing the Insufficiency of the *Sacrifices which were offered by the Law*, and thereupon introducing our Lord coming into the World, and saying as in the xlth *Psalms*, *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God*; it is subjoined at the 10th Verse, *By the which Will we are sanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ*. For here you must understand by this Word *Will*, in the first Place, *the Thing acceptable*; and in the second, *the Acceptance itself*. So likewise, *2 Cor. v. 18. God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*: And at the 21st Verse, it appears by what Means: *He hath made him to be*  
*Sin*

SERM.  
VIII.

SERM. *Sin* (that is, a *Sin Offering*) for us who  
 VIII. *knew no Sin, that we might be made the*  
 ~~~~~ *Righteousness of God in him.* I will add  
 but one more, *Rom. iii. 23,* and following  
 Verses, *For all have sinned, and come short*  
*of the Glory of God; being justified freely*  
*by his Grace, through the Redemption that*  
*is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth*  
*to be a Propitiation through Faith in his*  
*Blood.* The Inference to our Purpose, from  
 these and many other Scriptures, is, That  
 although we *have all sinned, and come short*  
*of the Glory of God,* yet since he hath *for-*  
*given, reconciled, justified, and sanctified*  
*us,* we may well trust in *that Name* that  
 hath *obtained* all these Things; and enter-  
 tain no Fear but our *Prayers* also will find  
 Acceptance, for the Sake of that *Sacrifice*  
 which hath found it.

But besides these *Affirmations,* the  
 Preachers of the Gospel use certain *Argu-*  
*ments* likewise, to evince the Consumma-  
 tion and Approbation of Christ's Underta-  
 king on our Behalf; which are, God's  
 raising him from the Dead, and placing  
 him at his own Right Hand. The *for-*  
*mer* is intimated most fully and clearly in  
 those

those few Words, which end the ivth SERM.  
 Chapter to the *Romans*; *Who was deliver'd* VIII.  
*for our Offences, and was raised again for*  
*our Justification.* And at the viiith. 33,  
 34. both Arguments are applied at once,  
 and the happy State of Christians trium-  
 phantly inferred. *Who shall lay any Thing*  
*to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God*  
*that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth?*  
*It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is*  
*risen again; who is even at the Right*  
*Hand of God, who also maketh Intercession*  
*for us.* I only mention these Places, be-  
 cause the former Authorities are equally  
 forcible with us; and I had not touch'd  
 upon these, but because they lead me to  
 another Consideration of our Lord's Per-  
 son, of great Importance to the present  
 Subject.

We have hitherto been making Use of  
 his *Humiliation, Afflictions, Death, and*  
*Passion,* to strengthen and establish our  
 Confidence in the Divine Favour; and  
 since these have been found to minister  
 such Faith and Comfort, surely we ought  
 not to pass over in Silence the *Exaltation*  
 and glorious Kingdom of our Mediator.

With

SERM. With respect to the former, the Apostle,  
 VIII. *Hebr. xii. 2.* seems to have call'd him *the*  
 Author of our Faith, and to the latter, *the*  
 Finisher of it. Looking unto Jesus, saith  
 he, *the Author and Finisher of our Faith ;*  
*who, for the Joy that was set before him, en-*  
*dured the Cross, despising the Shame —* THERE  
 is the Beginning — and is set down at the  
 Right Hand of the Throne of God — THERE  
 is the final Establishment of Christian Be-  
 lief. Let us therefore contemplate the  
 great Power and Dignity our Lord is in-  
 vested with, that we may be fully sensible  
 of the Virtue of his Intercession, which  
 he ever liveth to make for us. God hath  
 exalted him, we read, *with his Right Hand,*  
*to be a Prince and a Saviour ; hath crown-*  
*ed him with Glory and Honour, and put*  
*all Things in Subjection under his Feet ;*  
 and, (in a third Place) hath set him at his  
 own Right Hand in the Heavenly Places,  
 far above all Principality, and Power, and  
 Might, and Dominion, and every Name  
 that is named, not only in this World, but  
 also in that which is to come. Such is the  
 unlimited Authority and Power, wherein  
 Christ is instated by the Father for the  
 Government,

Government, Protection, and infinite In-  
 riching of his *Church*, whereof he is the  
 blessed *Head*, and *King*. They are  
 therefore so far from having Reason of  
 Doubt concerning this Promise of the Pre-  
 valence of their Prayers, that it may be  
 stated yet more to their Advantage. It  
 has all along been shew'd, with what  
 Faith and Assurance of Success, it is their  
 Privilege and Duty to pray for all Things  
 convenient for them, in the Name of their  
 Redeemer, because *the Father will* most  
 certainly, for his Sake, *give* them. But  
 now, upon this last Consideration, they  
 must conclude not only THAT, but like-  
 wise that he *himself*, for whose Sake and  
 in whose Name they have been encouraged  
 to ask, is impower'd and ready to do the  
 same. And here appears the Reason of  
 our Saviour's varying the Terms of his  
 Promise ; for as he says in my Text,  
*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my  
 Name, he will give it you.* So in the  
 14th of St. *John* 13. he had said, —  
*Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that  
 will I do.* If then we applied before the  
 Words of St. *Paul* to our Question with  
 undeniable

SERM.  
VIII.



SERM. undeniable Satisfaction, *He that spared not*  
 VIII. *his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us*  
 all; *How shall he not with him also freely*  
*give us all Things?* May we not with like  
 or greater Reason and Joy close this Argu-  
 ment, in borrowing most of the same  
 Words, and saying, "How shall he not  
 " freely give us all Things; HE that spared  
 " not *his own* Life, but deliver'd up him-  
 " self for us all?"

The Admiration of this glorious King-  
 dom, and ineffable Benignity of our Lord,  
 calls again to my Mind, with Indignation,  
 what I was lamenting at the Beginning  
 of my first Discourse; the Absurdity of  
 setting up *other* Intercessors, the calling  
 upon and trusting in *other* Names. For  
 what is the Ground, or the Consequence,  
 to render it useful, or innocent, or to-  
 lerable? Doth our own Mediator want  
 any Part of Knowledge, of Goodness, or  
 of Power, needful to perform his own  
 Promise? Or do the Saints and Angels  
 more certainly understand our Necessities,  
 and with more Affection, Interest, and  
 Ability intercede, and relieve them? Sure-  
 ly we are but the weaker for this Strength.

But

But let us go a little backward, and en-  
quire, if there be any Inducement, any  
Room, to depend upon their Merits, or  
plead them in Favour of our Imperfec-  
tions. Far from it; the holiest and most  
highly favour'd of God's Saints have their  
own Failings recorded in Scripture, no  
doubt, to teach us another Lesson; and  
had their Prayers heard, and Sins par-  
don'd for the Merit of our common and  
only Saviour. In the next Place, How  
will this Practice affect the Hearts of the  
Supplicants? What will true Religion gain  
by it? You have seen how the Love of  
Christ, his sinless Purity, and his Divine  
Power and Truth, awaken and determine  
all, that invoke his Name, to fervent Cha-  
rity and sincere Repentance; and establish  
their Hearts in an Assurance of Faith not  
to be shaken. And these are the Condi-  
tions fix'd, upon which alone our Prayers  
can be received. But in the new Devo-  
tions, instead of an entire Reformation of  
Life, it is justly to be fear'd, that our Cor-  
ruption will entertain and cherish a secret  
Hope of some Indulgence for Sin from  
those who were not themselves without it.

SERM.

VIII.



SERM. VIII. And as to Faith; How can that be founded without Command, without Promise, without Power to help, or (for ought we know) to hear? But let me pray and conclude with *St. Paul*; *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting Consolation and good Hope thro' Grace; comfort your Hearts, and establish you in every good Word and Work.*





## S E R M O N IX.

Of the Forgiveness of Injuries.

### P A R T I.



LUKE xvii. 4.

— *If he trespass against thee seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.*



**L**F you look on the pre-  
ceding Verse, and take  
what belongs to this  
Matter, you will have  
it intire thus : *If thy  
Brother trespass against  
thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive  
him.*

SERM.  
IX.


SERM. *him. And if he trespass against thee seven*  
 IX. *times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day*  
 ~~~~~ *turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou*  
*shalt forgive him.*

Some have thought this a hard Saying. *Seven Times a Day* is an Expression at least as strong against limiting our Forgiveness, as *seventy times seven* at large; which is our Lord's Answer to St. Peter, *Matth. xviii. 21. How oft shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him?* By which Question it appears, that even *he* presum'd, there ought to be some Bound fixed to this Duty. But our Lord shewed him, that he allow'd of *none*. And what Wonder, that he who receives us after never so many Transgressions, upon a true Repentance, should at our Hands require a like Behaviour towards our offending and penitent Brother? Nevertheless there are at this Day, not only whose Practice is contrary, (for that every body knows too well,) but who avow a contrary Principle; who pretend that the Tenderness exacted in the Text, serves to no End, but the Encouragement of Insolence and Injuriousness. They propose therefore, to pu-  
 nish

nish every wilful Wrong without Remission ; and invite all that love Justice to set a Hand to it, and assist the Injur'd in taking his Revenge. And this they urge as the only hopeful Method (if well follow'd) to restrain Fraud and Violence, and establish in the World a just Security for innocent Persons.

SERM.  
IX.

It must be confess'd, that this Notion has something in it that flatters Men of strong Minds at first Sight ; as if it put us in a Way, tho' very rigorous to Particulars, yet wholesome and profitable to the whole State of Mankind. And they that have large Experience of the World, are tempted to give into it, by the abundant Hypocrisy, Ingratitude, and Incurable-ness, which they encounter with. Now to bring this Objection home, and make it bear against the Precept of Forgiveness ; it is suppos'd, that every Body of Laws given by God to his Creatures, must be so fram'd, as to promote the Discipline of Order and Justice amongst them, and so provide for their general Good and Quiet, even in this present Life. And this ought to be admitted ; since we are taught, that

**SERM.** *Godliness* (which is the Practice of Christian  
**IX.** Precepts) *is profitable unto all Things, hav-*  
 *ing Promise of the Life that now is, and*  
*of that which is to come: And therefore,*  
 notwithstanding the many and great Suf-  
 ferings which that Practice brings upon  
 particular Persons, and, at certain Times,  
 upon whole Societies; yet is the Christian  
 Law, as to its main Tendency and Ef-  
 fects, admirably calculated for the present,  
 as well as future Welfare of its faithful  
 Professors. Thus we are obliged to take  
 under our Consideration the pretended Mo-  
 ral of prosecuting all Offences with Rigour,  
 which they would set up; and the Dis-  
 paragement offer'd to the contrary Moral  
 of Christianity, as noxious to the State of  
 Mankind.

And here we might be content to an-  
 swer; That being assur'd (as we are) that  
 the Rule of Forgiving our Brother's Of-  
 fences is enjoin'd by God, we ought not  
 to doubt of its serving most effectually his  
 declared Purpose in promoting the Good of  
 the World; although by our own Obser-  
 vation and Judgment, we could not dis-  
 cern its Aptness for that End: Although  
 the

the contrary Method should, to mere hu- **SERM<sup>o</sup>**  
 man Reason, appear more proper ; yet were **IX.**  
 we bound to receive the former with all  
 Humility, as God's positive Law, confi-  
 dering not only his Authority, but his per-  
 fect Knowledge of what will operate on  
 the Creatures he hath made and governs,  
 whose *Hearts he fashioneth, and understand-*  
*eth all their Works.*

But we may well proceed to a more di-  
 rect Answer, which will better meet with  
 the Curiosity and Boldness of the Objec-  
 tors. It is this ; that the Severity they  
 recommend does not produce the promised  
 Effects. The Thing has been try'd, and  
 we appeal to the History of the World  
 ancient and modern. The common Sen-  
 timents and Behaviour of Heathen Nations  
 of old, in this Point, are not unknown ;  
 what a gallant Part they accounted it to  
 pursue their Revenge implacably ; nor how  
 that Proceeding affected human Society.  
 One Revenge beget another ; and so they  
 multiply'd and extended to Families, and  
 Dependencies, and Governments ; and  
 were propagated without End ; for they  
 became hereditary from one Generation to



SERM. another. The Effects appear through the

LX. Records of those Times in bloody Characters. Instead of restraining Injury and settling Quiet, this Maxim gave a Licence to Rapin and Slaughter. Perpetual Jealousy, Malice, and lying in wait, were still creating private and publick Mischiefs, Oppressions and Murders, Seditions and Wars, attended with such Outrage and Cruelty, that, we may say, most of the Wars of Christians have been, in Comparison of them, but civil Disputes. In like Manner, do we not hear of the *Gentile* People at this Day, who are in several Parts extremely addicted to Revenge; how they are depopulating and exterminating one another daily by Depredations, Slavery, and Bloodshed?

*Lastly*, If we enquire of those Christian Nations, where this bitter Spirit, though somewhat restrain'd by their Profession, is the most affected and honour'd; shall we find Sincerity, Justice, and the Security of good Neighbourhood, more flourishing than among the rest? By no Means: But they are rather notoriously distinguished for their pernicious and lasting Feuds, and the

the Fruits of them, Treacheries, Violence, and Affaffinations. The Christian Philosophy is therefore justified, and the Pretences to a wiser Moral condemn'd, by Matter of Fact not to be avoided; which shews how little they that set it up understand the Nature of Mankind.

SERM.  
IX.



But it may be confess'd as very probable, that the Number of those, who submit not to the Precept of Forgiveness, would be much less, if they were not carried into Mistakes about the Extent of it, wherein some Christians have led the Way. Therefore, as I have endeavour'd to vindicate it against the Rigid and Unforgiving; so, to remove all Prejudices, it is requisite, in the second Place, to disclaim the Errors of such as have run into the contrary Extreme. They, misinterpreting the general or figurative Expressions in Scripture, which recommend Forgiveness, and Love, and Charity, have carried the Matter so far as to make it unlawful to condemn Men in capital or any criminal Causes, and much more (surely) to prosecute them; and the same to bear Arms even against a publick Enemy.

These

SERM. These are the great and flagrant Instances  
 IX. of Error on this Hand, and such as at  
 first Sight expose Religion as impracticable  
 and inconsistent with human Society. But  
 there are other Excesses too, relating to  
 this Matter, of absurd and hurtful Consequence  
 enough, though less apparent: And if these be  
 touch'd in stating the real Measure of Christian  
 Oligation; though they have the Air of great  
 Piety and charitable Resignation, let no Man  
 be offended.

Mighty Mischief has before now befallen  
 the Christian Church, by overstraining its  
 Rules or Doctrines under the Agency of real  
 or pretended Zeal for the higher Degrees  
 of Perfection. But does any Man know, when  
 once he has carried People a little beyond the  
 Truth, how far they shall be born adrift? For  
 practical Points indeed they say, we must ask  
 too much, that we may obtain what is necessary.  
 But how oft does it happen, that by asking  
 too much they obtain nothing? When they will  
*bind heavy Burdens* which Christ has not bound,  
 and *lay them on Men's Shoulders*; if any can  
 and do bear

bear them, they suffer much *gratis*; and if others bear only a Part, they are in-  
 snared and tormented in Conscience; but the greater Number, in Despair, and un-  
 able to distinguish, cast off all together, the *light Burden* of Christ, as well as the  
 Additions of human Invention. Let us therefore consider attentively, what it is  
 that he hath enjoined us in these Words, *If he [thy Brother] trespass against thee  
 seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent;  
 thou shalt forgive him.*

The Duty prescribed is forgiving those that offend us, and that without Stint, as has been already intimated in few Words: And as to the Generality of our Obligation in this Respect, towards all Men with whom we have to do, sufficiently express'd by the Word *Brother*, it is well enough understood and allow'd; and it is yet more plain and confess'd, that *seven Times in one Day* must denote a Repetition of Forgiveness as frequent as there can be of Offences; therefore I will not spend any Time in asserting those two Circumstances of the Object and Extent  
 of

SERM.  
IX.



SERM. of this Duty, but proceed to consider,  
 IX. *first*, the Condition upon which it is suspended ; and *secondly*, take the Occasion and Light offer'd from thence to state the Duty itself : And, *lastly*, I shall mention some Motives that may incite us to the Practice,

*First*, then ; The Condition is, *If he turn again to thee, saying, I repent* ; and in the Verse before, *if he repent*. From which two Expressions we may collect this, as the Intention of the Text : Our offending Brother is to be forgiven by us, *if first* he be sorry for the Wrong done ; and *if, secondly*, he let us understand so much. Not but that our Charity obliges us, (where we can with Hope of Success) to apply first to him, and endeavour to bring him to this Sense and Temper ; which seems to have been the Rule even of the Old Law, *Levit. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart : Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him ;* or as it is otherwise understood, *that thou bear not Sin for him.* But our Lord's Command is express ; *If thy Brother shall trespass*

*trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone : If he shall bear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother, Mat. xviii. 15. And again, in the Words introducing my Text ; If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him. But the Condition still remains, and may be insisted on : If the Wrong-doer would be forgiven, it is incumbent on him first to repent, and shew it. Even the Terms of the Lord's Prayer, which bind Forgiveness on us so strongly, do include this Condition : Forgive us, as we forgive : For we ought to know well, that we have no Forgiveness by the Christian Covenant without repenting of the Trespases for which we also ask to be forgiven.*


Now there can be no reasonable Question, but the Condition we speak of contains something real and substantial. In any serious Affair, it is evidently absurd to give such a Regulation as shall make it dependent on a Condition of no solid Use or Value. And a formal and false, or ludicrous Acknowledgement of an Injury, is nothing but a new Injury. 'Tis true, the

Words


SERM.

IX.

SERM. Words of the Text are, *Saying, I repent;*

IX.  but the former Verse has it absolutely, *if he repent*: Therefore the *saying* is to be a Declaration of what is indeed *meant*. And that must be no less than the condemning of the Action past, and a Resolution of contrary Behaviour for the future. This I take to be very clear; but it may be propos'd as a Difficulty, how we shall judge of the Sincerity of him that says he repents.

To *that*, it seems, no other Answer can be given, but that we must judge of it, as we do of every thing else that is out of Sight, by the Arguments of Probability that appear on either Side. Pride, and Revenge, and Interest, to be sure, are not to be of our Counsel; that the same Impartiality may take Place, as if we were to give an Opinion for another, and had no Concern in the Matter of our own to affect us. But here it may be said, that *Charity believeth all Things, and hopeth all Things*. Nevertheless, upon the least Consideration it will be agreed, that those Words cannot be extended to Things utterly incredible and hopeless. Charity, which gives the greatest Perfection to human Nature, *divests*

vests not Men of their Understanding : SERM.  
 So far otherwise, that Charity, as much IX.  
 as any Virtue, calls for the Guidance of   
 Discretion; and without it, does not, with  
 any Certainty, attain her Ends; nay, is  
 very liable to overthrow them herself.  
 However, this Character of *Charity's be-  
 lieving and hoping all Things*, will deter-  
 mine every good Man carefully to remove  
 all Obstacles to his judging with true Equi-  
 ty of the Profession his Brother makes him  
 to repent of the Injury he has done: And  
 if the Case be doubtful, will incline him  
 to the favourable Side, and make him  
 chuse to be censur'd, upon the Event,  
 for Weakness, much rather than Uncha-  
 ritableness.

But now comes the great Difficulty  
 of all: For methinks I hear your Charity  
 object: If we are bound to forgive him  
 that wrongs us upon his Repentance *only*;  
 how if he repent *not*? Are we then at  
 full Liberty to pursue the Ways of Enmi-  
 ty? And is it possible that this should be  
 allowed to the Followers of Jesus Christ,  
 who, *when we were Enemies, reconciled us  
 to God by his Death*? It is indeed impos-  
 sible.



SERM. fible. The Gospel is full of Precepts to  
 IX. the contrary; and the Law itself was not  
 ~~~~~ silent. But since it is manifest from the  
 Text, that there is a Difference to be made,  
 at least may be made, in our Behaviour to  
 the Offender that repents, and to him that  
 persists; let us examine, what is due from  
 us to one more than to the other; what  
 we are obliged to remit to both, and what  
 we are in Freedom to prosecute against the  
 Impenitent. In order to this, we must  
 consider the several Things, that Men or-  
 dinary pretend to upon such as have done  
 them wrong; and which they give up, all  
 or Part, under the Name of *Pardon*. The  
*first* of these is *Revenge*; the *second* (of  
 like Nature) the *forbearing* Offices of *Hu-*  
*manity*; the *third*, *Reparation*; and the  
*fourth*, a *Security* for the future. Of these  
 I shall speak severally, to set forth our  
 Duty or Liberty on each Head.

By the *first*, *Revenge*, or (as it is term-  
 ed sometimes for better Distinction) *private*  
*Revenge*, I understand that which is pro-  
 perly so called; the *Hurt* done an Enemy,  
 to gratify our Resentment of the Hurt we  
 conceive he hath done us. For when an  
 Evil-

Evil-doer is made to suffer with other Views, than that Gratification; it may justly be called by other Names, as it has indeed another Nature; though it often goes by the same in common Speech. Thus, *Rom. xiii. 14.* the Apostle says of the Magistrate, *He is a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* Nevertheless it is evident, that this Vengeance has Nothing in it of Passion, or any Contrariety to the charitable Spirit; being no more than the indemnifying and securing the private and publick Interests of the Subject and himself. So the same Apostle tells the *Corinthians, 2 Ep. x. 6.* That he *has in Readiness to revenge all Disobedience.* But we are sure he was endued with that Meekness, as would not suffer him to meditate any Punishment for the Satisfaction of his own Animosity, but purely for the Good and Discipline of the Church, and of the Persons punished too, if possible. This Distinction is useful and necessary to many Purposes; amongst the rest, it will keep us from a Fault too common, of censuring Men as guilty of criminal and unchristian Revenge, who are not only in-

SERM.  
IX.

SERM.

IX.



nocent, but sometimes doing a great deal of good, in the Spirit of Justice and Charity too. But the Question before us is of mere *Revenge*, the pleasuring our Anger or Grudge at the Cost of him that has offended us. And this is certainly unlawful, although the Party be never so far from repenting of his Provocation. The Testimonies of Scripture are numerous. *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any Grudge against the Children of thy People; but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: I am the Lord.* Levit. xix. 18. *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the Man according to his Work.* Prov. xxiv. 29. In the *New Testament*, our Lord's Commandments of *not resisting Evil*, and of *loving our Enemies*, as they go further, so they exclude *Revenge* with the greater Force. So *St. Paul* directly, *Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil: Rom. xii. 17.* And again, (Vers. 19.) *Dearlly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto Wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* Nay, so far must we be from recompensing Evil for Evil, that it is no small Guilt to wish it; or, if it happen, to delight or

triumph in it. From this *Job* purges himself, S E R M.  
*If I rejoiced at the Destruction of him that* IX.  
*bated me, or lift up my self when Evil found*  
*him: Neither have I suffered my Mouth to sin,*  
*by wishing a Curse to his Soul. Chap. xxxi.*  
 29, 30. But further still; the Gospel  
 obliges us, instead of cursing, to *blefs* and  
*pray for* unreconciled *Enemies*, even them  
 that actually *persecute and despitefully use* us.

Here then it will be said, since our *Re-*  
*venge* must be remitted to *Offenders*,  
 whether they repent or not; Why is it  
 said in the Text, *if he repent, forgive him?*  
 To which it may be justly reply'd, That  
 every Man who studies holy Scripture,  
 must be satisfy'd, that the Manner of *Ex-*  
*pression* follows not always a nice and  
 scrupulous *Preciseness*; and it is sufficient  
 against any *Doubt* concerning the *Duties*  
 there to be learn'd, that we cannot fail of  
 rightly interpreting one *Passage* by the con-  
 curring *Light* of others. But in the pre-  
 sent Case, I think a more particular An-  
 swer may be given; namely, that *Revenge*  
 is not comprehended among the *Things* to  
 be forgiven or remitted; because we have  
 indeed no *Manner of Title* to it, and we can-

SERM. not be said properly, (though we are apt  
 IX. to speak so) to *give up* what we cannot  
 claim by any Pretence of *Right*. Other  
 Pursuits against Offenders are founded, or  
 pretend to be, upon Necessity, or Profit,  
 or Security, such as Justice may warrant ;  
 but mere Revenge serves none of these  
 Ends, procures no Safety, gains no Ad-  
 vantage, answers no Necessity, but, to in-  
 dulse the vindictive Passion, invades HIS  
 Prerogative who hath said (as I quoted be-  
 fore) *Vengeance is mine : I will repay.*

The *second* Thing, whereby Men usu-  
 ally declare their Enmity or their Reconci-  
 liation, is by performing, on Occasion, or  
 forbearing the *Offices* of *Humanity*. I  
 mean such Offices, as are by Providence  
 brought in our Way ; so that we, rather  
 than another, can rescue our Neighbour  
 from Suffering or Ruin, and that without  
 any Disadvantage notably grievous to our-  
 selves, in Comparison of what he must  
 probably suffer, if we leave him exposed,  
 and afford not the timely Assistance which  
 the Case demands. We find Instances  
 that shew the Nature of this Kindness in  
 the Precepts which require the Perform-  
 ance ;

ance; as in *Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.* If thou SERM.  
 meet thine Enemies Ox, or his Ass, going IX.  
 astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him  
 again. If thou see the Ass of him that ha-  
 teth thee, lying under his Burden, and would'st  
 forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help  
 with him. And *Prov. xxv. 21.* If thine  
 Enemy be hungry, give him Bread to eat:  
 and if he be thirsty, give him Water to  
 drink. Which is repeated by St. Paul,  
*Rom. xii. 20.* And such also is the Ex-  
 ample of the good Samaritan's Behaviour  
 to the Man that lay in the Way stript and  
 wounded, in our Lord's Parable, *Luke x.*  
 Now the Neglect of these Duties proceeds  
 from the same Spirit that animates our  
 Revenge: For it is the Part of the *same*  
*Man*, to bring Mischief or Distress on  
 his Brother, and to break the Ties of Hu-  
 manity in not preventing or relieving them  
 when so much in his Power. This Car-  
 riage therefore, may be well enough called  
 a *Negative* Revenge; since it flows from  
 the same Rancour, which we are no less  
 forbidden to gratify by *Omission* than  
*Commission*. It is evident therefore, as  
 on the *first* Head, so likewise on this *se-*  
 cond,

SERM. *cond*, that we are *so far* to forgive the Person that has injured us, though he do *not* repent of it, if we will call it *Forgiving*. We cannot from his Perverseness plead an Exemption to paying him the Offices of Humanity, such as have been described. Besides the Scriptures you have heard before alledged, our Saviour's Commandment is positive to the Purpose and unavoidable: *I say unto you, Love your Enemies, do good to them which hate you.* No religious Christian can think the Doctrine here laid down, is at all strained beyond the Gospel Rule. The only Question will be, If we are not oblig'd to greater Lengths than I have yet express'd: If it be not too little, to serve our Enemies where special Opportunities are put into our Hands, and in embracing which our Burden is not great, compar'd with his Suffering if we pass them by: Whether we are not also bound industriously to seek out Occasions of doing him good, and that at as great an Expence to our own Interest, as Advantage to his. Neither is this to be answered altogether in the Negative; but only, that we are not bound to these Measures towards *all* Enemies,

mies, nor at *all* Times. Indeed, where some great Good is in View, to be procur'd by such Kindness to an Enemy, as the Honour of Religion, or the publick Quiet; there Charity will dictate to us that Proceeding. Good Men must, and will, study such Cases; and as they are free from every corrupt Byass, and acted by the Spirit of Christian Love, their Prudence will determine them to what may best serve the Glory of God in the Good of their Neighbour. But in general, there can be no Dispute but a Difference should be made in conferring Benefits, on the grateful or ungrateful, the just or injurious, our Friends or our Enemies. A contrary Method would be of no Service to Religion or Morality, as common Sense persuades every Man: Neither does the Scripture prescribe it to us. For notwithstanding the numerous Exhortations in it to Love and Tendernefs towards Enemies, we find this Difference there authoris'd. Of this my Text is a most pregnant Instance, as appears on the first Consideration, and may yet more distinctly in the further Handling. And that of *St. Paul,*



SERM. Gal. vi. 10. serves to the same Effect; *A*

*IX.* *we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all*

*Men, ESPECIALLY unto them that are of the Household of Faith; and much the more, if we compare it with our Lord's Decision in the Case of the Trespasser, that would not hear his offended Brother, nor the Church, Let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican, Mat. xviii.*

*17.* By this we see, it is not intended our Beneficence should flow equally upon those who correspond with us in a good and fair Demeanour, and upon the vicious, unjust, and incorrigible. We are indeed press'd to *Love, and do good to them that hate us, by this Motive, That we may be the Children of our Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust, Mat. v. 44, 45.*

But if we consider attentively, this high Example, to which our Conformity is requir'd, we shall find it furnishes no Argument to exclude a Difference in our Benefactions to the Good and to the Bad: Far otherwise; it justifies and confirms it. For although *the highest be kind unto the*  
*unthankful*

unthankful and to the Evil, yet is it clear **SERM.**  
 by many Proofs of Holy Scripture, that **IX.**  
 the pious and obedient are the more con-  
 stant and special Objects of his Favour,  
 even in the Distribution of this World's  
 Blessings, *The Righteous Lord loveth Right-*  
*eousness, his Countenance doth behold the*  
*Upright.*

Thus I have discours'd of the two first  
 Points propos'd, *Actual Revenge*, and the  
*forbearing Offices of Humanity*; and shew'd  
 them to be inconsistent with the Charity  
 we owe even to obstinate Enemies; and  
 this, to prevent Mistakes, lest these should  
 be thought of the Number of those Things  
 which the Text requires to be remitted or  
 given up to him *only* that repents of his  
 having wronged us. Two more remain,  
*The Reparation of Damage* already sus-  
 tain'd, and *Security* against the Future;  
 concerning which, the Resolution will in  
 many Cases be different: But for *them*  
 another Time is necessary, as likewise for  
 laying before you the powerful Motives  
 Religion furnishes to enforce the Practice  
 of Forgiveness.



## SERMON X.

Of the Forgiveness of Injuries.

PART II.



LUKE xvii. 4.

*— If he trespass against thee seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*

SERM.  
X.



HERE appears a just and necessary Foundation for the Law of Forgiveness, in the Imperfection of our common Nature; and every Man that will look into himself must find it. And being conscious to his own Mind of

so

so much Passion and Inadvertency, as have made, and will again make him, stand in Need of his Neighbour's Forgiveness, no Doubt but he will allow others to be full as weak as himself. And how then can he deny them the Indulgence which he wants and desires upon Occasion, and to which they have the same Title and Necessity. But if he enter into Comparisons, and will judge others more, and more frequently, faulty; Are they not also more unhappy of Temper, more light and feeble of Judgment and Resolution? That will probably be granted; and then the same must be granted a good Ground for the Forgiving greater and frequenter Faults. For he cannot be clear that they are at all greater or more frequent than his own, with Proportion to each Person's different Abilities and Tempers. This Doctrine then is plainly a Branch of that great Rule, *All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them*: That Rule which is *the Law and the Prophets*, and the Gospel too: That Rule which no Man in the World ever lived so much in Defiance of, as not to approve

SERM,

X.



SERM. prove (many Times at least) within his  
 X. own Heart. Thus you see a Concurrence  
 of all Authorities, of Reason and of Religion, binding us to *forgive* our *Brother* that *trespasses against* us, and *turns again to* us, and shews his *Repentance* of the *Injury*.

And as the Equity and Obligation of this Duty are signally great, so the Occasions to practise it are to many Men extremely frequent. We live in the Midst of Frailty and Presumption, of poor Apprehensions, short and weak Reasoning, joined in Company with high Confidence, strong Desires, and fierce Resentments. And what can be the Fruits of all this, but an almost continual Offending, and making Satisfaction, and (if we will do our Duty) forgiving one another? But besides the Real Occasions of forgiving, there may be a Multitude of Instances, wherein something may be required of us under that Name and Pretence, or our own Thoughts may molest us with Scruples, in Matters upon which the Law of God has made no Determination. We have therefore great Cause to study well the  
 Extent

Extent of this Duty, and the strong Mo- SERM.  
 tives, so necessary to the Peace of our X.  
 Conscience and the Title of our Salvation,  
 and of such daily Use; when yet our Ig-  
 norance or Disobedience in it brings an Ab-  
 surdity at least, and Disablement, upon our  
 daily Prayers, *Forgive us as we forgive.*

For this Reason, the two remaining Points  
 of my former Discourse shall be examin'd.  
 They are the *Reparation of Damage* sus-  
 tained, and the Provision for *Security* in  
 the Time to come: And to these the  
 Condition in the Text, *if he repent*, is  
 clearly applicable. For Reason teaches us,  
 that we have a natural Right to be in-  
 demnified for what we have wrongfully  
 suffer'd, at the Charge of the Wrong-  
 doer; and to use a special Caution for the  
 Future against the Persons that have  
 mark'd themselves with the Character of  
 Injurious. And although the Exerting  
 these Rights be sometimes called *reveng-*  
*ing* ourselves, yet is it not, strictly speaking,  
 of that Nature, but a Pursuit of Justice;  
 and may be (as it ought to be) abstract-  
 ed from all Malevolence and Passion that  
 delights in Evil. There is indeed apt to  
 be

SERMON. be a faulty Mixture ; and when People are  
 X. prosecuting the Recovery of their Loss, or  
 guarding against farther Mischief, they entertain often a malicious Joy in the deserved Sufferings of the Offender. But this is to be purged out. For Charity can allow us to take no Pleasure at the Suffering of any Man, unless in the pure View of Discipline, Example, and Amendment. For want of distinguishing these Things, and by misunderstanding a Passage in *St. Paul*, some have taught, that Christianity forbids us going to Law. But such Refinements serve only to vex innocent People with Scruples, and expose Religion to others as irrational and impracticable. Indeed, if Men cannot go to Law without Fraud and Covetousness, vexatious Arts, and Breach of Charity, then they must not ; for these Things are forbidden. But since they may be separated from our Suits, though it is done (it must be confess'd) too too seldom ; the Command had need be very plain and direct, (and we know of none such) that should disarm us of the Instruments of Security provided by the Justice and Prudence of Ages, and  
 at

at once cut the main Bond of Civil Society and all Temporal Enjoyments.

SERMO  
X.

Let us therefore return to the Points propounded ; and first, *Reparation*. A Man has suffer'd in his Person, or Substance, or good Name, by the Fault of another, whether of Malice, or Covetousness, or Neglect of any Trust or Duty ; it is natural, I say, for him to think of being restored to the Condition he was in before, and that by the same Hand by which he lost it ; or, if that is in Nature impossible, to obtain something instead of it, as near as may be of equal Value to him, We are to examine, whether the Law of Religion forbid the Prosecuting this Thought. Now for the better determining this, and clearing the whole Matter, where our Duty to forgive, and our Right to be repaired, come under joint Consideration ; it may be necessary to lay down distinct States of the various Circumstances which occur, because the Diversity of Circumstances diversifies our Obligation.

*First*, we will suppose the offending Party condemns his own Action, and, being



SERM. ing *able*, is *willing* to make a just Satisfaction. In this Case we have a clear Decision; the Man doth *repent*; *forgive him*, saith the Text. No Advantage is to be taken from his Offence, to vex him by Law or Fact, or to require any Thing *beyond* that Satisfaction.

*Secondly*, Let us put it just contrary-wise, that there are neither any Tokens of Sorrow for the Fact, nor any Consent to indemnify us for what we have suffer'd. Here likewise appears no Difficulty. Religion no more than Reason binds us to forego our Right. The only Caution is, that it be follow'd in the simple Spirit of Justice, admitting no evil Company, no Rancour, no Covetousness, no corrupt Practices, but with Charity ever at Hand, which will determine us to change our Behaviour whensoever the injurious Party changes his.

*Thirdly*, The Wrong-doer may make a Profession of Repentance, but *refuse* to make the *Satisfaction* in his *Power*. And here perhaps he, or somebody for him, will tell us, that since he repents, Christianity obliges us to release our Claim of Reparation,

Reparation, and forgive him the whole SERM.  
 Business. But a short and true Answer X.  
 may be given, that he *does not repent*. Re-  
 pentance lies not in Words: The Effence  
 of it is the Change of the Mind; and  
 that Change is to be proved by suitable  
 Actions, and certainly disproved by Ac-  
 tions unsuitable. Without Amendment,  
 without Restitution, ye know there is no  
 true Repentance towards God; and, with  
 respect to our Neighbour, it is the same  
 Thing for the same Reason. A Man says  
 he is sorry he has done me Wrong, but  
 will not do me Right. Does he not dis-  
 semble with me? nay, does he not rather  
 mock and insult me? He ought at least  
 to be in the same Condition with other  
 Debtors, who cannot pay with Words,  
 though their Obligations are not contract-  
 ed by Injury, but mutual Consent. This  
 Case then, (as no better than the former)  
 is to be thrown out of the Question. Chri-  
 stian Charity puts us under no Rule to  
 quit our Claim to such a one. Here is  
 no *returning* indeed, no *repenting*; no-  
 thing but a *Lye* to induce our For-  
 giving.

SERM. The *fourth* Supposition is (and that  
 X. commonly happens) of a Person unable,  
 in Whole or in Part, to make Amends for  
 the Injury done; though he appear other-  
 wise willing, and likewise grieved for his  
 Offence. In this Man we see an Object of  
 our Charity, and to him we are obliged  
 by it to remit our Claim of Reparation,  
 as far at least, and as long, as his Inabi-  
 lity extends. And herein we shall fol-  
 low the great Example proposed to us in  
 the Parable, *Matth. xviii.* where *the Lord*  
*of the Servant that had not to pay*; upon  
 his Supplication, *was moved with Com-*  
*passion, and loosed him, and forgave him*  
*the Debt.*


But *fifthly*, if we vary this Case a little,  
 and say that the Man is able indeed to  
 make good the Damage, but not without  
*extreme Hardship*, having not turn'd the  
 Injury to his own Advantage, and that  
*we* can much more easily bear the Loss;  
 then the Solution is not so plain. So  
 much is true and evident, that in releasing  
 him we do well and charitably: But the  
 Question is, Whether the Law of Christian  
 Charity absolutely bind us to it. The  
 Person,

Person, it is allow'd, is in the Circumstances that call for Compassion, and should find it; but I think it cannot be proved, that he must find it altogether at the Hands of the offended Party. To his Consideration, indeed, the Matter is first proposed, and he will most clearly, and properly, and honourably, take the whole Burthen upon himself. But if he shall insist on Part of his Right, affording only some Relief, and leaving the rest to the Consideration of others, as thinking himself at Liberty to exercise his Charity, according to Discretion, rather on some other Object; I dare not condemn him as directly guilty of the Breach of any Commandment.

Now I come to the *third* Point, to treat of that Security, which Men may urge there is a Right to provide for, that they may not *hereafter* suffer the like Injury, as they have already. But this is not all; for they may say, they are concern'd likewise for the Security of other good People as well as their own. And hereupon they will conclude, that, in some Cases at least, and in some Ways, they must be

SERM. at Liberty, notwithstanding the Doctrine  
 X. of Forgiveness, to punish, disable, and  
 ~~~~~ deter Offenders and evil-disposed Persons  
 from those Crimes, which their Characters  
 threaten us with. For in this Matter they  
 confine not their Thoughts to the Man  
 that is actually guilty ; but propose, by the  
 Example of his Punishment, to impress  
 an Awe upon such other Minds as need  
 the Restraint of it. And this is certainly  
 a Ground that the Civil Laws in all Coun-  
 tries go upon : Which do not inflict such  
 Severities upon Criminals, and even de-  
 prive them of Life, only for Fear of their  
 doing again the like Mischief (for with  
 most of them there might be other Me-  
 thods taken to prevent *that* :) But the Ne-  
 cessity of *Example* is their Motive ; and  
 by that View it is, that they are excused  
 from Cruelty, while, by Rigour to a *few*,  
 they are, in Effect, merciful to *many*, both  
 Good and Bad, keeping the one more in-  
 nocent, and the other more safe.

The *first* Plea, for *private Security*, where  
 our Danger is clear by costly Experience,  
 cannot be in general rejected. Prudence  
 and Self-defence are not inconsistent with  
 Charity.

Charity. It is said indeed, that *Charity* SERM.  
*seeketh not her own*; and, it is true, she X.  
doth not. But a Man endowed with   
Charity may, and must, seek his own,  
but not his own *only*; but not seek his  
own, to the unjust Prejudice or unchari-  
table Neglect of the Interests of others.

The *second* Plea is yet less to be reject-  
ed, which urges the Necessity and Use-  
fulness of making proper *Examples* to  
maintain the publick Peace, and strengthen  
the Guard of every good Neighbour against  
Fraud and Violence. And it may be true  
(nor is there Reason to doubt, but it is  
often in Fact true) that Men pursue Of-  
fenders at their own considerable Cost,  
and Labour, and Hazard, not so much  
for their particular Benefit or Safety, as  
for that of the Country in general. This  
will be said to be the Province of Ma-  
gistrates and Governors; and it is (emi-  
nently) so, and a very honourable one:  
But private Men cannot be excluded,  
where the Laws admit and encourage  
them; especially since it is evident, that  
without their Activity the Magistrate must  
fall very short in the Discharge of this  
R 3 Business.

SERM. Business. And though Men of unchristian Tempers may cover their Malice, or Cruelty, or other wicked End, with the same Pretence ; yet, where it is true, and the Means also can be justified, it must be a base Injustice to censure for Uncharitable, an Action that is plainly publick-spirited, beneficent, and a common Obligation. Farther still ; to strengthen the Reasonableness of such Proceedings, it may be alledged, that with respect to the Offender himself, a real Charity is aimed at (if he be not incapable of the Benefit) by taking the Course to reform him by due Severity ; which Experience shews to be, with too many, most effectual. But all these Reasonings must be admitted only with proper Caution : For no End is good enough to be sought by unlawful Means. Nor to obtain the otherwise just, and serviceable, and generous Purposes that have been set forth, can it ever become lawful to punish that Man whom God hath commanded us to discharge unpunish'd. The Business therefore now before us is to consider, in what Cases we are obliged, for God's Sake and by his Law,

Law, to yield up our Concern for our own or others future Security ; and in what we are at Liberty to provide for it at the Expence of the Offender.


SERM.  
X.

To begin ; you know I was even now putting many Cases about Men's repenting, or not ; and satisfying for the Injustice committed, or not. One or two I then omitted, reserving them for this Place : As, *first*, where the Party is *unable* indeed, but then shews himself no less *unwilling* to make Satisfaction ; but sets us and our Complaint of Wrong at utter Defiance. We have therefore before us a Man that has been unjust, and intends to be so : What we have lost by him is not recoverable ; but there are Ways, by the Laws of our Country, to lay some Chastisement upon him, such as may prevent, in Probability, farther Suffering to ourselves or others. Does the Divine Law forbid it ? Surely, if all Revenge in the Spirit, all Unmercifulness in the Degree of punishing, be excluded, it does not. Nor can we be charged with *rendering Evil for Evil* ; when we are doing Good in our whole View, not to ourselves only, but doing Good to our Neighbours also, and



SERM. doing Good, if he be capable of it, to the  
 X. Criminal himself.


With respect to the *other* Cases before stated, we must say, that in all Occasions, where we have Reason given us to believe our offending Brother *sensible* of his Offence, and find him ready to make us Reparation, (and that Readiness, if the Power be not wanting, ever accompanies that Sense) and likewise where there is a Disposition to make Reparation and the *Power* only is wanting; in these Occasions we must say, an Obligation lies upon us to let the Offender go free from any Punishment we might otherwise lay him under with regard to *Example*, or any Pretence of *Security* for the Future. He appears to be within the Benefit of the Law; he returns and repents; and he, from whom we must all beg Forgiveness, has commanded us to forgive him. I meddle not here with the Duty of the publick Magistrate, who in the known Case of Murder, and it may be also in some extraordinary Conjunctions, where the common Safety is eminently concern'd, has special Rules and Considerations to govern

vern him ; which it is not necessary to SERM.  
discuss in this Place. As to our X. *Business*,  
this is the Summe : He that changes his   
Sentiments and resolves on a different  
Course, goes free ; and he that persists in  
his injurious Disposition, remains liable.

But to proceed yet further in the particular Explanation of this Subject ; I will make another Supposal, omitted under the Head of *Reparation*. It is this ; A Man offers to answer the Damage we have suffer'd from him, but shews no tolerable Evidence that he repents of the Fault. And this Supposition may well be made : for *Reparation* does not certainly infer *Repentance*, but may proceed from other Motives ; although *Repentance* does certainly infer *Reparation*, or at least the Will to make it. Such a Tender of Satisfaction no Man is bound to accept, but has a Liberty of Discretion to exact other Penalties also agreeable to Law and Equity. For Religion interposes not ; and Reason makes a plain Difference between the penitent and impenitent with respect to future Security ; since the Fear of further Injury from the latter remains, which from the former is  
in

SERM. in a great Measure taken away. This  
 X. last Case was stated therefore not for any  
 ~~~~~ Difficulty in itself, but only to render  
 Things the more clear and express in the  
 Whole.


But a great Difficulty, and a very common one there is, incident to these Considerations; namely, to judge of the Sincerity of a Man's Repentance, (but of that something has been already said;) and what is to be done, where we remain doubtful. However, strict Reason will answer, that since Repentance is a Ground and Condition, without which I am not, in this respect, bound to forgive; THAT Repentance ought to appear to me before I can be bound to forgive. But then it lies upon me to take Care, that it be not through my Fault, that it appears not, where it really is. If I suffer myself to be blinded by Malignity and Jealousy; the Offence I commit under that Blindness, will be much the same, as if I did it with my Eyes open. It will therefore be our Safety to incline in these Cases to the favourable Side; and accordingly, a Man, whose Soul is possess'd with the Benevolence  
 of

of Charity, goes into Forgiveness with **SERM.**  
**Ease** and Delight, but not without Reluc- **X.**  
**tance** and Fear into the Courses of Seve-   
**riety.**

Now I have spoken of the Grounds and Intents of this Security against future Injuries, and of the Circumstances under which it may be insisted on; it remains to say something of the Ways by which it is procur'd. They are known to be, removing from Trust, restraining of Liberty, pecuniary or corporal Punishments, and lastly Capital. Of these, I see no doubt that can be reasonably moved concerning the first, except only, Whether it be in Propriety of judging and speaking any Punishment. The placing our Confidence and Trust in any Man appears to be a Matter of our free Choice; and which we may therefore remove and transfer to another at Discretion, even without any Offence given. And if so; the Continuation of it is not comprehended under Forgiveness. And this I say, only to check the Censoriousness of some Men, who taking little Care of Justice themselves, are yet extremely forward at all Adventures to



SERM. to clamour at others for Uncharitableness.

X.  But it must be acknowledged, that altho' the putting from our Trust have not the Nature of Punishment, yet has it the Effect, and that in some Cases a very severe one: For which Reason, the Matter is to be consider'd with a just Tenderness. But where a Man is persuaded, that continuing his Affairs in such a Hand is exposing them to Ruin, who can say, he is bound to do it; to shut his Eyes, and renounce his Prudence and his Interest?

Against the other four Methods of punishing or disabling Men, by Fines, or Imprisonment, and by their corporal or capital Suffering, there lies one general Objection of our Lord's Command, *not to resist Evil*. But the Intent and Scope of that Command is only to prohibit, *first*, all Revenge; and, *secondly*, as much as possible, Contention and Quarrels: In order to this, it obliges us to bear Injuries, where-ever our Christian Prudence tells us, that by such Meekness and Patience, Peace and Quietness, and Charity, will probably be promoted. But it obliges not, to bear them at all Times, and from every

every Person ; particularly, not where no **SERM.**  
 such good Effect can be hop'd for, and **X.**  
 where, on the other side, we have a real  
**Good** in View from taking our Remedy.  
 Divers Arguments there are to justify this  
 Interpretation ; which I omit at present  
 for Want of Room, it being sufficient for  
 my Purpose, the *Matter of Forgiveness*,  
 to alledge the Condition our Lord himself  
 has interposed in the Precept of the Text,  
*if he repent.*

*Lastly,* Some Men object in special,  
 against taking away the Lives of Offenders,  
 as inconsistent with Charity, and utterly  
 unlawful to Christian Men. Herein they  
 condemn the Judgment and Practice of  
 all Nations and Ages of Christianity. But  
 these Men are not mov'd by that Consi-  
 deration. But surely they must by the  
 Authority of *St. Paul*, who says, *Rom.*  
*xiii. 4.—If thou do that which is evil, be*  
*afraid ; for he beareth not the Sword in*  
*vain : For he is the Minister of God, a*  
*Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that*  
*doth Evil.* For these Words contain a  
 manifest Approbation of the Magistrates  
 exercising his Power in cutting off Crimi-  
 nals.

SERM. minals. And it is ridiculous to allow  
 X. THAT to be just and commendable, and at  
 the same Time to condemn all Prosecu-  
 tions : For that is to say, the Thing is  
 good, but all Men are bound, under Pain  
 of Sin, to render it impracticable.

Now I have gone through what I pro-  
 posed upon the three Points of *Revenge*,  
*Reparation*, and *Security* ; I have yet one  
 Thing to remark, which is, that I have all  
 along treated of solid Injuries, such as pro-  
 ceed from an unjust Mind and malicious  
 Intentions ; and therefore must desire you  
 to consider ; since these are to be forgiven  
 to the Penitent, how much more the slight  
 ones of Indiscretion and Inadvertency ought  
 to be passed over ; and how grievous a  
 Crime it must be, how scandalous to the  
 Christian Name, that outrageous Animo-  
 sities, settled Hatreds, and tragical Mis-  
 chiefs, often arise amongst us from such  
 trivial Occasions.

What still remains, is to lay before you  
 the powerful Motives we have to the Prac-  
 tice of Forgiveness ; upon which I must  
 now be very brief,

The *first* Thing to this Purpose, is the **SERM.**  
Result of all the past Discourse, which I **X.**  
hope is, that the Duty must appear unex-  
ceptionable to our Understandings, if it  
has been so stated as to put by the com-  
mon Objections, which arise from mis-  
understanding the Nature and Extent of  
it; if it has been shew'd to be by no  
Means inconsistent with the necessary  
Maintenance of Mens just Rights, and  
their private and publick Safety, and to  
exclude only Pride and Covetousness, and  
Choler and Cruelty. For the Consequence  
presses home; the more easy and reason-  
able the Duty, the more inexcusable the  
Transgression.

But the singular Motives arise from Re-  
ligion, the Religion of Christians; and as  
such, the great Revelation of Jesus Christ  
is the Means of our Reconcilement to God,  
offended by our Violations of his Law,  
Upon this Head, Mankind was before un-  
der great Distress of Mind for Want of a  
particular Foundation and declar'd Cer-  
tainty. But all this good Hope and Con-  
solation, the blessed Reconcilement itself,  
and every Privilege that results from it,  
are



SERM. are made by the same Revelation to depend most emphatically upon our loving and forgiving our Brethren, as we have been beloved, and desire to be finally forgiven ourselves.

X.  
~

As to the Title of Pardon in general; hear what the Author of it says; *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy: Matt. v. 7.* And his Apostle; *He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy. Jam. ii. 13.*

Secondly, As to the Privilege of obtaining Pardon and all other Blessings, by the Means of Prayer, purchased us by Christ; *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you; it is entirely vacated to the Unforgiving; for it depends on these Terms, When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: That your Father which is in Heaven may forgive you your Trespases: But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your Trespases. Mark xi. 25, 26.* Nay, the Condition is by our Lord inserted into the very Form of that Prayer which he hath prescribed for our Use, that it may perpetually stop the Mouths of the Disobedient.

Thirdly,

*Thirdly*, Our Reconciliation by Christ SERM  
 is followed with the Advancement of us X.  
 to the glorious Title of the Sons of God :  
 And yet this Adoption too is lost by the  
 same Default. *In this the Children of God  
 are manifest, and the Children of the De-  
 vil ; whosoever doth not Righteousness, is  
 not of God, neither he that loveth not his  
 Brother.* You see the Apostle *comprehend-*  
*ing* all other Duties under the Word *Righ-*  
*teousness*, hath chosen to *express* this single  
 one particularly.

*Lastly*, By the same Title we claim to  
 be Heirs of eternal Life : But we incur a  
 special Forfeiture of *that* likewise by Un-  
 mercifulness : *We know that we have pas-*  
*sed from Death unto Life, because we*  
*love the Brethren : He that loveth not his*  
*Brother abideth in Death. Whosoever ha-*  
*teth his Brother, is a Murderer : And ye*  
*know that no Murderer hath eternal Life*  
*abiding in him.*

These Reflexions will I hope, be suf-  
 ficient, (though they might be more in-  
 larg'd,) to induce us to a full and constant  
 Obedience of our Lord's New Command-  
 ment ; as they shew, that by a contrary

SERM. Behaviour a Man frustrates his own Prayers, or rather *turns them into Sin*; tears off the Badge of a Disciple of Jesus Christ; excommunicates himself from the Church and the Sacrament; and effectually renounces all the present Benefits and future Hopes of his Christianity.





# S E R M O N XI.

Of giving Scandal.



MARK ix. 42.

*Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in Me, it is better for him that a Milstone were hanged about his Neck, and he were cast into the Sea.*



THE Apostles of our Lord, SERM. XI. being not as yet enlightened by the coming of the Holy Ghost, were mighty full of a false Idea of his Kingdom, as appears by the immediate Occasion of these Words : *For by the Way they had disputed*

SERM. *among themselves, who should be the great-*  
 XI. *est; Verse 34. In that very Way, it seems,*  
 ~~~~~ *which he had chosen to travel with them*  
*privately, that he might have an Opportu-*  
*nity of instructing them alone, as he had*  
*done before, in a Doctrine very proper to*  
*destroy those vain Imaginations of tempo-*  
*ral Greatness. So Verses the 30th and 31st.*  
*And they departed thence, and passed thro'*  
*Galilee: And he would not that any Man*  
*should know it. For he taught his Disci-*  
*ples, and said unto them, the Son of Man*  
*is delivered into the Hands of Men, and*  
*they shall kill him; and after that he is*  
*killed, he shall rise the third Day. But*  
*neither this, nor the Rebuke that Peter*  
*met with, for opposing (with whatever*  
*Intention) a like Declaration; nor that*  
*made to the Disciples and People together*  
*of the Necessity of Self-denial, taking up*  
*the Cross, and even losing of their Lives for*  
*his and his Gospel's Sake, in the foregoing*  
*Chapter, could cure the inveterate Preju-*  
*dice they had entertained in common with*  
*the other Jews, of a Messiah triumphant*  
*on Earth; which, it is probable, they*  
*cherish'd the more fondly, after having*  
 joined

joined themselves to Christ, as reckoning upon an eminent Share in the good Things of such a Prince's Court. They saw and understood well enough, how the *Roman* Emperor had given his Friends, in their own, and the neighbouring Countries, Kingdoms and Tetrarchies; and expected, without Doubt, Reprizals upon the Heathen, with Honours and Advantages to themselves, at least equal.

S E R M.  
X I.  
~

As Nothing could be more opposite to the Purposes and Nature of our Saviour's Government; without indulging in the least this Conceit, he ruins all Pretences of that Kind in the 35th Verse, and in full and severe Words, shews a very different Ministry to which they were appointed in his Kingdom: *If any Man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and Servant of all.* And proceeds by Action also to point out, no less surprizingly, the Favourites he would own among his Subjects, whom they, and all, must value and respect; to whom, if they paid Regard and Service, he would interpret and reward it as done to himself, and avenge the contrary Practice, as the highest Instance of

SERM. Disobedience and Contempt to his Au-  
 XI. thority. *And he took a Child, and set him  
 in the midst of them; and when he had ta-  
 ken him in his Arms, he said unto them,  
 Whosoever shall receive one of such Children  
 in my Name, receiveth me: And whosoever  
 shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him  
 that sent me; adding the Words I read  
 to you, Whosoever shall offend one of these  
 little ones that believe in me, it is better for  
 him that a Millstone were hanged about his  
 Neck, and he were cast into the Sea.*

So terrible a Denunciation may well ex-  
 cite our Concern to understand both, *who*  
*these little ones* are, whose Interest is guar-  
 ded by such a Sanction; and *how*, and  
 by *whom* they may be offended. And  
 then, if it can be made appear, *why* the  
 giving that Offence is reputed so provoking  
 a Crime; it will lead us to the Detestation  
 of it, that we may stand the more secure  
 from incurring the Penalty; and, at the  
 same time, shew and recommend the op-  
 posite Path to Reward and Glory.

Now it seems evident from what our  
 Saviour both did and said, (especially from  
 those Words, *that believe in me,*) that by  
*little*


*little ones* he meant, in the *first* Place, (li- SERM.  
 terally) *Children*, of such Age as render'd XI.  
 them capable of Religion, and who should  
 actually embrace that which he came to  
 teach.

But *Secondly*, besides these very young Christians, parity of Reason will oblige us to reckon, amongst the *little ones* taken under so particular a Protection, all other Believers, whose Weakness and Simplicity places them, as to Religion, in the Rank of Children; who, in that Regard, labour under like Defects, and are susceptible of like Impressions to their Benefit or Injury from the Conduct of others. And hereto agrees, not only the Doctrine, but the Phrase too, of other Places of Holy Scripture, where the Apostles frequently design by like Expressions, the *weak in Faith*, and less perfectly instructed in *Christianity*, calling them *Babes* or *Children*, and *little Children*; and at the same Time distinguishing those *grown up* to superior Proficiency and Abilities, as *of full Age*; as *Young Men*, *Men*, and *perfect Men*.

It may be more necessary, in the next Place, to explain, what is intended by



SERM. *Offending* or *giving Offence*, or, (as it is  
 XI. commonly called by Words borrowed  
 from the Original,) *giving Scandal* and  
*Scandalizing*. For People have sometimes  
 run into Mistakes about the Crime of  
*Scandal*, charging innocent Persons with  
 it, or excusing unwarrantable Practices  
 under Colour of fearing to offend the Bre-  
 thren. Now the Word, which in our  
 Translation of the Bible is rendred various-  
 ly, (as sometimes a *Stumbling Block*, some-  
 times *an Occasion of Stumbling*, or *falling*,  
 and frequently *an Offence*,) appears to me to  
 have signified, originally, a certain Machine  
 or Instrument of Military Contrivance, laid  
 in Roads and open Countries to mischief,  
 and stop Enemies in their March, and  
 thence (generally) any Thing apt to over-  
 throw a Man in his Way, especially un-  
 foreseen; and lastly, to have been apply'd  
 in common Life, to express any Device  
 or Accident whereby Men may be stopt,  
 or turn'd out of their Way and Course  
 of doing or thinking, most commonly, in  
 some Manner surprizing and shocking, or  
 attended with Hazard and Mischief. Ac-  
 cordingly, in religious Concerns (which is  
 our

our Business) Men of all Sorts may be SERM.  
 offended or scandalized ; Infidels and Belie- XI.  
 vers, Hypocrites and Sincere, Strong and   
 Weak : and, according to the Variety of  
 Cases, the Fault may be greater or less.  
 It may be in those that *take* the Offence,  
 and not in those that *give* it, as well as  
 contrarywise ; and 'tis possible both Sides  
 may be innocent. But very commonly it  
 falls out, that we are bound in Duty, to  
 do or say what offends our Neighbour ;  
 but which *should* highly oblige him, and  
 it may be one Day *will*. Thus, you know,  
 the *Jews* were offended at our Lord's Pa-  
 rentage, and mean Circumstances ; and  
 afterwards at his Cross. Thus the *Pha-*  
*risees* were offended at his rebuking their  
 false Doctrines and Hypocrisy, (St. *Matth.*  
*xv. 12.*) For Men may act a part so long  
 and warmly, as to grow into Earnest,  
 and deceive themselves the better to deceive  
 others. And upon his mysterious Preach-  
 ing in the 6th of St. *John*, his Disciples  
 were offended, many of them to that De-  
 gree as to turn back and forsake him,  
 though *the Way, the Truth, and the*  
*Life.* Nay the Apostles themselves were  
 all

SERM. all of them, howsoever forewarn'd, upon  
 XI. his Betraying and Seizure *offended because*  
 of him. And thus it is indeed with *many*,  
 whenever any *Persecution ariseth for the*  
*Word's Sake*. But I forbear to multiply  
 Instances, designing only what may be suf-  
 ficient to make you apprehend in general,  
 that there are frequently Things necessary  
 in Prudence or Duty, which yet may be  
 the Occasion of Scandal ; and that the ra-  
 ther, because some may take an Opportu-  
 nity from the fearful Threatning in the  
 Text, to affright Men from considering the  
 Misapplication of it.

With regard to THAT, we are obliged to  
 consider, as the Object of our Duty, the  
*Weak* only ; and among them, as many  
 as are qualify'd with meek and sincere  
 Dispositions ; as for others we often meet  
 with, weak enough indeed in Understand-  
 ing, but no less strong in Prejudice and  
 Pride, and Censoriousness ; *they* are as far  
 from the Privilege, as from the Innocence  
 of Children.

But that is not all we are to attend to:  
 Even towards the Persons meant in our  
 Lord's Words, it is highly requisite to find  
 the

the general Extent of our Obligation; lest we remain fluctuating perpetually and uncertain, and suffer the Vexation of endless Scruples and Anxiety. The Measure therefore or Standard, whereby all Cases of this Sort may be try'd, (even those not comprehended in my Text,) is nothing else but *Charity*. To this *St. Paul* plainly points, when speaking, in the xivth of the *Romans*, of this Subject, of *putting a Stumbling-block, or an Occasion to fall, in our Brother's Way*, he thus evinces and expresses the Sin committed, Verse 15, *But if thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat, now walkest thou not charitably*. If then it be but remember'd, in the *first Place*, that *Charity* never sets us free from the Obligations of Justice, but that Matters of direct Right and Debt being first answer'd, then appears the Place of Tendernefs and Beneficence; and, *secondly*, that *Charity* obliges us to any Action only, in Proportion to our Abilities and Opportunities; these Things, I say, being born in Mind, will prove no small Light to guide us in all Occasions of Doubtfulness, which relate to giving Offence: For then only do

we

SERM.  
XI.  
~

SERM. we criminally offend the *Little ones that believe in Christ*, when *maliciously*, or with an *affected Ignorance*, or *Neglect*, we do the Things that may turn them out of the good Way of Faith, and Obedience to him: When, violating the Bonds of our Christian Brotherhood in the most cruel Instance, we sacrifice, as much as in us lies, the Souls of the Innocent to our Interest, Vanity, Sloth, or Passion; and incur the Sentence in the Text, and that Curse pronounced in the Law against *him that maketh the Blind to wander out of the Way*.

Our next Enquiry shall be, By *what Sorts of Men*, and by *what Kind of Actions*, this Guilt is most commonly contracted, that the Danger may be seen more plainly, and avoided more easily. And of this there is more Need, than at first Sight one would imagine. For *who* so likely to offend the Little ones, as the Great? *Whose* Example and Authority so powerful to turn aside the Weak and Ignorant, as that of the Wise and Learned: And *who* so able and skilful as these to judge of and decline such a Transgression? But though  
this

this be true, and though we therefore place first the Men of real Power and Capacity ; yet we must take into the Number of those obnoxious to this Guilt, all, that by the *Opinion* conceived of their good Qualities, have the same Influence upon others, as if they were *actually* Masters of those Qualities. For if a Man by Birth, or Place, or Wealth, or Artifice, has arriv'd, without other Merit, to an *Esteem* equal with the truly great ; it is evident, that for a Time, he is capable of doing as much Harm by his Credit, as they, though rarely as much good. And this may be one Reason to quicken those of Rank and Fortune in the Care of improving themselves in Knowledge and Prudence answerable to their *exterior* ; and especially in a zealous Concern for the liberal and religions Education of their Children, lest their real Defects and presum'd Sufficiency, prove a Snare to the Publick, and a double Ruin to themselves. But all Persons, (I proceed to infer from what I said just before) who are placed in the Eye of the World, and have gained an advantageous Distinction in it, by what  
Title

SERM.

XI.

SERM. Title soever ; are highly concern'd to  
 XI. guard well their Conduct, and keep clear  
 of the Sin and Condemnation I am dis-  
 coursing of. Their Words and Deeds, nay,  
 their Forbearance and Silence, cannot pass  
 without affecting others : And the more  
 publick their Life and Station is, the greater  
 still is the Number of those they may oc-  
 casion to fall. How deeply then should  
 the Fear of this Threat be infix'd in their  
 Hearts ? How strongly should they repre-  
 sent to their Imagination, the Havock that  
 their Irregularity is every Day making,  
 unseen, amongst the Children of Christ :  
 For, if *whosoever shall offend ONE of the  
 little ones that believe in him, it is better for  
 him that a Milstone were hanged about his  
 Neck, and he were cast into the Sea ;* what  
 is his Guilt, and the Horror of his Case,  
 that overthrows *Multitudes* of them ?  
 What *Seas*, what *Rocks* or *Hills*, can co-  
 ver him ?

Every body is aware, how this apper-  
 tains to the Governors of the Common-  
 wealth, and the Teachers of Religion ;  
 and therefore, if it were otherwise proper,  
 I need not insist with Regard to *them* ;  
 But

But private Men are also reach'd according to their Measure of Reputation or Ability. Tho' by the Way, it may be the Ground of a good Lesson to all, not to covet ambitiously the Eminences of Place or Respect, which they are not well assured their Virtue and Discretion is sufficient to justify and adorn. For if they obtain them, in this Respect, as well as others, they do but intitle themselves to *receive the greater Condemnation.*

But to return ; There are, I say, abundance of People concerned in the Caution recommended, though without any publick Character or Profession ; nay, very few totally exempt, at least in every Stage of their Life. And *first*, Experience teaches, that *Birth* and *Substance*, *Education*, or *Dexterity*, even in private Condition, cannot fail, in some Degree, to procure one Man Honour and Admiration from another ; which insensibly draws him to consider the Carriage of such a Superior as exemplary. And as there appears something in Example more sincere, and less imposing, it takes and works with ignorant People sometimes above all the Reason in the World,

SERM.

XI.



SERM. World, even in Despight of the Endeavours of him that gives it. And it is the same Thing in *Constructions* and *Inferences* of our Opinion or Practce, which we give manifest Occasion for, as in *open Example* : They produce equal Effects. So that without a prudent and charitable Guard upon our Management, we do not only fall into grievous Sins in the great and unknown Injury of others, but likewise disable ourselves from making any Reparation, or doing any Good to the World ; which every Man of Spirit must esteem a most wretched Incapacity.


*Secondly*, It is not to be thought, that those only, who in the Respects mentioned, are *very considerably* raised above others, are in Danger of scandalizing weak Brethren. The Reason of the Case, and the perpetual Gradation, through all Ages and Orders, of higher and lower, wiser and weaker, lead us to *extend* this Consideration ; and leave none unadmonished that believes, (and who does not?) that there may be some Man, or some Child at least, who may regard him as of a superior Discretion. Every body sees these Relations  
are

are estimated by proportionable Compari-  
son ; and the very same Persons may, with  
different Views, be properly reckon'd,  
Weak and Strong, Men and Children.  
He that is of small Account in the King-  
dom or County may be much consider'd,  
and justly too, in his Parish or Neighbour-  
hood, or at least within the Limits of his  
ordinary Conversation. But still further :  
The Distinction of Parents, of Masters  
and Mistresses, enters into every House,  
and calls upon them to attend diligently,  
that their Authority and Advantages be not  
perverted to the Destruction instead of the  
Edification of their Household, remem-  
bering the Tenderneſs declared for them  
by him who is their Master also and Fa-  
ther. He, it is true, will require of them  
only according to the Prudence and Means  
of Christian Improvement he hath given :  
But according to thoſe he certainly will  
require ; and it is no leſs neceſſary, in the  
Day of Accounts, to be found faithful in  
little than in much.

Now having ſpoken of the Nature of  
Offences in general, and likewise of the  
Quality of the Offenders, I question not

SERM. but from thence you already discern in  
 XI. particular also, to a good Degree, when,  
 and in what various Manners it is, that  
 Men, in the Face of the strictest Prohi-  
 bition, do offend, hinder, or ruin their  
 poor Brethren in their Christian Course.  
 Nevertheless, to be the more distinct and  
 full in so important a Matter, we may  
 survey the Kinds of Behaviour, the sever-  
 al Doings and Omissions that are charge-  
 able with this Sin.

I begin with the most direct and ap-  
 parent; when, by my Means, such as I  
 can influence, are *purposely* drawn into  
 Sin; whether by Hope, or Fear, or Mis-  
 representation of the Fact, or Example of  
 my own, or Approbation of others; any  
 Thing done, or signified, or let alone, that  
 I believe effectual to that Purpose. The  
 ordinary Incitements to this Wickedness  
 (as one Sin is fruitful still to the Produc-  
 tion of another) are Lust, Covetousness,  
 inordinate Ambition, Revenge, and some-  
 times base Fear; and the Offspring, I will  
 not doubt to affirm, is more deformed  
 and abominable than the Parents them-  
 selves. However, of these we can give  
 ourselves


ourselves some Sort of Account. Their SERM.  
 Causes are strongly rooted in depraved Na- XI.  
 ture; and good People are grieved, but   
 not amazed at them. But there is ano-  
 ther Way, a common one too, by which  
 Men rush into this Guilt of destroying  
 their Brethren, which I am ashamed to  
 name, but, in plain Terms, is nothing  
 else but *Diversion*. They find it a gay  
 Thing, it seems, full of Entertainment  
 and Triumph, particularly in Cases of  
 Excess, to insnare the Innocent, and over-  
 come their Modesty and Fear; which of-  
 ten ends in hardening and establishing  
 them, at length, in their own Society and  
 Practices, and, it may be, much worse.  
 Thus *Fools make a Mock of Sin* in others  
 as well as themselves; (and though I am  
 loth to say it) there are of our *wise* Men  
 sometimes in the Number. But should I  
 offer any Advice to such People? With  
 what Hope? that run upon such a Sen-  
 tence upon so frivolous a Temptation.

I come therefore to the *second* Sort;  
 which is the open Commission of Sins,  
 though without any immediate Thought  
 or *Design*. of occasioning Evil to others.

SERM. In these Cases indeed, the ill Effect does

XI. not so constantly follow as in the former.  
 This is scattering Fire at Random, neither intending to burn your House, nor your's ; nor yet caring for the whole Town. But if no Chance or Wind cast it upon combustible Matter ; does that excuse the Actor ? No more does it in this Instance, (or indeed in the former, if the Tempter be disappointed) though no weakening of Faith or depraving of Manners insue : THAT cannot lessen the Fault of him that had no Regard to either, and which consists in the Want of that very Regard ; and must be judged by him, who needs not the Evidence of Facts to make known and condemn the Guiltiness of the Heart. Some good Providence turn'd the Blow into the Air, or it met with the armed and strong Christian ; but it might have slain the Weak. The Poyson was laid in the Way of Children, though not found or swallow'd by them. So when St. *Peter* opposed himself to our Lord, declaring the Necessity of his Sufferings, though his Advice and Discouragement could not possibly hurt him, who was above all

Temp-

Temptations ; yet, never the more did he SERM.  
 escape without the severest Rebuke ; as XI.  
 we read, *St. Matth. xvi. 23. But he turned*   
*and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me.*  
*Satan ; thou art an Offence unto me : For*  
*thou savourest not the Things that be of*  
*God, but those that be of Men.* Here it is  
 to be added, that it alters not much the  
 Case neither, if what is done be in itself  
 no Sin ; but believed, or vehemently sus-  
 pected by him that does it, to be one.  
 And, before I leave this Article, I would ask,  
 What is the Inducement to these publick  
 scandalous Commissions, which some make  
 the characteristick Distinction of the Iniqui-  
 ty of this Age ? To what do we owe them ?  
 In many Occasions the Trouble of con-  
 cealing would not be great, and largely  
 recompensed to most Men, without taking  
 in any Religious Consideration. I see no-  
 thing but a thoughtless Temerity, or a  
 wanton Affectation of daring : Notable  
 Grounds for Men that would be thought  
 to want no Wit and Sense, to make every  
 Crime, and the Repentance, or the Mi-  
 sery, at least two-fold ! But if they will  
 say, these Sins are little ones ; let it be :

SERM. Why then will they make them great?

XI. The Scandal is probably the more pernicious; the Example without Shock follow'd; and these reputed *little Sins* soon believed to be none at all.

*Thirdly*, Though there be Nothing done otherwise forbidden, and no other Commandment neglected; and though we have no Purpose of tempting or occasioning any Creature to sin; yet may we do that Mischief very effectually, and be justly answerable for it. This arises from *Time* and *Place*, and every *Fashion* and *Circumstance* of Action; and from the *Opinions* that others have, in Proportion to which they judge of our Proceedings. Their Misconstruction of them is indeed the Cause of this Evil, and no Man's Wariness is sufficient always to escape that; nor can Justice make us accountable, at large, for other Mens Errors on that Foot, of how bad Consequence soever. But it is very consistent with Justice, and that Goodness too which indulges a reasonable Liberty of Action, that we should be bound mutually to regard one another's Benefit; and even where no Return can be expected,

ted, to forbear such Things, or Manner of Things, as we foresee, with little or none, or very disproportionable Advantage to ourselves, will occasion great Mischief to our Neighbour : Through his Mistake, indeed ; but an innocent Mistake, but a Mistake morally certain to be made, and which we cannot, for that Time, by any practicable Way, prevent.

SERM.  
XI.  
~

An Example will best shew the Nature of this : Such a one ye have at large in the viiith Chapter of the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, many of the *Christians* newly converted from *Paganism* in *Corinth*, apprehended, that they could not by any Means partake of Meats that had been sacrificed to Idols, without honouring the Idol thereby. A few of greater Reach seeing that Inference not to be necessary, and that they might be eaten as common Things, eat of them openly, and scorn the Ignorance of the rest. What follows ? Why divers of the former Sort, by *their* Example, whom they thought wiser than themselves, do so too, though still believing the Action could not be separated from paying Honour to the Idol. And so



SERM. the Fruit of these wise Mens Knowledge  
 XI. was little better than making poor People  
 think that Idolatry was consistent with  
 their Christianity. Now in these Occa-  
 sions, the ill Consequence, ye see, may be  
 as great as in either of the former Kinds ;  
 and the Misleading takes Place rather more  
 surely : For where Wickedness is directly  
 counsel'd or countenanced, we are natu-  
 rally upon our Guard ; which fails us in  
 these oblique Insinuations of Mischief.  
 Here is indeed Exercise for the greatest  
 Prudence and largest Knowledge of Man-  
 kind ; and those that are well stor'd, and  
 are really desirous in this Respect to become  
*the Servants of all*, may yet by Inadver-  
 tency, or Ignorance of the Case, or even  
 Defect of Judgment, give Scandal. But  
 then their Conscience justifies them ; 'tis  
 no more than an innocent Misfortune.  
 Let Men have the good Intention always  
 awake and ready, and exert the Under-  
 standing God has given them as cordially  
 in this as in other Matters : Let them but  
 work themselves, into a Habit, as wary  
 and watchful in this Cause of God and Re-  
 ligion, as they commonly shew in all Con-  
 versations,

versations, not to hurt the Credit and Interest of their Commerce, of their Party, or of the great Man upon whom they depend. And if they regard with any Faith and Consideration the Vengeance denounced in the Text, a lower Effect and Proof of their Sincerity cannot be expected.

SERM.  
XI.  
~

*Last of all*, I come to speak of the Reason, why that is declared in so high and dreadful a Manner; or, which considering the Divine Justice comes to the same Thing, why the offending these little ones may be equal'd with the greatest and most provoking Enormities. And here I might insist on divers Arguments particularly with relation to *Children*; lest any should *despise* them; as their Innocence of Deed and Purpose, and uncorrupt Readiness and Capacity for all Good, taken up with no Prejudice, nor swerving with any Byass; which has ever recommended them to the Pity and Protection of all endu'd with the least Generosity; and from which, if these Scandals prevent not, we are chiefly to hope for an Age of more Virtue and Christianity. I would add, that the same Qualities made them

SERM. them worthy to be propounded by our  
 XI. Saviour as the very Pattern necessary to be  
 followed by whosoever would *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; that none might wonder, if, whenever Mention is made of Greatness therein, neither the Virgin, nor the very chiefest Apostles, but they alone received from him the whole Honour and Distinction. But, as before I have omitted many Inlargements that might have been useful, so now, as the Time requires, I must content my self with urging that Reason, which appears to me the capital one: That is, that there is Nothing more directly contrary to Christ's holy Religion, the whole Frame and Spirit of it, than this offending the little ones, interrupting their Race, and hindering their Salvation. And as his Law is still illustrated by his Example, it is not more opposite to that, than the Reverse of his Life and his Death. *He took the Form of a Servant; came not to be ministred unto, but to minister*: And those Labours and that Condescension had not for their Object so much the *Wise Men, the Mighty, and the Noble*, as the whole Mass of his  
 Crea-

Creatures ; and therefore, in the first Place, SERM.  
 the ignorant Multitude : And, as his first XI.  
 Messengers and Preachers were chosen out  
 of that Number, so we find it a declared  
 Note of his being the true *Messias*, That  
*the Poor had the Gospel preached unto them.*  
 Therefore St. *Paul*, after saying that he  
*pleased all Men in all Things, not seeking his*  
*own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they*  
*might be saved,* 1 *Cor.* x. 33, adds, what we  
 read (not so well separated, I think) in the  
 1st of the next Chapter, *Be ye Followers*  
*of me, even as I also am of Christ.* But  
 how forcible is that Admonition of his in  
 another Place, *Destroy not him with thy*  
*Meat, for whom Christ died :* Never any  
 Thing exceeded this Expression of the  
 Goodness of God, and the Uncharitable-  
 ness of Man ! The *End of the Command-*  
*ment is,* you know, *Charity ;* whereby we  
 continue Members of the One Body of  
 our Lord, and are obliged to *have the same*  
*Care one for another,* and the greatest, if  
 Need be, of *those Members which seem to*  
*be more feeble, or less honourable.* The Ef-  
 fects of this Charity are strictly required  
 in all temporal Necessities of our Neigh-  
 bour.

SERM. bour. In those Cases we see the Justice  
 XI. of the Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cur-  
 sed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the  
 Devil and his Angels : For I was an hun-  
 gred, and ye gave me no Meat : I was  
 thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink : I was  
 a Stranger, and ye took me not in : Naked,  
 and ye clothed me not : Sick, and in Prison,  
 and ye visited me not.* And also of that  
 Reply, *In as much as ye did it not to one  
 of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*  
 And do we not discern Ground equal at  
 least for the Sharpness in my Text, and  
 observe the extreamest Breach of Charity  
 in the Sin there threatened ? In the first  
 Instance, Men have been ill Stewards of  
 the Goods of this World, in the latter of  
 the more precious Talents of the Mind  
 and spiritual Endowments : In one the  
 Body is neglected ; in the other the Soul  
 destroy'd. And it must be said, that here-  
 in wicked and proud Men are so far from  
 the Duty of Christians, that they imitate  
 and gratify the Destroyer, instead of fol-  
 lowing and obeying the Saviour, of Man-  
 kind.

But

But let us turn our Thoughts the other SERM.  
Way, even to that Exercise of Charity, XI.  
which, I doubt not, the Discourse of this  
Violation of it hath already suggested to  
you ; to direct the ignorant, and ani-  
mate the weak ; to remove every Stum-  
bling-block, and break every Snare ; to  
confirm the Faithful, and invite back the  
Wanderers into the Paths of Righteousness  
and Peace. I need not set forth at this  
Time the Dignity and Serviceableness of  
such a Beneficence : All that has been said  
of the Unworthiness, Cruelty, and Mis-  
chief of the opposite Conduct, will assist  
you to comprehend it. If it has appear'd,  
that thereby the Methods of Divine Good-  
ness, for Man's Salvation, are impiously  
thwarted, it will be as plain, that this  
contrary Virtue employs Men so blessedly,  
that they are qualified, as Fellow-workers,  
with the Grace of God. And if the Com-  
mination against the Offenders carries a  
Sound of Terror, and intolerable Appre-  
hension of a Penalty indefinite ; we may  
be assured the Divine Bounty, which  
ever shines above the Severity, has provi-  
ded for these Rewards, yet more surpassing  
all

SERM. all Imagination. These shall indeed be  
XI. the greatest, if not in the Kingdom of  
Christ on Earth, yet in that of the Glory  
of his Father in Heaven. Doubtless,  
when the Day appointed for Retribution  
shall arrive, *They that be thus wise, shall  
shine as the Brightness of the Firmament ;  
and they that turn many to Righteousness,  
as the Stars, for Ever and Ever.*





## S E R M O N XII.

Of T A K I N G Scandal.



M A R K IX. 43,—48.

*And if thy Hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into Life maimed, than having two Hands to go into Hell, into the Fire that never shall be quenched.*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

*And if thy Foot offend thee, cut it off ; it is better for thee to enter halt into Life, than having two Feet to be cast into Hell, into  
the*



## Of taking Scandal.

*the Fire that never shall be quenched:*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

*And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one Eye, than having two Eyes to be cast into Hell Fire:*

*Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

SERM.  
XII.



IN reading these Words, I believe, every Man is stop'd at the Form of them. They proceed with that deliberate Fullness and Majesty, which cannot fail to strike the Heart with Awe, and awaken in it a most attent Consideration of the Subject. When *Joseph* interpreted that famous Dream of the King of *Egypt*, he laid great Weight upon the various repeating of his Vision: *For that the Dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice,*

*twice, it is because the Thing is established* SERM.  
*by God, Genes. xli. 32.* And without XII.  
 Question this Oracle of the Text was not  
 delivered by our Lord with a threefold  
 Ingemination, but to oblige us with the  
 utmost Reverence to receive and regard  
 it as highly important and altogether in-  
 dispensable. To which Purpose, all that  
 Solemnity may appear the more needful,  
 when it shall be shew'd, in explaining the  
 Words, that the Choice of the greatest  
 and most induring Happiness or Misery is  
 (as they warn us) imply'd in the Per-  
 formance or Neglect of a Condition, which  
 many Persons find very hard to be com-  
 ply'd with, and besides are apt to believe  
 of no absolute Necessity.

Now *what* that Condition is, the *dis-*  
*membring* express'd in these Sentences,  
 (which are manifestly figurative) may be  
 judg'd; *first*, by considering how they  
 are introduced here; and, *secondly*, by ex-  
 amining the Difference found in the Place  
 parallel to this, in the xviiiith Chapter of  
 St. *Matthew*.

For the *first*; the Verse immediately be-  
 fore the Text says, — *whosoever shall of-*

SERM. *send one of these little ones that believe in*  
 XII. *me, it is better for him that a Mill-stone*  
 were hang'd about his Neck, and he were  
 cast into the Sea. We are here to see, if  
 the Sense of this Verse, which is most  
 certain in itself and obvious, will lead us  
 to that of the Verses before us.

The *first* Thing observable in it is, the  
*Nature of Offence or Scandal*, [*whosoever*  
*shall offend* ;] which in short is, the *tempt-*  
*ing or occasioning* others to sin. After  
 that we may consider the Persons expos'd  
 to Danger in that respect, [*these little ones*  
*that believe in me* ;] and they are the *Weak*  
 in Natural and in Christian Growth,  
 which we see there taken such Care of.  
*Lastly*, one must remark those most like-  
 ly to scandalize and subvert them, the  
*Persons* threaten'd ; which are to be sure  
 such as proportionably may be called  
*strong*. And so there opens a large Field  
 of Consideration concerning the several  
 Ways of incurring that Guilt, the provo-  
 king high Measure of it, and the Dread-  
 fulness of that just and heavy Punishment  
 accordingly annexed and denounced to it.  
 If then you find, (as it is evident) that  
 the

the Business of those Words was, to guard SERM.  
 the undiscerning and helpless from the XII.  
 Offences and Snares of the presumptuous,  
 by putting the latter under the Awe of a  
 most severe Vengeance; you may perceive  
 that in these of my Text, [*And if thy  
 Hand offend thee, cut it off, &c.*] our Lord  
 turns him from the Duty, the Transgres-  
 sion and Condemnation of the *Givers* of  
 Scandal, to the Duty, Transgression and  
 Condemnation of those who *take* it, and  
 suffer by it; namely, such of them, as are  
 not meer Children, but have some Degree  
 of Ability to discern and shun their Danger.  
 Where Means and Capacity of marking,  
 and avoiding those that would overthrow  
 or mislead us, are entirely wanting; his  
 Threatening falls wholly upon them that  
 so mislead and overthrow the Goings of  
 his Children. But when the Stature of  
 those little ones is once advanced, and that  
 first Weakness outgrown; with *Ability*  
 there commences *Duty*, and the Neglect  
 of it subjects those that are *scandalized* to  
 Penalties of a like Nature in this, with  
 those proclaimed against the *Scandalizers* in  
 the foregoing, Text.

SERM. This I offer, to make more apparent  
 XII. the Connexion between them, and with how  
 natural a Transition and just Coherence  
 with the Caution against giving Scandal at  
 the 42d Verse, it is subjoin'd at *Ver. 43. And  
 if thy Hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better  
 for thee to enter into Life maimed, than  
 having two Hands to go into Hell, into the  
 Fire that never shall be quenched, &c.* For  
 thence, from that orderly and strong Con-  
 nexion, it is that I would recommend my  
 Sense of those Words, that alone make  
 any Difficulty here, the *Hand*, the *Foot*,  
 and the *Eye*; which I interpret as, pri-  
 marily at least, intended of *Persons*, (Neigh-  
 bours, Acquaintance, or Friends) that  
 scandalize and corrupt those united with  
 them; because the Correspondence and  
 Harmony of the whole Passage will so  
 remain most entire and unforced. As  
 thus — “ If any one shall lead into  
 “ Sin or Error such weak or unwary Be-  
 “ lievers, as this Youth here before you;  
 “ let him know, that as he shews no  
 “ Mercy to the Souls of others, he must  
 “ expect none for his own. And to you  
 “ that have Sense and Skill to distinguish  
 “ the

“ the Authors of so great Mischief, and SERM.  
 “ their fatal Insinuations, I say, Fly from XII.  
 “ the Infection; reject and cut off all ~  
 “ Intercourse and Familiarity with them,  
 “ how near, how endear’d, how neces-  
 “ sary soever they may otherwise be.  
 “ The Happiness of the Soul, which can-  
 “ not otherwise be secured from Anguish  
 “ and Torments never to cease, must be  
 “ preferred before all Temporal Engage-  
 “ ments, Inclinations, and Convenien-  
 “ ces. The Relatives and Instruments  
 “ of these are at the most but as *Mem-*  
 “ *bers* of the Body, the *Hand*, the *Foot*,  
 “ and the *Eye*; and neither the Suffer-  
 “ ing nor Saving of them can ever come  
 “ into Competition with the Salvation  
 “ and Destruction of your better Part,  
 “ together with that Body itself, in a  
 “ Life and Kingdom, of Death and Mi-  
 “ sery, everlasting.

Secondly, If we look into the xviiiith  
 Chapter of *St. Matthew*, where the same  
 Threatning to the Givers of Offence, and  
 the same Precept for cutting off the of-  
 fending Members, are recorded; we shall,  
 I believe, be determined to the Sense of

SERM.

XII.

the Text I have now given. For there we have a Sentence inserted between them, (between the Threatning and the Precept, I mean) omitted by St. *Mark*, that points manifestly to this Interpretation of *Persons*; it makes the 7th Verse: *Wo unto the World because of Offences: For it must needs be that Offences come; but Wo to THAT MAN by whom the Offence cometh. Wherefore* (so the 8th Verse is brought in) *if thy Hand or thy Foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee, &c.* What then can the Hand be, or the Foot, we must cut off; what the Eye, we must pluck out, and cast from us; but some MAN, BY WHOM *the Offence cometh*; that worketh *Wo* both to *us* and to *himself*?

Without these Considerations, Men may be apt to understand the Thing otherwise, *viz.* that those most pleasurable and most useful Parts of our Bodies are put to signify the Affections to Delight or Profit; which when they prove irregular or excessive, must be subdued, cut short, or rooted out. And this Opinion seems the more plausible from another Place in St. *Matthew*, Chap. v. 29, 30. where the

same

same Words almost are indeed taken in that Sense. But it must be consider'd, that these were spoken at another Time, and upon another Occasion; and that *there* the Words going before clearly direct us to construe them of that Mortification; whereas in the *latter* Place of *St. Matthew*, and this of *St. Mark*, the Connexion, as has been set forth, leads us to the Exposition I have given. Nor ought it to seem strange, that the same Sentence of Holy Scripture should be employ'd to express different Thoughts, which the Words are capable of, according to the Matter they are applied to. I will give you another Example of our Lord's speaking in this Manner. In the ixth of *St. Matthew*, v. 13. he alledges those Words, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, to prove the Lawfulness and Duty of breaking a positive Law out of Charity to *other* Mens Souls: And in the xiith Chapter, ver. 7. of that Gospel, brings the same for an Evidence of our Liberty to break a like Law in Favour of our *own* extreme temporal Necessities. And both Citations are of one and the same Place in the Prophet *Hosea*. So

SERM.

XII.





SERM. we need not, I say, wonder, if the figurative Words, I am now expounding, are used by our Saviour at one Time to denote the *Lusts* and *Passions*, and at another the wicked *Persons*, our Favourers or Favourites, that have the Power to corrupt and seduce us to the same everlasting Ruin. The Doctrine of effectually restraining and mortifying all the natural or affected Desires that rebel against the Law of God, is necessary and of chief Difficulty; and what must be treated with the utmost Diligence on another \* Occasion. But now my Subject is to arm you rather against your *Corrupters* than your *Corruptions*. And this too is necessary; and (as a great many People are dispos'd) a Work of like Difficulty, requiring as strong and constant Exercise, and Power of Self-denial; for such, in Effect, does it prove, to deny and reject the Influence of others. And therefore, evidently it is, that my Text figures the Severity of the Performance to such a Height, and yet requires it of us with such an absolute Injunction, and the repeated Denouncing, upon the Failure, of everlasting Punishments. Upon

\* See Sermon xix.

Upon the whole Matter, there seems a **SERM.**  
 Parallel intended, that our Christian Reso- **XII.**  
 lution should reach the same Effect for  
 guarding the Innocence and Purity of  
 Conversation, as the Severity of *Moses's*  
 Law propounded by the Strictness of its  
 judicial Prosecutions ; and that we are well  
 referred from these Passages of the *New*  
*Testament*, to that in the xiiiith of *Deute-*  
*ronomy*, beginning at the 6th Verse. *If*  
*thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy*  
*Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy*  
*Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thine*  
*own Soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let*  
*us go and serve other gods, which thou hast*  
*not known, thou, nor thy Fathers ; namely*  
*of the gods of the People which are round*  
*about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from*  
*thee, from the one End of the Earth even*  
*unto the other End of the Earth ; thou shalt*  
*not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him ;*  
*neither shall thine Eye pity him, neither*  
*shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal*  
*him : But thou shalt surely kill him ; thine*  
*Hand shall be first upon him to put him to*  
*Death, and afterwards the Hand of all the*  
*People. And thou shalt stone him with*  
 Stones,

**SERM.** *Stones, that he die ; because he hath sought*  
**XII.** *to thrust thee away from the Lord*  
 thy God, which brought thee out of the  
 Land of Egypt, from the House of Bon-  
 dage. And all Israel shall bear, and fear,  
 and shall do no more any such Wickedness as  
 this is among you. And although in the  
 Time of the Heathen Persecutions of our  
 Religion, the like Scandal and Temptation  
 to serve other gods, was most exactly co-  
 pied by affectionate but false Friends  
 (when to be sure those Words of our Sa-  
 viour were verified on many, that took  
 not their Warning, *He that loveth Father*  
*or Mother more than me, is not worthy of*  
*me ; and he that loveth Son or Daughter*  
*more than me, is not worthy of me :* Al-  
 though, I say, the Parallel were then  
 fullest ;) yet since our God is deny'd by  
 other Works as well as Idolatry, the Com-  
 mand in my Text will ever be highly ne-  
 cessary to be regarded with utmost Con-  
 cern by abundance of People, lest, safe in  
 themselves, they perish out of mere Fond-  
 ness to others, and forfeit eternal Happiness  
 by Imitation. For, as in Times of Suf-  
 fering, divers (without Question) that nei-  
 ther

ther Death nor Torments could have alter'd, are yet overcome to renounce the Truth by the Tears of Parents or Children, or other dear Relations and Friends ; so in the more ordinary Conflicts of our Christian Warfare, many, that with Regard to their own Temper, and their own Views of Things, might acquit themselves well and faithfully, notwithstanding yield themselves, after the scandalous Example of their Associates, and are captivated, out of a false good Nature, by Temptations otherwise not difficult for them to triumph over.

To this *latter* Case, as of present and perpetual Use, I must chiefly address the rest of my Discourse : Nevertheless, we ought not quite to lose Sight of the *former* ; though the Divine Goodness doth of a long Time shelter his Church from every Storm, and seems to give us a Prospect, from our present Defences, of a lasting Tranquility. Nevertheless, I say, let us humbly, considering the sinful and divided State of Christendom, and the unsearchable Judgments of our Lord, as good Soldiers, arm our Minds during this  
Calm

SERM.

XII.

SERM. XII. *W* Calm of Peace, against a Day of Service ; and form well and truly, the Resolution necessary, not to bear Death only upon his Call, but those hideous Maims too, less supportable to many a Nature ; when our Hands, our Feet, and our Eyes, our loving and beloved Friends, will plead hard not to be cut off and torn from us. But we cannot, upon any easier Terms, be preserv'd from Apostasy, and what is due to it ; even our own cutting off from God and from our Part in his everlasting Kingdom. Good People then, to be sure, (and especially those much at their Ease) that are possess'd with Gratitude and Zeal towards God, and aspire to the highest Rewards of well-doing, ought to be jealous of Security and Surprize ; they ought frequently to figure in their Minds these difficult and very possible Circumstances ; and considering them Point by Point, work themselves into that Spirit that may conquer in the Midst of them. Hereby they will prevent all sudden Amazement and Disorder, if the Case arrive ; and, if it do not, obtain of him, that sees their Hearts

as well as their actual Services, a Crown SERM.  
not unlike that of Martyrdom itself. XII.

But, *Secondly*, The *general* Obligation is now chiefly to be consider'd; whereby we are warned and commanded to break all Society, extinguish and tear in funder every Engagement, and every Affection, to whomsoever, that we perceive has the Power to lead us into Disobedience and Infidelity towards our Heavenly Benefactor, our Sovereign Lord and Father. And here we may distinguish the Hold that others have upon us according to the several influencing Causes of Esteem or Admiration; as, Abilities and Utility to our Advantage, or Dearness and Affection, proceeding from Agreeableness and Friendship, or from the Ties of Blood, or the yet nearer Conjunction: Which is done meerly to keep something of Method; for in Deed, several of these often, and sometimes all, meet together in the same Person, and produce an Effect the more considerable. But if that happen, it will be easy, against such an united Strength, to draw together and unite also the Force and Encouragement of those Meditations, **which**



SERM. which I lay down single, as adapted to answer each Difficulty distinctly put.

W

Now, *first*; As for the Case of *Interest*; where we suffer ourselves to be corrupted by the Conversation of one recommended only by *that*; this I look upon as the smallest Difficulty to be overcome, if it relate only to the Desire of *Increase* or *Plenty* of worldly Goods. For what Christian Spirit, (indeed what Spirit at all) for so mean a Consideration, would persist in a Commerce opposite and ruinous to Worth and Virtue? What is this, but to imitate the Crime of *Judas*, to sell our Lord; at least renounce his Authority, and sell, what he hath bought, for sordid Lucre? Such a Temptation can alleviate very little the Guilt; nay, it may be thought rather an Aggravation. But if the Concern be that of *Necessity*, the real Want of Support and Maintenance; *such* an Interest may indeed form a great and pitiable Streight: For without Doubt, it must appear hard to cut off the Hand that feeds us. Yet where this really comes to pass, it will not exempt any one from that Duty; or excuse for continuing in the Way  
of

of those *Snares* that daily *overthrow* his *Goings*. No; This is the Time to remember, and shew our Faith in, that divine Declaration, which our Lord sustain'd himself with, when he was tempted; namely, *That Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.* It is not therefore to be purchased at the Price of Sin; but Life, with the Means of it, must be resigned chearfully to his Providence, who *feedeth the Fowls of the Air.* And whosoever embraces this Extremity for Conscience Sake, may well comfort himself in a joyful Confidence, that such a try'd Constancy, and full Trust in God, will be highly accepted and gloriously recompens'd by him; and so much the more, as it stands upon pure abstracted Christian Courage and Truth, obscure and unobserved in the World, and excited or sustained by no human Applause or Admiration. And, by the Way, give me Leave to make a general Application of this Remark, for the needful Confirmation and Comfort of all, that are exercised with such sore, though secret, Trials of their Faith and

Obe-

SERM.  
XII.



SERM. Obedience. For if we duly consider, and  
 XII. allow for the different Tempers Nature  
 hath form'd in Men; it will be judged, I  
 am confident, that many a one, to pre-  
 serve his Innocence, *endures as great a*  
*Fight*, unknown, and without deriving  
 any Support from Abroad, as they that  
 glorify God by their Sufferings on the most  
 publick Theatre of the Earth. But their  
 own *Heart* is Witness, and he that is  
*greater* is Witness to this absolute Proof of  
 Sincerity. He is the Beholder of the Re-  
 solution for his Sake in these solitary En-  
 counters; though no other Eye threaten  
 Shame, or promise Reputation. Call there-  
 fore upon Him, and he will certainly  
 both furnish the necessary Strength, and  
 crown the Victory with the most tran-  
 scendent Rewards.

These are Meditations that may be very  
 necessary to some People; and we know  
 not how many. But I will not enlarge,  
 because it is certain, that for the most part  
 by far, the good Providence of God so  
 orders Things, that our temporal and our  
 eternal Interests go Hand in Hand to-  
 gether, with the fullest Agreement and Se-  
 curity.

cūry. So the wicked Companions or Leaders, which Men are to be called upon to abandon, are such, generally, as (instead of maintaining or enriching) utterly undo them in this World, in the Way to their being undone for ever in the next. SERM.  
XII.

I should therefore now proceed to put the remaining Cases, that is, *secondly*, when the *Esteem* or *Admiration* of any Person leads another into sinful Compliances with him, *thirdly*, when the *Affection* of *Friendship* does it, and *fourthly*, that of *Kindred*, or of the *highest* Relation. But I must reserve them to another Time. \*

\* Note, *The Conclusion of this Subject is not found in the Author's Manuscripts.*



# S E R M O N XIII.

Of Christian Charity.

P A R T I.



I T I M. i. 5.

*Now the End of the Commandment  
is Charity, out of a pure Heart,  
and of a good Conscience, and of  
Faith unfeigned.*

SERM.  
XIII.



T. Paul, pursuing his Evangelical Labours which he extended over a great Part of the World, left his new Christians at *Ephesus*, (both Teachers and People) to the Direction and Government of *Timothy*. The Instructions he gave him at his Departure, he refers to,

to, repeats, and enforces, by this Epistle, SERM.  
XIII.  
 for the surer Discharge of his high Office in the Church. *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other Doctrine, neither give heed to Fables and endless Genealogies, which minister Questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in Faith: So do.* Thus he expresses in the 3d and 4th Verses, a Part of those Instructions; and in the Words of the Text subjoins the strongest Reason in the World, why the Teachers of Christianity should decline troubling themselves and Hearers with such Matters: Because the Design and Substance of our holy Religion, upon which they are to insist, are of a quite different Nature: *Now the End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned.* The special Cause for Timothy's Care of this Point, and a Description of the Persons he was by his Authority to restrain, appear in the Words following; *From which some having swerved, have turned aside to vain jangling; desiring to be Teach-*

SERM. *ers of the Law, understanding neither what*

XIII. *they say, nor whereof they affirm.* In the  
 beginnings of the Gospel, many of the  
*Jews*, to whom it was first preached, and  
 who saw the Miracles and other Acts of  
 our Lord, embraced it, yet retaining a  
 great Fondness for their Law; as is seen  
 in many Places of the Acts and Epistles.  
 For they would fain gratify their Pride  
 and vain Hope of special Favour, as the  
 only Children of *Abraham*, and peculiar  
 People of God. At the same Time we find,  
 that a great Company of the Priests were obedi-  
 ent to the Faith.—Acts vi. 7. Many of these,  
 it is natural to think, became Teachers of  
 Christianity. They must, indeed, in many  
 Respects, have been better qualified than  
 others for that Service. But some of the  
 Number, it seems, out of natural Weak-  
 ness or corrupt Design, went off from the  
 Simplicity of the Christian Religion. They  
 were desirous to make Advantage of their  
 Learning, which they had in the Law,  
 and the vain Traditions accompanying it,  
 that they might not be on the Level with  
 other Preachers of the Gospel. Those  
 Things, therefore, they would incorporate  
 with

with the Doctrine of Christ; and insisted SERM.  
mainly upon them, as People are apt to XIII.  
do upon their Singularities; whereby they  
at once gain'd a popularity among their  
Countrymen, and a distinguished Reputa-  
tion of their own Skill and Abilities.

These Preachers, we read, created many  
Troubles to *St. Paul*, and the Gentiles  
converted by him. Indeed, his Conduct  
was directly opposite; who was so far  
from valuing himself upon his perfect  
Education and eminent Proficiency in *Ju-  
daism*, or from staining his Gospel with  
those Mixtures to his own Honour, that *he  
counted all Things but Loss for the Excellency  
of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus.*---Phil. iii.  
8. Thus Things stood *then*; and it is too  
sure, that in later Times, and in our own  
Days, Men have made a like ill Use of other  
Learning; have obscured the Plainness, and  
weaken'd the main Design of Religion, by  
philosophic Schemes and curious Speculati-  
ons, which they have disputed into the Body  
of it.--But so much at present shall suffice for  
the Occasion of the Sentence in my Text;  
on which I will add no farther Reflexion,  
till I have explained its full Meaning.

SERM. XIII. *The End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned. First, it is to be consider'd, what is the Commandment in this Place; then, what Charity, with the Principles it springs from and subsists by, a pure Heart, a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned; thirdly, How we are to understand such a Charity's being the End of the Commandment.*

For the *first*; upon searching how the Word in the Original, and those of the same Derivation, are used in the ancient Translation of the *Old Testament*, and in the *New*, it appears to signify here, the *Charge* which the Evangelists of Christ received from him to deliver to their Hearers. So *the Commandment* is the *Revelation* of God committed to the Apostles and Ministers of his Word, which they are enjoin'd to declare to the People, and in his Name require their Obedience and Submission. The Revelation consists of Facts to be believed, and of Rules of Life and Manners to be observed; and the former support and inforce the latter. Out of this, the *Old Testament* is by no Means  
to

to be excluded. THAT also contains **SERM.**  
**Matters to exercise the Faith and Obedi-** **XIII.**  
**ence of God's People, as well as the *New.***  
**To our Purpose particularly, there is the**  
**true teaching of Charity, though ill in-**  
**terpreted by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* :**  
**And *Moses's* Law (excepting the Cere-**  
**monies and Civil Statutes, which formed**  
**a Commonwealth and Church that are**  
**ceased) is of perpetual Obligation to us**  
**Christians, according to our Lord's own**  
**preaching ; *Till Heaven and Earth pass,***  
***one jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass***  
***from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* Matt. v.**  
**18. Thus, I say, the Sense of the *Com-***  
***mandment* in the Words before us is, the**  
***Preaching* of Christ's Ministers according**  
**to his Instructions ; and THAT we have**  
**now contained in the whole Body of Ho-**  
**ly Scripture.**

The *second* Term to be explained is  
*Charity* ; and the direct Meaning of it here  
 is, the *Love* of our *Neighbour*. The Rea-  
 son of so interpreting will appear on read-  
 ing other Places of the same *St. Paul* ;  
 wherein, at first View, a Man must be  
 satisfied, he is delivering the same Doc-



SERM. trine with this in the Text. Thus *Rom. xiii.*

XIII. 8. *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law.* So again *Galat. v. 14. All the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* It is true, that Charity at large comprehends the Love of God, and of our Neighbour. Neither is the former shut out by this Interpretation, but supposed. The Thing express'd, is the Love of our Neighbour; but we know, THAT must be founded on the Love of God, to be a true Charity, and acceptable in his Sight. And this will be insisted on particularly, when we consider the Original and Support of this Charity, in the Words next to be explained. At present I need only add, that the Love of our Neighbour is exercised, by doing him *Justice* first; and, secondly, all other *Services* and *Kindnesses*, which his Circumstances require, and ours qualify us to perform. For we shall understand the Nature of it more perfectly, as we proceed to examine the Causes and the Companions of it, deliver'd in these three Articles, *a pure Heart, a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned.*

*First*

*First* the Charity, which our Apostle values, must rise out of a *pure Heart*; that is, a right and holy Intention. The Heart is almost all. THAT gives the same Action different Natures. In this Matter, the Purpose of it must not be *criminal*; it must not be only *innocent*; it is necessary, it should *also* be *religious*. A Man may do many Acts of Kindness or Bounty to others in the sole View of compassing some wicked Design; and these, it is plain, being tainted in their Original, are wicked too. Another does the same, to obtain some fair Interest or Esteem, or other unforbidden End, but without any Regard to a Divine Commandment; and he, if he be not guilty of Hypocrisy by pretending to more, is barely not condemn'd. His Acts are of a prudential Nature; and if their End be gain'd, they have *their Reward*. But Charity is *religious*; and nothing therefore is indeed Charity, that proceeds not from a religious Heart. This is that which forms and performs the inward Act. Now the inward Act is so very considerable, that it may be of Value without the outward,  
but

SERM.  
XIII.



SERM. but the outward never of any without  
 XIII. *that.* No Man can be saved that has not  
 Charity : Yet we see Multitudes under a  
 natural, or a providential, Incapacity to ex-  
 ercise the external Works of it. Thou-  
 sands want the Means to shew Love to  
 their Neighbour, by relieving him with  
 their Substance ; and Millions, to do it by  
 assisting him with their Knowledge and  
 Prudence. It is true, the *Deed* proves  
 the *Sincerity* ; and the *Want* of the Deed,  
 where *Opportunity* also is not wanted,  
 proves the *Insincerity* of our Hearts. But  
 it proves them to ourselves only, and to  
 other Men. God knows and approves,  
 according to its Perfectness, the internal  
 Act, the good and hearty Desire and clear  
 Determination of the Will, though it can-  
 not, by some invincible Impediment, pro-  
 duce the Effects desired and longed after.  
 He blames or disallows of none of his Ser-  
 vants for not doing the Service which he  
 hath not given him the Power to do. So  
 if, by the Course of his Providence, or  
 that of Nature (which is also his) he hath  
 denied People the Skill, the Opportunity,  
 the Wealth, to do Good with ; it is plain,  
 it

it is not his Pleasure it should be done by them ; neither doth he therefore require it at their Hands, or look on them as ever the more unprofitable Servants. *Men* have the Justice to judge of the Proportion of one another's Bounty by that of their Ability ; much more *God*, who knows exactly the Measure of their several Abilities, being indeed his own Gift. We remember the righteous Judgment, made by our Lord, of the poor Widow's Mites, that they were a greater Gift than the richest of the most wealthy Contributors. Now let me make one Supposal, that this good and zealous Soul had been destitute even of that small Means to testify her Affection : What shall we think then ? that our Lord, who knew the Heart, would have esteem'd the less of her Devotion to God's Service ? It is impossible. No : *If there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted* (as *St. Paul* witnesseth) *according to that a Man hath, and not according to that a Man hath not.* 2 Cor. viii. 12. And what wonder ? Do we not know, that almighty God standeth in no Need of the good Deeds of Men ? Where he pleases


to

SERM. to furnish Supplies, or Counsel, or Com-  
 XIII. fort, to the afflicted, the ignorant, or indigent; he wants not Instruments. An infinite Number of ministring Spirits attend him, and the whole Creation is subservient to his Word. There can be, therefore nothing, in our good Works of Charity, well pleasing in his Sight, but what flows from a good Heart. It is for the Exercise of his Graces in that Heart, that he first made, and still continues, the Variety of Conditions in the World, that one Man shall stand in Need of another. And he that does Good to another, in supplying such Need, for the Sake of him that commands it, does exercise *Charity out of a pure Heart*. The Love of God, which he shews by keeping his Commandment *because* it is his, is the pure Spring of his Actions of Love to his Neighbour. He that does the same Actions for temporal though innocent Ends, is therein void of this Purity of Heart; is no more charitable by it, than a Man is by sowing his Land for a Crop. He that has a Mixture of such temporal Motives with Spiritual, so far as that Mixture goes, does so  
 far

far abate of the purity of Heart, and by SERM.  
Consequence of the acceptableness of his XIII.  
Work. But the Man, whose apparent  
Charity arises from any evil Design; his  
Action, however specious or otherwise use-  
ful, is no better than his Heart, all im-  
pure, corrupt, and polluted. And this  
may serve for the Explanation of the first  
Circumstance St. *Paul* requires to our  
Charity, that it proceed *out of a pure*  
*Heart.*

The *second* Requisite, which we now  
come to consider, is *a good Conscience.*  
He that allows himself in any known Sin,  
or continually relapses into it, fails in this  
Point; and upon that Account, whatever  
Good he may do, has not the true Chri-  
stian Grace of Charity. There is indeed  
no Sin, but is directly or indirectly an Of-  
fence against Charity. Even those Vices,  
that seem only to hurt ourselves, yet do,  
either by drawing in and encouraging  
Partners, or by Scandal given to By-stand-  
ers, affect our Neighbours also. And  
though we suppose Crimes committed in  
all Solitariness and Privacy; yet for as  
much as they must alienate the Soul from  
God,

SERM. God, and habituate it to the Violation of  
 XIII. his Authority ; they do at the same Time  
 alienate it from the Service of Men for  
*God's Sake*, and steal away the only cer-  
 tain Foundation of being a faithful and  
 useful Member of his great Family. But  
 because we do not commonly observe,  
 how inseparably all Virtues and Graces,  
 truly such, are link'd together ; and be-  
 cause the ordinary Speech of Men gives  
 the same Person a Testimony of one Vir-  
 tue, and the Reproach of another Vice ;  
 the Apostle, to prevent all Mistake, ex-  
 pressly superadds to *Charity*, the necessary  
 Condition of *a good Conscience* in him that  
 exercises it. Charity, we know, is an  
 Oblation to God ; a *Sacrifice with which*  
*he is well pleased* : But then it must be  
 offer'd with clean Hands ; for *the Sacri-*  
*fice of the Wicked* (we also know) *is an*  
*Abomination to the Lord*. And how ne-  
 cessary it is to caution People on this Head  
 will appear, if we reflect on the numerous  
 Instances of their deceiving themselves  
 upon it. The Teachers of Religion, if  
 they do not bind themselves faithfully to  
*St. Paul's Doctrine*, may concur to such  
 Deceiving.

Deceiving. They have Opportunities (and SERM.  
in corrupt and dark Ages and Countries, XIII.  
the Thing has been and is still practised)   
to flatter Men of Ability with Hopes of  
Pardon for their Crimes not truly repent-  
ed of, upon Condition of bountiful Gifts  
to the Service of God and the Commu-  
nity. But if *Charity covers Sins*, they  
must be Sins repented of and forsaken.  
Where *that* is not done, by the Rule of  
the Text we see, there is indeed no Cha-  
rity, though Men call it so; and that  
which is not, can cover nothing. The  
Stains of Lust and Intemperance, of Vio-  
lence and Injustice, must be wash'd away  
by Repentance, and not by golden Streams  
only.

Let a Man consider the Excellence of  
the Body of Divine Laws, and the Wif-  
dom of their Author; and he will be sa-  
tisfied, that there is no taking out one  
from the rest, but that the whole Frame  
must be kept entire. A Breach made up-  
on any Part cannot but be injurious to the  
Whole; which contains nothing super-  
fluous, nothing but what is *holy, and just,*  
*and good*; worthy of the Lawgiver, and  
necessary



SERM. necessary for those he hath given it to  
 XIII. Hereby is seen the Foolishness of thinking  
 to compensate for the violation of one  
 Precept by the good keeping of another.  
 All are of like Authority, and of like general  
 Necessity: And to *this* Man, what  
 he singles out to be *exempt* from, is of  
 the much greater Necessity. For *that*, to  
 be sure, is the Command or Prohibition,  
 from which the particular Corruption of  
 his Heart and Nature is most averse. And  
 can we think more reasonably of God's  
 Law, than that it has this very Intent and  
 Scope, to reform and purify each Man's  
 Corruptions by his Practice of Obedience  
 to it; so to prepare and qualify our Na-  
 ture for a more exalted State? That Ex-  
 altation, we are sure, depends on our  
 Behaviour in the present lower Condition,  
 which is a Condition of Tryal. Herein  
 the Test is Compliance with God's Laws.  
 But with *which* chiefly? those that to us  
 in particular are *easy*, or those that are  
*difficult*? The *latter* unquestionless. For  
 the Proof of the Soul's submitting itself  
 to God's Will, is not to be look'd for in  
 Things it would embrace of its own Na-  
 ture

ture and Will ; but where our Byass draws a contrary Way ; where *Reluctance* and *Temptation* have Place, and the Christian *Warfare* and the Christian *Victory*. Thus the Man, that would set aside an universal Obedience, offends against *one* or *more* Articles of the Divine Law, which, in general, are a Part not to be broken off ; but *to Him* are in Effect the *Whole* ; the *whole Tryal* of his Sincerity, Subjection, and Love ; *his* only Yoke, *his* only Burden.

SERM.


XIII.



Again ; let a Man consider of the perfect Purity and transcendent Majesty of the Divine Nature ; and that will shew him, that what we call Works of Piety and Mercy (and which *are* so when duly perform'd) cannot possibly find Acceptance with Almighty God, when done by such as are of a corrupt Spirit, and stand in actual Rebellion to his Authority. And such is every one that goes on in any Sin : He is unreform'd and unreconciled. The continual serious Endeavour to keep all God's Commandments (which is an indispensable Condition annexed to the Grace of Atonement and Reconciliation) this Man refuses to labour in ; and therefore remains under

SERM. the Guilt and Pollution all along contract-  
 XIII. ed, and still increasing, as excluded from  
 the Benefit of that only *Fountain*, which  
 God hath *open'd for Sin and for Unclean-*  
*ness.* And besides the State of Defile-  
 ment, the Holy Scripture in many Places  
 concludes such a one in the State of En-  
 mity also, till he submit himself to that  
 Condition of being received to the Divine  
 Favour. Under this double Incapacity,  
 how should a Man present himself or any  
 Thing of his to God? Or what Construc-  
 tion can be made of his so doing, but, that  
 it is a fresh Affront, both to his Holiness and  
 to his Sovereign Authority? The Affection  
 and Duty must be undivided and entire, that  
 we pay to the Creator and Ruler of all  
 Things. We are ourselves entirely *his*,  
 and must not, *cannot serve two Masters.*  
*The Friendship of the World is Enmity with*  
*God.* And the Pretence of Charity, with-  
 out a good Conscience, a uniform Obedi-  
 ence, is a vain and an offensive Presump-  
 tion. It is not even possible it should be  
 otherwise: To suppose it, is to suppose,  
 that the great and holy God should him-  
 self countenance the Breach of his Laws.

But

But we know he is of purer Eyes than SERM.  
 to behold Evil, and cannot look on Ini- XIII.  
 quity. 

It remains still, that we treat of the *third* Article required to attend our Charity, which is *Faith unfeigned*; and this will appear necessary to support and enliven the other two. For neither can a *good Conscience* subsist, nor the *Heart* be preserved *pure*, without the Influence of *Faith unfeigned*. Indeed, besides the Life and Strength it gives to them, it may also be well consider'd as Part of their very Essence; because the Purity of the Intention consists mainly in our being moved to act for *God's* Sake and the *Commandment* Sake; and the Goodness of Conscience is its Conformity to the Divine Laws, the Rule of Conscience, and that, as they are Divine Laws: Now both these do not only suppose Faith in God the Lawgiver, but are the immediate Operations of it. Nevertheless, since Faith, in that Regard, is comprehended under a *pure Heart and a good Conscience*, we may judge, that the Apostle, in expressing it particularly after them, design'd to remark

SERM. its Power and Efficacy for encouraging and  
 XIII. establishing an undefiled Conscience and  
 pure Intention in all our Works of Cha-  
 rity. And therefore it shall be consider'd  
 in this View.

There have been Men in the World, who acknowledging the Reason and Fitness of moral Virtue, but not receiving the Truth of God's Revelation, have pretended to the Practice of the former without the Belief of the latter. And they argue, from the mere Nature of Good and Evil, for sufficient Ground to determine us to be good, and to do good, to be temperate, and just, and charitable, looking no farther than the Actions themselves, nor ever regarding the Authority or the Rewards and Punishments of a Sovereign Lawgiver. This must be acknowledged a commendable Effay for the Times of Ignorance: But now that the glorious Light of the Gospel shines upon us, how sinister is it for Men to shut their Eyes to it, and value their Skill in finding the Way without its Help? Such, it is very evident, have little consider'd the Weakness of their own Nature, and of Mankind in general,  
 being

being carried away with a false Presump-  
tion of Truth and Constancy to their Prin-  
ciples. Their own Failings, doubtless,  
might convince them : But where Pride  
is the Cause of an Error, it may be diffi-  
cult to obtain a Confession. However, if  
for themselves, they will not acknowledge  
the Insufficiency of this Way ; yet, for the  
rest of Mankind, the main Body of the  
World, they may surely be persuaded to  
it. They will not deny, that the Divine  
Revelation has added to *their* Motives for  
Innocence and Virtue, the most powerful  
and best adapted to human Nature that it  
is possible to imagin ; nor yet, that Mul-  
titudes, even of those who receive that  
Revelation, do nevertheless live in a shame-  
ful Unprofitableness and Immorality. And  
what Madness is it to set up the smaller  
Strength as sufficient, when the greater is  
seen so frequently to fail of Effect ? To  
depend upon a Philosophy without Reli-  
gion to reform and govern the World,  
that is so little reform'd and govern'd by  
Religion *itself*, which comprehends all their  
Philosophy, and superadds to it a Weight  
for a Purpose incomparably greater ? Let

SERM.  
XIII.

SERM. us therefore, if we would find a true  
 XIII. *Guide of our Life*, submit to *the Fear of*  
 ~~~~~ *the Lord*; and be assured, *that to over-*  
*come the World, the Victory must be our*  
*Faith.*

This will be made plainer to our particular Purpose, by examining distinctly, how *Faith* in God and his Gospel operates to promote *Charity out of a pure Heart and a good Conscience*; and how naturally the Want of it is attended with the Want of the other. He that looks no farther than the Concerns of this present World, and even in *them* apprehends not the Authority and Justice of a Divine Governor, (which is the Case of the faithless Man) may indeed do Acts of Kindness and Beneficence to others. It is likely, he may be induced to it by a special Affection; it is possible, a general Desire of Honour may sway him, or a particular Design of Ambition: He may likewise think of a wise Security against the Change of Fortune; and there are in whom a natural Tender-ness will prevail. But some of these Inducements go but a little Way; some do more Hurt than they do Good; some

of

of them are to be found but in few Men ; SERM.  
and many Men are found without one of XIII.  
them, at least in any strong Degree. Such  
Principles therefore give no Hope to the  
World of an universal Charity, or even of  
helping the State of Mankind consider-  
ably by numerous Benefactions. Tender-  
ness of Nature, which is the best of them,  
amounts to little more than a Weakness  
to bear the Sight of a lamentable Object.  
The laying up of Friends against an evil  
Day is meer Policy of Self-Interest, and  
takes Place but in one of a Thousand.  
Fondness of Men's Esteem, when it goes  
alone, must be confess'd a Vanity ; affects  
likewise but few, and them uncertainly.  
We may say the same of a form'd Ambi-  
tion, and a great deal worse besides. The  
Bounty of *that* is no more than baiting a  
Hook : Mischief to Mankind and not Be-  
neficence is its End, or at least its general  
Issue. Lastly, as for particular Affections ;  
they are justly accused of narrowing and  
monopolizing Men's Kindness, and often  
to Objects of little Worth. So *that* Prin-  
ciple too is an Adversary rather than a  
Friend to doing Good at large ; nay, very



SERM. commonly works more to the Prejudice  
 XIII. than Service of the very Persons to which  
 its Favours are limited. And this is the  
 State of such Charity as can consist with  
 Infidelity; mean, defective, and fallacious  
 to a wretched Degree. But if we speak  
 of Charity *indeed*; such as the Apostle has  
 described, and we have been explaining,  
 administer'd by clean Hands, and flowing  
 from a pure Heart: *Here* is no Seed to  
 produce it, and surely it is too excellent to  
 grow by Chance.

But on the other Side (which we are  
 now to consider) it is in the first Place  
 clear, that he who believes the Will of  
 God revealed to us, wants not a certain  
 Foundation for doing Good. That Will  
 requires it of him; and it requires it with  
 the two Circumstances of the *pure Heart*  
 and *good Conscience*. But the Point chiefly  
 before us is, how *unfeigned Faith* confirms  
 and enforces that Practice. The Consi-  
 derations are numerous which it ministers  
 to this Purpose: I shall insist upon one,  
 (which comprehends many) the Reward  
 to be obtained or forfeited in Consequence  
 of our Behaviour on this Occasion. We  
 have

have learn'd by the Scriptures, that our great Master, from whom we have our Being, and all Things that we have, has intrusted with his Servants divers Talents to be employ'd for his Honour and Service; and that he will, in the Last Day, hold a general *Audit*, wherein shall be distributed infinite Recompences to such as employ them accordingly, and to such only. Thus the gaining or losing Eternal Life and Happiness is the Result of our giving *then* a good or bad Account of our Trust. This Faith must determine him that receives it, not only to be useful and beneficent to the World, according to his Power, but to be so in the Manner prescribed to him. This *Faith* and *Hope* of Reward will oblige every *Man to purify himself, even as he that commands it is pure.* Such a one will place his Services and Benefactions, not where mean or corrupt Designs, but, where Want and Worth invite; where his Reason will tell him, it shall best answer *his* Pleasure, whose Steward he knows himself to be. He has before him, it may be, the serving an ambitious Purpose, or a false

SERM.  
XIII.



SERM.

XIII.



false Honour, or the Humour of a partial Affection : But he has also the solid Prize of true Happiness in Heaven. Here is the Competition ; for by chusing the former, he refuses the latter. And, it is true, unless his Faith be feigned, he cannot prefer such Tinsel and painted Glass to an eternal Weight of Glory. By this Means the Principle of his Actions will be secured, and his Justice and Mercy done for the Sake of the God of Justice and Mercy, whose Rewards are appropriated to those that act in View of them ; while the Men, who do their Works for vile temporal Ends, are left to find vile temporal Rewards ; and often miss of them too.

*Secondly,* The same *Faith* in God, as a *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, which compels us to seek *him* and not *ourselves* in the Exercise of charitable Deeds, operates with equal Strength to perfect our Obedience ; to keep a *Conscience void of Offence towards God* as well as *towards Men*. The Believer is thoroughly instructed, that the Blessings of a future Life are lost to all that persist unreform'd  
in

in any Article of Duty. One Corruption not mortified (he knows) is sufficient to corrupt his whole Soul, and vitiate all his Services. And he is yet an Infidel, who is not assured, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* But the entire and unfeigned Faith of Christ and his Gospel most certainly *worketh by Love*, and as certainly performs its Works of Love with unpolluted Hands. For with what Heart or Hope can a Man of this Faith ever think of appearing in other Condition before the great Judge and Distributor of Rewards? whom he knows to have been himself the pure Pattern of doing Good, and to that Effect an exemplary immaculate Sacrifice? Under Defilement of Guilt and Impenitence, he understands well, that far from an obedient Follower of this great Exemplar, a genuine Doer of Good; he must appear before that Tribunal, an ungrateful Frustrator of infinite Goodness, the Goodness of the Saviour, and on that Account now liable to the dreadful Justice in the same Person of the Judge of, Mankind.

SERM.

XIII.

The

**SERM.** The Thing yet to be discoursed upon  
**XIII** is, how the Charity we have described,  
according to the Text, is *the End of the*  
*Commandment* ; and some Inferences from  
it worthy of our Consideration. But it re-  
quires another Opportunity.



**SERM. XIV.**



# SERMON XIV.

Of Christian Charity.

PART II.



I TIM. i. 5.

*Now the End of the Commandment  
is Charity, out of a pure Heart,  
and of a good Conscience, and of  
Faith unfeigned.*



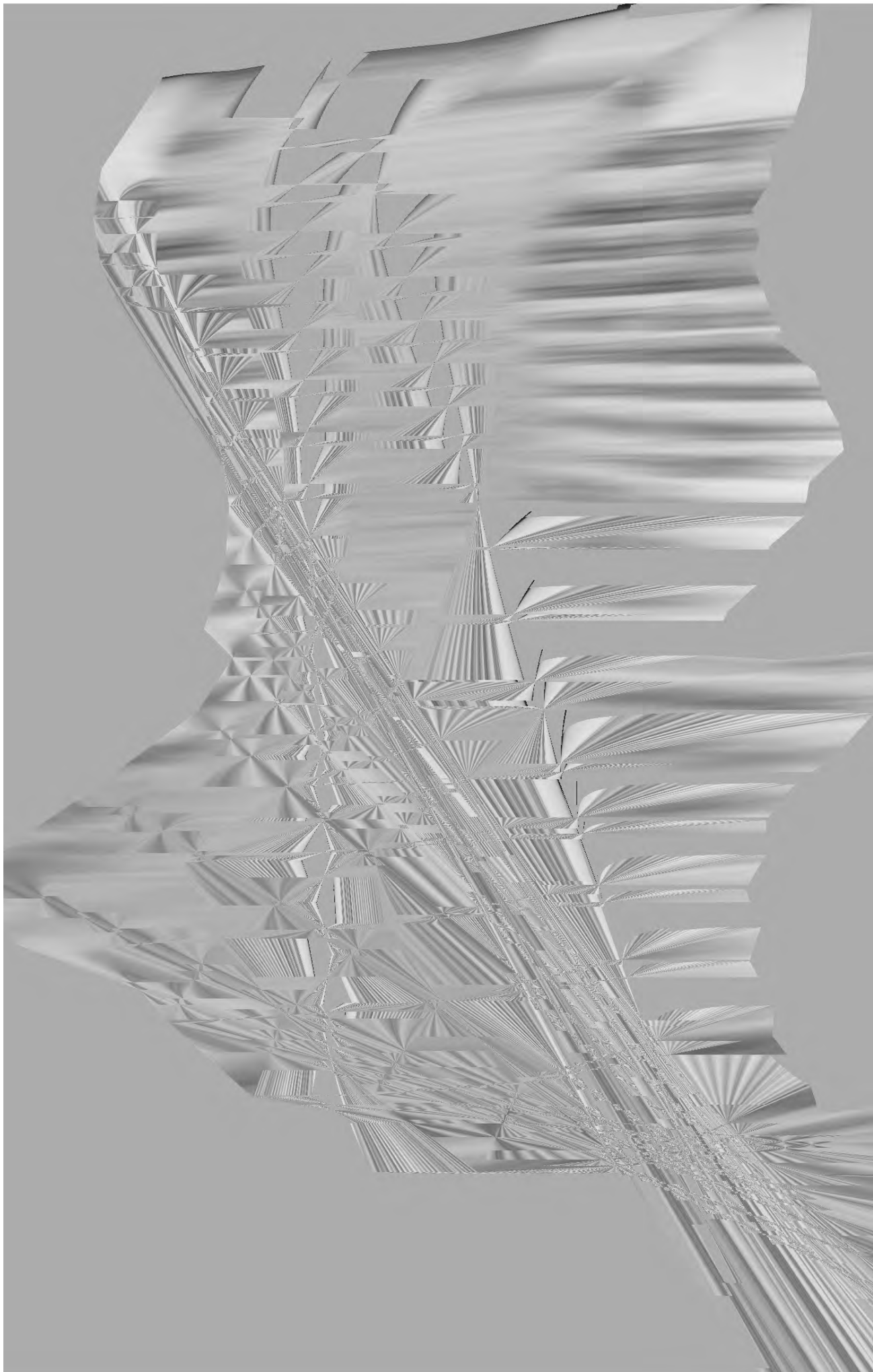
HERE remains, after my former Discourse on this Text, for our present Consideration, what the Apostle affirms, that *Charity is the End of the Commandment*, and what Inferences of chief Use are thence to be made. The End

SERM.  
XIV.

## Of Christian Charity.

12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100  
101  
102  
103  
104  
105  
106  
107  
108  
109  
110  
111  
112  
113  
114  
115  
116  
117  
118  
119  
120  
121  
122  
123  
124  
125  
126  
127  
128  
129  
130  
131  
132  
133  
134  
135  
136  
137  
138  
139  
140  
141  
142  
143  
144  
145  
146  
147  
148  
149  
150  
151  
152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200  
201  
202  
203  
204  
205  
206  
207  
208  
209  
210  
211  
212  
213  
214  
215  
216  
217  
218  
219  
220  
221  
222  
223  
224  
225  
226  
227  
228  
229  
230  
231  
232  
233  
234  
235  
236  
237  
238  
239  
240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
245  
246  
247  
248  
249  
250  
251  
252  
253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261  
262  
263  
264  
265  
266  
267  
268  
269  
270  
271  
272  
273  
274  
275  
276  
277  
278  
279  
280  
281  
282  
283  
284  
285  
286  
287  
288  
289  
290  
291  
292  
293  
294  
295  
296  
297  
298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312  
313  
314  
315  
316  
317  
318  
319  
320  
321  
322  
323  
324  
325  
326  
327  
328  
329  
330  
331  
332  
333  
334  
335  
336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341  
342  
343  
344  
345  
346  
347  
348  
349  
350  
351  
352  
353  
354  
355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365  
366  
367  
368  
369  
370  
371  
372  
373  
374  
375  
376  
377  
378  
379  
380  
381  
382  
383  
384  
385  
386  
387  
388  
389  
390  
391  
392  
393  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398  
399  
400  
401  
402  
403  
404  
405  
406  
407  
408  
409  
410  
411  
412  
413  
414  
415  
416  
417  
418  
419  
420  
421  
422  
423  
424  
425  
426  
427  
428  
429  
430  
431  
432  
433  
434  
435  
436  
437  
438  
439  
440  
441  
442  
443  
444  
445  
446  
447  
448  
449  
450  
451  
452  
453  
454  
455  
456  
457  
458  
459  
460  
461  
462  
463  
464  
465  
466  
467  
468  
469  
470  
471  
472  
473  
474  
475  
476  
477  
478  
479  
480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485  
486  
487  
488  
489  
490  
491  
492  
493  
494  
495  
496  
497  
498  
499  
500  
501  
502  
503  
504  
505  
506  
507  
508  
509  
510  
511  
512  
513  
514  
515  
516  
517  
518  
519  
520  
521  
522  
523  
524  
525  
526  
527  
528  
529  
530  
531  
532  
533  
534  
535  
536  
537  
538  
539  
540  
541  
542  
543  
544  
545  
546  
547  
548  
549  
550  
551  
552  
553  
554  
555  
556  
557  
558  
559  
560  
561  
562  
563  
564  
565  
566  
567  
568  
569  
570  
571  
572  
573  
574  
575  
576  
577  
578  
579  
580  
581  
582  
583  
584  
585  
586  
587  
588  
589  
590  
591  
592  
593  
594  
595  
596  
597  
598  
599  
600  
601  
602  
603  
604  
605  
606  
607  
608  
609  
610  
611  
612  
613  
614  
615  
616  
617  
618  
619  
620  
621  
622  
623  
624  
625  
626  
627  
628  
629  
630  
631  
632  
633  
634  
635  
636  
637  
638  
639  
640  
641  
642  
643  
644  
645  
646  
647  
648  
649  
650  
651  
652  
653  
654  
655  
656  
657  
658  
659  
660  
661  
662  
663  
664  
665  
666  
667  
668  
669  
670  
671  
672  
673  
674  
675  
676  
677  
678  
679  
680  
681  
682  
683  
684  
685  
686  
687  
688  
689  
690  
691  
692  
693  
694  
695  
696  
697  
698  
699  
700  
701  
702  
703  
704  
705  
706  
707  
708  
709  
710  
711  
712  
713  
714  
715  
716  
717  
718  
719  
720  
721  
722  
723  
724  
725  
726  
727  
728  
729  
730  
731  
732  
733  
734  
735  
736  
737  
738  
739  
740  
741  
742  
743  
744  
745  
746  
747  
748  
749  
750  
751  
752  
753  
754  
755  
756  
757  
758  
759  
760  
761  
762  
763  
764  
765  
766  
767  
768  
769  
770  
771  
772  
773  
774  
775  
776  
777  
778  
779  
780  
781  
782  
783  
784  
785  
786  
787  
788  
789  
790  
791  
792  
793  
794  
795  
796  
797  
798  
799  
800  
801  
802  
803  
804  
805  
806  
807  
808  
809  
810  
811  
812  
813  
814  
815  
816  
817  
818  
819  
820  
821  
822  
823  
824  
825  
826  
827  
828  
829  
830  
831  
832  
833  
834  
835  
836  
837  
838  
839  
840  
841  
842  
843  
844  
845  
846  
847  
848  
849  
850  
851  
852  
853  
854  
855  
856  
857  
858  
859  
860  
861  
862  
863  
864  
865  
866  
867  
868  
869  
870  
871  
872  
873  
874  
875  
876  
877  
878  
879  
880  
881  
882  
883  
884  
885  
886  
887  
888  
889  
890  
891  
892  
893  
894  
895  
896  
897  
898  
899  
900  
901  
902  
903  
904  
905  
906  
907  
908  
909  
910  
911  
912  
913  
914  
915  
916  
917  
918  
919  
920  
921  
922  
923  
924  
925  
926  
927  
928  
929  
930  
931  
932  
933  
934  
935  
936  
937  
938  
939  
940  
941  
942  
943  
944  
945  
946  
947  
948  
949  
950  
951  
952  
953  
954  
955  
956  
957  
958  
959  
960  
961  
962  
963  
964  
965  
966  
967  
968  
969  
970  
971  
972  
973  
974  
975  
976  
977  
978  
979  
980  
981  
982  
983  
984  
985  
986  
987  
988  
989  
990  
991  
992  
993  
994  
995  
996  
997  
998  
999  
1000

Concerning the Truth of this, we may  
not receive it, not in the Scriptures,  
nor in the Tradition, nor in the Meditations,  
nor in the Reason, nor in the Passion, of the Thing. The  
Witness of our Saviour, St. Mark vii. 12.  
For all things whatsoever I would that  
men should do, they may do them;  
but the Law and the Prophets.  
Therefore we can receive Men as to  
be distinguished as Justice and Kind-  
ness,





SERM. *End* of the Commandment is the *Design*  
 XIV. *or Purpose*, for obtaining which God gave  
 it; or, (which comes much to the same)  
 it is that *Perfection*, that principal and  
 most excellent Effect of all, that the Com-  
 mandment produces among Men. This  
 being apply'd to Charity, we find the  
 Character upon it of a Dignity ine-  
 stimable: That the Law, the Prophets,  
 and the Gospel itself, *all* that we have in  
 Charge from our God and Saviour in his  
 gracious Revelations of himself and Will;  
 were framed and executed, given and con-  
 tinued, in the prime View of planting and  
 increasing Charity in the World, as the  
 main Scope and Consummation of them  
 all.

Concerning the Truth of this, we may  
 satisfy ourselves *first*, out of the Scriptures,  
 and then employ our own Meditations on  
 the Nature and Reason of the Thing. The  
 Words of our Saviour, St. *Matth.* vii. 12.  
 are, *All Things whatsoever ye would that*  
*Men should do to you, do ye even so to them;*  
*for this is the Law and the Prophets.*  
 Whatsoever we can desire Men to do to  
 us, is comprehended in Justice and Kind-  
 ness,

ness, as they both are in Charity. Conformably hereunto, upon his Departure out of the World, he charged his Disciples with the Duty of Love and Charity, giving it the dignified emphatical Distinction of a New Commandment, St. *John* xiii. 34. and of HIS Commandment, xiv. 12. and that enforced by constituting it the very *Badge* of his Discipleship, and by alledging and prescribing the Example of his own incomprehensible Love, as may be seen in the same Places: The Substance of which St. *John* repeats in his own Person, in his First Epistle. Our great Apostle likewise, in divers Places, presses and illustrates this Doctrine of our Lord, and particularly ascertains, in his other Epistles, what he delivers to *Timothy* in the Text. So in that to the *Romans*, Chap. xiii. 8, &c. *Owe no Man any Thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law. For this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying,*

SERM.  
XIV.  


SERM. *ing, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour*  
 XIV. *as thyself. Love worketh no Ill to his*  
 Neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling  
 of the Law. And to the Galatians, Chap.  
 v. 13, 14. *By Love serve one another: For*  
*all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even*  
*in this; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour*  
*as thyself. And the Colossians, Chap. iii.*  
 14. *Above all these Things put on Charity,*  
*which is the Bond of Perfectness.*

We may yet make two Remarks from  
 Scripture, of great Weight to our Purpose.  
 The *first* is, that the Prophetical Descrip-  
 tion and Character of the Times of the  
 Messiah, wherein the most perfect Teach-  
 ing and Government of the People of  
 God was rightly expected, is the Descrip-  
 tion and Character of Peace and mutual  
 Charity. Thus the *Psalmist* foretells of  
*Abundance of Peace so long as the Moon*  
*endureth; Ps. lxxii.* And *Isaiab* celebra-  
 ting those Days in his Evangelical Pro-  
 phesy, Chap. xi. *The Wolf also shall dwell*  
*with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie*  
*down with the Kid: And the Calf, and the*  
*young Lion, and the Fatling together; and*  
*a little Child shall lead them. And the Cow*  
*and*

and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the Lyon shall eat Straw like the Ox. And the sucking Child shall play on the Hole of the Asp, and the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice Den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain; for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.

SERM.

XIV.



You see the Cause assign'd of this innocent Quietness and blessed Harmony of Affections is *the Knowledge of the Lord*. And what else is *the Knowledge of the Lord*, but *the Commandment* in my Text; and the *Fulness* of it, but the *Clearness* and *Diffusiveness* added to it by the Christian Revelation? So the Prophet, after setting forth with great Amplification the glorious End in an universal Charity, ascribes it in the Close to the *Commandment*, the efficacious Cause design'd for its Production.


The *second* Remark, to shew the Dignity of Charity which we insist on, is that upon the Discharge or Omission of the Offices of Charity our Lord has made the Sentence of his final Judgment to turn. You may remember the Description of that

SERM. solemn Day given us in the xxvth of St. XIV. *Matthew*, when the King shall say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in Prison, and ye came unto me.* Which he presently explains; *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Then comes the other Part, in which the Neglect of the same Things, the Reverse of these charitable Deeds, is made the Foundation of the other Sentence, the Sentence of Horror, *Depart from me ye Cursed.*

After this Evidence from Scripture, we may proceed to reason ourselves on the Excellence of Charity, and see how worthily of Divine Appointment it holds this high Rank. The Summ of all Perfection is in God; and every Degree of Goodness any Creature of his is capable of, must be derived from him, and can therefore be valued

valued only as it approaches to his original **SERM.**  
**Goodness.** Now consider the Attributes **XIV.**  
of God, and the Possibility in us of any  
Approach or Resemblance to them. We  
adore his Immensity, Power, Wisdom,  
Justice, and Goodness. The first Excel-  
lence of his *Immensity*, human Nature can  
in no Sort aspire to the least Shadow of,  
before whom *the Inhabitants of the Earth*  
*are as Grasshoppers, and the Nations count-*  
*ed as a Drop of a Bucket, and as the small*  
*Dust of the Balance.* Then for *Power*  
and *Wisdom*, may we not say almost the  
same Thing, especially in this our mortal  
State, of which alone we are now speak-  
ing? But if any Man contend, and would  
have a Value put on the Knowledge of  
some that are called wise, or on the Power  
of mighty Princes; (though they them-  
selves know, how very narrow and uncer-  
tain these are) yet when we consider the  
Mass of Mankind, the Distinction of one  
in a Million, is surely alledged in vain.  
Our general Lot is of great Weakness, and  
great Ignorance; and both necessary. It  
is impossible, from the State of Things  
and of ourselves, to make any consider-

SERM. able Advances on these Heads, till God  
 XIV. shall translate us from the present Condi-  
 tion of Impotence and Darknes. But  
 when we come to the last Attributes of  
*Justice* and *Goodness*, (under which, in Ef-  
 fect, is comprehended *Holiness*) *there* it is  
 that, by the Divine Grace, we lift up our  
 Heads: In *them* the Soul of Man may  
 bear some Image of his glorious Maker.  
 And this Capacity is universal; this Ex-  
 cellence and Goodness every Man may im-  
 prove in; and therefore are they a suitable  
 End of the Commandment which is given  
 to every Man: For who is there that  
 cannot be just and peaceable, and wish  
 well to his Neighbour, ever ready in Heart  
 to do well, and actually do so when Power  
 and Opportunity are granted him? Thus  
 we may discern the End of the Com-  
 mandment, and must at the same Time  
 admire the Worth and Fitness of it; and  
 likewise be fill'd with the deepest Vene-  
 ration for the Divine Bounty and Wis-  
 dom, in capacitating his Creature to re-  
 semble himself in his most glorious At-  
 tributes; and framing his Law, and every  
 Thing else, for the Attainment of that  
 excellent

excellent End. For it will be found not SERM.  
only the End of the Law, but of the Cre- XIV.  
ation itself, and of the Providence that   
presides over it. Mankind was made, and  
planted together in Societies, apparently  
for the Exercise of Charity, of mutual  
Love and Benefactions; and all the Orders  
and Conditions of Men, Rulers and Sub-  
jects, Rich and Poor, Prosperous and Af-  
flicted, Prudent and Simple, Teachers and  
Taught, are contrived and continued in  
the World for the same good Purpose; to  
give us Occasion of reciprocal Indearment,  
and fill the Soul with its only true Noble-  
ness, the Spirit of doing Good. A just  
Sense of this Matter will lead us to look  
on the Divine Law, not as an Imposition  
of *Duty*, so much as a *Privilege* for the  
highest Advancement of our Nature, the  
greatest imaginable Gift of God our Father  
to his beloved Children,

While we speak thus of Charity, still  
it is to be remember'd, that a true *Faith*  
and a *good Conscience* are inseparable from  
it. And hereupon it may be ask'd, what  
Advantage Charity has in particular over  
*them*. An Advantage is manifestly given,



SERM. and a great one, by the Words of the  
 XIV. Apostle. That Grace, which is the *End*  
 of the Commandment, is evidently placed  
 in an unequal'd height; and he hath not  
 said, that *Faith unfeigned*, or that a *good*  
*Conscience*, if attended with Charity, is that  
*End*; but puts them in the Rank of At-  
 tendants or Assistants, Helps or Conditions;  
 and gives the principal Place and Virtue to  
*this*. The Reasons for it, besides what has  
 been already open'd, may farther appear  
 by considering severally, first of a *good*  
*Conscience*, and then of *Faith*, as distin-  
 guish'd from *Charity*.

A *good Conscience*, or Innocence of Life,  
 with respect to those Duties which may  
 be apprehended as distinct from Charity,  
 (though in Strictness all reducible to it)  
 is concerned in Things of a temporary Use  
 and Establishment depending on our pre-  
 sent State only; or in those of the Nature  
 of Helps and Instruments to promote and  
 secure others of a higher Quality. Thus  
*Temperance* and *Chastity* are from Rules  
 provided for the Space of this Pilgrimage,  
 Laws to last no longer than our Journey.  
 They prescribe the just Use of Meats and  
 Drinks,

Drinks, while our Bodies require the Support of Food : They regulate the Passions arising from the gross Flesh, till it be refined in a purer State : They guard the Society instituted for the Propagation of our Race, during the short Time that we *marry and are given in Marriage*. But as soon as we shall be cloathed with glorified Bodies, and made *equal unto the Angels*, they cease ; Hunger and Thirst, and every carnal Appetite and Perturbation, the Subjects and Occasions of them, being then entirely ceased. But *Charity*, to which these minister for the present Time, is of a higher Derivation, even from the eternal divine Perfections, which it copies directly from ; and is likewise of an immortal Duration, they that exercise it on Earth, carrying it with them to Heaven.

*Secondly*, The Grace of *Devotion*, our *Confessions, Supplications, Sacraments* ; they are the Means of purifying and strengthening the Heart to Justice and all Goodness, and of obtaining the Divine Assistances thereunto necessary ; but still the Work must be of a higher Account than the Instruments, and the End

SERM.  
XIV.

SERM. more precious and noble than the Means.

XIV. And these two are calculated for the present Life, and our uncertain and weak Condition in it. But when once we shall be translated into the Kingdom that cannot be moved, the further Use of these Supports and Helps is determined; while yet Love and Charity continue, and even receive Enlargement and Perfection there.

Lastly, when we speak of Faith, abstracted from Charity, (which is the Case here) we consider it as furnishing Motives for Obedience, and not as the inward Obedience itself. And in that restrained Sense it clearly belongs to the Class of the auxiliary Parts of Religion, has the Nature of other Helps and Instruments subservient to the main End of it; and therefore, as we have already said of them, cannot come to any Competition with the End itself. Neither are we to omit the same Difference between Faith and Charity, which we observed of the rest; that Faith serves the Church militant only, and subsists not in the Church triumphant, but is swallowed up of Vision; when we shall see Face to Face, and know  
even

even as also we are known; whereas Charity, as our Apostle witnesseth, 1 Cor. xiii. never faileth; and for these Reasons we may conclude this Argument in his Words at the End of that Chapter, that *the greatest of these is Charity.* SERM. XIV.

After these Proofs and Vindications of the great Doctrine in the Text, I come to the Inferences that occur of chief Use to be made from it. The *first* is manifest, that we labour above all Things to possess our Souls with this Grace, as we would not be justly construed to renounce the whole Commandment, the Christian Faith, and the Christian Obedience. But this general Conclusion, tho' the most valuable and necessary of all, I need not spend more Words on at present, since it follows so directly and obviously from all that has been said, and cannot be more forcibly recommended, all Topicks falling short indeed of that we have proposed, That *Charity is the End of the Commandment.* But there is still Room for suggesting to your Thoughts some particular Inferences, and pressing their Justness and Importance.

SERM. The *first* of them shall be *Union* amongst  
 XIV. Christians. He that duly considers these  
 two Things, the transcendent Excellence  
 of *Charity*, and how lamentably it is laid  
 waste by *Separation*, will be convinced,  
 that the Business of *Union* deserves the most  
 tender Regards : The former I have even  
 now prov'd at large ; and for the latter, I  
 would to God there were any Need of  
 Proof. It is, indeed, *possible* to imagine,  
 Mens differing and parting upon a religious  
 Controversy, and yet preserving mutual Af-  
 fection, such as Religion demands. But  
 in Fact, it has ever been otherwise with  
 respect to very great Numbers of the con-  
 cern'd ; and will and must ever be other-  
 wise, while the real Passion of the weak,  
 and the pretended Passion of the designing,  
 shall work their natural Effects. Coldness,  
 Distance, and Narrowness of Spirit, are  
 the smallest Evils ; they soon proceed to  
 Contempt, Hatred, and Slanders ; and at  
 length flame out in Conspiracies, Persecu-  
 tions, Rebellions, and Wars. Zeal de-  
 vours *Charity* ; and the Arms of Religion  
 are turned upon herself. These calamitous  
 and most unreasonable, tho' most certain  
 Con-

Consequences, must restrain every Man SERM.  
XIV.  
 that will conscientiously attend to them, from breaking, if possible to avoid it, the sacred and salutary Bond of Union. And it is the more to the Purpose to press this here, because in our Country it is very well known, that Men separate from their Brethren, and acknowledge *themselves* that they do it without *Necessity*; which is, the avoiding of *Sin*. So for some imagined *Betterness* only they strengthen Opposition, and widen the publick Wounds, and sacrifice, as far as their Weight goes, Peace and Charity, the Vitals of true Religion, to a Circumstance of it; and a Circumstance which they own not to be absolutely necessary. Many a well-minded Man may find Difficulty in judging of a Number of Points and Arguments; but till he can be clearly convinced, *here* is a Guide for him in the mean while. *Charity* is *the End of the Commandment*, the Perfection and Substance of Religion: *That* he is sure of, and will therefore abide in the Way that serves the Establishment of Peace and Union for the Maintenance of Charity, till he is as sure that 'tis *unlawful*.

SERM.  
XIV.

A *second* Use of this Doctrine, and very proper to our unhappy Times, is that we be watchful against the Breach of *Charity* towards those we differ from in the present divided State of Christendom ; and so much the more, because it is both difficult in itself to preserve Temper between Opposites, and becomes more so by the Artifices of wicked Men, still employed on these Occasions to embitter and inflame either Side. But our Conduct, unless we forget and overthrow the End of the Commandment while we contend for the Truth of it, must be full of Humanity, Gentleness, Goodness, and free from Misconstruction, Calumny, Undermining, and Violence ; above all, from that common but abominable Practice of carrying on corrupt secular Ends under the Banner of a religious Zeal. This is such an Hypocrisy, such a Profanation, such a perverting of all that is good to all that is evil, that it must appear the greatest Impiety and Infamy of our Age, and make good Men dread the Removal from us of the Knowledge of Religion so sacrilegiously abused.

△

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, Our being thus certified of the main Design of God's whole Revelation to us, is of great Moment to settle our Minds, and direct our Judgment, with respect to divers Schemes of Religion, in which Men may have both over and undervalued some Parts of it. Where that has been done, the Consequence to those misled by them is, either to be confident or desponding of their State of Favour with God, both without Reason. For Instance in the former Kind ; some Teachers, in exalting *Faith*, have depressed the Value and Necessity of *good Life* and Actions : And what follows, but that Men, understanding *Faith* for no more than an *Assent* to the Truths of the Gospel and Reliance upon God's Mercy, presume themselves in a safe Condition without Reformation of their Manners, and bringing forth the good Fruits of a Brotherly Charity. Those they condemn under the Name of *Morality*, which their *converted* and *regenerate*, their *justify'd* and *sanctify'd* Man is advanced far beyond. And though it may seem strange to a plain Man, yet Scholastical Notions  
and

SERM.  
XIV.



SERM. and Arguments have been found out to  
 XIV. support a *Conversion* without turning from  
 ~~~~~ Evil to Good, and a *Regeneration* without  
 Newness of Life and Conversation: In a  
 Word, to find People just without Justice,  
 and *sanctified* without *Holiness*. This is  
 an Error subversive of all true Religion;  
 and nurses up a fatal Presumption, such as  
 cuts off the only Remedy, *Repentance*.  
 But when Faith is magnify'd (which it  
 may be justly) as of full Effect to our Sal-  
 vation; it ought to be understood, not  
 only a Persuasion of the Truth, but an  
 Obedience of the Heart to it. If that be  
 wanting, the Reliance on the Mercy of  
 God is so far from true Faith in him, that  
 it is a direct disbelieving of his Word. It  
 is to believe he will grant that without  
 Condition, which he has declared he will  
 not. They that fail in this Manner could  
 not do it, if they kept their Eye steadily  
 on the true Point of Aim, the *End of the*  
*Commandment*. That would prove, (as in  
 all Affairs the *End* to be compass'd is) a  
 right Direction what Labours to be em-  
 ploy'd in, and a sure Rule to judge of the  
 Measure of their Attainment; even whe-  
 ther

ther or no, and how far they have *run the* **SERM.**  
*Way of God's Commandments.* **XIV.**

And as this would well and certainly correct such undue and pernicious Confidence; it may be no less serviceable in raising and confirming the Hearts that sink under an unreasonable Diffidence and Dejection. It is a Thing often seen, that the Terrors, which should with great Cause seize upon wicked Men, are entertain'd in the Bosoms of some of the most faithful Servants of God. Their anxious Doubts and Fears are commonly concern'd about some of these Points; The Sincerity of their Love to God, Vehemence of Sorrow in Repentance, Ardency of Devotion, Practice of Austerities, and Retirement from the World. And all these Difficulties may be truly judged and set right by Application of the Doctrine before us, as a Rule to determine of ourselves by. Have we *Charity* from a pure Intention and Conscience, and unfeigned Faith? We are assured that we love God sincerely, because we keep his Commandments for his Sake. That Repentance, and those Devotions, that produce Purity of Heart and Obedience  
of

SERM. of Life, cannot be unaccepted ; because  
 XIV. they reach their own End, and the End of  
 the Commandment. The Sufficiency of  
 Mortifications and Austerities is in the same  
 Manner to be seen, by their producing  
 those same Fruits. Neither can there be any  
 of them more excellent, than the denying  
 ourselves for the Good of our Neighbour.  
*Lastly*, if this Doctrine of *St. Paul* may  
 stand against the Pretences of *Monkery*, it  
 is evidently better (to say no more) to do  
 Good in the World, than to fly from it.

I will conclude with shewing you,  
 that my valuing what we are taught in  
 the Text, as so proper, so sufficient, to  
 repress the vain Assurance on one Hand,  
 and on the other, dissipate the Fears of  
 such as are run into wrong Notions of  
 Religion, in a Word, to distinguish  
 clearly, who are indeed the Children of  
 God ; is no Strain to make the most of a  
 Subject ; but merely the sober, solid, and  
 safe Christian Use of it. This will ap-  
 pear, if *St. John* makes the very same.  
 Hear therefore his Words, *1 Ephes. iii.*  
*10, 11. In this the Children of God are*  
*manifest,*

*manifest, and the Children of the Devil : SERM.  
Whosoever doth not Righteousness, is not XIV.  
of God, neither he that loveth not his  
Brother. For this is the Message, that ye  
heard from the Beginning, that we should  
love one another.*





S E R M O N XV.

An Exposition of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

PART I.

*Of the Perfection of the Christian Law above the Jewish.*



MATT. V. 20.

*For I say unto you, that except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

SERM.  
XV.



THE main End of our Saviour's Coming and Teaching is so clearly set forth to us by his *Evangelists* and *Apostles*, that honest Men could never mistake it, but that the Spirit of Contention taking Advantage of their un-  
wary

wary Zeal for some very good Point, steals SERM.  
 upon them, and, while it sharpens more XV.  
 and more their Concern for THAT, leaves  
 them insensible and blind to all the rest.  
 The restoring and perfecting the Rules of  
 Virtue and Goodness, and the Encourage-  
 ments to the keeping them, are the Sub-  
 ject of Christ's preaching, and the Matter  
 of his Laws ; particularly, this Sermon  
 upon the *Monnt*, out of which the  
 Text is taken (the largest Discourse of his,  
 that Providence hath recorded) is spent  
 entirely to that Purpose. Indeed, the  
 whole Scriptures, especially of the *New*  
*Testament*, read without extreme Prejudice,  
 are one perpetual Lesson of the Guards and  
 Dictates of Morality. The Sum of this  
 we have collected with admirable Strength  
 at the End of the iid Chapter of the Epi-  
 stle to *Titus*; *The Grace of God that*  
*bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all*  
*Men, teaching us that, denying Ungodliness*  
*and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly,*  
*righteously, and godly, in this present World;*  
*looking for that blessed Hope, and the glori-*  
*ous appearing of the great God and our Sa-*  
*viour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for*

SERM. us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar  
 XV. *People, zealous of good Works.* Here you may see, that the *first* Coming of our Lord was to teach Mankind *good Works*; his Suffering and Redemption, to give *Capacity* and *Strength* for them; and his *second* glorious Coming to *reward* only the zealous *Practice* of the same under his Rules. For then it will be found, *that except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The Scope, and Importance too, of these Words may appear the better, if we consider the Occasion and Introduction to them. After our Lord's Temptation in the *Wilderness* and Victory over Satan, he began to *preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*; and this he did first to smaller Assemblies, going about, in the Synagogues of *Galilee*: But when by this Means his Fame was gone forth throughout all *Syria*, and great Multitudes of People followed him, he retired again, as if to a second Preparation for the more solemn  
 and

and publick Entrance upon his Ministry. SERM.  
XV.  
 He went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God; and when it was Day, called to him his Disciples, and chose out of them his *Twelve Apostles*. Then he returned into the plain Country, where the People were expecting him in extraordinary great Numbers; for they were gathered together from many and distant Countries, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; from *Galilee* and *Decapolis*, and *Jerusalem* and *Judea*, and from beyond *Jordan*, and from the Sea-coast of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. That he might speak therefore in the hearing of so numerous a Company, he went up to an Eminence, and from thence deliver'd that great Sermon to those that were and that would be his Disciples: All which may be gather'd from what precedes and follows it here in *St. Matthew*, and from the vith Chapter of *St. Luke* and Beginning of the viith.

As the Observation of these *Preparatives* may well engage a singular Respect from us to the Doctrines declar'd thereupon; so likewise the *Introduction* to them in the solemn pronouncing the *Beatitudes*, with-

out



SERM. out Question, excited the utmost Attention in the Auditors. Thereby in the first twelve Verses of his Discourse, he sets forth, with admirable Brevity and Authority, the *Temper of Mind* that qualified for his Discipleship, the *Persecutions* to be expected upon it, and the *Encouragement* to Perseverance; and that of a different Nature from what they had been used to hear; not like the Blessings of *Moses*; *Blessed shalt thou be in the City, and blessed shalt thou be in the Field*, Deut. xxviii. 3. or those that begin the Book of *Psalms*, which relate to the same *worldly* flourishing and Success: But such as could consist well with *Reproaches* and *Afflictions*, and even spring from them; so great, that though they were not actually conferr'd in this Life, the bare Expectation and Title to them, would be more than enough to over-balance all the Sufferings of it; *great is your Reward in Heaven*.

Thence he proceeds, at the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Verses, to intimate the indispensable Necessity he put his Ministers and Disciples under, of facing these Persecutions in an open Profession of the Truth;

Truth; forasmuch as he called them to that very End, that his Gospel might be so propagated to the rest of the World.

SERM.  
XV.

They were not to conceal their *Light*, but *let it shine freely before Men*; though, in that *Darkness*, it serv'd to direct the Aim of Malice against them. *My Son*, said a wise Man, *if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation.*

And we see our Saviour, here, and in many other Places, still sets before those that think of entring into his Service, the worst of Difficulties (at that Time especially) incident to it. And accordingly, when he comes to propound, in a more particular Manner, his Rule of Life, he barrs, in the very first Place, any Expectance of being discharged from the least Obligation of the moral Law already received by the *Jews*; and will not have any Man encouraged to follow him in a Thought of being indulged by his Religion, in the Gratification of unjust Appetites and Passions. On the contrary, instead of such *Ease*, Men are warn'd of a greater Strictness, several *Additions* and *Improvements* of the Law which he was come to *complete* and *per-*

SERM. *fect*, and so promulge it with a *mightier*

XV. *Sanction of Rewards and Punishments expressly declared. So my Text, and the 17th, 18th, and 19th Verses before it; Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: But whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say unto you, that except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The Scribes and Pharisees, you know, professed the greatest Zeal for the Law of Moses, of which they appeared to be rigid Observers and accurate Expositors. And as for the Word *Righteousness*, that signifies not only *Justice*, but every other Virtue that is requisite to denominate a Man blameless with respect to the Law he is under.

under. To which Purpose it may be ob-  
 serv'd, that the Word so render'd, was in  
 all probability, in the *Original* of St. *Mat-*  
*thew*, that which signifies *Mercy* and *Cha-*  
*riety*, as well as *Uprightness*. Accordingly,  
 in the first Verse of the next Chapter,  
 there is great Reason to judge, that the  
 true Reading in the first and authentick  
 Translation, gives us the same Word for  
*Alms*, as here in the Text for *Righteous-*  
*ness*. So that take it all together, and  
 you will understand, our Lord, in laying  
 down this Sum of his Doctrine, presup-  
 poses and expresses only in general, a due  
 Obedience to the Commandments already  
 injoin'd his People by God ; THAT Law  
 of *Righteousness* very well known to them,  
 which may be found in the Writings of  
*David* and *Solomon*, and the *Prophets*, and  
 of *Moses*, especially the *Ten Commandments*.  
 In the first Place, we must EQUAL the  
*Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*,  
 if any of them equal'd their own Pretences  
 of Holiness in zealous keeping the *Law and*  
*the Commandment*, which is *holy, and just,*  
*and good*. Upon this Foundation it is, that  
 our Law-giver and Prophet has been pleas-  
 ed

SERM.  
XV.



SERM. ed to build, taking away Nothing of the  
 XV. *ancient* Structure that was of any *Solidity*  
 or *universal Use*. And of THAT the Na-  
 ture and Substance is compriz'd in few  
 Words, and in the same it may suffice at  
 this Time to mention it from the most  
 remarkable Place of *St. Matthew*, Ch. xxii.  
 beginning at the 37th Verse, *Thou shalt*  
*love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart,*  
*and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.*  
*This is the first and great Commandment.*  
*And the second is like unto it : Thou shalt*  
*love thy Neighbour as thy self ;* for, as it  
 is there added, *on these two Commandments*  
*hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

But it is reasonable to speak more at  
 large to the Question which the Text sug-  
 gests to every body's Mind ; *wherein* our  
*Righteousness* must EXCEED that of these  
*Professors of Judaism ?* And in answering  
 whereof, our Lord seems to have spent, in  
 a manner, all the rest of this Chapter and  
 the two following, which comprehend  
 his great Sermon on the *Mount*. Out of  
 them therefore we may seek for Satis-  
 faction ; and it will be found, that all the  
 Points recommended for distinguishing the  
 Disciple

Christian Law above the Jewish. 363

Disciple from the Pharisee, may be reduced under three Heads. SERM.  
XV.

The *first* relates to *Defects* in the Law itself. The *second* to the *false Glosses* of these corrupt Interpreters of it. And the *third* to *other* evil Practices of theirs, and that *Hypocrisy* with which they cover'd, or shadowed them.

The *first* then contains those Precepts of our Saviour whereby he hath fulfilled the Law. For that Rule itself, though given by God, and without question very proper, and a very great Blessing to the People and Times it was given to, was not without *Defects*; which it pleased God, when the Fulness of Time was come for the teaching all Nations, to supply, speaking to them by his Son. Of these there are two Branches; the *former*, where something was indulg'd to the Jews, tho' less agreeable to Right and the primary Design of God in his general Institution of Things, and indulg'd, with *express Mention* of the Case; the *latter*, where they were not fully and clearly taught the *Perfection* and *Extent* of what is now plainly our Duty, but were left with some  
*Latitude,*

SERM. *Latitude, at least Uncertainty, of Judgment and Practice.*

XV. *The first mention'd I find but one Instance of; and that is declared and corrected in the 31st and 32d Verses of this Chapter, It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his Wife, let him give her a Writing of Divorcement. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his Wife, saving for the Cause of Fornication, causeth her to commit Adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth Adultery. So that here is a notable Liberty retrench'd from Christian Men, that was suffer'd in the Jews for the Hardness of their Heart. And the Obedience to this primitive Law of the Sanctity of Wedlock, restor'd by our Lord, must distinguish the Righteousness of his Followers (as many as are concerned) from that of the Scribes and Pharisees.*

*But secondly, there are divers Instances, in which he hath fulfilled, that is, render'd complete, perfect, and perspicuous, the Law of Moses, where it was left defective and loose, or obscure by reason of its Generality and Want of express and distinct Particulars.*

lars. These I shall offer to you in the SERM.  
 same Order, that you read them in. XV.

The *first* is a Prohibition, under severe Penalties, of *intemperate Anger*, and the ordinary Consequences of it, using *contemptuous Language*, and retaining *Grudges* against our Brethren. This you find at the Verse next to my Text, and the five following: *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old Time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in Danger of the Judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in Danger of the Judgment; and whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in Danger of the Council; but whosoever shall say, thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell Fire.* So far is set forth, how criminal *Rage* and *Scorn*, and the *immediate* Effects of this *proud Wrath*, all *Bitterness* of reproachful and contumelious *Words*, will be found; altho' they should not carry a Man to that *last Injury* forbidden in the *sixth* Commandment: And the *more lasting* Effects of the same will appear, from what is subjoin'd, to be no less offensive and dangerous. *Unreconcil'd*



SERM. *reconcil'd Enmity and uncharitable Dis-*  
 XV. *pleasure* against our Brother, makes all our  
 Services to God unacceptable and profane,  
 and leaves us in a State unreconcil'd with  
 HIM, and subjected, since we would re-  
 mit Nothing, to Vengeance also without  
 Remission. *Therefore, if thou bring thy*  
*Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that*  
*thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave*  
*there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy*  
*Way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and*  
*then come and offer thy Gift. Agree with*  
*thine Adverſary quickly, whiles thou art in*  
*the Way with him; leſt at any Time the Ad-*  
*verſary deliver thee to the Judge, and the*  
*Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be*  
*caſt into Priſon. Verily I ſay unto thee,*  
*thou ſhalt by no Means come out thence till*  
*thou haſt paid the uttermoſt Farthing.*

A *ſecond* Prohibition immediately fol-  
 lows; and gives the *ſeventh* Command-  
 ment a like Completion to what the for-  
 mer gave the *ſixth*. By *that*, you have  
 ſeen, whereas the Letter of *Moses* forbid  
*Murder*; our Lord found it neceſſary to  
 forbid alſo that *Fierceneſs*, and *Pride*, and  
*Malice*, which are apt to lead Men to it:

And

And agreeably, that Corruption of the SERM.  
 Heart which incites and betrays to the XV.  
 Commission of *Adultery*, is by *this* declar'd  
 an Offence against God, of like Nature  
 with *Adultery* itself. You have heard that  
*it was said by them of old Time, Thou shalt  
 not commit Adultery: But I say unto you,  
 that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust  
 after her, hath committed Adultery with  
 her already in his Heart.* And because of  
 an exceeding Proneness in the Nature of  
 many to fall into this Sin, which they  
 would be ready to alledge by way of *Excuse*,  
 THAT is in the next Words *prevent-*  
*ed*, and the *Insufficiency* declar'd. Men  
 are plainly told, they *must* correct, subdue,  
 and mortify that Nature *itself*, (if it be  
 such) unless by gratifying one Inclination  
 for the present, they will chuse to destroy  
 the whole Man for ever. *And if thy  
 right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast  
 it from thee: for it is profitable for thee  
 that one of thy Members should perish, and  
 not that thy whole Body should be cast into  
 Hell. And if thy right Hand offend thee,  
 cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is  
 profitable for thee, that one of thy Members  
 should*

SERM. *should perish, and not that thy whole Body*  
 XV. *should be cast into Hell.* Because the Di-

stemper will otherwise soon prove mortal, the severest Remedies must be used, if it will not yield to more gentle ones. And this Severity pursues divers Methods, either severally or together, as the Exigence of the Case, and our own or others Prudence may prescribe. To enter into a particular Discussion of these would require a larger Time. At present it must suffice to say, that we are commanded in these two Verses I have read to you, not to neglect, on account of *Difficulty*, any rational Means to render the Temptations of the Flesh ineffectual; whether they shall be found to be *bodily Labours*, or *religious Abstinences*, the Study and Care of *regulating our Thoughts*, the debarring ourselves from the *Entertainments, Places, or Conversations*, otherwise innocent, perhaps, and highly beneficial or delightful to us; or *lastly*, the submitting to some *Condition of Life* notably *disagreeable, inconvenient, and prejudicial* to our Affairs.

The next Prohibition of this Kind, not yet taken Notice of, begins at the 33<sup>d</sup> Verse,

Verse, and extending to the 38th, relates SERM.  
XV.  
to *profane Swearing*; wherein, I fear, the  
Righteousness of many Christians is so far  
from *exceeding* that of the *Scribes* and  
*Pharisees*, that their *Impiety* rather exceeds  
all the *Infidel* and *Pagan Nations* upon  
*Earth*. And yet I can make no *Question*,  
but every body sees and owns, that the  
*Rule* is right, and suitable, and necessary  
to preserve the *Reverence* of Things holy;  
and would judge the *Practice* of this Age  
absurd and pernicious, though our Lord  
had not planted the *Guard* of an express  
*Law* against it. Indeed he seems to have  
done so, not only from his *Divine Fore-*  
*sight* of the blasphemous *Licence* of our  
*Days*; but likewise to set aside (as he does  
elsewhere more directly) the wretched  
*Casuistry* of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who  
pretended to confine the *Validity* of Oaths  
to certain *Forms*; and declared the rest void  
of all *Effect* or *Significancy*. *Whosoever*  
*shall swear by the Temple*, (said these *blind*  
*Guides*) *it is nothing*; but *whosoever shall*  
*swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a Deb-*  
*tor*; and *whosoever shall swear by the Altar,*  
*it is Nothing*; but *whosoever sweareth by the*

SERM. *Gift that is upon it, he is guilty.* As ill  
 XV. founded as this was, while many of the  
 Nation had their Persons in Reverence,  
 (which they had Skill enough to preserve,  
 as well as the *Rabbi's* their Successors, a-  
 midst infinite like Dotages) these senseless  
 Distinctions, I say, were capable of doing  
 Mischief enough, by encouraging the de-  
 ceitful or profane Practice of *common*  
*Swearing.* And that this was among  
 them also too much used, may be collec-  
 ted from the Expressions made use of to  
 forbid Oaths in the Verses before referred  
 to : *Swear not by Heaven, nor by the*  
*Earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by thy Head.*  
 'Tis plain, I think, from the *Forms them-*  
*selves,* that this relates not to Oaths required  
 in the *Courts of Justice,* but those that  
 were affected and grown familiar in *pri-*  
*vate and ordinary* Conversation.

There still remain two Articles more in  
 this Discourse, which appear to be laid  
 down as Improvements of the old Law ;  
 and accordingly are subjoined to the Reci-  
 tal of a known Rule of it Verse 38. *Ye*  
*have heard that it hath been said, an Eye*  
*for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth.* The  
*first*

first you have in the following Words : SERM.

*But I say unto you, That ye resist not Evil:* XV.

*But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a Mile, go with him twain.* Herein, I say, is contain'd one other new Rule. And it amounts to a general Precept of bearing *Light* and *tolerable* Injuries ; and is to be understood with the *Latitude*, that's known to be necessary in the Explication of *other* general Commands. Not that every Person, and at all Times, and from every Person, is to bear such Injuries without seeking any Reparation. That would *destroy the Law*, which our Lord came not to do but left it in its Force ; so that the *Jewish* Tribunals remained, as before, obliged to *give Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth, Hand for Hand, Foot for Foot, Burning for Burning, Wound for Wound, Stripe for Stripe* ; and the Christian are now, according to the Rules of Justice, in their several Countries, obliged also to make Satisfaction to the Complainants, as well

SERM. in small as great Injuries. But the Thing  
 XV. required is the *Spirit of Meekness and Pa-*  
*tience*, always ready to endure, and al-  
 ways enduring, such Affronts and such  
 Wrongs, as any Person shall be able to do  
 without Prejudice growing thereby to  
 other Particulars, or Detriment to the Pub-  
 lick, or notable Mischief to himself. O-  
 therwise it is *lawful*, and may be even a  
*Duty*, to take the proper Remedies, whe-  
 ther of *Fact* or *Law*. In order to judge  
 of particular Cases, let the Heart be pre-  
 pared with the true Love of God and one's  
 Neighbour, to the Exclusion of all Cove-  
 tousness, Pride, and Impatience of Re-  
 venge: And then, if we determine with  
 the best Advice we can get, though we are  
 mistaken, we do no Wrong. *Charity* must  
 be the *Rule*, and *Discretion* and *Sincerity*  
 must *interpret* and *apply* it.

But besides, there is, upon Occasion of  
 mentioning that Law of *Retaliation* among  
 the *Jews*, another Precept, intimated in  
 the Words already recited, and more fully  
 express'd in the next Verse; *Give to him*  
*that asketh thee; and from him that would*  
*borrow of thee, turn not thou away.* And  
 this

this Precept obliges us to do such Kind-  
 nesses, as the former does to bear Injuries;  
 that is, to serve and gratify our Neighbour  
 in that *Measure* and *Frequency*, as may  
 consist with our *Ability*, and the *Prudence*  
 which is to govern this Charity. By *Cha-*  
*riety* I do not mean now our Duty towards  
 the Poor and Indigent (*that* would by  
 no Means have the Face of a *new Law*)  
 but I mean the *Disposition* (form'd indeed  
 by the same general Principle) of promo-  
 ting *Peace* and *good Neighbourhood*, and  
*Affection* amongst Men. The *Giving*  
 therefore, and *Lending*, and other Bene-  
 fits here intended, are due by Virtue of  
 this Precept, not to the *Necessitous*, but (in  
 proper Circumstances) to our *Equals* in  
 Wealth, and even *Superiors*. Which In-  
 terpretation will appear to be according to  
 Truth, by the whole Course and Order of  
 our Saviour's Words; who comes not to  
 speak of *Alms* till after dispatching ano-  
 ther important Point, which takes up all  
 the Remainder of this Chapter.

And now I have gone through my  
*first* Head of Discourse, namely, of Pre-  
 cepts given for *fulfilling* the Law; which



SERM. have appeared to be *six* in Number : The  
 XV. *first*, that which retrench'd the *Indulgence*,  
 whereby the *Jews* were suffer'd to continue in their Practice of *Divorces* ; the *second*, restraining *Anger*, outrageous *Words*, and the malicious contentious *Spirit* of *Quarrel* ; as the *third* does the *Lasciviousness* of the *Eye* and Consent of the *Heart* to Corruption, and annexes most strict Methods of Caution and Cure : By the *fourth*, the wicked and absurd Profanation of *Oaths* is cut off ; and by the *fifth* and *sixth*, such bearing of *Injuries*, and such doing of *Kind Offices*, is injoin'd, as I have just now explained to you.

The two remaining Heads, to which I had a principal Eye, when I entered upon this Subject, and then reckoned to have brought them within the Compass of the present Discourse, must now be deferr'd. With respect to what is already handled, let me only repeat to you the Words of the Text, *That except your Obedience in these Instances approve your Righteousness to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* : And then, by Way of Encouragement,

ment, and to prevent a rising Objection, SERM.  
 put you in Mind of the singular gracious XV.  
 Benignity that appears in the Revelations  
 and Constitutions of our Saviour. For,  
 notwithstanding all that there is of *New*  
 Duty in his Sermon on the *Mount*, his  
*Yoke still is easy, and his Burden light* ;  
 far lighter and far easier than the *Mosaical*.  
 All Additions to that he hath more than  
 ballanced, by taking away the whole ser-  
 vile Load of *Ceremonial* Observances : And  
 upon all our Endeavours he hath poured  
 the Spirit of *Life* and *Cheerfulness*, in the  
 Knowledge given of an effectual Expiation  
 of Guilt, and by Consequence a Recon-  
 cilement to God, with the perfect Assu-  
 rance too of his all-powerful Assistance.  
 But the blessed Hope of that Kingdom,  
 with the Loss whereof the Unrighteous  
 are threaten'd in my Text, crowns e-  
 very other Advantage of Christianity.  
 The full Faith of *Life* and *Immortality*,  
 which he *has brought to Light through the*  
*Gospel*, must inlarge and inflame our Pow-  
 ers to the Conquest and Contempt of what-  
 ever Difficulty. *Your Righteousness*, there-  
 fore may (as it must) *exceed, the Righ-*  
 B b 4 *teousness*

SERM. *teousness of the Jews, tho' the Labour of*  
 XV. *your Endeavours by no Means exceed*  
 theirs. As their Light was comparatively  
 dim, so was their Faith weaker, and all  
 spiritual Ability therefore, in Proportion,  
 much inferior to the Christian; the Strength  
 of one being as that of a *Man*, of the  
 other as that of a *Child*: And ye know  
 the same Task is to be reputed *hard*, or  
*easy*, as the Person that must perform it  
 is *stronger* or *weaker*.

To HIM therefore, our gracious Lord,  
 that hath diminish'd the Work of his Ser-  
 vants, and inlarg'd the Prospect of their  
 Rewards; *Unto him that loved us, and*  
*washed us from our Sins in his own Blood,*  
*and hath made, and will make us Kings*  
*and Priests unto God and his Father; to*  
*Him be Thanksgiving and Glory and Do-*  
*minion for Ever and Ever. Amen.*

SERM. XVI.



## S E R M O N X V I .

An Exposition of our Saviour's  
Sermon on the *Mount*.

P A R T II.

*Of the corrupt Behaviour of the  
Scribes and Pharisees.*



M A T. V. 20.

*I say unto you, that except your  
Righteousness shall exceed the  
Righteousness of the Scribes and  
Pharisees, ye shall in no case en-  
ter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* SERM.



U P O N Consideration of XVI.  
our Lord's Sermon on  
the *Mount*, the far great-  
er Part (indeed *all* but  
the Introduction and  
Conclusion) seems em-  
ployed in the Explication of these Words,  
and

SERM. and the Enlargements natural on Occasion  
 XVI. of the same. So that they appear to con-  
 tain the general Proposition, to the Proof and  
 Illustration whereof the rest is address'd ;  
 and make, as it were, the Text to the  
 Sermon. THAT serv'd therefore to an-  
 swer the Question, which his Auditors  
 must form to themselves : *Wherein*  
 must our Righteousness exceed that of  
 the *Scribes and Pharisees*, that we may  
 escape this Sentence of Exclusion from  
 the Kingdom of Heaven ? And the *Me-*  
*thod* of the Discourse follows the *Na-*  
*ture* of Things. For, in the *first* Place,  
 if the Rule of Righteousness, that is, of  
*Justice and Goodness*, be in any part *imper-*  
*fect and obscure* ; no less can be expected,  
 than that the *Practice* should fall at least  
 as much short of Perfection. And of *this*  
 I have already discours'd, enumerating the  
 apparent *Defects* of the *Mosaical Law*, as  
 they are mentioned in this Chapter, and  
 the Precepts given by our Saviour for the  
*fulfilling* of it, the making it *clear* and  
*complete*.

But *besides*, or indeed *without* Faults in  
 the *Law* and *Rule* itself, Mens Manners  
 may

may fail extreamly, (as those of the *Pharisees* actually did) in *Contradiction* to the Holiness and Justice of their Law, notwithstanding their *profess'd* Subjection to it. Now this, we know, may be done *two Ways* ; that is, by *acknowledg'd Violations* of the Law ; or under the *Shelter* of *false Interpretations*, or *Maxims pretended* to be founded on the same. Hence arise those two remaining Heads, which I propos'd before, but was obliged to defer the Particulars till now ; *one* of the *corrupt Glosses* and *Decisions* of the *Scribes* ; the *other* of the *ordinary Transgressions* of *acknowledg'd Duty* by the Generality of the *Pharisees*, together with the additional Sin of those *Hypocrisies* by which they endeavour'd to cover them from common Observation.

As to the former of these, I have in a good Measure prevented my self, by what I offer'd in my late Discourse, concerning our Lord's *Additions* to the *old Law*. For the greatest Part of them, as I intimated all along, were but fuller Explications of what was ordained from the Beginning. And if these Masters of *Israel* had not been

SERM.

XVI.



SERM. been very deficient in Skill and Probity,  
 XVI. they must have expressly taught, as the  
 ~~~~~ *Intendment* and *Consequence* of their Law,  
 most of the same Precepts which our Lord  
 gave for the *fulfilling* of it. For we ought  
 by no Means think slightly of the *Mo-  
 saical* Law, since he himself, in the xviiith  
 Chapter of *St. Matthew*, hath declared, it  
 comprehends the Sum of all Virtue and  
 Religion, even the Love of *God* and of our  
*Neighbour*; and therefore, in the Begin-  
 ning of the Discourse I am considering,  
 told his Hearers, they should *not think* he  
 was *come to destroy the Law or the Pro-  
 phets*; and that *till Heaven and Earth  
 pass, one jot or Tittle should in no wise  
 pass from the Law*. And lest any should  
 doubt of what Law he spake, in conclu-  
 ding, at the 12th Verse of the viiith Chap-  
 ter, he returns to mention and distinguish  
 it: *Whatsoever ye would that Men should  
 do to you, do ye even so to them: For this is  
 the Law and the Prophets*; thereby shew-  
 ing, that he gave that everlasting Autho-  
 rity, not to the *ceremonial*, but *moral*  
 part, as being of eternal Righteousness and  
 Equity. But besides the *Weakness* and  
*Shortness*

*Shortness* of the *Scribes* teaching, they are to be charg'd with Doctrines *directly false*, being found to have consulted with their *Pride, Covetousness, and Hypocrisy*, in forming their Interpretations and Resolutions; indeed of *Interpreters* and *Guardians*, to have turned *Corrupters* and *Makers* of the Law.

SERM.  
XVI.

One Instance of this, of Forms of *Oaths* obligatory, and not obligatory; I was obliged by the Course of my Argument to give you before. Another there is in the Matter of their *Corban*, or *Gifts* dedicated to the *Temple Service*, objected to them in the xvth of *St. Matthew*, and viith of *St. Mark*; whereby their pretended Zeal for the *exterior* Worship of God could destroy the plainest *Justice* and *Gratitude*, even the Duty of *Children* to *Parents*: in *Defiance*, as one would think, to the Fifth Commandment.

A *third*, of like Nature, is found in their condemning Works of *Charity* on the *Sabbath-day*. And both of these, I doubt not, sprung from the same Affectation of *false* Holiness, by which they hop'd to gain the Veneration of the *true*.

And



SERM. And these, because they are not express'd  
 XVI. in this Sermon of our Lord, and because  
 they are at this Time and in their own  
 Nature, of less general Importance, I only  
 mention, and proceed to the *fourth*,  
 which requires every Man's Attention,  
 and is found at the 43d Verse of this same  
 Chapter ; *ye have heard that it hath been  
 said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate  
 thine Enemy.*

The *first* Part of the Words is from the  
 Law of God ; the *second* from the pro-  
 fess'd Teachers of it ; and *overthrows* the  
 first.

The Proof of this depends upon a right  
 Answer to the Question which the Lawyer  
 put to our Saviour ; *And who is my Neigh-  
 bour ?* Are we to understand by that  
 Word, him that we dwell *nigh* unto, our  
*Acquaintance* and *Friend* ; or WHOMSO-  
 EVER the Divine Providence brings within  
 the Reach of our Opportunities to serve  
 or disserve, though *foreign, remote, un-  
 known*, or known by *Injuries* ? You have  
 heard of our Lord's Decision, which he  
 drew, by his Parable, out of the Lawyer's  
 own Mouth, that the *Jew* and the *Sama-  
 ritan*

*ritan* were Neighbours, when the Circumstances of the *former* lying naked, wounded, and half dead, implor'd the Humanity of the *latter*. To these it was no Bar, as it ought not to be, that they had never seen each other's Face, and probably never should more ; or that the distressed Person was of a Sect and Nation eminently hated, and hating the others. Let us therefore go and do likewise ; imitate the *Samaritan*, and exceed the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. Let no Distance of Place, or Interests, or Sentiments, extinguish the Charity and universal Neighbourhood, which at any Time God's Dispensation of human Events shall call upon us to remember and exert.

But Nothing is so sufficient to convict the *Scribes* of false Doctrine in this Matter, as if it be try'd by their own Books : Wherefore let us see if the same will not appear from *Moses* also. *Levit. xix. 18.* you have the general Precept ; *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any Grudge against the Children of thy People ; but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. I am the Lord.* And lest it should be thought, that  
the

SERM.

XVI.

SERM. the Obligation was limited to those of their  
 XVI. own Nation, the 33d and 34th Verses  
 ~~~~~  
 make it *universal*, applying the very same  
 Expression : *And if a Stranger sojourn  
 with thee in the Land, ye shall not vex  
 him. But the Stranger that dwelleth with  
 you, shall be unto you as one born amongst  
 you ; and thou shalt love him as thy self.*  
 Then, if the Case of Enmity be not large-  
 ly enough express'd in the fore-recited  
 Words ; *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear  
 any Grudge against the Children of thy  
 People :* Read the xxiiid of *Exodus*, the  
 4th and 5th Verses ; *if thou meet thine Ene-  
 mies Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt  
 surely bring it back to him again. If thou  
 see the Ass of him that hateth thee lying un-  
 der his Burden, and wouldest forbear to  
 help him ; thou shalt surely help with him :*  
 And compare it with the same Law re-  
 peated in the four first Verses of the xxiiid  
 of *Deuteronomy*, and you will find an E-  
 nemy reputed *more* than a Neighbour ;  
 For the *Enemy* in *Exodus*, *he that hateth  
 us*, is in *Deuteronomy* comprehended un-  
 der the Title of our *Brother*. And with  
 this of *Moses* agrees the *Wise Man*, whom  
 St.

St. Paul to the Romans quotes, in his SERM.  
*Proverbs*, Chap. xxv. Ver. 21. *If thine* XVI.  
*Enemy be hungry, give him Bread to eat ;*  
*and if he be thirsty, give him Water to*  
*drink.* Thus it appears, that if these  
Men would have *heard Moses and the Pro-*  
*phets*, it had never been said by them, *thou*  
*shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine*  
*Enemy ;* nor had our Lord been obliged  
to reform that Corruption in the follow-  
ing Words : *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.*

But if these must be judg'd inex-  
cusable, where shall the uncharitable and  
merciless Christian appear ? Of how much  
sorer Punishment shall he be thought wor-  
thy ? Without Doubt, if his *Righteousness*  
in this Respect do not, his *Guilt* will  
hugely exceed theirs. 'Tis impossible he  
should, after them, mistake his more plain  
and full Rule : And one would think it  
almost impossible he should resist the Force  
of his more powerful Motives to obey it.  
Let therefore our Meditation on them en-  
tirely dispose us to advance as much as in

SERM. us lies, and to rejoyce in the real Good,  
 XVI. both temporal and spiritual, of all Man-  
 kind; and possess our Souls with a Cha-  
 rity as extensive as our *Christian*, and if  
 Occasion be, as our *Human Brotherhood*.  
 Then we shall not fail to *bles and pray for*  
*them that curse and persecute us*; nor yet  
 to *do good to them* in Return for their *De-*  
*spite*, whenever there is any that we are  
 capable of doing, and they are capable  
 of receiving; much less to forgive  
 them when they *return* and repent; for  
 then they cease to be *Enemies*, and give us  
 the blessed Opportunity of performing the  
 Condition of our own Forgiveness at the  
 Hand of the Divine Majesty. Then we  
 shall acknowledge with Joy and humble  
 Thankfulness that *Call to glory and Virtue*  
 together in our Lord's Words at the End  
 of the Chapter and of this Subject; *That*  
*ye may be the Children of your Father which*  
*is in Heaven: For he maketh his Sun to*  
*rise on the Evil and on the Good, and send-*  
*eth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust.*  
 And again, *Be ye therefore perfect, even*  
*as your Father which is in Heaven is per-*  
*fect.*

Now

Now having spoken of the Defects of **SERM°**  
the Law, and of false Teaching under Co- **XVI.**  
lour of it, I come to the *third* Part of my  
Argument, to shew, that *Unrighteousness* of  
the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which neither  
of those excused, or pretended to justify;  
but was cover'd (Sin with Sin) with *Hy-*  
*pocrisy* only, or (which partakes of it) with  
the rigid and *ostentatious* Observance of  
*some* Duties, more consistent than the rest  
with their Interests and Inclinations. When  
we consider the Reverence with the Peo-  
ple, that, as well their *sitting in Moses Seat*,  
as their own artificial Conduct, gave these  
wicked Men, with the Power of such Ex-  
amples; we shall readily apprehend of  
how great Necessity it was, that he who  
would *bring in everlasting Righteousness*,  
should point out and reprove those Sins,  
and especially their impious Disguises of  
Piety. Now the Scriptures, in many Pla-  
ces, declare, the most common Sins of  
this Nature among the *Scribes* and *Pha-*  
*risees* (for the Sake of which they com-  
mitted so many more) to have been *Pride*  
and *Covetousness*. Of the former is that of  
*St. Luke*, the xith Chapter and 43d Verse.

SERM. *Wo unto you Pharisees ; for ye love the up-*  
 XVI. *permost Seats in the Synagogues, and Greet-*  
 ~~~~~ *ings in the Markets.* And again in his xxth  
 Chapter, Verse 46. *Beware of the Scribes,*  
*which desire to walk in long Robes, and love*  
*Greetings in the Markets, and the highest*  
*Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief*  
*Rooms at Feasts.* Which Particulars are  
 specified also by St. *Mark* in the very same  
 Words. But St. *Matthew* the xxiii. the  
 5th, 6th, and 7th Verses, is more full :  
*They make broad their Philacteries, and*  
*enlarge the Borders of their Garments, and*  
*love the uppermost Rooms at Feasts, and the*  
*chief Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings*  
*in the Markets, and to be called of Men,*  
*Rabbi, Rabbi.* But the most material En-  
 quiry seems to be, to what *End*, and to  
 what *Degree*, they affected these Things.  
 For if they had not hereby excluded the  
 Love of God from their Hearts ; and de-  
 sign'd the Gratification of their Pride, and  
 establishing and preserving an Authority to  
 be employ'd to ill Purposes, without  
 Doubt they had been blamed and threat-  
 en'd with much less Severity. Now this  
 we learn from St. *John*, where he shews,  
 that

that their Esteem for these Kind of Distinctions was such, that it hindered them from believing the Truth; or if the Evidence could not be resisted, had still the Power to fright them from professing it. Thus the vth of St. John's Gospel, vers. 44. *How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only?* And the xiith Chapter, vers. 42, and 43. *Nevertheless among the chief Rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue: For they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.*

Then for their Covetousness; the first Part, that is, *wicked Getting*, those Pieces bear Witness to, that accuse them of *devouring Widows Houses*; and the Reproach and Wo laid upon them for *making clean the Outside of the Cup and Platter*, when *within they were full of Extortion and Wickedness*. And that they were guilty of the second Part also, the *unmerciful Keeping*, appears from what is said in the xxiiid Chapter, and same Verse, of St. Matthew,



SERM. That they omitted the weightier Matters of  
 XVI. *the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith;*  
 but more especially from the former Part  
 of the xvith Chapter of *St. Luke*, where  
 after our Lord had by the Parable of the  
*unjust Steward*, figur'd the Wisdom of a  
 charitable and munificent Use of the good  
 Things of this World, and exhorted his  
 Hearers to *make to themselves Friends of*  
*of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, we are  
 told the Success it had upon these People,  
 with the Reason; *And the Pharisees also,*  
*who were covetous, heard these Things; and*  
*they derided him.*

These then were their principal Vices :  
 I call them so, because the rest, though  
 otherwise equal or superior in Magnitude,  
 appear to owe their Beginnings to these,  
 being either their natural *Effects*, or ne-  
 cessary *Supports*, or no less necessary *Veil-*  
*ings* of Hypocrisy. Of the former were  
 the *taking away of the Key of Knowledge*  
 from the People, the hardening themselves  
 against the Demonstration of our Lord's  
 Doctrine, and the Persecution of his Per-  
 son and his Disciples. But it is the latter  
 I am now to speak to.

They

They are so often called *Hypocrites* in SERM. the *Gospels*, that I think it needless to XVI. quote any more than two Places ; besides, what my Text directly leads me to ; but they will shew how entirely they were so. One is the first Verse of the xiith Chapter of St. *Luke*, *Beware ye of the Leaven of the Pharisees, which is Hypocrisy* : The other the 5th Verse of the xxiiid of St. *Matthew*, *All their Works they do for to be seen of Men*. Now if you turn your Eyes to the viith Chapter of the same Evangelist, (the Continuation of our Lord's Sermon on the *Mount*) you will find it employed in detecting these Vices, and upon Occasion, of exposing the artificial *pharisaical* Holiness, giving excellent Rules and Instructions to his Followers, for the unfeigned christian Exercise thereof. There you will see, in the first Place, how ye ought to beware of those Practices, which served them to cover, or draw Mens Eyes from their Injustice and Uncharitableness ; and at the same Time to nurse and gratify, and, in a Manner, consecrate their Pride and Vain-glory.

SERM. The *first* is their Fashion and Design in  
 XVI. Almsgiving. *Take heed that ye do not your  
 Alms before Men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father, which is in Heaven, Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites (they are the Pharisees) do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward. And after shewing the Corruption and its Punishment, there follows, as in the other Articles hereafter, the Reformation enjoin'd, and the Reward promised, to as many as embrace it. But when thou dost Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth : that thine Alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.*

The *second* is their Use of Prayer, that Part which we call *private* Prayer : But this Sort of People know no Use of any Thing religious, unless it be *publick*. And if such there be now, to them also it is said, *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are : For they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the  
 Corners*

*Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* After this we have inserted a Caution against *vain Repetitions* in Prayer, such as the *Heathen us'd*; which I think reaches also the *long Prayers* of the *Pharisees*: And then our Lord's own Form of Prayer, the Substance and Pattern of all Devotion; to which is annex'd, a Note of the mighty Reinforcement to our Duty of forgiving Enemies incorporated in the same, which I have already taken Notice of under my second Head of Discourse. Then we find resum'd and continu'd the Censure of the Practices before-mentioned. And,

The *third* is the *false Humiliations* of these proud unrepenting Sinners. Moreover when ye fast, be not as the *Hypocrites*, of a *sad Countenance*: For they *disfigure their Faces*, that they may appear unto Men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward. But thou, when thou fastest,

SERM.  
XVI.

SERM. *est, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face:*

XVI. *That thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Here we see the Power and Mischief of Hypocrisy; with what a

Malignity it taints and perverts: *Alms, Fasting, Prayer,* the mightiest Weapons of Religion, prest into the contrary Service, to encourage, assist, and fortify Men in their Ungodliness! For such was under the Law, and is, and even will be, under the Gospel, (since their Nature is immutable) all Pride, Uncharitableness, Fraud, and Oppression. And therefore the Shew of Charity, that would cloak Injustice and Avarice; and those Prayers, how long soever, that facilitate the *devouring Widows Houses*; and all the Austerities and Mortifications, that feed instead of mortifying Pride and Ambition, do not only, as you have just now heard, *lose their Reward* in Heaven.

THAT is a Gentleness of Expression, leaving the Hearer to imagine and collect the rest himself: For without Question, as the Misapplication of these holy Things to such


such accursed Ends is the highest Sacri-  
lege, the guilty must expect to receive, as  
our Lord threatens them elsewhere, *the*  
*greater Damnation*: And one may add,  
*the surer*. For no Sinner, I think, lies so  
much out of the Way of Repentance as  
the *Hypocrite*. It seems, by a just and ter-  
rible Judgment of God, they that abuse  
Religion to deceive others, are struck with  
spiritual Blindness, and frequently deceive  
themselves; and really imagine, (good  
Actors as they are) themselves to be *in-*  
*deed* the Saints, which they do but *perfo-*  
*nate*. This appears to be the Case of the  
*Generation that are pure in their own Eyes,*  
in all Ages, as well of the *Christian as*  
*Jewish Church*: *O how lofty are their Eyes!*  
*and their Eye-lids are lifted up.* Hence  
the Satisfaction and Prayer of the *Pharisee,*  
*God, I thank thee, that I am not as other*  
*Men are.* Hence the *Censoriousness* that  
is condemn'd in the Beginning of the fol-  
lowing Chapter, the viith of St. *Matthew,*  
*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For*  
*with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be*  
*judged; and with what Measure ye mete,*  
*it shall be measured to you again. And why*  
*beholdest*

SERM.

XVI.



SERM. *beholdest thou the Mote, that is in thy Brother's Eye ? &c.* And lest any one should

*XVI.*  doubt, whether our Lord had the same Sort of People still in his View, he adds their Surname ; *Thou Hypocrite, first cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye, &c.* Indeed the severe judging, or haughty pitying, the Actions and Manners of others, must always have been a Darling of the antient, as it is of the modern Hypocrisy ; since it proves of double Use to them ; advancing with the People the Presumption of their own Innocence, who treat Miscarriages so severely, and by the same Act entertaining their Superciliousness at their Neighbour's Expence.

But to return to the Remainder of the *sixth* Chapter. The *sixteen* last Verses are taken up in shewing the *Root*, and prescribing and recommending the *Cure* of all these Disorders. The *Love of this present World*, and *little Faith* in God's Providence, divide (at best) Mens Cares and Affections between their *heavenly* and their *earthly Treasures*. But because these Treasures are to be gain'd, and preserv'd, and enjoy'd, by Designs and Actions many  
Times

Times altogether inconsistent one with another ; it unavoidably follows, that he, that would win *the true Riches*, must cast out of his Heart the immoderate Delight in gathering, and the immoderate Fear of wanting, what *Moth and Rust* can corrupt, and what *Thieves break through and steal*. And if Mens Hearts are lifted up to the Desire of Title, and Place, and Pomp, they are still the *farther from the Kingdom of God*, as they want still more of this World, and are faster bound in the Service of Mammon and all Iniquity. To remedy this it is, that the *single Eye*, one View, one ultimate End of our Actions, and sovereign Object of our Desires, is recommended ; without which our *whole Body* must be full of *Darkness* ; our Life must be as the Motions of a Man without the Use of his Eyes ; equally destitute of all certain Confidence or Comfort, and of Truth, Steadiness, and Uniformity. Then, for those Things that are indeed necessary for the Infirmary of human Condition, as Food and Rayment ; to cut off all Handles to the Covetousness and Anxiety of seeking and keeping worldly Things, there is  
set

SERM.  
XVI.





SERM. set forth, not only the Trouble and In-  
 XVI. sufficiency of these Cares and Labours;  
 but the Universality of God's Providence,  
 and the particular Tenderness thereof to  
 Mankind, and especially his Servants that  
 depend upon it. And the Close has an  
 express Promise, that *all these Things shall  
 be added to them that seek first the King-  
 dom of God and his Righteousness*; not the  
*partial Righteousness of the Scribes and Pha-  
 risees*, but an equal Obedience to all the  
*Laws of God's Kingdom*, or Government,  
 flowing from an honest Heart, dedicated  
 to this Service, and admitting no Double-  
 ness, or any Rival to its heavenly Choice.  
 I need not enlarge upon the Happiness of  
 such Men; you see by the Words just ci-  
 ted, that they *have the Promise, both of  
 the Life that now is, and of that which is  
 to come*. I will only remark with regard  
 to the Subject in Hand, that they are free  
 from the miserable Necessity which the  
 others impose upon themselves, when they  
 fall into any Sin, of doing all Things to  
 deceive Man, instead of appeasing Almighty  
 God; whereby they make a Study and  
 Art of Wickedness, hiding and intrench-  
 ing

ing one Crime behind another ; nay, refine so far in Impiety, as to *turn* their best Actions, their *Fasting*, their *Almsdeeds*, and their *Prayers*, into *Sin*. SERM.  
XVI.


Nor are these the only Instances, wherein they prostituted Religion, or the Appearance of it, to their Interest and Vain-glory. Another we find in this, that whereas in Truth they *shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men*, yet they *compass'd Sea and Land to make one Profelyte* ; not to the Knowledge of God's Will and obeying it, (for that is *Religion* indeed) but to their Faction, a false Zeal and real Enmity to all Godliness ; and accordingly *made him twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves*. And to this our Lord might have a Regard, when he said to his Disciples (in the viith Chapter and 6th Verse of *St. Matthew*) *Give not that which is holy unto the Dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before Swine*. It was not for them (as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* of old, or as others have been blamed of late) to pick out the most profligate Persons, much less to make them so, in order to their **Conversions**.

Another



SERM. Another Instance may be their nice and  
 XVI. scrupulous observing some Points of their  
 Law : A Sample of which we have in  
 their paying *Tithe of Mint, and Anise, and  
 Cumin.* And a *third*, their no less exact  
 and curious observing the *Traditions of the  
 Elders*, of divers ceremonious *Washings*,  
 and other Additions to the Law. These  
 I do but name, because they are not ex-  
 press'd in this Sermon from the *Mount*, to  
 which I confine my Discourse.

But from these, and from all that have  
 been explained before, you may surely  
 conclude, that neither the most strict and  
 rigid Keeping of, or the most flaming  
 Zeal for, some Things that God has  
 commanded, or that Man has invented,  
 will ever make Amends for neglecting  
 something else, which we don't so well  
 like, but is commanded also by God.  
 There is no such *Traffick* with Heaven;  
 no such *Compensation* or *Ballancing* in our  
 last Accounts. Nothing, especially, will do  
 instead of the *weightier Matters of the  
 Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, that  
 is, *Honesty*. The trusting to such Shifts,  
 is *building* upon the *sandy Foundation*, as  
 universal

universal Obedience is that *Rock*; with SERM.  
which our Lord concludes his Sermon. XVI.  
This deserves your most serious Regard;   
and what goes just before, his Prophecy  
concerning *Pharasaical Christians*; which,  
both from its Phrase and Sense, may be  
looked upon as parallel to my Text. *Not  
every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,  
shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but  
he that doth the Will of my Father which is in  
Heaven.* And without doing THAT, you  
may judge how insignificant any lesser  
Merits will prove, when the greatest can-  
not prevail; as the following Verses, with  
which I conclude, do fully declare: *Many  
will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord,  
have we not prophesied in thy Name? And  
in thy Name have cast out Devils? And in  
thy Name done many wonderful Works?  
And then will I profess unto them, I never  
knew you: Depart from me, ye that work  
Iniquity.*



## S E R M O N XVII.

The Reasonableness of curbing  
Fleshly Appetite.

P A R T I.




I P E T. II. II.

*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as  
Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain  
from fleshly Lusts, which war  
against the Soul.*

SERM.  
XVII.



THE World, and the Inhabitants of it, are filled with the Characters of the *Wisdom* and Goodness of their Almighty Creator. And the more they are examined by a curious inquisitive Age, the more numerous and evident they still appear. Nevertheless there appear  
likewise,

likewise, especially in all that relates to SERM.  
Man, the Marks of *Displeasure*, a large XVII.  
Mixture of *Disorder* and *Imperfection*. 

Of which the *War*, mentioned in the Text, is one great Instance; the continual *Opposition* between our fleshly Appetites, and the Government of sedate Reason. From this arises a long Uneasiness; we being plac'd in a State of Danger and watchful Disquiet, and expos'd to Violence or Surprize, and the sad Consequence of Remorse, or the more sad one of Impenitence. For those Appetites of the Flesh often urge us to Actions inconsistent with the Law and the Good of our Being. And this Inconvenience is almost singular to Mankind; for we see the rest of living Creatures mov'd to the Use of what their Bodies call for, with much more Regularity and Proportion to the End of *Health* and *Strength*. They generally provide for themselves and the Continuance of their Race, and satisfy their Wants and Desires, in a Way and Measure suitable to their Nature, and are not perverted from it by the Dulness of Sloth, or the Labour of Art, or the Power of wild Ima-

404 *The Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. XVII. *gination*. So that when we say, Men are *brutal* in certain Vices, it must be explained only of their acting *as if* they had not *rational* Souls ; and yet we do the Brutes some Wrong in the Expression.

The Question therefore will be, since Man is so eminently involv'd in this grievous *War* between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, how he can be his Maker's most principal and most beloved Creature ? And this Question Religion answers, by teaching us to consider him and this present State of his, with relation to a better and more durable, wherein he may enjoy perfect Peace, and be rewarded according to his faithful Service in this Warfare below. Hereby therefore we must be satisfied, and encouraged to hearken to its Exhortation, *Dear-ly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

But though Religion gives us the *only* Reason *why* these Things are so ; and the *strongest* and *fullest* Reason to *behave* ourselves *manfully* in the Conflicts they occasion, because we are *Strangers* and *Pilgrims here* ; yet if we consider the *Tendency*  
and

and *Consequence* of the Lusts which war SERM.  
 against our Souls, there will appear a *na-* XVII.  
*tural* as well as a *religious* Reason to ab-  
 stain from them, or most of them. And  
 with *that* I will therefore begin, and shew  
*first*, That 'twere good for us to *abstain*  
 from the Lusts of the Body that *war a-*  
*gainst the Soul*, although we were not  
*Strangers* and *Pilgrims* on Earth. *Se-*  
*condly*, Because we *are* so, I will set forth  
 how much *more* we are bound to *abstain*  
 from them.

*First* then, let us consider the Interests  
 of Mankind, as limited within the Bounds  
 of this Life ; and see, how they will de-  
 termine him in the governing, or denying  
 his Appetites. Neither is this an idle Spe-  
 culation ; for though Religion furnish us  
 with more forcible Arguments, yet the  
 natural Light also is given by God, and  
 we are accountable to him for the Use of  
 it ; and therefore, where that joins its  
 Force with Religion, 'tis evident our Neg-  
 lect is more inexcusable, and will subject  
 us to a double Condemnation. It serves  
 likewise to recommend to our Minds the  
 Reasonableness of Religion, and induce us



SERM. to submit chearfully and thankfully to the  
 XVII. *Yoke* that is so *easy*, and the *Burden* that is  
 so light.

The *first* Consideration to this Purpose, we have Occasion given for in the Words before us. That which makes *War* against the *Soul* must be look'd upon as opposite to our Interest ; since we are conscious that we consist of *Soul* and *Body*, and that the *Soul* is naturally the directing and governing Part. There is no Need to prove the Fitness and Use of Reason's ruling over that which is irrational ; or that the Guidance of the Seeing ought not to be committed to the Blind. But this Exception is taken by many : Why should we look upon the Desires and Gratifications of the *Body* (one of the Parts in our Composition) to be prejudicial to the *Soul* where-with Nature hath so strictly united it ? Nothing, they say, can be supposed in her Works inconsistent and destructive of itself ; and so conclude, that our several Appetites are not hurtful to the *whole Man*, nor given to be *deny'd*, but to be *bearken'd* to as *Prompters* and *Sollicitors* truly in our Interests.

There

There is, I confess, a great deal of Reason and Truth in this, as it is generally laid down ; but the Doctrine here proposed makes not against the Inclinations and Demands of our Nature *at large* ; but only such of them as are rais'd to a disproportionable Growth, or perverted to an unreasonable Turn, or such as, though otherwise innocent enough, must, by reason of Circumstances, be paid for too dearly in the Consequence. These are not the genuine Fruits of *Nature*, but of *Fancy* rather, and *Affectation* at first, and of *Custom* and *Habit* in the Conclusion. What there is of Repugnance between any *native* Appetite and our Duty, shall be accounted for in proper Place. Under *this* Head I speak of no Affection or Enjoyment as *criminal*, but what is *naturally noxious*. Nor do I understand the Apostle to enjoyn Christians Abstinence from fleshly Desires, because 'tis their *general* Nature to *war against the Soul* ; but only from as many of them, as by their *Excess*, or their *Obliquity*, or the particular *State* of the Person, come to do so. Indeed the former Supposition is not true ;

408 *The Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. for, as we commonly experience, the Soul  
XVII. is so far from being prejudiced by the Sa-  
tisfactions given our Body within the Rule  
of *Temperance*, that she sympathizes in the  
Advantage, and increases thereupon her  
own Strength and Tranquillity ; as like-  
wise it is found, that she moves in all her  
Functions languishing or irregular, when  
those Satisfactions are *too severely* withheld.  
'Tis true, there have been of old, and are  
still, among *Christians* and *Pagans* too,  
some People of great Zeal, and highly ad-  
mir'd and honour'd by the Multitude, as  
the greatest and almost only Men of Re-  
ligion, that carry this Matter much fur-  
ther. They have made it their continual  
Task and most eminent Merit to deny  
their Bodies the innocent Comforts, and  
even Necessaries of Life, and to afflict  
them with the strangest Severities. And  
it is also true, that where Men of sober  
Sense observe these Practices, and cannot  
find they serve, in that Degree, any good  
or wise End, they may censure them as  
unnatural and absurd. But though they  
see them held in mighty Veneration, thro'  
the Weakness of the many, and the Arti-  
fice

vice possibly of some few ; let them not therefore condemn *all* Self-denial in gross, or slight any Rule or Authority that enjoins it. For those Self-tormenters that make such a War on their Bodies, however good their Meaning may be, are engaged in it rashly, without any real Warrant either of Reason or Religion. But there are nevertheless certain Affections of our Flesh, that rebel against the rational Powers, and as far as they do so, must be oppos'd and subdu'd by every religious and wise Man, indeed, every body that considers even his worldly Interest. The Condition of Particulars, and of the World, is render'd unhappy by them ; and would be notably amended and improv'd, if they were restrain'd but so far as that Consideration requires. These are the Vices of *Intemperance*, when Men gratify their bodily Passions, either by unjust Means, or by excessive and foolish Indulgences. These, we see, in continual Examples, hurt the Soul, and by Consequence the whole Man ; and *secondly*, they hurt also the Body itself directly ; and *thirdly*, they do the same to both together, by ruining  
the

SERM.  
XVII.

SERM. the Comforts which spring from private  
 XVII. Relation ; *fourthly*, they are destructive  
 also of the Quiet, the Property and Safety,  
 for which the publick Societies of Men  
 were formed.

And, *first*, it is notorious, that Men,  
 who pursue these Lusts, weaken their  
*Understandings*, and render them incapa-  
 ble, or much less capable, of nobler Pur-  
 suits and Attainments. And this is very  
 unequal and unwise, that the Mind should  
 be in *Servitude* to the Body, wholly em-  
 ployed to cater for the Pleasures of *that*  
 beyond all Necessity (and perhaps true  
 Enjoyment) and hinder'd from raising it-  
 self to its own Perfection, and finding its  
 own proper Enjoyments. For we know  
 (surely) there are Pleasures of the Mind  
 as well as of the Body ; and they must be  
 judg'd no less entertaining, if we try the  
 Matter by the Earnestness with which we  
 see they are followed by those that gain a  
 true Taste of them. Nay, they have cer-  
 tainly great Advantages above the other,  
 in that they are attended with *Peace* and  
*Reputation*, and not apt to run Men into  
*Injuries* and *Dangers*, *Loathings* or *Dis-*  
*appointments*,

*appointments, Contempt and Poverty*; which are the ordinary Fruits of *vicious Entertainments*. How reasonable therefore is it that we should refuse, for the Sake of these, to deprive ourselves of the other (*intellectual*) Pleasures, and to degrade our *better Part* into a languishing, unactive, stupid Condition? For *that* is the natural Consequence of still crowding Pleasures upon the Sense. It drowns or enervates even the strongest Parts; and leaves the Person ignorant, heavy, and useles, who was born to be great and happy in the Honour and Enjoyment of Knowledge, and of doing good to Multitudes. And this single Pleasure of contriving and doing good, I will venture to say, (for they that try it will justify me) exceeds all those that the Voluptuary surfeits in, and sells his Understanding and all his dearest Interests for.

But besides what the Soul of Man suffers in *it self*, by the Debasement and Maiming of its Faculties; the ill Consequence redounds also to the Body and bodily Concerns. The *Soul's Government* is (like other Governments) founded in  
the

SERM.  
XVII.



SERM. the *Good* of the *Subject* : And when the  
 XVII. Disorders of the inferior Part, the En-  
 croachments of the *seeming* Interests of our  
 Body, have deposed her from her proper  
 Authority, or suspended her Power for a  
 Time ; what follows, but that the Body  
 itself is exposed to all Manner of Hazards?  
 The Guard is dismiss'd, the Watchman  
 laid to sleep, if not his Eyes pluck'd out.  
 The Examples therefore are frequent of  
 fatal Mischiefs that *sottish* Men fall into  
 in the Way of Accident, stumbling de-  
 servedly upon their Death, or upon some  
 great Calamity, because they will be in  
 the dark. So are the Examples, of *doing*  
 to others, and *suffering* from them like  
 Mischiefs, in the *same* Kind of Men, and  
 in those that are abandoned to *Lust* ;  
 while they chuse to be led (instead of  
 Reason) by a blind Rage to their Destruc-  
 tion. Then for the Provision which the  
 Body requires for its comfortable Subsist-  
 ance, Nothing is more common than to  
 see it irreparably wasted, by People who  
 have no Exercise of their Understandings,  
 and therefore no Ability in them, more  
 than singly to hunt after these Pleasures.

Are

Are they not the ordinary Prey (and Jest SERM. too) of every crafty Fellow, though many XVII Times not of half their Capacity in the Order of Nature ? But that helps not, since they have destroyed or made useless what Nature bestow'd upon them. For what Resistance can a *Giant* make even to a *Child*, whiles he lies intoxicated by a sleeping Potion ? *Voluptuousness* indeed, does *directly* consume Mens Estates, by expending much and gathering little ; and *that* I am to mention in another Place. Nevertheless I could not here omit this *other* Cause of Ruin that attends Vice ; since very often *Neglect*, *Ignorance*, and *Thoughtlessness* of our Affairs, let more *slip*, than the *prodigal* Expende *casts away*. From these Effects therefore it may appear in part, that we overthrow even our *temporal* Interests, when we combine with the *Lusts* that *war against the Soul*, depressing her Faculties, and thrusting her from her Station, without whose Guardianship we cannot be safe or happy.

Now we come, in the *second* Place, to shew, that Prudence requires we should abstain from irregular and excessive Gratifications



414 *The Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. XVII. fications of the Body, because they *directly* hurt the Body *itself*, and destroy what is necessary to its well-being. Let it be granted, that Nature has provided bountifully, not only for our Living, but living agreeably and pleasantly in the World; and that it is therefore reasonable for Men to enjoy the Provision she has made. And suppose (all Severity laid aside) the Matter to be considered were, how one might obtain the *largest* Share of these Pleasures to himself. In order to this, it is evident he must consider the *Nature* of the Body, which is the Instrument or Vessel, by which he is to receive and act the Things agreeable to it; and must calculate the *whole Time*, that it may probably continue capable of and concern'd in these Matters; and also contrive to have in his Power the *outward Means*, which are necessary for the carrying them on. If the Space of human Life extended but to one *Day* or *Week*, the Account would be short and easy; and the Danger not great in adventuring to crowd all the Satisfaction possible into that narrow Compass; though it cannot be deny'd, that sometimes one *Hour's* Extra-

Extravagance has cut off all the Enjoy-  
ments of succeeding Life. But since, in  
all Reason, we are to take thirty or forty  
*Years* into the Consideration, the more  
Caution is requisite to prevent a Mistake.  
For if there be not a due Regard to *all*  
that Time ; both to preserve our *Persons*  
and our *Circumstances* in a proper State ;  
we may lose in the *whole* infinitely more  
Pleasures than we gain. Now it is often  
enough seen, that *Luxury* is a terrible  
Enemy to each of these ; and if it over-  
throw either of them, it destroys *itself* at the  
same Time. If Excess must be acknow-  
ledged ordinarily to abate the Vigour of the  
Body, to ruin Health, and shorten Life itself ;  
surely the Man of Pleasure should look up-  
on it as the most pernicious to his Design ;  
and not presume, without all Ground,  
that he shall be the one of Five hundred  
or a Thousand, that shall escape the natu-  
ral Consequences. And **THEY** are not a  
bare *Deprivation* and *Incapacity* of Enjoy-  
ments, but the *suffering* too of the cruel  
contrary, of wretched Languishings and  
tormenting Pains. If the same Excess  
frequently runs Men upon Violences and  
Injuries,

SERM.  
XVII.

SERM. Injuries, and so subjects them to the Stroke  
 XVII. of private Revenge or publick Justice : If  
 likewise it does in all Cases endanger the  
 Provision of Wealth and Substance, re-  
 quisite to living pleasantly, and, in far the  
 greatest Number, *certainly* destroy it ; then  
 will HE be found the truest Friend, and  
 the greatest Enjoyer of *Pleasure*, that calls  
 in *Temperance* for her Adviser and Gover-  
 nor. The Business is, to be so kind to  
 ourselves and to the Delights so dear to  
 us, as to look forward, and not sacrifice a  
 a *great* Sum to a *small* ; *Years* to *Months*  
 or *Days*, and the *Entertainment* of our  
 whole Life to the *Rage* of a very *small*  
 Part. This Absurdity is charg'd upon the  
*Intemperate* ; and they cannot avoid it,  
 unless they have calculated their Nativi-  
 ties, and are sure that their Time in the  
 World will be as short, as their Ability to  
 enjoy it is likely to be. Their Word in-  
 deed is, *To-morrow we die* : And by their  
 Actings, one would think, they under-  
 stood it *litterally* ; or that they would an-  
 ticipate even so short a Term. But com-  
 monly, the Saying will not justify their  
 Conduct : But their Conduct verifies the  
 Saying

Saying so far, that though they do not presently *die*, they lead a dying Life. On the contrary, the *sober* Man (whom they think *insensible*) if he reap fewer Satisfactions in some Days or Years of Life, yet in the *entire Compass* of it does vastly exceed their Number. In other Instances we see how this is. Two Men come to equal Estates : One of them lives upon his Rents, and suits his Expences to them ; The other mortgages for great present Sums, and outdoes his Neighbour mightily in a Flow of Splendor and Greatness. But this lasts not long : The Sums are gone, and the consuming Interest continues to prey upon him ; and his Lands, while they do remain, pay, for his short Vanity, the greatest Part of their Produce to his Creditors, and but a poor Residue to his own growing Wants. I suppose, it would be a needless Question, to ask, *which* of the two gets, or spends, most Money from his Estate ; and yet *more* needless, *which* is the wisest Manager. The voluptuous Extravagant anticipates his Revenue too of all kinds of Ability with just the same Discretion, and is exhausted

SERM. exhausted by the Payment of as severe an  
 XVII. Interest. And both alike suffer with the  
 more Regret their several Wants for the  
 excessive Abundance they have for a Time  
 been indulged in. If the Strength and the  
 Provision, that should be manag'd to car-  
 ry us through a long Journey, be wasted  
 at first setting forth ; the Remainder must  
 be miserably worn out in Want and Wea-  
 riness.

We have now observed the Disadvan-  
 tages that accrue to the *Body* and the *Mind*  
 severally, from giving Way to disorderly  
 Appetites ; and *next* are to mention some  
 Consequences of it, that affect them *both*  
*together*. There are certain Circumstan-  
 ces in Life, that minister Strength and  
 Clearness, equally, to the Fruitions either  
 of our sensitive or rational Part ; so that in  
 both of them we still find Interruption and  
 Disrelish upon the Change of those Cir-  
 cumstances. They are, the being *well*  
 with our *Friends*, our *Relations*, and *Fa-*  
*milies*. The Affairs of Men are so inter-  
 woven and mutually dependent on each  
 other, and their Tempers and Dispositions  
 so fram'd also for Society, that, generally  
 speaking,

Speaking, they are neither able nor inclined to enjoy good Things *alone*. The Course of the World will not, for the most part, give those Things, but on Terms of Communication ; and if it would, our Nature would receive them very coldly. Our Actions yield us, without Approvers, but a Half-contentment ; without Partners, our Diversions prove a Weariness ; and without Inheritors, we loath the Success of all our Labours. And since this is the Taste of Humanity, that we must have the Benevolence of others to us, and our own to others, in order to think, or act, or receive any Good, even to eat and drink, with Comfort and full Enjoyment ; nothing can be more mischievous to us than Vice and Lewdness, because nothing is more powerful to break all the Bonds of private Society, and pervert the Indearments of every Relation among Men. 'Tis this, we see, dissolves every Day the Conjunction of Friends and Neighbours, the Concord of Brethren, the Affection of Parents, the Duty of Children, and that straightest Union of Marriage itself. Whatsoever we owe to

SERM.  
XVII.



SERM. any of these, as Truth and Assistance to  
 XVII. some; to some provident Care also and  
 good Example; and Love, Obedience,  
 and Fidelity to others; the vicious Man  
 has Plenty of. Temptations to neglect and  
 frustrate. Instead of these he loads them  
 with Contempt, Scandal, Disgraces, and  
 Injuries. Consequently, he not only mis-  
 ses the good Offices which they would  
 otherwise owe and pay him; but in re-  
 turn meets with those Contraries which  
 proceed from Persons wrong'd and alie-  
 nated, as Jealousies, Heart-burnings, Ha-  
 tred, and Revenge.

This therefore is the wretched Bargain  
 such a Man makes: To indulge an af-  
 fected Passion or slothful Ease, otherwise  
 ruinous to himself, he poisons that Foun-  
 tain from whence he should derive most  
 of the Sweets of Life, and the true Relish  
 for all the rest. I need not go into Parti-  
 culars, and represent the State of such a  
 one, as *Neighbour* or *Relation*, a *Child* or  
*Parent*, a *Husband* or *Wife*. Every bo-  
 dy observes it, and too many feel it. 'Tis  
 true, that dissolute People pretend to find  
 a Remedy for this Evil, and substitute a  
 Friend.

Friendship with some of their own Way, in SERM.  
the room of that which they have de- XVII.  
stroy'd at Home. And to this Herd they  
are still flying from their domestick Un-  
easiness. But alas! that Remedy does but  
palliate, and at Bottom hastens their De-  
struction. That Friendship is as false and  
ruinous as its Foundation; and makes a  
short and poor Amends for that which  
they have forfeited, and which was built  
upon Nature and Justice, and mutual Ad-  
vantage. The sad Consequences of the  
Loss of this are perpetually watching for  
them at all Turns; meet with them almost  
every Day, and fill them with the bitter  
Sense of their Follies: Whereas the Am-  
usements of their vicious Fellowship on-  
ly delude some Hours, uncertainly, and  
bear no Proportion to the Comforts  
that each Day, much less that the Course  
of a whole Life, calls for.

Thus we have made good the *third*  
Charge against *Intemperance*, that it is apt  
to deprive Men of all Peace and Freedom,  
all Heart and Gust, for the ordinary En-  
joyments whether of Body or Mind; in  
as much as it embroils them with those,



SERM. who should be most dear to them, and to  
 XVII. whom they should be most dear ; makes  
 those Friends to be Enemies, that are incomparably the best qualified to contribute to their daily Happiness, and no less qualified again to create them daily Vexation and Misery.

The *fourth* and last Reason I have alleged, arising from our temporal Interest, for *Abstinence* from *fleshly Lusts*, is, that they are destructive of *publick Society* also, and of those great Ends of *Property*, *Quiet*, and *common Safety*, for which it was instituted. And this is a Reason of the greatest Dignity, though in many Places and Times of the smallest Force. But though a Man put off all Generosity, and retain not the least Concern for any but himself, still he will have Cause to shun and discountenance what threatens national Tranquillity, lest he himself and his own Affairs should not escape, when every body else is suffering. Now Corruption of Manners has been ever the most common Forerunner, and effectual Instrument of the Subversion of Nations and Governments, as all Histories witness,

witness. And Reason shews how it is done; and warns us to apprehend the same Effects from the same Cause. Lewdness and Intemperance, and indulging to unprofitable Idleness, are a great Part of that Corruption, and the principal Incentives of the rest. Civil Establishments are founded in Justice, and supported by the same. When therefore the Spirit to maintain, and to yield to that, is lost from among Men, how should those Establishments stand, or the Security and Happiness which depend upon them? But the Compliance with vicious Passions is still leading us out of the Way of Justice, and weakens more and more the Influence it naturally has upon our Minds, till at length all the Characters of it are quite sullied and obliterated. And besides that general Depravation from Vice, whereby the Regards to Right and Wrong are extinguished, it introduces universally the Temptation of Necessities, not to be satisfied by just and lawful Acquisitions. These Necessities are the constant Fruits of Sloth and Thoughtlessness, and riotous Expence. And let no Man trust to the honest Dispo-

SERM.

XVII.





Quality soever it be ; for it is capable of SERM.  
ruining his Circumstances, and poysoning XVII.  
his Temper ; so that there shall not be a  
Thing so foolish or base, nor so pernicious  
to himself and Country, but he will at last  
be hurried into.

Thus I have laid before you the natural Arguments against all inordinate Lusts of the Flesh, without taking in the Assistance of *Faith* and *Religion*. And even so they have been found, taking Men singly, the greatest Enemies to their Interests of Safety, Peace, and Pleasure itself, both in the *Body* and the Soul ; and destructive of all the same Advantages, as they arise from Society, whether in Families and Neighbourhoods, or States and Kingdoms.

But if we look upon Men in their better Capacity, as consisting of a Soul immortal, and a Body that shall revive and live together ; if we look upon them as *Pilgrims* and *Strangers* here, but *Subjects*, *Citizens* and *Heirs* of a Kingdom eternal in the Heavens ; the Obligation to abstain from these Lusts of momentary  
Pleasure

426 *Of the Reasonableness, &c.*

SERM. Pleasure will appear infinitely more strong,  
XVII. and in some Cases more extended. And  
to that I should now come; but it must  
be at some other Opportunity.



SERM. XVIII.



## S E R M O N XVIII.

The Reasonableness of curbing  
Fleshly Appetite.

P A R T II.



I P E T, II. II.

*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as  
Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain  
from fleshly Lusts, which war  
against the Soul.*



**B**EFORE Mankind was **SERM.**  
enlightened by the Gos- **XVIII.**  
pel of our Saviour, their  
Reason for the Guidance  
of Life and Manners  
was not so clear, as to  
leave them free from Difficulties and  
Error. Even those few, that spent  
their Time in the Consideration of these  
Things,

428 *Of the Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. Things and set up for Teachers, were di-  
 XVIII. vided extremely about the *chief End* of  
 Man, and governing Principle of all his  
 Actions. And yet till this be settled, all  
 must remain loose and uncertain. Some  
 of them, in particular, placed this *End*  
 and *Good of Man*, in *Virtue*; others join-  
 ed with that a Competence of bodily and  
*external Blessings*; and others (who had  
 the most numerous Followers) would have  
 it to be found in the Enjoyment of *Plea-  
 sures*. The *first* and *second*, though their  
 Doctrine were creditable and splendid, and  
 adapted to the public Good, yet labour'd  
 under this Difficulty; that they wanted  
*Motives* powerful enough to determine  
 many Persons to the *Self-denial* which  
 Virtue often requires, and to make them  
 easy under it. And the *third*, not insist-  
 ing sufficiently on this Self-denial, opened  
 a wide Gap to Selfishness and fleshly Lufts;  
 and left Men to be useless or pernicious  
 Members both in private and publick So-  
 cieties. Besides; all these, and whatever  
 other Philosophies there were, remain'd  
 incapable of persuading, effectually, any  
 great Numbers, because the Happiness  
 they

they severally proposed, was (for the most part of Men) overthrown by Experience. For how should they be govern'd by the View of a Good proposed, which generally proved impossible to be attained, but was still disappointed in the Effect with Emptiness and Misery. The Reason of all this Weakness, if we trace it, will be found here ; that they confined their Considerations to *this* Life, having no clear Account, or well-established Tradition, of the Happiness, or the Misery, that awaits us in *another*. They generally despised the Tradition they had to that Purpose ; and so made their Judgment of Mankind, whose Nature they were ignorant of. Accordingly their Conclusions were wide and defective ; as they must be, while they reasoned upon that as perishing in a few Years, which indeed was to revive and be of immortal Duration, and that in a State exceedingly different from the present, which fell under their Consideration.

But now, that the Revelation of our God and Saviour hath given all Men clear Evidence of their being *Strangers and Pilgrims*

SERM.  
XVIII.





SERM. *grims* on Earth, we are able to reconcile  
 XVIII. those different Reasonings about *hu-*  
*man Happiness*. Now we know that it *is*,  
 and that it is by us all *attainable*; and pro-  
 pose it as the End of our Actions, and see  
 it to be forcible enough to influence them  
 throughout our whole Life. There ap-  
 pears no more any Inconvenience in em-  
 bracing that natural and popular Doctrine,  
 which made Pleasure our ultimate Design  
 and final Happiness. There remain in it  
 no Consequences of *Base* or *Unjust*, no-  
 thing dishonourable to *ourselves*; or mis-  
 chievous to *others*. For our everlasting  
 Hopes regulate our short temporal Enjoy-  
 ments; and every Self-denial requir'd of  
 us, is but the securing an infinitely greater  
 Self-satisfaction. Though we moderate  
 our sensual Pleasures, and abstain from  
 those *fleshy Lusts that war against the*  
*Soul*; we pursue still the same Principle,  
 and are seeking and embracing the Plea-  
 sure that lasts for evermore. And where-  
 as the several Enjoyments of Virtue and  
 Peace of Mind, or of the Things desir-  
 eable for the Body, could not be attained by  
 many; and when attained are inconstant,  
 short,

short, and imperfect ; and therefore had SERM.  
not sufficient Weight to determine the XVIII.  
Course of a Man's Life against all Oppo-  
sition : The Christian Happiness is of a  
Nature absolutely complete, and certainly  
possible to be gained by all, and impossible  
ever to be lost again. For which Rea-  
sons it rightly forms the sovereign Object  
of the Desire of Mankind ; and is fully  
capable of controlling all other Desires,  
and making them move only in Subordi-  
nation to that End, without repining or  
Discomfort. This is that *Treasure*, that  
*Pearl of great Price*, which he that *finds*,  
can gladly, if Need be, *sell all that he hath*,  
that he may *buy it*. And when *fleshly*  
*Lusts war against* our Souls, here is the  
*Victory*, even in this *Faith*, that *overcomes*  
them and all *the World*.

'Tis true nevertheless, that altho' *Life*  
*and Immortality* were not brought to *Light*  
as they are *through the Gospel* ; yet a Man  
duly weighing his *temporal* Interests, would  
be obliged in Prudence to chuse *Tempe-*  
*rance and Industry*, against *Excess* and *Un-*  
*profitableness*, as the Ways of *least Misery*  
and *most Satisfaction* ; though they can-

not

432 *The Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. not promise a *perfect* Felicity ; which in-  
 XVIII. deed is not the Portion of this mortal Life.

And the Arguments for such a Choice I handled in a former Discourse. But now I come to offer the Reason which our Religion furnishes ; a Reason of much greater Force, and fully proportioned to master all the Difficulties of any Duty which the same Religion enjoins. This Reason the Text gives us, couch'd in these Words, *as Strangers and Pilgrims. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

This Exhortation is directed by the Apostle to those, that were well acquainted with the Phrase, and its Signification ; to *Jews* that had embraced Christianity. By the Teaching of the latter Profession, they must apprehend and know, *that if our earthly House of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens* : And so there is no likelihood they should look upon the Terms of *Strangers and Pilgrims* to be applied to them in the Text, with any Relation to their being

ing Strangers themselves in *divers Provinces*, (as at the Beginning of the *Epistle*) but on the general Account of their *sojourning here on Earth*, mentioned at the 17th Verse of the First Chapter. But, as *Jews* also, they had the Example of their Forefathers familiar to them; how they travelled many Years through the Wilderness towards their settled Habitation in the Holy Land; and how dearly they paid for indulging *fleshly Lusts* in that State, as the many Thousands shewed that fell short of the Promise, in the Murmuring which brought the *Quails*, and in the Matter of *Cozbi* and the Daughters of *Moab*. Nor could they fail in so natural an Application; *That these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, or Types, to shew their Posterity the Consequence of lusting after evil Things as they also lusted.* Further; besides this, they had, many of them, and all might have had, a direct Conclusion, That an everlasting Settlement is to succeed the short Stage of human Life on Earth, from the Use of these Words, *Strangers* and *Sojourners*, and such like, in their Scriptures, concerning the

434 *The Reasonableness of curbing*

SERM. XVIII. *Patriarchs first, and then the whole Body*  
of their Nation, even after the Establishment in *Canaan*. That the old Fathers look'd only for transitory Promises, is an Error justly condemn'd. *Jacob*, in *Gen. xlvii.* calls the Time of his *whole Life*, and of the Life of his Fathers, the *Days of their Pilgrimage*: And it may appear, that the Expression does not relate only to their *Travels*, and their dwelling as Strangers in the *Land of Promise*; because we find, long after Possession given of that Land, *David* calling himself, in the xxxixth *Psalms*, a *Stranger and a Sojourner as All his Fathers were*; and in the cxixth again, a *Stranger in the Earth*; and *1 Chron. xxix.* saying of himself and all his People, *we are Strangers before thee and Sojourners, as were all our Fathers: our Days on the Earth are as a Shadow, and there is no abiding.* And this language was taught them of *God*; who declares, *Levit. xxv. 23.* *the Land is mine; for ye are Strangers and Sojourners with me.* Hereupon we must infer, with the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, that these good Men desired a better Country, that is, *unheavenly*;

venly ; and that God had prepared for them SERM.  
 a City. And this Conclusion will be much XVIII.  
 strengthened, if we consider what the  
 same Apostle had observed a little before,  
 in that xith Chapter, that *Abraham*, whom  
 God called out of his own Land; *sojourn-*  
*ed in the Land of Promise as in a strange*  
*Country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac*  
*and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the same*  
*Promise ; and that as St. Stephen says,*  
*Acts vii. God gave him none Inheritance in*  
*it, no not so much as to set his Foot on.*  
 For how can it be thought, that they, for  
 whose Sakes God gave the Land to their  
 Descendants, should not have the Comfort  
 of any Grant at all in their own Persons ?  
 No, surely, the prime Object of their emi-  
 nent Faith and Hope, and of which the  
 earthly *Canaan* is but a Shadow, was a  
*City which hath Foundations, whose Builder*  
*and Maker is God.* This then is the Sense  
 of these Words of *St. Peter* to the con-  
 verted *Jews* : “ The faithful People of  
 “ God have not this World given them  
 “ for their principal Possession, or durable  
 “ Habitation ; but are placed in it, as in  
 “ a strange Land ; which, they are to

SERM. “ consider themselves, as travelling thro’  
 XVIII. “ to the Place of blessed and everlasting  
 “ Mansions prepared for them in their  
 “ Father’s House.”

The Import of the Words being thus explained, we are now to consider the Arguments that may be thence drawn, to determine us to comply with the Exhortation, and *abstain from the fleshly Lusts* prohibited.

The *first* is, our Condition of *Strangers* upon Earth, implies a State of *Trial* in order to *Reward* or *Punishment*; a great Part of which Trial is our obedient Abstinence from these Lusts, or our disobedient Indulgence to them. And this respects the great Rewards and Punishments themselves, as the *Consequences*, in a future State, of our Behaviour under the present Trial. The *second* Argument arises from the *immediate* Consequence to every Believer; as the *Conscience* of his Duty, perform’d or neglected, must, in View of *another* Life, either spoil or improve the Enjoyments, and alleviate or aggravate the sufferings of *this*.

*First* then, our being *Sojourners* implies SERM.  
a *Trial*; which will be manifest, if we XVIII.  
reflect, that no other Account can be giv-  
en of the Appointment of this mortal State,  
consistent with the Goodness of God the  
Author of it. He hath, we know by his  
Revelation, prepared and promised perfect  
Happiness for his Creatures, whom he  
brought out of Nothing for that Purpose.  
But at the present he hath placed them  
in a Condition mix'd with much Evil;  
and through that they must travel, before  
they can arrive at the full Enjoyment of  
his Goodness. And this suffering of pre-  
sent Evils, and Delay of appointed Enjoy-  
ments, are both, in themselves, contrary  
to the Nature of Good; and therefore  
must be accounted for by some Argument,  
either of *Necessity*, or of serving to a *great-  
er* Good in the Conclusion. But no such  
Account can be made without the Help  
of this Truth, That the Way of God's  
Dispensation towards Man, is not to crown  
him with full Blessedness, till Proof given,  
under a competent Trial, of his chusing  
the Good, and refusing the Evil set before  
him; and that this Way, with regard to



SERM. its excellent Consequences, is well consist-  
 XVIII ent with the Goodness, and worthy of the  
 Appointment of our Creator.

'Tis true, the Disobedience of our first Parents yields us a Reason for a great Proportion of the Evils incident to our Humanity, as the Fruits of that Disobedience. But this goes not far enough; for the Disobedience *itself*, the immediate Cause of so many Evils, could not possibly have happen'd, unless they had been *formed* imperfect and deceivable Creatures, capable of desiring what was pernicious to them, and of preferring it too before their real and necessary Good. In which Case, 'tis as evident, that Chusing in general is attended with Danger, and chusing Right with some Uneasiness; as it is, that chusing wrong is attended with great Calamity. 'Tis therefore insufficient to this Question of the Reason of our evil State, to trace the Matter up to the *original Sin* and the *original Weakness* of our *first Parents*. For still the Cause will be required of that Weakness *itself*. And *that* is found the same that was nam'd before, to account for the Mixture of Evil in human Affairs

Affairs down to this Day ; even *the Trial* SERM. of Faith and Obedience, much more pre- XVIII. cious, as our Apostle St. Peter says, than of Gold, that it might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory. We are Sojourners here upon the Earth, far from our native Home with regard to our better Part ; and so was our Father *Adam*, tho' better accommodated for this Travel both spiritually and bodily till his deserved Forfeiture. But neither he, nor we, could have been at all Sojourners, but must have been placed immediately in perfect Bliss by the Author of our Being, the Giver of every good and perfect Gift, were it not for that excellent End, that every Man should first strive and overcome, and then be crown'd. From this *Trial* result all the Virtues that Mankind is capable of, and all the religious Obedience, and all the Evidence of a sound Faith which governs the Hearts of Christians. But neither could that *Trial* subsist, nor any of those valuable Effects result from it, if our Duty were void of all Difficulties ; if it were never contrary to a present Interest, or a natural Desire ; if it required no Labour,

SER M. and expos'd us to no Sufferings. To refuse what we have no Inclination for, and to adhere to what is always agreeable, or to perform that which exacts no Toil or Attention of Mind, can never go for Proofs of Fidelity of Goodness. And therefore, if the Law (which Duty supposes) prescribed no more, what Ground could there be for that glorious Approbation, *Well done, good and faithful Servant*, which God has ordained shall go before his blessed Sentence of Reward, *enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord?*

Now I have explained the Thing, see further the excellent Use which flows from the Divine Beneficence, tho' some would cavil at it for appointing this Way to Perfection. For hereby the Creator has admirably condescended to give his own Creatures some Share in working out their Happiness. And this raises their Dignity to the utmost Possibility of dependent Beings; and from the Conscience of a sincere right Use of their Faculties, makes eternal Happiness itself more happy. If a Man considers never so little, he will be satisfied, that the most wonderful

ful

ful Work of God's Creation, is a Creature SERM.  
 endu'd with *Freedom of Will*: And by XVIII.  
 what has been said, it may appear the  
 most gracious and bountiful Work also.  
 And yet some Men have so blinded them-  
 selves with Prejudice, that they would ex-  
 clude this *Freedom* from the World, at  
 least from *Religion*; but indeed they ex-  
 clude Religion with it.

Thus you have heard, how our mortal  
 State, the *Pilgrimage* of this Life, infers  
 a *Trial* of us, in order to the being *judg'd*  
 and *rewarded* according to our Behaviour  
 under it; and likewise how reasonable  
 and gracious this Method is, whereby the  
 Opposition between *Flesh* and *Spirit* is  
 justified as necessary, and the Objection to  
 the *Difficulties*, which God's Law and his  
 Providence lay us under, silenced. And  
 so I proceed to consider the *Argument*,  
 which this Condition of ours affords, to  
 oblige us to comply with the Exhortation  
 of *abstaining from fleshly Lusts which war*  
*against the Soul.*

The Force of it is manifest enough  
 thus: Our abstaining from them, or not,  
 is a great Part of our *Probation*. The

Judg-

SERM. *Judgment* will certainly follow the *Fact*;  
 XVIII. and they that hearken to the Exhortation  
 will receive infinite Rewards; and they  
 that do not, will lose them, and incur the  
 dreadful Penalty. And since all the Uneasiness  
 of Self-denial, and all the Gratifications  
 of Sense here, bear no Manner of Proportion  
 to the Blessedness of the Rewards, and the  
 Wretchedness of the Punishment hereafter,  
 neither in their Degree, nor in their Duration;  
 'tis evident, *which* must be the Choice of any  
 rational Creature. And to support us in acting,  
 on every Occasion, agreeably to that Choice,  
 we can never want proper and effectual  
 Reflexions, if we would but awaken our  
 Thoughts, and use our Reason as faithfully  
 in this our greatest Concern, as we do  
 commonly in those of infinitely less  
 Consequence. If in *Sickness*, any Appetite  
 or Inclination sollicit us extremely (as it  
 is frequent) to that which we believe  
 mischievous in such a Condition; few are  
 so impatient, as to hazard their Recovery  
 for a present Satisfaction. Then we can  
 set the Probability of Years of Life against  
 a few Hours, and make an easy Determination,

nation, and despise the Brutishness of any SERM.  
that cannot. And yet the same Men, XVIII.  
when Life eternal and Death eternal are  
the Question, will greedily swallow the  
Poyson of forbidden Pleasures, and prefer  
a few Years to everlasting Ages. This  
seems amazing, where the Persons are Be-  
lievers ; and yet *that* is ordinarily the Case.  
But the Reason is, not Want of Assent to  
the Truth, but of Thought and Applica-  
tion in each Instance. In worldly Affairs,  
they do not only believe, that this or that  
Action is beneficial or ruinous ; but are  
bred to meditate on it, and inculcate it  
on their Minds ; and so have the Re-  
flexion always ready to answer every  
Temptation to Folly : And if they fail  
themselves, or see others do so, they soon  
also see or feel the mischievous Conse-  
quence. But of their *immortal* State, they  
study, and consider with Steadiness, but  
*little, or seldom* ; and therefore when Rea-  
son should resist the Appetite, it is lan-  
guishing and half asleep : And besides,  
the sad Consequence of this Thoughtles-  
ness, upon themselves or Neighbours, is  
placed out of Sight. And therefore it  
happens,

SERM. happens, that notwithstanding they believe  
 XVIII. and know this Life to be a short Pilgrimage, and of very little Concern to them, but as it is to be made a certain Passage to the better; yet are their Actions such, with relation to them both, that generally it were well, if the Proportion of Carefulness were exchanged; and what is bestow'd on this worthless Stage could be allotted to Eternity. For our Concern is much greater about our *Inn* than our *Home*. But if a Man will possess his Heart with the right State of the Case, and preserve the Sense of it there fresh and lively, his Practice will agree with his Reason, and his Works with his Faith. And this will be attained by employing himself often upon this Subject; by *Reading* and *Meditation*, and sealing all fast with *Prayer* and *Devotion*. Then will the Conclusion of governing himself, as one that *has here no continuing City, but is to seek one to come*, grow familiar and habitual, and recur in full Vigour at each Hour of Danger and Temptation, when fleshly Lusts shall be insinuating to draw him over to their Party. *They would*  
 bribe



bribe him with Pleasures, or deter him with Hardships, from a Life of useful Industry, from Justice, Temperance, and Sobriety ; but he is ready to turn their own Arguments against them ; and because he does value Ease and Pleasure, will embrace these short and tolerable Hardships, and decline these short and little Pleasures, to escape, and secure, those beyond all Comparison greater and more lasting. And by these Means not only the main Point is gain'd of a Man's faithful Adherence to his Duty, but an Ability form'd of doing it with reasonable Ease and Comfort : For when the Matter is represented to our Minds in any fair Light, it is apt to work in them a resolute Patience, and an even Contentment under all Instances of Self-denial. For after a thorough Consideration of the intolerable Consequences of any Thing, our Desires by Degrees cease to look towards it ; and the Power of Temptation can give us little Unrest, since *forbidden* is become, to our Way of Thinking, much the same as *impossible*. We see how this is in many Affairs of the World ; as for Example :

When



**SERM.** When one is in likely Circumstances for  
**XVIII.** great Honour and Preferment in the  
 Wars, or for great Riches in a short Time  
 by merchandizing abroad ; such a Man,  
 no Doubt, loves, as well as others, his  
 Country, his Friends, and his Ease, and  
 a hundred Liberties he is deprived of ; and  
 yet he wants them for the present without  
 any great Inquietude, because he has con-  
 cluded and set it down, that his Time for  
 those Enjoyments is not yet come ; and  
 that it would be a most childish Impo-  
 tence to quit his Advantages too hastily on  
 their Account. Nay, so far is he from re-  
 pining under his Restraints, that he rather  
 rejoices that he is in the Way of making  
 his Fortune ; and accordingly, instead of  
 Pity, he is envied by Thousands. Such  
 Images as these (of which the holy Scrip-  
 ture sets many before us) will easily be  
 applied by those, that for their Souls Sake  
 abstain from the unlawful Lusts of the  
 Body ; and that, with the greatest Advan-  
 tage on the Side of their own Case : For  
 whatever there is of Duty, Honour, Pru-  
 dence, or Interest, that determines Men  
 in their other Affairs to Constancy and  
 Cheer-

Cheerfulness in maintaining a Post of Difficulty, will be found in *this* also, but with Ten thousand fold the Force.

SERM.  
XVIII.

But there is a further Support to this Purpose; and that arises from my *second* Argument for abstaining from wicked Lusts, which is drawn from the same general Reason of St. Peter, that we are *Strangers* and *Pilgrims*; and from our State of *Probation* consequent upon our being so. That is, (as I have already stated it) the *immediate Consequence* to every Believer, as the *Conscience* of his Duty perform'd or neglected must, in View of another Life, either *spoil* or *improve* the *Enjoyments*, and *alleviate* or *aggravate* the *Sufferings* of *this*. The Divine Providence, and established Order of Things, give to religious and virtuous Men *three* Advantages above the wicked, even in the *present* World. The *first* may be called *natural*; because it results either from the Frame of our Bodies, or the necessary Way of Intercourse between rational Agents; and is seen in the Peace and Safety, the Health, and the Wealth, which ordinarily attend the Practice of Temperance, Justice,

SER M. tice, and Industry. The *second* is the Fa-  
 XVIII. *our* of God, in a special Manner *protec-*  
 ~~~~~  
*ting* the Persons and Concerns of good  
 Men. The *former* is common to *all*,  
 keeping external Rules; and is visible and  
 certain to *every* Observer; the *latter* be-  
 longs to the *faithful* only; and being for  
 necessary Reasons involv'd in much Ob-  
 scurity, is apprehended chiefly by *Faith*:  
 But *neither* of them is universal, or hap-  
 pens to all Persons, and at all Times. But  
 the *third*, which is contained in what I  
 have now propos'd to speak to, even the  
*Fruit* of a *good Conscience*, is an Advan-  
 tage granted to *every* Man religiously vir-  
 tuous, and for all the Time he is such,  
 and to none but him. At least this holds,  
 where People are rightly inform'd of their  
 Duty, as among Christians they must ge-  
 nerally be, especially with relation to the  
 Virtues and Vices pointed at by the Text;  
 concerning which there is no Controversy.

Now let it be consider'd, with what a  
 Force this Advantage ought to encourage  
 us in abstaining from forbidden Pleasures,  
 and the contrary Disadvantage deter us  
 from defiling our Consciences with them.

We

We know the World is all over interlac'd SERM.  
and blended with Good and Evil : No XVIII.  
Man is secure of the one, or exempt from  
the other. He that has the fewest En-  
joyments seldom passes a Day without  
some ; and is rarely excluded from Hopes  
of a greater Number. Again, the Man  
that meets with the least Sufferings, thinks  
them not inconsiderable ; and if he has  
any Thought of the Uncertainty of  
Things, lives in a just Fear of more.  
How valuable then must all account such  
a Blessing as should double the Satisfaction  
of every Enjoyment, and take away half  
the Weight of every Suffering ; and how  
terrible that Curse, which in the same  
Proportion enhances the Sufferings and  
diminishes the Satisfactions ? But this  
Blessing, or this Curse, each Christian trea-  
sures up in his own Breast, as he fills it  
with the Comfort, or the Horror, of a  
good, or of an evil Conscience. And  
Mens Experience will, I doubt not, bear  
me Witness, that I have spoken very mo-  
destly, in supposing this Circumstance  
gives or takes away but the *half* ; and that  
if in some Cases, or in some Person, at

SERM. certain Times, the Effect be no greater,  
 XVIII. or even less, yet generally it very much  
 exceeds that Proportion. The Condition  
 of the Mind is of far the greatest Consequence either Way. Without *that* the Body knows neither Good nor Evil. The Mind, in bearing Crosses and Afflictions, shews its Power or Weakness very notably, as it is evident in the Dejection and Impatience of one, and the Sedateness and Resolution of another, under the same Trial. And many are the Examples of such a calm Constancy in good Men that have all right *within*, as triumphs over those Sufferings, which quite overwhelm Spirits loaded with Guilt, and broken with the hopeless Expectation of Judgment. But if we consider of the other part, the Fruition of good Things in this Life; there the right or wrong Disposition of our Mind is still more significant, and vastly outweighs all other Ingredients. Every Man finds, where the Body wants its Health, all the Provisions of the most exquisite Luxury can yield no Relish: But, in all Christian Believers at least, a *good Conscience* is the Health of their Mind  
 and

and Soul. And with that therefore even  
homely Enjoyments acquire a Delicacy ;  
and without it the most delicate procure  
but Loathing. Now let it be suppos'd,  
that since a religious Man is debarr'd, by  
the Precept in the Text, from some Plea-  
sures, the Libertine should gain more in  
Number than he (which yet if we take  
in the Course of their whole Lives, I have  
before shew'd to be highly improbable :  
But suppose it) still the Religious is more  
than made Amends by the Way we have  
been discoursing. For Things must be  
*valu'd* as well as *number'd*, if we would  
compare them to Purpose : And we know  
'tis not the *Quantity* or the *Choice* of our  
Meat that gives the true Enjoyment, but  
the *Palate* and the *Stomach*.

To conclude therefore, Let me exhort  
you to keep your Consciences pure from  
sinful Lusts ; and to praise the Good-  
ness of God, who has so abundantly  
furnished us with Inducements to obey  
his Commandments : Who condescend-  
ing to our Weakness, because the Things  
that are eternal are not seen, has given us  
so great experimental Encouragement to

SERM. our Duty from Things temporal ; and has  
XVIII. graciously antedated great Rewards of well  
doing, even in the Day of our Trial and  
Probation.

*To Him be Glory for ever and ever.*





SERMON  
XVIII

## SERMON XIX.

### Of Mortification.



MAT. V. 29, 30.

*If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : For it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell.*

*And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell.*





SERM.  
XIX.

OUR Experience teaches, that the Appetites of our Flesh frequently tempt us to Disobedience against the Laws of God ; and are apt to grow over-strong and impetuous for the Government of Reason, which leads us to seek and embrace the Divine Grace, and follow our Duty and true Interest. And this Danger warns our Reason to contrive for a Security before-hand ; that it may not be put to encounter these Appetites in their full Strength, and be itself surpriz'd in a weak and languishing Condition. This End is to be obtained by the Practice of *Mortification* : Which serves to humble the bodily, and advance the rational Part ; and withdraws in Time the Fuel from those Fires, that else might gain too great a Head, and devour us before they could be restrained.

Neither are we left herein to the Guidance of Reason alone ; but the Laws of Religion, and the Discipline of the Church, prescribe the same Caution. It is true, that the Appointments of the *latter* are extremely neglected by all Ranks.  
But

But however such a general Difuse may abate of the Blame of Particulars as of-  
 fending against an establish'd Order ; yet there remains an Admonition from the setting apart certain Times throughout the Year, for the Exercise of that Christian Grace of *Mortification* ; there remains, I say, still an Admonition from publick Authority, in full Force, to render those inexcusable, who will not exercise it, at least as often as their particular Circumstances require. Then for the Laws of our holy Religion, which are for ever of equal Authority, I have now propos'd to you one great Branch of them in the Words I have chos'n to discourse upon, the Words of our Lord himself ; *If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : For it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell. And if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell.*

SERM.  
 XIX.

SERM.


XIX.




If the Matter of the Command appear (as it must) of a very difficult and severe Tenour; the Manner of publishing it, and engaging our Attention and Obedience, does, at the same Time, \* appear so full of Weight and solemn Assèveration, as shews the Importance to be of the utmost Value, and the Obligation altogether indispensable. This doubling of the Figure, and Reiteration of Expressions, naturally fortifies and redoubles to our Apprehension and Concern the Certainty and the Dignity of the Thing deliver'd.

As to the Signification of the Terms, *Hand and Eye, Plucking out, and Cutting off*; wherein the only Difficulty lies; it is evident, in the first Place, that they are not to be taken according to the Letter; that no *Blinding* or *Dismembring* is intended in this Precept: And *secondly*, if the Verses of the Text be considered by themselves, without Relation had to the Discourse, or Occasion that introduces them, the general Sense of those Terms is, reject and separate far from you, (notwithstanding

\* See Sermon. XII.

withstanding any Reluctance or any Pain) SERM.  
 whatever it be, how near or dear, or other- XIX.  
 wise serviceable soever; if it offend, that   
 is, betray to Sin, *supplant* and *over-*  
*throw* your Goings in the Paths of Religion  
 and Virtue. But *thirdly*, the particular  
 Obligation designed here to be laid on us,  
 and what *Subjects* this Severity must be  
 exercised upon, is to be learn'd only from  
 the Context, the immediately preceding  
 Matter that our Lord was discoursing of.  
 Indeed the same Words, for Substance,  
 are found again in the *New Testament*,  
 and even in this same Evangelist. But  
 upon Examination, they will appear di-  
 rected to a different Aim there; and so  
 yield us no Light for their Application  
 in my Text. The general Sense, 'tis  
 true, is all one in each of the three Pla-  
 ces; but by the Circumstances accompa-  
 nying the Words, they are determined to  
 enjoyn the Practice of one special Duty  
*here*, and of another *there*. In the ixth  
 Chapter of St. *Mark*, the 43d, 45th, and  
 47th Verses, the *Hand* and *Foot* to be *cut*  
*off*, and the *Eye* to be *pluck'd* out, are the  
*Companions, Friends, and Relations* of all  
 Sorts;

SERM. Sorts; which are to be forsaken and re-  
 XIX. nounc'd, and all the Ties of Blood, Af-  
 ~~~~~ fection, and Interest, to be burst asunder;  
 when they draw us off from our heavenly  
 Benefactor, Master, and Father. This I  
 have \* formerly shewed in discoursing on  
 that Place; and likewise, that St. *Mat-*  
*thew*, xviii. 8, 9. are to be interpreted in  
 the same Manner. But the Words of St.  
*Matthew*, which I have now chosen for  
 my Text, have another View; and charge  
 us, not to fly from and break off all Com-  
 merce with the *Persons* that corrupt us  
 (though that also is otherwise highly ne-  
 cessary;) but to subdue and banish the  
*corrupt Affections* within our own Breasts,  
 to mortify our inordinate Passions and  
 Lusts, and especially that of Concupi-  
 scence. For the Verses before are, *Ye*  
*have heard that it was said by them of old*  
*Time, Thou shalt not commit Adultery. But*  
*I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a*  
*Woman to lust after her, hath committed*  
*Adultery with her already in his Heart.*  
 And then follows, *And if thy right Eye*  
*offend thee, pluck it out, and the rest.*  
 Which

Which shews certainly, that the *offending* SERM.  
*Eye* in the latter Verse, is the same with XIX.  
the Eye of him that *looked to lust*, in the   
former ; and therefore that the Eye to be  
pluck'd out is something at Home, even  
a lascivious and intemperate Disposition in  
our own Mind. And I shall add, be-  
cause it is apposite, (though it may appear  
a little Observation,) that to preserve this  
Clearness of Connexion the Eye is men-  
tioned *first* ; whereas in the other two  
Places it comes in, as you may see, *last* of  
all after the cutting off the other Members.  
This Connexion, I say therefore, of the  
parts our Lord's Discourse, makes it mani-  
fest, that the Discipline enjoin'd is to be  
exercis'd directly on our *own selves*, not-  
withstanding that in the xviiiith Chapter  
of this Gospel, and in the ixth of St.  
*Mark*, is to separate us from the Entice-  
ments and contagious Familiarity of *other*  
wicked Persons. Nor ought it to seem  
strange that our Lord should apply the same  
Maxim or Precept of general Truth diffe-  
rently, on different Occasions. It is in itself  
reasonable ; and we have another Example  
in

**SERM.** in his Application of that great Saying, *I will*  
**XIX.** *have Mercy and not Sacrifice* : For in the  
 vith of St. *Matthew* vers. 13. he alledges  
 it to prove the Liberty we may and ought  
 to take against a positive Law, out of  
 Charity to *others* ; and in the xiith Chap-  
 ter, vers. 7. of the same, to prove a like  
 Liberty in Favour of *our own* Necessities  
 or Distress.— But further to confirm this  
 Interpretation ; and particularly, that by  
 the Parts of the human Body are figured  
 those Affections of the Mind to which  
 they are subservient and instrumental ;  
 there is a very plain Evidence in the Ex-  
 pressions of St. *Paul*, in the iiid Chapter  
 of his Epistle to the *Colossians*, Verse the  
 5th. *Mortify therefore*, saith he, *your*  
*Members which are upon the Earth*. What  
 are they ? It follows, *Fornication, Unclean-*  
*ness, inordinate Affection, evil Concupif-*  
*cence, and Covetousness, which is Idolatry*.

The Words being thus far explain'd, I  
 shall proceed to consider, *First*, The  
 Foundation of the Command contained in  
 them, with the general Scope of it ;  
 which is to preserve inward Purity, as  
 well as outward : Whence will result the  
 Evidence

Evidence of its *Equitableness* and *Necessity*; that we may not think it burdensome. *Secondly*, I will shew, to what Persons it extends: And *Thirdly*, In what Ways it is to be executed by them.

SERM.  
XIX.

*First* then, I would observe to you a two-fold Ground and Design of the Commandment given us for the Practice of *Mortification*. The *first*, to keep us from the Breach of God's Law, in committing the *outward* Acts of Sin prohibited by it, is very obvious. The Text plainly proposes it by those Words, *if thy right Eye offend thee, and, if thy right Hand offend thee, which you know signifies, are to thee an Occasion of Sinning*. And our own Reason falls in with it. If there are certain Seasons of Life, or certain Tempers of bodily Constitution, that nourish up our Passions to a Strength and Fierceness, which endangers our Innocence; and if again there is a Number of Persons, that are obliged to deny and suppress, for a Time, their natural Desires, because they cannot, in their present Circumstances, be yielded to without a Crime; then must it be



**SERM.** be plain, there is but too much Reason  
**XIX.** for the Doctrine of *Mortification*, to re-  
 duce or prevent those Desires and Passions ;  
 lest otherwise we be overcome of them ;  
 and for present Gratifications forfeit ever-  
 lasting Happiness.

But *Secondly*, The Precept is founded on the Necessity of preserving *inward* Purity as well as outward. This appears from the Words immediately preceding and occasioning those of the Text ; which teach, concerning Adultery, that he shall be, in the Sight of God, reputed guilty, not only that actually commits it, but whose Heart has entertained a full Consent to it, though the Fact follow not from Want of Opportunity, or the Restraint of worldly Motives ; and in other Sins it cannot be judg'd but that the Case is the same. All stands upon one common and evident Reason. The Man that is clearly determined within himself to break any divine Law if he could, has already despised the Authority, and rejected the Grace of God ; his Heart is harden'd against all the Promises and Threatnings ; and the Corruption of Sin has taken Possession of his Soul.

After

After this, what can the Act of the *Body* SERM.  
 (which is of itself but a meer *Instrument* ; XIX.  
 what, I say, can it) *add* to the *Offence*, as  
 committed against God ? Indeed it is not  
 so pernicious to *others*, because both the  
 Injury and the Scandal are forborn. But  
 then this Criminal forbears them from no  
 Motive of Goodness, and therefore it must  
 be as pernicious to *himself*, and equally  
 condemn him in HIS Sight, *to whose Eyes*  
*all Things are naked and open'd*. Or, if  
 some Difference can be maintain'd between  
 the Guilt of the *inward* and the *outward*  
 Commission, 'tis only in *Degree* : But the  
 Nature of Sin, of *wilful* Sin, remains,  
 sufficient to plunge us in Perdition ; and  
 therefore *Mortification* is necessarily appli-  
 ed to prevent the *inward*, as well as the  
*outward* Impurity.

These then being the Ends proposed,  
 which we are absolutely bound to secure ;  
 'tis vain to find Fault with the Severity of  
 the Means. They are indeed no distinct  
 Burden ; but a needful Caution to preserve  
 us both from Falling and Despair. When  
 my Safety depends upon arriving at a cer-  
 tain Place, he that shews me the true  
 Way,

SERM. XIX. Way, though it be a rugged one, does not increase my Labour, but spare it indeed, by employing it from the Beginning to the Purpose, and preventing fruitless Attempts and Disappointments. In our Case, if a Man decline the restraining his Inclination, or foregoing his Ease, in the Way of Discipline, because 'tis difficult; what does he but multiply his Difficulties? For how shall he that has used to deny himself nothing, not yield to the strongest Temptation; or reject the most pleasing Gratifications, that has never endured to refuse the most inconsiderable? But suppose that Want of Means, or the Sense of Shame, or other Interest of this Life, prove sufficient to withhold him at present from the open Crime; yet is there no Security even for *that* Degree of Innocence. For we know that Interest changes, and Shame wears off, and Opportunities arise; and then there remains no longer any Guard upon Affections unsubdued. But however, we have, as (you have heard) a further Duty incumbent on us, and cannot be indeed innocent, unless our Minds too be unpolluted from the Consent  
to

to Iniquity. And surely of THAT there can be no Hope, without purifying and regulating the Thoughts of them, and the strengthening them against all Evil, by the Habit of Self-denial and *Mortification*. Since therefore our Lord hath taught us, that *those Things which come forth from the Heart, they defile the Man; that out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemies*; Prudence will engage our prime Care in the Guard and Discipline of it, to secure and facilitate our other Duties, and oblige us to preserve in Memory the Advice of *Solomon, Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life.*

I come now to the *second* Point proposed; which was to shew, what *Persons* this Duty extends to. And it must be affirm'd, that the Obligation of *mortifying* in general the vicious Dispositions, with which the bodily part affects our Mind, is common to all Christians. Their State, as such, is a State of Warfare between the *Flesh* and the *Spirit*. THAT shews plainly the Enemy to be subdu'd; and that upon

SERM. the performing of it depends our Victory  
 XIX. and Crown, and from the Failure follows  
 everlasting Confusion. So the Apostle,  
*Rom. viii. 13. If ye live after the Flesh,*  
*ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do*  
*mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*  
 Indeed the very Admission to profess Chri-  
 stianity declares this to us. For our Bap-  
 tism sets forth the *putting off the old Man,*  
 and a *Death and Burial* with Christ :  
 Which Thing, with the Obligation it in-  
 fers, the same Apostle insists on in many  
 Places ; as *Rom. vi. 2, 3, and 4. How*  
*shall we that are dead to Sin, live any long-*  
*er therein ? Know ye not, that so many of*  
*us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were*  
*baptised into his Death ? Therefore we are*  
*buried with him by Baptism into Death ;*  
*that like as Christ was raised up from the*  
*Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so*  
*we also should walk in Newness of Life.*  
 And at the 6th Verse he further explains  
 what we must understand and conclude  
 hereupon ; namely, *That our old Man is*  
*crucified with him, that the Body of Sin*  
*might be destroy'd, that henceforth we*  
*should not serve Sin.* Again, in the ivth  
 to

to the *Galatians*, having premis'd, that *the* SERM.  
*Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the* XIX.  
*Spirit against the Flesh, and the Contra-*  
*riety of the one to the other, he proceeds to*  
 enumerate the wicked *Works of the Flesh,*  
 and the blessed *Fruits of the Spirit*; and  
 at the 25th Verse concludes, that *they*  
*that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh*  
*with the Affections and Lusts.* I need not  
 cite more Scriptures to this Effect: These  
 are sufficient to convince Men of the ne-  
 cessary Obligation to attain a great Degree  
 of Insensibility to the Pleasures of this  
 World, if they *have indeed so learned*  
*Christ,* as they profess, and are not in vain  
*baptized into one Body,* the Head whereof  
 is a *crucify'd Saviour.*

But *Secondly,* Besides the Duty common  
 to us all, which prescribes no particular  
 Method, but leaves every one to consider  
 and to act what Occasion still may require  
 for preventing the Success of Temptations;  
 'tis manifest, (and especially from the Text)  
 that such as are obnoxious to the Force of  
*one Temptation* above the rest, and, name-  
 ly, that of *loose Affections,* are bound to  
 remove all *Occasions and Incentives,* and

SERM. to kill and destroy the *Principles* and *Seeds*  
 XIX. of it within themselves: For so are the  
 Words, *If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out; and, if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off.* They therefore, that are not offended, or carried by them to the Breach of God's Law, have not this Injunction laid upon them. But it begins to take place with the *Offence*, or the just *Apprehension* of it; and continues no longer than *that* does. But it behoves all Persons, not to suffer the Desire of escaping the disagreeable Exercises of *Mortification* to bribe their Judgment, but be sure to be rather too distrustful than too confident of the Security of their State, considering the great and horrible Danger they have to shun, lest while they spare *one Member*, their *whole Body should be cast into Hell*. The great Apostle is not ashamed to say, *1 Cor. ix. the last Verse, I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection: lest that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a Cast-away.* And if the holy *Paul* could entertain such a Fear, and would therefore submit to such a Discipline, surely a Man had need to consider

der well, before he conclude himself safe and exempt from it, lest it prove a ruinous and most inexcusable Presumption.

SERM.  
XIX.  
~

The *third* and last Thing proposed to be explained, was, In *what Ways* the Command given by the Text is rightly comply'd with and executed. For the Zeal of some People (and perhaps a Mixture of Ostentation) has run a wrong Course *beyond* or *beside* the Design of the Precept. The Design of *that* being to secure us from the Force of Temptation, by so far moderating and humbling the Passions and Appetites, that they may submit on all Occasions to the Law of God, and the Voice of Reason; it is to be concluded, that whatever is not serviceable, or is not necessary to that End, is not required by it at our Hands. There is no Value in afflicting the Body *merely*; nor any Truth in the Notion, which some appear to have embrac'd, that a Thing is therefore acceptable to God, because it is unacceptable to our Nature. When he himself afflicts his Servants, 'tis with a paternal Affection for their Chastisement and Improvement: He *dealeth* with *them*



SERM. *as with Sons. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.*

XIX.

When this is consider'd ; and likewise, that the Body and the Nature of it is of his Workmanship, and wonderfully contriv'd within itself, and amply furnished from without, by the same Hand, for its well-being ; it must appear a superstitious Conceit, to imagine that he takes Delight in the Pain or Misery *alone* that it suffers. No ; all the Goodness of these Things is founded on the good *End* which I have mentioned, and limited within their Subserviency to the same. Therefore we reject, *first*, all those Practices of pretended religious Orders, which contribute nothing to this End ; such as their Whippings, and walking bare-foot, and Imposition of Silence, with many other Neglects or Cruelties towards themselves. For since we cannot see how they do ordinarily promote the main Purpose of Religion, the *keeping the Commandments* ; although they are held in the highest Veneration amongst many Christians, (and *Infidels* too, for *they* are fond of the same Ways) we cannot judge they do any true Honour to  
the

the Cause of Religion and Virtue, but must rank them at the highest amongst Mistakes well meant. And, in the next Place, there are divers other Methods, which, altho' they are or may probably be effectual towards subduing the corrupt Affections of the Flesh; yet cannot be approv'd, (as they were never intended by the Text) because they are not *necessary* to *this*, and are *hurtful* to *other* good Purposes. Under this Head is comprehended, what destroys the Nature or Health of the Man, or sequesters him from human Society. These Things are indeed to be suffer'd in Defence of Truth and Justice, when others inflict them upon us: But we are not obliged, nor even free, to inflict them upon ourselves. We have no more Power to destroy or disable the Constitution of our Bodies, than we have to deprive them of their Life. Both the one and the other are reserv'd to the Disposal of the Author of our Frame and Being. Neither is it more reasonable, that Men of virtuous Resolutions should fly to the Cloister or Wilderness, and by a kind of civil Death desert their Generation,

SERM.

XIX.



SERM. tion, which they were born, and are best  
 XIX. qualified, to serve. But we are encourag'd  
 ~~~~~ to trust in the Grace of God, to succour  
 us against Temptations, in the faithful  
 Use of other lawful and appointed Means.  
 Concerning all the rest, that we have re-  
 jected, it must be affirmed, that how  
 much soever they have the Nature of  
*Mortification*, they have not that of *CHRIS-  
 TIAN Mortification*.

It remains now that I recommend the  
*true Ways* of working THAT in us  
 so far, I mean, as is contained in my  
 Text. For one great and most useful  
 Branch of *Mortification*, the breaking off  
 all *Engagements* and *Conversations* with  
*Persons* that corrupt us, belongs, (as I have  
 shewed) to another Place. But I desire  
 it may be observed, from the Reason and  
 Authority produced for these *true Ways*,  
 how *immorally* licentious People cast off  
 all Discipline, because of some false and  
*absurd Ways* of Austerity, real or preten-  
 ded, that *Superstition* has introduced.  
 The *true* ones consist chiefly in re-  
 trenching, at proper Times, and in proper  
 Degrees, the Liberty that we have  
 other-

therwise in general ; *first*, in the Use of SERM.  
Meats and Drinks ; and *secondly*, with re- XIX.  
spect to Labour and Ease, and Diversions.

I say, in retrenching our *Liberty* ; for the  
meer Forbearance of Intemperance and  
Unprofitableness, which are directly and  
universally *prohibited*, and always sinful in  
ALL Persons, cannot be accounted any  
*Mortification*. THAT is of such a Na-  
ture, that the performing it becomes a  
Duty, and the omitting it a Crime, to *cer-  
tain People*, and at *certain Times*, accord-  
ingly as their Circumstances oblige ; where-  
as the same Performance or Omission may  
be no Crime or Duty to *others*, nor yet to  
the *same Men in different Circumstances*.

*First* then, the Retrenchment of our  
Liberty in the Matter of Meats and  
Drinks, is a salutary Practice for prevent-  
ing and restraining the Violence of certain  
Passions that betray us to Sin : And it is  
executed either by a *total* Abstinence,  
which we commonly understand by *Fast-  
ing* ; or else, by the *Abatement* and  
*Choice* of our Food. You know the Holy  
Scripture directs the Use, and pronounces  
the Reward of Fasting. After that, it is  
needless

SERM. needless to cite Examples thence, though  
 XIX. great and numerous in either *Testament*,  
 both for the publick and private Exercise  
 of it. The manifold Advantages it ministers to Piety, are as evident to Reason and Experience; how it not only does the Work of extinguishing and killing the Evils we speak of, but likewise quickens the Spirit of Devotion, and inflames the Sorrow of Repentance. These *spiritual Affections* it gives the highest Vigour to, at the same Time that it withdraws Nourishment and Life from the *Carnal*. And this certainly is the most blessed Conjunction of Powers, to serve those Purposes, which likewise are not to be separated. For how does any Man repent sincerely of Sin past, without embracing the utmost Caution against falling hereafter? Or how can either be done effectually, without fervent Prayer to obtain spiritual Strength for the one, and Pardon for the other? The great Neglect of so fruitful a Good, shews how much this Age is fallen from the Zeal of primitive Times. But if we regard religious Abstinence only as a Discipline of virtuous Purity, and Me-  
 dicine

dicine of the Soul ; who can refuse it, SERM.  
XIX.  
 that is conscious of his own disorderly State, and convinced of the Aptness and Force of the Remedy ? And generally the same that are conscious of the one, must be convinced of the other. But if many *need* not this Discipline, and many cannot *bear* it ; (and they too are for the most part the *same* ;) let it be no Excuse (as to be sure it will not) to those who *can* bear it and *do* need it. We press not, on this Occasion at least, the tender, or the declining Age ; nor the Constitution that is impaired, or still threaten'd with Sickness ; nor that exhausted by continual Labour. And yet there are Exceptions even to these Exceptions : And Men must be left to judge of the Necessity of this Thing, and of the Measure and Frequency of it, by the Knowledge they have of themselves, yet remembering that their Judgment will be one Day judg'd over again ; and *then* it will be of the utmost Consequence to them, that it be found honest and impartial, accurate, advis'd, and discreet.

But *secondly*, The Difficulties that attend the Practice of religious Abstinence will

SERM. will be much diminish'd, if we consider  
 XIX. the Latitude there is in using it. For  
 a *total* Forbearance of our Refreshment is  
 not always to be insisted on. The Design  
 we would reach may often be gain'd by a  
 less Severity ; and provided it be constant,  
 perhaps gain'd more certainly. If we use  
*such Abstinence that the Flesh may be sub-*  
*du'd to the Spirit,* (as our *Liturgy* speaks  
 very justly) though it be only as to the  
*Quantities* and the *Kinds* of our Food ; it  
 is an Obedience to the Command in the  
 Text : For in being *such,* we understand  
 it plucks out and *cuts off* effectually the  
 offending *Hand* and *Eye,* as there requir-  
 ed. And there may be People, who have  
 gain'd that habitual Power over their Ap-  
 petite, and exercise it generally with that  
 Strictness and watchful Discretion, as to  
 deserve the Name of *perpetual Fasters* ;  
 and to hope with Reason (supposing they  
 act thus on a religious Account) for the  
 Reward promis'd St. *Matt.* vi. 18. since  
 what they do has in it both the Self-denial  
 and Efficacy of other Fasting, and in the  
 Secrecy there recommended may exceed  
 all. I mention'd a *religious Account,* be-  
 cause

cause there are other Ends also of abstain-  
ing ; as for Example, that ordinary one  
of preserving Health ; which tho' other-  
wise foreign to our Purpose, may well  
suggest to your Thoughts a strong Evi-  
dence of *their* Insincerity, who will not  
practice it, when necessary, for an End  
infinitely more precious. That which  
others submit to by the meer Strength of  
Reason, for the short Concern of their bo-  
dily Part ; if we, with the Assistance of  
the Divine Grace, do not, for the Health  
of the Soul and its everlasting State ; *shall*  
they not *rise up in the Judgment, and*  
*condemn us ?*

There remains yet the other Part of  
*Mortification* which I propos'd, dependent  
on our Management of *Labour* and *Ease*,  
and *Diversions*. By *Labour* I understand,  
as well other virtuous Employment fol-  
low'd with assiduous Care and Attention,  
as the Toil of the Body itself. For the  
Labour of the Mind also is known to af-  
fect the Body and bring it under, besides  
the Advantage it yields of another kind,  
in strengthening the Mind itself, and leav-  
ing no Room in it for vain and corrupting  
Ima-

SERM.  
XIX.





SERM. Imaginations. I need not therefore dispute with People of any Rank or Education about the Labour of the Hands; (tho' surely many more should use it than do;) there is Work to be found, indecent or impracticable to none, in domestick Concerns, in Services of Charity, in the Study of good Arts and Books, especially religious Reading and Meditation, and in the teaching and improving of others. In these, (not to mention the Prosecution of particular Professions) they may find Burdens proper to impose on themselves, for the subduing of vicious, and cherishing virtuous Dispositions, and so escape from the Snares, with which they are sensible that Ease and Plenty, and Delicacy, are entangling their Souls. The same Christian Care and Severity that imposes such *Tasks*, for the Security and Edification of Particulars, as their worldly Condition might exempt from, does likewise restrain their *Liberty* in *Rest* and *Recreations*, and all the *Amusements* and *Diversions* of Life, innocent, perhaps, in general, but *to them* prejudicial, insidious, and seducing. But that which was said before, in Effect contained

tained this also : For the Laborious must SERM.  
 retrench their Ease ; and serious Employ- XIX.  
 ment excludes the idle Devices of spend-  
 ing Time. I will not therefore be tedious  
 to People of Understanding, while I in-  
 sist on the moderating unnecessary *Sleep*,  
 though a Matter of the greatest Conse-  
 quence to our Purpose ; nor enforce the  
 apparent Wholsomness of Discipline to  
 ourselves, in cutting off or exceedingly re-  
 ducing, whether you will call them the  
*Businesses* or the *Pleasures* of foolish Books,  
 of scrupulous and long Dressing, of for-  
 mal and ostentatious Visits, of assiduous  
 Gaming, Theatres, Balls, and the like  
 Assemblies. These Things are in Pos-  
 session and Credit ; and it is, no Doubt,  
*hard*, and I had almost said, *scandalous*,  
 to part with them. But if they *do* of-  
 fend, endanger, or mislead our Steps, the  
 Commandment of our Saviour *cuts* them  
*off*. They cannot be more pleasant than  
 the Light of the *Eyes*, or more necessary  
 than the Service of the *Hands* ; and God  
 forbid we should hold them more precious  
 than our *Souls*.

There

SERM.

XIX.



There is still one Word, which I cannot omit ; that (as in every other good Work) to all our Study and Sincerity in Self-denial and *Mortification*, continual *Prayer* must be superadded, if we would hope for Success ; that the Spirit of Light and Holiness would direct our Judgments, purify our Hearts, and strengthen us against all Temptation with that *Faith which overcometh the World.*



SERM. XX.



## S E R M O N   X X .

Of the Love of G O D .



I C O R . xiii. 3.

*And though I bestow all my Goods  
to feed the Poor, and though I  
give my Body to be burned, and  
have not Charity, it profiteth me  
Nothing.*



Y the last Words of the **S E R M .**  
former Chapter one may **XX.**  
judge, that the Apostle  
entered upon the Praises  
of Charity with a special  
Regard to that Branch  
or Power of it, which engages our *En-*  
*deavours to keep the Unity of the Spirit in*  
**V O L . I .**            **I i**            *the*

SERM. *the Bond of Peace.* Nevertheless, in going  
 XX. on he is carried to consider it in the full  
 Extent and original Nature, as appears by  
 the comparing and preferring it to Hope  
 and Faith it self, that is, to all Christian  
 Graces. I will therefore take it in the  
 same Extent. Charity is the Love of God,  
 and of our Neighbour. Thereupon imme-  
 diately arises this Difficulty. 'Tis suppo-  
 sed in the Text, that a Man gives all his  
 Substance to the Poor, and hath not that  
 Love of his Neighbour; and that ano-  
 ther dies in the Flames for his religious  
 Profession, and is yet destitute of that  
 Love of God. The two Instances given  
 are plainly the highest Effects that the  
 Force of Charity can ever produce. So a  
 Person that has not well meditated on the  
 Principles of Religion, may be apt to say  
 with *Nicodemus*, *How can these Things be?*  
 Why these Effects, great as they are, do  
 not, with absolute Certainty, prove the  
 Cause from which they *should*, and, al-  
 most perpetually *do*, flow. Other Causes,  
 and without the Concurrence of *the Love*  
*of God*, have sometimes, doubtless, in Fact,  
 produc'd them, and may therefore again  
 do

do it. To Man, indeed, who cannot SEARCH. XX.  
search the Heart, these are the strongest  
Proofs of Sincerity that the Matter is ca-  
pable of; and as they can but rarely fail,  
we are in Reason and Charity carried to  
believe and to honour those that give 'em.  
But that very Honour, so due and so cer-  
tain, may corrupt all: The Hope of it  
may usurp the Place of the divine Love,  
and become the real, tho' secret, Motive of  
such glorious Actions. But notwithstand-  
ing, in the former of the Apostle's In-  
stances, the *bestowing* one's Goods, even  
*all* one's Goods, *to feed the Poor*, Vanity  
or Ambition may fill the Heart, and  
leave no Place for Charity; yet in the  
latter, where the Body is surrendered to  
Torments and Fire, 'tis still hard to con-  
ceive the Absence of a religious Motive;  
since for a Man's *Life* there can be no  
Equivalent here below. It may be truly  
answer'd, that notwithstanding all the Ab-  
surdity, it is more than possible for Men  
to sacrifice their Blood to the Fear of Re-  
proach and the Hope of Applause. But I  
shall open yet another Way, wherein Cha-  
rity will be found wanting; and that is,

SERM. where we do an Act of Virtue or Religion, (a very eminent one perhaps) and not without Respect to God and his Will, but persist, at the same Time, in neglecting other Things requir'd, or doing other Things forbidden, by that Will of God. And this is applicable to both the Cases in the Text, or any other like. If for God's Sake we can be charitable to the Poor, or suffer Death rather than abjure our Religion; but will not subdue our Lusts, or will not follow Peace; (for Example) will not keep the rest of the Commandments for his Sake; we have but a maim'd, imperfect Charity; not the true, which *St. Paul* here means to require. 'Tis plain, *we love not the Lord our God with all our Heart*: For then would our Obedience to him be uniform and universal. And the divided Heart he will not accept; the Man that offers it is no better than an Idolater.

Having thus explain'd and justify'd the Sense of the Apostle's Words, we see that the most admirable Performances Humanity is capable of for the Good of our Neighbour, or the Honour of Religion, are

are yet of no Value, not at all religious, unless the Love of God possess the Heart of the Doer. I say, *the Love of God*: For that Love or Charity which is shewn to our Neighbour, is comprehended under the other; because the Love of our Neighbour is *then* only Charity when it springs from the *Love of God*; and because where the Love of God is the Love of our Neighbour will spring from it: *He that loves God, will love his Brother also.* Now there can be no Doubt, but when St. *Paul* declares this of the highest Performances that can be instanced, he surely declares as much in Effect of all other whatsoever. So we must conclude his Doctrine to be, that the *Love of God* is required as a vital Principle, without which all that might otherwise pretend to the Title of Virtuous or Religious, is worthless, false, and dead. Now since it appears to be the indispensable Duty of every Soul to *love God*, and that it is the very Test and Life of every other Duty; it is very necessary, both for our Safety and Comfort, to understand it aright: For not only they that fail in this Duty fail

SERM.

XX.





SERM. in all ; but they that fail in it least of all,  
 XX. are the most apt to be perplexed, and a-  
 fraid, and even to despair, as if they did.  
 Therefore I will shew the Cause, *first*,  
 Why the *Love of God* is thus universally  
 required to Religion ; and *secondly*, those  
 by which it is form'd in Hearts that are  
 religious ; and then, in the *third* Place,  
 from thence state and limit the Nature of  
 it ; and introduce throughout such Infe-  
 rences as are most useful, and answer such  
 Objections as are most weighty and signi-  
 ficant.

To the *first*, I will not prove, what  
 every body must see, that there can be no  
 Religion, but what is built either upon  
 the *Fear* of the Deity, or the *Love*, or  
 upon them *both*. 'Tis as plain, that  
 what is built on *Fear alone*, is dishonour-  
 able to God, arising from a false, imper-  
 fect Notion of his Nature ; and does by  
 that Notion set up, in Effect, a false God,  
 and so a false Religion and wicked Wor-  
 ship. The *Love* of God must therefore,  
 you see, be admitted as a *Foundation* to  
 any religious Practice ; and (because it  
 flows from more excellent Apprehensions  
 of God than *Fear*) as the most principal  
 Foun-

Foundation. Let us hear the Author of SERM.  
 the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, setting forth XX.  
 what is required to give a Man, in any  
 true Sense, the Name of *Religious*, Chap.  
 xith. 6. *He that cometh to God, must be-*  
*lieve that he is, and that he is a Rewar-*  
*der of them that diligently seek him. He*  
*that cometh to God; that is, who would*  
*religiously serve him, must believe that he*  
*is: But that's impossible without believ-*  
*ing the very principal Things of his Na-*  
*ture, in which and by which he is. To*  
*the Purpose; he must believe him to be*  
*good as well as just. Else it is evident,*  
*he does not believe that God is, but a*  
*Nature quite different from the divine; and*  
*that ought not, cannot, without the high-*  
*est Crime, be call'd God. But this Scrip-*  
*ture teaches us yet further, that such a*  
*Man must believe also, that he is a Re-*  
*warder of them that diligently seek him:*  
 Not only good in the general, but good  
 particularly to *him*, the *religious* Man.

And now I come to my *second* Head,  
 the *Cause* that forms the *Love of God* in  
 our Hearts: For here is a Cause that  
 reaches to all, how mean and low soe-

SERM. ver their Understanding and Affections run.

XX. Every one feels and loves his own Good at least, and naturally has a Regard to the Author proportion'd to the Greatness of it. See therefore, how a right Belief of God operates on the Believer's Mind. Infinite *Power* and infinite *Knowledge*, and perfect *Holiness*, will, if the Judgment be clear and well dispos'd, create Love: But as Men commonly are, they may carry them no further than Esteem, and Admiration, Fear, and Reverence. But if we believe the *Goodness* too of this holy and wise, and Almighty Being; when we are persuaded that he is the Author, the only Author, of all the Good we have, or do, or can ever enjoy, and that voluntarily confer'd on Undeservers, and Illdeservers; then we must go on; then are we constrain'd to *love* him also, and prefer him before all Things and all Persons, as knowing there is not the Person, nor Thing, that can be at all good to us but by his Permission, Appointment, and Gift. And this Consequence will be more strong still and certain, if we consider God, according to our Christian Faith, as the gracious

cious Rewarder of them that diligently seek SERM.  
*him.* For so we see him ready, after all XX.  
his other Bounties, to crown our imper-  
fect Endeavours, if true and constant,  
with good Things, infinite in Measure,  
and everlasting in Duration.

From this View of the Matter, we have a  
just Inference for the Consolation of divers  
good and pious People, whose Souls are tor-  
mented with Doubts and Fears that they  
are destitute of the *Love of God.* For if  
*that* is so natural and necessary a Conse-  
quence of a right Belief in his Goodness  
to us, how can they be without it? They,  
I say, who believe it, and often meditate  
upon it, and in daily Devotions give  
Thanks for it? But there is indeed ano-  
ther Conclusion with regard to the wick-  
ed, whose Belief is a bare Assent, not im-  
press'd on the Heart by any serious Medi-  
tation, nor apply'd as Occasion requires to  
the Direction of their Practice. And *that*  
answers an Objection, How, if *the Love*  
*of God* be the Effect of Christian Belief,  
so many Christians should want it, as by  
their Lives 'tis evident they do. For when  
we say that Cause *certainly* produces that  
Effect,

SERM. Effect, we still mean, if it be made use  
 XX. of and apply'd, not, if it be neglected and  
 push'd out of our Thoughts. And that  
 this is a just Distinction appears, because  
 it is the same Case in the Concerns of this  
 World; where we see every Day one  
 Man behaving *thus* for a Reason truly  
 unanswerable; and another *quite contra-*  
*ry*, though he cannot deny to you that  
 he knows the very same Reason presses  
 him. Whence is the Difference? Why  
 we know the one thinks of it, and keeps  
 it alive and warm upon his Mind, ready  
 to influence his Actions; while the other  
 puts it from him, and is still drowning  
 the Remembrances of it with the Hurry  
 and Noise of other Diversions and Pursuits.  
*Thirdly*, Since it has been shew'd from  
 the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, that to be a  
 Religious Man, one must look upon God  
 as a *Rewarder*; and that the *Love of God*,  
 the great Principle of Religion, flows from  
 the Consideration of his Goodness to us,  
 present and to come; we may inter the  
 Vanity of those Men, who condemn the  
 loving and serving God for Hope of Re-  
 ward, as *mercenary*. To talk thus, tho'  
 it

it may look like a Strain of Piety, is indeed to forget both the general Nature which God hath given to Man, and the Revelation he hath made in Holy Scripture for the Government of his Life. We may well content ourselves with St. *John's* Divinity, who dwells so much on this Subject; and says plainly, 1 Epist. iv. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

The *third* general Head, which I proposed, is more fully to state and describe the *Love of God*, intended by the Word *Charity* in my Text. This we shall be helped to do, by reflecting on the Causes before set forth which produce in us that Love: For the Effect must be answerable to its Cause. And here I will not insist on the sovereign Excellence and Perfection of the Divine Nature (because few Men can or do attain that Strength and Purity of Thought, as *thence* to kindle and maintain the Love of God in their Hearts) but come directly to that which every rational Creature must be affected with, even God's Loving-kindness to *us*; his being the free Dispenser of so many great Benefits to us, past and present; and the only

Author

SERM.

XX.



SERM. Author likewise of all we hope for, especially those infinite and endless ones in a better Life. These we have before observed to be the Motives of our Love to him. What *Affection* therefore the Consideration of these Benefits *naturally* inspires the Mind with, such is and will be our *Love* towards God. Our Creator, Preserver, and Blessor, our Redeemer and eternal Rewarder form the Object, endearing itself; and the Kind of Love this Object attracts and commands, is plainly a Love of Gratitude, and of joyful Trust, and of Honour and Value; all suitable to their Object, and therefore so great as to shut out all Possibility of a Rival. So the Devotion of the *Psalmist*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of thee.* And so the Form of delivering the first, the great Commandment concerning this Matter, in *Deut.* vi. 4, 5. points principally against all Rivalship. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.* Idolatry is here forbidden

bidden in special, as appears more fully SERM.  
XX.  
by the Relation this Place bears to the first and second of the *Ten Commandments*, where Idolaters are called *Haters* of God, and He himself *a jealous God*; as it does likewise by the general Language of the Scriptures, which terms Idolatry, Fornication, and Adultery against God. Nevertheless, this further Consequence is evident, that the Man who *loves the Lord with all his Heart, and Soul, and Might*, can neither prefer, nor equal any Thing in the World to him; cannot depart from his Adherence and Duty to him for the Love or Fear of the most powerful Temptation. A Consequence, which St. Paul, with Regard to Christians, has asserted with that triumphant Assurance, *Rom. viii. 38, 39. I am persuaded, saith he, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*


We have now described *the Love of God* as derived from its Causes, and added the

Con-



SERM. Confirmation of Scripture ; and have  
 XX. found, that *he* loves God as he ought,  
 who is thankful to him, and with Comfort and Complacency relies on his Goodness, and esteems and honours him in his Heart as his chiefest (or rather only) Good above all Things in Heaven and Earth. This being settled, we have Ground to confute some Mistakes which are met with in relation to this Subject.

The *first* shall be of those Men, who would exclude *Fear* from being a proper Motive to the Service of God, in Minds throughly Christian, allowing it Place only in the *Beginnings* of Religion, and then setting the good and holy Man above its Consideration. But alas ! who is there yet cloth'd in this Flesh but is weak enough to want that powerful Restraint ? And what Licentiousness is not to be apprehended, if by these ill-grounded Refinements Men come to lay aside the Bridle of holy Discipline, and Guide of human Life ? I call them *ill-grounded* ; For *first*, there is nothing inconsistent with the *Fear* of God in the Nature of our *Love* to him. Sovereign Honour, and Value, joyful Trust,  
 and

and grateful Affection, all agree very well SERM.  
 with Fear ; that is, a *conditional* Fear, XX.  
 upon the Supposition of our falling away   
 from the Duties of that Love ; which  
 surely no Man but has Need sufficient to  
 be cautious and apprehensive of. *Second-*  
*ly*, The Text, chiefly insisted on for this  
 Opinion, does not prove it. 'Tis the 1st  
 of St. *John*, iv. 17, 18. *Herein is our*  
*Love made perfect, that we may have Bold-*  
*ness in the Day of Judgment : Because as*  
*he is, so are we in this World. There is*  
*no Fear in Love ; but perfect Love casteth*  
*out Fear : because Fear hath Torment.*  
*He that feareth is not made perfect in*  
*Love.* I cannot indeed rely upon the An-  
 swer commonly given, That *the Day of*  
*Judgment* signifies here the *Time of Perse-*  
*cution* ; and so *Fear* is the Fear of *suffer-*  
*ing* in it. But I say the Apostle limits the  
 Nature of that Fear he speaks of (though  
 it be a Fear of God) by applying the Rea-  
 son, *Because Fear hath Torment.* Now a  
*tormenting* Fear, be it of Distrust, or of  
 impenitent Guilt, consists not indeed with  
 Love. But what is that to the Fear of  
*Offending*, and of the Consequences, if  
 we

SERM. we do ? This Fear is rather inseparable  
 XX. from Love, than any way contrary to it.

And thus is this Place reconcil'd with the  
 Multitude of other Scriptures wherein we  
 know the Fear of God is perpetually re-  
 commended and impressed upon us. I  
 will read to you only one of them, but  
 sufficient to leave the Matter perfectly  
 clear and without all Doubt ; for it com-  
 bines together, and commands the Fear of  
 God, and the Love of God, in the same  
 Sentence, and the same Breath. *Deut. x.*  
*12, 13. And now, Israel, what doth the*  
*Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear*  
*the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways,*  
*and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy*  
*God with all thy Heart, and with all thy*  
*Soul, to keep the Commandments of the Lord*  
*and his Statutes, which I command thee this*  
*Day for thy Good ?* You hear *Moses* in  
 these Words summing up the whole Law,  
 and contracting the Substance of it (in a  
 Manner) to three Words, *Fear*, and *Love*,  
 and *Obedience* : Of which, the two *first*  
 (*Faith* being presupposed) are the main  
 Principles, Motives, or Causes ; and the  
*latter*, the Effect, Matter, and Business of  
 true

true Religion. So well is our *Liturgy* SERM.  
 authorized, wherein we pray to God for XX.  
*an Heart to love and dread him, and dili-*  
*gently to live after his Commandments.*

A *second* Mistake, which we have gain-  
 ed the Light to rectify, may be, in some  
 pious but less knowing People, the same  
 we had Occasion to speak to before ; who  
 observing how their Minds are affected to-  
 wards other Objects of their Love, and how  
 towards Almighty God ; and perceiving  
 they are so more *vehemently* and *sensibly*  
 to the former, shall for that Reason be-  
 lieve themselves destitute of the true Love  
 of God. They conclude truly, both with  
 respect to the Commandment, which  
 requires *all the Heart*, and with respect to  
 the sovereign Excellence of the Divine  
 Nature, that if their *Love of God* do not  
 exceed what they have to every Thing else,  
 'tis in Effect Nothing. For it complies  
 not with the Commandment ; and instead  
 of honouring, dishonours its supreme Ob-  
 ject. But it ought to be consider'd, that  
 this Object is a pure Spirit, *whom no Man*  
*hath seen, nor can see* ; not to be appre-  
 hended by any of our bodily Senses. And

SERM. since 'tis from *them* ordinarily that all *pas-*  
 XX. *sionate* and *transporting* Affections are  
 ~~~~~  
 kindled, we should not measure and estimate the Love of God by Comparisons in that Kind. THAT may well be neither insincere, nor so defective as to be rejected, tho' without any Height of a *sensible* Fervour. So no one need to despair of himself, because he feels his Affections mov'd with more *Passion* and *Eagerness* towards other Things. This depends upon *bodily* Temperament; and God hath taught us another Way to try the Reality and true Degree of our Love to him. What is that? To look to the *Effects* of it. If for his Sake, and his Commandment's Sake, we pay Obedience to his Laws; we may comfort ourselves that our Love has stood the Test. But if any Thing else be lov'd too well to be rejected, when it comes in Competition with our Duty, we are convicted of Deficiency or Insincerity. The Love of God dwells not in our Hearts, whatsoever Warmths or Emotions they may sometimes be sensible of. Let us then rest in the Proof prescribed by Scripture, and be assured,  
 that

that no other Testimony is sufficient, nor SERM.  
yet necessary to assure our Consciences. XX.

Those Scriptures are well known: *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* And our Saviour's Words, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* And again, *If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love.* And several others to the same plain Effect.

I have now shewn and asserted the Sense of the Text; that the most difficult, and beneficial, and honourable Actions, which Religion can dictate, or enable Man to do, may yet be done, without any Religion at all, and are so, where they have not for a Motive the Love of God; THAT being as the Principle of Life, and the Soul itself of religious Duty. I have shew'd likewise the Nature of this Love; that it consists in the incomparable Honour and Esteem, the joyful Dependence, and profound Gratitude of our Hearts towards Almighty God; and this was derived from the Causes of it, which were prov'd to be the various and astonishing Instances of the Divine Goodness. And a *third* Thing, before explain'd, was, why the Love of

SERM. God is universally requir'd to Religion ;  
 XX. where it appeared to be a necessary Foundation, and that the most worthy and principal one of all true Religion. In concluding I will add to the many Inferences made throughout, only one more of general Use. We have seen, that to keep any Commandment is Nothing, unless it be kept on a religious Principle. We have seen too, that Principle must be entire, sufficient to determine a Man to keep all the Commandments ; otherwise 'tis not the right Principle, and so all that it produces is vicious and defective. The *Love of God* will enable us to adhere to him against every Temptation ; therefore, if we do so against some only, we have not the true and acceptable Love. Let a Man therefore consider well concerning the Share of Influence, that Credit, Shame, Interest, or natural Temper, has upon his Actions ; and never let him give his Soul Rest, till upon a full Meditation he is assured he should, by the Grace of God, abide by his Duty, without the Help, or against the Hindrance of all these. I do not speak of Failings, which

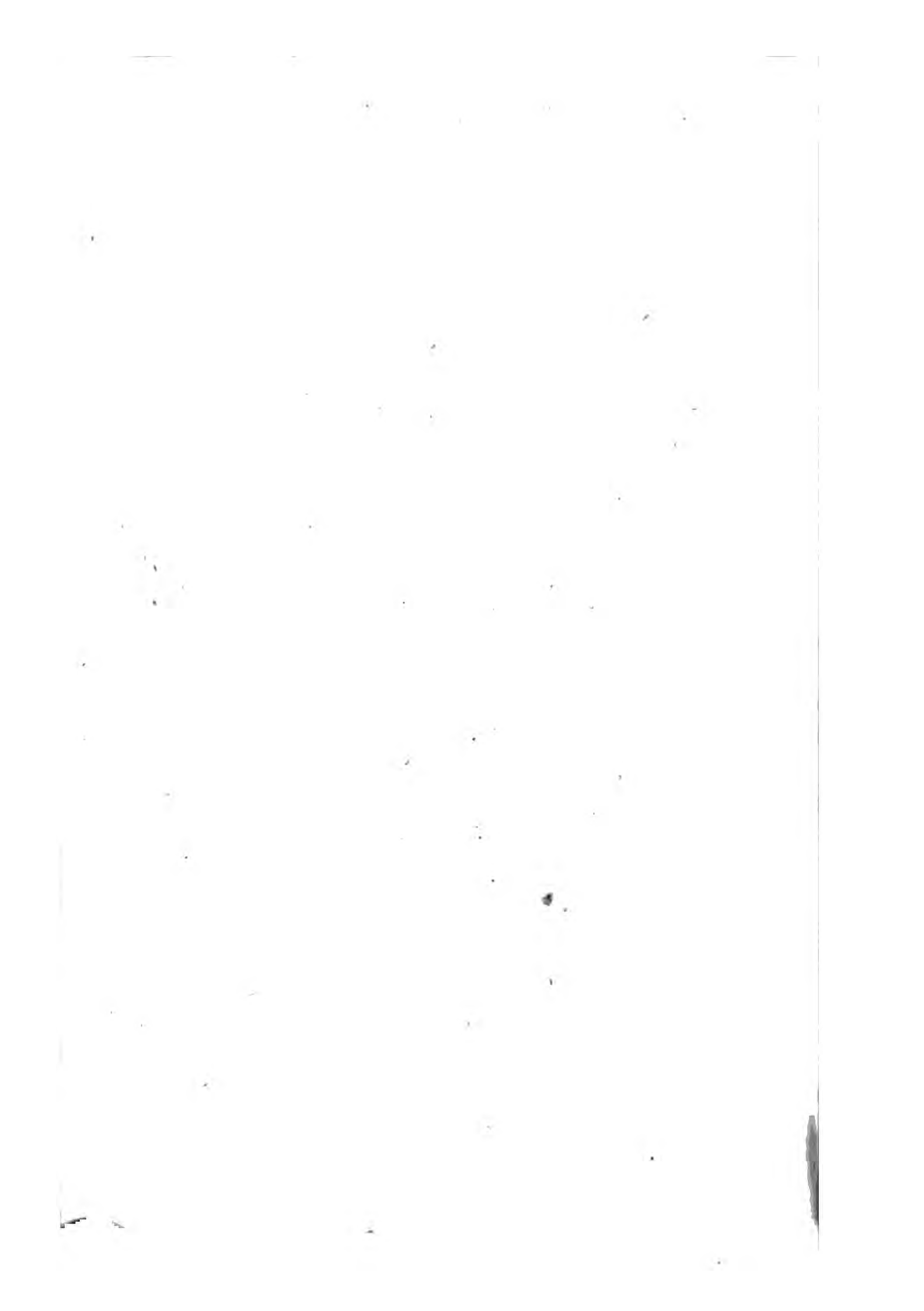
which the best Men are not clear of, but **SERM.**  
 still amend and overcome. But if in a **XX.**  
 Man's ordinary Course he follows his Rule  
 in many Things, and neglects it but in  
 one, he plainly *has not* the *Charity* in my  
 Text ; all his good Deeds (so called but  
 falsely) will *profit* him *Nothing*. And this  
 for our present State. But we must carry  
 our Concern further. We may be con-  
 scious of no habitual Breach of any Chri-  
 stian Duty, as our Condition of Life now  
 stands. Let not that alone be a Ground  
 of Security. No ; we must labour to  
 form and fix a Disposition of Soul to Obe-  
 dience, such as, whatever Occasions shall  
 arise hereafter too, may hold firm, equal  
 to every Duty, superior to every Tempta-  
 tion. What great Matter is it, if I for-  
 bear the Sin to which naturally I have  
 little or no Inclination : And what if my  
 present Circumstances invite me to no o-  
 ther ? Surely I ought to think the Time  
 of my Trial is not yet come ; which per-  
 haps comes to all Men sooner or later.  
 This is certain, all must provide against it.  
 That Provision lies in the Heart entirely,  
 and unmoveably devoted to God and his  
 Service.



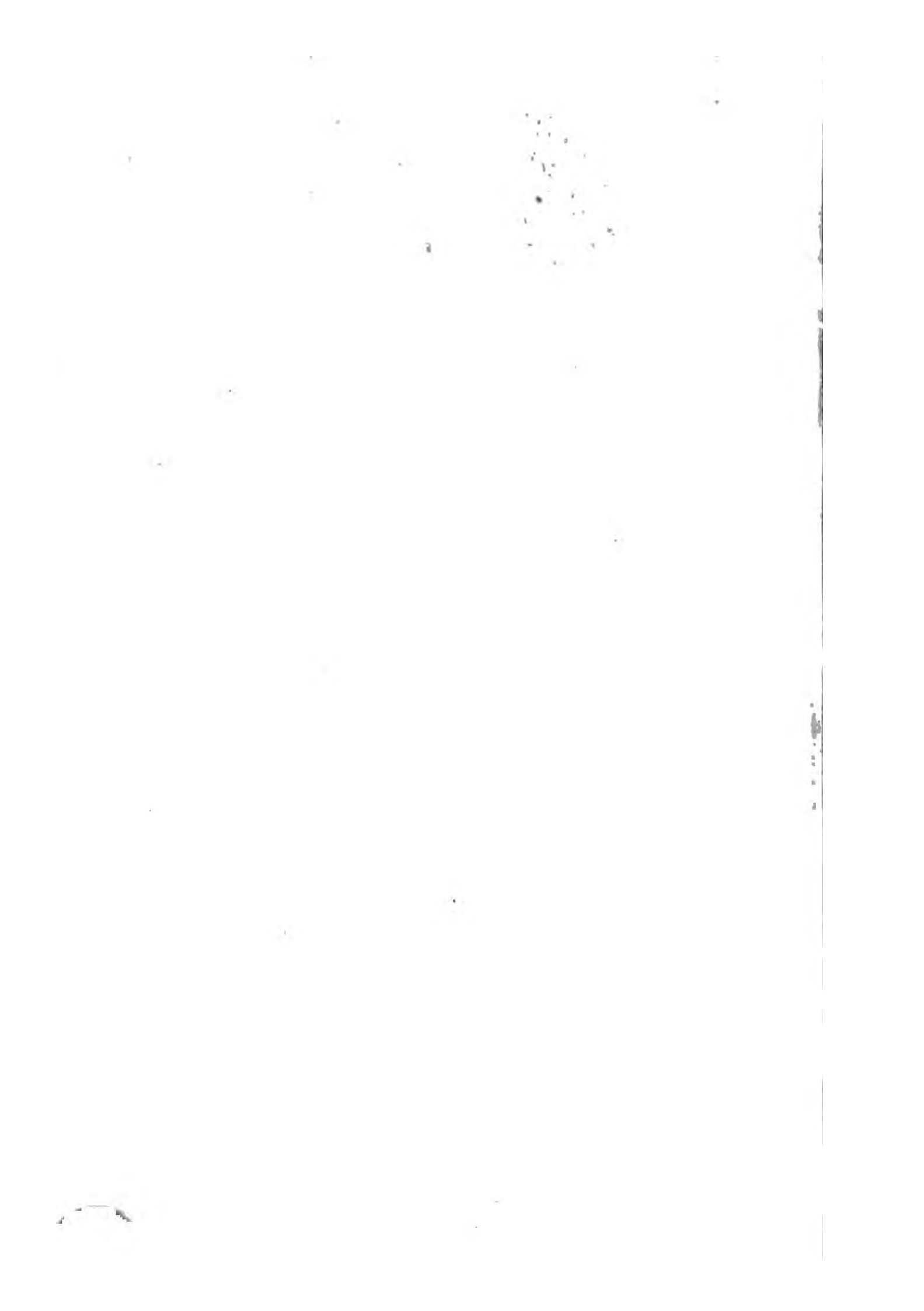
SERM. Service. Even what I do now, that is otherwise right, without *that* is naught, or at best indifferent. But *that* justifies the present, and will secure the future. From *that* we shall be able to cry with St. Paul, *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword?* And all one for the Tryals, no less powerful, of the other part; if they should be our Lot; those of Ease, and Riches, and Honours, and Power, and Pleasures. It remains, that we pray also for this Ability; and if at any Time impair'd by human Frailty, for the renewing and compleating of it by Divine Grace: And therefore the Prayer of our Apostle for his *Philippians* shall make the Conclusion. *This I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment; that ye may approve Things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the Glory and Praise of God. Amen.*

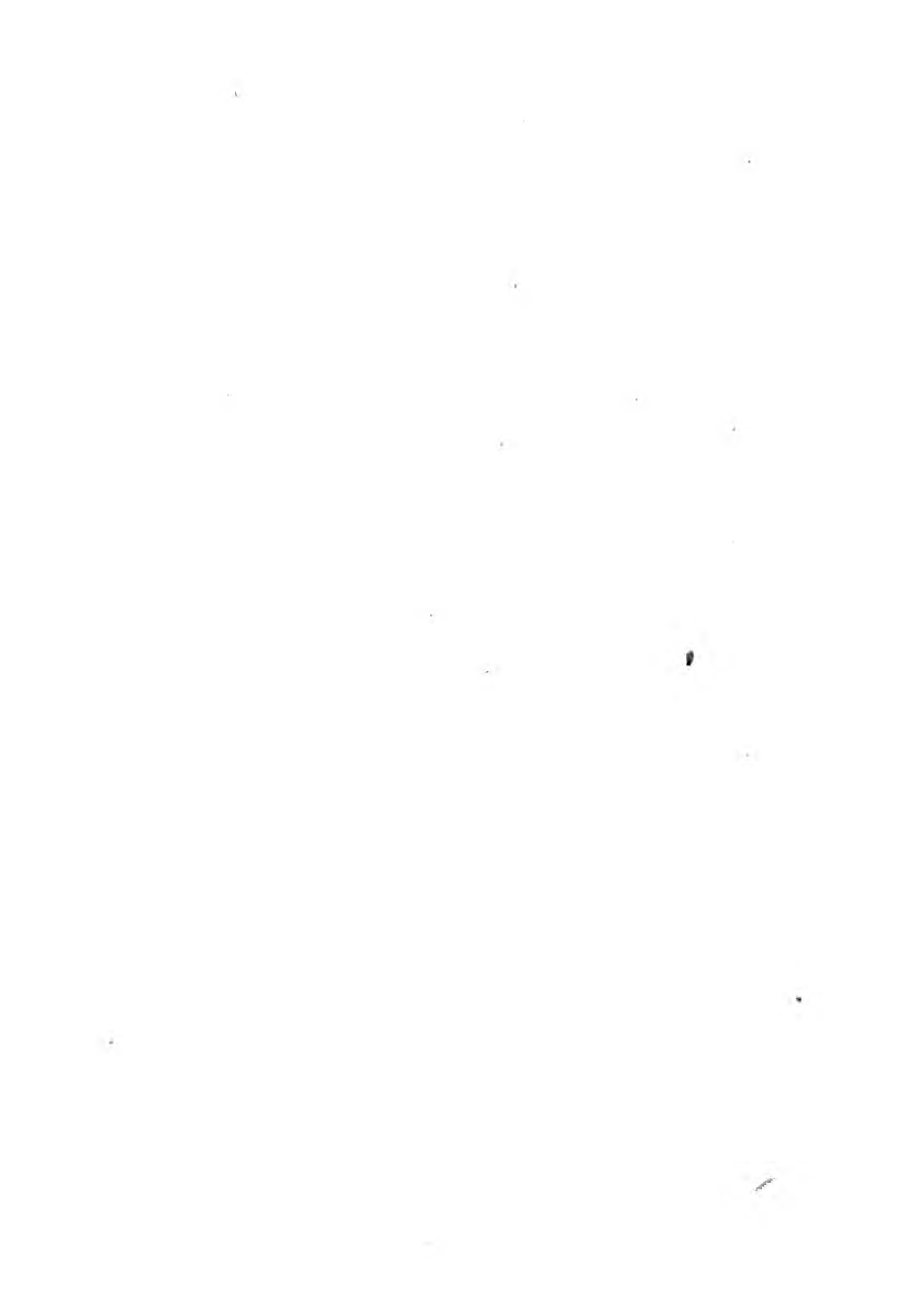
The End of the First Volume.

Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is extremely faint and illegible due to low contrast and fading. It appears to be organized into several paragraphs or sections, but the specific content cannot be discerned.













*Ex donatione Hereditum, Dni  
Francisci Yarbrough S.T.P.  
super Principalis.*

REMOVED

B. N. C. LIBRARY

BY ORDER OF





