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*The Sinful Christian condemn'd
by his own Prayers.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

LUKE xix. 22.

Preached in the Parish-Churches of
*West-Ham in Essex, and St. Olave's
Hart-street, London,*

B Y

The Rev. WILLIAM DODD
Lecturer of those Parishes:

And published at the Request of Many who
heard it.

Despise ye the Church of God? 1 Cor. xi. 22.

L O N D O N :

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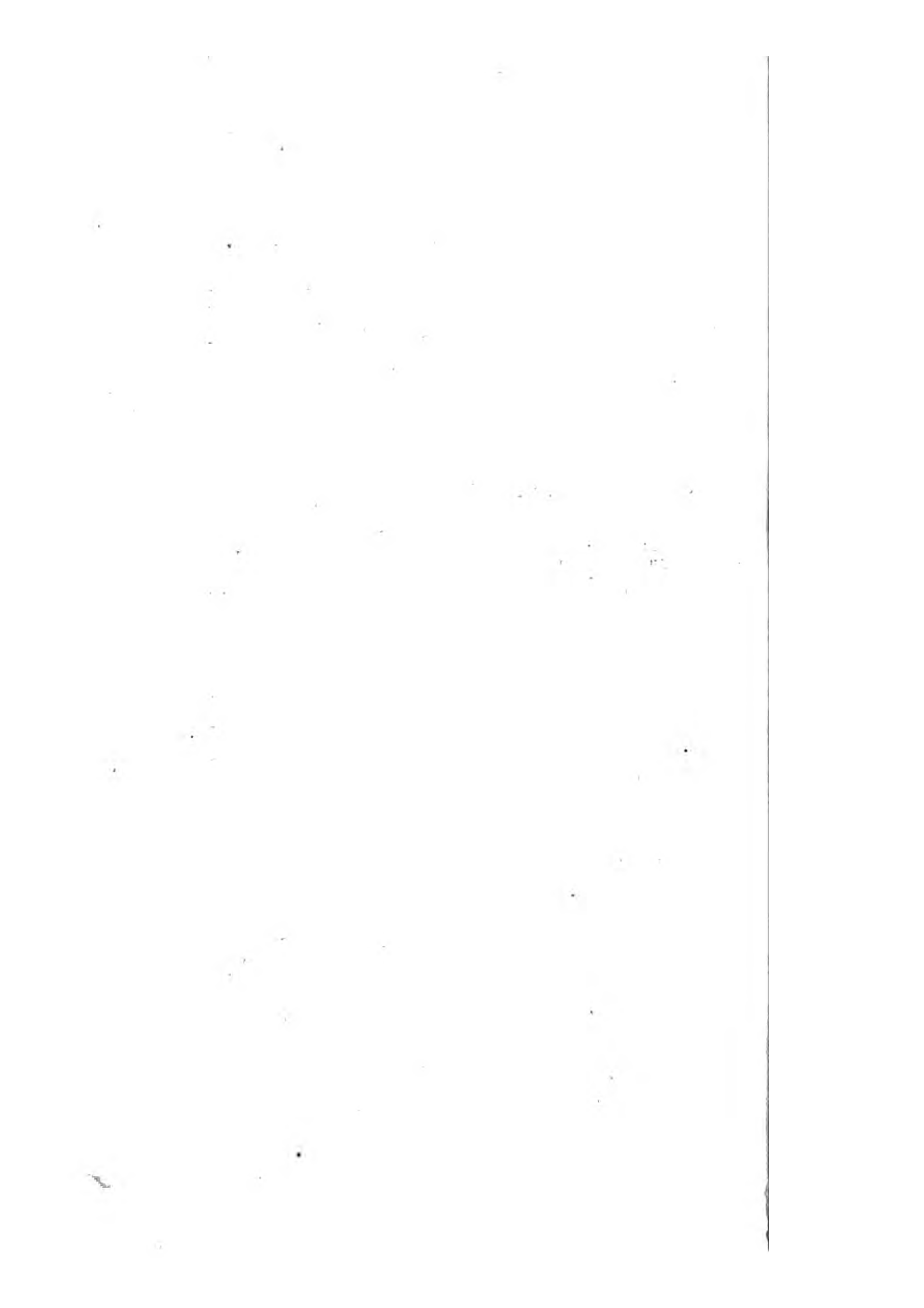
ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL of my worthy Friends and Parishioners, for whose Judgment I have the greatest Regard, being of Opinion that the following Discourse might be of Service, if made publick; I have complied with their repeated Requests, and delivered it to the World. If it be found useful in the least Degree to the Cause of Christianity, I have my Reward: And I pray God to make it so, that his Glory may more and more abound in our Land; that Numbers may be added to his Church daily; and that we his People may be so filled with his Love and Praises, as to enjoy, in the sincere Profession of the Gospel of Truth, that Peace which passeth all Understanding!

Plaiſtow, Oct. 1.

1755.

W. D.



St. L U K E xix. 22.

And he saith unto him, Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant.

OUR Saviour in this Chapter is comparing the Gospel-Kingdom to a certain Nobleman, who gave Gifts to several of his Servants, wherewith they might trade till his Return to take an exact Account of their Improvements.—(*Occupy till I come.*) St. *Matthew* speaks of ten Talents delivered to one, five to another, and so on : St. *Luke* informs us, that he gave the same to each, One Pound, which they improved differently ; the first gaining ten Pounds with it, (*Lord, thy Pound hath gained ten Pounds,*) the second, five : And they were rewarded according to their several Improvements. But another came, we are told, saying, *Lord, here is thy Pound which I have kept laid up in a Napkin : For I feared*
B
thee,

thee, because thou art an austere Man; thou takest up that thou laidst not down, and reapest that, thou didst not sow. And his Lord said unto him, *Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant.* Thy own Confession shall be thy Condemnation, which, whether it be true or false in Fact, matters little;—Thou hast said, and thy own Words shall judge thee. *Thou knewest that I was an austere Man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow, —Wherefore then gavest not thou my Money into the Bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with Usury?* “If thou knewest, as thou hast confessed, that I was this austere and hard Master, why didst thou not use all thy Endeavours to approve thyself in my Sight; since thou must be well assured, that so austere and hard a Master could never be pleased or satisfied with an idle and unprofitable Servant?”

Thus the Servant from his own Words was condemned: And thus will God judge and condemn from their own Words and Confessions all those sinful Professors of *Christ's Religion*, who bear the sacred Name of *Christians*; who are baptised with that
 holy

holy Baptism; who there have received from him the precious Gift of the holy Spirit, which they have suffered to remain buried in their Hearts; who take that holy Name of *Jesus* into their Lips, but never conform to his divine Example in their Lives. From their own Lives and Confessions will he condemn such; and what Condemnation can be more bitter and severe, what will aggravate our Pangs and Tortures in eternal Woe more than the Reflection, that we have been our own Judges, that we have *condemned* ourselves to this Place of Torments?

We especially, of the Church of *England*, shall above all others be thus self-condemned, if our Lives be not agreeable to the Doctrine of *Christ*, if our Talent be *wrapped up in a Napkin*, if we do not improve the precious Gift bestowed upon us, and live in that Faith and Holiness, which we profess, and for which we continually pray. For think, what egregious Mockery of God it is, in solemn Prostration to bend ourselves before his Throne, and, with united Voice, to ask for Graces and Virtues,

which, as we never desire, so we never strive to obtain?

To set this Matter in the clearest Light before your Eyes, and so (if it please the Almighty Giver of all good Gifts) to stir up those, who in Words profess, but in Deeds deny, the Religion of *Christ*, to a serious Thought of the imminent Danger of such a self-judging, self-condemning State, I propose, in the following Discourse, to extract some few of those Passages from the Liturgy of our Church, wherein we all confess, in Prayer, our Want and Desire of the Pardon and Peace to be obtained by *Jesus Christ*: And if the Extracts occasion me to be somewhat longer than usual, I hope, the Importance of the Subject will render you attentive and patient Hearers. For I trust, this Reflection will have no small Weight with many of you,—“ What shall I answer my almighty Judge and Lord, when I stand before his awful Tribunal, *at that Day*, if I am not the Christian which I profess to be, if I do not the Things, which I acknowledge my Duty, and for which I daily pray?” This Discourse too will have another Use,

in fully satisfying you, that those Points which I have so often and earnestly pressed upon your Hearts from hence, are the very Truths you all profess to believe ; the very Things for which we jointly pray ; the very Doctrines of that Church whereof we boast ourselves Members—And may the Spirit of God so bless my Words and Labours for your Sakes, that the many Friendships and Kindnesses I receive amongst you in temporal Things, may be richly repaid in an Abundance of spiritual Blessings, to the everlasting Good and Glory of your Souls !

Our Liturgy is founded upon that whereon Redemption is founded, the *Knowledge and Confession of our lost and sinful Estate*. And therefore it begins well with several select Passages of sacred Scripture, “ moving us to acknowledge and confess our manifold Sins and Wickedness, and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the Face of almighty God our heavenly Father, but confess them with an *humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient Heart* ; to the end that we may obtain *Forgiveness* of the same, by his infinite Goodness and Mercy.”

Accordingly

Accordingly we unite, Ist in Confession of our Sins to almighty God, acknowledging with *St. Paul, that in us, that is, in our * Flesh, [our old Man, our corrupt Nature] dwelleth no good Thing:* in that, ist, “We have erred and strayed from the Ways of God like lost Sheep. 2. That we have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts. 3. That we have offended against his holy Laws. 4. That we have left undone those Things which we ought to have done; and 5. That we have done those Things which we ought not to have done; And lastly, That there is no Health in us:” No Soundness in our corrupt Nature, but that *from the Sole of the Foot even unto the Head, there is no Soundness in it, but Wounds, and Bruises, and putrifying Sores †.*—As we go on, we confess that we have *unclean Hearts*, and beg of God to make them *clean*, as He only can do it,—*O God make clean our Hearts within us.* We profess ourselves to be in the Blindness and Darknes of Sin, and beg of God to *lighten*

* Rom. vii. 18.

† Isaiah i. 6.

our Darknefs. In the Litany we confefs ourfelves *miferable Sinners*, and entreat the Lord *to have Mercy upon us*, over and over. We there befeech our Lord *Chrift* not to remember nor to take Vengeance as well of the Offences of our Forefathers, as of our own; and pray to be delivered from all our Sins, from Blindnefs of Heart, Pride, Envy, Hatred, and every bitter Fruit of the old, evil and corrupt Stock. *As Sinners we befeech God to bear us.*—We beg, not *to be dealt with after our Sins, nor rewarded after our Iniquities.*—We defire God to turn from us all thofe Evils which we moft *righteoufly have deferved*, and mercifully to look upon our Infirmities.’

Thus we confefs our manifold Sinfulnefs before God ; our loft Eftate, our utter Difobedience, and the Impossibility of attaining any thing, but by the Mercy and Forgiveness of a gracious and pardoning God : And how, my Brethren, can it be poffible, that any Christian who joins in thefe Confessions and Prayers to God, fhould ever ftand upon his own Merit, fhould ever deny his loft and fallen Eftate, fhould ever doubt of the Impossibility of an Acceptance

ance with God, save only by the Blood and Merits of *Jesus Christ*?—But who shall dare to make these Confessions, and thus to approach the Throne of an all-seeing God with a notorious Falshood in his Mouth, neither knowing, feeling, nor lamenting the Misery and Danger of that desperate Sinfulness and Iniquity which He thus in Word acknowledges, but in Deed denies, before the most High? Oh, consider that there is no trifling with this most high God, this great, all-seeing, and almighty Judge: but from thy own Mouth, from these thy own Words and Confessions, He will judge and condemn thee, miserable Sinner, who lamenting thy Sins in Word, and praying to be delivered from them, still retainest those Sins which thou confessest, still continuest in that Iniquity and Evil according to which thou desirest God not to deal with and reward thee!

Thus must the Mouth of every Man be stopped.—But when we look to the Confession of Sins in our Communion Service, how should it alarm every Heart, humble us before God, and cause us in the deepest Manner to deplore that Sin wherein we were conceived, and which, like a Leprosy, hath spotted over all our Soul!—For
there

there with our Voices lifted up “ to the almighty God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, Maker of all Things, Judge of all Men, we *acknowledge* and *bewail* our manifold Sins and Wickedness, which we from Time to Time most grievously have committed by *Thought*, *Word*, and *Deed*, against his divine Majesty—provoking most justly his Wrath and Indignation against us. We profess earnestly to *repent*, to be *heartily sorry* for these our Misdoings: we declare that the Remembrance of them is *grievous* unto us, that the Burden of them is *intolerable*; and so, humbly entreat our most merciful Father, to have *Mercy* upon us, for his Son our Lord *Jesus Christ*'s Sake,—to *forgive* us all that is past, and to enable us, for the future, to serve and please him in Newness of Life.”

Who, my Brethren, that comes to this sacred Table, will ever after such a Confession talk of their Goodness, or dare to think highly of themselves?—Can Words be pen'd more strong, or can any Expressions speak more emphatically the Contrition and Humiliation of the Sinner before an almighty Judge? Let us not presume to take

them in our Mouths, nor confess that we have been *grievously wicked* in *Thought, in Word, and in Deed*, unless we have well examined and *judged ourselves*, that so we may not be *judged of the Lord*,—unless we are firmly resolved to lead a new Life, and to seek in true *Repentance* and *Faith* for Pardon and Acceptance through *Jesus Christ*,

Which is the II^d Branch of Doctrine, that our Liturgy eminently teaches, and that we profess to believe: For praying to God “to have Mercy upon us miserable Offenders, we request him to spare *us*, who *confess* our Faults; to *restore* them that are *penitent* according to his Promises declared unto Mankind in *Christ Jesu* our Lord.” And, as the Foundation of all Christian Comfort, we are told, (oh, that we may all hear with the Ear of Faith!) “That, He hath given Power and Commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his People, being *penitent*, the *Absolution* and *Remission* of their Sins: That, He pardoneth and absolveth all them that, 1st, *truly repent*; and 2^{dly}, *unfeignedly believe* his holy Gospel.” Wherefore we pray to him to give us this *Repentance*, and to endue us
I with

with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, &c. And upon the Confession and Knowledge hereof all our Service is built, in *which*, our *Creeds*, or the short Summaries of our Faith, are jointly repeated by us all; so that we can never, without a manifest Shock to our Consciences, repeat those Creeds in the Presence of God, and deny the great Truths of the Gospel, which they contain, as the Belief of a * Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; of the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of *Jesus Christ* for us;—of the assisting Grace of the Spirit, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting: Through *which*, we

* Nay indeed, as we pray to each Person of this sacred Trinity to *have mercy upon us*, miserable Sinners, so do we address them jointly, *Oh holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable Sinners.* Thus to pray to and not believe in this Trinity, is Idolatry indeed: St. *John* in his 1st Epistle, c. v. 20, having asserted the *Divinity of our Saviour* in the strongest Terms, adds very remarkably, *Little Children, keep yourselves from Idols.* “ We are in Him that is true, even in his Son *Jesus Christ*, οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος. *Hic ipse est verus Deus.— This same is the true God, and eternal Life.* *Little Children, &c.* Note, the full Stop after *Jesus Christ*, in our Translation, has no Authority from the Original.

pray God to hear and accept us penitent Sinners, for the Sake and Merits of his Son *Jesus Christ*;—wherein we entreat the *Lamb of God*, that *taketh away the Sins of the World*, to have Mercy upon us: *Mercifully* to forgive us our Sins; and in every State of Life, as well as in the Hour of Death and Day of Judgment, by his Sufferings and Glories, we earnestly implore and strongly importune this *good Lord to deliver us*.

We desire God, “ whose Nature and Property is ever to have Mercy and to forgive, to loose us from the Chains of our Sins for the Honour of *Jesus Christ* our Mediator and Advocate.”—And as we thank and bless “ our heavenly Father for our Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life; so above all for his inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord *Jesus Christ*; for the Means of Grace, and for the Hope of Glory;” which alone are * obtained to us by and through Him. And in the Communion Service we profess to approach the blessed Table, “ truly and earnestly repent-

* See the *Exhortation* in the *Communion Service* toward the End.

ing of our Sins, and drawing near with Faith:”—Upon which Conditions we believe and expect to have Mercy, Pardon and Deliverance from all our Sins, at the Hands of God, “ who hath promised Forgiveness of Sins, to all that with hearty *Repentance* and *true Faith* turn unto him.” Nay we desire his Mercy to be shewed upon us as we have Faith, *as we do put our Trust in Him*. Who then without this *hearty Repentance* and this *true Faith* shall ever dare to hope for Acceptance with God? and if we are found wanting herein, how dreadfully again shall we be judged and condemned out of our own Mouths; with which we request God to restore us that are penitent, when we never think of leaving off one Sin; and that, according to his Promises in *Jesus Christ*—in whom we do not believe, when we do not live according to his Law? Moreover, in one of our Collects we desire of God to grant, “ that we may so *perfectly and without Doubt believe* in his Son *Jesus Christ*, that our Faith may *never be reprov'd in his Sight* *.—And in another acknowledge, “ That God has

* Collect for St. *Thomas* the Apostle.

given this his Son to die for our Sins, and to rise again for our Justification *, to this End or Purpose, which is a III^d essential Branch of Christian Doctrine, that we may put away the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, and always serve him in Pureness of Living and Truth.”

What then shall they do, who are Members of this Church, called by the Name of that Lord in whom they thus profess to believe as the only Redeemer, as dying for their Sins and rising again for their Justification ; to whom they pray for Pardon of, for Deliverance from Sin, and for Grace to lead a Life of Pureness and Holiness, while yet they are Friends to Sin, married to the Flesh, Slaves to the World and all its sinful Lusts, Pleasures and Passions ? Out of your own Mouths, and by your own Confessions, will God judge and condemn you, oh ye wicked Servants, if ye do not make haste to repent, and lead that Life which ye pray to lead,—(Oh strange and miserable Blindness!) and yet remain *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures,*

* Collect for first Sunday after Easter.

living in Malice and Envy, hateful and hating one another †.—For observe how the joint Petitions of the Church ascend to the Throne of God:—(Oh, that they were found pure and perfect! the earnest and sincere Breathings of every penitent and contrite Heart!) “Grant, O most merciful Father, for his Sake, that we may hereafter live a *godly, righteous, and sober* Life, to the Glory of thy holy Name.” In which Petition is contained every thing, that can be desired to the Perfection of the Christian Life; which we beg may be in and by us directed, to the Glory of God, as its ultimate End, both in what we do as to *him, our Neighbour and ourselves*. But this is not all; we request of God daily, (or at least ought to do so) “to defend us with his mighty Power, and to grant that this Day we fall into no *Sin*, neither run into any Kind of Danger, but that all our Doings may be ordered by his Governance, to do *always* that is *righteous* in his *Sight*.” Mark, these are our own Petitions; from these Words we must judge ourselves, if we do not en-

† Titus iii. 3.

deavour to keep ourselves thus free from Sin, and thus doing Righteousness, which his Grace, as we shall presently see, if desired, will enable us to do: for so far is our Lord from being an *austere and hard Master*, that, by our own Confession, the *Service of Christ is perfect Freedom*.

Our Litany breathes the most earnest Spirit of Supplication for the divine Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost, and all his precious Fruits in our Lives. And in the general Thanksgiving, we, in the strongest Terms possible, “ Beseech our almighty Father to give us that due Sense of all his Mercies, that our Hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may shew forth his Praise, not only with our *Lips* but in our Lives, by giving up ourselves to his Service, and by walking before him in Holiness and Righteousness all our Days, thro’ *Jesus Christ* our Lord.” — We desire, at the End of every Commandment, *The Lord to have Mercy upon us*, for our past Neglect and Omission, *and to incline our Hearts to keep this Law*, for the future. All through the Collects, we send up the same Requests to God, for Deliverance from Sin and for
Lives

Lives of Holiness; and in the Communion Service as we beg, "That God would for *Christ's* Sake forgive us all that is past, so we beg, that He would grant us to serve and please him in Newness of Life, to the Honour and Glory of his Name." "That our sinful Bodies may be made clean, by the Body of *Jesus Christ*, and our Souls washed through his most precious Blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him and He in us.—That we may be fulfilled with his Grace and heavenly Benediction:" Which we are assured, that we shall obtain, "if with true penitent Hearts and lively Faith we receive that holy Sacrament;—for then we spiritually eat the Flesh of *Christ* and drink his Blood;—then we dwell in *Christ* and *Christ* in us, we are one with *Christ*, and *Christ* with us." Even as our Saviour himself declares,—*Abide in me and I in you. As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit: For without me ye can do nothing**; which is

* John xv. 4, 5.

the IVth essential Branch of Christianity, whereof I choose to speak, which is clearly taught in our excellent Liturgy, which we all profess to believe, and in Faith of which we pray God to give us his *Holy Spirit*; to give unto us (as we cannot have it otherwise than as a *free Gift*) that *Peace, which passeth all Understanding*; the *peculiar Gift* * of *Christ*, and the *certain Fruit* † of the Spirit dwelling in us: “ To give us a Heart to love and dread him, and to keep his Commandments; to give Increase of Grace to all his People; to guide and govern us and his whole Church by his good Spirit; to *cleanse* the *Thoughts* of our Hearts by the *Inspiration of his holy Spirit*, that we may perfectly love and worthily magnify his holy Name.” We desire, “ That as being regenerate and made his Children by Adoption and Grace, we may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit.” —Indeed upon this Particular our very Entrance and Admittance into the Church is founded, whose baptismal Service begins

* John xiii. 27.

† Galatians vi. 22.

with

with declaring these two great Truths:—
 1st, “*Forasmuch as all Men are conceived and born in Sin*; and 2dly, that our Saviour *Christ* saith, * *None can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and the Holy Ghost.*”—How much then doth it behove us to take especial heed, that our Souls be *so renewed by the Holy Ghost*, as we request they may be; that we be so born again; since our Saviour’s Words declare, that without this *new Birth*, this Renewal by the Spirit, we *can never* enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

We confess in another Collect upon the Authority of the sacred Scriptures, “That all our Doings are nothing worth without *Charity* [or Love] even as our Lord and his Apostles declare;—and therefore we request him, to send his *Holy Ghost*, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Love.” If then we do not keep God’s Commandments, which is the only Mark and Evidence of *Love* †, how again will this Prayer condemn us?

* John iii. 5.

† John xv. 12. xiv. 15. 1 Corinthians xiii.

Further, we request God, “to make and create in us *new* and *contrite* Hearts,—we confess that we have no Power of ourselves to help ourselves, and therefore desire Him to keep us, both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls.—We acknowledge that God, by his *special Grace preventing us*, doth put into our Minds good Desires;—and we pray, that, by his continual Help, we may bring the same to good Effect: That, by his *holy Inspiration*, we may think those Things that be good; and by his merciful guiding may perform the same;—that, by his *Holy Spirit*, we may have a right Judgment in all Things, and evermore rejoice in his holy Comfort. That we who *cannot* do any thing that *is good without him*, may by him be enabled to live according to his Will, through the Spirit enabling us to think and do always such Things as be rightful; making us continually to be given to all good Works, and in all Things directing and ruling our Hearts.” Nay, we desire, that he would “endue us with the Grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our Lives according to his holy Word;”—and in the Communion Service, “we pray our heavenly

heavenly Father so to assist us with his Grace, that we may continue in the holy Fellowship of the Saints, and do all such good Works as He hath prepared for us to walk in."

What then, my Brethren, shall we say of those, who join in and dare to present these Prayers to the Throne of Grace, while they deny the Power and Influence of the blessed Spirit of God ; while they esteem as enthusiastical, those very Truths, which our Liturgy sets forth in the strongest Terms ; and while, which is at the Bottom of all the rest, an evil Heart and evil Life sufficiently shews that they are Strangers to the cleansing, purifying, sanctifying Graces of that Spirit ; by whose Power they beg God nevertheless to cleanse their Hearts, to direct and guide their Thoughts and Actions ; which unclean and impure as they are, will be found but sorry Proofs of a Spirit of Holiness dwelling in, guiding and influencing them ? Once more * imagine a Sinner at the Bar of eternal Justice, and while his Judge enquires of him, where-

* See Page 6.

fore he quenched and resisted by a sinful Life, all the Motions of the blessed Spirit,—think, what can he reply?—“ Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant,” must his Lord say. “ Thou didst confess, that without my Grace thou couldst do nothing ; thou didst desire to have the Thoughts of thy Heart cleansed by my Spirit ; and yet when I sent that Spirit, when I call’d to thee by my Word, and would fain have awakened thee from Sin, thou refusedst to obey, thou wouldest none of my Counsels, choosing Death rather than Life ;—therefore be it unto thee according to thy miserable Choice.”

Thus have I selected some Passages from the Prayers which we ourselves put up to God ;—the Truths contained in which we of Necessity believe, otherwise our Prayers are Sin, and we are Mockers. I have made no Mention of the *Lord's Prayer*, because it properly belongs to another Consideration ; though in it is contained the Sum and Substance of what is gone before, and of all Christianity. To shew its Agreement, according to the Heads of Doctrine in this Discourse, 1st, *We confess in it, our Sins and*
Trespases,

Trespases, desiring them to be forgiven, upon Condition of our mutual Forgiveness.

2. We apply to God as *our Father*, which, without *Faith*, we cannot do acceptably; for *without Faith it is impossible to please God* * :—And in doing which, we acknowledge *the Peace purchased by Christ*, who hath *reconciled us to God even the Father*, and *sent the Spirit of Adoption into our Hearts*, whereby we cry *Abba, Father* †.

3. We desire that, *his Name may be hallowed* [or sanctified] in our Lives and in all our Words; *that his Kingdom of Grace and Glory may come to us*, and all Mankind; and that we may all, in Pureness and Holiness of living, *do his Will here on Earth as his Servants do it in Heaven*; and to enable us so to do, we beg of him, 4. *To give us Day by Day our daily Bread*;—the constant Supply of his gracious Spirit, to feed and support our Souls; which, if we seek first, we are assured that Food and all earthly Things shall not be wanting unto us ||: and this Grace and Spirit assisting us, we pray, as for Support,

* Heb. xi. 6.

† Rom. viii. 15, &c.

|| Matt. vi. 33.

fo for Deliverance from Temptation and the Power of the *Evil One*, our spiritual and deadly Enemy.

It would be very easy to select from our Liturgy Petitions confirming every Point of Christian Doctrine ; and it would be as easy to confirm, in return, every Passage (as well those here selected, as the rest) by Texts of Scripture, and Authors of the greatest Eminence in the Church of *England* ; a Work which might not be without its Usefulness, but which is far beyond the Compass of a single Sermon. I have satisfied myself therefore with these four main Pillars of the Christian *Faith*, so strongly built up in our Liturgy.— 1st, The Doctrine of the universal Sin and Misery of Man, 2. His free and full Redemption therefrom by Repentance and Faith in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, 3. The Fruits and Effects thereof shewn in a Life of Love and Holiness, and 4. The absolute Inability of Man to receive this Blessing, otherwise than by the Grace and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit :—And these Doctrines will be found to contain all the rest : These shew us our State, and the Way to Salvation ; these (in the Words

of the Liturgy) sufficiently prevent us from “trusting in our own Righteousness.” These must convince us, “how unworthy we are, through our manifold Sins and Offences, to offer any Sacrifice unto God, who yet is well pleased with our imperfect, though bounden Duty and Service; whom we can only approach, as trusting in his manifold and great Mercies, and as requesting him not to weigh our Merits, but to pardon our Offences, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.”

I will trespass upon your Patience but a few Minutes longer, just to observe, how much we should prize this excellent Service of our Church, which is thus pure in its Doctrines, thus found in its Precepts: And how we should be inflamed to ardent, earnest Devotion by Prayers composed with such a remarkable Agreement to Scripture, with such a Spirit and Energy of Expression, that we may pronounce them every thing but inspired: The Composers and Compilers of which excellent Service, most of them, after many and grievous Persecutions, sealed its Truths with their Blood!

“And, (to use the Words of an able Writer)

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who

who shall dare to violate this Book, which so many Confessors have signed, so many Martyrs in our Land have hallowed with their Blood? How shall we call them Martyrs if we deny their Faith? How shall we celebrate their Victory, if we dislike their Cause? If we believe them to be crowned, why shall we deny that they *strove lawfully*? So that if they, dying in Attestation of this Book, were Martyrs, why do we condemn the Book for which they died? If we will not call them Martyrs, it is clear, we have changed our Religion since then; and then it should be considered whither we are fallen? The Reformers of King *Edward's* Time died for it: In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time they avowed it under the Protection of an excellent Princess; but in the sad Interval of Queen *Mary's* Reign it suffered Persecution: And it is but an unhandsome Compliance for Reformers to be unlike their Brethren, and to be like their Enemies; to do, as do the Papists, and only to speak great Words against them. And it will be sad to live in an Age that will disavow King *Edward's* and Queen *Elizabeth's*

Religion and Manner of worshipping God ; and in an Age that shall do as did Queen *Mary's* Bishops, reject and contemn the Book of Prayer and the Religion contained in it. *”

God grant, we may never live to see such an Age, but rejoice from Generation to Generation in the full and free Possession of this inestimable Blessing ! Yet let us remember, my Brethren, and deeply fix it in our our Hearts, that being Members of such a Church, and Sharers in such a Service, will but enhance our Condemnation, if we live not as we profess to believe ; since the *Doers of the Word, and not the Hearers only, are justified before God : Since Faith without Works, is like the Body without Breath, a dead and lifeless Mass †.*

And to examine a little, whether we do indeed so live as we profess, whether we shew forth God's Praise in our Lives, as well as with our Lips ;—let us ask,—

* See Bishop *Jeremy Taylor's* Preface to his *Apology for authorised and Set Forms of Liturgy.*

† James i. 22. ii. 26:

You confefs yourfelves Sinners;—(Nay, but fome Man may ftop me and fay, “ I do not confefs myfelf fuch. I am clear from this Condemnation which you fpeak of from the Prayers; for though I come to Church, I never fay thefe Prayers, I never kneel to this God, I never lift up my Heart to him, my Eyes and Thoughts are differently employed mean while.”—Alas, vile Pretence! then fo much the more doft thou condemn thyfelf, notorious and bafe Hypocrite;—for by Baptifm thou waft made the Property of *Chrift*; thou belongeft to him, thou art his Servant by Creation and Redemption.—He hath purchafed thee with a Price great and ineftimable: And how *auftere* a Master foever thou mayft think him; be affured, He will reckon very ftrictly with thee; He will call thee to a very exact Account: And until thou becomeft wholly Apoftate, feparateft thyfelf from his Church entirely, and joineft thyfelf to the Synagogue of the *Jews* or the Mosque of the *Mabometans*, thou beareft a Part in her Prayers, and thofe Prayers will condemn thee. Nay, and if thou doft leave the
Church

Church of Christ thou canst not be saved, for *there is Salvation in no other* *. So that, poor Sinner, thou art miserably beset; there is no flying from Death, from God, and from Judgment; no Way to be happy but to leave thy Sins and be holy;—and with this solemn Truth I will leave thee, entreating God to lift up the Light of his merciful Love on the Darknes of thy be-nighted Heart.)—You confess yourselves Sinners before God; grievous, erring, offending, blind, and spotted Sinners; without any Health in any Faculty of your Souls, without any good Thing dwelling in your Flesh;—you confess that your Sins are grievous to you, the Burden of them intolerable;—But does your Heart go with your Lips?—do ye indeed feel and lament, what these Words express?—if ye do not, these very Words condemn you; you give a Lye to the Searcher of Hearts, and with impudent Boldness confess and tell to him what you know to be false.—Oh, for the Sake of *Christ*, fly from this Danger! and let the

* Acts iv. 12.

Sense of it above all Things shew you the deep and horrible Sinfulness of your Souls, not afraid as they are, thus to lye unto the Almighty Searcher of Hearts.

You profess to repent, and pray for Faith in *Christ*;—do you wish then for true Repentance, do you desire hearty Faith?—If you see yourselves *Sinners* you cannot but desire *Faith*, since that alone can bring you to *Christ*, and so *save* you from your Sins:—But if these Words are only the Fruit of the Lips;—take heed, once more I warn thee——thy own Mouth condemneth thee.

You pray to lead a *Godly, righteous and sober Life to the Glory of God*; Is God's Glory then the End and Aim of your Actions?—Do you intend it in all you do, towards him, your Neighbour and yourself? Or rather, do you never think at all thereof, but intend and act as your own Pleasure, Lust, Interest or Caprice directs?—Oh thou wicked Servant, who thus injurest thy Lord and thyself! these thy own Words,
 “ Grant, O most merciful Father, for his Sake, that I may hereafter lead a godly,
 righteous

righteous and sober Life," will be bitter against thee at the Day of sad Account.—Sinner, they will strike thee speechless before God: Oh, that now they might be found powerful to awaken thy Soul, and to drive thee to that Spirit of Grace and Comfort, by whose Aid and Inspiration alone we all acknowledge ourselves enabled to think, to act and live a Life agreeable to God.—Oh, that thou wouldst seriously lay these Things to Heart, and be moved by these *Terrors* to seek for the *Loving-kindness* of the Lord.—For what shall it profit thee to hold out, to lose thy own Soul, though thou couldst gain the whole World? what shall it profit thee to despise the Long-suffering, the Mercy and Forbearance of thy God and Saviour, not *knowing*, not *applying* that Knowledge to thy eternal Advantage; that *the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance*? Oh, that we may none of us be found Despisers of his Goodness and Love, quenching the kindly Admonitions of his Spirit, rejecting his holy and heavenly Motions;—
but

but that we may gladly welcome him into all our Hearts, give up our Souls to his divine Guidance, and by his blessed Influence be and such happy Improvers of the Talents entrusted to our Charge, as to hear from our Almighty Judge and King, " Well done thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things, Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord!"

Which divine Voice, that we may all hear, grant blessed Father for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*, thy beloved Son, and our most loving Saviour. *Amen.*

F I N I S.