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Mr. *BRADFORD*'s
SERMON,

Preached at

St. Paul's,

March *the 6th.* 169⁸₂.



10

*The Nature of that Salvation, which the Gospel
offereth; and the Method of obtaining it,
by a Mediator.*

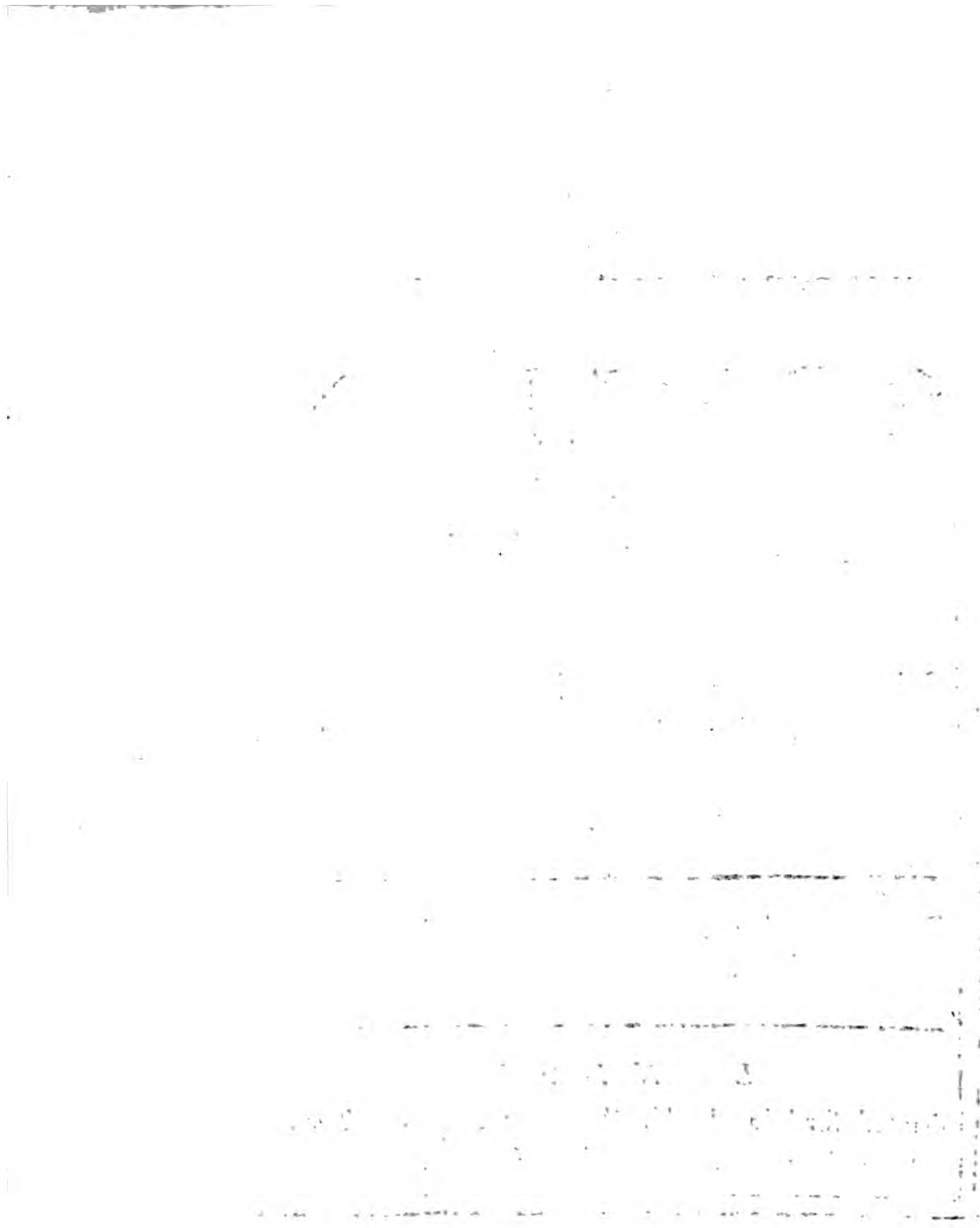
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
Cathedral Church of St. *P A U L*,
March the 6th, 1698.

Being the Third, for this Year, of the
Lecture, Founded by the Honourable
Robert Boyle, Esq;

By *SAMUEL BRADFORD*, M. A.
Rector of *St. Mary le Bow*.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*; at the *Bible and Three
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1 TIM. I. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, —

IN treating on these Words, I propos'd, by God's Assistance, to make good the Apostle's assertion, *viz.* that the Saying mention'd by him is both certainly true, and fit to be entertain'd by us with all readiness and thankfulness; and *that*, whether we consider the intrinick Evidence it carries along with it, or the external Attestation which hath been given to it.

I began with its intrinick Evidence, *viz.* its credibility from its manifest agreeableness to those Notions which we naturally have concerning God and our selves. And to make this appear, I propos'd the following Method.

First, To consider who the Persons are, whom Christ Jesus came into the World to save.

Secondly, What kind of Salvation he proposeth to them.

B

Thirdly,

Thirdly, In what way and manner he hath, by his *coming into the world*, wrought out this *Salvation* for them.

The *first* of these I have dispatch'd, shewing, that the Persons, whom *Christ Jesus came into the World to save*, were both *Men* and *Sinners*, under each of which denominations, I endeavour'd to make it appear, that they were fit Objects of the Divine Care and Compassion to be exercised in some extraordinary manner.

I proceed now to consider in the *second* place, what kind of *Salvation* *Christ Jesus* proposeth to these Creatures, concerning which I shall not need to add much, after what hath been discours'd upon the former head. For by a little reflection upon the condition of *Sinners*, 'twill be easie to discern, what kind of *Salvation* they stood in need of, which is the very same, which our Saviour hath propos'd to us in his Gospel, his design in coming into the World being to provide for the necessities of fallen *Men*; with reference to which Necessities *Salvation* must imply both a Deliverance from those many Evils, to which Sin had expos'd them; and a Restitution of those many Blessings, which by their transgression they had forfeited.

Thus for Instance; The *Salvation* of *Men* by *Jesus Christ* consists in his delivering them from the just displeasure of their Maker, and all the terrible Effects of it; together with a complete Restoration of them to the Divine favour, and giving them a Title to all those Blessings which are proper for humane Nature, when accepted of God; in the setting

setting them free from all that disorder and irregularity which had been introduc'd into the several Faculties of their Souls, together with the dissatisfaction and uneasiness of Mind which necessarily follow'd, as also from those inconveniencies and miseries to which their Bodies likewise were expos'd, either as a consequence or a punishment of the corruption of their Minds; in restoring perfectly that frame and temper of Spirit, which is natural to an intelligent and reasonable Creature, together with that healthful and vigorous state of Body, that sound constitution of the whole Man, which would have been the Effect or the Reward of Innocency and Integrity.

In a word, *Salvation* consists in reconciling God to Men, and Men to God, and in all the blessed Fruits of such a Reconciliation; which how many and how great they will be, we are not able in this imperfect State so much as to conjecture. This will be best understood, by such as shall partake of this Salvation, when it shall be fully accomplished: In the mean time, it may satisfy and encourage us to believe, that they will bear a proportion to the Bounty of God, and the Capacities of Men.

And as this is the *Salvation*, which the Gospel offereth to every particular Man to whom it is Preach'd, so it assures us, that all those who shall embrace the offer, shall be thus saved; and that the consequence of this will be a Renovation of this part of the World, which has been so miserably disorder'd by the Sins of Men, a Restitution of whatsoever has been decay'd in it, the expelling sin and misery out of it, the subduing and confining

Rom. 8. 20, the great Enemy of God and Man, who has so long
 21, usurp'd dominion over it, the *delivering the Crea-*
 22. *ture it self*, even this *whole lower Creation*, from
 2 Pet. 3. 21. that *vanity and bondage of Corruption*, to which it
 is at present *subjected*, and under which it *groans*
and travelleth in pain, into a *glorious Liberty*; in a
 word, the *creating New Heavens and a New Earth*,
wherein nothing but *Righteousness shall dwell*; and
 finally the complete and everlasting happiness of
 an innumerable company of intelligent and reason-
 able Creatures, who by the craft of their subtile
 Enemy, and through their own weakness and folly,
 had once fallen from God, and the state in which
 he had placed them, and been in imminent danger
 of utter Perdition.

All this is so evidently propos'd by the Gospel of
 our Saviour, as the design of his Undertaking, and
 so expressly and fully declar'd thereby, that I
 need not spend time in producing any particular
 Proofs.

And all this is without question highly worthy
 of so great and so good a Being as God is.

Had the Christian Revelation told us, that Al-
 mighty God had sent his only-begotten Son from
 Heaven, only to secure to us the pleasures of the
Elysian Fields, or a *Mahometan Paradise*, to pro-
 vide for us a full and perpetual Enjoyment of Sen-
 sual Entertainments and Delights; whosoever had
 any just thoughts of the divine, or humane Na-
 ture, might reasonably have disputed, nay boldly
 denyed the divinity of such a Revelation. But
 when on the contrary it assures us, that our Savi-
 our came into the World with such noble and ge-
 nerous

nerous designs as these, to cause the displeasure of God to cease, to heal the diseases of immaterial and immortal Spirits, to repair the divine Image in them, to restore both them and the Tabernacles they sojourn'd in to their primitive Integrity and Soundness, to repair the ruins of Nature, to make the Beauties of the Creation in this lower World conspicuous, to destroy the Works of the Devil, to recover such of God's Creatures as should be found capable of a Recovery, to introduce and settle Everlasting Righteousness and Peace, and finally to make a considerable number of the children of Men Eternally happy in the Enjoyment of their Maker; these are all of them things so well becoming the Majesty and the Benignity of the Everlasting Father, and his only-begotten Son, and at the same time so beneficial and grateful to humane Nature, that we have all the reason in the World to hearken to such a Revelation as this, and to be well dispos'd to receive it as coming from God.

And this again renders the *Saying* in the Text still more *credible*, when we thus consider what kind of *Salvation* that is, which *Christ Jesus* offereth to *Sinners*.

But because the main stress, with respect to the intrinsic Evidence of this *Saying*, will lie upon what I have to offer upon the *third* general Head I proposed, I therefore proceed to that, designing to insist more largely and particularly upon it, *viz.* to consider in what way and manner *Christ Jesus* by his *coming into the world* hath wrought out this *Salvation* for *Sinners*.

The

The Nature of *Man*, and the condition of *Sinners*, as you have heard, make it credible, that God should concern himself for their Recovery. 'Tis also credible, that if Almighty God should offer *Salvation* to Men, it would be such a kind of *Salvation* as I have been describing : But besides all this, the Method in which our Lord hath obtained this *Salvation* for us is so excellent in it self, so suitable to the nature of things, so agreeable to all just apprehensions both concerning God and our selves, so well accommodated to our necessities and our reasonable desires, that I am verily perswaded, nothing but a want of understanding it can occasion any reasonable man to hesitate at the belief of it.

I am very sensible, before I enter upon this Argument, that we ignorant and weak Creatures are not able to account for the Works of our Maker. Even the least of his Works in Creation and Providence infinitely exceeds our Comprehension ; and much more the wonders of our Redemption by Jesus Christ. We are not capable of diving into all the depths of this admirable Dispensation, nor of spying out all the reasons and excellencies of it. But yet so much we may discern, as may cause us justly to admire and adore the divine Perfections display'd therein, and may strongly incline us to believe the Divinity of this Revelation, even before we come to consider the external Attestation which it hath receiv'd from God. This therefore is next in order to be done, *viz.* to contemplate the Method in which *Christ Jesus* by his coming into the world saveth *Sinners*, and with Modesty and Re-
verence

verence to inquire into the Way and Manner of our *Salvation* by the Gospel.

Now the most comprehensive Notion we can frame to our selves of our blessed Saviour's Undertaking is, that he acted as a *Mediator* between God and Men ; and therefore by considering what the Office of a *Mediator* is, and how our Lord executed that Office, we shall be the better able to understand the Method of our Salvation by him.

That our Lord sustein'd the Character of a *Mediator*, is evident from the account we have of his Undertaking, throughout the Scriptures. Those Persons, who in the Old Testament are mention'd as Types and Representatives of the Messiah, were divers of them a sort of *Mediators* between God and the People of *Israel*. *Moses* the great Lawgiver of the *Jews* was apparently a Figure of Christ in this respect ; as he managed all affairs between God and that People, receiving and delivering Messages from God to them, and again presenting their Addresses to God, and frequently making supplications on their behalf. And therefore the Apostle gives him this Title, when he says, that *the Law was ordain'd by Angels, in the hands of a Mediator*, meaning *Moses*. Gal. 3. 19. The *Levitical* Priests were so many Types of our Lord, as they were a sort of *Mediators* between God and the *Israelites*, being appointed to expound the Law of God to them, to bless them in his Name, and to offer up Sacrifices together with Prayers and Praises to God upon their account. Their High-Priest had in an eminent manner this Character, exercising the *Mediatorial* Function, as a
special

- Heb. 9. 7. special representative of the Messiah, when he went *alone once every year* into the *second Tabernacle*, or holy of holies, upon the great day of Expiation, *not without blood, which he offer'd* not only for himself, but also for the errors of the People.
- 1 Tim. 2. 5. As to the New Testament, it may seem superfluous to recite from thence any particular Proofs, that our Saviour acted as a *Mediator* between God and Men; 'tis his Character throughout that Volume. *There is*, saith St. Paul, *One God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* The Author to the *Hebrews* making a comparison between the High-Priests under the Law, and our great High-Priest under the Gospel, saith
- Heb. 8. 6. of him, that *he hath obtain'd a more excellent Ministry* than theirs, *by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant.* He calls him again more than once, *the Mediator of the New Testament, or Covenant.* And to add no more, St. Paul, though he does not there use the Word *Mediator*, yet he expresses the sense of it very emphatically, where
- chap. 9. 15.
chap. 12. 24. he says, *There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we eis αὐτῷ for, or to him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we δι' αὐτοῦ by him;* in which words he evidently opposeth the *one Lord* or *Mediator* of Christians, to the *many Lords*, or *Mediators* of the Gentiles, mention'd in the preceding Verse; and in saying that *all things*, particularly *we* Christians are *by him*, he plainly gives him the Character of a *Mediator*.
- 1 Cor. 8. 6.

What the Office of a *Mediator* is, we all know, *viz.* to make up a difference between two Parties, and

and in order to that, equitably and impartially to consider the real Interests and the just pretensions on each side, and to transact matters so, that both may be satisfied; that if any injury has been done, it may, as far as 'tis possible, be repaired; that whatsoever displeasure has been conceiv'd may be remov'd; that whatsoever mischief has been produc'd, it may be prevented for the future; in a word, that all things may be managed suitably to the condition, and agreeably to the expectation of the Parties concern'd.

But before we come to consider the particular way and manner in which our great *Mediator* hath discharg'd this his Undertaking, it may not be amiss first to shew in the general, that it was perfectly agreeable both to the nature of God, and of fallen Man, that there should be a *Mediator* to transact this great affair of reconciling this Apostate Creature to his Maker.

That this hath been the general Apprehension of Mankind, that it becomes us to approach to God by a *Mediator*, is fully evident from all the Records of antient and almost universal Practice. The Distinction between *Θεοί* and *Δαίμονες*, the superior Gods, and Dæmons, among the Pagan Theologers is well known, and how they made the latter a sort of *Mediators* between the Gods and Men. *Plutarch* is very express to this purpose, where he mentions the *τὸ Δαιμόνων γίνεσθαι ἐν μέσῳ Θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων*, and he only makes it a Question, whether those who asserted this Doctrine deriv'd it from *Zoroaster* and the *Magi*, or from *Orpheus* and the *Thracians*, or whether it had an *Egyptian* or *Phrygian* original; but

Plutarch.
περὶ τῶν ἐκ-
λελοιπότητων
χρησιμίων.

he takes it for granted it was of the utmost Antiquity, and venerable upon that account, as well as reasonable in it self. And even those Pagan Philosophers, who conceiv'd most worthily of the Divine Nature, and acknowledg'd one Supreme God over all, yet at the same time allowed and practis'd the worship of inferior Deities, as a kind of *Mediators* between the Sovereign God and mortal men, as it were easie to shew from the School of *Plato*.

Gen. 3. 15.

As to the original of this Notion, and particularly whether it became so universal from a primitive Tradition, ever since the Promise made to our first Parents, of *the seed of the woman*, and the appointment of expiatory Sacrifices (as is probable) at the same time, I shall not venture to determine; tho' to such with whom the Scripture Records have their just weight this appears most likely. But be that as it will; what I at present insist upon is, that this is agreeable to the natural Apprehensions of Mankind; insomuch that though the Pagan Theologers exceedingly err'd in appointing to themselves *Mediators*, whom God never intended, nor could approve; yet they had good ground for conceiving a *Mediator* necessary, at least highly expedient, between the divine Majesty, and the sinful children of Men. It ought not to pass for a Mistake or a Prejudice taken up without reason; but for a natural and just apprehension, as will plainly appear, if we contemplate the Perfection of the divine Nature, or the Imperfection of our own.

We

We conceive of God, as a pure Spirit, Eternal, Incomprehensible, Infinite in all Perfection: We feel our selves dependent, indigent, weak Creatures, at an infinite distance from him who made us. And although, if we had retain'd our Native Integrity, the consideration of the divine Goodness, and our own Innocency, might have embolden'd us to approach to him with freedom: yet being farther apprehensive of his infinite Purity, and intimately conscious of our Apostacy from him, and the impurity and disorder we have contracted thereby, we must needs be asham'd and afraid to approach to him of our selves, and we cannot but wish that we could meet with some Person worthy and fit to mediate between him and us, who would be so kind as to offer us his Assistance, and introduce us again into his Presence and Favor.

This was that, (as I took notice in my former Lecture) which, according to the account of *Moses*, caus'd our first Parents to hide themselves Gen. 3. 8. from the face of God, and tremble when they heard his voice, as soon as ever they were conscious of having transgress'd his Law, and thereupon felt themselves naked. And 'tis the very same thing, which makes every Sinner, instead of repenting and returning to God, be apt still to run farther from him; his guilt, as well as his corrupt inclination, rendering him shy of approaching to him, or hoping in him. For although, what I have before observ'd is true, *viz.* that 'tis both natural and reasonable to hope, that so good a Being as God is, would find out some way, for
C 2 the

the Recovery of such Creatures as fallen Men are; yet 'tis as natural and reasonable to be fill'd with shame and Fear, in the sense of having offended this great and good Being, and to wish that some one might be found out to interpose between him and us. And therefore *Job* speaks the language of Nature, who, though he were as apprehensive as any Man of the divine Goodness, and conscious of his own Integrity in the main; yet considering the greatness of God's Majesty, and his own weakness, both as a Man, and a Sinner, and at present in great distress, he makes this a part of his complaint, *He is not a Man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any Days-man* (the Septuagint uses the very word *Mediator*) *between us, who might lay his hand upon us both.*

That this is really the sense of Nature, may yet farther appear, in that amongst Men it is always reputed fit and decent, and the properest Method for attaining our end, that an Inferior, who has injured or disoblig'd his Superior, should attempt a Reconciliation, by the interposal of some third Person well known to them both. If a Child by gross Neglect or wilful Disobedience has incur'd the displeasure of a Parent, notwithstanding his knowledge and experience of his Parents Affection and Tenderness, 'tis very natural for him to desire some good Friend, who has an Interest in his Parent, and is more his equal, to mediate in his behalf. If a Subject has rebell'd against his Prince, and thereby dishonor'd and offended him, be the Prince never so famous for his goodness and

and clemency, yet the Rebel is naturally afraid to approach him, without the intercession of some prevalent Friend at Court. And in each of these Cases, both the Father and the Prince judge it to be more fit and decent, they better like and approve this manner of proceeding, than if the undutiful Child or Subject should boldly and confidently intrude themselves into their presence. And it is lookt upon by all, as more for the Honor of the Superior, as well as the satisfaction of the Inferior, that this course should be taken. It doth right to the one, by rendering his Authority more awful for the future; as well as it relieves the other, by affording him assistance suitable to his distress, and agreeable to his wishes.

And if it be thus amongst Men, why should it not much more be thought a reasonable way of proceeding between the great and holy God, and his apostate Creatures; when the universal Parent hath been disoblig'd by his Offspring, and the Supreme Lord of all disobey'd by his Subjects?

There is not indeed upon all accounts the same use of a *Mediator* between God and Men, as between one Man and another. A Mediator between Men may be often necessary to remove unreasonable Prejudices; to rectifie Mistakes and Misapprehensions, which may have been taken up without cause; or to allay inordinate Passions, which may have been raised on one side as well as the other. But in God, none of these things can be conceiv'd; He can have no unreasonable Prejudices
against

against his Creatures ; no Misapprehensions concerning them ; no inordinate Passions with respect to them : but still it may be for the honor of God, and consequently to his satisfaction ; as well as for the benefit of the Sinner, that a *Mediator* should interpose between them, as I shall presently endeavour to shew more fully. Thus much I thought fit to premise with respect to this Method of our Salvation in the general, *viz.* to shew the agreeableness and fitness of our Saviour's sustaining the Character of a *Mediator*, both with respect to God and Man.

I proceed now to consider more particularly, the way in which our Saviour hath executed this Office, according as the Gospel represents the matter, and to evince, that upon this account also, *This is a faithful Saying, &c.*

According to the account I have already given of the Office of a *Mediator*, there must be these two general Designs, which our Saviour must be suppos'd to have carried on in the Execution of it.

- I. To do whatsoever might satisfy Almighty God, in order to his being reconcil'd to fallen Men. And
 - II. To do also whatsoever should be found necessary in behalf of fallen Men, in order to the reconciling them to God.
- I. To do whatsoever might satisfy Almighty God, in order to his being reconcil'd to fallen Men.

Almighty

Almighty God, both as he is a Being infinitely greater than his Creatures, and as he was the Person offended, ought first to be consider'd in the Mediation, which was to be transacted; and if any thing should be found necessary, or highly expedient to be done, in order to the giving him just Satisfaction in the case, this in all reason should be a principal part of the Mediator's care.

Now as to this, some perhaps might be apt to think, that nothing more could be requisite towards the giving Satisfaction to God, than the bringing the fallen Creature to Repentance and Amendment. For what can in reason be expected from a weak and fallible Creature, such as Man is, who was drawn into Sin in the manner I have before express'd, but that he should become thoroughly sensible of his folly and guilt, humbly make his acknowledgments to his Creator, and for the future endeavour to behave himself better? And how can we suppose, that a God of infinite Goodness, should not take this as full Satisfaction from his Creature?

This by a first and superficial view of the case, some men may be apt to imagine: but if they would look more thorowly into it, and consider the matter to the bottom, they might easily see reason to alter their Judgments.

I readily allow, that this is all that can be expected from the Sinner, 'tis all he can do on his part, and a God of infinite goodness will no doubt approve of such his behaviour: but notwithstanding all this, there may be something farther necessary,

cessary, or at least highly fit to be done for the honor of Almighty God, and which he may therefore determine shall be done for his Satisfaction, before he will enter upon new Terms with his Apostate Creature.

For instance; There are two of the divine Attributes, to which more especially Honor ought to be done in this case, namely the *Holiness* of God, and his *Justice* as Governor of the World.

I.

The *Holiness* of God.

The Epithet *Holy* is frequently annexed to the sacred Name of God in Scripture, under which are comprehended all the Moral Perfections of the divine Nature, particularly his entire love of goodness, and his irreconcilable hatred of all Evil, or Sin. Hence he is said by the Prophet, to be of purer Eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look on iniquity. He is frequently represented as hating sin, and even the workers of iniquity, for their works sake; as being offended, troubled, and, to speak after the manner of men, griev'd at his heart, at the folly and wickedness of Mankind. All which denotes, although no passion in God, nor ill-will to his Creatures, of both which the Perfection of his Nature renders him incapable; yet a fixed contrariety and aversion in the divine Nature to all Moral Evil, and on the contrary a full approbation of, and inexpressible love to all Moral Good.

And Reason, as well as Scripture, assures us this must be so. For if there be so much unworthiness, baseness, and deformity in Sin, as I have shew'n

shew'd in my former discourse; if it be so opposite to the nature both of God and his Creature; and the occasion of so much disorder and confusion in the whole Creation, as I then observ'd; it cannot possibly be otherwise than the object of the divine hatred and displeasure. The better any Creature is, the more he abhors an unhandfome, a dishonest, or a wicked action; and the more he approves and takes pleasure in Virtue and Goodness of all kinds; all which is nothing else but a faint Image of God in his Creature.

From the consideration of all this it will appear very reasonable, that if a *Mediator* should interpose between God and Men, he should provide for the honor of this divine Attribute; he should take effectual care that the Holiness or Purity of God should be render'd conspicuous to all the World, even in the manner of receiving his offending Creatures to Mercy; and that the Method in which God should declare himself reconcileable to Sinners should be such as might consist with, nay fully testify and express his abhorrence of their sins. Just as when a tender Parent determines to forgive his repenting Child, he will chuse to do it in such a way, as at the same time to discover his real displeasure upon account of the Offence he had given, and that in some proportion to the nature and quality of the offence.

The *Justice* of God, as Governor of the World, was also to be regarded in this Case. 2.

This Attribute is necessarily joyn'd with that before mention'd. The supreme Lord and Governor

Gen. 18. 25.

of the Universe must, from the purity of his Nature, be just and righteous in his Government. And therefore *Abraham*, in his pleading with God for *Sodom*, takes it for granted, that the Judge of the World would do right, and infers from thence, that he would certainly distinguish between the Righteous and the Wicked. *That be far from thee, to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right!* And as it is the part of a righteous Governor, to make a difference between the righteous and the wicked; so it is another effect of the same Righteousness, in shewing Mercy to repenting Offenders, to make them thorowly sensible of the heinousness of their Offence. Thus earthly Princes are us'd to do, and 'tis esteem'd an instance of Justice in their proceedings: and why should it not in like manner be a proper instance of Justice in the great Governor of Heaven and Earth; especially where the Offence had so much of obliquity and malignity in it, and so much disorder and mischief consequent upon it, as in the Apostacy of Mankind?

Psalm. 50. 21

The Multitude of Offenders still adds weight to this Consideration. The whole race of Mankind being corrupted; there was so much the greater necessity of their being made sensible of their Maker's displeasure, lest they should have been encourag'd to go on in their rebellion, by an easie indemnity; lest from the *silence* of God in this case, they should have been so vain as to have *thought him altogether such an one as themselves*; and because sentence against their evil works was not *speedily*, or *thorowly*

rowly executed, their hearts should have been *fully* Ecclef. 8. 11.
set in them to do evil.

And if we might be allow'd to add, what we Christians take for granted, as being assur'd of it by the Word of God, that God had given our first Parents a strict charge, together with a special admonition and warning, as to the instance in which they transgress'd, adding a positive and severe threatening, that *in the day* in which they transgress'd, *they should surely dye*; this still makes it more requisite, that the Justice of God should be publicly vindicated, before he should offer terms of Reconciliation; and that if he should in Mercy forbear to execute the threatening in its utmost severity, yet he should however make the Sinner thorowly sensible of his desert.

I might have added here, that it was very fit, that the *Wisdom* of God, as well as his *Justice* in governing the World, should be regarded by our *Mediator*; it being evidently an instance of *Wisdom* in a Governor, to render his Authority awful and venerable to his Subjects, and never to appear so soft and easie as to pass by notorious disobedience, without making some severe remarks upon it.

I might farther have observ'd, that there was no way so likely to recover the Sinner to repentance, as by thus manifesting the divine Purity, Justice, and Wisdom, in order to the awakening in him a sense of his fault and his danger, and the engaging him to take greater care for the time to come. But this may come into consideration more properly in another place. It may suffice here to have observ'd, that it was very agreeable to the conceptions we

have both of the divine Nature and our own, that something should be done by our *Mediator*, by way of satisfaction to Almighty God, for the dishonor which had been done to his Attributes by the Apostacy of Men.

What remains upon this Head is to shew, that the particular Method which our *Media or* hath taken, did eminently tend to these purposes.

'Tis true, that all the Evils, which have befallen the children of Men, since their Apostacy from God, have been so many expressions and testimonies of God's hatred of Sin, and his love of Holiness, as also of the Justice and Wisdom of his Government; but upon serious and impartial consideration of our blessed Saviour's undertaking, we shall be forc'd to confess, that greater honor hath been given thereby to God, than by all the Sufferings which any of the rest of the children of Men have undergone; and that if we do but thorowly lay to heart what he, so great and excellent a Person, hath voluntarily done and suffer'd upon our account, it will tend more effectually than any other Method we can think of, to the making us sensible of the evil and danger of offending so holy and righteous a Being as God is. For

1. Our *Mediator* gave honor to these Attributes of God, by asserting, and publishing, and explaining the Law of God which had been violated by Men; I mean the great Law of Nature, divided into two Tables, requiring the Love of God and Man; which, as they were the two constitutive parts of the natural or moral, so they are also of the Christian Law.

What

What our Lord declar'd over and above the meer Law of Nature, namely concerning the Mercy of God in forgiving Sinners upon their Repentance and Faith in him, was become necessary by reason of transgression; and even in making Repentance and Faith the conditions of acceptance, he hath in an eminent manner done right to God and his Law. For Repentance implys an acknowledgment of our unworthiness in offending God by violating the Law he had given us; and Faith in God through a *Mediator* implys our sense of guilt, and need of Mercy.

But besides this, our Lord did openly declare the Righteousness of the divine Law, as first given to Man, by explaining it fully, and inculcating it afresh upon us, and insisting upon the absolute necessity of a sincere Obedience to it, even in this imperfect State, in which we are not capable of yielding that which is absolutely perfect.

This appears by the Answer our Saviour gave to the Lawyer, telling him that *the Love of God and our Neighbour* were *the two great Commandments of the Law*, and that these were indeed *the Sum of the Law and the Prophets*: but especially by his admirable Discourse upon the Mount, wherein he vindicates the Natural or Moral Law of God, from all the false Glosses which the Jewish Doctors had put upon it, declaring the necessity of regarding even *the least of its Precepts*, by those who hoped to partake of the Kingdom of Heaven; expressly assuring them, that *he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it*, πληρῶσαι, (one way of doing which was by interpreting it in its fullest latitude and extent;) and finally,

finally, that till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfill'd; as much as to say, that the reason of it is immutable, and consequently the obligation everlasting.

But of this I may have occasion to discourse more at large, when I come to consider what our *Mediator* hath done towards the relieving our necessities; 'tis enough in this place to have mention'd it, as one instance whereby the righteousness of the divine Law was vindicated, and consequently honor given to the Purity, and Justice, and Wisdom of God.

2. Our *Mediator* gave honor to these Attributes, in complying strictly and fully with the Law of God in his own Person, and thereby giving a complete instance of Obedience in that Nature which had transgress'd.

This was to vindicate the Law of God in a remarkable manner, by shewing the agreeableness and fitness of it to humane Nature, when the Son of God, appearing in this Nature, made it the Rule of his Life, and thereby not only testified his approbation of it; but also shew'd the capacity of humane Nature, whilst innocent and untainted, and attended with the Grace of God, to comply perfectly with it. This was in truth a glorious Triumph over Sin and Satan, when our Nature assum'd by the Son of God, appear'd in that instance like it self, as it came out of God's hands, perfectly pure and obedient; and our Saviour might well say as he did, when he was leaving the World, *Father, I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finish'd the work which*

which thou gavest me to do. He had done so, both as *Man*, and as our *Mediator*.

But of this also, *viz.* the life of our blessed Saviour, as it was an example for our imitation, I shall have occasion to discourse hereafter, and therefore do but just mention it here, as another instance wherein our *Mediator* glorified the Attributes of God, by his coming into the World. But

He did so in the highest degree, by all the Sufferings which he underwent upon our account. 3.

It was not it seems sufficient for our *Mediator* to declare and publish the divine Law afresh; nor to give an instance of perfect Obedience to it in his own person: but it was judg'd requisite also, that he should submit to an afflicted and suffering condition, and at last yield himself to be offer'd up as a Sacrifice upon the Cross, to testifie, in the most significant manner that was possible, the fixed love of God to Righteousness, his unalterable hatred of Sin, his impartial justice in governing the World, the excellency of the Laws which he had given to Men, and the danger of transgressing them.

Such was the nature of the Offence given to God by Man's Apostacy, and so bad were the circumstances of Mankind, that it seem'd expedient to the great Father and Lord of all, that our *Mediator* should voluntarily humble himself in this extraordinary manner. The Son of God was admitted to be our *Mediator*, upon no lower Terms than these; as is plainly intimated by the Author to the *Hebrews*, when citing a passage out of a prophetic Psalm, he applies it to our Saviour, and represents him as saying to his Father, when he came into the World,
Sacrifice.

Heb. 10. 5,6. *Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not : but a Body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the Volume of the Book it is written of me) to do thy will O God ; by which will (as he adds a little after) we are sanctified, through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Ver. 10.

Mat. 26. 28.

And upon our *Mediator's* thus suffering for us, new terms of Mercy and Reconciliation were offer'd to us, upon which account he himself calls his Blood, *the Blood of the new Covenant ; viz.* that Blood in the shedding of which the new Covenant between God and Man, for acceptance upon Repentance and Faith, was made and ratified.

The Sufferings of our Lord are throughout the Holy Scriptures represented, as making expiation for the Sins of Men ; and particularly his death upon the Cross, as it is made to answer all the expiatory Sacrifices under the Law, so it is it self frequently Styled, a Sacrifice and Offering for Sins, and represented as the means of God's being reconciled to us ; and so it evidently was, in as much as by this means the Sins of Men were so openly condemn'd, the Righteousness of God's Law so notoriously declar'd, and by consequence the Holiness and Justice of God so conspicuously honor'd in the view of the World ; which certainly may be reasonably call'd, giving Satisfaction to God.

This Doctrine of our Saviour's offering up himself as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, and thereby giving Satisfaction to the great Lord of all, is so fully declar'd throughout the New Testament, and particularly in one whole Epistle, Written, as it should

should seem, to that very purpose, I mean that to the *Hebrews*, that I knew not how to do right to Christianity, without thus plainly asserting it.

I know, that according to the Will of our pious and charitable Founder, I am *not to descend to any Controversies that are amongst Christians themselves*, and therefore I shall not make this a *Controversie*, but take it for granted, as what is not only fully asserted in holy Writ, and agreeable to the sense of the most primitive Christian Antiquity, as well as the judgment of the main Body of Christians throughout every age ; but what belongs to the true Christian Scheme, and is necessary to render it entire and of a piece. And though I would be very loth to deny the Title of *Christian*, to any man who seriously lays claim to it, and in so sceptical an Age as this, to lessen the number of Christian Professors : yet I must not, for the sake of such as desert the Christianity which we are taught by the Scriptures, overlook so prime a branch of it as this is. Let those, who call themselves by this Name, and yet deny that satisfaction was made to God by the Sufferings of Christ for the sins of Men, reconcile their Title and their opinion as well as they can : My business is to assert and vindicate the truth of the Christian Religion, as exhibited to us in the Gospel ; and I am so far from thinking the Doctrine of Expiation, and Satisfaction made by the Death of Christ, an objection against the Christian Revelation, that I have judg'd it necessary to insist upon it, as one admirable instance of the Excellency of that Method,

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thod, in which our *Mediator* hath obtain'd Salvation for us.

The Sum of what I have said upon this Argument is, that our Lord, when he came into the World, took upon him the Character of a *Mediator*, and that he executed his Mediatorial Office, partly by doing that which was greatly for the honor of his Heavenly Father, the Person offended, and consequently well-pleasing and satisfactory to him, making this the first step in procuring Reconciliation between God and Men.

The business of my next Discourse will be, to proceed to shew how our Lord hath farther executed the same Office, by providing for the Necessities of Men. I shall conclude at present with two short Inferences from what has been now offer'd.

- I. If what I have said upon this Subject be true, it shews us how little Christianity is beholden to those, who attempt to *lessen* the Person of our *Mediator*.

This inference will appear just, if we do but observe, that by how much the greater and more considerable the Person of our *Mediator* is, by so much the better qualified he must also be for the obtaining Salvation for us; and particularly by so much the greater will that honor be, which is done to the Attributes of God by his Doctrine, and especially by his Actions and his Sufferings.

It must certainly, in the account of any reasonable Man, be a more full and ample declaration of

of the Holiness and Justice of God, for a Person so near to the Father, as the Scriptures represent our *Mediator* to be, first to condescend so low as to assume our Nature, and then to do and suffer so much upon our account; than for one that was *υιός ανθρωπου*, a meer Son of *Adam*, to have done it. The dignity of the Person transacting this affair, must needs add weight to all that was done by him.

If this be true, what awful thoughts ought we to have of Almighty God! what regard to his Purity, and Justice, and his Authority over us! what fear of dishonoring and offending so Excellent a Majesty! what a dread of wilfully violating any of his known Laws for the future! When he thought fit, notwithstanding the infinite Goodness of his Nature, not to offer us Terms of Mercy, but in the Method of the Gospel; when he would not treat with us at all without a *Mediator*; and when, having appointed his own Son to that Office, he was pleas'd to found and ratifie a New Covenant with us in his Blood.

The reasoning of the Apostle is unanswerable, both with respect to the former part of this Discourse, and the latter. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation!* And, *If we sin wilfully, after we have receiv'd the knowledge of the Truth, i. e.* if we either Apostatize from our Christian Profession, or which comes to the same issue, live in plain contradiction to the Profession we make; *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sins; (no greater can be made) but a certain fearful looking for of judgment,* Heb. 2. 3.
Chap. 10. 26,
ver. 27.
and

II.

and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries; this, as he adds, being to tread under foot the Son of God, and to count the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, besides, doing despite to the Spirit of Grace.

Heb. 10. 29.

May Almighty God preserve us all from such Apostacy, in this degenerate Age; may he, if it be possible, recover such as be fallen; and may he give us all Grace, not only to adhere to the Profession of Christianity, but also to bring Reputation to it, by a suitable Practice; through Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Advocate, to whom, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, our great Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, be ascribed all Honor and Glory now and for ever, Amen.

F I N I S.

The First SERMON.

The Qualifications requisite, towards the Receiving a Divine Revelation.

The Second SERMON.

Apostate Men fit Objects of Divine Care and Compassion.

The Third SERMON.

The Nature of that Salvation, which the Gospel offereth; and the Method of obtaining it, by a Mediator.

These three by Mr. Bradford, and Printed for Tho. Parkhurst.