SERMONS
AND
DISCOURSES
ON SEVERAL
SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS.

BY
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SERMONS
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ON
SURVEYS
AND
OCASIONS
BY
R. D. BURNE, D.D.
A LLORO'S EDITION 1754

"Reader, I am a man and have a body.

[Text continues]"
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Fourth VOLUME.

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LUKE xxiii. 28.
Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your Children.

THIS is a Day of Trouble, of Rebuke, and Blasphemy; distinguished in the Annals of our Nation, and the Calendar of our Church, by the sad Suffering of an excellent
On the Martyrdom of

S E R M. excellent Prince, who fell a Sacrifice to

the Rage of his Rebellious Subjects; and

by his Fall derived Infamy, Misery, and Guilt on them, and their sinful Posterity.

We are met here, to acknowledge our Sin, to express our publick Detestation of it, and to deprecate the Vengeance, which hath pursued, and doth still, I fear, pursue us on the Account of it. In order to raise and improve these good Thoughts and Dispositions, I have pitch'd on the Words spoken by our Blessed Saviour in his sad Procession towards Calvary, as the Ground of our present Meditations,—Daughters of Jerusalem, &c.

Since Providence so order'd it, that one of the Lessons for that Day, whereon the Royal Martyr suffer'd, and which was read to him just before his ascending the Scaffold, should contain an Account of the Passion of our Lord; and the same Lesson is still by Authority appointed to be read in these annual Assemblies; I may be
be allowed, I hope, from the History of that Passion, written by St. Luke, I.
to take the Words you have heard, and apply them to the Subject I am now about to handle, without incurring the Imputation of drawing unseemly Parallels, and without giving Offence to any, but those, who are Offended with the Anniversary itself, and with our solemn and devout Manner of observing it.

As Jesus went to his Crucifixion, St. Luke tells us, that there followed him, a great Company of People, and of Women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your Children: For, behold, the Days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the Barren, and the Wombs that never bare, and the Paps that never gave suck! His present Sufferings, and approaching Death, withheld him not from reflecting with Concern on the Calamities, which were rea-
On the Martyrdom of
Serm. dy to overtake others on his Account. And, because the Women who followed him to Calvary, out of a Tenderness of Nature peculiar to their Sex, indulged themselves in the loudest Expressions of Grief; therefore to these he particularly addresses the Admonition of the Text; directs them to turn their well meant Compassion from him upon themselves; to reserve all their Tears for a time, now at hand, when the whole Nation of the Jews would be called to a strict Account for spilling his Blood, and be made an astonishing Instance of Divine Vengeance.

The good Prince, whose unhappy Fate we commemorate, did in this, as well as other respects, follow the Steps of the great Captain of his Salvation, who was made perfect through Sufferings: For the last Moments of his Life, which his Murderers allowed him, were employed in awakening a drowsy Nation into a Sense of its Guilt, and a Dread of its impending Punishment. Secure of his own Innocence
necence and Happiness, he seem'd tooserms, have conquer'd all Concern for him-
sel; and, like a true Father of his
People, was chiefly solicitous for the
Peace and Welfare of his People.
His dying Words breathed nothing
but Pity and Tenderness towards his
Subjects who were to survive his
Fall, and to feel the sad Effects of it.
And therefore to those, who with
weeping Eyes then beheld that bloody
Scene, and to us, who with like Grief
now look on at a distance, may we
suppose the Royal Sufferer (consistent-
ly with the Character he then main-
tain'd) to say,—Weep not for me; but
weep for yourselves, and for your Chil-
dren.

This I am sure, is an Instruction;
which the Day itself seems naturally
to afford us, and which I shall, there-
fore, pursue in both its Branches; shew-
ing you,

First, That we misplace our Grief, if
we employ it in bewailing and
On the Martyrdom of
s e r m . lamenting our Martyr'd Sovereign;

I. And,

II. Secondly, That the true End of these annual Humiliations is, to weep for ourselves, and for our Children; to deplore the Guilt which our Fore-fathers contracted by this inhuman Deed, and which, we have reason to fear, is not even yet fully expiated.

I. First, In the early Ages of the Church, the Custom was annually to observe those Days, on which the Martyrs were crowned (such was the Language of that Time) not with dejected Looks, or any outward Expressions of Sorrow; but with the Solemnities usual on Birth-days (and such also they were styled) even with all possible Instances of devout Exultation and Joy. Upon these Occasions, pious Christians flocked to the Places, where those faithful Servants of Christ slept, or had sealed the Truth of their Testimony with their Blood: There they
they held their sacred Assemblies (as Ser. M. they afterwards built their Churches.)

There they made their Eucharistick Ob-
lations, and celebrated their Feasts of Love; gave Thanks to God for the exemplary Virtues and Graces, which adorned the Lives and Deaths of those holy Persons, and excited themselves into like degrees of Christian Zeal and Fervor.

Their Behaviour in these Cases should be the Rule of Our's, and teach us to observe this Anniversary in such a manner, as may render it most honourable to the Dead, and most useful to the Living. To that end, it will become us, not vainly to indulge our Grief, or our Resentments, in behalf of our much injured Prince; not fruitlessly to spend our time in lamenting his Misfortunes; but rather to employ it in magnifying the Grace of God, which enabled him so constantly to endure them, and so heartily to forgive the Authors of them; which armed him with such a wondrous De-
gree
on the Martyrdom of the
Gree of Meekness and Patience; inspi-
red him with such Christian Mag-
nanimity and Courage, as made him
shine with a greater Lustre in the
Depth of his Sufferings, than he did
in his most flourishing Circumstan-
ces; and put off his Crown after a
more glorious Manner, than he first
wore it on the Day of his Corona-
tion.

Indeed, the Mind of Man, filled
with vain Ideas of worldly Pomp and
Greatness, is apt to admire those
Princes most, who are most fortunate,
and have filled the World with the
Fame of their successful Achievements.
But to those, who weigh Things in
the Balance of right Reason, and true
Religion, it will, I am perswaded, ap-
ppear that the Character of this excel-
lent King, even while he was in his
lowest and most afflicted State, had
something in it, more truly Great and
Noble, than all the Triumphs of Con-
quersors; something, that raised him as
far above the most prosperous Princes,
as they themselves seem raised above the rest of Mankind.

Many Kings there have been, as happy as all worldly Felicity could make them; and some of these have distinguished themselves as much by their Virtues, as their Happiness. But the Possessors of those Virtues, being seated on a Throne, displayed them from thence with all manner of Advantage; their good Actions appeared in the best Light, by reason of the high Orb, in which they moved, while performing them; whereas, the Royal Virtues, which we this Day celebrate, shone brightest in Affliction, and when all external Marks of Royal State and Dignity were wanting to recommend them. Others, perhaps, may have been as just, as beneficent, as merciful in the Exercise of their Royal Power, as this good King was; but none surely did ever maintain such a majestick Evenness and Serenity of Mind, when despoiled of that Power, when stripped of every
On the Martyrdom of

Serm. every thing but a good Cause, and a good Conscience; when destitute of all Hopes of succour from his Friends, or of Mercy from his Enemies: Then, even then, did he possess his Soul in Peace, and patiently expect the Event, without the least outward Sign of Dejection or Discomposure. He remembered himself to be a King, when all the World beside seemed to have forgotten it; when his inferiors treated him with Insolence, and his Equals with Indifference; when he was brought before that infamous Tribunal, where his own Subjects sat as his Judges; and even when he came to die by their Sentence.—In all these sad Circumstances, on all these trying Occasions, he spake, he did nothing, which misbecame the high Character he bore, and will always bear, of a great King, and one of the best of Christians. And this Mixture of unaffected Greatness and Goodness, in the Extremity of Misery, was, I say, his peculiar and distinguishing Excellence
In addition to his other Royal Qualities, that adorned Prosperity, he shared in common with others of his Rank; but in the decent and kingly Exercise of these passive Graces, he had, among the List of Princes, no Superior, no Equal, no Rival.

Indeed, the last Scene of his Sufferings was very dismal; and such, from which mere Human Nature, unsupported by extraordinary Degrees of Grace, must needs have shrunken back a little affrighted, and seemed desirous of declining. But those Succours were not wanting to him; for he went even through this last Trial, unshaken; and submitted his Royal Head to the stroke of the Executioner, with as much Tranquillity and Meekness, as he had born lesser Barbarities. The Passage through this Red Sea was bloody, but short; a Divine Hand strengthened him in it, and conducted him through it; and he soon reached the Shore of Bliss and Immortality.
On the Martyrdom of SERM. He is now at Rest in those Mansions, where Tears are wiped from all Eyes, where there is neither Death, nor Pain, nor Crying, and from whence Sorrow and Sighs do flee away. Wherefore, Let us not mourn, refusing to be comforted; but let us rather (as those early Christians did on the like Occasions) rejoice with exceeding Joy: Rendering to God our Thanks, that he hath been pleased, in these last and most degenerate Times, to afford us such an illustrious Pattern of Virtue and Goodness, as even the purest Ages of Christianity would have looked up to with Reverence; that, by this Means, he hath given to loose and prophane Men an Instance of the great Power of those Religious Principles, which did, and which only could support the Mind of this pious Prince under all the Indignities and Miseries that befel him.

What an Honour is it to that Church, at whose Breast he first sucked these Principles, to have been instrumental
mental in sowing the first Seeds, from whence such excellent Fruits afterwards sprang! How ought he to boast and triumph in this Thought, That a Prince, who excelled as much in the Knowledge, as in the Practice of Religion, should be so firm and unmoveable an Assertor of her Doctrine, and Discipline, and Worship! which he therefore valued highly, because he understood them thoroughly: That he should go on to maintain Her Cause, even long after he despaired of maintaining his Own, or of being able to retrieve his lost Crown and Dignity! and that, after he had thus defended her Faith, during his Life, he should recommend it still more at his Death, by dying in it, and for it!

But the more Excellent the Character of this Prince was, the more barbarous and brutal was the Rage by which he fell. Every Consideration, which heightens his matchless Virtues, and endears his Memory to us, serves also to enhance the Wickedness of
On the Martyrdom of

Serm. of those Sons of Belial, who were the

1. Instruments of his Ruin, and embued

their Hands in his Blood. And therefore, though we have no Occasion to

weep for him, yet have we great Rea-

son to weep for ourselves, and for our

Children; for the Guilt which the

Nation contracted, and the Infamy it

underwent, by reason of that inhuman

Deed, and for the other fatal Conse-

quences, which then did, and which

(as we have just Reason to fear) may

still attend it. And this is the second

Point, upon which I proposed to en-

large:

II. Secondly, That Nations, as Nations

are liable to Guilt, and consequently

to Punishment; and such Punishments

must be inflicted in this Life, in which

alone those Nations and Communities

subsist, and cannot be extended to an-

other World, where all Kingdoms and

People are to be swallowed up in the

Kingdom of the Lamb, and to be-

come one Fold under one Shepherd; and
and that the Punishments inflicted by 
God on Nations in this Life, may be altogether, or in part, deferred by God for some time, 'till the Iniquity of those Nations is full, and the Sinners grown ripe for Vengeance: These are all Points sufficiently evident from Reason and Scripture, and the History of the World; they need no solemn Proof, because they admit of no great Doubt. Little indeed is said on this Head in the Books of the New Testament, which were all written for the Use of private scattered Christians, ere as yet any one entire Nation was converted, or any of the great Rulers of the World had submitted their Scepters to the Scepter of Christ: And, therefore, the Precepts there contained, relate chiefly, if not solely, to the Conduct of particular Persons, and are silent as to the Methods of God's dealing with publick Bodies and Societies of Men. And there was the less Occasion for any Instructions of this kind in the New Testament, because they had been given
On the Martyrdom of

SERM. so frequently and fully in the Old; the Prophetick Parts of which do every where inculcate these Doctrines, as the Matters of Fact, recorded in the Historical Books, illustrate and confirm them. And from thence, therefore, all our Observations must be drawn, concerning the Influence which a People's Sins have upon their Sufferings, and concerning the Measures of that Political Justice, by which God governs the World. And in truth, it was proper that the Directions of this kind should be given under the Institution of Mo-ses; the Letter of which extended no further than to the Concerns of this Life: Whereas the Duties, the Promises, and Threatnings of the Gospel do all look beyond the Grave, and are designed to regulate our Behaviour in this World, as it relates and leads to another.

The Doctrine then of God's Visiting Nations, as such, for Sins committed by them in that Capacity, being supposed; let us briefly apply it to the present
present Case, and see how far we our-selves are concerned in it.

That the Sin of this Day was *National*, is not to be denied; the Nation itself confesseth it, by appointing and observing these publick and stated Humiliations. It was under the Colour of a *National Authority*, that the Rebellion was first raised, and all along carried on, and at last consummated by the Erection of that infamous *High Court of Justice*, which gave the finishing Stroke to the successful Villanies of that Time, by taking away the Life of our Sovereign. Indeed, the greatest Part of the Nation abhorred that barbarous Act (and, had their Power been equal to their Inclination, would have prevented it) but many of them had contributed to it too much, and too long before; and, having joined in all the Steps that led to the Murder of the King, could not at last, by expressing their Detestation of the *Crime*, excuse themselves entirely from the *Guilt* of it.
It was the Nation therefore, that I. Sinned; and sinned with an high Hand, and with all the inflaming Circumstances of Guilt and Aggravation. They made their way to the Completion of this Wickedness, through the most solemn Engagements, through all the Ties of Reason, and the Reluctances of Conscience: The Laws of God and Man were but as Whips upon the Arms of these Sampsons, which they broke at pleasure; and, when they had once overleaped the Mounds and Fences of Justice, were resolved to think every Step lawful, which was necessary to justify those they had already taken. Many Years they continued steadfastly pursuing these unrighteous Measures; they held fast Deceit, and refused to return; and after heaping Transgression upon Transgression, did at last, through the Blood of many of their Fellow Subjects, arrive at that of their Sovereign, and in the calmest and most deliberate manner perpetrate the black Design they had for some time meditated.

Jer. viii. 5.
The common Methods, made use of by rebellious Subjects in the Destruction of Princes, did not please them; Poison, or a private Assassination was too basy and clandestine a Way: They were resolved to have the Proceeding more Publick, and Slow, and Solemn; to carry it on by the Forms of Law, and with the mock Shew and Pageantry of Justice (a Way which crowned Heads had not hitherto been treated in) and since the Crime itself was old, and had been often repeated, to recommend it at least by the Newness of the Invention: In which respect, it must be confessed, that they outstripped all their Rivals in this Sort of Wickedness, even the bloodiest of their King-killing-Neighbours. Indeed new Inventions for slaughtering Kings, and overturning States, are the peculiar Reproach of this Nation; of which we have two eminent Proofs upon Record, not to be paralleled in other Histories, the Gunpowder-Treason, and that of this Day; One of them contrived by Papists, the
On the Martyrdom of

Serm. the Other by wild Sectaries and En-thusiasms; neither of them (God be thanked) by the Members of the Church of England!

Jer. v. 8. And, Shall I not visit for such Things, faith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be a-venged of such a Nation as this? Shall a People sin in this remarkable Manner; and shall not that Sin be as remarkably punished? It was immediately, and in some measure punished by the fatal and necessary Consequences of it, by the sad Disorders and Confusions that attended it. For, had Zimri:

Peace who slew his Master? Did the Partners in this black Crime quietly reap the expected Fruits of it? No! they did not, they were soon displaced from the high Seat of Authority, which they had usurped; and gave way to other Usurpers, and to various Forms of Government, which prevailed in their turns. The feverish Nation rolled from one Posture, one Expedient to another, and found Rest in none. It then soon appeared, how great the Loss was
was of their admirable Prince; and of their ancient Constitution, which perished with him. The People, who had miscalled his mild and gentle Reign, Oppression and Tyranny, found themselves now ruled with a Rod of Iron, and broken in Pieces like a Potter's Vessel. They had complained of Arbitrary Power without Cause, and now smarted under it without Remedy. To secure their Liberty and Laws, they had made this Change; which left both of them at the Mercy of Standing Armies. Thus did their own Wickedness correct them, and their Backslidings did reprove them! They had pulled down a regular Primitive Church; and immediately Churches, Sects, and Religions, without Number, sprang up in the room of it; instead of the honest English Plainness and Simplicity, a demure and fly Hypocrisy prevailed; instead of sober and well-weighed Devotions, all the Freaks and Rants of Enthusiasm. Every Way of worshiping God, but the true One, was publickly allowed.
Sermons allowed; all men were admitted to the Exercise of the Sacred Function, but those who were most lawfully called to it, and best qualified for it. A loud and causeless Complaint of impositions on the Consciences of men, in things pertaining to God, had helped to ruin the Church; and now, every little Society pretending to that venerable Name, did the very thing they had complained of; imposed the Platform of their Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship, as Divine; and were for rooting out all that opposed, or did not comply with it. In the mean time, they, who preserved themselves free from this sort of Infection, were in as much danger of swerving to a contrary extreme, and of making Inferences to the Prejudice of Religion itself, which they saw perverted and prostituted to the worst Designs. Even good men, at the sight of these prosperous Hypocrites, were ready to cry out in the Words of complaining Jeremiah: — Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee;
King Charles I.

thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy serm.

Judgments: Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked prosper? why are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them; yea, they have taken root; they grow, they bring forth Fruit: Thou art near in their Mouth, and far (very far) from their Reins! Then, when these hypocritical Pretenders to Godliness abounded, did an opposite Spirit of open Levity and Profaneness begin to gain Ground upon a Serious and Religious People: Then were those Seeds of Infidelity first sown among us, which have since sprung up, and increased into a mighty Harvest. Our endless Divisions were a Scandal to the truly Pious, the Boast of Rome, and the Sport of Atheists: We were made a Reproach to our Neighbours, a Scorn and a Derision to them that were round about us; a Bye-word among the Heathen, a Shaking of the Head among the People: We lay down in our Shame, and our Confusion covered us. No Words can express the various Sorts of
S E R M. of Misery, under which this Nation then groaned, by reason of the Multitude of Oppressions and Oppressors. New Job xxxv. Lords had Dominion over us; the very Refuse and Outcast of the People; the Head became the Tail, and the Tail the Head; the Child behaved himself proud against the Antient, and the Base against the Honourable. From Violence and Bloodshed this new Model of Government had arisen; and the same Methods were requisite to cement and uphold it. Plunder and Rapine compleated the Devastations which War had begun: Armed Force decided Right, or executed the Sentence of those, who had no manner of Right to decide it: They were altogether like Wolves, ravening the Prey to shed Blood, and to destroy Souls to get dishonest Gain. As the Voice of a Woman in Travail, as the Anguish of her that bringeth forth her first Child; such was then the Voice of the Daughter of Sion, that bewailed herself, that spread forth her Hands, saying; Woe is me now!
new! for my Soul is weary, because of Murderers!

At last this Storm ceased, the Clouds dispersed, and the Sun shone out again in his Strength; the Royal Family returned, and with it our old Constitution in Church and State; the Regicides suffered, and the Land seemed to be cleansed of the Royal Blood, that was shed therein, by the Blood of those that shed it. Thus, for a while, we vainly imagined; but sad Experience soon undeceived us. Not many Years passed, before God did again empty, as it were, at once, all the Vials of his Wrath upon us: The Sword raged abroad; Fire and Pestilence at home: And when this goodly City was laid in Ashes, and Desolation and Emptiness reigned in her Streets, doubtless pious Persons did often reflect, how much her misemployed Wealth, and misguided Zeal had formerly contributed to the Miseries and Confusions under which we laboured: And even they, whom a few Years Plenty and Prof-
On the Martyrdom of

SERM. Prosperity had lulled into a Forgetfulness of their Guilt, began then to lay their Hands upon their Hearts, and with Joseph's Brethren to say: Verily, we are guilty concerning our Prince; therefore is this Destruction come upon us!

There was still a more terrible Judgment behind, which we were threatened with; and in some measure felt, tho' the Providence of God did not suffer it thoroughly to lay hold of us: I mean, the Advances made by Popery in a late Reign toward establishing itself among us. And this also was the Fruit of our former Iniquities; for (to speak a plain Truth, which, plain as it is, has been lately treated with Scorn and Derision by shameless Writers) the Attempt of introducing a Foreign Religion was but too natural a Consequence of our forcing the Royal Family to take Shelter in Foreign Countries; where they might be allured by the tempting Appearances of a splendid Worship, and a regular Hierarchy, and by
by glorious but empty Pretences to Universality and Infallibility; especially at a Time, when the good Frame of our Ecclesiastical Polity here at home was shattered and dissolved, and the Honour of our Sion was laid low in the Dust. Still therefore our Punishment was from ourselves; nor was God a hard Master in inflicting it; for we reaped only what we had sowed, and gathered what we had strawed; and the first Subversion of our Constitution involved us in all the Confusions and Miseries, in which we long afterwards laboured. But that Storm also blew over, and Times of Liberty succeeded, wherein we promised ourselves the settled Enjoyment of all manner of Advantages and Blessings. Can we say, that those Hopes were not in great measure defeated by the Spirit of Irreligion and Libertinism, which then, and ever since that Time notoriously prevailed; by those intestine Factions and Discords, by which we have been torn; and that foreign War, under the Weight
Weight of which we for more than twenty Years groaned? till the vast Expence of Blood and Treasure, which it occasioned, made us ready to cry out in the pathetick Words of the Prophet, *O thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put thyself up in thy Scabbard; rest, and be still!*

And when that Sword rested in its Scabbard, was not the Manner of Sheathing it as unwelcome to us, as even the Havock it had occasioned, when naked and drawn! Was not the good Queen (now with God) the Subject of malicious, but groundless Reproaches on that very Account? Did we not murmur at the Blessing, and bring ourselves, at last, with great Difficulty to relish and approve it?

But may we not now at length hope, that all is well with us, and that the ill Consequences of spilling the Royal Blood of this Day are ceased, the Anger of God appeased, and our National Guilt utterly pardoned? How can that be
be, until the Nation itself hath mani-

festy repent? And the Repentance of a Nation for any Sin is best testified by its general Abhorrence of the Principles and Practices that caused it. And are we able in this manner to purge ourselves of this Day's Transgression? Do we, indeed, give evident, Proofs, that we heartily and universally detest it? If that be really our Case, what meaneth then this Bleating of the Sheep in our Ears, and this Lowing of the Oxen which we hear? How comes it to pass, that these Anniversary Humiliations are so openly spoken against, ill treated and derided? Why has the horrid Guilt of the Day been lessened in Publick Discourses, and represented with all manner of Alleviations and Softnings? As if it were unpopular and imprudent, to paint such a Villany to the Life, or to speak of it in suitable Terms of Ignominy and Reproach! Why have the Doctrines, which paved the Way to this bloody Deed been freely revived, embraced, and cherished; and
On the Martyrdom of

Serm. and those, for which the Sufferers in
the Royal Cause underwent all manner
of Persecutions, been discountenanced
and exploded? Why has the Spirit of
Liberty been indulged to an outrageous
Degree of Licentiousness; the Revere-
rence due to Thrones shaken by mean
and insolent Pens; and Contempt
poured on the sacred Character of
Princes, as though they had not been
anointed with Oyl? Why have Le-
ctures, in such sacred Places as these,
been more than once read to the Peo-
ple, not only with Permission, but Ap-
plause, instructing them how near they
might approach towards the Sin of Re-
bellion, without actually incurring the
Guilt of it? And why have impious
Wretches by their Mock Feasts ridi-
culed our Solemn Fasts, without being
punished, or (which is yet a worse Sign)
even without being detected in order
to Punishment? Certainly, these are
no good Proofs of our Abhorring the
Sin of the Day; and why then should
we flatter ourselves with the Thought,
that

2 Sam. i.
21.
that God hath left off to abhor, and will no longer continue to chastise us for the Sake of it? Truly (to use our Saviour's Words) ye bear witness, that Luke xi. ye allow the Deeds of your Fathers; for they indeed killed the Prophets, and ye build their Sepulchres; that is, Ye pay some outward Respect to their Ashes, some ceremonious Regard to their Memories; but without renouncing the Principles, and abominating the Practices, that led to the spilling that Righteous Blood, which, therefore, we have Reason to fear, may be required even of this Generation. When, and in what manner, God will require it, he alone knows. But if we consider the Height of all Sorts of Wickedness, to which we are now arrived; the open Contempt of Religion, and Scorn of sacred Persons and Things, that reigns among us; the intestine Discords, by which we are torn at home; the Dangers which have threatened us from abroad, and (however we may say, Peace, Peace, to ourselves) still...
On the Martyrdom of

SERM. do threaten us, we have just Cause to apprehend, that the compleat Measure of our Iniquity is almost filled up, and that the Day of our Visitation is not far off.

But do not thou, O Lord, to whom Vengeance belongeth, do not thou deal with us according to our Deserts; be not displeased at us for ever, neither stretch out thy Wrath from one Generation to another! Command thy destroying Angel, when he goeth through the City (as the Prophet Ezekiel speaks) to set a Mark upon the Forehead of all those that sigh, and that cry for the Abomination, which hath been done in the midst thereof; and either to spare the whole for their Sakes; or, at least, not to smite the Righteous together with the Wicked! Make us deeply sensible of this, and all other our great Enormities, and of thy wondrous Lenity and Forbearance! Teach us, even yet in this our Day (if it be possible) the Things that belong to our Peace, ere they be hid from our Eyes! Teach us by a Reflect-
Reflection on past Calamities, to prevent new ones, and to avoid those Rocks and Shelves, on which our Fore-fathers were shipwrecked!

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits of that Blood, which speaketh better Things than the Blood of Abel!

To him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Adoration, and Thanks, now, and for evermore. Amen.
null
The Wicked Lives of Christians no Argument against the Truth of Christianity.

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. James's Chapel,

April 26, 1713.

I T I M. vi. 1

That the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blasphemed.

The Purity and Perfection of the Christian Morality, considering the Meanness of the Persons who published
The Wickedness of Christians

SERM. blissed that Doctrine, is a sure Argument of its divine Original and Authority. But then the Lives of many Christians, led in a Way so little answerable to the Precepts of Christ, are a mighty Dishonour to our Religion, and give Occasion, to those who seek Occasion, to reproach and blaspheme it.

What signifies it, says the Libertine, or indeed how can one be satisfied, that the Gospel is of heavenly Extraction; when we see, it hath no more Efficacy and Influence on the Hearts and Lives of those who profess it, than other Religions that are of mere Human Contrivance; when there is as much Impiety, and Vice of all Sorts among those that name the Name of Christ, as amongst the Mahometans and Heathens?

This popular Objection St. Paul appears to have had much upon his Thoughts, and doth therefore frequently press his new Converts in this and other Epistles, to distinguish themselves by a becoming Sanctity of Life and Manners; for this Reason, among others,
no Proof against Christianity.

If there were great Occasion for such Exhortations then, there is much greater now; when the Manners of Christians are degenerated so far, not only from the Precepts of Christ, but even from the Pattern set by those first Believers; and when there are even among those, who call themselves Christians, some, as ready to lay hold of this Objection, and to urge it in Prejudice of our Religion, as any of the most determined Heathens, even Porphyry, Celsus, or Julian himself, were.

From the Words therefore, a proper Occasion will be given me to enquire,

First, What Ground there is for a Complaint of the extreme Wickedness of Men now under the Evangelical Dispensation.

Secondly, Allowing the Complaint to be just, how little Reason there yet would
The Wickedness of Christians

would be for turning it to the Disad-

vantage of Christianity itself. And,

III. Thirdly, What are the Inferences
that may more justly and naturally be
deduced from it.

I. First, I am to consider, What just
Ground or Coulor there may be for a
Complaint of the exceeding Wicked-
ness of Men now under the Christian
Dispensation.

And here it may with Truth be ob-
served, to the Advantage of our holy
Religion, that, as bad as Men are un-
der it, they would have yet been worse
without it; since, upon a just Com-
parison of Christians, even in these
later Times, with the Enemies of the
Cross of Christ, it will, I am persuad-
ed, be found, that the Manners of the
one are not quite so corrupt and vi-
cious as those of the other. There may
perhaps be some particular Christians
more abandoned to all Sorts and De-
grees of Impiety, than any even of the
most
no Proof against Christianity. 43

most profligate Heathens (for which serm.
Instances I shall account in what fol-
II.
lows) but surely Christendom, as to the
general State of it, is not equally scan-
dalous in this respect, with those Parts of
the World, that are Strangers to
Christ; those Parts of it, I mean, where
the Incentives to Luxury, Ambition,
and every sort of Vice do equally a-

And therefore the aggravating De-
scriptions that have been given of this
Matter by some pious and pathetical
Pens, are not to be interpreted too
strictly. The Faults of Christians are
obvious and manifest to those of the
same Faith, and strike our Imaginations
strongly on the account of their Near-
ness; whereas the Vices of the Heathen
World, being practised at a Distance,
and coming to our Knowledge by rare
and uncertain Reports, do therefore
make but faint Impressions on our
Minds.

The Rule, by which Christians are
obliged to walk, is so excellent, and
they
they are thereby so fully and clearly informed of the whole Extent of their Duty; the promised Assurances are so mighty, and the Rewards so vast, by which they are animated to Obedience; that their Transgressions, as they are attended with a deeper Guilt, so must needs appear to be of a more prodigious Size, than those of other Men. And it is no wonder therefore, if, on both these Accounts, good and holy Persons have spoken of them with a particular Degree of Detestation and Horror.

And as the Vices of Christians are, for these Reasons, open and glaring, so their Virtues oftentimes disappear and lie hid. The profound Humility and Self-denial, which the Christian Religion first enjoined, leads the true Disciples of Christ, in the Exercise of the chief Gospel Graces, to shun the Applause and Sight of Men, as much as is possible. Hence, some of the best Christians are least known to be such, because they make the least Noise and Shew
no Proof against Christianity.

Shew with their Goodness. There is nothing extraordinary or singular in their Manner of Life and Behaviour; no Ostentation of Sanctity in Look, Word, or Deed. Notwithstanding their Domestic Severities, yet, when they come abroad, they anoint the Head, and Matt. vi. wash the Face, that they appear not unto Men to fast. They found no Trumpet before their Alms, or other good Works; but endeavour to perform them with that Secrecy, which our Saviour recommended, when he said, Let Matt. vi. not thy Right Hand know what thy Left 3. Hand doth.

And of this there is One, though a very late, yet so remarkable an Instance, that, for the Honour of our holy Faith, I think it may deserve to be particularly mentioned, the Instance, I mean, of the Author of that excellent Book, the Whole Duty of Man; who took not more Care to do good to the World, than he did to conceal the Doer of it; being contented to approve himself to him, and him only, who
The Wickedness of Christians

SERM. who seeth in secret, and resolved that the

II. Praise of Men, whether in his Life, or

after his Death, should be no Part of his Reward.

On these, and such Accounts as these, I say, Vice seems to have the Odds of Virtue among those, who name the Name of Christ, much more than it really hath. However, after all the Abatements that have been, or can be made in this Case, still it must be owned, That the Wick-
edness of Christians is exceeding great, and, considering the special Helps to-
wards Holiness, which they above the rest of the World enjoy, very amaz-
ing. Even good Men, when they find all the powerful Means of Grace pro-
posed in the Gospel, to have so little Success, are apt to be somewhat startled
at it; and ill Men do not fail to make a very ill Use of it, and to turn it to the Disadvantage of Christianity it-
self.

Secondly, That they are very unreasonable in so doing, I am in the next
place to shew. For,

1. The
no Proof against Christianity.

i. The holiest and purest Doctrine imaginable is but Doctrine still; it can only instruct, admonish, or persuade; it cannot compel. The Gospel Means of Grace, powerful as they are, yet are not, and ought not to be irresistible. They are Moral Causes, which do not violently constrain our Wills and Affections; but only, by gentle Methods solicit and incline them. They work not like a Medicine, or a Charm, without our Concurrence and Co-operation. And therefore let the Discoveries of our Duty and Happiness now made, be never so bright and clear, yet a Multitude of Christians may still so live, as if there was no such Discoveries. And this is no greater a Wonder, that it is, that the Lufts and Passions of frail Men should often get the better of their Reason; and the truest Sense and Knowledge of our Duty give way in the Presence of mighty Temptations; which always hath been, always will, and must be the Case, while Human Nature consists (as it doth) of jarring
The Wickedness of Christians

Serm. jarring Principles, and the corrupt Part

II. of us is (as it generally is) the prevailing

Ingredient in the Composition.

Let the Gospel have never so little Success in promoting Holiness, yet all who have considered it, must own, that it is in itself as fit as any thing that can be imagined for that Purpose, and incomparably more fit than any other Course that ever was taken. If therefore the desired End be not attained, we must not blame the Means, which are confessedly apposite and proper, but the Men, who refuse or neglect to make use of them. The Rules of Health, and the Prescriptions of the Physician may be good; and yet few be the better for them, if few strictly observe them. It is no Disparagement to the Art, if those receive no great Benefit from it, who do not surrender themselves up to the Methods it prescribés.

Did Philosophy suffer in the Opinion of wise Men, on the Account of the Debaucheries that reigned in those Ages;
Proof against Christianity.

Ages, wherein it flourished most among the Grecians and Romans? Was it then thought a good Inference, that, because Men were very dissolute, when Wisdom was at the Height, and the Light of Reason shone brightest, therefore Wisdom and Reason were of little Use towards making Men Virtuous? No! the Excellence and Fitness of the Rule was universally acknowledged; and all the Blame was laid on those, who did not comply with it. Object in the like manner against natural Religion to a Deist, and he will give you the like Answer. And why then should he not receive the same Apology for revealed Religion, in its Turn? If the ill Conduct of those, who embrace any Rule of Life and Manners, be a reasonable Exception against the Rule itself, there's an End of all Rules whatsoever; since none there are, from which most of those, who in Theory approve them, do not in Practice mightily swerve and decline. But,
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Serm. 2. The present Wickedness of Christians cannot be owing to any Defect in the Doctrine of Christ, nor be urged as a Proof of the real Inefficacy of it towards rendering Men holy; because there was a Time, when it had all the Success of this kind, that could be expected; the Time, I mean, of its earliest Appearance in the World; when the Practice of the Generality of Christians was a just Comment on the Precepts of Christ; and they could appeal from their Doctrines to their Lives, and challenge their worst Enemies to shew any remarkable Difference between them. When they were, as the Apostle speaks, blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom they shone as Lights in the World. When they were so far from Injustice and Wrong, and the several wicked Arts of Deceiving, that, in the vast Multitude of Converts, No Man said that ought was his own, but they had all things common, and were

Phil. ii. 15. 

Acts iv. 32.
were not only of one Faith, and of one Worship, but of one Heart, and of one Soul. Now, if the Efficacy and Power of the Christian Doctrine must be tried by its Fruits, why may we not have leave to take it at its first setting out, and to argue, that the most immediate and nearest must have been the most natural and genuine Effects of it? He that will try the Goodness of a Spring, should go to the Fountain Head itself, and not judge of it by Streams from thence at a great Distance derived, which many other Waters may perhaps have fallen into during its Course, and many impure Mixtures have defiled.

The Gospel is the same now, as it was then; equally the Power of God Rom. i. unto Salvation, equally mighty in pulling down of strong Holds; and there- 2 Cor. x. 4. therefore, that it doth not still produce the same Effects, must be owing, not to any Ineptitude or Defect in the Means, but to other Causes and Considerations, some
The Wickedness of Christians

Serm. some of which I shall now briefly explain. And,

1. There must needs be a great Disparity between the first Christians, and those of these latter Ages; because Christianity was the Religion of their Choice. They took it up, while it was persecuted, and they could have no other Inducement to receive it, but a Conviction of its Excellence, which they attained by impartial and diligent Enquiries; the Effect of which was, that the holy Precepts and precious Promises of the Gospel made a lively and durable Impression on them. Whereas Christianity with us is generally not a Matter of Choice, but of Fashion and good Luck. We are born, where it is professed; and we fall into it, as we do into other prevailing Opinions and Customs, of Course; and no wonder therefore, if it floats only on the Surface of our Minds, if it takes not Root downwards, and consequently doth not bring Fruit upwards, in our Life and Practice. For the Gospel,
no Proof against Christianity.

tho' it be the great Instrument of Holiness, yet can make those alone Holy, who consider and weigh it, and fasten its holy Rules upon their Hearts and Consciences by Meditation and Study.

2. Another Account of the great Degeneracy of Christians may be drawn from Mens erecting new Schemes of Christianity, which interfere with the true and genuine Account of it. Some Men rely on the mere Externals of Religion, on Masses, and Pilgrimages, Indulgences, and bodily Austerities: And if all these fail, they have a Reserve still, in the Merits and Intercessions of Saints and Angels. Others, who call themselves Christians, have no regard for the Dead Letter of Scripture, but regulate themselves by a certain Light within, by unaccountable Impulses and Inspirations. There are yet others, who hope to be saved by a bare Act of Recumbency on the Merits of Christ, and by the Free Grace of the Gospel, without observing the Law of Works, without being tied to the Elements
The Wickedness of Christians

II.

Now these Schemes (and the same we might say of some others) subvert the true Gospel Scheme of Salvation, by Repentance from dead Works, and becoming a New Creature; and as far as they do so, must needs undermine the Interest of Virtue and Goodness, and smooth the Way towards the Commission of Wickedness. If all the World embraced the Doctrine of Christ in its Simplicity and Purity, without adultering it by false Mixtures, it would be far more Operative and Effectual than now it is, towards reforming Mens Lives, and sanctifying their Natures. But when they frame to themselves a Gospel, which Christ and his Apostles never preached, and expect to be saved on any other Terms and Conditions than those God hath proposed; 'tis no wonder if from such an Evil Root, as Evil Fruit arises; and they grow as corrupt in their Practice, as they are in their Opinions.
The same may be said of some over-easy and loose, or over-strict and rigorous Decisions in Matters of Conscience. Many modern Casuists have bent their Thoughts, and strained their Wits, in order to soften the Severity of the Gospel Morals, and to bring them down, as near as they can, not only to the Infirmities, but even the Vices of human Nature. They have invented an Art of Lying without Sinning: They have allowed a Man to act on that Side of an Opinion, which he is satisfied is false, so it carry but any Shew of Probability with it; and they have determined it to be probable, if two or three grave Writers of Note have espoused it. They have made good Ends capable of Sanctifying the worst and most forbidden Means; have declared it not necessary for a Man to exercise more than one Act of Love towards God in his whole Life-time, or to be contrite for his Sins, but on his Death-bed. And these are the Positions, not only of a few, obscure, but
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Ser. II. of very, many, and very celebrated Authors; and cannot therefore but go on a great way towards debauching the Minds of all such as have any Reverence for those Cæsars.

On the other side, good, but mistaken Men have sometimes carried the Doctrine of the Gospel to a very severe and astonishing Height; and framed from thence such Rules of Life, and Determinations in Morality, as directly opposed the first and most innocent Inclinations of Human Nature. And in this they thought, they had done God and Men good service; but the Event has disproved them. For some Persons finding Religion represented as so melancholy and sour a thing, have concluded, that God, the Author of our Nature, could never be the Author of so unnatural and extravagant a Scheme; and have thereupon rejected it at once, and set themselves loose from all the Ties of Morality. Others, still adhering to the Truth of the Doctrine, have yet been so far discouraged by
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by the uncomfortable and forbidding sermon. Look of it, as to lay aside all Hopes either of duly practising or relishing it; and have therefore resolved rather to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, and run the Venture of their future Happiness, than be certainly miserable here, for fear of being so hereafter. And a third Sort there are, who have endeavoured to raise their Practice up to these Speculations; but failing (as how could they but fail?) have sunk into Religious Despair, concluded themselves Reprobates, out of the Favour of God, and a State of Salvation,

So that too easy and too severe Decisions have alike done Differvice to Religion. These perhaps have frightened near as many from the Prosecution of Virtue, as Those have allured to the Commission of Vice; but the True Doctrine of the Gospel, which steers between these Extremes, is not answerable for the Excesses on either side, and ought not therefore to be blasphemed
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Phrased on the account of them. We may add in the

3rd Place, That 'tis not to be expected, but that, where Christians are wicked, they should be rather worse than other Men; for this very Reason, because they have more Help towards becoming better, and yet live in the Contempt or Neglect of them. Those excellent Rules of Life, which they will not suffer to do them Good, must for that very Reason do them Harm, if they set their Faces against so plain a Revelation of their Duty, and resolve to sin in Defiance of it. For, if the Light that is in them be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?

How great, even according to the natural Course and Tendency of Things, whereby what is good, when corrupted, grows bad in proportion to its former Goodness: How much greater, in respect of the just Judgments of God, who punishes such Persons with the total Dereliction of his Spirit, and a Penal Blindness; giving those up to a Reprobate
no Proof against Christianity. 59

Reprobate Mind, who thus hold the Serm. Truth in Unrighteousness.

Lastly, The Faith of Christ suffers much from the ill Lives of those, who have nothing of Christianity but the Name; and are, whilst they reproach it for the ill Conduct of its Professors, themselves the greatest Reproach to it. Set aside the Disorders of the almost Christians, and of such as, whatever they may outwardly profess, do not sincerely and heartily love our Lord Jesus; and one great Occasion of Blaspheming the Doctrine of Christ will be removed. 'Tis very hard therefore to make our Faith answerable for the ill Manners of those, who do not in good Earnest receive it; but much harder still, that those very Men should press the Objection most eagerly, without whose loose and immoral Lives, there would not be near so much Ground and Colour for it.

This is as if Catiline should have declaimed against the Debaucheries of Rome, whilst he and his Accomplices were
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were in the Midst of it, and had contributed to bring it to that Pitch of Wickedness, which they had complained of.

Many other instructive Reflections might be suggested on these Heads: But thus much may suffice to shew, How far there is any real Occasion for a Complaint of the exceeding Wickedness of Men, now under the Christian Dispensation; and then, supposing the Complaint just, how little Reason there would be, to turn it to the Disadvantage of Christianity itself. It remains, that I should point out to you, on my

Third General Head, some more proper and natural Inferences that may be drawn from it. They are many and weighty: But I will not detain you further than by the Mention of a few of them.

And, 1. This should be so far from shocking our Faith, that it ought, on the contrary, to confirm and strengthen it,
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it. For the universal Degeneracy of Christians in these latter Days was plainly and punctually foretold by Christ and his Apostles. When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth? said our Saviour. Now the Spirit speaketh (says St. Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy) that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving Heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils; speaking Lies in Hypocrisy, having their Consciences scarred with a hot Iron. And in his second Epistle, This know, that in the last Days perilous Times shall come; for Men shall be Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers: To which he adds a large Catalogue of the blackest and worst of Sins which should then abound. And parallel Passages to these are also to be found in St. Peter's and St. Jude's Epistles. Now the testimony of Jesus is that Spirit of Prophecy; and if he therefore and his Apostles by that Spirit of Prophecy forewarned us of this Event, it should not, methinks, lessen
Nay, the vicious Lives of the Generality of Christians is an Argument for the Truth of Christianity on another Account. For the professed Design of God in revealing it, being to reform the World, and that Design being so remarkably defeated; were not our Religion founded on a Rock, on the most apparent Reason, and most incontestable Miracles, it must, a long time ago, have sunk under the Weight of this single Prejudice. Had this Counsel, or this Work been of Men, it would, under such a Disadvantage, have certainly come to nought; but it being of God, nothing can overthrow it. We may from hence in the

2d Place, Take occasion to consider the monstrous Degree of Pravity and Perverseness, that is hid in the Heart of Men, and to account for the Rise of it. It is plainly such, and so great, we see, as to be Proof against the brightest Discoveries of God's Will, and our Duty;
Duty; such as no Rules can rectify, no sermon. Endeavours can reform.

And this one reflection, duly attended to, would satisfy us, that we are not now in our natural state, and as we came forth from the Hands of God; but fallen and degenerated from primitive perfection. For can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive, that the noblest part of the visible creation should, in its original frame and constitution, be the most imperfect and faulty? That Man should have been created by God, with such violent tendencies to evil, and such rooted aversions from goodness, as at present discover themselves in him? Even without the Light of Revelation, it would, on this very account, be highly reasonable for us to believe (what those, who reasoned best among the Heathens, the scholars of Socrates did believe) that some change must needs have happened in our faculties and natures, since they were first formed; and that our souls are now placed in a state,
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S E R M. State, not of natural Dignity and Excellence, but of Probation and Recovery.

3. It will be a third good Use of what has been discoursed, if we learn from thence, not to measure Doctrines by Persons, or Persons by Doctrines; that is, not to make the One a compleat Rule and Standard, whereby to judge of the Goodness or Badness of the Other. I cannot now duly explain this Reflection, and shall therefore employ it only in order to wipe off a Reproach that hath been sometimes cast on that excellent Church, of which we are Members; as if ill Livers abounded more than ordinarily in her Communion. I trust in God, the Aspersion is utterly false and groundless; the mere Effect of Malice, Envy, or Design. But, were it never so true, yet would not this be a Touchstone to try her Doctrines by; since for the same Reason that the Wickedness of Christians in general is no Argument against the Truth of Christianity, the Wickedness to
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to be found in any particular Society, can be no Objection against the Doctrines particularly professed in that Society. By Scripture and by Reason Religious Opinions are to be examined; and not by the Lives and Practice of those who espouse them.

However, since the World is for the most part composed of such as do not reason rightly, but judge merely by outward Appearances; since Mankind are generally so made, that the holiest Religion in the World must needs suffer in their Opinions, on the Account of the ill Lives of those who profess it; let us therefore make this

4th and last Use of what has been said, To excite ourselves from thence to do what in us lies towards removing this Scandal from the Christian Faith at large, and from that particular Church of Christ to which we belong; both by living Ourselves, as becomes our holy Religion; and by influencing Others, as we have Ability and Opportunity,
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SERM. tunity, to live as we do; that so both we, and they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things; may render it lovely and desirable in the Eyes of all Men, even its fiercest Enemies and Opposers; having our Conversation (as the Apostle speaks) honest among the Gentiles (and those who are worse than Gentiles; Christians in Name and Profession, but at the Bottom hardened and feared Unbelievers) that, whereas they speak against us as Evildoers, they may by our good Works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the Day of Visitation.

The primitive Christians (as you have heard) appealed freely from their Doctrines to their Lives, in Confirmation of the Truth of Christianity: We, on the contrary, are forced to appeal from our Lives to our Doctrines; and to shelter ourselves under the indisputable Goodness of the Rule we embrace, whilst we are guilty of very many, and very great Deviations from it. Let us be ashamed to make use of this Argument
no Proof against Christianity.

gument any longer, and resolve to render our Actions and Opinions perfectly consistent; that so our Religion may appear to be, not a Notional System, but a vital and fruitful Principle of Holiness; and we may save not only our own Souls, but the Souls of many others also, who shall be won over to the Obedience of the Faith, by observing our good Conversation in Christ Jesus.

To whom, with the Father, and blessed Spirit, be ascribed all Majesty, Might, and Praise, now and for ever. Amen.
The Fear of God a Motive to Holiness.

A SERMON

Preached at

St. James's Chapel,

March 20, 1718-19.

PHIL. vi. 1.

Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

The wise and good Author of our Nature, foreseeing that, in this degenerate and corrupted State of it, the Rules of Duty he prescribed, would not, without great Difficulty and Reluctance be complied with, hath been graciously pleased
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Sermon pleased to address himself, not to our
III. Reason only, but our Passions also, and

To enforce his Commands, by proposing, together with them, such Motives and Considerations, as (he knew) would have the greatest Influence towards determining our Choice; towards securing, and enlivening our Christian Obedience. And the most operative of these Motives seems to be that, which applies itself to our Fears, and urges upon us the strict Practice of Virtue, by the Threats of divine Vengeance, which will certainly attend our Disobedience. This Consideration the sacred Writers frequently inculcate; and particularly St. Paul in the Words of the Text, wherein he exhorts the Philippians to work out their own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

On which Words I intend to build this plain, but useful Proposition, That "A Fear of God's Wrath, and of eternal Punishment, is a proper and sufficient Motive to lead Men to Holiness." This seems to be a very evident Truth; and yet those, who have
to deal with scrupulous Consciences, know, that some very pious and well-meaning Christians, do in good earnest doubt of it; and will not allow themselves to be in a Regenerate Estate, or to have a sure Title to the Divine Favour, because their Repentance wholly took its Rife at the first, and hath since perhaps in some measure received its Growth and Increase from that base and flavish Principle of Fear, to which, they imagine the true Sons of Adoption and the Elect of God are always Strangers.

To remove the Scruples, under which such good, but mistaken Men labour, shall be the Business of my present Discourse: Wherein I will endeavour,

First, By some general Reflections to lessen the ill Opinion, which these Persons entertain of themselves; And then proceed,

Secondly, To prove more directly, that the Principle, from which their Repent-
First, I desire them to consider, that although the Gospel doth (almost in every Page of it) represent to us the Necessity of Repentance in general; yet, as to any particular Motive, from whence this Change of Mind and Manners must necessarily flow, it is altogether silent. Which seems to intimate this Truth, That if a Man be but sincerely and thoroughly Good, it matters not much out of what Principle he first became so: Else the Scripture, which so often and earnestly presses upon us the one, would have laid some Stress on the other also. It is said indeed that we must Love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength; that we must walk in his Ways, and keep all his Commandments; but it is no where determined, from what Motive this our Love and Obedience must
must originally spring, in order to find acceptance with God. And therefore, where no express directions are given, there the Divine Goodness seems to have indulged a latitude. And why then should we make the Way that leads to Eternal Life, narrower, and the Gates narrower, than God himself appears to have made it? But,

2. It seems a little unequal and preposterous in these persons, to lay so great a stress on their fears in one respect, when they distrust them so much in another. For the state of their case is plainly this,—that by a dread of Divine Vengeance they were at first scared from the practice of vice, and led into the paths of virtue: And it is the same religious dread that now inclines them to suspect, and condemn themselves, on that very account. They fear they have not repented in that manner they ought to have done, because their repentance was at first the effect of their fear; that is, they al--
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Serm. low the Suggestions of this Passion to have a great deal of Weight in the latter Case, but none at all in the former. Which is, at one and the same time, to pay too much, and too little Regard Rom. xiv. to it, and to condemn ourselves (as St. Paul elsewhere speaks) in that thing we allow. And the Judgments Men pass on their own Condition, from such inconsistent and confused Views as these, must needs be very uncertain, and unfit to be relied on. Nay,

3. It is no flight Token of a Man's being really and sincerely Good, and upon such Principles and Grounds as are well-pleasing to God, in that he suspects himself not to be so: Since we rarely find any but the best and most religious Minds, entertaining such little Doubts, and encouraging such nice Scruples as these. The bold presumptuous Sinner goes on hardly in his way; careless and fearless; without looking backward to the Point from whence he set out, or forward to the End of his Journey. He repenteth not of
of his Wickedness (according to the Desermon given of him by the Prophet Jeremy) saying, What have I done? but turneth again to his Course, as the Jer. xviii. 6. Horse rushes into the Battle. The Hypocrite on the other side, is as secure and well satisfied in his Way, having acted his Part so long, as to come at last to think it real, and to deceive even his own Heart, as well as the Eyes and Observations of others; and contenting himself with a demure Shew and Face of Religion, without any troublesome Doubts or Misgivings. But it is the good and conscientious Man chiefly, that is uneasy and dissatisfied with himself; always ready to condemn his own Imperfections, and to suspect his own Sincerity upon the slightest Occasions. He desires so much and earnestly to please God, that he can never think he pleases him as much as he ought to do. Every wry Step, by which he imagines himself to have declined from the Path of Duty, affrights him when he reflects on it; every
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Serm. every the least Obliquity in Thought, Word, and Deed, seems considerable to him. So that these Suspicions and Godly Jealousies do, I say, usually abound most there, where there is least need of them; and it is (generally speaking) a very good Sign of a Man's loving God heartily and in good earnest, when he begins to doubt, whether he loves him or no; and suspects even the best Fruits of Holiness, which shine in his Life and Practise, because he cannot look back with Satisfaction on the Principle of Fear, from whence they flowed. And therefore these very Scruples and Jealousies, which he thus cherishes, concerning the Goodness of his State, would really afford Matter of sound Comfort to him, if he had but Skill and Courage enough to make a right Use of them.

In order to convince him of which Truth, after premising these general Reflections, I proceed now, as I proposed, more particularly and directly to prove,
"That a Fear of God's Wrath and eternal Punishment, is a proper and sufficient Motive to lead Men to Holiness."

This will appear, if we consider,


2. The natural Apprehensions we have of God, as a Lawgiver, Judge, and Avenger.

3. The Depth of Sin, into which some Men are plunged; and out of which nothing but Motives of Terror and Astonishment can possibly raise them.

1. The Passion of Fear is natural to us, and was given us by God for our Safety and Convenience; to warn us of impending Dangers, and to put us upon finding out proper Ways for avoiding them. When therefore this Passion imprints on our Minds a lively Sense of the Punishment due to Sin, of the Displeasure of God, of the mighty and insupportable Torments of Hell; and doth from hence excite and quicken us
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Sermon us into the Practice of Virtue; when it doth this, I say, it doth its Duty, and serves the very End for which it was implanted in our Nature. Every thing, that God made, is good; that is, there is some good Use or other, to which it may be put. And certainly our Fears must then be of the greatest Use to us, when they are turned upon their most proper and important Object, Everlasting Burnings. Do we think, they were designed to admonish us only of some slighter Harms, which may reach our Bodies, or our Fortunes? to keep us awake and alarmed in relation to the Evils of this Life alone, without extending to those of another, as certain as these, and far greater than these in Degree and Duration? We may as well imagine, that Reason was given us, merely as an help towards managing the little Affairs of this present World to our Advantage, without any regard to what is future; to make us wise and prudent in our short and momentary Designs upon Happiness,
Happiness, without assisting us in the
Discovery and Pursuit of eternal Feli-
city. Certainly, as Man is a Creature
framed for Religion, so every one of his
Faculties and Affections was originally
ordained to the same End that he him-
self was; and may therefore to that pur-
pose be usefully, and is always most fitly
employed. His Fears therefore, and his
Hopes, and all the other Passions that
belong to the reasonable Nature, were
given him, as much for religious Uses, as
his very Soul and his Being were. So
that when the Terrors of the Lord per-
suade Men, a natural End is served by a
natural Passion; and, upon these Terms,
we may be sure, the Author of our Na-
ture will not refuse our Obedience.

2. This will further appear, in the
next Place, from the natural Apprehen-
sions we have of God, when we consider
him as the Object of our Duty and Ser-
vice: It is plain, that we do then re-
present him to ourselves, as a Law-
giver; that is, as one who prescribes a
Rule to our Actions, and will punish

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Serm. the Breach of it. We cannot conceive him as giving a Law without a Sanction, that is, without representing him at the same time to ourselves, as enforcing that Law with a Threat, and securing the Observance of it by some Penalty annexed. This is the Method of all Inferior Legislators, and is from thence easily and naturally transferred by us to the Supreme. So that our first and most immediate Conceptions of God, by which we are excited to our Duty, involve in them this very Motive we are so apt to suspect; and we cannot propose to ourselves the One, without feeling in some measure the Power and Force of the Other.

To observe God's Laws under a Prospect of Reward, is what many of those, who reject a Principle of Dread, will not deny to be a reasonable and sufficient Inducement to Virtue. Now, how our desiring a Good should make what we do on that account acceptable in the Eyes of God, and yet that very thing be unacceptable, when done to avoid an Evil,
Evil; how the Hope of Reward should be a good Motive, and yet the Fear of losing that Reward be an ill one, is hard to determine. It is on each side, the Selfishness of the Principle, and the Mixture of our own Interest with it, that seems to lessen its Worth. And I cannot see, how our Interest is less concerned in pursuing Pleasure, than in flying Pain.

Indeed, the noblest and most commendable Reason of our serving God is, our Love of him. God is Love, and he chiefly delights in those disinterested Duties which spring from that Principle. However, he hath been pleased to condescend to the Weakness, nay to the Baseness of our Natures, and to accept our bounden Duty and Service, upon much lower Terms. He hath thought fit to allure, and to frighten us into Obedience; and him that comes even this way to him, he will in no wise cast out.

3. To strengthen this Proof yet further, let us, in the third place, take a View
Ser. View of the State and Condition of
profligate Sinners. We shall find it to
be such, that nothing but Terror can
any ways lay hold of them. Is it pos-
sible for a Man that is sunk into all
manner of Vice and Impurity, to be
struck on a sudden with the Beauty of
Virtue and Goodness, with the Love of
God, and of his infinite Perfections?
Can he (do we think) recover himself,
by reflecting on the Deformity and Tur-
pitude of Sin, on the Dignity of his Na-
ture, and of that divine Character and
Resemblance which he bears? Alas!
let Virtue be never so lovely, Goodness
never so desirable; yet He hath no Eyes
to see it, no Heart to desire it. He hath
lost the Taste of every thing, but those
very Delights, in which he indulges him-
self; and Reason is no longer Reason to
him, than it pleads for his Enjoyments.
Now what, I say, can possibly rouse
such a Creature as this, so lost to all in-
genuous Motives, but the Sense of di-
vine Vengeance, and the Dread of etern-
al Punishments? The Terrors of Hell
may
Motive to Holiness.

may still perhaps persuade him to consider (for Fear will find an Entrance where no other Passion can) but to all Arguments besides he is perfectly impenetrable.

Indeed, after that the Wrath of God hath terrified him into Reflections on his wretched State, and into Resolutions of quitting it, there is room for other Motives to come in, and finish the Work thus begun; to improve his Contrition, and raise his Repentances, and build him up in the Practice of all manner of Holiness. But still the leading Step towards Repentance must, I say, proceed from his Fear; which therefore is a sure Foundation for all Penitents to build on, unless we can suppose that God ever leaves Men in Sin, without affording them any one proper Motive to stir them up to Virtue; an opinion not easily to be entertained of infinite Goodness.

Why then should the pious Christian harbour any Doubts of this kind in his Breast? O, why should his Soul be cast down.
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Serm. down, and his Spirit disquieted within him? There is no Room for Despondency of Mind in such a State as His; no Reason, why that Dread of Divine Wrath, which frightened him at first into the Ways of Virtue, should continue to haunt and pursue him still, now he is far advanced in them. The only Fears, which will he prejudicial to him, and which he ought to dismiss, are those concerning the Validity of his Repentance. His other Fears were agreeable to Nature, and Reason, and to those Methods, which the Divine Wisdom hath thought fit to make use of for reclaiming Sinners. To serve God out of Love, and Love only, without the least Mixture or Allay of any baser Principle, is the Privilege of Angels and blessed Spirits who live in the Presence of God. It will hereafter be the Reward of our having lived as became the Gospel, but it cannot be matter of strict Duty to us now. Lower and less noble Ends must influence us, while we are in this State of Imperfection:
a Motive to Holiness.

Till that which is perfect is come, that which is in part need not, and cannot be done away. Therefore why is his Soul cast down, and why is his Spirit disquieted within him?

To all this perhaps the dejected Christian, for whose sake I have entered on this Argument, will reply, That the Fear of eternal Punishment is indeed a proper and sufficient Motive to lead Men to Holiness, if it be such a Fear of God's Power and Justice, as is sweetly allayed and tempered by a Sense of his Goodness; that is, if it be an Evangelic and Filial Fear, composed of an equal Mixture of Awe and Delight, of Love and Reverence; for to such a Fear as this the most eminent Saints of God were no Strangers, since they served the Lord with Fear (as good David speaks) and rejoiced before him with Reverence.

But alas! His is altogether a Legal and a Servile Fear; a fullen, gloomy Passion, without the least Mixture of any thing Joyous and Delightful; a mere
III. mere Dread of Omnipotence, armed
with Vengeance, which presents the Rod
to him as lifted up, and makes him
tremble at the Sight of it; and forces
him on towards his Duty, without, and
against Inclination, merely as Beasts of
Sacrifice are dragged to the Horns of the
Altar. This is his wretched Case; no
Glimpse of Light appears in any Cor-
ner of his Soul; no comfortable Re-
flections on the Goodness and Mercy
of God shine inwardly upon him; but
the Face of his Mind is all covered with
Darkness, Distrust, and Horror. And
how can the Services that flow from
such a Temper as this, be acceptable to
that God, who is all Love and Light,
and is pleased only with a willing Mind,
and a cheerful Giver? This is the sad
Account which some Men give of
themselves without Cause. To rectify
it, let them consider,
1st. Hath this Principle, which they
thus blame, done the Work of a bet-
ter? Hath it made them Charitable,
Humble, Temperate, Devout? Hath
it enabled them to purify themselves from all Spot and Blemish, and to adorn the Doctrine of their God and Saviour in all Things? If it hath, they may put what Odious Names upon it, and dress it up in what frightful Shapes they please; but it is certainly such a Principle, as will bear the Test, and, if they continue to be directed by it, will at last carry them to Heaven. Be not deceived, He that doth Righteousness, is righteous; and as such, shall receive a Recompence at the great Day of Account, though he became so upon the lowest and least valuable Considerations: The Meaness of the Motive, which induced him to obey, shall not rob him of the Rewards which are due to Obedience. And therefore the Distinction between a Legal and Servile Fear is here mistaken and misapplied. For a Servile Fear (in the true Notion of it) is such a Dread of divine Vengeance, as hath no saving Influence upon Mens Lives and Conversations; such as Malefactors are seized with, when under the Sentence
Sentence of Execution, and without Hopes of escaping it; such as Ill Men feel, who go on obstinately in their Ill Courses, notwithstanding it; and such, under which the Devils themselves bow and tremble, though without altering in the least their diabolical Natures by the Means of it. But this is far from being the Case of that Man, who works out his own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: And therefore, we miscall such Fears as these, when we term them Servile: For that is always in the Accounts of right Reason, and will be esteemed in the Sight of God, a true Filial Fear, which works by a true Filial Obedience. But,

2<sup>nd</sup>ly It is further probable, that these melancholy Persons do represent their own inward Sense of Things worse than it deserves; and persuade themselves into an Opinion, that they Love God less, and Dread him more than perhaps they really do. For (as I hinted at the Beginning of this Discourse) it is scarce conceivable that any Men, who
who are not sincerely good, should dis- serve quite themselves with such Scruples about the Ends and Motives which inclined them to Goodness. It is their Fear of not Loving God as much as they ought to do, which makes them apprehend that they do not love him at all. And therefore, instead of turning their Eyes inwardly upon the Ideas, which they have lodged in their frightful Imagination, let them direct them upon the outward Effects of their Fears; instead of puzzling themselves about the true Principle of Holiness, let them take a comfortable Prospect of the genuine Fruits of it, which abound in their Life and Practice. And then their Doubts will all disappear, their Scruples will vanish; and they will be satisfied, that the Love of God hath that Place which it ought to have in their Hearts, in as much as they Obey him: For in this we know that we love God, if we keep his Commandments. But,

3dly and lastly, Let the Men who are under these Apprehensions, make a right
right Use of them; not disturb and terrify themselves with such Thoughts, but take Occasion from thence to gain Ground upon themselves, and to advance faster in the Ways of Religion; and to excite in their Hearts such a fervent and exalted Love of God, as shall leave no room for any Doubts and Misgivings. It is true, that perfect Love casteth out Fear; but such a Degree of Divine Love is scarce attainable here: However, we may aspire and approach still nearer and nearer towards this Perfection. How much soever we have conquered our Dread of God, and improved our Love of him, we may go on still to dread him less, and to love him more, 'till we come at last to be rooted and grounded in Love; and be able to comprehend, with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge.

To Him, together with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.

THE
The Terrors of Conscience.

A SERMON
Preached at
St. P A U L's
Before the
L O R D M A Y O R,
May 30, 1703.

MATTH. xiv. 1, 2, 3.
At that Time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the Fame of Jesus, and said unto his Servants, This is John the Baptist, He is risen from the Dead; and therefore mighty Works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in Prison, &c.

THE Wicked (says the Prophet) are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt. SERM. IV.

If. lvii. 20.
**Serm. Dirt.** That is, Men of flagitious Lives are subject to great Uneasiness: Whatever Calm and Repose of Mind they may seem for a Season to enjoy, yet anon, a quick and pungent Sense of Guilt (awakened by some Accident) rises like a Whirlwind, ruffles and disquiets them throughout, and turns up to open View, from the very Bottom of their Consciences, all the Filth and Impurity which had settled itself there. A Truth, of which there is not, perhaps, in the whole Book of God, a more apt and lively Instance, than that which the Passage I have read from the Evangelist sets before us. The crying Guilt of John the Baptist’s Blood fat but ill, no doubt, on the Conscience of Herod, from the Moment of his spilling it. However, his inward Anguish and Remorse was stifled and kept under for a time, by the Splendor and Luxury in which he lived, till he heard of the Fame of Jesus; and then his Heart smote him, at the Remembrance of the Inhuman Treatment he had given to such
such another Just and Good Man; and **serm.** wrung from him a Confession of what he felt, by what he uttered on that Occasion. **He said unto his Servants, This is John the Baptist! He is risen from the Dead! and therefore mighty Works do shew forth themselves in him.** There could not be a wilder Imagination than this, or which more betrayed the Agony and Confusion of Thought, under which he laboured. He had often heard John the Baptist preach, and must have known that the Drift of all his Sermons was, to prepare the Jews for the Reception of a Prophet, mightier than Him, and whose Shoes he was not worthy to bear. Upon the Arrival of that Prophet, soon afterwards, **Herod's frightened Conscience gives him no Leisure to recollect what his Messenger had said; but immediately suggests to him, That this was the murdered Baptist himself! Herod, as appears from History, was, though Circumcised, little better than an Heathen in his Principles and Practices; or, if sincerely a **Jew,**
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Serm. Jew, was, at most, but of the Sect of the Sadducees, who said, there was no Resurrection; and yet, under the present Pangs and Terrors of his Guilt, he imagines, that John was risen from the Dead, on purpose to reprove him. It was the Baptist's distinguishing Character, that he did no Miracles, nor pretended to the Power of doing them; and yet even from hence the disturbed Mind of Herod concludes, that it must be He, because mighty Works did shew forth themselves in him. And so great was his Consternation and Surprize, that it broke out before Those, who should least have been Witnesses of it: For he Whispers not his guilty Fears to a Bosom Friend, to the Partner of his Crime, and of his Bed; but forgets his high State and Character, and declares them to his very Servants. Surely nothing can be more just and apposite than the Allusion of the Prophet, in respect to this Wicked Tetrarch; He is like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt.
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Dirt. And such is every one, that 

with an high Hand, against the clear Light of his Conscience: Although he may resist the Checks of it at first, yet he will be sure to feel the Lashes and Reproaches of it afterwards. The Avenging Principle within us will certainly do Its Duty, upon any eminent Breach of Ours; and make every flagrant Act of Wickedness, even in this Life, a Punishment to itself.

With this general Proposition the particular Instance of the Text (duly opened and considered) will furnish us: and this Proposition therefore I now purpose, by God's Blessing, to handle and enforce; and, in order to fix a due, lively, and lasting Sense of it upon our Minds, I shall, in what follows, consider Conscience, not as a mere Intellectual Light, or Informing Faculty, a Dictate of the Practical Understanding (as the Phrase of the Schools is) which Directs, Admonishes, and Influences us, in what we are to do; but as it acts back upon the Soul by a Reflection
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Serm. Reflection on what we have done; and iv. is, by that Means, the Source and Cause of all that Joy, or Dejection of Mind, of those internal Sensations (if I may so speak) of Pleasure or Pain, which attend the Practice of great Virtues or great Vices; and begin that Heaven, and that Hell in us here, which will be our Sure and Eternal Portion hereafter. Prov. xx. 27. The Spirit (or Conscience) of Man is the Candle of the Lord, which not only discovers to us, by its Light, wherein our Duty consists; but revives also, and cheers us with its bright Beams, when we do well; and, when we do ill, is as a burning Flame, to scorch, and confume us.

As such, I shall consider it in my present Discourse: Wherein,

I. First, I shall endeavour to Illustrate this plain but weighty Truth (for indeed it needs Illustration only, and not Proof) by some Considerations drawn from Scripture, Reason, and Experience.

Secondly,
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Secondly, I shall account for a particular and pressing Difficulty, that seems to attend the Proof of it. And,

Thirdly and lastly, I shall apply it to (the proper Object of all our Admonitions from the Pulpit, but most especially of this) the Hearts and Consciences of the Hearers.

First, I am to illustrate this Truth by some Considerations drawn from Scripture, Reason, and Experience.

That Guilt and Anguish are inseparable, and that the Punishment of a Man's Sin begins always from Himself, and from his own Reflections, is a Truth everywhere supposed, appealed to, and inculcated in Scripture. The Consequence of the first Sin that was ever committed in the World, is there said to have been, that our offending Parents perceived their own Nakedness, and fled from the Presence of God: that is, a conscious Shame and Fear.
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S E R M. Fear succeeded in the Room of lost Innocence; and the Presages of their own Minds, those Auguria Pœnae futurae (of which even the Heathen Moralists speak) anticipated the Sentence of Divine Vengeance. In relation to this Office of Conscience it is, that the inspired Writers speak of it (in Terms borrowed from the awful Solemnities of Human Judicatories) as bearing Witness against us, as Accusing, or Excusing, Judging, and Condemning us. And the Prophet therefore adds this Woe to the other Menaces, which he had denounced on a disobedient and profligate People, that their own Wickedness should correct them, and their Backsliding should reprove them: A Correction so severe and terrible, that Solomon balancing the Outward Afflictions of Life, and Bodily Pains, with the Inward Regrets and Torments of a guilty Mind, pronounces the former of these to be Light and Tolerable in comparison of the latter: The Spirit of a Man (says he) will sustain his Infirmities;
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fimities; but a wounded Spirit who can bear? Isaiah describes the dismal Reflections, and foreboding Thoughts that harbour in such a Breast, after this Manner: The Sinners of Sion are afraid, Fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites: Who shall dwell with devouring Flames? Who shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? But no Part of Scripture gives us so lively an Account of this inward Scene of Dejection and Horror, as the Psalms of Penitent David: In one of them, particularly, he thus complains: Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, as an heavy Burthen; they are too heavy for me. I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared, by reason of the Disquietness of my Heart. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the Day long. My Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me; and as for the Light of mine Eyes, it is also gone from me. For thine Arrows slick fast in me, and thy Hand preseth me sore: There is no Soundness in my Flesh, be-
cause of thine Anger; neither is there any Rest in my Bones, because of my Sin.

This is the Expressive Language of Holy Writ, when it would set out to us the Disorders and Uneasiness of a guilty self-condemning Mind. And,

2. There is nothing in these Representations particular to the Times and Persons, on which they point; nothing but what happens alike to all Men in like Cases; and is the genuine and necessary Result of offending against the Light of our Consciences. Nor is it possible indeed in the Nature of the Thing, that Matters should be otherwise. It is the Way, in which Guilt doth and must always operate. For Moral Evil can no more be committed, than Natural Evil can be suffered, without Anguish and Disquiet; Whatever doth Violence to the plain Dictates of our Reason concerning Virtue and Vice, Duty and Sin, will as certainly discompose and afflict our Thoughts, as a Wound will raise a Smart
Smart in the Flesh that receives it. Good and Evil, whether Natural or Moral, are but other Words for Pleasure and Pain, Delight and Uneasiness: At least, tho' they may be distinguished in the Notion, yet are they not to be separated in Reality; but the one of them, wherever it is, will constantly and uniformly excite and produce the other. Pain and Pleasure are the Springs of all human Actions, the great Engines, by which the wise Author of our Natures governs and steers them to the Purposes, for which he ordained them. By these, annexed to the Perception of Good and Evil, he inclines us powerfully to pursue the one, and to avoid the other; to pursue natural Good, and to avoid natural Evil, by delightful or uneasy Sensations, that immediately affect the Body; to pursue moral Good, and to avoid moral Evil, by pleasing or painful Impressions made on the Mind. From hence it is, that we so readily choose or refuse, do or forbear every thing
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Sermon. thing that is profitable or noxious to us, and requisite to preserve or perfect our Beings. And because it is an End of far greater Importance, and more worthy of our All-wise Creator's Care, to secure the Integrity of our moral, than of our natural Perfections; therefore he hath made the Pleasures and Pains, subservient to this purpose, more extensive and durable; so that the inward Complacence we find in acting reasonably and virtuously, and the Disquiet we feel from vicious Choices and Pursuits, is protracted beyond the Acts themselves, from whence it arose; and renewed often upon our Souls, by distant Reflections; whereas the Pleasures and Pains, attending the Perceptions of natural Good and Evil, are bounded within a narrower Compass, and do seldom stay long, or return with any Force upon the Mind, after a Removal of the Objects that occasioned them.

Hence then the Satisfactions, or Stings of Conscience severally arise: They are the
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the Sanctions, as it were, and Enforcement of that eternal Law of Good and Evil, to which we are subjected; the natural Rewards and Punishments originally annexed to the Observance, or Breach of that Law by the great Promulger of it; and which being thus joined and twisted together by God, can scarce by any Arts, Endeavours, or Practices of Men be put asunder. The Prophet therefore explains Good and Evil, by Sweet and Bitter. Woe be to them (says he) that call Evil Good, and Good Evil! that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter! Implying, that the former of these do as naturally and sensibly affect the Soul, as the latter do the Palate; and leave as grateful, or displeasing a Relish behind them. But, 3. There is no need of Arguments, to evince this Truth; the universal Experience and Feeling of Mankind bears Witness to it. For say, did ever any of you break the Power of a darling Lust, resist a pressing Temptation,
or perform any Act of a conspicuous and distinguishing Virtue, but that you found it soon turn to account to you? Did not your Minds swell with a secret Satisfaction, at the Moment when you were doing it? And was not a Reflection upon it afterwards always sweet and refreshing? Health to your Navel, and Marrow to your Bones? On the contrary, did you ever indulge a Criminal Appetite, or allow yourself sedately in any Practice which you knew to be unlawful, but that you felt an inward Struggle, and strong Reluctances of Mind before the Attempt, and bitter Pangs of Remorse attending it? Though no Eye saw what you did, and you were sure that no Mortal could discover it; did not Shame and Confusion secretly lay hold of you? Was not your own Conscience instead of a thousand Witnesses to you? Did it not plead with you Face to Face, as it were, and upbraid you with your Backslidings? Have not some of you, perhaps, at this Instant, a sensible Experience
perience of the Truth which I am pres- s e r m. 
fing upon you? Do you not feel the iv. 
Operation of that powerful Principle, of which I am discoursing? Is not the Memory of some of your past Sins even now present to you? And are not your Minds sting with some Degree of that Regret and Uneasiness, which followed upon the first Com- mission of them? And do you not dis- cover what passes within you, by a more than ordinary Attention, Seriousness, and Silence; and even by an Endeavour to throw off these visible Marks of Con- cern, into which you are surprized, as soon as they are observed?

The jolly and voluptuous Livers, the Men who set up for Freedom of Thought, and for disengaging themselves from the Prejudices of Education and superstitious Opinions, may pretend to dispute this Truth, and perhaps, in the Gaiety of their Hearts, may venture even to deride it: But they cannot, however, get rid of their inward Convictions of it; they must feel it some-
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SERM. times, though they will not own it.

iv. There is no possibility of reasoning ourselves out of our own Experience, or of laughing down a Principle woven so closely into the Make and Frame of our Natures. Notwithstanding our Endeavours to conceal and stifle it, it will break out sometimes, and discover itself to a careful Observer, through all our Pretences and Disguises; for even in the midst of such a Laughter, the Heart is sorrowful: and as the Beginning of that Mirth was Folly, so the End of it is always Heaviness.

Prov. xiii. 14.

Look upon one of these Men, who would be thought to have made his ill Practices and ill Principles perfectly consistent; to have shaken off all Regard to the Dictates of his own Mind concerning Good and Evil, and to have gotten above the Reproofs of his Conscience; and you will find a thousand Things, in his Actions and Discourses, testifying against him, that he deceiveth himself, and that the Truth is not in him.
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him. If he be indeed, as he pretends, at ease in his Enjoyments, from whence come those Disorders and Unevenness in his Life and Conduct; those Vicissitudes of good and bad Humour, Mirth and Thoughtfulness; that perpetual Pursuit of little, mean, insipid Amusements; that restless Desire of changing the Scene, and the Objects of his Pleasures; those sudden Eruptions of Passion and Rage upon the least Disappointments? Certainly, all is not right within; or else there would be a greater Calm, and Serenity without: If his Mind were not in an unnatural Situation, and under contrary Influences, it would not be thus tossed and disquieted. For what Reason doth he contrive for himself such a Chain and Succession of Entertainments; and take care to be delivered over from one Folly, one Diversion, to another, without Intermission? Why, but because he dreads to leave any void Spaces of Life unfilled, lest Conscience should find Work for his Mind at those Intervals? He
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SERM. He hath no way to fence against guilty Reflections, but by stopping up all the Avenues at which they might enter. Hence, his strong Addiction to Company, his Aversion to Darkness and Solitude; which recollect the Thoughts, and turn the Mind inward upon itself, by shutting out external Objects and Impressions. It is not, because the Pleasures of Society are always new and grateful to him, that he pursues them thus keenly; for they soon lose their Relish, and grow flat and insipid, by Repetition. They are not his Choice, but his Refuge; for the Truth is, he dares not long converse with himself, and with his own Thoughts; and the worst Company in the World is better to him, than that of a reproving Conscience.

A lively and late Proof of this we had in a certain Writer, who set up for delivering Men from these vain fantastick Terrors; and was, on that Account, for a Season much read and applauded. But it is plain, that he could
could not work that Effect in himself, which he pretended to work in others: For his Books manifestly shew, that his Mind was over-run with gloomy and terrible Ideas of Dominion and Power; and that he wrote in a perpetual Fright against those very Principles, which he pretended to contradict and deride: And such as knew his Conversation well, have assured us, that nothing was so dreadful to him, as to be in the Dark, and to give his natural Fears an Opportunity of recoiling upon him. That he was timorous to an Excess, is certain; he himself owns it, in the Account which he wrote of himself, and which is in every one's Hands: But he did not care to own the true Reason of it, and therefore lays it upon a mighty Fright, which seized his Mother, when the Spaniards attempted their famous Invasion, in the Year 1588. the Year in which he was born. The more probable Account of it is, that it naturally sprung from his own Conduct and
Method of thinking. He had been endeavouring all his Life-time, to get rid of those Religious Principles, under which he was carefully educated by his Father (a Divine of the Church of England) and to set up for a new System and Sect, which was to be built upon the Ruins of all those Truths, that were then, and had ever been held sacred by the best and wisest of Men. It was Vanity pushed him on to this Attempt, but he could not compass it. He was able, here and there, to delude a superficial Thinker with his new Terms and Reasonings: But the hardest Task of all was, thoroughly to deceive himself. His Understanding could not be compleatly imposed upon, even by its own Artifices; and his Conscience, every now and then, got the better of him in the Struggle; so he lived in a perpetual Suspicion and Dread of the Reality of those Truths, which he represented as Figments; and, while he made Sport with that Kingdom of Darkness (as he loved to call another World)
World) trembled, in good earnest, at the Thought of it.

_Tiberius_, that compleat Pattern of Wickedness and Tyranny, had taken as much Pains to conquer these Fears as any Man, and had as many Helps and Advantages towards it, from great Splendour and Power, and a perpetual Succession of new Business, and new Pleasures; and yet, as great a Master of the Art of Diffimulation as he was, he could not dissemble the inward Sense of his Guilt, nor prevent the open Eruptions of it upon very improper Occasions. Witness that Letter, which he wrote to the Senate from his impure Retreatment at Capreæ. Tacitus has preserved the first Lines of it; and there cannot be a livelier Image of a Mind filled with wild Distraction and Despair, than what they afford us: _Quid scribam Vobis, P. C. aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, Dii me Deæque pejus per-dant, quàm perire quotidie sentio, si scio!_ That is, "What, or how, at this Time,
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Serm. iv. "Time, I shall write to you, Fathers of the Senate, or what indeed I shall not write to you, may all the Powers of Heaven confound me yet worse than they have already done, if I know, or can imagine!" And his Observation upon it is well worthy of ours, and very apposite to our present purpose: "In this manner (says he) was this Emperor punished by a Reflection on his own infamous Life and Guilt; nor was it in vain that the greatest Master of Wisdom (he means Plato) affirmed, that were the Breast of Tyrants once laid open to our View, we should see there nothing but ghastly Wounds and Bruises; the Consciousness of their own Cruelty, Lewdness, and ill Conduct, leaving as deep and bloody Prints on their Minds, as the Strokes of the Scourge do on the Back of a Slave. Tiberius (adds he) confessed as much, when he uttered these Words; nor could his high Station, or even Privacy and Retirement itself
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"itself hinder him from discovering himself from discovering serm.
"to all the World the inward Agonies and Torments, under which he iv.
"laboured." Thus that excellent Historian *.

Believe it, the Tales of Ghosts and Spectres were not (as is commonly said) the mere Inventions of designing Men to keep weak Minds in Awe; nor the Products only of a religious Fear, degenerated into Melancholy and Superstition, but wicked Men, haunted with a Sense of their own Guilt (as the cruel Tetrarch here in the Text, with the Baptist’s Murder) were used to affright themselves with such Phantoms as these, and often mistook strong and terrible Imaginations for real Apparitions. Thus I am sure, the Author of the Book of Wisdom very naturally accounts for them in his 17th Chapter; out of which I shall recite a large Passage, very apposite to the Point which

* About this Passage of Tiberius, see Hooker’s excellent Reflections, p. 367, 368.
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Serm. we are now handling. He is there with great Elegance, describing that panick Fear, which seized the impious Ægyptians, when (as he speaks) they were fettered with the Bonds of a long Night, and shut up in their Houses, the Prisoners of Darkness. Then, says he, they who had supposed that they lay hid in their secret Sins, were horribly astonisht and troubled with strange Sights. For neither might the Corner that held them, keep them from Fear; but Noises, as of Waters falling down, sounded about them, and sad Visions appeared unto them with heavy Countenances. And they that promised to drive away Terrors and Troubles from a sick Soul (the Men, we may suppose, who set up for confounding the Notions of Good and Evil, and ridiculing Conscience) were sick themselves of Fear worthy to be laughed at. For though no terrible Thing did affright them, yet being scared by Beasts that passed by, and Hissing of Serpents, they died for Fear; refusing to look upon the Air, which on
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no Side could be avoided. For Wicked-ness (as he concludes) condemned by its own Witness, is very timorous; and, being pressed with Conscience, always forecasteth grievous Things!

I know it will be said, that though this be often, yet it is not always the Case; since we have now and then Instances of Men, who lead very flagitious Lives, and yet feel not any of these Qualms or Guirds of Conscience; but do, in all appearance, live easily, and sometimes even die calmly. Which could not be (say the Objectors) if the Principle of Conscience, and the condemning Power of it were natural to Man; for it would then act like other natural Principles, universally, and without Exception. Having hitherto therefore illustrated this Truth by Observations drawn from Scripture, Reason, and Experience; I now proceed on my

Second general Head, To account for this Difficulty, which attends the Proof of it. In order to it,
SERM. I. I observe, that we are deceived often in the Judgments we pass on such Occasions. In our common Intercourse with the World, we see only the Outside and Surface, as it were, of Mens Actions, but cannot tell how it is with them Inwardly, and at the Bottom. We frame our Opinions of them from what passes in Conversation and publick Places, where they may be upon their Guard, acting a Part, and studying Appearances. The Hypocrite in Perfection will put on the Mask so artificially, that it shall seem to be real and natural. Decency, and a Desire of Esteem shall enable Men to cover great Passions and Frailties, which nevertheless fit very close to them, and, as soon as those Restraints are taken off, break out with Freedom. We have read of those, who have been endued with such a Constancy and Firmness of Temper, as even to endure the Rack, and to appear composed under the Pains of it, without owning their Crime, or declaring their Accomplices,
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And in like manner, the Terrors and Serm. ments of a guilty Conscience may sometimes be borne and dissembled. I ob-

serve,

2. That the Disorders and Reprehensions of Conscience are not a continued, but an intermitting Disease; returning upon the Mind by Fits, and at particular Seasons only; in the Intervals of which the Patient shall have seeming Health, and real Ease. The Eruptions of burning Mountains are not perpetual, nor doth even the Smoak itself ascend always from the Tops of them; but though the Seeds of Fire lodged in their Caverns may be stifled and suppressed for a Time, yet anon they gather Strength, and break out again, with a Rage great in Proportion to its Discontinuance. 'Tis by Accidents and Occasions chiefly that the Power of this Principle is called forth into Act; by a sudden ill Turn of Fortune, or a Fit of Sickness, or our Observation of some remarkable Instance of divine Vengeance, which hath over-
iv. Even Herod was not always under the Paroxysm described in the Text, but surprized into it unawares, by his bearing of the Fame of Jesus; and then his Heart smote him at the Remembrance of the inhuman Treatment he had given to such another just and good Person, and filled his Mind anew with forgotten Horrors. We cannot therefore, from a present Calm of Thought, know, either how it hath been with a Man heretofore, or how it shall be with him hereafter; but may easily in such Cases, and do often judge wrong Judgment; saying, Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace, but a Truce only; and where it will appear, that there was none, whenever Affliction ruffles a Man's Soul, or a Death-bed rouzes him:

\[\text{Vera tum voces pestore ab imo} \]

\[\text{Erumpunt, atque cripitur persona, manet res:} \]

Then (and sometimes not till then) all Masks and Disguises are thrown off, and the Mind appears naked and unguarded to itself and others.
Ask those who attend the Sick, and help to prepare them for their Passage into another World; ask them, I say, and they will tell you, how many Instances they have met with of Men, who seem to have been given up to a Spirit of Insensibility and Slumber, and have accordingly slept on for a long time, and taken their Rest; and yet have in their last Moments been all at once sufficiently awakened: What inexpressible Agonies and Horrors they have found upon the Minds of dying despairing Sinners, who thought themselves secure against such Attacks, and believed that the clamorous Principle within them was wholly silenced; but upon the near Prospect of another World, and which made no Impression on them at a Distance, have changed their Sentiments, and dropped their false Confidence; have seen their Guilt, and dreaded their Danger, when it was too late perhaps to think of deploring the one, or escaping the other.

After all, it must be owned,
The Terrors of Conscience.

S E R M. 3. That there are now and then In-
vi. stances of Men, who have gone through

even this last Tryal unshaken; and, af-

fter leading very dissolute Lives, have

yet died hard, as the Phrase is, without

any seeming Concern for what was

passed, or Dread of what was to fol-

low. Whenever such an Effect hap-

pens, it is owing to one or more of

these Causes; either to ill Principles

early and deeply imbibed, or to a cer-
tain Obstinacy and Sullenness of Tem-

per peculiar to some Men; or lastly,
either to a natural or acquired Stupi-
dity. If a Man begins betimes with him-
self, and takes Pains to vitiate his

Mind with lewd Principles, and lives

long in the Profession of them, he may

at last root and rivet them so fast, 'till

scarce any Application whatsoever is

able to loosen them; and 'till the na-
tural Sentiments of his Conscience are
even choaked and stifled by the Means

of them.

A false Firmness and Resolution, join-
ed with a Shame of unsaying and un-
doing
The Terrors of Conscience.

doing all a Man hath said and done before, may possibly carry him headlong on to his Death, without owning, or perhaps even seeing his Danger. Gross and heavy Minds, unimproved by Education and Instruction, have at length arrived at such a Degree of Stupidity, as to think of nothing beyond this World, nor of any Thing in it, but what immediately affects their Senses. And even Spirits more refined may, by a perpetual and total Immersion in bodily Pleasures, arrive at last at the same Degree of Insensibility. In such Cases and by the Help of such Qualities as these, it is possible, I grant, and sometimes happens, that Men have gone out of the World, as they lived in it, defying Conscience, and the Power of it, and deriding the Flames of Hell, 'till they were in the Midst of them. But these are rare Instances, and of no Force therefore, when opposed to the general Conviction and Feeling of Mankind upon the same Occasions. They prove only that there are Monsters in the
The Terrors of Conscience.

Serm. the Moral, as well as the Natural

IV. World, which make nothing against the settled Laws, and regular Course of either. To argue against the innate and pungent Reflections of Conscience from some Men want of them, is, as if one should attempt to prove, that Man is not a reasonable Creature, because some Men are born Naturals, and others by too great an Intention of Thought, or by brutal Excesses, have lost the Use of their Reason. For if the Light of Reason may itself be extinguished, much more may the Voice of Conscience be drowned; which being a practical Principle, is perpetually warred upon by our Lusts, and Passions, and sinful Habits; whereas the other being a more speculative Power, hath no Contrary in the Mind of Man to struggle with.

But I forbear, since there remains yet the

III. Third and last Part of my Task, To apply what hath been said to the proper
The Terrors of Conscience.

proper Object of All our Admonitions S E R M.
from the Pulpit (and particularly of IV.
This) the Hearts and Consciences of the
Hearers.

Since therefore the wise Author of our Natures hath so contrived them, that Guilt is naturally, and almost necessarily attended with Trouble and Uneasiness, let us even from hence be persuaded to preserve the Purity, that we may preserve the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds. For Pleasure's Sake, let us abstain from all criminal Pleasures and Pollutions; because the racking Pains of Guilt, duly awakened, are really an Overbalance to the greatest sensual Gratifications. The Charms of Vice (how tempting soever they may seem to be) are by no Means equivalent to the inward Remorse and Trouble, and the tormenting Reflections which attend it; which always keep Pace with our Guilt, and are proportioned to the Greatness and Daringness of our Crimes: For mighty Sinners (here as well as hereafter) shall be...
The Terrors of Conscience.

Serm. mightily tormented. Sins of Omission, iv. Infirmity, and Surprize there will be; even the just Man falls seven Times a Day by them, and rises again from them with Strength and Cheerfulness to his Duty; but let us be sure carefully to guard against all such flagrant Enormities, as do Violence to the first and plainest Dictates of our Reason, and overbear the strongest Impulses of our Conscience; for these will certainly leave a Wound behind them, which we shall find it hard to bear, and harder, much harder to cure. Let no Temptation, no Interest, no Influence whatsoever sway us to do any Thing contrary to the Suggestions of Conscience in plain Cases, and Points of Moment; let us no more dare to do in private what that tells us ought not to be done, than if we were upon an open Theatre, and the Eyes of the whole Creation were upon us. What signifies it that we escape the View and Observation of Men, when the watchful Witness within sees and records all our Faults, and will
The Terrors of Conscience.

will certainly one Day reprove us, and set our Misdeeds in Order before us.

It hath been reckoned a good Rule for an happy Conduct of Life, to be sure of keeping our domestic Concerns right, and of being easy under our own Roof, where we may find an agreeable Retreat and Shelter from any Disappointments we meet with in the great Scene of Vexation, the World. And the same Rule will, with greater Reason hold, in relation to the Peace of our Consciences. Let our first Care be to keep all quiet and serene there: When this Point is once gained at Home, external Accidents will not be able deeply to affect us; and unless it be gained, all the Pleasures, the Abundance and Pomp of Life will be insipid and tasteless to us.

Wherefore let us resolve all of us to stick to that Principle, which will keep us easy when we are alone, and will stick to us in an Hour when all outward Comforts fail us. Let those of us particularly cherish it, who are in any
any Degree placed above the rest of our Neighbours by a Superiority of Parts, Power, Riches, or any other outward Distinctions. Let those chiefly listen to this Reprover, who are otherwise set in great measure above Reproof: The more destitute they are of Advice and Correction from others, the more careful should they be to attend to the Suggestions and Whispers of this inward Monitor and Friend. Though they value not the Censures passed by the Vulgar on their Actions, yet surely they cannot slight their own: Nor do they stoop beneath themselves, when they stoop to themselves only, and to the inward Dictates and Persuasions of their own Minds. The Marks of Distinction they bear, though they may enable them sometimes to sin with Impunity as to Men, yet will they not secure them against the Lashes of an avenging Conscience; which will find them out in their most secret Retreats, cannot be forbid Access, nor dismissed without being heard; will make
The Terrors of Conscience.

make their Way to them, as they did to Herod and Tiberius, through Business or Pleasure, nay even through Guards and Crowds, and all the vain Forms and Ceremonies, with which they may be surrounded.

In a Word; Let us keep Innocency, and do the Thing which is right; for whatever other Expedients towards Happiness Men may take up with, yet that, and that only, will bring us Peace at the last.
St. Paul's Defence before Felix:

A SERMON

Preached at

St. James's Chapel,

February 27, 1712-3.

ACTS xxiv. Part of Ver. 25.
And as He reasoned of Righteousness,
Temperance, and Judgment to come,
Felix trembled.

Who, that hears these Words, would not wish to have been present at this astonishing Scene; which represents the Apostle of the Gentiles, giving an Account of his Faith to Felix, the Roman Governor, in so moving
Observations on

Sermon, and convincing a manner, with such a Force of Eloquence and Strength of Argument, that even he, before whom he stands capitally accused, is struck, awed, confounded by his Discourse, and the Judge himself quakes at the Voice of the Prisoner! As he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come (says the Text) Felix trembled.

The Words will furnish us with very Instructive and Useful Reflections, if we take Occasion from them distinctly to consider,

I. First, The Subject Matter of Saint Paul's Discourse; Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.

II. Secondly, His Manner of handling it; he reasoned.

III. Thirdly, The remarkable Effect, that followed, upon his thus handling this important Subject; Felix trembled.

First,
First, The Subject Matter of Saint Paul's Discourse is said to have been, Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.

Not that we are to imagine, that the Apostle confined himself solely to the three Particulars here mentioned, without touching on any other Point of Christian Doctrine: Doubtless he declared to Felix the whole Counsel of God in the Redemption of Man by Christ Jesus; and insisted particularly on the great Article of Christ's Resurrection, in this Sermon, as he did in many others: For the Words, immediately preceding those of the Text, are, that Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the Faith in Christ; and therefore all the Articles of the Christian Faith were, we may be sure, sufficiently explained by him. However, though many other Doctrines were at that Time handled by the Apostle, yet these of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, had
Nosferatious on

s e r m. so large a Share in his Discourse, were
v. so warmly, so effectually urged by him,
that St. Luke hath not thought fit to take Notice of any other Part of his Sermon. From whence we are naturally led to raise this plain, but profitable Observation, that the moral Duties we are to practise in this Life, and the Rewards or Punishments we are to expect in another, are the chief Considerations in Religion, which should most often and earnestly be inculcated by those who preach the Gospel, and be most attentively listened to, and weighed by those who bear it.

Some Persons have a Prejudice against what is, by way of Reproach, called Moral Preaching, and Moral Arguing; when the Nature of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice are insisted on, and the several Consequences displayed, which, by the Light of Reason, are known to attend them: This, they think, is not to preach Jesus Christ, and his Gospel; it is not to speak spiritually, feelingly, powerfully, to the Hearts
Hearts and Consciences of Men. But SerM.
St. Paul, it seems, was not of this Mind, when he made Justice, and Temperance, and a future Account, the chief Subject of his Sermon before Felix; when he argued (as his Manner of Preaching upon other Occasions shews that he did) from Principles of Natural Light, how great Reason Men had to practise the two first of these, and to believe and expect the latter; when he enlarged upon the intrinick Beauty and Loveliness of those Virtues, and their manifest Subserviency to Mens present and future Happiness; and urged the universal Consent of Mankind to this Purpose, who had always acknowledged themselves to be under these Obligations, and, accordingly as they did, or did not fulfil them here, liable to be rewarded, or punished hereafter. St. Paul, we may be sure, thought himself all this while to be preaching Jesus Christ and his Gospel: And from the Effect we learn, that this Moral preaching of the Apostle was
Observations of

SERM. was sufficiently powerful, awakening, edifying; for it had such a Spiritual Efficacy in it, as to make his Auditor tremble.

But the Subject Matter of St. Paul's Discourse is not more observable, on the Account of its Excellence and Importance at large, than it is, for the particular Fitness and Propriety of it, with Regard to the Person to whom it was addressed. The two Vices of which Felix was most remarkably guilty, were Injustice and Intemperance; as Historians of unsuspected Credit, both Heathen and Jewish, inform us. Tacitus says of him, that, Judææ impositus, & cuncta malefāta sibi impune [cessura] ratus, tantā potentia subnīxo, per omnem sæavitiam ac libidinem jus regium servīli ingenio exercuit: i.e. The Impunity which he promised himself from his high Station and Power, tempted him to commit all manner of Lust and Violence. And Josephus adds, that Drusilla herself, who now sat with him on the Judgment Seat, was really the
the Wife of a certain King of the Eme-

s, but had been enticed from his Bed by Felix, with whom she now publickly lived and conversed. Nothing therefore could be more apposite, than a Discourse concerning Righteousness and Temperance, before such a cruel and voluptuous Person; nothing more proper, than to put this unjust Judge in mind of another, a more impartial and dreadful Tribunal, before which he himself should one Day stand, and be judged. Thus did St. Paul adapt and proportion what he spake to the peculiar Wants and Exigences of the Hearer; and in so doing, left us a Pattern worthy of Imitation; such as, when attentively considered, will give us great Occasion to admire the Dexterity and Address, the sincere and disinterested Conduct, the mighty Courage and Zeal of this Eminent Apostle.

What could have more of holy Art and Wisdom in it, than St. Paul's answering the Enquiries of Felix in such a Manner, as was most likely to benefit the
The Roman Governor, v. led by no other Principle than Curiosity, desires from St. Paul an Account of his Faith: St. Paul readily complies, and so orders that Account, as to set those Parts of Christianity in the clearest Light before Felix, which he wanted most to see and consider; so as to turn off his general Apology for the Gospel into an immediate and close Application of some of its chief Doctrines to the particular Case of Felix; and to shew him, ere he is aware, that the Laws both of Christianity and Nature agree, in condemning his Violences and Impurities.

What a sincere and disinterested Spirit does there appear in St. Paul on this Occasion! He stood there accused of heinous Crimes, and was ready to sink under the Malice and mighty Power of his Accusers, the High Priest, and chief Men of the Jewish Sanhedrim then present, and soliciting a severe Sentence against him. And yet he seems regardless of the imminent Peril he
he was in; and, forgetting his own private Interest, any Degree of Concern for himself, turns all his Thoughts, and bends his whole Force towards promoting the general Interest of the Gospel, and the Salvation of Souls. He contrives not how he may gain the Affections of his Judge, and make him favourable to his Cause; but how only he may induce him to be kind to himself, and a good Christian; how he may render him fit to receive Mercy and Favour from the supreme Judge of Heaven and Earth. What is, if this be not to preach the Gospel of Christ in Simplicity and godly Sincerity?

Lastly, we may observe also, in the Behaviour of St. Paul, the Marks of an Undaunted and Exemplary Courage. He fears not, we see, to utter necessary, though harsh and ungrateful Truths in the Ears of one, who had the Power of Life and Death over him. He knew, with what Dangers the faithful Discharge of his Duty would, in this
this Case, be attended; how impatient
the Great are, under a Reproof, though
couched in the most gentle and least
offensive Language: what absolute Em-
pire Drusilla had gained over the Heart
of Felix, and with what Revengeful-
ness that impure Woman would be sure
to pursue any one, who should venture
to represent his Guilt to him, and to
rouze his sleeping Conscience: And yet
none of these frightening Considerations
were able to repress his Godly Zeal,
or to check his Freedom; which he
conducted indeed, with great Caution
and Prudence, insinuating his Reproofs
under the Cover of some Evangelical
Doctrines, then proposed by him:
However with so great Force and Suc-
cess, as to strike Confusion and Ter-
ror into the Person, for whom they
were intended.

Let us copy the excellent Pattern
which this Apostle hath set us, by tak-
ing all proper Opportunities of spread-
ing the Kingdom of Christ in the
Hearts of Men, and of advancing the
Interests
Interests of his Gospel. Let us resolve always to do our Duty, and discharge a good Conscience faithfully, without being deterred by possible Inconveniences, or Dangers that may attend us for so doing; without suffering secular Views, and our own private Interests to divert us from pursuing any good Design, whereby we may reasonably hope to promote the Divine Glory, and the Good of Mankind.

Let us act in such Cases discreetly indeed, warily, wisely; but withal courageously, zealously, firmly, as disregarding the Fear of Man, when it comes in Competition with the Fear of God. These (I say) are the Intimations, these the Instructions given us by the Behaviour of St. Paul; when, before an oppressive, a dissolute, and an unbelieving Magistrate, he took an Occasion to Discourse of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.

In which Discourse of his,

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The Second Thing observable is, his Manner of handling these Subjects; he Reasoned: that is, he treated of them in a Rational Way; proving from the Nature and Tendency of those Virtues our Obligation to practise them; and inferring from those Obligations the Certainty and Necessity of a future Account, wherein Notice should be taken how we have, or have not complied with them; and we should be rewarded or punished accordingly. And can any Thing be said more to the Advantage of a Rational Way of evincing the Doctrines of Morality, and the Truths of the Gospel, than that St. Paul practised it? He practised it, not on this only, but on many other Occasions: In his several Apologies for himself and for his Gospel, recorded in the Acts, throughout his Epistles sent to the several Churches he planted, we find this great Apostle of the Gentiles continually Reasoning; not merely proposing Doctrines in an...
Authoritative Manner, by Virtue of his Apostleship and Commission from God, but proving and making good what he proposes by Inference and Argument. Thus he frequently did, and by so doing has sanctified Reason to the Purposes of Religion, and shewed us that one Sort (indeed the best Sort) of good Preaching, consists in good Arguing.

Some pious and well meaning Christians have a very wrong Notion concerning edifying Discourses, and profiting by Sermons. They relish nothing from the Pulpit, but what is addressed to their Passions, and set out with all the Advantages of a popular Eloquence, and moving Delivery. By this Means they find themselves inwardly affected and warmed; and that heating of their Fancy they esteem and call Spiritual Edification. But when any Point of Doctrine is handled in a Close and Argumentative Manner, it appears flat and unsavory to them, has nothing in it of the Life and Power.
Observation on Power of Godliness, and is all mere human Reasoning. But herein they are widely mistaken; for it is a far greater and more useful Work, to inform the Understandings, and convince the Judgments of Men, than to raise their Passions; and that Discourse, which is most Instructive, and best supported by Reason, is certainly, if Men attend to it as they ought, most Edifying too. A Vehement and Voluble Tongue, a languishing Tone of Voice, a pious Set of Phrases, or the like, will very powerfully move the Affections of some Sort of Hearers; but the Warmth by that Means raised, is momentary, and vanishing, without any true, sound, lasting, spiritual Improvement. To compass that, the Way, we find, which the mighty and successful Preacher St. Paul took, was, to Reason. Though he were Divinely Inspired, and spake therefore, as the Oracles of God, with an uncontrollable Authority; though he were endued with Supernatural Powers, and could therefore have con-
firmed the Truth of what he uttered by Miracles; yet in Compliance with the Way in which Human Nature, and Reasonable Creatures are usually wrought upon, he Reasoned. But these Reflections have been in some Degree anticipated; and therefore, without enlarging further upon them, I hasten to consider the

Third and last Thing observable in the Text, the wonderful Effect that followed upon St. Paul's thus Reasoning on these important Subjects, Felix trembled. His Mind was filled with Horror, at the Remembrance of his past Crimes, and the Apprehension of a future Reckoning; and these inward Fears and Forbodings appeared in the outward and visible Marks of a great Consternation.

Though he was one of the mightiest Men on Earth, and Paul, a poor despised Prisoner; though he was then sitting on the Seat of Judgment, where it behoved him to do nothing that
Observations on

Ser. misbecame his high Place and Character; yet could he not dissemble the
Pangs and Agonies of his uneasy Mind, he trembled!

From whence it is natural to observe the great Force and Efficacy of
the Word of God, duly handled and applied: 'It is (according to the Account of it, given by this very Apostle in another Place) quick and powerful,
and sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder
of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of
the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.

Heb. iv. 12.

There is no Sin so secret, but that it will find it out and expose it; no
Heart so hard, but that it can soften it; no Conscience so far plunged in a
lethargick Sleep, but that it is able to rouze it. Strange are the Instances of
this Kind recorded in Holy Writ. Our Lord opens the Prophecies, and
expounds the Scriptures concerning himself, to the two Disciples travelling
towards Emmaus; and, while he is doing
ing it, their Hearts burn within them. SERM.

Philip points out to the Eunuch the iv.
Meaning of a Chapter in Isaiah; im-
mediately Light and Conviction rush in
into his Mind; he confesses Jesus, and
demands Baptism. St. Peter preaches
the Gospel to a great Multitude of
the Jews, who had just before been
instrumental in the Crucifixion of
Christ: They no sooner hear him,
than they are pricked to the Heart;
and cry out, Men and Brethren, what
shall we do? and straitway there are
added to the Faith no less than Three
Thousand Souls by this single Sermon.
And here in the Text, while St. Paul
is reasoning of Righteousness, Temper-
ance, and Judgment to come, Felix
trembles. Such is the wonderful Power
of Truth, when particularly blessed
by the God of Truth, and bid to go
forth and prosper! Such is the great
and astonishing Influence of the Word
of God, when assisted and enlivened
by his Spirit! It prevails over all Diff-
culties, all Opposition, and is mighty
Remarkable to this Effect is the different Success of Tertullus's and St. Paul's Pleading. Tertullus, we may presume, was one of the most famous Pleaders of his Time; else the High Priest and Elders, in a Cause of such Consequence (which they themselves went from Jerusalem to Cæsarea on Purpose to prosecute) would not have pitched upon him for their Advocate. And yet this great Orator, with all his studied Art and Eloquence, made no Impression on Felix; whereas St. Paul's Speech soon afterwards moved, terrified, confounded him. The Reason of which different Effect seems to have been, that the one was with good Words to varnish over an ill Cause, and by the Power of Oratory to support a false and lying Accusation: Whereas the other had Right and Truth on his side, and therefore pressed them earnestly: He himself felt what he spake, had an inward and vital Sense of those Truths he delivered; and therefore
therefore he made others feel them too; he spake from his own Heart, and to the Hearts and Consciences of those that heard him; and therefore he prevailed.

How should this Instance of the operative Virtue of God's Word reproach our Sluggishness and Insensibility? An impure and wicked Heathen (we hear) trembled at St. Paul's Doctrine. The same Doctrine sounds every Day in the Ears of negligent Christians, without terrifying, without alarming them. The same Apostle still reasons with them in his Epistles, concerning Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come: But he reasons to no Purpose; his Words seem to them as idle Tales; they neither feel their Force, not regard their Meaning. Surely for this Felix shall one Day rise up in Judgment against them; for he heard and trembled.

I observe (Secondly) that though Felix shewed great Concern on that Occasion, yet Drusilla, the Partner of his
Obervations on

Sermon. his Crimes, did, for ought appears, fit by altogether unmoved with the Apostle's Discourse. The most probable Account of which seems to be this; that she, being born and bred a Jewess, had better Opportunities of knowing the Will of God and her own Duty, and greater Obligations to practice what she knew, than those who were guided only by the Light of Nature and Reason. And yet, notwithstanding the mighty Restraints which her Religion laid upon her, she had forsaken her Marriage Vows, and gone from the Bed of her Husband, who was circumcised, into that of an uncircumcised Heathen. For which Reason her Guilt was of a much deeper Dye than that of Felix was; and consequently her Heart more obdurate, and insensible of Reproof. From whence we may raise to ourselves this general and useful Reflection; that the more Advantages any Man has towards discovering the Truth, and the more freely the Means of Grace have been
been indulged to him, the more desper ate in his Case, if he happens to revolt, and the harder will the Task be, if he turns profligate, to reclaim him. It is a Work of much less Difficulty to make a good Christian of a professed Heathen, than to bring an ill Christian, who now lives like an Heathen, to a feeling Sense of his Sins, and to any Degree of true Remorse and Compunction of Heart for them.

Let us hear the Issue of the whole Matter — What the Consequences of these Tremblings of Felix was, and how long they continued upon him, the Context will inform us. He abruptly breaks off the Discourse with St. Paul, and dismisses him in Hast. Go thy way (says he) for this Time, when I have a convenient Season I will call for thee! But he soon recovers from his Fright; for it presently follows — He hoped also, that Money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftner, and communed with
Observations on Sermon with him. We see the Seed of the Word, sown by the Apostle, fell among Thorns, and immediately the Thorns sprang up, and choked it: The Love of unjust and oppressive Gain quickly returned upon Felix, and drove out the Impressions of St. Paul’s Reasonings; and when he had once stood the Shock of his Conscience, and got the better of his Fears, he afterwards heard the same Things said, without any Degree of the same Remorse and Concern. He sent for St. Paul often and communed with him, with no other Design but that of gratifying his Curiosity, and extorting a Bribe from him—So suddenly and easily may the best Reflections be stifled, and the strongest Convictions overborn by the Force of any one prevailing Vice, or Lust, that hath gotten an absolute Dominion over us!

That this may not be our Case, whenever we hear an awakening Discourse from the Pulpit, and find our Consciences touched to the Quick with some
some apposite Passages of it; let us not referm.
forthwith endeavour to get rid of the
Smart, and to dismiss such troublesome
Reflections, as Felix did; Go your way
for this time, when I have a conve-
nient Season I will call for you. Nay,
but this is the proper Time, this the
most convenient Season for our enter-
taining them, and conversing with
them, when they press to be admitted,
and heard. Take not therefore some-
thing, as the Way is, to put off the
Fit; call not in Company, Business, or
Pleasure to divert your Thoughts from
their present melancholy Employment;
but rather study every way to cherish
and promote these good Beginnings by
Retirement, Meditation, and Prayer!
Commune with your own Heart in your
Chamber, and be still there; suffer
these Terrors of the Lord freely to rea-
son and plead with you, till they have
persuaded you there in private; re-ap-
ply, and inforce, and improve those
good Impressions you received in pub-
lic, till you have riveted the Influence
Observations on, &c.

SERM. of them fast into your Mind, and v. reached the End for which the good Spirit of God intended them; even till (by the Means of them) you have wrought out a Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of!

Which that all of us may attain, God of his infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits of Christ our Saviour, to whom, with the Father and the blessed Spirit, be ascribed all Power and Praise, now and for ever.
Of Glori\(\text{ng in the Cross of Chri}t\):  

A 

S E R M O N 

Preached at 

St. J A M E S's Chapel, 

O N 

G O O D-F R I D A Y, 1718.


But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World. 

G O D forbid! A Manner of Speech familiar, and almost peculiar to St. Paul; frequently employed by him in his Writings, thrice
The Methods of Glorying

in this very Epistle; never, but where he intends, with a particular Degree of Earnestness and Vehemence, to condemn some Doctrine or Practice imputed to Christians, or prevailing among them; by which he thought Christianity highly dishonoured. In such Cases, it is usual with him to express his Dislike, his Detestation of such Doctrine, or Practice, by this emphatical Phrase, μὴ γὰρ τοῦτο, which we translate, God forbid!

The special Occasion of his employing it here in the Text, was this: The Gentile Converts among the Galatians, after St. Paul's Departure from them, had been seduced by some false Teachers, who were Jews, into a Belief, that the Law of Moses was not entirely abolished, but that Circumcision, and the other Rites of it, were still necessary to be observed by all those, who, being Heathens, intended to become Christians. This Opinion had been entertained, and spread by these false Teachers, partly
ly through a superstitious Reverence for their Law, and a mistaken Notion of the true Nature and Design of the Gospel; and partly, with a View of lessening the Prejudices, which the Jews had conceived against the Doctrine of Christ; and of avoiding the Persecutions, which they every where raised against those, who propagated, or professed it.

The Apostle having argued against these Teachers, and their Opinions, strongly and fervently in various Parts of this Epistle, returns to the same Subject at the Close of it; and there sums up in short, what he had before more largely delivered. As many (says he) as desire to make a fair shew in the Flesh [ἐκεῖνοι οίτως εἴς τὰς ἡδυνής, a Phrase of his own, which signifies, to act upon carnal Views, and for worldly Ends, and to study popular and plausible Appearances] they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ. [Not so much out of a Con-


The Methods of Glorying

vi. urge upon you, as that they may live easily, and carry Things smoothly with all Men.] For, as it follows, neither They [these false Teachers] themselves, who are Circumcised, keep the Law; but desire to have you Circumcised. To what End? Even that, they may glory in your Flesh; that they may boast of having made you Profelytes to Judaism, in the Way to Christianity, and by that Means recommend themselves to their Countrymen, on the Account of their Zeal for the Law of Moses, at the same Time that they would be thought to serve the Interests of the Gospel. But let them consult their own Safety, and affect a false Glory by this insincere Conduct, if they please; God forbid (says he) that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! God forbid, that I should act upon any such worldly Views and Motives in the Propagation of the Doctrine of Christ, or think to promote it by any Methods, but what
what are agreeable to the Nature and Design of it: It is the Doctrine of the Cross, and ought therefore to be preached in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, without worldly Hopes or Fears, without Arts and Disguises: The chief Article of this Doctrine, that wherein the great Lines of it center, is, the Satisfaction made to Divine Justice, by the Sufferings and Death of a Crucified Saviour. By this Sacrifice of the Cross all the legal Sacrifices and Ceremonies are determined and abolished; by this, and this only, a real Atonement is made to God for our Sins, and a Way opened to his Favour: On this, consequent-ly, all the Hopes and Happiness of a Christian depend. Mean therefore and ignominious as the Circumstances of this Transaction were, I will not be offended at them myself, nor fear lest others should be offended: On this Subject I will perpetually dwell in my private Meditations; and in my publick Instructions: Of this Capital Article of the Christian Faith I will not only not be
be ashamed, but I will boast; I will glory in it, and in nothing beyond, or besides it: For it is a Doctrine full of Wonder and Delight, of Instruction, Advantage, and Comfort to sincere Believers, to penitent Sinners; since it is that, whereby the World is Crucified unto me, and I unto the World. Whereby the World is Crucified unto me: All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is rendered, though not incapable of polluting me, yet ineffectual towards condemning me; the Sting of Sin is taken away, the Guilt is pardoned; and I am crucified unto the World: I am, by the victorious Power of that Grace, which was purchased by this Sacrifice of the Cross, become insensible, and dead, as it were, to the Pleasures, the Pomps and Vanities of this World; I have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts. Since therefore the Sufferings of Christ are of so great Efficacy and Power, as to be able to free me, not only from
the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, but also from the Dominion and Power of it; is there any Thing I should value myself upon, in Comparison of the Privilege of being made a Partaker of the Merits of these Sufferings? in Comparison of the Mercies, the Advantages I enjoy, by the Means of this humble, but admirable Dispensation? Let others form to themselves what Schemes of Satisfaction and Happiness, pride themselves in what Preeminences, what Distinctions they please; But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World!

I have largely explained the Connection, and thereby opened the Meaning of these Words of St. Paul: The Use I intend to make of them is, from thence to shew,

_First_, That whatever Excellencies, outward Advantages, or Privileges, it may be our Lot to enjoy, yet it mis-
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S E R M. becomes us, as we are Christians, to
vi. glory in them: But that,

II. Secondly, It highly becomes us to
go in the Cross of Christ.

III. Thirdly, By what Methods, and in
Opposition to what Enemies of the
Cross of Christ, we are obliged to glory
in it.—Of these three Points in their
Order, as far as the Time will permit.
And,

I. First, I am to shew, That whatever
Excellencies, outward Advantages, or
Privileges it may be our Lot to enjoy,
yet it misbecomes us, as we are Chris-
lians, to glory in them.

I do not say, that we are to be insen-
sible of such Advantages, to have
no Relish of them, no Complacence
in them: For neither Reason nor Re-
ligion require such a Conduct from us.
They are the good Things of Life,
given us by the Author of all Good,
on purpose that we should, in due
Measure
Measure and Season, enjoy them; nor can they of themselves, while our Appetites, and our Opinions concerning such Things are well regulated, be hurtful to those who possess them. They may be used, if they are not over-valued; if we do not suffer our Affections to cleave too closely to them, and our Minds to be in any degree elated, and swelled by a Reflection upon them. They may be a Part, a small Part of our Happiness in this transitory Scene of Life, provided we always retain in our Minds the Apostle's Directions concerning them, That they, who have these Things, be as though they had them not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it; for the Fashion of this World passeth away: These worldly Advantages, these Honours, Profits, Pleasures, whatever they be, are of uncertain Continuance, and may in a little Time slip away from us; to be sure,
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sure, we shall in a little Time slip a-
way from them, and leave them be-
hind us: And therefore, why should
we rest in them? Why should we boast
of them? Why should we feed and
raise, not our Appetites and Lusts only,
but our Vanity and Pride also, by the
Means of them?

The Christian Religion, by the Ten-
dency of all its Doctrines (particularly
that of Christ crucified) by the manner
of its Progress, and the mean Charac-
ters of those who first promulged and
embraced it, seems to have been so
throughout contrived, as effectually to
mortify, and beat down any undue
Complacence we may have in our-
selves on such Occasions. **Ye see your**

**Calling, Brethren** (says St. Paul with
that παρθησία, that becoming Freedom
of Speech, in which he excels) how
that not many wise Men after the Flesh,
not many Mighty, not many Noble are
called; but God hath chosen the foolish
Things of the World to confound the
Wise; and God hath chosen the weak

**Things**
in the Cross of Christ.

Things of the World, to confound the
Things which are mighty; and the base
Things of the World, and the Things
which are despised hath he chosen, yea,
and the Things which are not, to bring
to nought the Things that are. And to
what end did he thus order Matters in
the Propagation of his Gospel? Even to
this (as it follows) that no Flesh should
glory in his Presence, but that he who
glorieth might glory in the Lord; might
value himself upon being a serious sin-
cere Christian, and upon nothing be-
fides it.

Indeed it is enough to disparage all
the fine Shews and Appearances of this
Life, and to render us indifferent to all
the Charms of it, if we do but atten-
tively consider that compleat Instance
of suffering Greatness and Goodness,
on which our Faith and Devotion
ought this Day to be employed. For
on this Day they were all, together
with the Handwriting of Ordinances,
(the ceremonious Observances of the
Law) blotted out, filled, and defaced,
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SERM. and nailed by Christ to his Cross, as the Scripture speaks; on which when
he was lifted up, he did there crucify the World, and the Things of it, eclipse the Lustre, and destroy the Power of all its empty Vanities. Behold then our High-priest, offering up the great Sacrifice required for the Redemption of Souls! pouring out his own Blood on the Altar of his Cross, and thereby making an Atonement for the Sins of the whole World! Behold him, I say, by the Eye of Faith, and you will acknowledge, that though there was never any Spectacle so sad, yet neither was there ever any so glorious, or so worthy of being contemplated and admired by Men and Angels. Stript indeed he was of all outward Comforts and Supports, surrounded he was with every Thing that to human Nature was grievous: And yet, even in this Depth of his Humiliation, if we consider the mighty Work he was accomplishing, we cannot but despise all the vain Pomps of Life, in comparison of the
in the Cross of Christ.

the Splendor of his Sufferings. For then, even then, while he hung on the Cross, was the great Captain of our Salvation fighting our Battles, and subduing our Enemies; then was he leading Captivity captive, spoiling Principalities and Powers, making a Shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in himself: Then was he vanquishing Death by his Death, and opening for us a Gate to Life and Immortality: Then was he disarming Sin of its Sting, and Hell of its Terrors; and procuring for us those Supplies of Grace, which might enable us to withstand the Temptations of Sense, and the Wiles of the Devil.

Surely the vain Glories of this World, when compared with these real Triumphs of the Cross of Christ, must lose all their Force and Influence, and grow flat and insignificant in the Eyes of a good Christian. Can we look up to him that was pierced, see him stretched on his Cross; enduring the Pain, despising the Shame of it, and not
not look down with Neglect and Con-
tempt on that Scene of Sin and Vanity
which occasioned those Sufferings? Is
it possible for us to love the World,
and the Things that are in the World,
while our Eyes are fixed on him, who
gave himself for our Sins, that he might
deliver us from this present evil World;
that is, on purpose that he might free
us from the enchanting Power of its
empty Delights, and vain Allurements?
These he taught us, by his Doctrine
and by his Practice, by his Life and
by his Death, to undervalue; he chose
to be without them, and the Perfec-
tion of his Virtue consisted in over-
looking and despising them. We there-
fore, who profess to be his Followers,
must certainly degenerate very far from
that Profession, when we eagerly pur-
fue, greedily enjoy, and highly admire
them.

Beloved, this our glorying is not
good, But,

Secondly, It highly becomes us to
glory in the Cross of Christ, as I pro-
posed,
posed, in the second Place to shew. 

For since by the alone Merits of his 

Cros we gain all the Advantages of the 

Christian Dispensation, are reconciled 
to God, and made capable of Heaven 
and Happiness, we cannot but glory in 
that Cros, if indeed we value ourselves 
upon our being Christians.

The Cros of Crifl is the Doctrine, 
to which all the other Doctrines of the 
Gospel refer, and from which they de-
rive all the Efficacy and Influence they 
have, towards purging our Conscienc-
es from dead Works; and therefore 
in that single Article they are often all 
of them summed up and comprized. 

We preach Christ crucified, says St. 
Paul; as if that, and that alone were 
the Subject of all he wrote, and all 
he spoke: And again, I determined to 
know nothing but Christ, and him cru-
cified; as if that were the great Point 
of saving Knowledge, to which those 
who learn, or who teach the Religion 
of Christ, should altogether apply them-
selves. Can we look upon it, under 

this
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Serm. this View, and refrain from glorying in it? To this Article of our Faith the Enemies of the Gospel have always taken the greatest Exceptions; and in this therefore we ought to triumph most, as being secure against their Attacks, and despising their vain Objections and Reasonings. The first Preachers of our Faith must, in this Case, be our Patterns. They knew that Christ crucified was to the Jews a Stumbling-Block; but did they therefore dissemble the Scandal of the Cross for that very Reason? No! they boasted of it, they insisted upon it in all their Applications to the unbelieving Jews, recorded in the Acts; particularly Saint Peter omits no occasion of mentioning to them Him whom they slew, and hanged on a Tree; as an high Reproach to his Murderers indeed, but none at all to his Disciples and Followers.

Very fitly therefore has the Church of England appointed that, after we have been received into the Congrega-
in the Cross of Christ.

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tion of Christ's Flock by Baptism, we should be signed with the Sign of the Cross, in token (as she speaks) that we should not hereafter be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, but should manfully fight under his Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and continue Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our Lives Ends. A Ceremony, which, whatever Fault may have been found with it, is certainly very Ancient, very Innocent, and very Significant too; as it fitly admonishes us, throughout the whole Course of our Christian Warfare, to look upon the Cross of Christ as the proper Badge of our Profession, which we ought not to be ashamed, or afraid to own, whenever He, in whose Service we are lifted, shall call upon us to take it up, and follow him. But to proceed, I am to shew,

Thirdly, By what Methods, and in opposition to what Enemies of the Cross of Christ we are Obliged to Glory in it.

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SERM. 1. Now the first Step requisite towards our complying with this Obligation is, frequently to meditate on the Sufferings and Death of Christ. We glory in nothing but what we esteem and value; and what we value much, we shall be apt often and attentively to consider. We should therefore revolve often in our Thoughts this great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh, dying on the Cross, to destroy the Works of the Devil: We should turn it on all Sides, and consider it, as the proper Subject of our Awe and Wonder, our Joy and Pleasure, our Gratitude and Love; 'till we have warmed our Hearts with a lively Sense of the inestimable Benefits conferred on us by the Means of it. This the oftener we do, the better: But we cannot, without inexcusable Negligence, omit doing it on such a Day as this, set apart by the Church on Purpose to commemorate the Passion of our Lord. If we fail to employ some Part of this Day in our Closets, and in devout Meditati-
in the Cross of Christ.

Ons on the Cross of Christ, we are unworthy of that Redemption he pur-chased for us. What (said our Saviour to his sleeping Disciples, when he was entering on his Agony) can you not watch with me one Hour! Can you not shake off your Drowsiness, and bear me Company in my Sorrows for a few Moments, on so important and becoming an Occasion? Can your sluggish Inattention and Indifference to what concerns me so nearly, consist with a true Love of me, or with the Character of my faithful Disciples? What! can you not watch with me one Hour? Watch and pray, lest ye enter into Temptation.

2. A Second Step towards fulfilling our Obligation to glory in the Cross of Christ, is, if we endeavour to imitate the perfect Example he hath set us, and to form in our Minds some faint Resemblances of those meek Graces and Virtues, which adorn the Character of our Suffering Saviour. And this Step is a natural Consequence of the for-
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for imitation will in some degree spring from attention: if we see him as he is, we shall be like him, as St. John argues. In vain do we boast of the Cross of Christ, as that whereby the guilt of our sins is abolished, if the power of them still remains unsubdued in us: Then are his sufferings our glory, when they become a fruitful principle of holiness to us, and affect us in such a manner, as to give us resolution and strength to live above the world, and all its temptations.

In hoc vince, was the inscription on the cross, in that vision, by which the first christian emperor was encouraged to give battle to his enemies. And this also is the motto, by which every good soldier of Christ is to animate himself in his spiritual conflicts; this is to be written on our banners, and graven in our minds: This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith in a crucified Jesus. When from Him we have learnt to undervalue the false glories of this world,
World, and to despise its Terrors, to serve.

to resign ourselves absolutely to God's Disposal, and to make it our Meat and Drink, our only Study and Delight, to do the Will of him that sent us; when we shall have emptied ourselves of all swelling Thoughts, all vain Conceits of our own Privilges and Perfections, and shall be thoroughly instructed in that great Lesson of Humility, which he, who was meek and lowly in Heart, hath taught us; when we shall have so considered him that endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, as not to be weary and faint in our Minds, upon the like Oppositions and Trials; so, as to bear Indignities and Injuries decently and well, and to forgive and pray for those who do them; so as to be able to support ourselves under any of the Calamities of Life with Equanimity and Patience, with Fortitude and Firmness: Then may we be said, most truly, most effectually to glory in the Cross of Christ.
The Methods of Glorifying Christ ourselves, and to promote the Honour of his Religion with others, who shall observe our Progress in all divine Graces and Virtues, and be edified in beholding our good Conversation in Christ Jesus.

3. A Third Instance and Proof of our glorying as becomes us in the Cross of Christ, is, if we frequently and worthily celebrate the Memorial of his Death, the blessed Sacrament of his Body and Blood. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death, until he come, καλασάνειλητε, ye do significantly express it, ye do solemnly publish and declare it. Indeed both the Sacraments, that of Baptism, and this of the Lord's Supper, as they derive their Efficacy from the Cross of Christ, so do they carry in them some resemblance of his Death: Baptism, of his Death and Resurrection jointly; the Eucharist, of his Death only; being instituted for this very End and Purpose, to imprint on our Minds, by Sym-
Symbols of Bread broken, and Wine poured out, a lively Image of the great Sacrifice of the Cross, and to inspire us, by that Means, with such holy Thoughts and Affections, as a good Christian would have, if he were really an Eye Witness of the Passion of Christ. Often therefore ought we to resort to this mysterious Repast, even as often as we have Occasion (and when have we not Occasion?) to raise our Gratitude, and improve our Devotion, and inflame our Love towards God, for the abundant Mercies bestowed on us, in the Sufferings and Death of our Saviour. Nor can we abstain from this Table of the Lord, without forgetting (indeed without so far renouncing) our Relation to Christ crucified, and thereby declaring ourselves utterly unworthy of that holy Name whereby we are called. Verily, verily, except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us.

'Twas his dying Charge to us, Do this in Remembrance of me: And surely,
Sermon, considering how much he has done and suffered for us, had he commanded us some hard Thing, we should not have refused to comply with him: How much less should we refuse, when we are only commanded to remember him, by an Action naturally pleasing and delightful to us? when he invites us only to eat and to drink at his own Table?

Christ, the same Night that he was betrayed, took Bread: At that very Time, when Men were laying Snares for his Innocence, and contriving his Ruin, did he appoint this great Means of blessing and strengthening them: When his Body was now about to be pierced, and his Blood to be spilt by the Hand of Violence; then did he institute this Mystery, by which the Merits of both were to be conveyed to the whole Race of Mankind, even to his Murtherers themselves, if by Faith and Repentance they should lay hold of them. Must not our Stupidity and Ingratitude be as amazing as his Love, if the very Circumstances, in which he gave
in the Cross of Christ.
gave us this Precept, do not incline us to obey it? Can we be said to glory in the Cross of Christ, while we neglect and despise this great Memorial of his Death, which he instituted for the good of Souls? Ought we not rather to fear, left, by abstaining wilfully and contemptuously from this holy Table, we should involve ourselves in some Degree of their Guilt, whom the Apostle declares to have trodden under Foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant, by which they were sanctified, an unholy Thing? But finally, we may

4. In the Fourth Place, be said (very properly said) to glory in the Cross of Christ, when we zealously assert, and vindicate the true Doctrine of his Satisfaction, against all the Enemies and Opposers of it; against the false Notions of the Jews, and the false Religion of the Mahometans; against the mischievous Opinions of some deceived, or deceiving Christians; against the vain Pretences of Reason and Philosophy, and
The Methods of Glorying, &c.

Serm. and against the proud Insults and Blasphemies of Atheists and Infidels. But these Particulars would open too large a Field of Matter to me at present, and may perhaps (God permitting) be no improper Subject for our Reflections on a like Occasion.

In the mean time, let us conclude, by rendering to the great Lover of Souls the Thanks that are due to Him, for the Redemption, which he, as on this Day, purchased for us.

Revel. v. 12. Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing: For He hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. Therefore Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever! Amen.
The Duty of External Worship:

A SERMON
Preached at the
ROLLS CHAPEL,
April 2, 1699.

PSALM xcv. 6.
O come let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

THESE Words are taken from an Hymn, which is very fitly placed at the Entrance of the Morning Devotions of the Church: It being a solemn and earnest Invitation to the publick Worship of God that follows; and
The Duty of

serm. and probably employed to that Purpose

vii. at the Beginning of the Service used in

the Jewish Temple.

In that Hymn we are called upon
to pay all the Parts of our *internal* and
*external* Homage.

The Words, which I have chosen,
mention only the *latter* of these, *outward* Adoration; which they do, by expressing the several *Modes* of it; as *Worshiping*, *Bowing down*, and *Kneeling* before God: *Terms*, which those who are skilled in the Original, have been at some Pains to *explain*, so as to settle the distinct Meaning of each of them. I shall wave that Enquiry, as not very useful, and consider the Words in their more free and *general* Sense; as they imply *all* those *devout* Postures of Body, in which *outward* Worship may be supposed to consist.

To press upon you, as effectually as I can, the Exercise of these, when we thus meet together in God's Sanctuary, shall be the Business of my present Discourse.
External Worship.

In which I shall endeavour to shew how requisite a reverent and pious De-meanour in the publick Service of the Church is, in order to render our Devotions acceptable to God.

This perhaps, at first sight, may seem too plain a Proposition to need any Proof: And it will be thought, that there is no good Christian in the World, who is not very well satisfied of the Truth of it. And yet, certain it is, that there are, among those who aim at a more than ordinary Purity in the Worship of God, many sincere but deluded Persons, who disapprove and deny it; who think external Modes of Worship, not only unnecessary, but superstitious, now under the Gospel Dispensation, when, they say, all bodily Service is done away, the Law of outward Rites and Ceremonies is abolished, and the true Worshipers of God are to worship him only in Spirit and Truth.

And even among those who admit the Necessity of bodily Worship in the Theory,
Serm. Theory, yet how many are there that deny it in their Practice, and so behave themselves in the publick Service of the Church, as to make it appear, that this Truth has not yet in good earnest reached their Hearts, or not sunk very deep into them: Or if it has, the Impressions it once made upon their Minds, are now grown so faint and weak, that they operate but little, unless by proper Arguments and Motives they be continually excited and kept alive in them.

In order therefore to convince those who seem not to have sufficiently considered the Importance of this Duty; and in order also to raise the Devotion of such as are remiss and careless in the Discharge of it; I shall, in what follows, consider External Worship, as a fit and reasonable Duty, upon these three several Accounts. Either as one Part of that natural Homage, which the whole Man, Soul and Body, does, by the first Principles of Reason, and Law of his Nature, owe to his sovereign
External Worship.

reign Lord, his great Creator and Pre-sermer. Or as an Help and Assistance towards promoting the Spiritual Wor-ferv. en of our Souls. Or lastly, as an outward Sign, by which we express to others the Religious Esteem and Veneration that dwells in us: That is (in a Word) it may be considered with relation to God, Ourselves, or our Neigh-

bour.

First, then, External Adoration may be considered as a Part of that natural Homage, which the whole Man, Soul and Body, owes to God, upon the Account of his Creation and Preservation of us, and his sovereign Dominion over us.

If we are to worship God for the Being, and the Benefits which we receive at his Hands, as the plain Rules of Reason inform us; then does it seem agreeable to the same Reason, that we should make Use of all those several Ways of Worship, which do best express the total and entire Dependance...
The Duty of

SERM. we have on him. The Soul worships him, by framing to itself awful Ideas of his Majesty and great Excellencies, by invoking Aid and Assistance from him, and by putting up Praises to him. The Body worships him, by bowing and prostrating itself; and by all those humble and devout Postures, which suit best with those inward Affections and Dispositions of the Mind. Both together make up that compleat Harmony of Divine Worship, which results from the Agreement of the several Parts of our Frame in the same Acts of Acknowledgment, that Odour of a sweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

Indeed, as we have no Way of forming to ourselves any Idea of God, but by considering the several limited Perfections and Excellencies, that are variously scattered among his Creatures, and attributing them to him without Bounds; so have we no other Way of applying ourselves to him, as his Vassals, his Dependants, and the Works of
of his Hands, than by considering what are those inward and outward Marks of Respect, which we usually pay to the Dignity of any Man here upon Earth, to his Authority over us, or his Beneficence towards us; and by giving them to God, in a much higher Degree, than we do to Man. Now, the Expression of our Esteem of any Earthly Good, the Respect we bear towards Persons of great Excellence, Parents, Benefactors, or Governors, is contained in these Two Things; a Veneration of Mind for them, and a Submission of Body to them.

And whoever fails in either of these, is, by the general Consent of Mankind, reckoned to be so far wanting in his Duty, and to deviate from those Rules of Subordination, which God has made necessary for this World.

Of this the Mind of Man is very sensible; and being therefore conscious of the superlative Excellencies of the Divine Being, and of the infinite Goodness of its Nature towards us, finds it-
The Duty of

self uneasy under these Apprehensions; 'till it has paid its due Homage, its Debt of Honour to it. Which, nevertheless it has no Ability to do, otherwise than by applying to God those outward sensible Marks of Respect, and those inward Submissions of Soul, which are in Use among the Sons of Men.

To these therefore it flies, these it lays hold of, eager and impatient to do something (it knows not well what) in humble Acknowledgment of his Attributes, and in Return to his many loving Kindnesses.

It fees very well, how disproportioned all our Acts of Homage are to the Divine Greatness: That God dwells in inaccessible Light, to which none of our Services can reach; in the Glory of an eternal Majesty, which nothing we can do, can either add to, or diminish. Nevertheless perceiving in itself a restless Principle, exciting it continually to the Love and Honour of God; strong Endeavours after Gratitude, and no other Way of exerting them,
them, but by inward and outward Acts of Worship; these, how insignificant foever, it ventures to pay, in sure Confidence, that they will be grateful to that Being, which accepteth according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Thus does External Adoration become a Point of Natural Homage, due to the supreme Lord of the World, in Token of that entire Dependance we have on him; the Dependance of the whole Man, Soul and Body, which both equally came forth from his Hands, and are both equally sustained by him. Both therefore must join in paying the common Tribute of Praise; which, however to Him it may be nothing worth, of less Account than a Drop of the Bucket, or a small Dust of the Ballance, yet to Us-ward is the very Law of our Nature, and our bounden Duty and Service.

And this is a Way of Reasoning, which the Holy Ghost in both Testaments hath sanctified, and taught us to use.
We are invited by the good Psalmist, in my Text, to bow down, and kneel before God. And the Reason follows: For he is the Lord our God, and we are the People of his Hands. Agreeably to which the Apostle urges us, to glorify God in our Body, and in our Spirit, which are God's. We are to glorify him in our Body, as well as our Spirit, by outward as well as inward Devotion; since there is the same Argument for both; they are God's: His they are, and to Him they must do their Homage.

And therefore 'tis a remarkable Passage, which the same Apostle hath: I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that you present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable Service. Though he mentions only the presenting our Bodies, yet he gives that the Name of our reasonable Service, ἡ λογική λατρεία ὑμῶν, a Worship agreeable to Reason, and to the Suggestions of our natural Faculties.
We all look for the Glorification, not only of our Souls, but Bodies, in the Life to come. Now a Reward suppose a Work: It is meet and right therefore, that we should worship and glorify God in this Life with the Body as well as the Soul, if so be we expect that God should glorify both our Bodies and Souls in another. The outward Worship, without the inward is dead; and again, the inward, without the outward, is not complete; even as the Glorification of the Soul, separate from the Body, is not, nor shall be consummate, till the Body be again raised, and reunited to it.

Indeed, they who derogate so much from bodily Worship in the Service of the true God, do by Consequence render Idolatry a Sin far less heinous in Degree than it is. For the Sin of Idolatry consists, we know, in our communicating that Honour to a Creature, which is due unto the Creator alone. And therefore, in the same Proportion as external Worship is due to the Creator,
The Duty of

S E R M. t o r, will the Grievousness and Guilt
of that Sin be, by which we transfer
that Worship from the Creator to the Creature; for it cannot be denied, but
that Part of the Sin of Idolatry consists even in the outward Worship given
to an Idol. And therefore, if outward Worship be not insisted on with any
Strictness now under the Gospel, as a Debt due to God, neither will the pay-
ing it to Idols be in any high Degree culpable.

Thus does the Consideration of outward Worship, as it respects God, the
Object of it, afford us one powerful Motive to a composed and solemn Be-
haviour in the publick Service of the Church. Let us see, what Force it
will have, as it relates to ourselves; Or as it is,

II. Secondly, an Help and Assistance, to-
wards promoting the spiritual Worship
of our Souls.

There is so close a Connexion be-
tween the Mind and its Organs, that
they act, as it were, by Consent; and in some Degree, pass into the other.

And this natural Sympathy shews itself no where more remarkably than in Acts of Devotion. When the Mind is warmed with heavenly Thoughts, and wrought up into some Degrees of holy Ecstasy, it stays not there, but communicates these Impressions to the Body; and excites those several Actions, without, that carry a Resemblance to what is done within.

On the other Side, devout Postures of Body, when perceived and attended to by him that uses them, do as certainly pass onward and impart their Force to the Mind also; raising there those several Passions and Emotions, to which the outward Act is naturally conjoined. 'Tis true, the Rise of all is originally from within; there the Springs of Action first begin to play; and from thence Orders are sent out to the Body, what Motions shall arise. But then, after that, this Engine, thus moved
moved, acts backward upon its first principle, the Soul; returns the Force, that was lent it from thence, with Interest; and improves that Spark of holy Fire, which first sprung up there, into a great and mighty Flame.

External Worship then becomes this way a just and reasonable Duty, inasmuch as it is naturally fitted to excite like inward Acts of Devotion; and being itself perceived, does, in a Way not perceived by those who yet feel the Effects of it, work upon the most hidden Powers of the Mind. And it is very well it does so: For the Mind of Man is in the Duties of Religion so little Mistress of strict Attention, so unable to fix itself steadily even on God, its best and worthiest Object, that it cannot have too many Assurances from without, in order to it. As therefore God hath so tempered the Body together in all its Members, that the Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor the Head again unto the Feet, I have no need of you: so has he also
also tempered the whole Frame of Man sem. in such a Manner, as that the Parts of it may mutually support each other.

Nor can the Soul, in its most spiritual and sublime Acts, those of Devotion, reject the Body, as useless and unassisting. Nay much more (as St. Paul continues his Reasoning) that Part, which seems to be more feeble, is necessary.

We usually blame the Body to an high Degree, as the great Clog and Hindrance of the Soul; the Obstructer of its free and natural Motions, the Offerer of impious, of filthy, of vain Images; the Sollicitor to every evil Act, all that defiles the Man. And this is generally what may be said of it, with a great deal of Justice. For it is all this, and it does all this in a thousand several Instances. But in the Case of Devotion now before us, Things may be far otherwise managed, and the Body rendered so useful and serviceable to the Soul in this Duty, as to make Amends (as it were) for the Obstructions it gives it in the Performance of
The Duty of Ser M. of many others. Here it may be made to draw equally in the Yoke of Duty: Nay even to give Wings to the Mind, which it presseth down, and over-whelms on many other Occasions. Nor is the Body more beholden to the Soul, for the Beginning of its Motions, than the Soul afterwards is to the Body, for the Increase of hers. But

III. Thirdly, We have still another Way of considering outward Worship, as it is a Sign, by which we express to others the religious Esteem and Veneration that dwells in us. And we shall find, that from hence too we are highly obliged to the most solemn and devout Use of it. For as in the former Instances it has appeared to be an Instrument of God's Honour, and our own particular Advantage, so here we shall find that it reaches even to the common Good of our Neighbour too.

And certainly great are the Advantages which the People of God, when they are met together, do mutually receive
External Worship.

receive from it. The cold and remiss Worshiper is, at the Sight of an exemplary Piety, kindled into some Degrees of holy Warmth; the fervent and devout, in the Presence of it, becomes yet more enflamed. A religious Emulation rises then in the Breasts of the Faithful, an holy Strife and Desire of excelling. He that sees another composed in his Behaviour throughout, and fixed down to the holy Duty he is engaged in, grows ashamed of his own Indifference and Indecencies, his spiritual Dissipations and Dryness, and presently sets himself to imitate that amiable Pattern, and resolves to be remarkably devout, and as much the Object of other Mens Imitation.

But Believers are not the only Persons, that receive Benefit by it; Unbelievers too, tho' unwillingly, have their Share. The profane Scoffer, who dares encounter a single Christian, without Shame or Fear of Reproof, has here an Answer to his bold Scoffs, in that still and powerful Argument, which
The Duty of

S E R M. which arises from the Behaviour of a devout Multitude, worshiping God in the Beauty of Holiness: Such an Argument as will destroy all his unreasonable Suspicions, and convince him of the Sincerity of Mens Hearts towards God, by the natural unaffected Signs of it, which are shewn in his Service: Such as will put him in mind of the Numbers of devout and good Men, against which he engages; lead him on from the Thought of the present Congregation to those of the same kind that are spread over the Face of the Earth; and make him sit down and consider, whether with such a small Strength (his own, and that of a few more) he can encounter so many Thousands, even the united Wisdom and Practice of Mankind. Surely, as St. Paul argues in relation to the Prophecying practiced in the Primitive Church, if all thus worship, and there cometh in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are
are the Secrets of his Heart made manifest; and so falling down on his Face, he will worship God, and report, that God is in you of a Truth.

Thus have I explained the several Grounds, on which external Adoration stands, and the several good Uses, to which it may be employed; how much the Honour of God depends upon it, the Advancement of Piety in our own Breast, and in that of our Neighbour. And sure I need exhort you but briefly to the Practice of that, which appears every way so plain and so reasonable a Duty. Let us then lay up these Thoughts in our Hearts, and keep our Feet (as the Wise Man speaks) when we go to the Sanctuary, by a careful Reflection upon them! Let us carry in our Ears always when we enter into the Place of God's publick Worship, the Sound of those Expressions he used to Moses out of the flaming Bush: 

**Put off thy Shoes from thy Feet** Exod. iii. for the Place whereon thou standest is holy Ground!

Let
The Duty of

Serm. Let us consider with ourselves, if such and so many are the Advantages that spring from a due Care of external Behaviour, how great must the Inconveniences then be, that arise from the Neglect of it? from an indecent and slovenly Worship; a Worship fit neither for God, who is a God of Beauty and Order, to receive; nor for Man, who is the only Creature in this lower World that has a Sense of these Things, to pay. Surely nothing less can follow from so loose a Practice, than the Decay of Religion in all its vital and substantial Parts; a Forgetfulness of that God, whom to have always in our Thoughts is the greatest Preservative against Sin that a Christian Man can have; the Derisions of the Proud towards these our solemn Meetings, and the open Scorn of every thing that is holy.

From the primitive Writers of the Story of the Church we learn, that the first Christians, who were so exemplary in all the Parts of Christian Duty,
above those of latter Times, outstripped us in nothing more than in the outward Marks of Devotion and Reverence, which appeared upon them in their publick Assemblies. They resorted to the House of God with the same holy, Awe and Reverence, as if they were really to meet, and to converse with him there: They continued, during the Time of Divine Service, immovable fixed to their Duty, without the least Sign or Token of a wandering, or alienated Mind. They contented not themselves with the ordinary Postures of Devotion, such as Genuflection, the Bowing of the Head or the Body, but did (as one of the Ancients speaks) prostrate themselves on the Pavement, cover it with their Bodies, and wash it with Tears of devout Joy.

God grant, that, if these Heights of Devotion be too exalted for an Age so degenerate as this, in which Iniquity abounds and the Love of many is waxen cold; yet, at least, that so much of the
The Duty of External Worship.

SERM. Life and Spirit of Primitive Piety may be kept up among us, as may render our Behaviour, sober and composed in the Use of holy Things, and take away from wicked Men an Occasion to blaspheme!

Now to God the Father, &c.
External Worship not sufficient alone:

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. James's Chapel,

In the Year 1711-12.

LAMENT. iii. 14.
Let us lift up our Hearts, with our Hands, unto God in the Heavens.

These are the Words of Jeremiah, spoken to the Jews of his Time, who were very exact and punctual in the outward Ceremonies and Performances of Religion, but very deficient in the inward Life and Reality of it. They resorted to the Temple.
Temple constantly, and were careful to practice the various Rites which the Law of Moses prescribed: But they did not bring along with them a Disposition of Soul suitable to those Solemnities; their Mind was alienated from the Service, even while they were performing it. The Prophet, sensible of this great Defect in their way of Worship, thus exhorts them to the Cure of it. Let us lift up our Hearts (says he) with our Hands, unto God in the Heavens.

Which Words refer to the Jews, as performing the Publick Service of their Church in the Temple or the Synagogue; and imply, that the Devotion of the Hand, without that of the Heart, is of no Acceptance with God; that bodily Exercise (in this Sense of the Word) profiteth but little, unless accompanied with an holy Warmth and Elevation of Mind.

This is a very plain but unregarded Truth: Many Christians there are, who seem not to be thoroughly convinced
not sufficient alone.

vinced of it; and the best of us, God's \text{serm}. knows (such is the Infirmity of our \text{viii.} Nature) want sometimes to be awakened into a vigorous and lively Sense of it.

Many Frequenters of such religious Assemblies as these, think their Duty sufficiently discharged by a punctual and regular Attendance upon them. If they are present during the Time of Divine Service, if they take their Share in the several Parts of it, join in the \text{Hymns} and the \text{Responces}, and add their \text{Amen} to the Prayers; if their \text{outward} Behaviour be every way decent, and agreeable to the holy Usages of the Church; tho' they are \text{inwardly} absent from the Duty, wherein they seem to be engaged, and their wandering Thoughts are employed all the while on foreign and vain Objects; yet shall they go away satisfied and justified in their own Conceit, as if they had performed the whole of their reasonable Service, and not offered the Sacrifice of \text{Ecl. v. 1: Fools}; forgetting the Reproof which

P 4 \text{Esaias}
External Worship

S E R M.  Esaias first gave to the whole Jewish Nation, and which our Saviour applied particularly to the Scribes and Pharisees: This People draweth nigh unto me with their Mouths, and honoureth me with their Lips; but their Heart is far from me.

That such a Mock Worship as this, such a mere Face and Form of Devotion, is not what God requires, what he will hearken to, or reward, give me leave briefly to shew, by observing, how unproportioned it is to the Divine Nature, and our Own, to the great End and Design of Prayer, and to those mighty Blessings and Benefits, with which, when duly performed, it is certainly attended.

The Object of our religious Addresses is God; that God, who is a Spirit; and who therefore will be worshiped in Spirit (as our Saviour argues) with all the Faculties and Powers of our Mind, with the utmost Intention and Vigour of Thought: And he therefore who lifts up his Hands to him, without any
not sufficient alone.

any Elevation of his Heart, Affronts him, instead of Adoring him. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name! says good David. He summons every Faculty and Affection of his Soul, all that is within him, to do Homage to God, as knowing that the mere Outward Homage, unaccompanied by the Inward, would be a Lifeless and Useless Performance. What! do we hope to impose upon God, as we sometimes do upon Men, by a mere Form of Godliness, without the Power of it? Do we think, that he requires our Adoration and Homage for his own Sake; and therefore contents himself with the Honours that are done him by outward Shews and Appearances? He, who requireth Truth in the inward Parts, to whom all Things are naked and open, and who tryeth the very Hearts and Reins! He, whose Language in holy Writ is, My Son, give me thy Heart! Give me thy Heart, whilst thou art performing any Part of
External Worship

Serm. of thy Duty that relates either to Me, thy self or thy Neighbour; but chiefly give me thy Heart, whilst thou art immediately addressing thyself to me by Prayer and Praise; whilst thou art actually Conversing with me, Intreating and Adoring me: Give me thy Heart at such a Time; or else all that thou givest me besides, will prove a vain Oblation. Again,

Let us consider our own Nature as well as that of the Divine Being. Are we not Reasonable Creatures? And ought not a Reasonable Creature to pay an entire and reasonable Service? How can We be said to worship God, while the better half of us is unconcerned in the Act? It is the Mind, chiefly, that is the Man; and where the Mind therefore is absent, the Man is not present: He offers not a living and a breathing Victim, but a dead and lifeless Carcase; and with such a Sacrifice how can God be well pleased?

What is Prayer, but an Ascent of the Mind towards God? an holy En-
gine, by which we lift up our Spirits to 
the great Father of Spirits; maintain a 
sweet Intercourse with him, and breath 
out, from the Bottom of our Hearts, 
our common Desires and Acknowledg-
ments to him? And what is there of 
this, in coming unto him, as his People 
cometh, in sitting before him as his Peo-
ple sitteth; in shewing much Love with 
our Mouth, while our Heart goeth after 
it's Covetousness?

Wondrous is the Efficacy of Prayer, 
as represented in Scripture; mighty 
Things are there said to have been 
done in virtue of it. But how were 
they done? by the mere bending of 
the Knees, and uttering of Words and 
Syllables? No! but by the Attention 
of the Heart, by Zeal, and Fervency. 
It is only the fervent Prayer of a Righ-
teous Man, that availeth much: And 
when Elias, by his prevalent Interpo-
sition with God, shut up or opened 
the Heavens, brought Drought or Rain 
upon the Earth, it is said of him,
Indeed this Qualification of Prayer is enjoined us by God; not only as a becoming Expression of our religious Reverence towards him; but as a proper and natural Means of working in our Souls those good Dispositions, which his blessed Spirit delights in, and delights to reward. We are directed to ask with a fixed and fervent Mind, because such a Manner of asking fits and qualifies us for receiving; makes us humble, submissive, dependent, affects us with a deep Sense of our own Insufficiency and Unworthiness, and of the Divine Bounty and Goodness; suspends the evil Motions and Desires of our Hearts for a time; and produces in us an heavenly Frame and Temper of Soul. This is the nearest and most immediate Effect of Prayer, which must first be obtained, in order to the obtaining of our Requests. And how therefore can he, who
who is a Stranger to the One of these, ever hope to arrive at the Other?

Can we imagine that Pardon of Sin, and Peace of Conscience; the Fruits of the Spirit, and Support against Temptations; in a Word, the Blessings of this World and the next, with which God has promised to reward our Prayers, should be purchased at the cheap Expence of Forms and Appearances? That those Devotions which affect not Us first, should affect God afterwards? That he should attend to, or regard, such Requests, as we neither regard, nor attend to ourselves?

Let us then not mock God, and deceive ourselves! Let us not think we have fulfilled our Duty merely by resorting to the Church, and adding one to the Number of the Congregation; by doing as other Men do, and saying as other Men say there; nor hope to atone by an outwardly decent Behaviour, for an inwardly alienated Mind. But let us, under a due Sense of the preceding Reflections, whenever we
we come to the House of God, not fail to come whole and entire; to offer and present unto God (as the Liturgy speaks) ourselves, our Souls, and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively Sacrifice to him: let us resolve to worship him, not with our Lips and Knees only, but (as we are obliged to love him) even with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength!

God be thanked, by whose good Providence we are Members of a Church, where the publick Offices of Religion are so modelled and contriv-ed, as to be apt, in every Part of them, to raise the Attention, and kindle an holy Flame in the Breasts of all sincere Worshipers. I cannot better spend the remaining Part of my Time, than in pointing out to you the great Advantages which we, in this Respect, enjoy, and by that Means shewing you, how inexcusable we are, if we neglect to improve them, more inexcusable than the Members of any other Church, or Commu-
not sufficient alone.

Communion in the Christian World. Ser. VIII.

For,

1. The Language, wherein our Service is performed, cannot but be of use to fix and keep alive our Attention. 'Tis our own Mother Tongue, what all of us are acquainted with; and can therefore listen to with Ease and Delight, because we understand it. There is a Church, whose publick Prayers are put up in a Language unknown to the greatest Part of those who are to join in them. But how can the Heart be affected by the mere Sound of Words, while it is utterly a Stranger to their Meaning? The publick Devotions therefore of an unlettered Papist, must needs be one continued Scene of Distractions and Wanderings, from the Beginning to the End of them.

Nor are our Offices drawn up only in our own Tongue, but in the most easy and plain Parts of it, which lie open to Christians of the meanest Capacities and Attainments. There is nothing fantastical in the Expression of them,
them, no vain Use of such hard Phrases of Scripture, as tend rather to amuse and puzzle, than to instruct common Hearers; nothing which approaches to that mysterious, unintelligible Way of Speaking, in which some either deceiving, or deceived Christians delight; nothing that favours of Singularity, Hypocrisy, or Enthusiasm. Whatever we meet with there, is plain, simple, natural; and yet at the same time solemn, majestick, moving; significant and full, sound and wholesome: It carries both Light and Heat in it, and is fitted equally to inform the Understandings and inflame the Affections of the wisest and weakest of Christians. I need not say how far this Excellence of our Service contributes to rouse and inspirit the Attention of those who partake of it; especially, if it be considered,

2. That these Prayers and Praises are offered up in a premeditated Form of Words, with which every one is before acquainted: For this also I must reckon
reckon among the peculiar Advantages E R M. of our Way of Worship, towards fast-
ening down the Minds of Men to that holy Duty, wherein they are engaged. I grant, indeed, that Unpremeditated Prayers, uttered with great Fluency, with a devout Warmth and Earnest-
ness, are apt to make strong and a-
akening Impressions on the Minds of the Generality of Hearers. But it may be doubted, whether the Attention thus raised, be that which we are now recommending; whether it be not an Attention rather of Curiosity and Sur-
prise, than of a real Piety and sound Devotion. For a good and conscien-
tious Man, who is to join in a Prayer, with which he was before unacquaint-
ed, must needs do it with some little Diffidence and Fear, left there should be any Thing in the Matter or Man-
ner of that Prayer, improper and un-
becoming: He must suspend his Assent to those unknown Requests, 'till he has so far considered them, as to be sure that they are fit for him to agree in.
And while he is thus employing his 

Thoughts on one Petition or Sentence, another succeeds, which will require a like Degree of Suspence and Deliberation: And this cannot but check his Devotion, by dividing and breaking the Force of his Mind. Whereas he, who offers up his Requests to God in a known and stated Form, has no Avocations of this Kind to struggle with; and can therefore apply himself directly and vigorously to his holy Task, and

James i. 6. *Ask in Faith, nothing doubting.* He fears not, lest unsitting Requests should be made, or fit ones clothed in unsuitable Language; and is therefore at Leisure to excite all the Powers and Affections of his Soul, and to engage them in that spiritual Service. This, I say, is a peculiar Advantage, which attends the Use of precomposed Prayers; and if there be many, who do not find and feel this Effect of them, it is not, I am persuaded, the Fault of set Forms, but *their own:* They want Attention and Fervency in *this* Way of Worship; and
not sufficient alone. and they would want it equally, perhaps much more in any other.

3. It is yet a further great Advantage which we of this Communion enjoy, that our Service is not one continued Act of Devotion, but is interrupted by many little Breaks and Pauses, and consists of several distinct and entire Forms of Petition and Praise; by which Means the Mind is eased and relieved from too long and strict an Attention; retires a little, and returns, as it were, with new Strength to its Duty. The Collects of our Liturgy are so short, that a devout Christian may, even whilst he is pronouncing his Amen at the close, by a sudden Glance of Thought, recollect every Branch of them; and so contract into that single Word the whole Force of the preceding Prayer. Nay, the very Frame and Contrivance of these Collects, is highly useful to raise and to enliven our Devotions, insomuch as they generally begin with the awful Mention of some of God's Attributes, and always end with reminding
External Worship

s e r m. minding us of the Blood and Intercession of Jesus. And what Considerations in Religion are there more operative and more awakening than these, which return so often upon our Minds, during the Course of our excellent Service?

4. Which contributes also to render us attent and devout, by that useful and affecting Variety, with which it abounds. There is in it a Variety of all Sorts of religious Duty, in which a Creature can apply itself to its Creator. There we confess our Sins, and intercede with God for the Pardon of them: There we deprecate the divine judgments that may be inflicted, and pray for all the Blessings (Spiritual and Temporal) that can be bestowed on ourselves, or others; and there we put up our Praises and Thanksgivings to God for all the Instances of his Mercy and Goodness towards us. There we hear the holy Scriptures read, and profess our Belief of the great Articles of Faith: And these different Parts of divine
divine Worship are so happily inter-
mixed, and succeed each other in so
beautiful an Order, that the Mind of
the Worshiper has always a new and
pleasing Employment.

As the Priest has his Share in the
Performance of these Offices, so the
People too have theirs; and in a much
larger Proportion, than belongs to them
in any other Christian Assemblies. Each
is employed in stirring up the other in-
to an holy and affectionate Emulation of
Heart and Voice; and they do there-
fore mutually provoke and kindle each
others Devotion.

5. I add also (in the last Place) that
the Service of our Sanctuary is particu-
larly contrived to promote Attention by
the decent, orderly, and solemn Manner,
in which it is performed. For it is
neither on the one Side so very plain
and simple, as not to be able to rouse;
nor on the other so splendid and gaw-
dy, as to be apt to distract the Mind.
It is duly tempered between these Ex-
tremes, and partakes of either, as far
External Worship

Sermon. as either is requisite towards creating VIII. and cherishing a sound and reasonable, a warm and active Devotion. Pictures indeed, and Images, to which the Church of Rome in this Case has recourse, fix the Attention; but it is on a wrong Object. A Multitude of vain and pompous Ceremonies, a Variety of rich Habits and Ornaments, Musick framed for Delight, without Improvement: These Things indeed may render an Assembly attentive; but so likewise would a Scene in the Theatre. The Devotion they produce (if indeed they produce any) goes no further than the Senses; it is not that of the Heart and Spirit. But with us, all the outside of our Worship contributes towards the inward Life and Reality of it: Our Churches are decently adorned; they who officiate at our Altars, are decently habited; our daily Service is performed, and our Sacraments administered in a becoming and reverend Manner; our Musick is always, or always ought to be, grave and solemn. Every Part and
not sufficient alone.

and Circumstance of our Worship is so ordered, as to inspire us with an holy Reverence and Awe, and so far to keep the outward Senses awake, as their Vigilance may be of use to give Wings to our Devotion, and Vigour to our Minds.

Since therefore we have so many signal Helps and Advantages towards worshiping God in his Sanctuary with an heavenly Frame and Temper of Soul, let us resolve from this Moment to make a due Use of them; to repair often to the House of God with holy Reverence and Awe, and to lift up our Hearts, together with our Hands, whenever we thus approach him, in the Beauty of Holiness.

Which that we may all of us do, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.
The Usefulness of Church Musick:

A

SERMON

Preached on

St. Cecilia's Day,

In the Year 1698.

Psal. lvii. 7, 8.

My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed; I will sing, and give Praise. Awake up, my Glory! awake Psaltery, and Harp! I myself will awake right early.

It is the Man after God's Heart, whose Words these are; and in them he points out to us one of the chief Methods, by which he became so:

Even
Even by preparing and qualifying his own Heart in the best Manner that he could, for the Duties of the Sanctuary; and by endeavouring, when he assisted at those Solemnities, to perform them with the utmost Attention, Alacrity, and holy Warmth of Mind, of which he was capable.

He enters not on the divine Praises, till he finds himself in such a Posture, and under such a Composure of Mind, as suits with that holy Employment: *My Heart is fixed*, says he, *O God, my Heart is fixed*: Then, and then only, it is Time for him to go on, and say, *I will sing, and give Praise*. And that he may be sure to preserve, to feed, and to improve the good Disposition he is in, he calls to his Aid those excellent Helps to Devotion, which he had so often tried with so good Success; *Vocal and Instrumental Musick*, *Awake up, my Glory*, says he, *awake, Psaltery and Harp!* By his Glory he means his Tongue, the most noble Organ of the Body of Man, especially when
Church Musick.

when employed in celebrating the Praise and Glory of God. By Psaltery and Harp (which alone are mentioned) we must understand all the several Instruments of Musick, which were, by his Appointment brought into the Temple-worship: And with these Assistances, these Encouragements, he ventures now to undertake for himself, that he will maintain that lively Erection of Mind, with which he enters on the divine Service, throughout the whole Course of it; that he will rouze up every Faculty, Affection, and Power of his Soul, and keep them fixed to the holy Work they are about, without Distraction or Wandring: *I myself will awake,* says he. And when he adds to all this that he will do it *right early,* he intimates to us the particular Time, at which such Resolutions as these are best executed; 'tis in the *Morning,* the Season of Devotion, when the Mind is fresh and vigorous, untired with the Business of the Day, and untainted with ill Images and Impressions.

This
This I take to be the full Import of those Words of the devout Psalmist; which I have read to you; and which, I think, I may now not improperly discourse on under these Propositions: By shewing you,

I. First, That the great Thing which recommends our public Devotions to God, is, our performing them, with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of the Mind. That therefore,

II. Secondly, All the pious Helps and Expedients, that conduce to this End, are to be laid hold of; particularly those which the Text points out to us, the Use of vocal and instrumental Harmony.

III. Thirdly, That the Way of performing divine Service in the Church of England, is better fitted to promote this good End [the fixing our Attention, and enflaming our Affections] than any other publick Form of Devotions
votions now practised in the Christian World: That it enjoys this Advantage, as in several other Respects, particularly in Relation to a solemn and decent Use of Church Musick.

Which Three Points being made out, I shall close with a Fourth; wherein I shall briefly, but earnestly exhort you, to make your Devotion exemplary, in Proportion to those Advantages, which you above all others enjoy.

First, I am to shew you, that the great Thing which recommends our public Devotions to God, is, our performing them with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of Mind.

Our Worship is composed, as we ourselves are, of a Body, and a Soul: the Body is the outward ceremonious Part; the Devotion of the Lips, of the Hands, and of the Knees, all that lies open to the Sense and Observation of others; but the Life and Soul of the Duty consists in those inward Acts of
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s e r m. of Adoration and Love, Intercession and Thanksgiving, Submission and Trust, whereof God, and we ourselves only are conscious. This unseen Homage is that, which animates and sanctifies what is visible; and without this, all the outward Shew, and Form of Devotion, is of no Acceptance, no Value; a lifeless and an useless Performance.

Indeed under the Jewish Dispensation a Regard was had to the mere Externals of Religion: From a gross and carnal People tied down to earthly Expectations and sensible Objects, God was pleased, in some measure, to accept a gross and carnal Service, and to hinder them by that Means, from falling into downright Idolatry, a mighty Propension to which they had contracted during their Stay in Egypt. They were to be distinguished and kept separate from all other Nations, by a peculiar Body of Rites and Ceremonies; and these Rites and Ceremonies therefore being useful to this End, derived some Value also from it; especially, being
being all of them such, as had a typical semblance. Reference to more vital and substantial Duties, and were Shadows and Emblems of good Things to come: The Virtue of which, they, by the divine Appointment, did not only represent, but impart also to such as performed them. But this typical State being at an end, a more pure and perfect Institution succeeded; a more refined and spiritual Worship was set up, in which the Mind is all, and does all; and in which outward Observances have no otherwise a Place, than as they serve, either to testify the inward Affections of our Hearts to others, or to excite and improve them in ourselves. A Worship every way proportioned to the Nature of God, who is to receive it; and to the Nature of Man, who is to pay it; and to the End and Use also of such religious Duties, which is, not merely to express our Homage to God, or to procure a Return from him; but also to work in our Minds all those good Dispositions and Graces, which...
The Usefulness of  

Sermon, we are so earnest to obtain; and to be  

IX. at once a necessary Condition, and a proper and natural Means also of spiritual Improvement. And this is remarkably the Case of such Prayers as are put up with Application of Mind, with Zeal and Fervency: Our very asking in such a manner fits and qualifies us for receiving; makes us resigned, submissive, dependent; affects us with a deep Sense of our own Insufficiency and Unworthiness, and of the divine Bounty and Goodness; suspends the evil Motions and Desires of our Hearts for a Time, and puts us every Way into that holy and humble Frame of Mind, which God delights in, and delights to reward.

A great deal more might be said, to shew, how requisite it is, to approach God in his Worship, with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of Soul; if either this were a Point, which any good and pious Man doubted of, or were intended to be dwelt on in this Discourse any further, than as it leads the
the Way to those which follow. The serm. next of which is,

Secondly, That therefore all such pious Helps and Expedients as conduce to this great End, are to be laid hold of; particularly those which the Text points out to us, Vocal and Instrumental Harmony. The Use of these in Divine Service, I shall now recommend and justify, from this Consideration: That they do, when wisely employed and managed, contribute extremely to awaken the Attention, and enliven the Devotion of all serious and sincere Christians.

And their Usefulness to this End will appear on a double Account, both as they remove the ordinary Hindrances of Devotion, and as they supply us further with special Helps and Advantages towards quickening and improving it.

By the melodious Harmony of the Church, the ordinary Hindrances of Devotion are removed, particularly these
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Serm. three: That Engagement of Thought,

which we often bring with us into the

Church from what we last conversed with; those accidental Distractions, that may happen to us during the Course of Divine Service; and that Weariness and Flatness of Mind, which some weak Tempers may labour under, by reason even of the Length of it.

When we come into the Sanctuary immediately from any worldly Affair (as our very Condition of Life does, alas! force many of us to do) we come usually with divided and alienated Minds. The Business, the Pleasure, or the Amusement we left, sticks fast to us; and perhaps engrosses that Heart for a Time, which should then be taken up altogether in spiritual Addresses. But as soon as the Sound of the sacred Hymns strike us, all that busy Swarm of Thoughts presently disperses: By a grateful Violence we are forced into the Duty that is going forward, and, as indevout and backward as we were before,
before, find ourselves on the sudden seizure with a sacred Warmth, and ready to cry out with holy David; my Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed! I will sing, and give Praise. Our Misapplication of Mind, at such Times, is often so great, and we so deeply immersed in it, that there needs some very strong and powerful Charm to rouse us from it; and perhaps nothing is of greater Force to this Purpose, than the solemn and awakening Airs of Church Musick.

For the same Reason, those accidental Distractions that may happen to us, during the Course of the Service, are also best cured by it. The strong-minded, and best practised in holy Duties, may sometimes be surprized into a Forgetfulness of what they are about, by some violent outward Impressions; and every slight Occasion will serve to call off the Thoughts of no less willing, though much weaker Worshipers. Those that come to see, and to be seen here, will often gain their
The Usefulness of

their Point, will draw and detain for a
while the Eyes of the Curious, or the
Unworthy. A Passage in the sacred Sto-
ry read, and Expression used in the
common Forms of Devotion, shall raise
a foreign Reflection perhaps in musing
and speculative Minds, and lead them
on from Thought to Thought, and
Point to Point, till they are bewildered
in their own Imagination. These, and
an Hundred other Avocations will a-
rise, and prevail; but when the Instru-
ments of Praise begin to sound, our
scattered Thoughts presently take the
Alarm, return to their Post, and to
their Duty, preparing and arming
themselves against their spiritual Ansi-
ants.

Lastly, Even the Length of the
Service itself becomes an Hinderance
sometimes to the Devotion, which it
was meant to feed and raise: For,
alas! we quickly tire in the Perfor-
mance of holy Duties; and as eager
and unwearied as we are in attending
upon secular Business, and trifling Con-
cerns,
cerns, yet in divine Offices, I fear, the Expostulation of our Saviour is applicable to most of us: *What! can ye not watch with me one Hour?* This Infirmity is relieved, this Hinderance prevented or removed, by the sweet Harmony that accompanies several Parts of the Service, and, returning upon us at fit Intervals, keeps our Attention up to the Duty, when we begin to flag, and makes us insensible of the Length of it. Happily therefore, and wisely is it so ordered, that the Morning Devotions of the Church, which are much the longest, should share also a greater Proportion of the Harmony which is so useful to enliven them.

But its Use stops not here, at a bare Removal of some of the ordinary Impediments to Devotion; it supplies us also with special Helps and Advantages towards furthering and improving it. For it adds Dignity and Solemnity to the publick Worship; it sweetly influences and raises our Passions, while we assist at it; and makes us do our Duty with
The Usefulness of

with the greatest Pleasure and Cheerfulness; all which are very proper and powerful Means, towards creating in us that holy Attention and Erection of Mind, which I have shewn to be the most reasonable Part of this our reasonable Service.

Such is our Nature, that even the best Things, and most worthy of our Esteem, do not always employ and detain our Thoughts, in Proportion to their real Value, unless they be set off and greatened by some outward Circumstances, which are fitted to raise Admiration and Surprize in the Breasts of those who hear, or behold them. And this good Effect is wrought in us by the Power of Sacred Musick. To it we, in good Measure, owe the Dignity and Solemnity of our publick Worship; which else, I fear, in its natural Simplicity and Plainness, would not so strongly strike, or so deeply affect the Minds, as it ought to do, of the Slug-gish and Inattentive, that is, of the far greatest Part of Mankind. But when
Voices and Instruments are skilfully adapted to it, it appears to us in a majestic Air and Shape, and gives us very awful and reverent Impressions; which, while they are upon us, it is impossible for us not to be fixed and composed to the utmost. We are then in the same State of Mind, that the devout Patriarch was, when he awoke from his holy Dream; and ready with him to say to ourselves: Surely the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this Place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.

Further; the Availableness of Harmony to promote a pious Disposition of Mind will appear, from the great Influence it naturally has on the Passions, which, when well directed and rightly applied, are the Wings and Sails of the Mind, that speed its Passage to Perfection, and are of particular and remarkable Use in the Offices of Devotion: For Devotion consists in an Ascent of the Mind towards God, attended
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Sermon attended with holy Breathings of Soul, and a divine Exercise of all the Passions and Powers of the Mind. These Passions the Melody of Sounds serves only to guide and elevate towards their proper Object: These it first calls forth, and encourages, and then gradually raises and inflames. This it does to all of them, as the Matter of the Hymns sung gives an Occasion for the employing them; but the Power of it is chiefly seen in advancing that most heavenly Passion of Love, which reigns always in pious Breasts, and is the surest and most inseparable Mark of true Devotion; which recommends what we do in Virtue of it to God, and makes it relishing to ourselves; and without which, all our spiritual Offerings, our Prayers and our Praises, are both insipid and unacceptable. At this our Religion begins, and at this it ends; it is the sweetest Companion and Improvement of it here upon Earth, and the very Earnest and Foretaste of Heaven: Of the Pleasures of which nothing
thing further is revealed to us, than serm, that they consist in the Practice of Holy Musick, and Holy Love; the joint Enjoyment of which (we are told) is to be the happy Lot of all pious Souls to endless Ages. And observable therefore it is, that that Apostle, in whose Breast this divine Quality seems most to have abounded, has also spoken the most advantageously of Vocal and Instrumental Harmony, and afforded us the best Argument for the lawful Use of it: For such I account the Description, which he has given us of the Devotions of Angels and blessed Spirits performed by Harps and Hymns in the Apocalypse. A Description which, whether real or metaphorical, yet, belonging to the Evangelical State, certainly implies thus much, that whatever is there said to be made use of, may now, under the Gospel be warrantably and laudably employed.

And in his Steps trod the holy Martyr Ignatius, who probably saw Saint John in the Flesh; and learnt that
Lesson of divine Love from him, which, after his Example, he inculcated every where in his Epistles; and together with it instils into the Churches he writes to, a Love of Holy Harmony, by frequent Allusions and Comparisons drawn from that Science, which recur oftner in his Writings, than in those of any other Ancient whatever, and seem to intimate to us, that the Devotions of the Church were set off with some kind of Melody, even in those early Times, notwithstanding we usually place the Rise of the Institution much lower.

Would we then have Love at these Assemblies? Would we have our Spirit softened and enlarged, and made fit for the Illapses of the Divine Spirit? Let us, as often as we can, call in to our Aid the Assistances of Musick, to work us up into this heavenly Temper. All Selfishness and Narrowness of Mind, all Rancor and Peevishness vanish from the Heart, where the Love of Divine Harmony dwells; as the evil Spirit of Saul.
Church Musick.

Saul retired before the Harp of David. The Devotional, as well as the Active Part of Religion is (we know) founded in good Nature; and one of the best Signs and Causes of good Nature is, I am sure, to delight in such pious Entertainments.

And now it naturally follows from hence (which was the last Advantage, from whence I proposed to recommend the Use of Church Musick) that it makes our Duty a Pleasure, and enables us, by that Means, to perform it, with the utmost Vigour and Cheerfulness. It is certain, that the more pleasing an Action is to us, the more keenly and eagerly are we used to employ ourselves in it, the less liable are we, while it is going forward, to tire, and droop, and be dispirited. So that whatever contributes to make our Devotion taking (within such a Degree as not at the same time to dissipate and distract it) does, for that very Reason, contribute to our Attention and holy Warmth of Mind in performing it.

What
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What we take Delight in, we no longer look upon as a Task, but return to always with Desire, dwell upon with Satisfaction, and quit with Uneasiness. And this it was which made holy David express himself in so pathetical a Manner concerning the Service of the Sanctuary: As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks (says he) so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God. When, O when shall I come to appear before the Presence of God? Which passionate Wish, as it certainly proceeded from the Pleasure he took in reflecting on those holy Offices, so, I question not, but a good Part of that Pleasure arose from the sacred Melody which accompanied them. For so he himself instructs us to think of him in many other Passages of the Psalms; particularly where he breaks out into this pious Exultation: It is well seen, O my God, how thou goest, how thou my God and King goest in the Sanctuary: The Singers go before, the
the Minstrels follow after; in the Midst are the Damsels playing with the Timbrels. And if the Image of that holy Quire, now only present to his Memory, gave him so much Pleasure, what Transports do we think he was under, when he himself assisted at the Service, and his Ears drank in their holy Strains?

And the same may we observe to be the Case, as to some of the Fathers of the first Rank, St. Chrysostom, St. Austin, and St. Basil: As Eloquent as they naturally were, yet they never appear so Eloquent, never put on such a Variety of thought and Expression, such an Elevation of Soul and Style, as when they are discoursing of the Energy and Power of Church Musick. Could I produce to you the Passages from them to this Purpose at length, you would say, that Men who spake thus feelingly, and with so much Extacy, of the holy Hymns and Anthems of the Church, when they were at a Distance from them, must have an Heaven almost
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SERM. most in their Breasts, when they partook of them. If therefore the Praises of God, tunefully performed, be naturally attended with an holy Pleasure, that Pleasure, I say, must needs produce Attention; actuate all the Springs, and enliven all the Motions of Devout and Heavenly, nay even of Earthly, and Sluggish Minds. The Ancients do sometimes use the Metaphor of an Army, when they are speaking of the joint Devotions put up to God in the Assembly of his Saints: They say, we there meet together in Troops to do Violence to Heaven; that we encompass, we besiege the Throne of God, and bring such an united Force, as is not to be withstood. And, I suppose, we may as innocently carry on the Metaphor, as they have begun it, and say, that Church Musick, when decently ordered, may have as great Uses in this Army of Supplicants, as the Sound of the Trumpet has among the Hosts of the mighty Men! It equally rouses the Courage, equally gives Life, and Vigour,
Church Musick.

Vigour, and Resolution, and Unanimity to these holy Affailants.

Thus have I shewn you, in how many several Respects Vocal and Instrumental Harmony may be serviceable to awaken, fix, and inflame us in our publick Addresses to God; and how far therefore it recommends itself to the Approbation and Use of all pious Christians, upon this single Consideration: So that, though the Worship now under the Gospel be Spiritual, yet are we not debarred, on that Account, from employing several Means and Instruments of Worship, which are not so. On the contrary, from the Spiritual Nature of our Worship, it follows, that all such outward Helps and Expedients may and ought to be laid hold of, as do really assist and promote the inward Worship of our Spirits. And for this Reason therefore, among others, the melodious Harmony now practised in our Church ought to be continued.

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'Till then our Brethren of the Separation can prove, either that Musick has not that Influence on the Mind of Man, as it has been represented to have; or that the Minds of us Christians are not so disposed to receive its Impressions, as those of other Men; that we have not the same Faculties to be wrought upon, the same Passions to be regulated, the same Dulness and Distracttion of Mind to be cured; 'till this can be made out by them, they must allow us to retain those Modes of Worship, which We and our Forefathers, from the Infancy of the Reformation down to this Day, have practifed, to our great Spiritual Comfort: Modes of Worship, which They perhaps, who stand aloof from them, may think (and call sometimes) Rudiments of the Law, and weak and beggarly Elements; but which We, by Experience, find and feel to be very strong and powerful Incentives to Godliness.

Gal. iv. 9. If Abuses now and then creep into this Part of our Worship, They shall not
not be more ready to point them out, than we will be to own and reform them. If some slight inconveniences may happen to have arisen from hence, which seem to blemish the performance of our Religious Service, far be it from us either to cherish, or defend them. The very best things are liable to be misused; and the better the thing, oftentimes the more liable it is to it. However we doubt not, but that, upon a fair balance of profit and loss, it will appear, that the few inconveniences pretended to have arisen from hence, are not to be compared with the many and mighty advantages, that have certainly sprung from it; and that if one good man has been thrown back in his devotions, hundreds and thousands have been extremely forwarded by it.

And this is what I should now more particularly endeavour to prove under my

Third general head, wherein I proposed to shew, that the way of performing
The Usefulness of forming divine Service in the Church of England is better fitted to fix our Attentions, and raise our Affections, than any other Form of Devotions now practised in the Christian World*: That it enjoys this Advantage, as in several other Respects, so particularly in relation to a solemn and decent Use of Church Musick. But the greatest Part of the Matter that would arise on this Head, is foreign to the Design of the Day; and what is not so, has in Part been prevented already; and neither of them can now be insisted upon, without depriving you too long of a better and more sensible Conviction of the Power of Church Musick, than any I can supply you with. I shall therefore take this whole Point for granted; and from thence, in the

Fourth and last Place, very briefly, but earnestly exhort you to make your Devotion Exemplary in Proportion to

* See the preceding Discourse on this Subject.
those Advantages, which you above serm. all others enjoy. In vain will it be for us to boast, that we have extraordinary Helps to inward Piety, if our outward Behaviour plainly declares, that we do not make a due Use of them. In vain shall we hope to convince those that differ from us, of the Decency and Expedience of this Part of our Worship, and of its great Tendency to spiritual Edification; if they see that it does not really produce those good Effects in us which we ascribe to it: Let us reason never so well in this Case, they will think they have answered our Arguments, if they can but confront them with our Practices. Let us take away the Strength of this Objection, as well as we can that of all the rest; and then, I am sure, our Devotions will be altogether blameless. O let all of us, that have any regard for the Honour of that Church, to which we belong, any Zeal for the true Interests of Piety, any real Concern of Heart on the Account of those
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SERM. those little Niceties, and endless Scruples that thus unhappily divide us; O let all of us, I say, that are thus affected and disposed (as all of us, I am sure, should be) resolve, from this Moment, so to order our external Deportment in the House of God, as may best enable it to reach those excellent Ends! Let no light and vain Motion, no loose and unseemly Gestures be seen upon any of us, when we appear in this great Presence! Let our Ears then listen to nothing, but to the solemn Offerings of Prayer and Praise that are then put up, and listen to them with no other Design, but to affect our Souls with a deep Sense of them. Let not our Eyes lead the Way to our naughty Hearts, and teach them to wander! But let us be all composed throughout into Attention, and awed into a religious Respect and Silence.

To the Sound of Words, and the Significance of Gestures, let us join all along the sweet Melody of our Hearts; compleating the holy Comfort, we assist
at, by a divine Agreement of Mind and Sermon. Body in the same Acts of Adoration, and by making all our Worship both inward and outward exactly harmonious, and of a Piece! So shall we take away every Reproach that shall be cast upon our Communion: So shall we win the Hearts, and convince the Judgments of those that differ from us: So shall we thoroughly recommend our Worship to God, and ourselves by the Means of it. In a Word, so shall we make the Devotions of this our Church Militant here on Earth, the lively Image of those of the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

To a blessed Participation of which, may God of his infinite Mercy bring us, &c.
THE

SIN and FOLLY

Of being Anxious about

FUTURE EVENTS.
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

A

SERMON

Preached at

WESTMINSTER Abby,

March 13, 1714-15.

MATT. vi. 34.
—Take no Thought for the Morrow.

THIS is Part of our Saviour's Ser-
mon on the Mount; wherein he
proposed a short Sum of Christian Doc-
trine, in Opposition to the false Max-
ims, and corrupt Notions of Mor-
ality, that then obtained in the World.

And
Of Anxiety and Solitude.

S E R M. And indeed, all the Precepts he there laid down, though highly reasonable in themselves, were yet so distant from the common Opinions and Practice of the Jews, that we are not to wonder, if (as St. Matthew informs us) when he had ended these Sayings, the Multitude was astonished at his Doctrine: For they had heard nothing like it from their Teachers, the Scribes and Pharisees. And, perhaps, no one Branch of it was more surprising to that worldly minded People, immersed deeply in the Cares of Life, and in a restless Concern for Earthly Things, than the Rule given by him in the Text:—

Take no Thought for the Morrow. A Rule, which even to Christian Ears may seem somewhat harsh at first Hearing; and will therefore deserve to be a little explained, in order to its becoming a sure Foundation of Duty, and the proper Subject of those Reasonings and Exhortations, with which I propose to enforce it.

—Take
—Take no Thought for the Morrow.

The Meaning of our Saviour in these Words, cannot be, that we are to live at Random, secure and careless of whatever may befall us; that we are not to look into the Consequences of our own, or other Men's Actions, nor endeavour any ways to foresee, and prevent approaching Dangers: That we are to make no manner of Provision for future Events, to lay up nothing, and concern ourselves about nothing, but what is present, and immediately before us: For this is no Part of the Character either of a Wise or Good Man, nor agreeable to many other Rules and Directions given us in holy Scripture. Doubtless, Sagacity in discerning, and a prudent Forecast towards declining Evils, are not only allowable, but commendable Qualities: Frugality and Diligence are certainly Virtues: And therefore the prudent Man is thus described by Solomon, that he foreseth the Evil, and hideth himself:³
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Serm. himself: And the Ant is recommended to us, as a Pattern of Providence and Parsimony; Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her Ways, and be wise. Even our Saviour had a Bag, wherein there was probably a Supply for more than one Day. And as he allows us to foresee Persecutions at a Distance, and to escape them by an early Flight; so he himself took that Method of declining them, and cannot therefore be supposed to condemn what he frequently practised. But his Meaning plainly is, to forbid such a Care and Concern for future Accidents, as is attended with Uneasiness, Distrust, and Despondency; such a Degree of Thoughtfulness, as takes up, and dejects, and distracts the Mind. We are not too curiously to pry into the remote Issues of Things, nor to perplex and afflict ourselves with the Forethought of imagined Dangers. We are not to guard against Want, by an eager anxious Pursuit of Wealth, nor be so careful in providing supplies for the Necessities of
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Of this Life, as to forget that we are designed for another. In this Sense we are obliged to take no Thought for the Morrow. And indeed this is the Sense which the Original naturally carries: For what our Version renders by taking Thought, is in the Greek, a Word of much greater Force and Compass, signifying a restless Solicitude, and Distraction of Thought; and by the Morrow, is not meant the very next Day only, but, according to the Import of the Eastern Phrase, all the Time to come, any future Event, at what Distance soever. The Design of the Text therefore is, to prohibit all anxious and perplexing Cares; whether as to the good Things of Life, the Necessaries and first Conveniencies of it, how we shall be furnished with them; or, whether as to the ill Things, the possible Dangers, and distant Evils of Life, how we shall bear them: A Disease very incident to good and virtuous Minds, when they happen to be a littled tinctured with Melancholy; and very
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Serm. very apt, where it gets Possession, to poison all the Enjoyments of Life, and even to make Life itself sometimes a Burthen to the Owner. It has been known, when an excessive Love of some earthly Good [as perhaps of a near and dear Relation or Friend] has in tender Tempers raised such a Dread of losing that Happiness, as hath been more than equal to the Pleasure they took in enjoying it. And there have been Instances of those, who, under all the Affluence and Plenty in the World, have fancied to themselves some Accident, that might rob them at once of all they possessed; and have by such an an imaginary Scene made themselves as truly miserable, as if it were real. Nor is it an unusual Thing for Men to be influenced so far, by Reflections on such possible Accidents as these, as to shut up their Hands and their Bowels to the Poor, and to think themselves excused from relieving other Men's Wants, lest they themselves should one Day want what they are
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are invited to bestow. However, should some of these be thought rare Cases, yet nothing is more common, than to see Men, who are at Ease, disquieting themselves with remote Prospects, and with the vain Fear of future Evils: Especially if they live in doubtful and distracted Times, when the Spirit of Diffension reigns openly, and Parties of Men are loud and violent against each other: Then they sink under the sad View of Things, and are ever scaring themselves with the Forethought of the very worst, that can befall Themselves or Others, particular Families or Cities, Churches or Kingdoms. To these (and to all such as these) we may presume that our Blessed Lord directs the Precept of the Text—take no thought for the Morrow.

It shall be my Business to shew both the Evil, and the Unreasonableness of such Anxious Thoughts; and how little they are to be justified, either in Point of Piety or Prudence.

Vol. IV. T First,
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Serm. First, The Evil of them lies in these Particulars: That they are opposite to several plain Precepts of holy Writ; That they often invade the peculiar Province and Prerogative of God, and are always built on a secret Distrust of his Providence.

Several express Commands there are in Scripture of the same Import with that of the Text: Be careful for nothing (says St. Paul) but in every Thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God. Cast all your Care upon him (says St. Peter) for he careth for you. Commit thy Way unto the Lord (says good David) trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Can a Man transgress these Commands, without Guilt; or entertain any Degree of Anxiety, without transgressing them?

Indeed, when we indulge ourselves too far in these melancholy Presages, and pretend to see a great way off the Evils
Evils that shall happen to us, we are guilty of Impiety on another Account; inasmuch as we proudly and arrogantly pretend to what doth not lie within the Compass of our Knowledge, and affect to partake with the Almighty in one of his great Attributes. *Secret* Deut. xxix. 29.

*Things belong unto the Lord our God:* He alone, who orders and disposes Futurities, can foresee them at a Distance: But Man is a short-sighted and blind Creature; and never more blind, than when he pretends to see furthest, and to set up for Prophecying. It is the kind Design of God, to wrap up Things to come in Clouds and Darkness, lest we should arrive at the Knowledge of that, which, when known, would certainly trouble us. The Scheme of successive Angry Providences, by which God must govern a wicked World, would be so terrible and amazing a Sight, that, in Pity to us, God has shortened and bounded our View. And what Madness, what Wickedness is it then, to pry curiously into
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Ser. M. into those Arcana of Providence, which we can never find out, and which were hidden from us, on purpose that we might not find them out! Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God; but those that are revealed, belong unto us and to our Children: And one of these revealed Truths is, the wise Aphorism of the Text, Take no Thought for the Morrow.

That such Anxiety is Irreligious, will further appear, if we consider it as built always on a secret Distrust of God’s Goodness towards us, and perpetual Watchfulness over us. It hath indeed somewhat of the Nature of Infidelity; and therefore our Saviour applies himself to those who give way to it, under this Compellation: O ye of little Faith! Did we repose an entire Confidence in God; were we thoroughly persuaded, that he is as ready, as he is able, to do every Thing that is needful for us, and that, without his Permission and Appointment, no Snare can entrap us, no Calamity can
can crush us, no Evil can approach to 

hurt us; had we always upon our Minds, I say, a deep and lively Sense of these Truths, it were impossible that a Concern for future Events should much disquiet us; we should certainly, according to the Advice of St. Peter, cast our Care upon God, if we in good Earnest believed, that he cared for us. I do not say, that such a Persuasion would render us indifferent to all Events, and wholly unconcerned at the probable Approach of impending Dangers; but it would in good Measure take off the Edge and Sting of our Forebodings; it would compose and calm us into a patient Resignation of ourselves to the Divine Will and Appointment; it would make us hope the best, that there is room to hope in every Case, and expect the worst that could happen with Tranquillity and Evenness.

By the Light of Nature we learn, God is infinitely wise and good: And what greater Security can we have, than
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Serm. than to be under the Protection of infinite Wisdom and Goodness? Ought we in reason to disturb ourselves with an eager Desire of possessing what infinite Goodness shall be pleased to lay upon us? Do we not know, and feel, that we depend upon God, originally, for what we are, and every Moment for his continued Preservation? That in him we live, move, and have our Being? And can we doubt, whether he, who gave us the greater Gift, Being itself, will afford us the Less, whatever is absolutely requisite to our Well-being?

The Argument is our Saviour's—

Take no Thought (says he) for your Life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on: Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Rayment?

The same plain Lesson we learn also from the Observation of God's perpetual Care and Providence over the several Ranks of lower and less noble Creatures; over the Birds of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field, and the very
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very Plants that flourish on the Face of the Earth. These all wait upon him, who giveth him their Meat in due Season. He feeds them within, and he clothes them without, either usefully, or splendidly, as seemeth best to him: His overflowing Bounty supplies them with whatever is suitable to their Natures and Wants: He openeth his Hands, and filleth all Things living with Good. And shall he, who provides thus liberally for inferior Beings, neglect any Ways to take care of Man, the Heir of all his Blessings, and Lord of the Creation? Thus hath the same divine Preacher, with admirable Simplicity and Force, argued in the same Chapter: Consider the Fowls of the Air (says he) for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not much better then they? And why take ye Thought for Raymond? Consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow: They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that
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Serm. that Solomon, in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the Grass of the Field, which To-day is, and To-morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?

But I forbear to enlarge further on this Point, that I may have room for those Considerations that belong to my

II. Second general Head; under which I proposed to shew, that an anxious Concern for To-morrow, is as destitute of all Pretences to Wisdom as Goodness.

A Censure, that will not easily be allowed! since the looking forward to the probable Events of Things hath been ever esteemed one of the first and chiefest Instances of Prudence. It hath so, and with good Reason; when that Sagacity is employed in a proper Manner, and within its due Bounds; when it gives the Mind a calm and clear Foresight of the Difficulties it is likely to meet with, and leaves it at Liberty, under
under that View, to prepare itself every way for the Encounter: But when it serves only to disarm us of our Courage, and to deprive us of our Reason; to create Vexations to us, and to multiply Dangers; it is then the very Folly of Foolishness, as may appear from the ensuing Reflections. For, 1. The Task we set ourselves in this Case, is infinite and endless. And after all will not answer the Design, for which it is intended. He, who makes uncertain May-be's the Object of his Concern, has taken Care to supply his Mind with perpetual Matter of Disquiet; has pitched upon a fruitful Subject of Uneasiness, which can never be exhausted. The possible Evils and Calamities of Life are without Number; and in vain therefore should we attempt to reckon them up: Or, could we number them, it would be a still vainer Attempt, to forecast with ourselves particularly how we might avoid them: Which yet is perhaps the only wise Reason that can be given for
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Serm. for our musing much upon them. Did the Affairs of this World proceed in an even and regular Course, so that we might easily trace Effects from their Causes, and judge surely of the future by the present; it might be reasonable and prudent often to employ our Thoughts and Concern on Times and Things at a Distance, and endeavour to foresee, what were possible to be foreseen, in order to make the wisest Use and Advantages of it. But alas! we have no sure Clue to guide us in such Searches as these: The Events of Life are to the utmost Degree uncertain, and depend often on such secret Springs and Motions, as lie without the Reach of our Observation; and therefore fall out often so croffly, and so contrary to common Rules, that it is but lost Labour to draw long Schemes before hand, and form nice Conjectures upon them. I returned and saw under the Sun (says a very experienced Observer) that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them all. There is scarce any Man, perhaps, who is not sensible, that the greatest Turns that have happened to him in his Fortunes, have been owing to such lucky Hits, and to such a Set of conspiring Circumstances, as he could not any ways have foreseen, nor can yet account for: And few there are, I believe, who have not by the same happy Co-incidence of Things, without their Foreknowledge, or Care, escaped great Dangers. And what therefore is so very uncertain, as future Events are, ought not to be the Object of any great Concern or Passion. But were it possible to guess at a remote Event with some Degree of Assurance, yet it is impossible to know, whether we ourselves shall live to see it. It may happen, as we presage: But, e'er it happens, we may be snatched from the World; and that is all one to us, as if it were never to happen at all.
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And why then should such a short-lived thing as Man, lengthen his Cares to no Purpose? Why should a Creature of to day take Thought for the morrow?

Either the Evil we fear, will come, or it will not: If it will, then the Saying of our Lord takes Place, sufficient for the Day (that is, for the Day of Visitation) is the Evil thereof: It is Time enough to bear it, when it doth befall us; but it is unpardonable Folly to invite it to come and torment us before our Time; to add imaginary to certain Afflictions, and to suffer a Thing a thousand Times over in our Thoughts, because we must once suffer it in Reality. But if it will not come, then our Fear of it is our only Evil: And surely such a Fear is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, in the utmost Propriety of the Expression. Anxiety of Mind, therefore, makes us feel a Thousand Afflictions, which will never overtake us, and multiplies those which certainly will. And how can a worse
Of Anxiety and Solicitude. 285

a worse Character possibly be given of any Thing, that sets up for Prudence? x.

Nay,

2. It not only multiplies Evils, but takes away from us the Power either to escape, or bear them; renders us incapable of using those Methods of Prevention, which are requisite to ward the Blow, or of suffering what we cannot prevent, with Decency and Patience. This is plain, that the worst Thing in the World to advise with, in Case of Dangers, present or future, is a feared Imagination: For that disturbs and disorders a Man's Thoughts to such a Degree, that he cannot calmly consider what is fittest to be done, in order to avoid the Thing he fears; and it deprives him also of that Presence and Firmness of Mind, which should support him under what is unavoidable.

That very Trembling, and Weakness, which proceeds from too quick a Sense of approaching Danger, takes away from a Man the Use of those Limbs.
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

S E R M. Limbs, which should help him, either to grapple with it, or to decline it.

When thou art afflicting thyself therefore, with sad Omens and Presages, and applauding thy own Wisdom and For-sight in so doing, remember the Decision of one, who was certainly wise, and who has told thee, that the Fear of Man bringeth a Snare; but he that trusteth in the Lord, shall be safe. Again.

3. This Concern for Futurities robs us of all the Ease and the Advantages, which might arise from a proper and discreet Use of the present Moment. Certainly, the greatest Pleasure, on this Side Heaven, lies in an even and serene, a calm, composed, and steady Mind; that is inwardly at rest, and, by Consequence, at leisure to enjoy all outward Comforts; that hopes the best, and is prepared for the worst; enjoys the Present, and is not anxiously concerned for the Future. Such a Temper of Mind is the greatest Blessing God can bestow upon a Man, because it gives
gives the Taste and Relish to all other \textit{serm.} Blessings; and therefore the greatest Folly a Man can be guilty of, is, to part with it upon any Account, and to quit a certain Tranquillity \textit{now}, out of the vain Fear of being robbed of it \textit{some time}, or other. Further,

4. 'Tis very \textit{unreasonable} to disquiet ourselves about \textit{distant} Evils; it often happening that the \textit{Presence} of the Things themselves, suggests better Expedients, wiser and quicker Counsels to us, than all our Wisdom and Forethought at a Distance can do. The \textit{Morrow} (says our Lord) \textit{shall take Thought for the Things of itself}; that is, it shall bring along with it a Power and Strength of Mind answerable to its Neceffities, a Frame of Spirit every Way suited to our Circumstances and Occasions. "Thus \textit{Sickness} (as one well observes) "doth of itself produce in " us such a Temper, as is fitted to that " Trial: it makes us affect Privacy and " Silence, which conduce to our Re- " covery, and gives us such a Serious-" ness
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"Of necessity, and Readiness to submit to good Advice, as is agreeable to the Dangers that attend it. And thus Necessity and Want infuse into the Soul that Decency of Behaviour, that Carefulness to watch proper Opportunities, that Courtesies and Eloquence of Speech, which no Premeditation can furnish, and proves a kind of Inspiration." Trouble not thyself, therefore, about what is to come: For when it is to come, it shall either find, or make thee ready to undergo it: Tomorrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself; and why then shouldst thou be at a needless Expence of Thought beforehand?

To these several Accounts of the Folly and Unreasonableness of anxious and tormenting Cares, give me Leave to add one more, and I have done.

That he, who indulges them, forfeits his Interest in the divine Providence and Protection; and that is a Loss, for which all the Wisdom, and Skill, and Foresight in the World can make
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make no Amends. He that terrifies himself with the Apprehension of future Evils, declares in Effect, that he doth not absolutely rely upon God for his ordering, and disposing them. And he, who doth not absolutely trust God with all his Concerns, has no Right to his Protection and Defense, no Reason to expect his Support and Assistance; but is left to work out every Thing, as well as he can, by the Dint of second Causes, by his own Parts, Policy, and Prudence. And how wretched is his Case, who has brought his Affairs to that Pass, as to be deprived of his best and faithfullest Counsellor, his most kind and potent Friend, and to live, as it were, without God in the World? It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, says the Apostle: and surely, next to that, it is a fearful Thing to take ourselves out of his Hands, and to exempt ourselves from his Care; which he is in good Construction supposed to do, who sets himself with any Degree of Solicitude to take Thought for the Morrow.
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Serm. Let all of us, who are convinced of the Reasonableness of these Speculations, put them immediately in Practice! let us even To-day, while it is called To-day, throw off all Anxiety and Concern for To-Morrow! If we heartily believe the Doctrine of divine Providence, let us shew our Faith by our Works; let us live, as if we did believe it; Industriously indeed, warily, wisely; because by these Means we are to entitle ourselves to the Protection of God; but withal, unconcernedly, cheerfully, resignedly, as knowing, that we are secure of his Protection when we stand in Need of it. Let us behave ourselves like dutiful Children, under the Guidance of a wise and gracious Parent, who, we are satisfied, loves us, and will, as he thinks fit, and sees best, provide for us; and therefore we fall into all his Commands and Directions with an implicit Obedience, and trouble ourselves with nothing farther, but only to do the Duty which he hath appointed us, in our several Places and
Of Anxiety and Solicitude. Let us cast all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.

Nay, should he at any Time seem to withdraw his Favour and the Light of his Countenance from us; should he bring us into the Pit and the Snare, and lay Trouble upon our Loinst, suffer the Malice of our Enemies, or (which is worse) the Treachery of our Friends to prevail against us; let not this itself deject us or shake the firm Repose of our Minds, but let us still express ourselves in the same resolved Manner that Job did under his severe Trials: While I live, Job. xxvii; will I not remove mine Integrity from me; though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. Let us, even at such a Time, take up Words of holy Assurance, with Habakkuk, and say: Although the Figtree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines; the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Field shall yield no Meat; the Flocks shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

U 2 Could
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

S E R M. Could we bring ourselves once to this Divine Temper of Soul, could we work ourselves up into this devout Confidence, all the Turns and Vicissitudes of human Affairs, all the Strokes of ill Fortune, which we feel or fear, would fit light and easy upon our Minds: In the midst of Confusion and Troubles, of Evils imminent, or already come; of real, or fancied Dangers; we might be even and serene; possessing our Souls in Patience, and the good Things of Life with Pleasure; and enjoying the present Moment, without a Mixture of Fears and Disquiets, arising from near or remote Possibilities: Saying, nay singing as the divine Psalmist hath taught us, God is our Hope and Strength, a very present Help in Time of Trouble! Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea: Though the Waters thereof rage and swell, and though the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same! God is our Hope and Strength,
Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

Strength, a very present Help in Times of Trouble.

To whom, even to the God and Father of our Life, the wise Dispenser of Good and Evil, the Governor of Events, and Rock of our Confidence, together with his only begotten Son, and ever Blessed Spirit, be ascribed all Glory and Praise, now and for ever!
The Wretchedness of a Wavering Mind.

A SERMON
Preached at the
ROLLS Chapel,
December 4, 1698.

GEN. xlix. 4.
Unstable as Water, thou shalt not excel.

These are Part of the dying SERM.

Patriarch Jacob's Words, when XI.
he blessed the Twelve, leaning upon the Top of his Staff. Of the Eldest of Heb. xi.
these [Reuben] the Character he gives is contained in the Words I have read to
of which there are several very different Interpretations. I shall not trouble you with them, but take that, which they do most naturally and obviously bear. And according to that, Jacob does in these Words seem to represent Reuben to be of a fickle, uncertain, irresolute Temper; not utterly void of all Propensions to Goodness, but incapable of acting up to them; not without honest and virtuous Resolutions, but unable firmly to keep and practise them. And this being his Case, he pronounces upon him, that he shall not excel. That is, that he shall never arrive to any Pitch and Perfection in Virtue, nor ever command a thorough Esteem and Respect from good Men; that he should never be able eminently to distinguish himself by the Exercise of those good Qualities of Mind, which procure Honour and Happiness to Men in this World, and in another.—Unstable as Water, thou shalt not excel.
a Wavering Mind.

From which Words a natural Occasion will be given me of discoursing to you of the ill Condition of that Man, who, like Reuben in the Text, being unstable as Water, is distracted between two Courses of Life, a good and a bad one. The Unhappiness and Wretchedness of which State, after I have set out and proved to you at large, I shall apply myself to persuade the Man that is thus bewildered, to retrieve himself by serious Consideration, as soon as he can, and to fix a sure Principle of Virtue in his Mind, that may guide and govern him throughout, and make him uniformly wise and holy.

Now the Condition of a Man who is divided between two contrary Ways of Life, between Virtue and Vice, Godliness and Irreligion, is certainly very wretched and deplorable. For he is in the meanest State of Mind that human Nature is capable of. He is perpetually restless and uneasy; full of Anxiety and Torment. He loses all the Advantages
The Wretchedness of
s e r m. vantages of this World; and most as-
xi. surely forfeits all Pretences to any in
the next.

1. This doubtful, uncertain Way of
Living and Thinking proceeds from a
mean State of Mind, such as is beneath
the Dignity of human Nature.

Man was made to discern and em-
brace Truth; and, for this Reason, is
there a Spirit in him; and the Inspiration of the Almighty has given him Un-
derstanding. He has Faculties, whereby
he may distinguish between true and
false, right and wrong; and may fix
to himself sure Principles of Action.
When he does this, approves what is
best, and sticks to what he approves,
he does what he was designed to do,
and answers the End of his Being.
When he does not, but suffers him-
self to be swayed and bent different
Ways by different Motives, and to
float under Uncertainties, then he for-
feits the great Prerogative, and the most
distinguishing Advantage that belongs
to the reasonable Nature. The Scrip-
ture
a Wavering Mind.

Nature therefore alloweth not to the Irre-

tol but and the Inconstant Name of Men: They are said to be Children tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doc-

trine. They are in the Weakness and Nonage of their Reason, which is as yet not improved and ripened into its due Strength and Maturity.

The Perfection of Man is to be like God; for in his own Image created he him; to be like God in all his Attributes, particularly in that glorious one of his Immutability; whereby he is, as the Scripture speaks, without Variableness, or Shadow of turning; the same Yester-
day, To-day, and for ever.

Now this Immutability of God is twofold, relating either to his Nature, or his Purposes. The Unchangeable-
ness of his Nature we have no Room to imitate: For he designed us for a Changeable State, made us Creatures that were to purify our Natures, and exalt them by Degrees; till by his last great and glorious Change he should translate us into an Immortal and Un-
alterable
The Wretchedness of

...alterable State, and make us eternally

the same in our Natures, and eternally

happy in the Exercise of them. But

his Moral Immutability, the Steadiness

of his Counsels, Purposes, and Actions,

we may in some Measure, and there-

fore must imitate, as far as Human

Frailty will suffer us. We are like

him in this Perfection, when we get

to ourselves, by Thought and Reflec-

tion, a firm Persuasion of the eternal

Differences of Good and Evil, and of

that inseparable Dependance which Re-

ward and Punishment have upon them;

and when we govern our Lives under

the Sense of these Persuasions, Evenly

and Uniformly. This is truly Godlike!

the great Improvement, the Honour,

and the Excellence of our Natures!

And this Perfection he robs himself of,

who wavers between different Princi-

ples and Practices; and is sometimes

good and sometimes bad, as it happens.

He puts not his Faculties to that Use,

for which they were given him; em-

ploys not his Reason to those Purposes,
for which it was designed, the establishing and strengthening of his Mind in moral Principles; but lives as much at Random, and without Hold, as if the Breath of the Almighty were not in him.

Indeed, unless Reason gives us a Firmness and Constancy of acting, it is so far from being the Glory and the Privilege, that it is really the Reproach and Disgrace of our Natures; and makes us lower than even the Horse and Mule that have no Understanding. For they, without that, act always regularly and consonantly to themselves, under the never erring Guidance of Instinct; a blind, but sure Principle; whilst Man, with all his boasted Titles and Privileges wanders about in Uncertainties, does and undoes, and contradicts himself throughout all the various Scenes of Thinking and Living.

2. But the Dignity of our Nature, is a Consideration capable of touching but few. Let us go on therefore to more
The Wretchedness of
serm, more plain and affecting Considerations.

For such an unsettled Temper of Mind as we have described, creates a great deal of Trouble and Disturbance to the Man, who is so unhappy as to Master of it.

And this follows plainly from what has been discoursed upon the former Head. For whatsoever is natural, becoming, and worthy of us, is attended always with Ease and Delight to the Doer; whereas that which thwarts our first End and Design, and is destructive of our natural Perfections, must needs be Pain and Grief to us. For the Truth of which in this particular Case we may appeal to the Feeling of all those, who have ever once made the Experiment. How uneasy is that Man always to himself, who acts backwards and forwards, and has no sound Bottom to rest upon. What Disquiets does it create in his Mind, to see himself perpetually condemning himself, allowing himself in that Opinion or Practice this Hour, which he is sure he
Wavering Mind.

he shall disallow and go against in the sermon next. [And this perhaps is the only Part of his Temper that he ever can be sure of.]

Certainly a Mind, thus at odds with itself, cannot but be very troublesome to the Man that has it; unless, together with the Power of keeping his Resolutions, he has lost also that of reflecting afterwards on the Breach of them. For whenever he looks back upon his Actions, Guilt and Folly will appear written, as it were, upon the Front of them: He must needs pronounce himself Light and Inconsistent, Insincere, and Void of that true Fear of God, which dwells only with Simplicity and a single Heart. In fine; so many disagreeable and mortifying Thoughts will offer themselves to him, as cannot but leave a Wound behind them. And a Spirit thus wounded (with Guilt and Folly too) who can bear? In Truth, as to Ease of Mind, it belongs oftentimes to the compleatly wicked, more than to those who are

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by halves so. For the first may have hardened and stupified his Conscience so far, till it lets him alone, and gives him no further Notice of the Dangerousness of the State he is in. But he who Sins and Repents, and then Sins again in an endless Circle, is sure to hear of his own Follies, and be sensible of his own Miseries. His good Fits are like the short Intervals of Madness, which serve only to let the Madman into a Knowledge of his own Disease; whereas it would be much more to his Satisfaction and Content, if he were Mad always.

Good God! When a Man finds himself breaking through all the strongest Bonds that should hold him; through his most deliberate Resolutions, made in Time of great Danger and Adversity, or upon his solemn Approach to the Table of the Lord, but forgotten again in the Presence of any new Temptation, what Horrors must the Sense of this create in him? What Hatred and Contempt of himself?
What Despair almost of ever arriving at那样 Strength and Firmness of Mind, 微
which is requisite to carry him evenly on through the Paths of Virtue? Surely 他 is like the troubled Sea, that cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and 难
Dirt. There is no Peace, faith my God, to such a wicked one as this.

But further, such a Temper, so distracted between contrary Inclinations and Practices, is in the 3d Place, mischievous to a Man in Point of Interest, as well as Ease. For it renders him unfit for all the Affairs and Business of Life; incapable of forming advantageous Designs with Confidence, or of prosecuting them with Effect. A double minded Man (faith St. James) is unstable in all his Ways. He that is so in Point of Religion (the greatest and most important Concern of Life, the one Thing necessary) will probably be so in every Thing beside; and then what kind of Undertaking is such an one qualified for? To what Calling can he betake himself 与

X 2
The Wretchedness of

with any Probability of Success, who

wants the very first Elements of Thriv-
ing, Industry, Constancy, and Perse-
verance? Alas! the Doubts and Mis-
givings of his Heart concerning his

own internal State are such, as take a-
way from him the Taste of all outward

Comforts at present, and hinder him

from an effectual Pursuit of them. It

must be a Mind easy and at rest, that
can apply itself thoroughly towards

making those Advantages of the Things

of this Life, which are innocent and

lawful. And such an one is not his,

whose Ways (as the Wise Man speaks)

are double before the Lord. Besides,

this Unequalness in acting, these Heats

and these Colds in Religion, when

once they appear (and how can they

chuse but appear some time or other?)

will draw upon a Man theSuspicion

of Hypocrisy and Dissimulation. He,

who in the Eye of the World is some-
times good, and sometimes bad, as it

happens, will be sure to have the

Measure of himself taken from the

worst
worst Side of him; and the other Parts of his Character esteemed only as pure Artifice and Feigning. His Credit will be blasted, and his good Name be taken away; that Engine, by which he is to profit himself and others, and to do all the Good he is like to do in the World. Intimacies and Friendships are the great Comforts and Supports of Life, and of these such a Man will be thought incapable. What Ground can his Levity give any one to build their Confidence upon? What Encouragement is there to venture an Acquaintance with the Rash and Unstable? What Reason to expect a mutual Consent and Agreement of Thoughts and Affections, from a Mind so little at Unity in itself.

4. But these are slight Inconveniences, in Comparison of what follows; that such a wavering uncertain Temper of Mind is utterly inconsistent with the Terms of Salvation, and the Hopes of eternal Happiness. For 'tis not an Holiness taken up by Fits and Starts, that
The Wretchedness of

that can carry a Man to Heaven. It
must be a constant regular Principle,
influencing us throughout, that must
do that. **If ye continue in my Word**
(says our Saviour) then are ye my Disci-
ples indeed. An **uninterrupted Course**
of Virtue and Goodness, and nothing
less, can justify us before God, and
intitle us to our Reward. And the
Reason is, because nothing less can
prove our **Sincerity** to God, which is
the great and fundamental Rule, by
which we are to be tried. And a
**Vein of this must run through all our**
Thoughts and Actions, to make them
acceptable before God. **My Son, give me thy Heart,** says God; that is, come
to me with a **sincere and unfeigned**
Design of serving me; surrender up
to me **all thy Inclinations and Af-
fections without Reserve**; and give me
**Possession of thy Soul, without any**
Rival or Competitor. Which how can
be be said to do, that admits **contrary**
Interests perpetually to struggle within
him, and in his **heartiest Repentances**
is
is not without some Prospect of Sinning again? Holy David therefore makes 

Inf sincerity the Character and Mark of these kind of Men: Their Heart was not right with God, says he, nei-

ther were they steadfast in his Covenant.

The one follows upon the other; if so be that they are not steadfast, neither can their Hearts be right with God.

Let not a Man therefore flatter himself that things are well with him, because he is not absolutely given over to work Wickedness, but though he sometimes seems to be dead in Tres-
passes and Sins, yet he soon rises again by Repentance; for assuredly this (which is at the Bottom nothing but an Art of getting to Heaven, and yet enjoying his Lufts all the while) will not serve his Turn. There is no Pro-
mise in Scripture that belongs to the unstable and wavering Man; the Terms of the Covenant are universal Purity; or at least universal Sincerity: And under these, can no Man be saved.

X 4 And
And as the State of a Man is thus, with Respect to another World, very dangerous and bad already, so is it likely to grow worse and worse still without Remedy. For every new Return to Sin, every single Desertion of Virtue, does naturally unqualify a Man more and more for a sound Repentance, and weakens all the Motives that lead to it. Sin does by this Means grow familiar to us, and loses its Frightfulness. By our suffering its continual Approaches, it begins to appear to us in a more harmless Shape: We find fewer Horrors about us at the Thought of it, fewer Desires of avoiding it.

Besides, by these Vicissitudes of sinning and relapsing, our Resolution at last is quite broken; and we sit down every Time with less Hopes of the Mercy and Forgiveness of God, and of his Grace and Assistance.

Much more might be said, to set out the great Danger of such a State, and the Inconsistency of it with the Terms
Terms of Salvation, if this were not too plain a Point to need any further Proof; and therefore I chuse rather in what remains, to go on, as I proposed, from these several Considerations,

Secondly, To persuade the Man that is thus bewildered, to retrieve himself by serious Consideration, as soon as is possible; and to fix a sure Principle of Virtue in his Mind, that may guide and govern him throughout, and make him uniformly wise and holy.

For which Purpose I shall take leave to recommend two or three plain, but useful Considerations.

1. And first, he that sets about this Work, must be sure that his Belief is right and found at the Bottom: For 'tis generally the Uncertainty and Waveringsness of this, that produces all that Unevenness, and Disorder in the Life and Practice of Mankind. A sudden Heat of Devotion, or the Fear of what will become of a Man in the other
other World, will carry him sometimes into mighty Resolutions of quitting Sin, and living well for the future. But these wear off quickly and come to nothing; because they arose only from present Passion, and were not built on any good Foundation, on any strong and full Conviction of the Mind. They are the Seed which fell upon stony Places, where they had not much Earth; and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no Deepness of Earth: But when the Sun was up (when an hot Temptation presented itself afresh) they were scorched; and because they had no Root, they withered away. Let him therefore, who would pursue this Cure to Purpose, look to himself, lest there be in him an evil Heart of Unbelief. Let him enquire diligently of himself, whereon it is that his Faith stands; how he comes to be persuaded of the Truth of Natural Principles, and of those of Revealed Religion. And let him (if he has it not already) procure to himself such an Evidence of these Things,
Things, as is not to be shaken. For when this Principle is once well fixed in his Heart, Virtue will go out from it into his Life and Actions; and it will work Wonders towards making him all Harmonious, and of a Piece. When he has gone thus far, let him,

2. In the next Place, consider well what that particular Weight was, that in the Days of his Irresolution still hung upon him, and clogged all his virtuous Endeavours. What it was, that, when his Soul had made some Effort towards Goodness, overbalanced it still, and swayed it secretly again towards Nature's Side: For that too is very often the Case. There is some particular Sin of our Constitution, some great and ruling Infirmity, that damps all our good Motions, and spoils all our best Resolutions; and will continue to do so, 'till by a direct Opposition of ourselves to it, we have conquered and removed it. When we have
The Wretchedness of

have cut off this Right Hand, plucked
out this Right Eye, sacrificed the dar-
ing Lust of our Heart, we may then
hope, that the greatest Part of the Diff-
culty is over, and that no less powerful
Temptation will be able to draw us a-
side. But 'till this be done, in vain are
all our other Attempts and Designs.
While the great Offence has yet any
Hold upon us, nothing will be done to
Purpose; but he that has been divided
in his Opinion, and wavering in his
Practice, will be divided and wavering
still.

3. When he has thus settled his Faith
upon good Grounds, and armed him-
self well against that Sin which does
so easily beset him, he must take care
(in the next Place) not to suffer himself
to come within Reach of any Thing
that may any ways unfasten his Reso-
lutions, whilst they are yet young and
tender. He must admit of no Debate
within him about a Principle, but
throw off all such Thoughts, as Enemias
ties to the Peace of his Mind. 

must listen to no sceptical Discourse; 

no loose Reasonings of carnal Men, 

such as pervert the Truth. For these are the chief Engines of Satan to draw him back again into his former Unsettledness; and his good Purposes may happen to be blasted in the Bud, if they are ventured too soon amongst them. No! No! but let him root and ground himself in the Faith first by an answerable Life and Conversation; so shall it happen, that as his good Practice took rise at first from his good Opinions, so shall his Opinions be strengthened afterwards by his Practice; 'till both being confirmed in him, shall enable him to stand in the evil Day, and not to be afraid of what-er it is that would shake his Stedfastness.

4. If to these Endeavours he (lastly) joins fervent and unwearied Prayer to Almighty God, for the Aids and Supports of his Grace, he shall assuredly from
from thence be made perfect at last, be established, strengthened, settled. He shall have a new Heart created in him, that shall enable him to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord.

1 Cor. xv. 58.
Of Living Peaceably:

A

Farewel SERMON

Preached at

St. BRIDE's

December 11, 1698.

ROM. xii. 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.

THERE are many excellent Pre- serm.
cepts and Rules of Duty laid to- xii.
gether by the Apostle toward the End of c this Chapter; but none of greater Mo-
ment to be earnestly inculcated upon

Vol. IV. Y Christians,
 serm. Christians, and duly observed, than this which I have pitched upon for the Subject of my following Discourse. And I have the rather chosen it, at this particular Time, because it is the last Opportunity I shall have of bespeaking you under that Character, which I have hitherto borne towards you. And it being likely therefore that the Contest now on foot, may end in the same little Animosities and Misunderstandings, which are usual on such Occasions; I thought I could not do better, than to discourse to you upon a Subject that might be of some Use to temper and allay them; and to dispose you towards such a peaceable State of Mind, as becomes those, who are about to chuse a Minister of the Gospel of Peace.

I shall discourse first to you of the Argument at large, and then apply it to the particular Occasion for which I have chosen it. What I have to say on these Words, must naturally fall under these four Heads following:

First,
Of Living Peaceably.

First, Here is a Command enjoined; to live peaceably.

Secondly, The utmost Limits and Extent of that Command are set down; we must live peaceably with all Men.

Thirdly, The great Difficulty of so doing, is allowed and expressed: If it be possible, says St. Paul, and as much as in you lies; intimating, that in respect of some Tempers, and in some Circumstances, it is scarce possible, though we do all that in us lies, to effect it. To which I shall add in the

Fourth and last Place, some familiar Helps and Directions, that may be of Use to assist us towards performing it.

As to the First of these, the Precept here given of living peaceably, I need not use many Words to tell you what it is; it is easily and universally under-
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SERM. understood: Would to God, it were but as universally practised! And then such Exhortations as these would be needless! But though an Account of the Duty may not be requisite, to inform even the meanest and most ignorant Christian, yet it may be of use to bring to his Mind what he already knows, and to awaken in him sensible and lively Impressions of it: And to that End, I shall in a very brief, and plain Manner describe it.

To live peaceably, is so to demean ourselves in all the Offices and Stations of Life, as to promote a friendly Understanding and Correspondence among those we converse with; so as to prevent, as much as we can, all outward Contention and Strife, nay, all inward Mistakes and Jealousies from arising, and to quench and allay them as soon as we can, whenever they are risen; so, as to disagree openly with no Man in Things of an indifferent Nature, and of no Moment; and, where the Point is of Importance enough to deserve to be
be insisted on, there to do it, with *serious* much Candor, and Modesty, and *xii.* Sweetness, as not to offend even those we do not agree with. In a Word, it is so to conduct our Actions, Discourses, and Dealings, as to make ourselves and others as easy as is possible. Various are the Instances of this Duty; some influencing our Behaviour with relation to the Publick, some towards Private Men; some regarding Opinions, and some regulating our Practice; some taking Place in Matters of Civil Life, and some in the Concerns of Religion.

They live peaceably with respect to the Publick, who pay a due Regard to the Laws of their Country, and express a due Reverence towards their Superiors; honouring them sincerely, obeying them submissively; not rashly censuring their Actions, but putting the best and most candid Construction upon them; not being over busy in Matters that are too high for them, and do not concern them.
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Serm. They live peaceably in Religious Matters, who, on the one Side, are contented to enjoy their own Opinions, without arraigning their Superiors in Church and State for being otherwise minded; and without disturbing the publick Peace, in order to propagate their Tenets, and make Proselytes; and who, on the other Side, do not by unjustifiable Methods of Severity force Men into the Profession of what they disbelieve; whose Zeal for their Faith never makes them forget their Temper, nor outrun the Bounds of Christian Goodness and Prudence; who make great Allowances for the Weakness of Men's Reason and the Strength of their Prejudices, and condemn not all as insincere, who are not so enlightened as they are; but leave them to stand or fall to their own Master; praying for them in the mean time, that they may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and endeavouring by all gentle persuasive Methods to reclaim them.

Finally,
Finally, They live peaceably in Matters of common Life and daily Practice, who take care to make their Carriage inoffensive, obliging; who are not ready to entertain ill Reports of Men, much less to disperse them; who whisper about nothing to set Friends and Neighbours at Variance; who mind their own Business, without intermeddling much in the Concerns of others; who can take a slight Affront or Injury in Conversation without resenting it, and even a great one without returning it.

But I forbear to give any further Description of so known a Duty; and go on to consider in the

Second Place, the Extent of it: it must be practised towards all Men: Not only towards those who are in good Terms with us, but toward those who are not; not only to the Good-natured and Candid, but even to the Captious and the Froward. For, as our Saviour argues in a like Case, if you
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S E R M. you live peaceably with them only, who live peaceably with you, what Thank have you? Do not even Sinners the same? The Worst, and worst Natured Men will go thus far: For there is no Temptation to break Peace with those who live inoffensively with us, no room for Contention with the Mild and Complying; the Tryal of our Temper is, when Shocking Accidents happen to us; when ill Words are given us; when we are touched in Point of Interest and Honour; or in any other respect drawn into a Dispute, and forced to engage: Then, to bear Opposition meekly, to ward off the Anger of our Adversaries by a discreet and dexterous Address; to keep ourselves free from the Contagion of that Passion and that Resentment which reigns in them, or free at least from the outward and visible Signs of it, this is no vulgar Attainment, but a very great Pitch of Christian Perfection. And the Apostle therefore, at the very Time he is giving the Precept,
cept, acknowledges the great Difficulty that there is sometimes in obeying it: If it be possible, says he, and as much as in you lies; intimating, as I said, that in respect of some Natures, and in some Circumstances, it is scarce possible, tho' we do whatever in us lies, to come up to it.

And this is the Third Thing I undertook to explain.

To live peaceably with all Men, in the strictest Sense of the Words, is a Thing absolutely impossible, and out of our Reach; for it depends upon what we are not Masters of, the Dispositions and Passions of other Men. Let us take what Care we can to prevent mistakes, they will sometimes arise; let us with never so much Caution avoid doing Injuries, we cannot always avoid receiving them; some churlish and savage Natures there are, that delight in Outrages, and are moved with no Condescensions, no Compliances: such Sons of Belial (as was said),
S E R M. said of Nabal) that a Man cannot speak to them. Where violent Encroachments are made upon our Fortune or good Name, we not only may, but must vindicate ourselves from them, though Breach of Peace, and an open Rupture with any Man attend our doing it. Slight Affronts, and small Injustices we may put up with; but where we are wounded to the Quick, either in our Estate, or Reputation, we are not at Liberty to be silent: To be upon our Defence in such Cases, is a Debt we owe to ourselves, our Posterity, our Relations, and Friends, who have all an Interest in us.

When the Cause of true Religion suffers from the Tongues or Pens of Libertines and Unbelievers; when any open Attempts are by ill Men made on the Constitution of that Church or State, whereof we are Members; when an absent Friend is traduced by lying Lips; or the Name of any sincerely good and virtuous Man is vilified; it is our Duty in such Cases to
to stand up, and rebuke this Spirit of Treachery, Malice, or Prophaneness. The Honour of God, or the Interests of Virtue would, at such a Time, be blemished by our Silence and Forbearance: And therefore the Rule of our Saviour here takes Place; *be that is not with us, is against us.* He that doth not openly and heartily espouse the Cause of Truth, will be reckoned to have been on the other Side. And then Peace with Men can never be eligible, when it implies Enmity with God.

However, in all these Cases, where we lay aside Peace for a more valuable End, we are bound to have an Eye to it, even while we seem to overlook it; and must so break with Men on such Occasions, as to leave Room, and to prepare the Way for a Closure. War itself has its Rules and Restraints, within which its savage Cruelties are bounded: Much more must the Measures of our Resentment, in such Breaches as these, be tempered
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Sermon with great Humanity and great Prudence. We must recover our Right, and wipe off Aspersions, without Rancour or Revenge; we must contend for the Truth of the Gospel itself, so as not to forget the plain Precepts of it; and for the Glory of God, with such a well regulated Zeal, as does not trample upon any of his Commands: That is, the Warmth of our Concern for the best Doctrines, Persons, or Things, must never so far transport us, as to make us say any Thing of any Man, but what our Cause and his Character will justify; nor endeavour to inspire People with worse Opinions concerning him, than we in our Consciences believe he deserves. And to preserve ourselves thus far upon our Guard, when we are engaged, is a much harder Task than not to engage at all; and will require our calling in to our Aid all the pious Helps and Expedients, with which Reason and Religion will furnish
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nigh us; and which therefore I shall s e r m.

now, in the

Fourth and last Place, point out to you.

Many of this Kind there are; but the Time I have already spent, and the Application I am further to make of the Whole, will not suffer me to mention all, or to dwell, as much as I ought, even on those that I do mention.

1. The Rise of most of our Disquiets and Discords is, from the tumultuous and disorderly Motions of our Passions; and these therefore must in the firft Place be well regulated, especially that fierce and boisterous Passion of Anger, which discovers itself the earliest, and is tamed the latest of any; and is, of all others, the greatest Enemy of our Repose. This therefore, and the rest must be brought under the Discipline and Government of Reason, if we ever hope to be easy to ourselves or other Men; and indeed,
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S E R M. deed, unless we are first easy to our-

xii. selves, it is impossible we should ever be so to others. We may as well ex-
pect perpetual Sun-shine in Climates subject to Storms and Hurricanes, as that there should be a lasting Peace in that Breast, where the Passions are allowed to reign.

2. The next plain Help towards living peaceably is, if we moderate our Desires, and shorten our Designs, with Regard to the good Things of Life, contenting ourselves with such a Share of them, as answers all the good Ends of living, and not eagerly grasping after more, than would be of real Use to us, if we had it: The Wants and Conveniences of Nature are known, and certain, and soon supplied; but imaginary Wants are infinite and endless; and he that has set his Heart upon them, will find it very difficult ever to recall it. He is got beyond Reason in his Desire, and will probably stick at no unreasonable Method of obtaining it. And the natural Issue of
of this must be perpetual Feuds and Bickerings, Contentions and Struggles; for our Desires will meet those of other Men, as eager every whit as ours, and as impatient of being re-lifted. From whence come War and Fightings? (says St. James.) Come they not hence, even of your Lusts? that is, from your covetous Desires; for so it follows: Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain.

3. A third Rule, in this Case, is, to have a watchful Eye upon ourselves, in our first Entrance upon any Debate or Contest; and at that Time to be sure to keep the Reins closely in our Hands, when there is the most Danger in giving a loose to them; and they are the most easily manageable. For let us but indulge ourselves a little in the first Motions of Warmth and Resentment, and by insensible Steps and Degrees we may be wrought up at last into all the Heighth of Madness and Folly. The beginning of Strife.
(faith the Wise Man) is as when one letteth out Water. When the Bank is once broken down, we do not know how far it may flow, or how deep a Space it may fill.

To this we may add,

4thly A particular Vigilance over ourselves, with regard to the Intemperance of the Tongue, that Member which setteth on Fire the Course of Nature, and is itself set on Fire of Hell. We must restrain it in every Respect, but especially in relation to that natural Proneness it has towards publishing the Faults of others; which ought never to be done, but with the utmost Caution and Tenderness. We can never strictly justify ourselves in speaking Evil of any Man, though that Evil should be true, but when either the Seal of Friendship binds up the Discourse, or the Rules of Charity and Justice require us so to do. The Son of Sirach seems to carry this Matter very far: Whether it be to Friend or Foe (says he) talk not of other Men's Lives.
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Lives, and, if thou canst without of-fence, reveal them not; which seems to bar us from spreading an ill Report of any Man, but when we are under an absolute Neceffity of doing it. He that governs himself constantly by this Rule, takes one of the surest and most promising Steps towards liv-ing peaceably with all Men: Especially if,

5thly He keeps himself always from embarking in Parties and Factions, and falling in with Vehemence into all the Interests and Designs of them. This will necessarily in Time imbit-ter his Spirit, and sour his Humour, make him like and dislike Men im-plicitly, and lead him into many Re-fentments, which he has nothing to do with.

Again, 6thly Let a Man that de-fires to pass through this World in-ofensively, resolve to be very dili-gent in his particular Profession and Calling; and, if he has none, to make one to himself, by some proper and

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suitable
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Serm. suitable Employment. He that is employed, has no Leisure to move in the little Disputes and Quarrels which trouble the Peace of the World, and which are chiefly kept up and banded to and fro by those who have nothing else to do: The Apostle therefore (we may observe) in his Exhortation joins studying to be quiet, with the doing our own Business, as if the one was a natural and inseparable Attendant on the other.

Above all, let him add, in the last Place, fervent and unwearied Prayer to the blessed Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord, that he would please to vouchsafe him the inestimable Benefits of it, and endue him with the Qualities that promote it, by the powerful Operation of that Spirit, whose Fruits, Love, Joy, and Peace, are peculiarly said to be; who inhabiteth only with those, who do in some Measure partake of them, and who to those, with whom he inhabits, imparteth
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I parteth them yet more and more abundantly. I therefore, in the manner of every method of performing it. Would to God all that hear me this Day would resolve to practise this plain, but useful Lesson, as fully as I have handled it, and give a remarkable Instance of their Compliance with the Direction of the Text, in the Choice that is now coming before you; wherein, I fear, there will be but too much Occasion given of trying how far these Considerations have had their due Weight with you, and made a deep and becoming Impression upon you.

Seven Years I have from this Place admonished, exhorted, besought you: What Success these Labours of mine have had, He knows best, for whose Glory they were designed. It will be one sure and comfortable Sign to me that
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that they have had some, if it shall appear, that the Words I have spoken to you To-day, are not in vain; if they shall prevail with you in any measure, to avoid those Rocks, which are usually split upon in Elections, where Multitudes of different Inclinations, Capacities, and Judgments are interested. To which End, let me intreat you, that, since in these Cases Unanimity and an entire Agreement of Hearts and Voices is not to be expected, you would at least take Care to disagree, in as decent, and friendly, and Christian a Manner as is possible.

Let not your Zeal for any one Man's Character ever draw you to load, and depreciate, and vilify another! Take not up slight Reports to Mens Disadvantage, spread them not, encourage them not, listen not with Greediness to them.

Let it be enough, that the unsuccessful lose what they seek after, an Opportunity of exercising among you that
that Talent in divine Instructions where- s er M:
with God has enabled them. Let them not lose also, as far as in any of you lies, their good Name, that great Engine of doing good, by which their Labours must be made effectual to other Persons, in other Places, and which as far as any of you shall endeavour to deprive them of; so far will you endeavour to obstruct the Influence of their Doctrine, and to make their Character useless.

Remember, I beseech you, that your holy Contention is, about a Minister of the Gospel of Christ; carry it not on by a Violation of any Rules of the Gospel: Those Rules, for the Breach of which, if he be a good Man (as I question not he will be) he will not thank you, nay will be obliged by his very Post to reprove you afterwards.

I speak not this to accuse any of you, as if any of these Methods had been already practised; but knowing how the Passions of Men, not under
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Of strong Checks and Restraints of Grace, are apt to work on these Occasions, as becomes me, I warn you.

Set an Example to the rest of the Parishes of this ample City, in the Management of such Elections as these, reform the Disorders that (God knows) too often attend them. Manifest to the World the Reasonableness of your having an Interest in choosing your Preachers, by the fit and laudable Manner in which you make use of it. Be not too stiff and peremptory in your Opinions: Let those who are (or should be) conscious of their not having all the Advantages requisite towards determining their Choice in these Things, defer somewhat to the Judgment of such as are perhaps somewhat better qualified for it: They must judge for themselves indeed, their Souls are concerned; but let them judge with Humility and Modesty.

Should some little Heats arise, while the Dispute lasts, when it is over, I am confident they will vanish; and all
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of you will join in paying that Person's esteem, you shall pitch upon, the Esteem due to his Function, and to his Station here; and which, I take this Opportunity of telling the World, I have truly received from you.

However, though I have no Reason in any respect to complain of my Entertainment among you, yet nothing would please me better than to hear that your Respect and Love was in every Instance increased towards him that is to succeed me; because nothing can be a better Evidence of your Sincerity in Religion, and of your Growth in it, that when you grow also in your sincere Regards to those, who in a particular manner belong both to that and you. And it is an infallible Sign, that the Truths of the Gospel have not made that Impression upon a Man's Heart and Conscience which they ought to do, when the Preachers of the Gospel have not had that Share in his Esteem, which belongs to the Use-
And this I take to be so universal a Rule, as to admit of no Exception; at least, I am sure, I never met with any. And it is therefore my Hope, I say, that you will always shew yourselves to be a religious People, and under the Influence of good Principles, by your Behaviour towards those whose Business it is to watch over you for good; which will be one Way, I am sure, of securing to yourselves a Succession of able and worthy Men, as may adorn this Place, equally by their Lives and Doctrines; and be a lasting Honour and Advantage to those who choose them.

As for myself, with how great Imperfection I have performed my Duty here, and how far short I have fallen of the important Trust committed to me, of instructing and guiding you in the Ways of Virtue, no Body can be more sensible of than I am. However, thus much I take leave to say, that in

Simpli-
Simplicity and godly Sincerity I have preached the Gospel of Christ among you: directing my Discourses always against those vicious Principles and Practices, which to me seemed most to prevail; and sparing nothing I observed to be amiss in you, out of Regard to Mens Persons or Opinions, or to any worldly Consideration whatever.

The Infidelity of the Age has forced me to dwell often on the great Articles and Mysteries of our Faith, and to explain them largely: But I call God to witness, that I never proposed any Explication of these Points, never recommended any Thing of this Kind to your Belief, but what I firmly, and from the Bottom of my Heart believed myself. The Faith I have delivered to you, the Faith of the Church of England, into which we are all baptized, is, I am entirely satisfied, the same that was once delivered to the Saints: I hope none of you will be ever invited, by the specious Arts and Infi-
Insinuations of Heresy, to depart from it. I am sure the Profession of it in all its Branches and Members, is what, by the Grace of God, I intend to live and die in.

The Church you are of, is, without doubt, the purest and soundest, the most reasonable and moderate Church upon Earth; the nearest to the primitive Pattern of any, and the most serviceable to our Improvement in Virtue and Godliness: Reverence her, I beseech you, in proportion to her Worth; quit not her Communion for any Boasts to more pure and spiritual Worship; nor for the Amusements of a more glorious and splendid one; for the Pretences of those Men who make Reason their God, without taking in Revelation for their Guide; or for the extravagant Follies and Freaks of Enthusiasm.

As a Sign of your unfeigned Respect for her Constitution, resort often to her Service, and let your outward Behaviour there speak your inward Devotion;
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tection; frequent her Sacraments; listen to her Instructions from the Pulpit; xii.
bring up your Children in the Knowledge of her Articles of Religion; in-
son them early with a due Value for her Doctrine and Discipline; and sa-
tisfy yourselves, that this is one of the best Legacies you can leave them.

This is what I have always incul-
cated to you, and, had the Providence of God continued me longer among
you, should have gone on to inculcate still. I can only hereafter wish it, and
pray for it, which I shall not fail to perform.

Indeed my particular Employment here now ceases, but my Relation to
you, I trust, never shall; I shall always cherish the Memory of it, and reflect
gratefully upon it, reckoning myself yours in some measure, even after my
ministerial Office here is at an End, and being ready to serve any, even the
meanest of you, in all the Christian Duties and Services of which I am ca-
pable.

And
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And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. And may the God of Peace (that Peace, to the Practice of which I have now been exhorting and persuading you) may the God of Peace, who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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