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SERMONS

O N

Several Occasions:

I N

THREE VOLUMES.

B Y

J O H N W E S L E Y, *M. A.*

. Fellow of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

V O L. I.

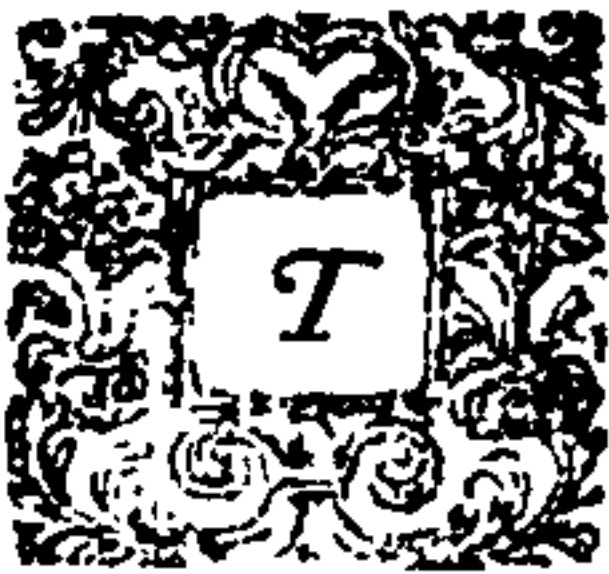
L O N D O N :

Printed by W. STRAHAN: And sold by
T. TRYE, near Gray's-Inn Gate, Holbourn;
and at the Foundery, near Upper Moorfields.

MDCCLVI.



THE
P R E F A C E.

I.  *THE following Sermons contain the Substance of what I have been preaching, for between Eight and Nine Years last past. During that Time I have frequently spoken in Publick, on every Subject in the ensuing Collection: And I am not conscious, that there is any One Point of Doctrin, on which I am accusom'd to speak in public, which is not here, incidentally, if not professedly, laid before every Christian Reader. Every*

A 2 *serious*

serious Man, who peruses these, will therefore see in the clearest Manner, what those Doctrines are which I embrace and teach, as the Essentials of True Religion.

2. But I am thoroughly sensible, these are not proposed, in such a Manner as some may expect. Nothing here appears, in an elaborate, elegant or oratorical Dress. If it had been my Desire or Design to write thus, my Leisure would not permit. But in truth I at present design'd nothing less; For I now write (as I generally speak) *ad populum*: To the Bulk of Mankind, to those who neither relish nor understand the Art of Speaking: But who notwithstanding are competent Judges of those Truths, which are necessary to present and future Happiness. I mention this, that curious Readers may spare themselves the Labour, of seeking for what they will not find.

3. I design plain Truth for plain People. Therefore of set Purpose I abstain
from

from all nice and philosophical Speculations, from all perplex and intricate Reasonings; and as far as possible, from ever the Shew of Learning, unless in sometimes citing the Original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all Words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in Common Life: And in particular, those kind of Technical Terms, that so frequently occur in Bodies of Divinity, those Modes of speaking which Men of Reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to Common People are an unknown Tongue. Yet I am not assured, that I do not sometimes slide into them unawares: It is so extremely natural to imagine, that a Word which is familiar to ourselves, is so to all the World.

4. Nay, my Design is, in some Sense to forget all that ever I have read in my Life. I mean, to speak, in the general, as if I had never read one Author, Ancient or Modern. (Always excepting the Inspired.) I am persuaded, that on the

one hand, this may be a Means of enabling me more clearly to express the Sentiments of my Heart, while I simply follow the Chain of my own Thoughts, without intangling myself with those of other Men: And that, on the other, I shall come with fewer Weights upon my Mind, with less of Prejudice and Prepossession, either to search for myself, or to deliver to Others, the naked Truths of the Gospel.

5. To candid, reasonable Men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost Thoughts of my Heart. I have thought, "I am a Creature of a Day, passing thro' Life, as an Arrow thro' the Air. I am a Spirit, come from GOD, and returning to GOD: Just hovering over the Great Gulph; till a few Moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an Unchangeable Eternity! I want to know one Thing, the Way to Heaven: How to land safe on that happy Shore. GOD himself has condescended to teach
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the Way; for this very End he came from Heaven. He hath written it down in a Book. O give me that Book! At any Price, give me the Book of GOD! I have it: Here is Knowledge enough for me. Let me be Homo unius libri. Here then I am, far from the busy Ways of Men. I sit down alone: Only GOD is here. In his Presence I open, I read his Book; for this End, to find the Way to Heaven. Is there a Doubt concerning the Meaning of what I read? Does any Thing appear dark or intricate? I lift up my Heart to the Father of Lights. "Lord, is it not thy Word, If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of GOD? Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, If any be willing to do thy Will, he shall know. I am willing to do. Let me know thy Will."

I then search after and consider parallel Passages of Scripture, comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual. I meditate thereon, with all the Attention and

Ear-

Earnestness of which my Mind is capable. If any Doubt still remain, I consult those who are experienced in the Things of GOD: And then, the Writings whereby being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

6. I have accordingly set down in the following Sermons, what I find in the Bible concerning the Way to Heaven; with a View to distinguish this Way of GOD, from all those which are the Inventions of Men. I have endeavour'd to describe the True, the Scriptural, Experimental Religion, so as to omit nothing which is a Real Part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more especially my Desire, First, To guard those who are just setting their Faces toward Heaven, (and who having little Acquaintance with the Things of GOD, are the more liable to be turn'd out of the Way) from Formality, from mere Outside Religion, which has almost driven Heart-Religion out of the World:
And

And Secondly, To warn those who know the Religion of the Heart, the Faith which worketh by Love, lest at any time they make void the Law thro' Faith, and so fall back into the Snare of the Devil.

7. By the Advice and at the Request of some of my Friends, I have prefixt to the other Sermons contain'd in this Volume, three Sermons of my own and one of my Brothers, preach'd before the University of Oxford. My Design requir'd some Discourses on those Heads. And I prefer'd these before any others, as being a stronger Answer than any which can be drawn up now, to those who have frequently asserted, "That we have changed our Doctrine of late, and do not preach now, what we did some Years ago." Any Man of Understanding may now judge for himself, when he has compared the latter with the former Sermons.

8. But some may say, I have mistaken the Way myself, altho' I take upon me to teach it to others. It is probable, many
will

will think this; and it is very possible, that I have. But I trust, whereinsoever I have mistaken, my Mind is open to Conviction. I sincerely desire to be better inform'd. I say to GOD and Man, "What I know not, teach thou me!"

9. Are you persuaded, you see more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then, treat me, as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a Change of Circumstances. Point me out a better Way than I have yet known. Shew me it is so, by plain Proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the Path I have been accustomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave, labour with me a little, take me by the Hand, and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not displeas'd if I intreat you, not to beat me down, in order to quicken my Pace: I can go but feebly and slowly at best; then, I should not be able to go at all. May I not request of you farther, Not to give me hard Names, in order to bring me into the

Right Way? Suppose I was ever so much in the wrong, I doubt this would not set me right. Rather, it would make me run so much the farther from you, and so get more and more out of the Way.

10. Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, so shall I be too; and then there will be small Hopes of finding the Truth. If once Anger arise, ἤνυτε κάπνος (as Homer somewhere expresses it) this Smoke will so dim the Eyes of my Soul, that I shall be able to see nothing clearly. For GOD's sake, if it be possible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to Wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this Fire of Hell; much less, blow it up into a Flame. If we could discern Truth by that dreadful Light, would it not be Loss rather than Gain? For how far is Love, even with many wrong Opinions, to be prefer'd before Truth itself without Love? We may die without the Knowledge of many Truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's Bosom. But if we die with-

out

*out Love, what will Knowledge avail?
Just as much as it avails the Devil and
his Angels!*

*The GOD of Love forbid we should
ever make the Trial! May he prepare us
for the Knowledge of all Truth, by filling
our Hearts with all his Love, and with
all Joy and Peace in believing.*





SALVATION by FAITH.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY's OXFORD,*

BEFORE THE

U N I V E R S I T Y,

On JUNE 18, 1738.



VOL. I.

B

EPHES. ii. 8.

By Grace ye are saved through Faith.

I. **A**LL the Blessings which God hath bestowed upon Man are of his mere Grace, Bounty or Favour: His Free, undeserved Favour; Favour altogether undeserved; Man having no Claim to the least of his Mercies. It was Free Grace that *formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into him a living Soul, and stamped on that Soul the Image of God, and put all Things under his Feet.* The same Free Grace continues to us, at this Day, Life and Breath, and all Things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least Thing at God's Hand. *All our Works thou, O God, hast wrought in us.* These, therefore, are so many more Instances of Free Mercy: And whatever Righteousness may be found in Man, this is also the Gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then shall a sinful Man atone for any the least of his Sins? With his own Works? No. Were they ever so many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all Unholy and Sinful themselves, so that every one of them needs a fresh Atonement. Only corrupt Fruit grows on a corrupt Tree. And his Heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being *come short of the Glory of God, the glorious*

Righteousness at first impress'd on his Soul, after the Image of his Great Creator. Therefore, having nothing, neither Righteousness nor Works to plead, his *Mouth is utterly stopt before God.*

3. If then sinful Man find Favour with God, it is *Grace upon Grace.* If GOD vouchsafe still to pour fresh Blessings upon us, yea, the Greatest of all Blessings, *Salvation*; what can we say to these Things, but *Thanks be unto GOD for his Un-speakable Gift!* And thus it is. Herein GOD commendeth his Love toward us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died to save us. By Grace then are ye saved through Faith. Grace is the Source, Faith the Condition, of Salvation.

Now, that we fall not short of the Grace of GOD, it concerns us carefully to enquire,

- I. What Faith it is through which we are saved?
- II. What is the Salvation which is through Faith?
- III. How we may answer some Objections.

I. What Faith it is through which we are saved?

1. And first, It is not barely the Faith of a Heathen. Now GOD requireth of a Heathen to believe, *That GOD is; that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and that he is to be sought by glorifying him as GOD, by giving him Thanks for all Things; and by a careful Practice of Moral Virtue, of Justice, Mercy and Truth toward their Fellow Creatures.* A Greek or Roman therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without Excuse if he did not believe thus much, The Being and Attributes of GOD, a future State
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of Reward and Punishment, and the obligatory Nature of Moral Virtue. For this is barely the Faith of a Heathen.

2. Nor, 2^{dly}, Is it the Faith of a Devil, tho' this goes much farther than that of a Heathen. For the Devil believes; not only, that there is a wise and powerful GOD, Gracious to reward, and Just to punish, but also, that JESUS is the Son of GOD, the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the World. So we find him declaring, in express Terms, *Luke iv. 34. I know Thee, who Thou art; the Holy One of GOD.* Nor can we doubt but that unhappy Spirit believes all those Words, which came out of the Mouth of the Holy One; yea, and whatsoever else was written by those Holy Men of old; of two of whom he was compell'd to give that glorious Testimony, *These Men are the Servants of the most high GOD, who shew unto you the Way of Salvation.* Thus much then the great Enemy of GOD and Man believes, and trembles in believing, That *GOD was made manifest in the Flesh*, That he will tread all Enemies under his Feet, and that *all Scripture was given by Inspiration of GOD.* Thus far goeth the Faith of a Devil.

3. *Thirdly*, The Faith through which we are saved, in that Sense of the Word which will hereafter be explained. is not barely that which the *Apostles* themselves had while CHRIST was yet upon Earth; tho' they so believed on him as to leave all and follow him; altho' they had then Power to work Miracles, to heal all manner of Sicknes, and all manner of Disease; yea, they had then Power and Authority over all Devils: And which is beyond all this, were sent by their Master to preach the Kingdom of GOD.

4. What Faith is it then through which we are saved? It may be answered, first, in general, It is a Faith in CHRIST; CHRIST, and GOD through CHRIST, are the proper Object of it. Herein therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely, distinguished from the Faith either of ancient or modern Heathens. And from the Faith of a Devil, it is fully distinguish'd by this, It is not barely a Speculative, Rational Thing, a cold, lifeless Assent, a Train of Ideas in the Head; but also a Disposition of the Heart. For thus saith the Scripture, *With the Heart, Man believeth unto Righteousness.* And, *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy Heart, that GOD hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.*

5. And herein does it differ from that Faith which the Apostles themselves had while our Lord was on Earth, that it acknowledges the Necessity and Merit of his Death, and the Power of his Resurrection. It acknowledges his Death as the only sufficient Means of redeeming Man from Death Eternal; and his Resurrection as the Restoration of us all to Life and Immortality: Inasmuch as *he was delivered for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification.* Christian Faith is then, not only an Assent to the whole Gospel of CHRIST, but also a full Reliance on the Blood of CHRIST, a Trust in the Merits of his Life, Death, and Resurrection; a Recumbency upon him as our Atonement and our Life; as *given for us, and living in us.* It is a sure Confidence which a Man hath in GOD, that through the Merits of CHRIST, his Sins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the Favour of GOD; and in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as *our Wisdom, Righte-*

Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption, or in one Word, our Salvation.

II. What Salvation it is, which is through this Faith, is the Second Thing to be considered.

1. And first, Whatsoever else it imply, it is a Present Salvation. It is something attainable, yea, actually attained on Earth, by those who are Partakers of this Faith. For thus saith the Apostle to the Believers at *Ephesus*, and in them to the Believers of all Ages, not *Ye shall be* (tho' that also is true) but *ye are saved through Faith*.

2. *Ye are saved* (to comprize all in one Word) from Sin. This is the Salvation which is through Faith. This is that great Salvation foretold by the Angel, before GOD brought his first begotten into the World, *Thou shalt call his Name JESUS, for he shall save his People from their Sins*. And neither here, nor in other Parts of holy Writ, is there any Limitation or Restriction. All his People, or, as it is elsewhere express'd, all that believe in him, he will save from all their Sins; from Original and Actual, Past and Present Sin, of the Flesh and of the Spirit. Through Faith that is in him, they are saved both from the Guilt and from the Power of it.

3. First from the Guilt of all Past Sin. For whereas *all the World is guilty before GOD*; inso-much that should he be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it: And whereas by the Law is only the Knowledge of Sin, but no Deliverance from it; so that by fulfilling the Deeds of the Law, no Flesh can be justified in his Sight: Now the Righteousness of GOD, which is by Faith of JESUS CHRIST, is manifested unto all that believe. Now they are justified freely by
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his Grace, through the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST. Him GOD hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood; To declare his Righteousness for (or by) the Remission of the Sins that are past. Now hath CHRIST taken away the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. He hath blotted out the Hand-writing that was against us, taking it out of the Way, nailing it to his Cross. There is therefore no Condemnation now, to them which believe in CHRIST JESUS.

4. And being saved from Guilt, they are saved from Fear. Not indeed from a filial Fear of offending; but from all servile Fear, from that Fear which hath Torment, from Fear of Punishment, from Fear of the Wrath of GOD; whom they now no longer regard as a severe Master, but as an indulgent Father. They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage; but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit itself also bearing Witness with their Spirits, that they are the Children of GOD. They are also saved from the Fear, tho' not from the Possibility, of falling away from the Grace of GOD, and coming short of the great and precious Promises: They are sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Earnest of their Inheritance. (Eph. i. 13.) Thus have they Peace with GOD through our Lord JESUS CHRIST. They rejoice in Hope of the Glory of GOD. And the Love of GOD is shed abroad in their Hearts, through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them. And hereby they are persuaded (tho' perhaps not all at all Times, nor with the same Fulness of Persuasion) that neither Death nor Life, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate them from
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the Love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our Lord.

5. Again, through this Faith they are saved from the Power of Sin, as well as from the Guilt of it. So the Apostle declares, *Ye know that he was manifested to take away our Sins, and in him is no Sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* (Chap. iii. 5, &c.) Again, *Little Children, let no Man deceive you.—He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.—Whosoever believeth is born of GOD. And whosoever is born of GOD doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him: And he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD.* Once more, *We know that whatsoever is born of GOD sinneth not: But he that is begotten of GOD, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not,* Chap. v. 18.

6. He that is by Faith born of GOD, sinneth not, 1. By any habitual Sin: For all habitual Sin, is Sin Reigning. But Sin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor, 2. By any wilful Sin, for his Will, while he abideth in the Faith, is utterly fet against all Sin, and abhorreth it as deadly Poison. Nor, 3. By any Sinful Desire; for he continually desireth the Holy and Perfect Will of GOD; and any Tendency to an Unholy Desire, he by the Grace of GOD stifleth in the Birth. Nor, 4. Doth he sin by Infirmities, whether in Act, Word or Thought. For his Infirmities have no Concurrence of his Will; and without This they are not properly Sins. Thus, *He that is born of GOD doth not commit Sin.* And tho' he cannot say, *He hath not sinned,* yet now, *he sinneth not.*

7. This then is the Salvation which is through Faith, even in the present World: A Salvation from Sin, and the Consequences of Sin, both often express'd in the Word *Justification*; which, taken
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in the largest Sense, implies, A Deliverance from Guilt and Punishment, by the Atonement of CHRIST actually applied to the Soul of the Sinner now believing on him, and a Deliverance from the whole Body of Sin through CHRIST *formed in his Heart*. So that he who is thus justified or saved by Faith, is indeed *born again*. He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new *Life, which is hid with Christ in GOD*. He is a new Creature: *Old Things are past away: All Things in him are become New*. And as a new-born Babe he gladly receives the *ἄδοκον*, sincere Milk of the Word, and grows thereby: *Going on in the Might of the Lord his GOD, from Faith to Faith, from Grace to Grace, until at length he come unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*.

III. The first usual Objection to this is,

1. That to preach Salvation or Justification by Faith only, is to preach against Holiness and Good Works. To which a short Answer might be given: It would be so, if we spake, as some do, of a Faith which was separate from these. But we speak of a Faith which is not so, but necessarily productive of all Good Works and all Holiness.

2. But it may be of Use to consider it more at large: Especially since it is no new Objection, but as old as St. Paul's Time; for even then it was asked, *Do we not make void the Law through Faith?* We answer, first, All who preach not Faith, do manifestly make void the Law; either directly and grossly by Limitations and Comments, that eat out all the Spirit of the Text: Or indirectly, by not pointing out the only Means whereby it is possible to perform it. Whereas, secondly, *We establish the*

the Law; both by shewing its full Extent, and Spiritual Meaning: And by calling all to that living Way, whereby *the Righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in them*. These, while they trust in the Blood of CHRIST alone, use all the Ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the *Good Works which he had before prepared that they should walk therein*, and enjoy and manifest all holy and heavenly Tempers, even the same *Mind that was in CHRIST JESUS*.

3. But does not preaching this Faith lead Men into Pride? We answer, Accidentally it may. Therefore ought every Believer to be earnestly cautioned, (in the Words of the great Apostle) *Because of Unbelief, the first Branches were broken off; and thou standest by Faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. If GOD spared not the natural Branches, take heed lest he spare not Thee. Behold; therefore the Goodness and Severity of GOD! On them which fell, Severity: But towards thee, Goodness: If thou continue in his Goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*. And while he continues therein, he will remember those Words of St. Paul, foreseeing and answering this very Objection, (Rom. iii. 27.) *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what Law? Of Works? Nay; but by the Law of Faith*. If a Man were justified by his Works, he would have whereof to glory. But there is no glorying for him, *that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly*. (Rom. iv.) To the same Effect are the Words both preceding and following the Text, (Eph. ii. 4, &c.) *GOD who is rich in Mercy,—even when we were dead in Sins, hath quicken'd us together with CHRIST (by Grace ye are saved)—that he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Gracc, in his Kind-*
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ness towards us through CHRIST JESUS. For by Grace ye are saved through Faith: And that not of yourselves. Of yourselves cometh neither your Faith nor your Salvation. *It is the Gift of GOD*; the free, undeserved Gift, the Faith thro' which ye are saved, as well as the Salvation, which he of his own good Pleasure, his mere Favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one Instance of his Grace; that believing ye are saved, another. *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.* For all our Works, all our Righteousness, which were before our Believing, merited nothing of GOD but Condemnation. So far were they from deserving Faith; which therefore, whenever given, is not *of Works.* Neither is Salvation of the Works we do when we believe. For *it is then GOD that worketh in us.* And therefore, that he giveth us a Reward for what he himself worketh, only commendeth the Riches of his Mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4. However, may not the speaking thus of the Mercy of GOD, as saving or justifying freely by Faith only, encourage Men in Sin? Indeed it may and will; many *will continue in Sin that Grace may abound.* But their Blood is upon their own Head. The Goodness of GOD ought to lead them to Repentance; and so it will those who are sincere of Heart. When they know there is yet Forgiveness with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their Sins also, thro' Faith which is in JESUS. And if they earnestly cry, and faint not, if they seek him in all the Means he hath appointed, if they refuse to be comforted till he come, *he will come and will not tarry.* And he can do much Work in a short Time. Many are the Examples in the Acts of the Apostles, of
 GOD's

GOD's shedding abroad this Faith in Men's Hearts, even like Lightning falling from Heaven. So in the same Hour that *Paul* and *Silas* began to preach, the Jailor *repented, believed, and was baptized*: As were three thousand by *St. Peter* on the Day of Pentecost, who all repented and believed at his first Preaching. And blessed be GOD, there are now many living Proofs, that he is still *mighty to save*.

5. Yet to the same Truth, placed in another View, a quite contrary Objection is made: "If a Man cannot be saved by all that he can do, this will drive Men to Despair." True, to despair of being saved by their own Works, their own Merits or Righteousness. And so it ought; for none can trust in the Merits of CHRIST, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that *goeth about to establish his own Righteousness*, cannot receive the Righteousness of GOD. The Righteousness which is of Faith cannot be given him, while he trusteth in that which is of the Law.

6. But this, it is said, is an uncomfortable Doctrine. The Devil spoke like himself, that is, without either Truth or Shame, when he dared to suggest to Men that it is such. 'Tis the only comfortable one, 'tis *very full of Comfort*, to all self-destroy'd, self-condemn'd Sinners. That *whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*: That *the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him*: Here is Comfort, high as Heaven, stronger than Death! What! Mercy for all? For *Zacchæus*, a Publick Robber? For *Mary Magdalen*, a Common Harlot? Methinks I hear one say, Then I, even I, may hope for Mercy! And so thou may'st, thou afflicted one, whom

none hath comforted! GOD will not cast out thy Prayer. Nay, perhaps he may say the next Hour, *Be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*; so forgiven that they shall reign over thee no more; yea, and that *the Holy Spirit shall bear witness with thy Spirit that thou art a Child of GOD*. O glad Tidings! Tidings of great Joy, which are sent unto all People. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters: Come ye and buy, without Money, and without Price*. Whatsoever your Sins be, *though red, like Crimson, though more than the Hairs of your Head: Return ye unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*.

7. When no more Objections occur, then we are simply told, That Salvation by Faith only, ought not to be preached as the first Doctrine, or at least not to be preached to All. But what saith the Holy Ghost? *Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that which is laid, even JESUS CHRIST*. So then, *That whosoever believeth on him shall be saved*, is and must be the Foundation of all our Preaching; that is, must be preached first. "Well, but not to all." To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom shall we except? The Poor? Nay, they have a peculiar Right to have the Gospel preached unto them. The Unlearned? No. GOD hath revealed these Things unto unlearned and ignorant Men from the Beginning. The Young? By no means. *Suffer these in any wise, to come unto CHRIST, and forbid them not*. The Sinners? Least of all. *He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*. Why then, if any, we are to except the Rich, the the Learned, the Reputable, the Moral Men.

And 'tis true, they too often except themselves from hearing; yet we must speak the Words of our Lord. For thus the Tenor of our Commission runs, *Go and preach the Gospel to every Creature.* If any Man wrest it or any Part of it to his Destruction, he must bear his own Burden. But still, *as the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto us, That we will speak.*

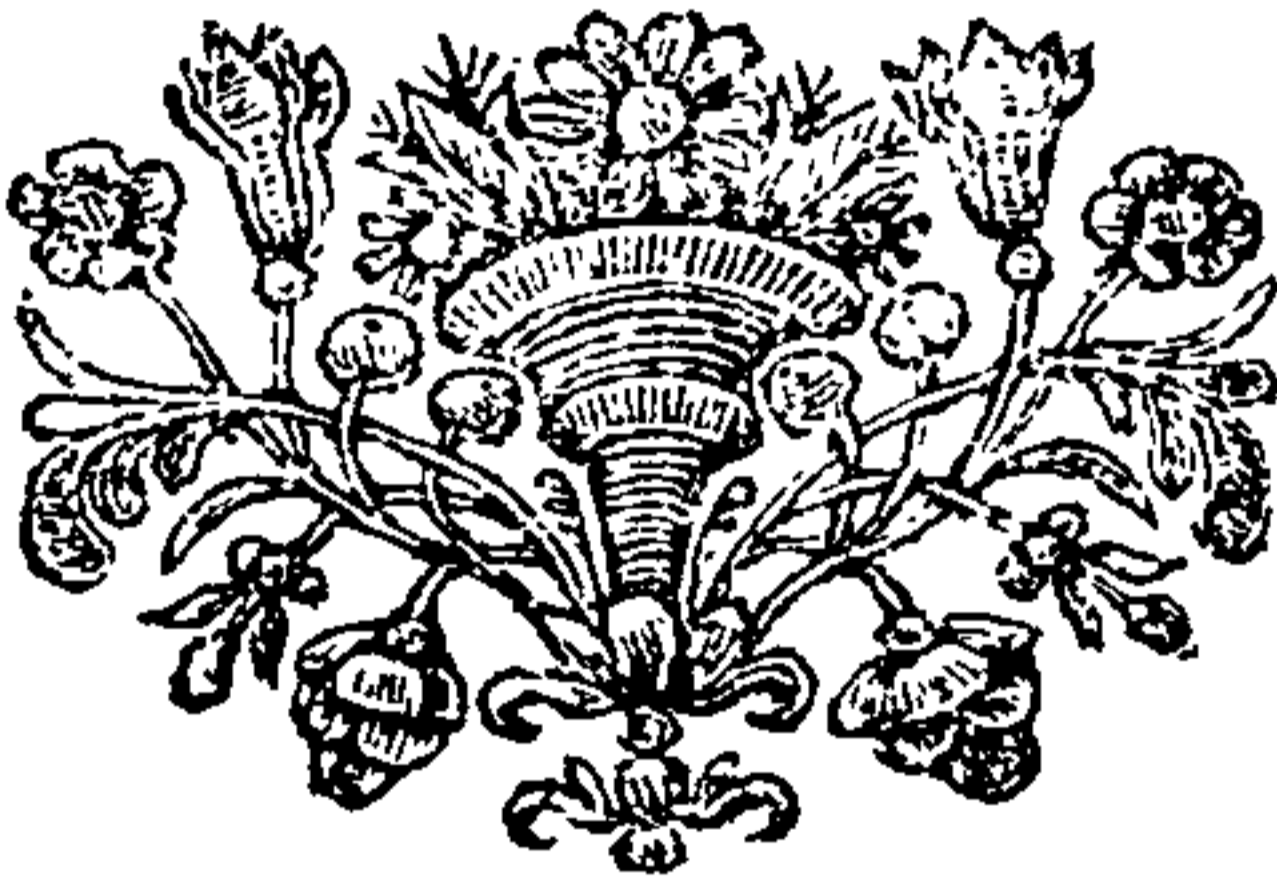
8. At this Time more especially will we speak, *That by Grace ye are saved through Faith:* Because never was the maintaining this Doctrine more seasonable than it is at this Day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the Increase of the *Romish Delusion* among us. 'Tis endless to attack one by one, all the Errors of that Church. But Salvation by Faith strikes at the Root, and all fall at once where this is established. It was this Doctrine (which our Church justly calls *the strong Rock and Foundation of the Christian Religion*) that first drove Popery out of these Kingdoms, and 'tis this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a Check to that Immorality, which hath *overspread our Land as a Flood.* Can you empty the great Deep, Drop by Drop? Then you may reform us, by Dissuasives from particular Vices. But let the *Righteousness, which is of GOD by Faith* be brought in, and so shall its proud Waves be stay'd. Nothing but this can stop the Mouths of those who *glory in their Shame, and openly deny the Lord that bought them.* They can talk as sublimely of the Law, as he that hath it written by GOD in his Heart. To hear them speak on this Head, might incline one to think, they were not far from the Kingdom of GOD. But take them out of the Law into the Gospel; begin with the Righteousness of Faith, *with*
C 2 CHRIST,

CHRIST, the End of the Law to every one that believeth: And those who but now appeared almost, if not altogether Christians, stand confest'd the Sons of Perdition; as far from Life and Salvation (GOD be merciful unto them!) as the Depth of Hell from the Height of Heaven.

9. For this Reason the Adversary so rages, whenever *Salvation by Faith* is declared to the World. For this Reason did he stir up Earth and Hell, to destroy those who first preached it. And for the same Reason, knowing that Faith alone could overturn the Foundations of his Kingdom, did he call forth all his Forces, and employ all his Arts of Lies and Calumny, to affright that Champion of the Lord of Hosts, *Martin Luther*, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that Man of GOD observes, *How would it enrage a proud strong Man arm'd, to be stopt and set at nought by a little Child, coming against him with a Reed in his Hand?* Especially, when he knew that little Child would surely overthrow him, and tread him under Foot.* *Even so, Lord JESU!* Thus hath thy Strength been ever *made perfect in Weakness!* Go forth then, thou little Child, that believest in him, and *his Right-hand shall teach thee terrible Things!* Tho' thou art helpless and weak as an Infant of Days, the strong Man shall not be able to stand before thee. Thou shalt prevail over him, and subdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy Feet. Thou shalt march on under the great Captain of thy Salvation, *conquering and to conquer*, until all thine Enemies are destroyed, and *Death is swallowed up in Victory.*

Now

Now Thanks be to GOD which giveth us the Victory through our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Blessing and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



C 3

T H N



*THE
ALMOST CHRISTIAN.*

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY*'s *OXFORD*,

BEFORE THE

U N I V E R S I T Y,

On J U L Y 25, 1741.



ACTS xxvi. 28.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

AND many there are who go *thus far* : Ever since the Christian Religion was in the World, there have been many in every Age and Nation, who were *almost persuaded to be Christians*. But seeing it avails nothing before GOD, to go *only thus far*, it highly imports us to consider,

First, What is implied in being almost,
Secondly, What, in being altogether a Christian.

I.) 1. Now, in the being *almost a Christian* is implied, first, Heathen Honesty. No one, I suppose, will make any Question of this ; especially, since by Heathen Honesty here, I mean, not that which is recommended in the Writings of their Philotophers only, but such as the common Heathens expected of one another, and many of them actually practised. By the Rules of this they were taught, that they ought not to be unjust ; not to take away their Neighbour's Goods, either by Robbery or Theft : Not to oppress the Poor, neither to use Extortion toward any : Not to cheat or over-reach either the Poor or Rich, in whatsoever Commerce they had with them :

To

To defraud no Man of his Right, and, if it were possible, to owe no Man any thing.

2. Again, the common Heathens allowed, that some Regard was to be paid to Truth as well as to Justice. And accordingly, they not only held him in Abomination, who was foresworn, who called GOD to witness to a Lie; but him also, who was known to be a Slanderer of his Neighbour, who falsely accused any Man. And indeed little better did they esteem wilful Liars of any sort, accounting them the Disgrace of Human Kind, and the Pests of Society.

3. Yet again, there was a Sort of Love and Assistance, which they expected one from another. They expected whatever Assistance any one could give another, without Prejudice to himself. And this they extended, not only to those little Offices of Humanity, which are perform'd without any Expence or Labour; but likewise, to the Feeding the Hungry, if they had Food to spare, the clothing the Naked, with their own superfluous Raiment; and in general, the giving to any that needed, such Things as they needed not themselves. Thus far (in the lowest Account of it) Heathen Honesty went, the first Thing implied in the being *almost a Christian*.

II.) 4. A second Thing implied in the being *almost a Christian*, is the having a Form of Godliness, of that Godliness which is prescribed in the Gospel of CHRIST: The having the *Outside of a real Christian*. Accordingly, the *Almost Christian* does nothing which the Gospel forbids. He taketh not the Name of GOD in vain: He blasphemeth and curseth not; he sweareth not at all, but his Communication is yea, yea; nay, nay. He profanes not the Day of the LORD, nor suffers it

to

to be profaned, even by the Stranger that is within his Gates. He not only avoids all actual Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleaness, but every Word or Look, that either directly or indirectly tends thereto: Nay, and all idle Words, abstaining both from all Detraction, Backbiting, Talebearing, Evil-speaking, and from *all foolish Talking and Jestings*, *εὐτραπέλια*, a kind of Virtue in the Heathen Moralists's Account. Briefly, from all Conversation that is not *good to the Use of edifying*, and that consequently *grieves the Holy Spirit of GOD*, whereby we are sealed to the Day of Redemption.

5. He abstains from *Wine wherein is Excess*, from Revellings and Gluttony. He avoids, as much as in him lies, all Strife and Contention, continually endeavouring to live peaceably with all Men. And if he suffer wrong, he avengeth not himself, neither returns Evil for Evil. He is no Railer, no Brawler, no Scoffer, either at the Faults or Infirmities of his Neighbour. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any Man; but in all Things acts and speaks by that plain Rule, *Whatsoever thou wouldst not be should do unto thee, that do not thou to another*.

6. And in doing Good, he does not confine himself to cheap and easy Offices of Kindness, but labours and suffers for the Profit of many, that by all means he may help some: In spite of Toil or Pain, *Whatsoever his Hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his Might*: Whether it be for his Friends, or for his Enemies; for the Evil, or for the Good. For, being *not slothful in this*, or in any *Business*, as he hath Opportunity he doth Good, all manner of Good to all Men; and to their Souls as well as their Bodies. He reproveth the
 Wicked,

Wicked, instructs the Ignorant, confirms the Wavering, quickens the Good, and comforts the Afflicted. He labours to awaken those that sleep, to lead those whom GOD hath already awakened, to the Fountain opened for Sin and for Unclean-ness, that they may wash therein and be clean; and to stir up those who are saved through Faith, to adorn the Gospel of CHRIST in all Things.

7. He that hath the Form of Godliness, uses also the Means of Grace, yea, all of them, and at all Opportunities. He constantly frequents the House of GOD; and that not as the Manner of some is, who come into the Presence of the Most High, either loaded with Gold and costly Apparel, or in all the gaudy Vanity of Dress; and either by their unseasonable Civilities to each other, or the impertinent Gaiety of their Behaviour, disclaim all Pretensions to the Form, as well as to the Power of Godliness. Would to GOD there were none even among ourselves who fall under the same Condemnation: Who come into his House, it may be, gazing about, or with all the Signs of the most listless, careless Indifference, tho' sometimes they may *seem* to use a Prayer to GOD for his Blessing on what they are entering upon; who, during that awful Service, are either asleep, or reclined in the most convenient Posture for it; or, as tho' they supposed GOD was asleep, talking with one another, or looking round, as utterly void of Employment. Neither let these be accused of the Form of Godliness. No; he who has even this, behaves with Seriousness and Attention, in every Part of that solemn Service. More especially when he approaches the Table of the Lord, it is not with a light or careless Behaviour, but with an Air, Gesture and Deportment which

which speaks nothing else, but *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

8. To this if we add, the constant Use of Family-Prayer, by those who are Masters of Families, and the setting Times apart for private Addresses to GOD, with a daily Seriousness of Behaviour: He who uniformly practises this Outward Religion, has the Form of Godliness. There needs but One Thing more in order to his being *almost a Christian*, and that is, Sincerity.

III.) 9. By Sincerity I mean, a real, inward Principle of Religion, from whence these outward Actions flow. And indeed, if we have not this, we have not Heathen Honesty; no, not so much of it as will answer the Demand of a *Heathen, Epicurean Poet*. Even this poor Wretch, in his sober Intervals, is able to testify,

* *Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore ;
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine poenæ.*

So that if a Man only abstains from doing Evil, in order to avoid Punishment,

† *Non pasces in cruce corvos,*

saith the Pagan; there, *Thou hast thy Reward*. But even he will not allow such a harmless Man as this, to be so much as a *good Heathen*. If then any Man, from the same Motive, *viz.* to avoid Punishment, to avoid the Loss of his Friends, or his Gain, or his Reputation, should not only ab-

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stain

* Good Men avoid Sin from the Love of Virtue ;
Wicked Men avoid Sin from a Fear of Punishment.

† Thou shalt not be hang'd.

stain from doing Evil, but also do ever so much Good, yea; and use all the Means of Grace; yet we could not with any Propriety say, This Man is even *almost a Christian*. If he has no better Principle in his Heart, he is only a Hypocrite altogether.

10. Sincerity therefore is necessarily implied in the being *almost a Christian*: A real Design to serve GOD, a hearty Desire to do his Will: It is necessarily implied, that a Man have a sincere View of pleasing GOD in all Things: In all his Conversation; in all his Actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This Design, if any Man be *almost a Christian*, runs through the whole Tenor of his Life. This is the moving Principle both in his doing Good, his abstaining from Evil, and his using the Ordinances of GOD.

11. But here it will probably be enquired, Is it possible that any Man living, should go so far as this, and nevertheless be *only almost a Christian*? What more than this can be implied, in the being *a Christian altogether*? I answer, first, That it is possible to go thus far, and yet be but *almost a Christian*; I learn not only from the Oracles of GOD, but also from the sure Testimony of Experience.

12. Brethren, Great is *my Boldness towards you in this Behalf*. And *forgive me this Wrong*, if I declare my own Folly upon the House-top, for yours and the Gospel's Sake. Suffer me then to speak freely of myself, even as of another Man. I am content to be abased, so ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile, for the Glory of my LORD.

13. I did go thus far for many Years, as many of this Place can testify: Using Diligence to eschew
all

all Evil, and to have a Conscience void of Offence: Redeeming the Time, buying up every Opportunity of doing all Good to all Men; constantly and carefully using all the Publick and all the Private Means of Grace; endeavouring after a steady Seriousness of Behaviour, at all Times and in all Places: And GOD is my Record, before whom I stand, doing all this in Sincerity; having a real Design to serve GOD, a hearty Desire to do his Will in all Things, to please him who had called me to *fight the good Fight*, and to *lay hold of eternal Life*. Yet my own Conscience beareth me Witness in the Holy Ghost, that all this Time I was but *almost a Christian*.

II. If it be enquired, What more than this is implied in the being *altogether a Christian*? I answer,

I.) 1. First, The Love of GOD. For thus saith his Word, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength*: Such a Love of GOD is this, as engrosses the whole Heart, as takes up all the Affections, as fills the entire Capacity of the Soul, and employs the utmost Extent of all its Faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his GOD, his Spirit continually *rejoiceth in GOD his Saviour*. His *Delight is in the Lord, his Lord and his All*, to whom *in every Thing he giveth Thanks*. All his *Desire is unto GOD, and to the Remembrance of his Name*. His Heart is ever crying out, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire beside thee*. Indeed, what can he desire beside GOD? Not the World, or the Things of the World. For he is *crucified to the World, and the*
D 2
World

World crucified to him. He is crucified to the Desire of the Flesh, the Desire of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. Yea, he is dead to Pride of every Kind: For *Love is not puffed up*; but he that dwelling in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him, is less than nothing in his own Eyes.

II.) 2. The Second Thing implied in the being *altogether a Christian* is, The Love of our Neighbour. For thus said our Lord in the following Words, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* If any Man ask who is my Neighbour, v.c. reply, Every Man in the World; every Child of his, who is *the Father of the Spirits of all Flesh.* Nor may we in any wise except our Enemies, or the Enemies of GOD and their own Souls. But every Christian loveth these also as himself, yea, *as Christ loved us.* He that would more fully understand what Manner of Love this is, may consider St. Paul's Description of it. It is *long-suffering and kind. It envieth not. It is not rash or hasty in judging. It is not puffed up,* but maketh him that loves, the least, the Servant of all. *Love doth not behave itself unseemly, but becometh all Things to all Men. She seeketh not her own, but only the Good of others, that they may be saved. Love is not revoked. It casteth out Wrath, which he who hath, is not made perfect in Love. It thinketh no Evil. It rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. It covereth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things.*

III.) 3. There is yet one Thing more that may be separately considered, tho' it cannot actually be separate from the preceeding, which is implied in the being *altogether a Christian*: And that

that is the Ground of All, even Faith. Very excellent Things are spoken of this throughout the Oracles of GOD. *Every one, faith the beloved Disciple, that believeth, is born of God. To as many as received him, gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. And, this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith. Yea, our Lord himself declares, He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting Life; and cometh not into Condemnation, but is passed from Death unto Life.*

4. But here let no Man deceive his own Soul. “* It is diligently to be noted, the Faith which bringeth not forth Repentance and Love, and all good Works, is not that right living Faith which is here spoken of, but a dead and devilish one. For even the Devils believe, That Christ was born of a Virgin, that he wrought all kind of Miracles, declaring himself very GOD: That for our Sakes he suffered a most painful Death, to redeem us from Death everlasting: That he rose again the third Day; that he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father, and at the End of the World, shall come again to judge both the Quick and Dead. These Articles of our Faith the Devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet for all this Faith, they be but Devils. They remain still in their damnable Estate, lacking the very true Christian Faith.” ¶

5. “The right and true Christian Faith is, (to go on in the Words of our own Church) not only to believe that holy Scripture, and the Articles of our Faith are true, but also to have a sure

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Trust

* Homily on the Salvation of Man,

Trust and Confidence, to be saved from everlasting Damnation by Christ. It is a sure Trust and Confidence which a Man hath in GOD, that by the Merits of Christ his Sins *are* forgiven, and he reconciled to the Favour of GOD,—whereof doth follow a loving Heart, to obey his Commandments.”

6. Now, whosoever has this Faith, which *purifies the Heart*, by the Power of GOD, who *dwelleth therein*, from Pride, Anger, Desire, *from all Unrighteousness*, from *all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, which fills it with Love stronger than Death, both to GOD and to all Mankind; Love that doth the Works of GOD, glorying to spend and to be spent for all Men, and that endureth with Joy, not only the Reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised and hated of all Men, but whatsoever the Wisdom of GOD permits the Malice of Men or Devils to inflict; whosoever has this *Faith*, thus *working by Love*, is not *almost only*, but *altogether a Christian*.

7. But who are the living Witnesses of these Things? I beseech you, Brethren, as in the Presence of that GOD, before whom *Hell and Destruction are without a Covering*: How much *more the Hearts of the Children of Men*? that each of you would ask his own Heart, “Am I of that Number? Do I so far practise Justice, Mercy and Truth, as even the Rules of Heathen Honesty require? If so, have I the very *Outside* of a Christian? The *Form of Godliness*? Do I abstain from Evil, from whatsoever is forbidden in the written Word of GOD? Do I, whatever Good my Hand findeth to do, do it with my Might? Do I seriously use all the Ordinances of

GOD at all Opportunities ? And is all this done, with a sincere Design and Desire to please GOD in all Things ?

8. Are not many of you conscious, that you never came thus far ; That you have not been even *almost a Christian* ? That you have not come up to the Standard of Heathen Honesty ? At least, not to the Form of Christian Godliness ? Much less hath GOD seen Sincerity in you, a real Design of pleasing him in all Things. You never so much as intended, to devote all your Words and Works, your Business, Studies, Diversions, to his Glory. You never even designed or desired, that whatsoever you did, should be *done in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, and, as such, should be a *spiritual Sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ*.

9. But supposing you had, Do good Designs and good Desires make a Christian ? By no Means, unless they are brought to good Effect. “ Hell is paved, saith one, with good Intentions.” The great Question of all then still remains. Is the Love of GOD shed abroad in your Heart ? Can you cry out, “ My GOD and my All ? ” Do you desire nothing but him ? Are you happy in GOD ? Is he your Glory, your Delight, your Crown of Rejoicing ? And is this Commandment written in your Heart, That he who loveth GOD love his Brother also ? Do you then love your Neighbour as yourself ? Do you love every Man, even your Enemies, even the Enemies of GOD, as your own Soul ? As Christ loved you ? Yea, dost thou believe that Christ loved *thee*, and gave himself for thee ? Hast thou Faith in his Blood ? Believeest thou the
Lamb

Lamb of GOD hath taken away *thy* Sins, and cast them as a Stone into the Depth of the Sea? That he hath blotted out the Hand-writing that was against *thee*, taking it out of the Way, nailing it to his Cross? Hast *thou* indeed Redemption through his Blood, even the Remission of *thy* Sins? And doth his Spirit bear witness with *thy* Spirit, that thou art a Child of GOD?

10. The GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who now standeth in the Midst of us, knoweth that if any Man die without this Faith and this Love, good it were for him that he had never been born. Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy GOD: Call in the Day when he may be found. Let him not rest, till he *make his Goodness to pass before thee, till he proclaim unto thee the Name of the Lord, The Lord, the Lord GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity and Transgression and Sin.* Let no Man persuade thee by vain Words, to rest short of this Prize of thy high Calling. But cry unto him Day and Night, who, *while we were without Strength, died for the Ungodly,* until thou knowest in whom thou hast believed, and canst say, "My LORD and my GOD." Remember, *always to pray and not to faint,* till thou also canst lift up thy Hand unto Heaven, and declare to him that liveth for ever and ever, "Lord, Thou knowest all Things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

11. May we all thus experience what it is, to be not almost only, but altogether Christians!
Being

Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus: Knowing we have Peace with GOD through Jesus Christ: Rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD, and having the Love of GOD shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Höly Ghost given unto us!





A

S E R M O N

Preach'd on

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1742,

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD,*

By *CHARLES WESLEY, M. A.*
Student of CHRIST-CHURCH.



EPHES. V. 14.

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light.

IN discoursing on these Words, I shall, with the Help of GOD,

First, Describe the Sleepers to whom they are spoken.

Secondly, Enforce the Exhortation, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead.* And, *Thirdly*, Explain the Promise made to such as do *awake and arise*; *Christ shall give thee Light.*

I.) 1. And first, as to the Sleepers here spoken to. By Sleep is signified the Natural State of Man: That deep Sleep of the Soul into which the Sin of *Adam* hath cast all who spring from his Loins; that Supineness, Indolence, and Stupidity, that Insensibility of his real Condition, wherein every Man comes into the World, and continues till the Voice of GOD awakes him.

2. Now *they that sleep, sleep in the Night.* The State of Nature is a State of utter Dark-ness; a State wherein *Darkness covers the Earth, and gross Darkness the People.* The poor unawakened Sinner, how much Knowledge soever he may have as to other Things, has no Know-
E ledge

ledge of himself: In this Respect, *he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* He knows not that he is a fallen Spirit, whose only Business in the present World, is to recover from his Fall, to regain that Image of GOD wherein he was created. He sees *no Necessity* for *the one Thing needful*, even that inward universal Change, that *Birth from above* (figured out by Baptism) which is the Beginning of that total Renovation, that Sanctification of Spirit, Soul and Body, *without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

3. Full of all Diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect Health: Fast bound in Misery and Iron, he dreams that he is happy, and at Liberty. He says, Peace, Peace, while the Devil, *as a strong Man armed*, is in full Possession of his Soul. He sleeps on still, and takes his Rest, tho' Hell is moved from beneath to meet him; tho' the Pit, from whence there is no Return, hath opened its Mouth to swallow him up: A Fire is kindled around him, yet he knoweth it not; yea it burns him, yet he lays it not to Heart.

4. By one who sleeps we are therefore to understand (and wou'd to GOD we might all understand it!) A Sinner satisfied in his Sins; contented to remain in his fallen State, to live and die without the Image of GOD: One who is ignorant both of his Disease, and of the only Remedy for it: One who never was warned, or never regarded the warning Voice of GOD *to flee from the Wrath to come*: One that never yet saw he was in Danger of Hell-fire, or cried out in the Earnestness of his Soul, *What must I do to be saved?*

5. If

5. If this Sleeper be not Outwardly Vicious, his Sleep is usually the deepest of all: Whether he be of the *Laodicean* Spirit, *neither cold nor hot*; but a quiet, rational, inoffensive, good-natured Professor of the Religion of his Fathers; or whether he be Zealous and Orthodox, and *after the most straitest Sect of our Religion, live a Pharisee*; that is, according to the Scriptural Account, one that *justifies himself*; one that labours to *establish his own Righteousness*, as the Ground of his Acceptance with GOD.

6. This is he, who *having a Form of Godliness, denies the Power thereof*; yea, and probably reviles it, wheresoever it is found, as mere Extravagance and Delusion. Mean while, the wretched Self-deceiver thanks GOD, that he is *not as other Men are; Adulterers, Unjust, Extortioners*: No, he doth no Wrong to any Man. He *fasts twice in the Week*, uses all the Means of Grace, is constant at Church and Sacrament; yea, and *gives Tithes of all that he has*, does all the Good that he can: *Touching the Righteousness of the Law, he is blameless*: He wants nothing of Godliness but the Power; nothing of Religion, but the Spirit; nothing of Christianity, but the Truth and the Life.

7. But know ye not, that however highly esteemed among Men, *such a Christian* as this may be, he is an Abomination in the Sight of GOD, and an Heir of every Woe, which the Son of GOD Yesterday, to Day, and for ever, denounces against *Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites*? He hath *made clean the Outside of the Cup and the Platter*, but within is full of all Filthiness. *An evil Disease cleaveth still unto him, so that his inward Parts are very Wickedness.*

ness. Our Lord fitly compares him to a *painted Sepulchre*, which *appears beautiful without*; but nevertheless is *full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleaness*. The Bones indeed are no longer dry; *the Sinews and Flesh are come upon them, and the Skin covers them above*: But there is *no Breath* in them, no Spirit of the living GOD. And if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. *Ye are Christ's, if so be that the Spirit of GOD dwell in you.* But if not, GOD knoweth that ye abide in Death, even until now.

8. This is another Character of the Sleeper here spoken to. He abides in Death, tho' he knows it not. He is dead unto GOD, *dead in Trespasses and Sins*. For, *to be carnally minded is Death*. Even as it is written, *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin: And so Death passed upon all Men, not only temporal Death, but likewise Spiritual and Eternal.* *In that Day that thou eatest* (said GOD to Adam) *Thou shalt surely die.* Not bodily (unless as he then became Mortal) but spiritually: Thou shalt lose the Life of thy Soul: Thou shalt die to GOD; shalt be separated from him, thy essential Life and Happiness.

9. Thus first was dissolved the Vital Union of our Soul with GOD: Insomuch that *in the Midst of Natural Life, we are now in Spiritual Death*. And herein we remain till the second Adam becomes a quickening Spirit to us, till he raises the Dead, the Dead in Sin, in Pleasure, Riches, or Honours. But before any dead Soul can live, he *bears* (hearkens to) *the Voice of the Son of GOD*: He is made sensible of his lost Estate, and receives the Sentence of Death in himself.

self. He knows himself to be *dead while he liveth*, dead to GOD and all the Things of GOD: Having no more Power to perform the Actions of a living Christian, than a dead Body to perform the Functions of a living Man.

10. And most certain it is, that one dead in Sin, has not *Senses exercised to discern spiritual Good and Evil*. Having Eyes, he sees not, he hath Ears and hears not. He doth not taste and see that the Lord is gracious. He hath not seen GOD at any Time, nor heard his Voice, nor handled the Word of Life. In vain is the Name of JESUS like Ointment poured forth, and all his Garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes and Cassia. The Soul that sleepeth in Death, hath no Perception of any Objects of this Kind. His Heart is *past feeling*, and understandeth none of these Things.

11. And hence, having no spiritual Senses, no Inlets of Spiritual Knowledge, the Natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of GOD; nay, he is so far from receiving them, that whatsoever is spiritually discerned is mere Foolishness unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of Spiritual Things, but he denies the very Existence of them. And Spiritual Sensation itself is to Him, the Foolishness of Folly. *How*, saith he, *can these Things be?* How can any Man know, that he is alive to GOD? Even as you know, that your Body is now alive. Faith is the Life of the Soul: And if ye have this Life abiding in you, ye want no Marks to evidence it to yourself, but that *ἔνδοξος Πνεύματος*, that divine Consciousness, that *Witness of GOD*, which is more and greater than ten thousand Human Witnessesses.

12. If he doth not now bear Witness with thy Spirit, that thou art a Child of GOD, O that he might convince Thee, Thou poor unawakened Sinner, by his Demonstration and Power, that Thou art a Child of the Devil! O that as I prophesy, there might now be a *Noise and a Shaking*, and may *the Bones come together, Bone to his Bone*. Then come from the *four Winds, O Breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live!* And do not ye harden your Hearts, and resist the Holy Ghost, who even now is come to convince you of Sin, because you believe not on the Name of the only begotten Son of GOD.

II.) 1. Wherefore, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead*. GOD calleth Thee now by my Mouth; and bids Thee know thyself, Thou fallen Spirit, thy true State and only Concern below. *What meanest Thou, O Sleeper? Arise! Call upon thy GOD, if so be thy GOD will think upon Thee, that thou perish not*. A mighty Tempest is stirred up round about Thee, and Thou art sinking into the Depths of Perdition, the Gulf of GOD's Judgments. If thou wouldst escape them, cast thyself into them. *Judge thyself, and Thou shalt not be judged of the Lord*.

2. Awake, awake! Stand up this Moment, lest Thou *drink at the Lord's Hand the Cup of his Fury*. Stir up thyself to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy Righteousness, mighty to save! *Shake thyself from the Dust*. At least, let the Earthquake of GOD's Threatnings shake Thee. Awake and cry out with the trembling Goaler, *What must I do to be saved?* And never rest, till Thou believest on the Lord Jesus, with a
Faith

Faith which is his Gift, by the Operation of his Spirit.

3. If I speak to any one of you more than to another, it is to Thee, who thinkest thyself unconcerned in this Exhortation. *I have a Message from GOD unto Thee.* In his Name, I warn Thee to *flee from the Wrath to come.* Thou unholy Soul, see thy Picture in condemn'd *Peter*, lying in the dark Dungeon, between the Soldiers, bound with two Chains, the Keepers before the Door keeping the Prison. The Night is far spent, the Morning is at Hand, when thou art to be brought forth to Execution. And in these dreadful Circumstances, Thou art fast asleep; Thou art fast asleep in the Devil's Arms, on the Brink of the Pit, in the Jaws of everlasting Destruction.

4. O may *the Angel of the Lord come upon Thee, and the Light shine into thy Prison!* And mayst Thou feel the Stroke of an Almighty Hand, raising Thee with *Arise up quickly, gird thyself and bind on thy Sandals, cast thy Garment about Thee, and follow me.*

5. Awake, Thou everlasting Spirit, out of thy Dream of Worldly Happiness. Did not GOD create Thee for Himself? Then, thou canst not rest, till thou restest in Him. Return thou Wanderer. Fly back to thy Ark. *This is not thy Home.* Think not of building Tabernacles here. Thou art but *a Stranger, a Sojourner upon Earth:* A Creature of a Day, but just launching out into an Unchangeable State. Make haste. Eternity is at Hand. Eternity depends on this Moment. An Eternity of Happiness, or an Eternity of Misery!

6. In what State is thy Soul? Was GOD, while I am yet speaking, to require it of Thee, art Thou ready to meet Death and Judgment? Canst Thou stand in his Sight, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity?* Art Thou meet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? Hast Thou fought a good Fight and kept the Faith? Hast Thou secured the one Thing needful? Hast Thou recovered the Image of GOD, even *Righteousness and true Holiness?* Hast Thou put off the Old Man and put on the New? Art Thou cloathed upon with Christ?

7. Hast Thou Oil in thy Lamp? Grace in thy Heart? Dost Thou love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength? Is that Mind in Thee, which was also in Christ Jesus? Art Thou a Christian indeed? That is, a new Creature? Are old Things past away, and all Things become new?

8. Art Thou Partaker of the Divine Nature? Knowest Thou not, that Christ is in Thee, except Thou be reprobate? Knowest Thou, that GOD dwelleth in Thee, and Thou in GOD, by his Spirit which he hath given Thee? Knowest Thou not, that thy Body is a Temple of the Holy Ghost, which Thou hast of GOD? Hast Thou the Witness in thyself? The Earnest of thine Inheritance? Art Thou sealed by that Spirit of Promise, unto the Day of Redemption? Hast Thou received the Holy Ghost—or dost Thou start at the Question not knowing whether there be any Holy Ghost?

9. If it offends Thee, be Thou assured, that Thou neither art a Christian, nor desirest to be One. Nay, thy very Prayer is turned into Sin; and Thou hast solemnly mocked GOD this very Day,

Day, by praying for *the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit*, when Thou didst not believe there was any such Thing to be received.

10. Yet on the Authority of GOD's Word and our own Church, I must repeat the Question, *Hast Thou received the Holy Ghost?* If Thou hast not, Thou art not yet a Christian: For a Christian is a Man, that is *anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*. Thou art not yet made a Partaker of pure Religion and undefiled. Dost Thou know, what Religion is? That it is, a Participation of the Divine Nature, the Life of GOD in the Soul of Man: *Christ formed in the Heart, Christ in Thee, the Hope of Glory*. Happiness and Holiness; Heaven begun upon Earth. *A Kingdom of GOD within Thee: Not Meat and Drink, no outward Thing: but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost?* An everlasting Kingdom brought into thy Soul, a *Peace of GOD, that passeth all Understanding; a Joy unspeakable and full of Glory?*

11. Knowest Thou, that in *Jesus Christ*, neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision; but *Faith that worketh by Love*; but a new Creation? Seest Thou the Necessity of that Inward Change, that Spiritual Birth, that Life from the Dead? That Holiness? And art Thou thoroughly convinced, that *without it, no Man shall see the Lord?* Art thou labouring after it? *Giving all Diligence, to make thy Calling and Election sure? Working out thy Salvation with Fear and Trembling? Agonizing to enter in at the straight Gate?* Art Thou in earnest about thy Soul? And, canst Thou tell the Searcher of Hearts, *Thou, O GOD, art the Thing that I long for!* Lord, Thou knowest all Things! Thou knowest that I would love Thee!

12. Thou

12. Thou hopest to be saved—but what Reason hast Thou to give of the Hope that is in Thee? Is it because Thou hast done no Harm? Or, because Thou hast done much Good? Or, because Thou art not like other Men; but Wise, or Learned, or Honest and morally Good? Esteemed of Men, and of a fair Reputation? Alas, all this will never bring Thee to GOD. It is in his Account lighter than Vanity. Dost Thou know *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*? Hath he taught Thee, that *by Grace we are saved through Faith? And that, not of ourselves. It is the Gift of GOD: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.* Hast Thou received the faithful Saying as the whole Foundation of thy Hope, that *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners?* Hast Thou learned what That meaneth, *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance? I am not sent, but to the lost Sheep?* Art Thou (He that heareth, let him understand!) Lost, Dead? *Damned already?*—Dost Thou know thy Deserts? Dost Thou feel thy Wants? Art Thou *poor in Spirit? Mourning for GOD* and refusing to be comforted? Is the Prodigal come to himself, and well-content to be therefore thought *beside himself*; by those who are still feeding upon the Husks which he hath left? Art Thou willing to *live Godly in Christ Jesus?* And dost Thou therefore *suffer Persecution?* Do Men say all Manner of Evil against Thee falsely, for the Son of Man's Sake?

13. O, that in all these Questions ye may hear the Voice that wakes the Dead, and feel that Hammer of the Word, which *breaketh the Rock in Pieces!*—If ye will bear his Voice to Day, while it is called to Day, harden not your
Hearts.

Hearts. Now awake thou that sleepest in Spiritual Death, that Thou sleep not in Death Eternal! Feel thy lost Estate, and arise from the Dead. Leave thine old Companions in Sin and Death. Follow Thou Jesus, and let the Dead bury their Dead. Save thyself from this untoward Generation. Come out from among them, and be Thou separate, and touch not the unclean Thing, and the Lord shall receive Thee, Christ shall give Thee Light.

III.) 1. This Promise I come, lastly, to explain. And how encouraging a Consideration is This, that whosoever Thou art who obeyest his Call, Thou canst not seek his Face in vain. If Thou even now awakest and arisest from the Dead, he hath bound himself to give Thee Light. The Lord shall give Thee Grace and Glory; the Light of his Grace here, and the Light of his Glory, when Thou receivest the Crown that fadeth not away. Thy Light shall break forth as the Morning, and thy Darknes be as the Noon-day. GOD who commanded the Light to shine out of Darknes, shall shine in thy Heart; to give the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the Face of Jesus Christ. On them that fear the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with Healing in his Wings. And in that Day it shall be said unto Thee, Arise, shine: for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon Thee. For Christ shall reveal himself in Thee. And he is the true Light.

2. GOD is Light, and will give himself to every awakened Sinner, that waiteth for him: And Thou shalt then be a Temple of the living GOD, and Christ shall dwell in thy Heart by
Faith:

Faith: And being rooted and grounded in Love, Thou shalt be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height of that Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge, that Thou mayst be filled with all the Fulness of GOD.

3. Ye see your Calling, Brethren. We are call'd to be *an Habitation of GOD through his Spirit: And through his Spirit dwelling in us, to be Saints here, and Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* So exceeding great are the *Promises which are given unto us, actually given unto us who believe.* For by Faith we receive, *not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of GOD, the Sum of all the Promises, that we may know the Things that are freely given to us of GOD.*

4. The Spirit of Christ is that great Gift of GOD, which at sundry Times, and in divers Manners he hath promised to Man, and hath fully bestowed since the Time that Christ was glorified. Those Promises before made to the Fathers, he hath thus fulfilled: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes *.* *I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring †.*

5. Ye may all be living Witnessess of these Things: Of Remission of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost. *If Thou canst believe, all Things are possible to him that believeth.* *Who among you is there, that feareth the Lord, and yet walketh on in Darknes, and hath no Light?* I ask Thee in the Name of Jesus, believest Thou that *his Arm is*
not

* Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

† Isaiah xliv. 3.

not shortened at all? That he is still mighty to save? That he is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever? That he hath now Power, on Earth to forgive Sins? Son, be of good Cheer; thy Sins are forgiven. GOD for Christ's Sake hath forgiven Thee. Receive this, not as the Word of Man; but as it is, indeed, the Word of GOD; and Thou art justified freely through Faith. Thou shalt be sanctified also through Faith which is in Jesus, and shalt set to thy Seal, even thine, that GOD hath given unto us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.

6. Men and Brethren, let me freely speak unto you: And *suffer ye the Word of Exhortation, even from one the least esteem'd in the Church. Your Conscience beareth you Witness in the Holy Ghost, that these Things are so, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. This is Eternal Life, to know the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. This experimental Knowledge, and this alone is true Christianity. He is a Christian, who hath received the Spirit of Christ. He is not a Christian, who hath not received him. Neither is it possible to have received him and not know it. For at that Day* (when he cometh, saith our Lord) ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. This is that Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him: For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

7. The World cannot receive him, but utterly reject the Promise of the Father, contradicting and blaspheming. But every Spirit which confesseth not this, is not of GOD. Yea, *this*

* John xiv. 20.

is that Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard, that it should come into the World, and even now it is in the World. He is Antichrist whosoever denies the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or that the Indwelling Spirit of GOD is the common Privilege of all Believers, the Blessing of the Gospel, the unspeakable Gift, the universal Promise, the Criterion of a real Christian.

8. It nothing helps them to say, “ We do not deny the Assistance of GOD’s Spirit; but only this Inspiration, this receiving the Holy Ghost, and being sensible of it. It is only this feeling of the Spirit, this being moved by the Spirit, or filled with it, which we deny to have any Place in Sound Religion.” But in only denying this, you deny the whole Scriptures, the whole Truth and Promise and Testimony of GOD.

9. Our own excellent Church knows nothing of this devilish Distinction: But speaks plainly of * *feeling the Spirit of Christ*; of being † *moved by the Holy Ghost*, and knowing and ‡ *feeling there is no other Name than that of Jesus*, whereby we can receive Life and Salvation. She teaches us all to pray for the || *Inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, yea, that we may be *filled with the Holy Ghost* §. Nay, and every Presbyter of hers, professes to *receive the Holy Ghost by the Imposition of Hands*. Therefore, to deny any of these, is in Effect, to renounce the Church of England, as well as the whole Christian Revelation.

10. But *the Wisdom of GOD* was always *Foolishness with Men*. No Marvel then, that the great

* Art. 17. † Office of consecrating Priests. ‡ Visitation of the Sick. || Collect before the Holy Communion, § Order of Confirmation,

great Mystery of the Gospel, should be now also *hid from the Wise and Prudent*, as well as in the Days of Old; That it should be almost universally denied, ridiculed and exploded as mere Frenzy: And that all who dare avow it still, are branded with the Names of Madmen and Enthusiasts. This is *that falling away* which was to come: That general Apostasy, of all Orders and Degrees of Men, which we even now find to have overspread the Earth. *Run to and fro in the Streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a Man; a Man that loveth the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, and serveth him with all his Strength?* How does our own Land mourn (that we look no farther) under the Overflowings of Ungodliness? What Villainies of every Kind are committed Day by Day; yea, too often with Impunity, by those who sin with a high Hand, and glory in their Shame? Who can reckon up the Oaths, Curses, Profaneness, Blasphemies, the Lying, Slandering, Evil-speaking, the Sabbath-breaking, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Revenge, the Whoredoms, Adulteries, and various Uncleaness, the Frauds, Injustice, Oppression, Extortion, which overspread our Land as a Flood?

11. And even among those who have kept themselves pure from these grosser Abominations; how much Anger and Pride, how much Sloth and Idleness, how much Softness and Effeminacy, how much Luxury and Self-Indulgence, how much Covetousness and Ambition, how much Thirst of Praise, how much Love of the World, how much Fear of Man is to be found? Mean while, how little of true Religion? For where is he that loveth either GOD or his Neighbour, as He hath

given us Commandment? On the one Hand are those, who have not so much as the Form of Godliness: On the other those who have the Form only; there stands the *Open*, there the *Painted Sepulchre*. So that in very Deed, who-soever were earnestly to behold any publick gathering together of the People, (I fear, those in our Churches are not to be excepted) might easily perceive, *that the one Part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees*: The one having almost as little Concern about Religion, as if there were *no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit*; and the other making it a mere lifeless Form, a dull Round of external Performances, without either true Faith, or the Love of GOD, or Joy in the Holy Ghost.

12. Would to GOD I could except us of this Place. *Brethren, my Heart's Desire, and Prayer to GOD for you is, That ye may be saved from this overflowing of Ungodliness, and that here may its proud Waves be stay'd!* But is it so indeed? GOD knoweth, yea, and our own Conscience, it is not. Ye have not kept yourselves pure. Corrupt are we also and abominable; and few are there that understand any more, few that worship GOD in Spirit and in Truth. We too are *a Generation that set not our Hearts aright, and whose Spirit cleaveth not stedfastly unto GOD*. He hath appointed us indeed to be *the Salt of the Earth*. But if the Salt have lost its Savour, it is *thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under Foot of Men*.

13. And shall I not visit for these Things, saith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? Yea, we know not how

soon he may say to the Sword, *Sword, go through this Land!* He hath given us long Space to repent. He lets us alone this Year also: But he warns and awakens us by Thunder. His Judgments are abroad in the Earth. And we have all Reason to expect that Heaviest of All, even *that he should come unto us quickly, and remove our Candlestick out of its Place, except we repent and do the first Works:* Unless we return to the Principles of the Reformation, the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel. Perhaps we are now resisting the last Effort of Divine Grace to save us. Perhaps we have well nigh *filled up the Measure of our Iniquities,* by rejecting the Counsel of GOD against ourselves, and casting out his Messengers.

14. O GOD, *in the midst of Wrath remember Mercy!* Be glorified in our Reformation, not in our Destruction. Let us *hear the Rod, and him that appointed it.* Now that *thy Judgments are abroad in the Earth,* let the *Inhabitants of the World learn Righteousness.*

15. My Brethren, it is high Time for us, to awake out of Sleep; before the *great Trumpet of the Lord be blown,* and our Land become a Field of Blood. O may we speedily see the Things that make for our Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes! *Turn Thou us, O good Lord, and let thine Anger cease from us.* O Lord, *look down from Heaven, behold and visit this Vine;* and cause us to know the Time of our Visitation. *Help us, O GOD of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name;* O deliver us, and be merciful to our Sins, for thy Names Sake. *And so will we not go back from thee: O let us live, and we shall call upon*

by Name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, shew the Light of thy Countenance, and we shall be whole.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us, unto him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen.





Scriptural Christianity.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

St. *MARY*'s *OXFORD*,

BEFORE THE

U N I V E R S I T Y.

AUGUST 24, 1744.

Whosoever heareth the Sound of the Trumpet, and taketh not Warning, if the Sword come and take him away, his Blood shall be upon his own Head. Ezek. xxxiii. 4.



A C T S iv. 31.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

1. **T**HE same Expression occurs in the second Chapter, where we read, *When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all (the Apostles, with the Women, and the Mother of Jesus, and his Brethren) with one Accord in one Place. And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**. One immediate Effect whereof was, *They began to speak with other Tongues †*; infomuch that both the *Parthians, Medes, Elamites*, and the other Strangers who came together, when this was noised abroad, heard them speak, in their several Tongues, the wonderful Works of God ‡.

2. In this Chapter we read, that when the Apostles and Brethren had been praying, and praising God, *the Place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost* ||. Not that we find any visible Appearance here, such as had been in the former Instance: Nor are we informed that the *extraordinary Gifts* of the Holy Ghost, were then given
to

• Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ver. 6. || Acts iv. 31.

to all or any of them ; such as *the Gifts of Healing, of working other Miracles, of Prophecy, of discerning Spirits ; the speaking with divers kinds of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues* ||.

3. Whether these Gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the Church throughout all Ages ; and whether or no they will be restored at the nearer Approach of the *Restitution of all Things*, are Questions which it is not needful to decide. But it is needful to observe this, That even in the Infancy of the Church, God divided them with a sparing Hand. *Were all even then Prophets ? Were all Workers of Miracles ? Had all the Gifts of Healing ? Did all speak with Tongues ?* No, in no wise. Perhaps not one in a Thousand. Probably none but the Teachers in the Church, and only some of them *. It was therefore for a more excellent Purpose than this, that *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*.

4. It was, to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all Ages) *the Mind which was in Christ*, those holy *Fruits of the Spirit*, which whosoever hath not, *is none of His* : To fill them with † *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness* : To endue them with *Faith*, (perhaps it might be rendered, *Fidelity*) with *Mekness and Temperance* : To enable them to *crucify the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts*, its Passions and Desires ; and, in consequence of that *inward Change*, to fulfil all *outward Righteousness, to walk as Christ also walked*, in the ‡ *Work of Faith, the Patience of Hope, the Labour of Love*.

5. With-

|| 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10. * 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, 30. † Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. ‡ 1 Thess. i. 3.

5. Without busying ourselves then in curious, needless Enquiries, touching those *extraordinary* Gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer View of these his *ordinary* Fruits; which we are assured will remain throughout all Ages: Of that great Work of God among the Children of Men, which we are used to express by one Word, *Christianity*: Not as it implies a Set of Opinions, a System of Doctrines, but as it refers to Mens Hearts and Lives. And this *Christianity* it may be useful to consider under three distinct Views.

I. As beginning to exist in Individuals.

II. As spreading from one to another.

III. As covering the Earth.

I design to close these Considerations with a plain practical Application.

I. And first, let us consider Christianity in its Rise, as beginning to exist in Individuals.

Suppose then one of those who heard the Apostle *Peter* preaching *Repentance and Remission of Sins*, was *pricked to the Heart*, was convinced of Sin, repented, and then *believed in Jesus*. By this *Faith of the Operation of God*, which was the very *Substance or Subsistence of Things hoped for* *, the demonstrative *Evidence of invisible Things*, he instantly *received the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby he now *cried Abba, Father!* † Now first it was that he could *call Jesus Lord*, by the *Holy Ghost* ‡, the *Spirit itself bearing Witness with his Spirit that he was a Child of God* ||. Now it was that he could truly say, *I live not, but Christ liveth in me;*
and

* Heb. xi. 1. † Rom. viii. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3. || Rom. viii. 15.

and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by Faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

2. This then was the very Essence of his Faith, a divine ἔλεγχος † of the Love of God the Father, through the Son of his Love, to him a Sinner, now accepted in the Beloved. And ‡ being justified by Faith, he had Peace with God, yea the Peace of God ruling in his Heart: A Peace, which passing all Understanding, (παντα ὑπερ, all barely rational Conception) kept his Heart and Mind from all Doubt and Fear, through the Knowledge of him in whom he had believed. He could not therefore be afraid of any evil Tidings; for his Heart stood fast believing in the Lord. He feared not what Man could do unto him, knowing the very Hairs of his Head were all numbered. He feared not all the Powers of Darknes, whom God was daily bruising under his Feet. Least of all was he afraid to die; nay, he desired to depart and be with Christ ||; who § through Death had destroyed him that had the Power of Death, even the Devil; and delivered them who through Fear of Death, were all their Lifetime, till then, subject to Bondage.

3. His Soul therefore magnified the Lord, and his Spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. He rejoiced in him with Joy unspeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: In whom he had Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins. He rejoiced in that Witness of God's Spirit with his Spirit, that he was a Child of God: And more abundantly, in Hope of the Glory of God, in Hope of the glorious Image of God, the full Renewal of his Soul in Righteousness and true Holiness; and

* Gal. ii. 20. † Evidence or Conviction. ‡ Rom. v. 1.
|| Phil. i. 23. § Heb. ii. 15.

and in Hope of that *Crown of Glory*, that *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

4. *The Love of God* was also *shed abroad in his Heart*, by the *Holy Ghost* which was given unto him*. Because he was a Son, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his Heart, crying, *Abba, Father †!* And that filial Love of God was continually increased by the *Witness* he had in himself ‡, of God's pardoning Love to him, by beholding what Manner of Love it was, which the Father had bestowed upon him, that he should be called a *Child of God* ||. So that God was the Desire of his Eyes, and the Joy of his Heart; his Portion in Time and in Eternity.

5. He that thus loved God, could not but love his Brother also; and not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth. "If God, said he, so loved us, we ought also to love one another §." Yea, every Soul of Man, as the *Mercy of God is over all his Works ††*. Agreeably hereto, the Affection of this Lover of God, embraced all Mankind for his sake; not excepting those whom he had never seen in the Flesh, or those of whom he knew nothing more than that they were *the Offspring of God*; for whose Souls his Son had died; not excepting the *Evil and Unthankful*, and least of all his Enemies, those who hated, or persecuted, or despitously used him for his Master's sake. These had a peculiar Place both in his Heart and his Prayers. He loved them even as *Christ loved us*.

6. And *Love is not puffed up *||*. It abases to the Dust every Soul wherein it dwells. Accord-

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ingly,

* Rom. v. 5. † Gal. iv. 6. ‡ 1 John v. 10. || 1 John iii. 1.
§ 1 John iv. 11. †† Psal. cxlv. 9. *|| 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

ingly he was *lowly of Heart*, little, mean, and vile in his own Eyes. He neither sought nor received the *Praise of Men*, but that which cometh of *God only*. He was meek and long-suffering, gentle to all, and easy to be intreated. Faithfulness and Truth never forsook him; they were bound about his Neck, and wrote on the Table of his Heart. By the same Spirit he was enabled to be temperate in all Things, refraining his Soul even as a weaned Child. He was crucified to the World, and the World crucified to him: Superior to the Desire of the Flesh, the Desire of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. By the same Almighty Love was he saved, both from Passion and Pride, from Lust and Vanity, from Ambition and Covetousness, and from every Temper which was not in Christ.

7. It may be easily believed, he who had this Love in his Heart, would *work no Evil to his Neighbour*. It was impossible for him, knowingly and designedly, to do Harm to any Man. He was at the greatest Distance from Cruelty and Wrong, from any unjust or unkind Action. With the same Care did he *set a Watch before his Mouth, and keep the Door of his Lips*; lest he should offend in Tongue, either against Justice, or against Mercy or Truth. He *put away all Lying, Falshood and Fraud*; neither was *Guile found in his Mouth*. He *spake Evil of no Man*; nor did an unkind Word ever come out of his Lips.

8. And as he was deeply sensible of the Truth of that Word, *without me ye can do nothing*, and consequently, of the Need he had to be *water'd of God every Moment*; so he continued daily in all the Ordinances of God, the stated Channels of his Grace to Man. *In the Apostle's Doctrines or Teaching*, receiving that Food of the Soul with
all

all Readiness of Heart, *in the breaking of Bread*, which he found to be *the Communion of the Body of Christ*, and *in the Prayers and Praises* offered up by the great Congregation. And thus he daily *grew in Grace*, increasing in Strength, in the Knowledge and Love of God.

9. But it did not satisfy him, barely to abstain from doing Evil. His Soul was a-thirst to do Good. The Language of his Heart continually was, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. My Lord went about doing Good; and shall not I tread in his Steps?* As he had Opportunity therefore, if he could do no Good of a higher kind, he fed the Hungry, clothed the Naked, helped the Fatherless or Stranger, visited and assisted them that were Sick or in Prison. He *gave all his Goods to feed the Poor*. He rejoiced to labour or to suffer for them; and wherein soever he might profit another, there especially to *deny himself*. He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembering the Word of his Lord, *Insomuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me* *.

10. Such was *Christianity* in its Rise. Such was a Christian in ancient Days. Such was every one of those, who *when they heard the Threatenings of the Chief Priests and Elders, lift up their Voice to God with one Accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The Multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart and of one Soul.* (So did the Love of Him in whom they had believed, constrain them to love one another.) *Neither said any of them that ought of the Things which he possessed was his own; but they had all Things common.* So fully were they crucified to the World, and the

* Matth. xxv. 40.

World crucified to them. *And they continued stedfastly with one Accord in the Apostles Doctrines, and in the Breaking of Bread, and in Prayer. And great Grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: For as many as were Possessors of Lands or Houses sold them, and brought the Prices of the Things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles Feet; and Distribution was made unto every Man, according as he had need*.*

II. 1. Let us take a View, in the second Place, of this *Christianity*, as spreading from one to another, and so gradually making its Way into the World. For such was the Will of God concerning it, who *did not light a Candle to put it under a Bushel, but that it might give Light to all that were in the House.* And this our Lord had declared to his first Disciples, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World;* at the same Time that he gave that general Command, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven †.*

2. And indeed, supposing a few of these Lovers of Mankind, to see *the whole World lying in Wickedness,* Can we believe they would be unconcerned at the Sight, at the Misery of those for whom their Lord died? Would not their Bowels yearn over them, and their Hearts *melt away for very Trouble?* Could they then stand idle all the Day long, even were there no Command from him whom they loved? Rather would they not labour, by all possible Means, to *pluck some of these Brands out of the Burning?* Undoubtedly they would:

* Acts iv. 31----35. † Matth. v. 13, 14, 15, 16.

would: They would spare no Pains to bring back whomsoever they could of those poor *Sheep that had gone astray, to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls* *.

3. So the Christians of old did. They laboured, having Opportunity, * *to do Good unto all Men*, warning them to *flee from the Wrath to come, now, now, to escape the Damnation of Hell*. They declared, † *The Times of Ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all Men every where to repent*. They cried aloud, *Turn ye, turn ye from your Evil Ways; so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin* §. They || *reasoned with them of Temperance and Righteousness, or Justice, of the Virtues opposite to their reigning Sins, and of Judgment to come, of the Wrath of GOD which would surely be executed on evil Doers in that Day when he should judge the World*.

4. They endeavoured herein to speak to every Man severally as he had need. To the Careless, to those who lay unconcerned in Darknes and in the Shadow of Death, they thundered, *Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light*: But to those who were already awakened out of Sleep, and groaning under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD, their Language was, *We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the Propitiation for our Sins*. Mean Time those who had believed, they provoked to Love and to good Works; to patient Continuance in Well-doing; and to abound more and more in that Holiness, without which no Man can see the Lord **.

G 3

5. And

* 1 Pet. ii. 25.
§ Ezek. xviii. 30.

† Gal. vi. 10.
|| Acts xxiv. 25.

‡ Acts xvii. 30.
** Heb. xii. 14.

5. And their Labour was not in vain in the Lord. His *Word ran and was glorified. It grew mightily and prevailed.* But so much the more did Offences prevail also. The World in general were offended, *because they testified of it, that the Works thereof were evil ††.* The Men of Pleasure were offended, not only because these Men were made, as it were, *to reprove their Thoughts.* (He professeth, said they, *to have the Knowledge of God: He calleth himself the Child of the Lord: His Life is not like other Mens; his Ways are of another Fashion: He abstaineth from our Ways, as from Filthiness: He maketh his boast, that God is his Father *.*) But much more, because so many of their Companions were taken away, and would no more *run with them to the same Excess of Riot †.* The Men of Reputation were offended, because, as the Gospel spread, they declined in the Esteem of the People; and because many no longer dared to *give them flattering Titles, or to pay Man the Homage due to God only.* The Men of Trade called one another together, and said, ‡ *Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth. But ye see and hear that these Men have persuaded and turned away much People. So that this our Craft is in Danger to be set at nought.* Above all, the Men of Religion, so called, the Men of *Outside Religion,* “the Saints of the World,” were offended and ready at every Opportunity to cry out, § *Men of Israel, Help! We have found these Men! Pesticent Fellows, Movers of Sedition*
throughout

†† John vii. 7. * Wild. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. † 1 Pet.,
iv. 4. ‡ Acts xix, 25, &c. § Acts xxiv. 5.

throughout the World. || These are the Men that teach all Men, every where, against the People, and against the Law.

6. Thus it was that the Heavens grew black with Clouds, and the Storm gathered a main. For the more Christianity spread, *the more Hurt was done*, in the Account of those who received it not, and the Number increased of those who were more and more enraged at these ** Men who thus turned the World upside down; insomuch that they more and more cried out, *Away with such Fellows from the Earth; it is not fit that they should live*, yea, and sincerely believed, that *whosoever should kill them, would do God Service*.

7. Mean while they did not fail to †† cast out their Name as evil: So that this †† Sect was every where spoken against. §§ Men said all manner of Evil of them, even as had been done of the Prophets that were before them. And whatsoever any would affirm, others would believe. So that Offences grew as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude. And hence arose, at the Time fore-ordain'd of the Father, Persecution in all its Forms. Some, for a Season, suffered only Shame and Reproach; some, *the Spoiling of their Goods*; some *had Trial of Mocking and Scourging*, some *of Bonds and Imprisonment*; and others *resisted unto Blood* *.

8. Now it was, that the Pillars of Hell were shaken, and the Kingdom of God spread more and more. Sinners were every where turned from
Dark-

|| Acts xxi. 28. ** Acts xvii. 6. †† Luke vi. 22.
 †† Acts xxviii. 22. §§ Matth. v. 11. † Heb. x. 34. --- xi.
 37, &c.

Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God. He gave his Children such a Mouth, and such Wisdom, as all their Adversaries could not resist. And their Lives were of equal Force with their Words. But, above all, their Sufferings spake to all the World. They approved themselves the Servants of God, in Afflictions, in Necessities; in Distresses; in Stripes, in Imprisonments, in Tumults, in Labours; in Perils in the Sea, in Perils in the Wilderness; in Weariness and Painfulness, in Hunger and Thirst, in Cold and Nakedness †. And when having fought the good Fight, they were led as Sheep to the Slaughter, and offered up on the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith, then the Blood of each found a Voice, and the Heathen owned, He being dead, yet speaketh.

9. Thus did Christianity spread itself in the Earth. But how soon did the Tares appear with the Wheat? And the *Mystery of Iniquity* work as well as the *Mystery of Godliness*! How soon did Satan find a Seat, even in the *Temple of God*! Till the *Woman* fled into the *Wilderness*, and the *Faithful* were again diminished from the *Children of Men*. Here we tread a beaten Path: The still increasing Corruptions of the succeeding Generation, have been largely described from Time to Time, by those Witnesses God raised up, to shew that he had built his Church upon a Rock, and the *Gates of Hell* should not wholly prevail against her ‡.

III. 1. But shall we not see greater Things than these? Yea, greater than have been yet from the Beginning of the World. Can Satan
cause

† = Cor. vi. 4, &c.

‡ Matth. xvi. 18,

cause the Truth of GOD to fail, or his Promises to be of none Effect? If not, the Time will come, when *Christianity* will prevail over all, and cover the Earth. Let us stand a little, and survey (the third Thing which was proposed) this strange Sight, a *Christian World*. Of this the *Prophets* of old enquired and searched diligently* : Of this the Spirit which was in them testified, It shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their Swords into Plough-shares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation; neither shall they learn War any more †. In that Day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the People. To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Lord shall set his Hand again to recover the Remnant of his People; and he shall set up an Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble the Outcasts of Israel, and gather together the Dispersed of Judah, from the four Corners of the Earth ‡. The Wolf shall then dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid: And the Calf and the young Lion and the Fatling together; and a little Child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy, saith the Lord, in all my Holy Mountain. For the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea §.

2. To

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c. † Isa. ii. 2, 4. ‡ Isa. xi. 10, 11, 12. § Isa. xi. 6---9.

2. To the same Effect are the Words of the great Apostle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. *Hath God cast away his People? God forbid. But through their Fall Salvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminishing of them be the Riches of the Gentiles, how much more their Fulness? For I would not, Brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this Mystery,—That Blindness in Part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in: And so all Israel shall be saved* ||.

3. Suppose now the Fulness of Time to be come, and the Prophecies to be accomplished, What a Prospect is this? All is *Peace, Quietness, and Assurance for ever.* Here is no *Din of Arms, no confused Noise, no Garments rolled in Blood.* *Destructions are come to a perpetual End: Wars are ceased from the Earth.* Neither are there any intestine Jars remaining; no Brother rising up against Brother; no Country or City divided against itself, and tearing out its own Bowels. Civil Discord is at an End for evermore, and none is left either to destroy or hurt his Neighbour. Here is no Oppression to *make even the wise Man mad; no Extortion to grind the Face of the Poor; no Robbery or Wrong; no Rapine or Injustice; for all are content with such Things as they possess.* Thus *Righteousness and Peace have kisseth each other**; they have taken *Root and filled the Land: Righteousness flourishing out of the Earth, and Peace looking down from Heaven.*

4. And

|| Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 26.

* Psal. lxxxv. 10.

4. And with Righteousness or Justice, Mercy is also found. The Earth is no longer *full of cruel Habitations*. *The Lord hath destroyed both the blood-thirsty and malicious, the envious and revengeful Man*. Were there any Provocation, there is none that now knoweth, to *return Evil for Evil*: But indeed there is none doth Evil, no not one; for all are *harmless as Doves*. And being *filled with Peace and Joy in Believing*, and united in one Body, by one Spirit, they all *love as Brethren*, they are *all of one Heart and of one Soul*. Neither saith any of them, that ought of the *Things which he possesseth is his own*. There is none among them that lacketh; for every Man loveth his Neighbour as himself. And all walk by one Rule, *Whatever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them*.

5. It follows, that no unkind Word can ever be heard among them: No *Strife of Tongues*, no Contention of any kind, no Railing or Evil-speaking; but every one *opens his Mouth with Wisdom, and in his Tongue there is the Law of Kindness*. Equally incapable are they of Fraud or Guile: Their *Love is without Dissimulation*: Their Words are always the just Expression of their Thoughts, opening a Window into their Breast, that whosoever desires may look into their Hearts, and see that only Love and GOD are there.

6. Thus, where *the Lord Omnipotent taketh to himself his mighty Power and reigneth*, doth he *subdue all Things to himself*; cause every Heart to overflow with Love, and fill every Mouth with Praise. *Happy are the People that are in such a Case; yea, blessed are the People who have*

have the Lord for their God*. Arise, shine, (saith the Lord) for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Thou hast known that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redcemer the mighty God of Jacob. I have made thy Officers Peace, and thy Exacters Righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy Land, Wasting nor Destruction within thy Borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praise. Thy People are all righteous; they shall inherit the Land for ever: The Branch of my Planting, the Work of my Hands, that I may be glorified. The Sun shall no more be thy Light by Day; neither for Brightness shall the Moon give Light unto thee: But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory †.

IV. Having thus briefly considered *Christianity*, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the Earth, it remains only that I should close the whole with a plain practical Application.

I. And first, I would ask, Where does this *Christianity* now exist? Where, I pray, do the *Christians* live? Which is the Country, the Inhabitants whereof are all thus filled with the Holy Ghost? Are all of one Heart and of one Soul? Cannot suffer one among them to lack any Thing, but continually give to every Man as he hath Need? Who one and all have the Love of GOD filling their Hearts, and constraining them to love their Neighbour as themselves? Who have all put on Bowels of Mercy, Humbleness of Mind, Gentleness, Long-suffering? Who offend
not

* Psal. cxliv. 15.

† Isa. lx. 1, 16---19.

not in any Kind, either by Word or Deed, against Justice, Mercy, or Truth? But in every Point do unto all Men, as they would these should do unto them. With what Propriety can we term any a *Christian Country*, which does not answer this Description? Why then, let us confess we have never yet seen a *Christian Country* upon Earth.

2. I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of GOD, if ye do account *me* a Madman or a Fool, yet *as a Fool bear with me*. It is utterly needful that some one should use great Plainness of Speech towards you. It is more especially needful at *this Time*; for who knoweth but it is the *last*? Who knoweth how soon the Righteous Judge may say, *I will no more be intreated for this People*. Tho' Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in *this Land*, they should but deliver their own Souls. And who will use this Plainness, if I do not? Therefore I, even I, will speak. And I adjure you, by the Living GOD, that ye steel not your Breasts against receiving a Blessing at my Hands. Do not say in your Heart, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*: Or, in other Words, Lord, thou shalt not send, by whom thou wilt send? Let me rather perish in my Blood, than be saved by this Man!

3. Brethren, *I am persuaded better Things of you, tho' I thus speak*. Let me ask you then, in tender Love, and in the Spirit of Meekness, Is this City a *Christian City*? Is *Christianity, Scriptural Christianity*, found here? Are we, considered as a Community of Men, so filled with the *Holy Ghost*, as to enjoy in our Hearts, and shew forth in our Lives, the genuine Fruits of that Spirit? Are all the Magistrates, all Heads and

Governors of Colleges and Halls, and their respective Societies, (not to speak of the Inhabitants of the Town) *of one Heart and one Soul?* *Is the Love of GOD shed abroad in our Hearts?* Are our Tempers the same that were in him? And are our Lives agreeable thereto? Are we *Holy as he which hath called us is holy, in all manner of Conversation?*

4. I intreat you to observe, that here are no *peculiar Notions* now under Consideration; that the Question moved is not concerning *doubtful Opinions*, of one kind or another; but concerning the undoubted, fundamental Branches (if there be any such) of our *common Christianity*. And for the Decision thereof, I appeal to your own Conscience, guided by the Word of God. He therefore that is not condemned by his own Heart, let him go free.

5. In the Fear then, and in the Presence of the Great GOD, before whom both you and I shall shortly appear, I pray you that are in Authority over us, whom I reverence for your Office Sake, to consider, (and not after the Manner of Dissemblers with GOD) Are you *filled with the Holy Ghost?* Are ye lively Portraits of Him, whom ye are appointed to represent among Men? *I have said, Ye are Gods*, ye Magistrates and Rulers; ye are by Office so nearly allied to the GOD of Heaven! In your several Stations and Degrees, ye are to shew forth unto us *the Lord our Governor*. Are all the Thoughts of your Hearts, all your Tempers and Desires, suitable to your High Calling? Are all your Words like unto those which come out of the Mouth of GOD? Is there in all your Actions Dignity and Love? A Greatness which Words cannot express, which can flow only from an Heart full of
 GOD—

GOD—and yet consistent with the Character of *Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm!*

6. Ye venerable Men, who are more especially called to form the tender Minds of Youth, to dispel thence the Shades of Ignorance and Error, and train them up to be wise unto Salvation, Are you *filled with the Holy Ghost?* With all those *Fruits of the Spirit*, which your important Office so indispensably requires? Is your Heart whole with God? Full of Love and Zeal to set up his Kingdom on Earth? Do you continually remind those under your Care, that the one rational End of all our Studies, is to know, love, and serve *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?* Do you inculcate upon them, Day by Day, that *Love alone never faileth?* (Whereas, *whether there be Tongues, they shall fail, or Philosophical Knowledge, it shall vanish away:*) And that without Love, all Learning is but splendid Ignorance, pompous Folly, Vexation of Spirit. Has all you teach an actual Tendency to the Love of God, and of all Mankind for his sake? Have you an Eye to this End in whatever you prescribe, touching the Kind, the Manner, and the Measure of their Studies; desiring and labouring, that wherever the Lot of these young Soldiers of Christ is cast, they may be so many *burning and shining Lights, adorning the Gospel of Christ* in all Things? And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your Strength in the vast Work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your Might? Exerting every Faculty of your Soul? Using every Talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your Power?

7. Let it not be said, that I speak here, as if all under your Care were intended to be Clergymen. Not so: I only speak as if they were all intended to be Christians. But what Example is set them by us who enjoy the Beneficence of our Forefathers; by Fellows, Students, Scholars; more especially those who are of some Rank and Eminence? Do ye, Brethren, abound in the Fruits of the Spirit, in Lowliness of Mind, in Self-denial and Mortification, in Seriousness and Composure of Spirit, in Patience, Meekness, Sobriety, Temperance, and in unwearied, restless Endeavours, to do good, in every kind, unto all Men; to relieve their outward Wants, and to bring their Souls to the true Knowledge and Love of God? Is this the general Character of Fellows of Colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, Have not Pride and Haughtiness of Spirit, Impatience and Peevishness, Sloth and Indolence, Gluttony and Sensuality, and even a proverbial Uselessness, been objected to us, *perhaps* not always by our Enemies, nor *wholly* without Ground? O that God would roll away this Reproach from us, that the very Memory of it might perish for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately consecrated to God, called to *minister in holy Things*. Are we then Patterns to the rest, *in Word, in Conversation, in Charity; in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity**? Is there written on our Forehead and on our Heart, *Holiness to the Lord*? From what Motives did we enter upon this Office? Was it indeed with a single Eye to *serve God, trusting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon us this Ministration, for the promoting of his Glory, and the edifying of his People*? And have we clearly determined, by God's Grace, to give our-

* 1 Tim. iv. 12.

selves wholly to this Office? Do we forsake and set aside, as much as in us lies, all worldly Cares and Studies? Do we apply ourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our Cares and Studies this Way? Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others also? Do we know God? Do we know Jesus Christ? Hath God revealed his Son in us? And hath he made us able Ministers of the New Covenant? Where then are the Seals of our Apostleship? Who that were dead in Trespasses and Sin, have been quickened by our Word? Have we a burning Zeal to save Souls from Death, so that for their sake we often forget even to eat our Bread? Do we speak plain, by Manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God? Are we dead to the World and the Things of the World, laying up all our Treasure in Heaven? Do we lord it over God's Heritage? Or are we the least, the Servants of all? When we bear the Reproach of Christ, Does it sit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are smitten on the one Check, Do we resent it? Are we impatient of Affronts? Or do we turn the other also; not resisting the Evil, but overcoming Evil with Good? Have we a bitter Zeal, inciting us to strive sharply and passionately with them that are out of the Way? Or is our Zeal the Flame of Love, so as to direct all our Words with Sweetness, Lowliness, and Meekness of Wisdom?*

9. Once more, What shall we say concerning the Youth of this Place? Have you either the Form or the Power of Christian Godliness? Are

2 Cor. iv. 2.

you humble, teachable, advisable; or stubborn, elf-willed, heady and high-minded? Are you obedient to your Superiors as to Parents? Or do you despise those to whom you owe the tenderest Reverence? Are you diligent in your easy Business, pursuing your Studies with all your Strength? Do you *redeem the Time*, crowding as much Work into every Day as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conscious to yourselves, that you waste away Day after Day, either in reading what has no Tendency to *Christianity*, or in Gaming, or in—you know not what? Are you better Managers of your Fortune than of your Time? Do you, out of Principle, take Care to *owe no Man any Thing*? Do you *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*; to spend it in the more immediate Worship of God? When you are in his House, Do you consider that God is there? Do you behave, *as seeing Him that is invisible*? Do you know how to *possess your Bodies, in Sanctification and Honour*? Are not Drunkenness and Uncleaness found among you? Yea, Are there not of you, who *glory in their Shame*? Do not many of you *take the Name of God in vain*, perhaps habitually, without either Remorse or Fear? Yea, Are there not a Multitude of you that are sworn? I fear, a swiftly-increasing Multitude. Be not surprized, Brethren. Before God and this Congregation, I own myself to have been of that Number; solemnly swearing to *observe all those Customs*, which I then knew nothing of; *and those Statutes*, which I did not so much as read over, either then, or for some Years after. What is Perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a Weight of Sin, yea, Sin of no common

Dye,

Dye, lieth upon us ! And doth not *the Most High regard it ?*

10. May it not be one of the Consequences of this, that so many of you are a Generation of *Triflers*; Triflers with God, with one another, and with your own Souls? For how few of you spend, from one Week to another, a single Hour in private Prayer? How few have any Thought of God in the general Tenor of your Conversation? Who of you is, in any Degree, acquainted with the Work of his Spirit, his supernatural Work in the Souls of Men? Can you bear, unless now and then, in a Church, any Talk of the Holy Ghost? Would you not take it for granted, if one began such a Conversation, that it was either *Hypocrisy* or *Enthusiasm*? In the Name of the Lord God Almighty, I ask, What Religion are *you* of? Even the Talk of *Christianity* ye cannot, will not bear. O my Brethren! What a *Christian City* is this? *It is Time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine Hand!*

11. For indeed, what Probability, what Possibility rather, (speaking after the Manner of Men) is there that *Christianity, Scriptural Christianity*, should be again the Religion of this Place? That all Orders of Men among us should speak and live as Men *filled with the Holy Ghost*? By whom should this *Christianity* be restored? By those of you that are in Authority? Are you convinced then, that this is *Scriptural Christianity*? Are you desirous it should be restored? And do ye not count your Fortune, Liberty, Life, dear unto yourselves, so ye may be instrumental in the restoring it? But suppose ye have this Desire, who hath any Power proportioned to the Effect? Perhaps some of you have made a few faint Attempts,

tempts, but with how small Success? Shall *Christianity* then be restored by young, unknown, inconsiderable Men? I know not whether ye yourselves could suffer it. Would not some of you cry out, “Young Man, in so doing thou reproachest us?” But there is no Danger of your being put to the Proof; so hath *Iniquity overspread us like a Flood*. Whom then shall God send? The Famine, the Pestilence, (the last Messengers of God to a guilty Land) or the Sword? *The Armies of the Romish Aliens*, to reform us into our first Love? Nay, rather let us fall into thy Hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the Hand of Man.

Lord, save or we perish! Take us out of the Mire, that we sink not! O help us against these Enemies, for vain is the Help of Man. Unto thee all things are possible. According to the Greatness of thy Power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and preserve us in the Manner that seemest thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt.



JUSTIFICATION by FAITH.

A

S E R M O N

On ROMANS iv. 5.



ROMANS iv. 5.

To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted to him for Righteousness.

1. **H**OW a Sinner may be justified before GOD, the Lord and Judge of all, is a Question of no common Importance, to every Child of Man. It contains the Foundation of all our Hope; in as much as while we are at Enmity with GOD, there can be no true Peace, no solid Joy, either in Time or in Eternity. What Peace can there be, while our own Heart condemns us? And much more, He that *is greater than our Heart and knoweth all Things?* What solid Joy, either in this World or that to come, while *the Wrath of GOD abideth on us?*

2. And yet how little hath this important Question been understood? What confused Notions have many had concerning it? Indeed not only confused, but often utterly false; contrary to the Truth, as Light to Darkness: Notions absolutely inconsistent with the Oracles of GOD, and with the whole Analogy of Faith. And hence, erring concerning the very Foundation, they could not
2 possibly

possibly build thereon : At least, not *Gold, Silver, or precious Stones*, which would endure when *tried as by Fire*; but only *Hay and Stubble*, neither acceptable to GOD, nor profitable to Man.

3. In order to do Justice, as far as in me lies, to the vast Importance of the Subject, to save those that seek the Truth in Sincerity, from *vain Jangling and Strife of Words*, to clear the Confusedness of Thought, into which so many have already been led thereby, and to give them true and just Conceptions of this great Mystery of Godliness, I shall endeavour to shew,

First, What is the general Ground of this whole Doctrine of Justification.

Secondly, What Justification is.

Thirdly, Who they are that are justified. And,

Fourthly, On what Terms they are justified.

I. I am, first, to shew, What is the general Ground of this whole Doctrine of Justification.

1. In the Image of GOD was Man made, holy as he that created him is holy; merciful as the Author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect. As GOD is Love, so Man dwelling in Love, dwelt in GOD, and GOD in him. GOD made him to be *an Image of his own Eternity*, an incorruptible Picture of the GOD of Glory. He was accordingly pure, as GOD is pure, from every Spot of Sin. He knew not Evil in any Kind or Degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. He

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loved the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, and with all his Mind and Soul and Strength.

2. To Man thus upright and perfect, GOD gave a perfect Law, to which he required full and perfect Obedience. He required full Obedience in every Point, and this to be performed without any Intermiffion, from the Moment Man became a living Soul, till the Time of his Trial should be ended. No Allowance was made for any falling short. As indeed there was no need of any; Man being altogether equal to the Task assigned, and thoroughly furnished for every good Word and Work.

3. To the entire Law of Love which was written in his Heart (against which perhaps he could not sin directly) it seemed good to the sovereign Wisdom of GOD, to superadd one positive Law: *Thou shalt not eat of the Fruit of the Tree that groweth in the midst of the Garden: Annexing that Penalty thereto, In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

4. Such then was the State of Man in Paradise. By the free, unmerited Love of GOD, he was holy and happy; he knew, loved, enjoy'd GOD, which is (in substance) Life everlasting. And in this Life of Love, he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey GOD in all Things: But if he disobey'd him in any, he was to forfeit all. *In that Day, said GOD, thou shalt surely die.*

5. Man did disobey GOD. He *eat of the Tree, of which GOD commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it.* And in that Day he was condemn'd, by the righteous Judgment of GOD. Then also the Sentence whereof he was

warn'd before, began to take place upon him. For the Moment he tasted that Fruit, he died: His Soul died, was separated from GOD; separate from whom the Soul has no more Life, than the Body has when separate from the Soul. His Body likewise became corruptible and mortal; so that Death then took hold on this also. And being already dead in Spirit, dead to GOD, dead in Sin, he hastened on to Death everlasting; to the Destruction both of Body and Soul, in the Fire never to be quenched.

6. Thus *by one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin. And so Death passed upon all Men*, as being contain'd in him who was the common Father and Representative of us all. Thus *through the Offence of one*, all are dead, dead to GOD, dead in Sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal Body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the Sentence of Death eternal. For as *by one Man's Disobedience, all were made Sinners*; so by that Offence of one, *Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*, Rom. v. 12, &c.

7. In this State we were, even all Mankind, when GOD *so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End we might not perish but have everlasting Life*. In the Fulness of Time, he was made Man, another common Head of Mankind, a second general Parent and Representative of the whole human Race. And as such it was that *he bore our Grievs*, the Lord laying upon him *the Iniquities of us all*. Then was he wounded for our Transgressions and bruised for our Iniquities. He made his Soul an Offering for Sin: He pour'd out his Blood for the Transgressors: He *bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree,*

Tree, that by his Stripes we might be healed: And by that one Oblation of himself once offer'd, he hath redeem'd me and all Mankind; having thereby made a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World.

8. In Consideration of this, that the Son of GOD hath *tasted Death for every Man, GOD hath now reconciled the World to himself, not imputing to them their former Trespasses.* And thus, *as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification.* So that for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, GOD now vouchsafes on one only Condition (which himself also enables us to perform) both to remit the Punishment due to our Sins, to reinstate us in his Favour, and to restore our dead Souls to spiritual Life, as the Earnest of Life eternal.

9. This therefore is the general Ground, of the whole Doctrine of *Justification.* By the Sin of the first *Adam*, who was not only the Father, but likewise the Representative of us all, we all fell short of the Favour of GOD, we all became *Children of Wrath:* Or, as the Apostle expresses it, *Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation.* Even so, by the Sacrifice for Sin made by the second *Adam*, as the Representative of us all, ~~GOD~~ is so far reconciled to all the World, that he hath given them a New Covenant. The plain Condition whercof being once fulfilled, *there is no more Condemnation for us, but we are justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*

II. 1. But what is it to be *justified*? What is *Justification*? This was the second Thing which I proposed to shew. And it is evident from what has been already observed, that it is not, the being made actually just and righteous. This is *Sanctification*; which is indeed, in some Degree, the immediate *Fruit* of Justification: But nevertheless is a distinct Gift of GOD, and of a totally different Nature. The one implies, what GOD *does for us* through his Son; the other what he *works in us* by his Spirit. So that altho' some rare Instances may be found, wherein the Term *Justified* or *Justification*, is used in so wide a Sense as to include *Sanctification* also; yet in general Use, they are sufficiently distinguish'd from each other, both by St. *Paul* and the other inspired Writers.

2. Neither is that far-fetch'd Conceit, that Justification is, the clearing us from Accusation, particularly that of *Satan*, easily proveable from any clear Text of holy Writ. In the whole scriptural Account of this Matter, as above laid down, neither that Accuser nor his Accusation appears to be at all taken in. It cannot indeed be denied, that he is the *Accuser of Men*, emphatically so called. But it does in no wise appear, that the great Apostle hath any Reference to this, ~~more~~ or less, in all that he hath written touching Justification, either to the *Romans* or the *Galatians*.

3. It is also far easier to take for granted, than to prove from any clear Scripture-Testimony, that Justification is, the clearing us from the Accusation brought against us by *the Law*. At least,
if

if this forced, unnatural Way of speaking, mean either more or less than this, That whereas we have transgressed the Law of GOD, and thereby deserved the Damnation of Hell, GOD does not inflict on those who are justified, the Punishment which they had deserved.

4. Least of all does Justification imply, that GOD is *deceived* in those whom he *justifies*; that he thinks them to be what in fact they are not, that he accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that GOD judges concerning us, contrary to the real Nature of Things: that he esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous, when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The Judgment of the all-wise GOD, is always according to Truth. Neither can it ever consist with his unerring Wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so. He can no more in this manner confound me with Christ, than with *David* or *Abraham*. Let any Man to whom GOD hath given Understanding, weigh this without Prejudice: and he cannot but perceive that such a Notion of Justification, is neither reconcileable to Reason or Scripture.

5. The plain scriptural Notion of Justification is Pardon, the Forgiveness of Sins. It is that Act of GOD the Father, whereby for the sake of the Propitiation made by the Blood of his Son, he *showeth forth his Righteousness* (or Mercy) *by the Remission of the Sins that are past*. This is the easy, natural Account of it given by *St. Paul*, throughout this whole Epistle. So he explains it himself, more particularly in this, and in the following Chapter. Thus in the next

Verſes but one to the Text, *Bleſſed are they, faith he, whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe Sins are covered: Bleſſed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* To him that is juſtified or forgiven, GOD *will not impute Sin* to his Condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this World or in that which is to come. His Sins, all his paſt Sins, in Thought, Word and Deed, *are covered*, are blotted out: ſhall not be remember'd or mention'd againſt him, any more than if they had not been. GOD will not inflict on that Sinner what he deſerved to ſuffer, becauſe the Son of his Love hath ſuffer'd for him. And from the Time we are *accepted through the Beloved, reconciled to GOD through his Blood*, he loves and bleſſes and watches over us for Good, even as if we had never finned.

Indeed the Apoſtle in one Place ſeems to extend the Meaning of the Word much farther; where he ſays, *Not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified.* Here he appears to refer our Juſtification, to the Sentence of the great Day. And ſo our Lord himſelf unqueſtionably doth, when he ſays, *By thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified: proving thereby, that for every idle Word Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an Account in the Day of Judgment.* But pethaps we can hardly produce another Inſtance, of St. Paul's uſing the Word in that diſtant Senſe. In the general Tenor of his Writings, it is evident he doth not. And leaſt of all in the Text before us, which undeniably ſpeaks, not of thoſe who have already *finished their Courſe*, but of thoſe who are now juſt *ſetting out*, juſt *beginning to run the Race which is ſet before them.*

III.

III. 1. But this is the third Thing which was to be considered, namely, who are they that are justified? And the Apostle tells us expressly, *the Ungodly*: He, that is GOD, *justifieth the Ungodly*: The Ungodly of every Kind and Degree, and none but the Ungodly. *As they that are righteous, need no Repentance*, so they need no Forgiveness. It is only Sinners that have any Occasion for Pardon: It is Sin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveness therefore has an immediate Reference to Sin, and (in this Respect) to nothing else. It is our *Unrighteousness* to which the pardoning GOD is *merciful*: It is our *Iniquity* which he *remembereth no more*.

2. This seems not to be at all consider'd by those, who so vehemently contend, that a Man must be sanctified, that is, holy, before he can be justified: Especially by such of them as affirm, that universal Holiness or Obedience must precede Justification (unless they mean, that Justification at the last Day, which is wholly out of the present Question) so far from it, that the very Supposition, is not only flatly impossible (for where there is no Love of GOD, there is no Holiness; and there is no Love of GOD, but from a Sense of his loving us) but also grossly, intrinsically absurd, contradictory to itself. For it is not a *Saint* but a *Sinner* that is *forgiven*, and under the Notion of a Sinner. GOD *justifieth* not the Godly, but the *Ungodly*; not those that are holy already, but the Unholy. Upon what Condition he doth this, will be consider'd quickly: But whatever it is, it cannot be Holiness. To assert this is to say, the Lamb of GOD takes away,

away, only those Sins which were taken away before.

3. Does then the good Shepherd seek and save only those that are found already? No. He seeks and saves that which is lost. He pardons those who *need* his pardoning Mercy. He saves from the Guilt of Sin (and at the same time from the Power) Sinners of every Kind, of every Degree: Men who till then were altogether ungodly; in whom the Love of the Father was not; and consequently, in whom dwelt no good Thing, no good or truly Christian Temper: But all such as were evil and abominable, Pride, Anger, Love of the World, the genuine Fruits of that *carnal Mind, which is Enmity against GOD.*

4. These *who are sick, the Burden of whose Sins is intolerable*, are they that *need a Physician*; these who are guilty, who groan under the Wrath of GOD, are they that need a Pardon. These who are *condemned already*, not only by GOD, but also by their own Conscience, as by a thousand Witnesses, of all their Ungodliness, both in Thought and Word and Work, cry aloud for him that *justifieth the Ungodly, through the Redemption that is in Jesus: The Ungodly and him that worketh not*; that worketh not before he is justified; any thing that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his Heart is necessarily, essentially evil, till the Love of GOD is shed abroad therein. And while the Tree is corrupt, so are the Fruits; *for an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit.*

5. If it be objected, “Nay, but a Man, before he is justified, may feed the Hungry, or clothe the Naked; and these are good Works:”

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The Answer is easy. He *may* do these, even before he is justified. And these are, in one Sense, *Good Works*; they are *good and profitable to Men*. But it does not follow, that they are, strictly speaking, good in themselves, or good in the Sight of **GOD**. All truly *good Works* (to use the Words of our Church) *follow after Justification*. And they are therefore good and *acceptable to GOD in Christ*, because they *spring out of a true and living Faith*. By a Parity of Reason, all *Works done before Justification*, are not good, in the Christian Sense, *forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ* (tho' from some kind of Faith in **GOD** they may spring) *yea rather, for that they are not done, as GOD hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not* (how strange soever it may appear to some) *but they have the Nature of Sin*.

6. Perhaps those who doubt of this, have not duly considered the weighty Reason which is here assign'd, why no Works done before Justification, can be truly and properly good. The Argument plainly runs thus:

No Works are good which are not done as **GOD** hath willed and commanded them to be done:

But no Works done before Justification are done as **GOD** hath willed and commanded them to be done:

Therefore no Works done before Justification are good.

The first Proposition is self-evident. And the second, That no Works done before Justification, are done as **GOD** hath willed and commanded them to be done, will appear equally plain and undeniably,

undeniable, if we only consider GOD hath willed and commanded, that *all our Works* should be done in Charity, (*ἐν ἀγάπῃ*) in Love, in that Love to GOD, which produces Love to all Mankind. But none of our Works can be done in this Love, while the Love of the Father (of GOD as our Father) is not in us. And this Love cannot be in us, till we receive the Spirit of Adoption, crying in our Hearts, *Abba, Father*. If therefore GOD doth not justify the Ungodly, and him that (in this Sense) *worketh not*, then hath Christ died in vain; then notwithstanding his Death, can no Flesh living be justified.

IV. 1. But on what Terms then is he justified, who is altogether *ungodly*, and till that Time, *worketh not*? On one alone, which is Faith. He believeth in him that justifieth the Ungodly. And he that believeth is not condemn'd: Yea, he is passed from Death unto Life. For the Righteousness (or Mercy) of GOD is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe:— Whom GOD hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood: that he might be just, and (consistently with his Justice) the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus: Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law: without previous Obedience to the Moral Law, which indeed he could not till now perform. That it is the Moral Law, and that alone which is here intended, appears evidently from the Words that follow. Do we then make void the Law through Faith? GOD forbid! Yea, we establish the Law. What Law do we establish by Faith? Not the Ritual Law: Not

Not the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*. In no wise ; but the great, unchangeable Law of Love, the holy Love of God and of our Neighbour.

2. Faith in general is, a divine, supernatural *ἔλεγχος*, *Evidence* or *Conviction of Things not seen*, not discoverable by our bodily Senses, as being either past, future or spiritual. Justifying Faith implies, not only a Divine Evidence or Conviction, that *GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself*, but a sure Trust and Confidence, that Christ died for *my* Sins, that he loved *me* and gave himself for *me*. And at what Time soever a Sinner thus believes, be it in early Childhood, in the Strength of his Years, or when he is old and hoary-hair'd, GOD justifieth that ungodly one : GOD for the sake of his Son pardoneth and absolveth, him who had in him till then no good Thing. Repentance indeed GOD had given him before : But that Repentance was neither more nor less, than a deep Sense of the Want of all Good, and the Presence of all Evil. And whatever Good he hath or doth from that Hour, when he first believes in GOD through Christ, Faith does not *find* but *bring*. This is the Fruit of Faith. First the Tree is good, and then the Fruit is good also.

3. I cannot describe the Nature of this Faith better, than in the Words of our own Church. "The only Instrument of Salvation" (whereof Justification is one Branch) "is Faith : that is, a sure Trust and Confidence, that GOD both hath and will forgive our Sins, that he hath accepted us again into his Favour, for the Merits of Christ's Death and Passion.—But here we must take heed that we do not halt with GOD, through an inconstant,

constant, wavering Faith. *Peter* coming to Christ upon the Water, because he fainted in Faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be fear'd, that we should sink as *Peter* did, not into the Water, but into the bottomless Pit of Hell-fire." Second Sermon on the Passion.

“ Therefore have a sure and constant Faith, not only that the Death of Christ is available for all the World, but that he hath made a full and sufficient Sacrifice for *thee*, a perfect cleansing of *thy* Sins, so that thou mayst say with the Apostle, He loved *thee* and gave himself for *thee*. For this is to make Christ *thine own*, and to apply his Merits unto *thyself*.” Sermon on the Sacrament, first Part.

4. By affirming that this Faith is the Term or Condition of Justification, I mean, first, that there is no Justification without it. *He that believeth not is condemn'd already*; and so long as he believeth not, that Condemnation cannot be removed, but *the Wrath of GOD abideth on him*. As there is no other Name given under Heaven than that of *Jesus of Nazareth*, no other Merit whereby a condemn'd Sinner can ever be saved from the Guilt of Sin; so there is no other Way of obtaining a Share in his Merit, than *by Faith in his Name*. So that as long as we are without this Faith, we are *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise*, we are *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel*, and *without GOD in the World*. Whatsoever Virtues (so call'd) a Man may have (I speak of those unto whom the Gospel is preach'd; for *what have I to do to judge them that are without?*) whatsoever good Works (so accounted) he may do,

do, it profiteth not; he is still a *Child of Wrath*, still under the Curse, till he believes in Jesus.

5. Faith therefore is the *necessary* Condition of Justification. Yea, and the *only necessary* Condition thereof. This is the second Point carefully to be observed; That the very Moment GOD giveth Faith (*for it is the Gift of GOD*) to the *Ungodly, that worketh not, that Faith is counted to him for Righteousness*. He hath no Righteousness at all, antecedent to this, not so much as negative Righteousness or Innocence. But *Faith is imputed to him for Righteousness*, the very Moment that he believeth. Not that GOD (as was observed before) thinketh him to be, what he is not. But as *he made Christ to be Sin for us*, that is, treated him as a Sinner, punished him for our Sins, so he counteth us righteous, from the Time we believe in him: that is, he doth not punish us for our Sins, yea, treats us as tho' we were guiltless and righteous.

6. Surely the Difficulty of assenting to this Proposition, That Faith is the *only Condition* of Justification, must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus much, That it is the only Thing without which none is justified; the only Thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to Pardon. As on the one hand, tho' a Man should have every thing else, without Faith, yet he cannot be justified; so on the other, tho' he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he hath Faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a Sinner of any Kind or Degree,

gree, in a full Sense of his total Ungodliness, of his utter Inability to think, speak or do Good, and his absolute Meettness for Hell-fire: Suppose, I say, this Sinner, helpless and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the Mercy of GOD in Christ (which indeed he cannot do but by the Grace of GOD) who can doubt, but he is forgiven in that Moment? Who will affirm, that any more is *indispensably required*, before that Sinner can be justified?

Now if there ever was one such Instance from the beginning of the World (And have there not been, and are there not ten thousand times ten thousand?) it plainly follows, that Faith is, in the above Sense, the sole Condition of Justification.

7. It does not become poor, guilty, sinful Worms, who receive whatsoever Blessings they enjoy, (from the least Drop of Water that cools our Tongue, to the immense Riches of Glory in Eternity) of Grace, of mere Favour, and not of Debt, to ask of GOD the Reasons of his Conduct. It is not meet for us to call him in question, *who giveth Account to none of his Ways*; to demand, *Why didst thou make Faith the Condition, the only Condition of Justification? Wherefore didst thou decree, He that believeth, and he only, shall be saved?* This is the very Point on which St. Paul so strongly insists in the ninth Chapter of this Epistle, *viz.* That the Terms of Pardon and Acceptance must depend, not on us, but *on him that calleth us*: that there is no *Unrighteousness with GOD*, in fixing his
 own

own Terms, not according to ours, but his own good Pleasure: who may justly say, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy*, namely, on him who believeth in Jesus. So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, to chuse the Condition on which he shall find Acceptance; but of GOD that sheweth Mercy, that accepteth none at all, but of his own free Love, his unmerited Goodness. Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, viz. on those who believe on the Son of his Love: And whom he will, that is, those who believe not, he hardeneth, leaves at last to the Hardness of their Hearts.

8. One Reason, however, we may humbly conceive, of GOD's fixing this Condition of Justification, *If thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ thou shalt be saved*, was to hide Pride from Man. Pride had already destroyed the very Angels of GOD, had cast down a third Part of the Stars of Heaven. It was likewise in great measure owing to this, when the Tempter said, *Ye shall be as Gods*, that Adam fell from his own Stedfastness, and brought Sin and Death into the World. It was therefore an Instance of Wisdom worthy of GOD, to appoint such a Condition of Reconciliation, for him and all his Posterity, as might effectually humble, might abase them to the Dust. And such is Faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this End. For he that cometh unto GOD by this Faith, must fix his Eye singly on his own Wickedness, on his Guilt and Helplessness, without having the least Regard to any supposed Good

in himself, to any Virtue or Righteousness whatsoever. He must come as a *mere Sinner* inwardly and outwardly, self-destroy'd and self-condemn'd, bringing nothing to GOD but Ungodliness only, pleading nothing of his own but Sin and Misery. Thus it is, and thus alone, when his *Mouth is stopped*, and he stands utterly guilty before GOD, that he can look unto *Jesus*, as the whole and sole *Propitiation for his Sins*. Thus only can he be found in him, and receive the *Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith*.

9. Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these Words, thou vile, helpless, miserable Sinner, I charge thee before GOD the Judge of all, go strait unto him, with all thy Ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thy own Soul, by pleading thy Righteousness, more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroy'd, deserving and dropping into Hell: And thou shalt then find Favour in his Sight, and know that he justifieth the Ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the *Blood of Sprinkling*, as an undone, helpless, damn'd Sinner. Thus look unto *Jesus*! There is *the Lamb of GOD*, who taketh away thy Sins! Plead thou no Works, no Righteousness of thine own! No Humility, Contrition, Sincerity. In no wise. That were, in very Deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou singly, the Blood of the Covenant, the Ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful Soul. Who art thou, that now seest and feelest both thine inward and outward Ungodliness! Thou art the
Man!

Man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge *Thee* for a Child of GOD by Faith. The Lord hath Need of thee. Thou who feelest thou art just fit for Hell, art just fit to advance his Glory: The Glory of his Free Grace, justifying the Ungodly and him that worketh not. O come quickly. Believe in the Lord Jesus; and *thou*, even *thou* art reconciled to GOD.



The Righteousness of Faith.

A

S E R M O N

ON ROMANS x. 5, 6, 7, 8.



ROM. X. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Moses describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, that the Man which doeth those Things shall live by them.

But the Righteousness which is of Faith speaketh on this wise. Say not in thine Heart, who shall ascend into Heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above :

Or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the Dead.

But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart; that is the Word of Faith, which we preach.

1. **T**HE Apostle does not here oppose the Covenant given by *Moses*, to the Covenant given by *Christ*. If we ever imagined this, it was for want of observing, that the latter, as well as the former Part of these Words, were spoken by *Moses* himself, to the People of *Israel*, and that, concerning the Covenant which then was. (*Deut.* xxx. 11, 12, 14.) But it is the Covenant of *Grace*, which *GOD* through *Christ* hath established with Men in all Ages, (as well before, and under the *Jewish* Dispensation, as since *GOD* was manifest in the *Flesh*) which *St. Paul* here opposes to the Covenant of *Works*, made with *Adam* while
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while in Paradise ; but commonly supposed to be the only Covenant which God had made with Man, particularly by those *Jews* of whom the Apostle writes.

2. Of these it was that he so affectionately speaks, in the Beginning of this Chapter. *My Heart's Desire and Prayer to GOD, for Israel is, that they may be saved. For I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal for GOD, but not according to Knowledge. For they being ignorant of GOD's Righteousness* (of the Justification that flows from his mere Grace and Mercy, freely forgiving our Sins through the Son of his Love, through the Redemption which is in Jesus) *and seeking to establish their own Righteousness, (their own Holiness, antecedent to Faith, in him that justifieth the Ungodly, as the Ground of their Pardon and Acceptance) have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of GOD, and consequently seek Death in the Error of their Life.*

3. They were ignorant, that *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*, that by the Oblation of himself once offered, he had put an End to the first Law or Covenant (which indeed was not given by God to *Moses*, but to *Adam* in his State of Innocence) the strict Tenor whereof, without any Abatement was, “Do this and live :” And at the same time purchased for us that better Covenant, “Believe and live ;” Believe and thou shalt be saved ; now saved both from the Guilt and Power of Sin, and, of Consequence, from the Wages of it.

4. And how many are equally ignorant now, even among those who are called by the Name
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of Christ? How many, who have now a *Zeal for God*, yet have it not, *according to Knowledge*: But are still *seeking to establish their own Righteousness*, as the Ground of their Pardon and Acceptance; and therefore vehemently refuse, to *submit themselves unto the Righteousness of GOD*? Surely my Heart's Desire, and Prayer to GOD for you, Brethren, is, that ye may be saved. And in order to remove this grand Stumbling-block out of your way, I will endeavour to shew, First, What *the Righteousness is, which is of the Law*, and what *the Righteousness which is of Faith*; Secondly, The Folly of trusting in *the Righteousness of the Law*, and the Wisdom of *submitting to that which is of Faith*.

I. 1. And, first, *The Righteousness which is of the Law, saith, The Man which doth these Things, shall live by them.* Constantly and perfectly observe all these Things to do them, and then thou shalt live for ever. This Law or Covenant (usually called, The Covenant of *Works*) given by GOD to Man in Paradise, required an Obedience, perfect in all its Parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the Condition of his eternal Continuance, in the Holiness and Happiness wherein he was created.

2. It required, That Man should fulfil all Righteousness, inward and outward, negative and positive: That he should not only abstain from every idle Word, and avoid every evil Work, but should keep every Affection, every Desire, every Thought in Obedience to the Will of GOD. That he should continue holy, as he which had created him was holy, both in Heart
and

and in all manner of Conversation : That he should be pure in Heart, even as GOD is pure ; perfect as his Father in Heaven was perfect : That he should love the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, with all his Soul, with all his Mind, and with all his Strength : That he should love every Soul which GOD had made, even as GOD had loved him : That by this universal Benevolence, he should *dwell in God* (who is Love) *and GOD in him* : That he should serve the Lord his GOD with all his Strength, and in all Things singly aim at his Glory.

3. These were the Things which the Righteousness of the Law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it farther required, That this entire Obedience to God, this inward and outward Holiness, this Conformity both of Heart and Life to his Will, should be perfect in *Degree*. No Abatement, no Allowance could possibly be made, for falling short in any Degree, as to any Jot or Tittle either of the outward or the inward Law. If every Commandment relating to outward Things was obeyed, yet that was not sufficient, unless every one was obeyed with all the Strength, in the highest Measure, and most perfect Manner. Nor did it answer the Demand of this Covenant, to love GOD with every Power and Faculty, unless he were loved with the full Capacity of each, with the whole Possibility of the Soul.

4. One Thing more was indispensably required by the Righteousness of the Law, namely, that this universal Obedience, this perfect Holiness both of Heart and Life, should be perfectly uninterrupted also, should continue without any Interruption,

termission, from the Moment wherein GOD created Man, and breathed into his Noftrils the Breath of Life, until the Days of his Trial should be ended, and he should be confirmed in Life everlasting.

5. The Righteousness then which is of the Law, speaketh on this wise. “Thou, O Man of GOD, stand fast in Love, in the Image of GOD wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in Life, keep the Commandments, which are now written in thy Heart. Love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart. Love as thyself every Soul that he hath made. Desire nothing but GOD. Aim at GOD in every Thought, in every Word and Work. Swerve not in one Motion of Body or Soul, from him thy Mark and the Prize of thy high Calling. And let all that is in thee praise his holy Name, every Power and Faculty of thy Soul, in every Kind, in every Degree, and at every Moment of thine Existence. *This do, and thou shalt live : Thy Light shall shine, thy Love shall flame more and more, till thou art received up into the House of GOD in the Heavens, to reign with him for ever and ever.*”

6. *But the Righteousness which is of Faith speaketh on this wise : Say not in thine Heart, who shall ascend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above (as tho’ it were some impossible Task, which GOD required thee previously to perform, in order to thine Acceptance :) Or, who shall descend into the Deep, that is, to bring up Christ from the Dead ; (as tho’ that were still remaining to be done, for the Sake of which thou wert to be accepted. But what saith it ? The*

Word (according to the Tenor of which, thou mayst now be accepted as an Heir of Life eternal) *is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart, that is, the Word of Faith, which we preach*: The new Covenant which GOD hath now established with sinful Man, through Christ Jesus.

7. *By the Righteousness which is of Faith, is meant, that Condition of Justification (and in consequence of present and final Salvation, if we endure therein unto the End) which was given by GOD to fallen Man, through the Merits and Mediation of his only begotten Son. This was in part revealed to Adam soon after his Fall, being contained in the Original Promise, made to him and his Seed, concerning the Seed of the Woman, who should bruise the Serpent's Head* *. It was a little more clearly revealed to *Abraham*, by the Angel of GOD from Heaven, saying, † *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* It was yet more fully made known to *Moses*, to *David*, and to the Prophets that followed: And through them, to many of the People of GOD, in their respective Generations. But still the Bulk even of these were ignorant of it; and very few understood it clearly. Still *Life and Immortality* were not so brought to Light to the *Jews* of old, as they are now unto us by the *Gospel*.

8. Now this Covenant saith not to sinful Man, “Perform unfinning Obedience and live.” If this were the Term, he would have no more Benefit by all which Christ hath done and suffered

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. xxii. 15, 18.

for him, than if he was required, in order to Life, to *ascend into Heaven and bring down Christ from above*; or to *descend into the Deep, into the invifible World, and bring up Christ from the Dead*. It doth not require any Impossibility to be done (altho' to mere Man, what it requires would be impossible; but not, to Man affifted by the Spirit of GOD :) this were only, to mock human Weakness. Indeed, ftremely speaking, the Covenant of *Grace* doth not require us, to *do* any thing at all, as abfolutely and indifpenfably neceffary in order to our Juftification: But only, to *believe* in him, who, for the Sake of his Son, and the Propitiation which he hath made, *juftifieth the Ungodly that worketh not*, and imputes his Faith to him for Righteoufnefs. Even fo *Abraham believed in the Lord**, and he counted it to him for Righteoufnefs. † *And he received the Sign of Circumcifion, a Seal of the Righteoufnefs of Faith — that he might be the Father of all them that believe — that Righteoufnefs might be imputed unto them alfo.* ‡ *Now it was not written for his fake alone, that it (i. e. Faith) was imputed to him. But for us alfo, to whom it fhall be imputed (to whom Faith fhall be imputed for Righteoufnefs, fhall ftand in the ftand of perfect Obedience, in order to our Acceptance with GOD) if we believe on him who raifed up Jeſus our Lord from the Dead: Who was delivered to Death for our Offences, and was raifed again for our Juftification: “For the Affurance of the Remiffion of our Sins, and of a fecond Life to come to them that believe.”*

9. What faith then the Covenant of Forgiveness, of unmerited Love, of pardoning Mercy? *Believe*

* Gen. xv. 6. † Rom. iv. 11. ‡ Ver. 23, 24, 25.

in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. In the Day thou believest, thou shalt surely live. Thou shalt be restored to the Favour of GOD; and in his Pleasure is Life. Thou shalt be saved from the Curse and from the Wrath of GOD. Thou shalt be quickened from the Death of Sin, into the Life of Righteousness. And if thou endure to the End, believing in Jesus, thou shalt never taste the second Death, but having suffered with thy Lord, shalt also live and reign with him for ever and ever.

10. *Now this Word is nigh thee.* This Condition of Life, is plain, easy, always at hand. *It is in thy Mouth and in thy Heart,* through the Operation of the Spirit of GOD. The Moment *thou believest in thine Heart* in him, whom GOD hath raised from the Dead, and *confessest with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus,* as thy Lord and thy GOD, *thou shalt be saved* from Condemnation, from the Guilt and Punishment of thy former Sins, and shalt have Power to serve GOD in true Holiness, all the remaining Days of thy Life.

11. What is the Difference then between the *Righteousness which is of the Law,* and the *Righteousness which is of Faith?* Between the First Covenant, or the Covenant of Works, and the Second, the Covenant of Grace? The essential, unchangeable Difference is this: The one supposes him to whom it is given, to be already holy and happy, created in the Image and enjoying the Favour of GOD; and prescribes the Condition whereon he may continue therein, in Love and Joy, Life and Immortality. The other supposes him to whom it is given, to be now unholy and unhappy; fallen short of the glorious Image of
GOD,

GOD, having the Wrath of GOD abiding on him, and hastening through Sin, whereby his Soul is dead, to bodily Death and Death everlasting. And to Man in this State, it prescribes the Condition, whereon he may regain the Pearl he has lost: May recover the Favour, and the Image of GOD, may retrieve the Life of GOD in his Soul, and be restored to the Knowledge and the Love of GOD, which is the Beginning of Life eternal.

12. Again, the Covenant of Works, in order to Man's *Continuance* in the Favour of GOD, in his Knowledge and Love, in Holiness and Happiness, required of perfect Man, a *perfect* and uninterrupted *Obedience*, to every Point of the Law of GOD. Whereas the Covenant of Grace, in order to Man's *Recovery*, of the Favour and Life of GOD, requires only *Faith*; living Faith in him, who through GOD justifies him that *obeyed not*.

13. Yet again: The Covenant of Works required of *Adam* and all his Children, to *pay the Price themselves*, in Consideration of which, they were to receive all the future Blessings of GOD. But in the Covenant of Grace, seeing we have nothing to pay, GOD *frankly forgives us all*: Provided only, that we believe in him, who hath *paid the Price for us*; who hath given himself a *Propitiation for our Sins, for the Sins of the whole World*.

14. Thus the first Covenant required what is now *afar off* from all the Children of Men; namely, unflinching Obedience, which is far from those who are *conceived and born in Sin*. Whereas the second requires what is nigh at hand; as tho' it should say, Thou art Sin: GOD is Love. Thou by Sin art fallen short of the Glory of

God ; yet there is Mercy with him. Bring then all thy Sins to the Pardoning God, and they shall vanish away as a Cloud. If thou wert not ungodly, there would be no room for him to justify thee as ungodly. But now draw near, in full Assurance of Faith. He speaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe ; for even the just God *justifieth all that believe in Jesus.*

II. 1. These things considered, it will be easy to shew, as I propos'd to do in the second Place, the Folly of trusting in the *Righteousness which is of the Law*, and the Wisdom of *submitting to the Righteousness which is of Faith.*

The Folly of those who still trust, in the *Righteousness which is of the Law*, the Terms of which are, Do this and live, may abundantly appear from thence. They set out wrong. Their very first Step is a fundamental Mistake. For before they can ever think of claiming any Blessing on the Terms of this Covenant, they must suppose themselves to be in his State, with whom this Covenant was made. But how vain a Supposition is this ? Since it was made with *Adam* in a State of Innocence. How weak therefore must that whole Building be, which stands on such a Foundation ? And how foolish are they who thus build on the Sand ? Who seem never to have considered, That the Covenant of Works was not given to Man, when he was dead in Trespases and Sins, but when he was alive to God, when he knew no Sin, but was holy as God is holy : Who forget, That it was never design'd for the *Recovery* of the Favour and Life of God once lost, but only for the *Continuance* and Increase,

crease thereof, till it should be compleat in Life everlasting.

2. Neither do they consider, who are thus *seeking to establish their own Righteousness which is of the Law*, what manner of Obedience or Righteousness that is, which the Law indispensably requires. It must be perfect and entire, in every Point, or it answers not the Demand of the Law. But which of you is able to perform such Obedience? Or, consequently, to live thereby? Who among you fulfills every Jot and Tittle even of the outward Commandments of God? Doing nothing, great or small, which God forbids? Leaving nothing undone which he enjoins? Speaking no *idle Word*? Having your Conversation always *meet to minister Grace to the Hearers*? And *whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, doing all to the Glory of GOD*? And how much less are you able to fulfil all the inward Commandments of God? Those which require, that every Temper and Motion of your Soul should be Holiness unto the Lord? Are you able, *To love GOD with all your Heart*? *To love all Mankind as your own Soul*? *To pray without ceasing*? *In every thing to give Thanks*? *To have GOD always before you*? And to keep every Affection, Desire and Thought, in obedience to his Law?

3. You should farther consider, That the Righteousness of the Law requires, not only the obeying every Command of GOD, negative and positive, internal and external, but likewise in the perfect Degree. In every instance whatever, the Voice of the Law is, *Thou shalt serve the Lord thy GOD with all thy Strength*. It allows no Abate-
ment

ment of any kind. It excuses no Defect. It condemns every coming short of the full Measure of Obedience, and immediately pronounces a Curse on the Offender. It regards only the invariable Rules of Justice, and saith, "I know not to shew Mercy."

4. Who then can appear before such a Judge, which is *extreme to mark what is done amiss*? How weak are they who desire to be tried at the Bar, where *no flesh living can be justified*? None of the Offspring of *Adam*. For suppose we did now keep every Commandment with all our Strength: Yet one single Breach which ever was, utterly destroys our whole Claim to Life. If we have ever offended, in any one Point, this Righteousness is at an end. For the Law condemns all who do not perform uninterrupted as well as perfect Obedience. So that according to the Sentence of this, for him who hath once sinned, in any Degree, *there remaineth only a fearful Looking for of fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries of GOD.*

5. Is it not then the very Foolishness of Folly, for fallen Man to seek Life by this Righteousness? For Man, who was *shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin did his Mother conceive him*: Man, who is by Nature all *earthly, sensual, devilish, altogether corrupt and abominable*: In whom, till he find Grace, *dwelleth no good Thing*; nay, who cannot of himself think one good Thought? Who is indeed all Sin, a mere Lump of Ungodliness, and who commits Sin in every Breath he draws; whose actual Transgressions, in Word and Deed, are more in Number than the Hairs of his Head! What Stupidity, what Senselessness must it be,
for

for such an unclean, guilty, helpless *Worm* as this, to dream of seeking Acceptance by *his own Righteousness*, of living by *the Righteousness which is of the Law*?

6. Now whatsoever Considerations prove the Folly of trusting in the *Righteousness which is of the Law*, prove equally the Wisdom of submitting to *the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith*. This were easy to be shewn with regard to each of the preceding Considerations. But to wave this, the Wisdom of the first Step hereto, the disclaiming our own Righteousness, plainly appears from hence, That it is acting according to Truth, to the real Nature of Things. For what is it more, than to acknowledge with our Heart as well as Lips, the true State wherein we are? To acknowledge, that we bring with us into the World, a corrupt, sinful Nature; more corrupt indeed than we can easily conceive, or find Words to express? That hereby we are prone to all that is evil, and averse from all that is good; that we are full of Pride, Self-will, unruly Passions, foolish Desires; vile and inordinate Affections; Lovers of the World, Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God? That our Lives have been no better than our Hearts, but many ways ungodly and unholy; insomuch that our actual Sins, both in Word and Deed, have been as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude: That on all these Accounts, we are displeasing to him, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; and deserve nothing from him, but Indignation and Wrath and Death, the due Wages of Sin? That we cannot by any of our Righteousness, (for indeed, we have none at all) nor

nor by any of our Works (for they are as the Tree from which they grow) appease the Wrath of GOD, or avert the Punishment we have justly deserved? Yea, that, if left to ourselves, we shall only wax worse and worse, sink deeper and deeper into Sin, offend GOD more and more both with our evil Works and with the evil Tempers of our carnal Mind, till we fill up the Measure of our Iniquities, and bring upon ourselves swift Destruction? And is not this the very State wherein by Nature we are? To acknowledge this then, both with our Heart and Lips, that is, to disclaim our own Righteousness, *the Righteousness which is of the Law*, is to act according to the real Nature of Things, and consequently is an Instance of true Wisdom.

7. The Wisdom of submitting to *the Righteousness of Faith*, appears farther from this Consideration, That it is the Righteousness of GOD: I mean here, It is that Method of Reconciliation with GOD, which hath been chose and established by GOD himself, not only as he is the GOD of Wisdom, but as he is the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, and of every Creature which he hath made. Now, as it is not meet for Man to say unto GOD, What dost thou? As none who is not utterly void of Understanding, will contend with one that is mightier than he, with him whose Kingdom ruleth over all; so it is true Wisdom, it is a Mark of a sound Understanding, to acquiesce in whatever he hath chosen, to say in this, as in all Things, "It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him Good."

8. It may be farther considered, That it was of mere Grace, of free Love, of undeserved Mercy,

Mercy, that GOD hath vouchsafed to sinful Man, any way of Reconciliation with himself, that we were not cut away from his Hand, and utterly blotted out of his Remembrance. Therefore whatever Method he is pleased to appoint, of his tender Mercy, of his unmerited Goodness, whereby his Enemies, who have so deeply revolted from him, so long and obstinately rebelled against him, may still find favour in his Sight, it is doubtless our Wisdom to accept with all Thankfulness.

9. To mention but one Consideration more. It is Wisdom to aim at the best End by the best Means. Now the best End which any Creature can pursue, is Happiness in God. And the best End a Fallen Creature can pursue is, The Recovery of the Favour and Image of GOD. But the best, indeed the only Means under Heaven given to Man, whereby he may regain the Favour of God, which is better than Life itself, or the Image of GOD, which is the true Life of the Soul, is the submitting to the *Righteousness which is of Faith*, the believing in the only-begotten Son of GOD.

III. 1. Whosoever therefore thou art who desirest to be forgiven and reconciled to the Favour of GOD; Do not say in thy Heart, "I must *first do this*; I must *first* conquer every Sin; break off every evil Word and Work, and do all Good to all Men: Or, I must *first* go to Church, receive the Lord's Supper, hear more Sermons, and say more Prayers." Alas, my Brother, thou art clean gone out of the Way. Thou art still *ignorant of the Righteousness of*
GOD,

GOD, and art *seeking to establish thy own Righteousness*, as the Ground of thy Reconciliation. Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to **GOD**? Wherefore then dost thou say, *I must do this and this first*, and then I shall believe. Nay, but *First Believe*. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Propitiation for thy Sins. Let this good Foundation *first* be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well.

2. Neither say in thy Heart, “ I can’t be accepted yet, because I am not *good enough*.” Who is *good enough*? Who ever was? To merit Acceptance at **GOD**’s Hands! Was ever any Child of *Adam good enough* for this? Or will any, till the Consummation of all Things? And as for thee, thou art not Good at all: There dwelleth in thee no good Thing. And thou never wilt be, till thou believe in Jesus. Rather thou wilt find thyself worse and worse. But is there any need of being worse, in order to be accepted? Art thou not *bad enough* already? Indeed thou art, and that **GOD** knoweth. And thou thyself canst not deny it. Then delay not. All things are now ready. *Arise and wash away thy Sins*. The Fountain is open. Now is the time, to wash thee white in the Blood of the Lamb. Now he shall *purge thee as with Hyssop*, and thou shalt be clean; he shall wash thee, and thou shalt be whiter than Snow.

3. Do not say, “ But I am not *contrite enough*: I am not *sensible enough* of my Sins.” I know it. I would to **GOD**, thou wert more *sensible* of them, more *contrite* a thousand fold than thou art. But do not stay for this. It may be **GOD** will make thee

thee so, not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much, till thou lovest much, because thou hast had much forgiven. In the mean time, look unto Jesus. Behold how he loveth thee ! What could he have done more for thee which he hath not done ?

“ O Lamb of God, was ever Pain,
Was ever Love like Thine ! ”

Look steddily upon him, till he looks on thee, and breaks thy hard Heart. Then shall thy *Head* be *Waters*, and thy *Eyes Fountains of Tears*.

4. Nor yet do thou say, “ I must *do* something more, *before* I come to Christ.” I grant, supposing thy Lord should delay his coming, it were meet and right to wait for his appearing, in doing, so far as thou hast Power, whatsoever he hath commanded thee. But there is no Necessity for making such a Supposition. How knowest thou that he will delay ? Perhaps he will appear, as the Day-spring from on High, before the Morning-light. O do not let him a Time. Expect him every Hour. Now, he is nigh ! Even at the Door !

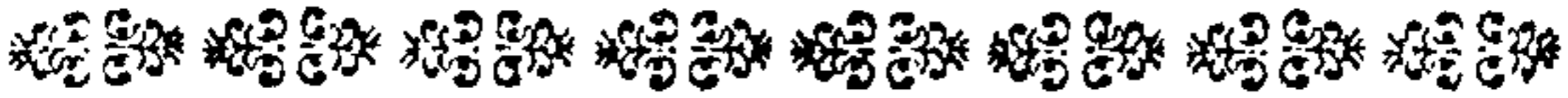
5. And to what End wouldst thou wait for *more Sincerity*, *before* thy Sins are blotted out ? To make thee more worthy of the Grace of God ? Alas, thou art still *establishing thy own Righteousness*. He will have Mercy, not because thou art worthy of it, but because his Compassions fail not : Not because thou art righteous ; but because Jesus Christ hath atoned for thy Sins.

Again, if there be any thing good in *Sincerity*, why dost expect it, *before* thou hast Faith ? See-

ing Faith itself is the only Rout of whatever is really good and holy.

Above all, How long wilt thou forget, That whatsoever thou dost, or whatsoever thou hast, before thy Sins are forgiven thee, it avails nothing with GOD, toward the procuring of thy Forgiveness? Yea, and that it must all be cast behind thy Back, trampled under Foot, made no Account of, or thou wilt never find Favour in GOD'S Sight; because until then thou canst not ask it, as a mere Sinner, guilty, lost, undone, having nothing to plead, nothing to offer to GOD, but only the Merits of his well-beloved Son, *who loved thee, and gave himself for thee.*

6. To conclude. Whosoever thou art, O Man, who hast the Sentence of Death in thyself, who feelest thyself a condemned Sinner, and hast the Wrath of GOD abiding on thee: Unto thee saith the Lord, Not, Do this; perfectly obey all my Commands and live: But, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. The Word of Faith is nigh unto thee; Now, at this instant, in the present Moment, and in thy present State, Sinner as thou art, just as thou art, Believe the Gospel: And I will be merciful unto thy Unrighteousness and thy Iniquities will I remember no more.*

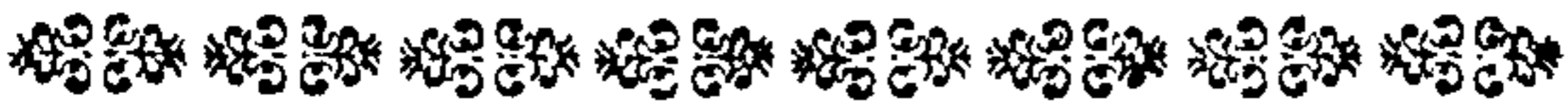


The Way to the Kingdom.

A

S E R M O N

On MARK i. 15.



M 2

MARK i. 15.

The Kingdom of GOD is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

THES E Words naturally lead us to consider, First, The Nature of True Religion, here term'd by our Lord, *The Kingdom of GOD*, which, saith he, *is at hand*: And Secondly, The Way thereto, which he points out in those Words, *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*.

I. 1. We are, First, to consider, The Nature of True Religion, here term'd by our Lord, *The Kingdom of GOD*. The same Expression the great Apostle uses in his Epistle to the *Romans*, where he likewise explains his Lord's Words, saying, *The Kingdom of GOD is not Meat and Drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. Chap. xiv. v. 17.

2. *The Kingdom of GOD*, or True Religion, *is not Meat and Drink*. It is well known, that not only the unconverted Jews, but great Numbers of those who had received the Faith of Christ, were notwithstanding *zealous of the Law*, (*Acts* xxi. 20.) even the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*. Whatsoever therefore they found written therein, either concerning Meat and Drink-

Offerings, or the Distinction between clean and unclean Meats, they not only observ'd themselves, but vehemently press'd the same, even on those *among the Gentiles* (or Heathens) *who were turned to GOD*. Yea, to such a Degree, that some of them taught, wheresoever they came among them, *Except ye be circumcised, and keep the Law, (the whole Ritual Law) ye cannot be saved.* Acts xv. 1, 24.

3. In Opposition to these, the Apostle declares, both here and in many other places, That True Religion does not consist in *Meat and Drink*, or in any Ritual Observances: Nor indeed in any outward Thing whatever, in any Thing exterior to the Heart; the whole Substance thereof lying in *Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

4. Not in any *outward Thing*; such as *Forms or Ceremonies*, even of the most excellent Kind. Supposing these to be ever so decent and significant, ever so expressive of inward Things: Supposing them ever so helpful, not only to the Vulgar, whose Thought reaches little farther than their Sight; but even to Men of Understanding, Men of stronger Capacities, as doubtless they may sometimes be: Yea, supposing them, as in the Case of the Jews, to be appointed by GOD himself; yet even during the Period of Time wherein that Appointment remains in Force, True Religion does not principally consist therein; nay, strictly speaking, not at all. How much more must this hold concerning such Rites and Forms, as are only of Human Appointment? The Religion of Christ rises infinitely higher, and lies immensely deeper than all these. These

are good in their Place ; just so far as they are in fact subservient to true Religion. And it were Superstition to object against them, while they are applied only as occasional Helps to Human Weakness. But let no Man carry them farther. Let no Man dream, that they have any intrinsic Worth : Or that Religion cannot subsist without them. This were to make them an Abomination to the Lord.

5. The Nature of Religion is so far from consisting in these, in *Forms of Worship, or Rites and Ceremonies*, that it does not properly consist in any *outward Actions*, of what Kind so ever. It is true, a Man cannot have any Religion, who is guilty of vicious, immoral Actions ; or who does to others, what he would not they should do to him, if he were in the same Circumstance. And it is also true, that he can have no real Religion, who *knows to do good, and doth it not*. Yet may a Man both abstain from outward Evil, and do Good, and still have no Religion. Yea, two Persons may do the same outward Work, suppose, Feeding the Hungry, or cloathing the Naked : And, in the mean Time, one of these may be truly Religious, and the other have no Religion at all : For the one may act from the Love of God, and the other from the Love of Praise. So manifest it is ; that altho' true Religion naturally leads to every good Word and Work, yet the real Nature thereof lies deeper still, even in *the hidden Man of the Heart*.

6. I say, of *the Heart*. For neither does Religion consist in *Orthodoxy or Right Opinions* ; which altho' they are not properly outward things, are not in the Heart, but the Understanding.

A Man may be orthodox in every Point; he may not only espouse Right Opinions, but zealously defend them against all Opposers: He may think justly concerning the Incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever blessed Trinity, and every other Doctrine, contained in the Oracles of God: He may assent to all the three Creeds; that call'd The Apostles', the *Nicene*, and the *Athanasian*: And yet 'tis possible, he may have no Religion at all, no more than a *Jew*, *Turk*, or *Pagan*. He may be almost as orthodox as ——— the Devil; (tho' indeed, not altogether. For every Man errs in something; whereas we can't well conceive him to hold any erroneous Opinion) and may all the while be as great a Stranger as he, to the Religion of the Heart.

7. This alone is Religion, truly so call'd: This alone is in the Sight of God of great Price. The Apostle sums it all up in three Particulars, *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. And first, *Righteousness*. We cannot be at a Loss concerning this, if we remember the Words of our Lord describing the two grand Branches thereof, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy * Strength. This is the First and great Commandment, the first and great Branch of Christian Righteousness. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord thy God; thou shalt seek and find all Happiness in him. He shall be thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward, in Time and in Eternity. All thy Bones shall say, Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is*

* Mark xii. 30.

none upon Earth that I desire beside thee! Thou shalt hear, and fulfil his Word who saith, My Son, give me thy Heart. And having given him thy Heart, thy inmost Soul, to reign there without a Rival, thou may'st well cry out, in the Fulness of thy Heart, I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength. The Lord is my strong Rock and my Defence: My Saviour, my GOD and my Might, in whom I will trust; my Buckler, the Horn also of my Salvation and my Refuge.

8. And the Second Commandment is like unto this; the Second great Branch of Christian Righteousness is closely and inseparably connected therewith, even *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Thou shalt love* — Thou shalt embrace with the most tender Good-will, the most earnest and cordial Affection, the most inflamed Desires of preventing or removing all Evil, and of procuring for him every possible Good — *Thy Neighbour* — that is, not only thy Friend, thy Kinsman, or thy Acquaintance; not only the Virtuous, the Friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy Kindness; but every Child of Man, every human Creature, every Soul which God hath made: Not excepting him whom thou never hast seen in the Flesh, whom thou knowest not either by Face or Name: Not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still despightfully uses and persecutes thee. Him thou shalt *love as thyself*; with the same invariable Thirst after his Happiness in every Kind; the same unwearied Care to skreen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his Soul or Body.

9. Now is not this Love *The fulfilling of the Law?* The Sum of all Christian Righteousness?

Of

Of all inward Righteousness ; for it necessarily implies *Bowels of Mercies, Humbleness of Mind* (seeing *Love is not puffed up*) *Gentleness, Meekness, Long-suffering*, (for *Love is not provoked but believeth, hopeth, endureth all Things*) and of all outward Righteousness ; for *Love worketh no Evil to his Neighbour*, either by Word or Deed. It cannot willingly either hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of Good Works. Every Lover of Mankind, as he hath Opportunity, *doth good unto all Men* ; being (*without Partiality and without Hypocrisy*) *full of Mercy and good Fruits*.

10. But true Religion, or a Heart right toward GOD and Man, implies Happiness as well as Holiness. For it is not only *Righteousness*, but also *Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. What Peace ? *The Peace of GOD*, which GOD only can give, and the World cannot take away : The Peace which *passeth all Understanding*, all (barely) rational Conception ; being a supernatural Sensation, a divine Taste of *the Powers of the World to come* : Such as the natural Man knoweth not, how wise soever in the Things of this World : Nor indeed can he know it, in his present State, *because it is spiritually discerned*. It is a Peace that banishes all Doubt, all painful Uncertainty ; the Spirit of GOD *bearing witness with the Spirit* of a Christian, that he is *a Child of GOD*. And it banishes Fear, all such Fear as hath Torment ; the Fear of the Wrath of GOD, the Fear of Hell, the Fear of the Devil, and in particular, the Fear of Death : He that hath the Peace of GOD, *desiring* (if it were the Will of GOD) *to depart and to be with Christ*.

11. With this Peace of GOD, wherever it is fix'd in the Soul, there is also *Joy in the Holy Ghost* : Joy wrought in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever-blessed Spirit of GOD. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in GOD, through Christ Jesus, *by whom we have now received the Atonement, καταλλαγὴν*, the Reconciliation with GOD ; and that enables us boldly to confirm the Truth of the Royal Psalmist's Declaration, *Blessed is the Man* (or rather *happy*) *אשרי ה'י'ש* *whose Unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered.* He it is that inspires the Christian Soul, with that even, solid Joy, which arises from the Testimony of the Spirit, that he is a Child of GOD : And that gives him to *rejoice with Joy unspeakable, in Hope of the Glory of GOD* : Hope, both of the glorious Image of GOD, which is in part and shall be fully *revealed in him* ; and of that Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for him.

12. This Holiness and Happiness joined in one, are sometimes stiled in the inspired Writings, *the Kingdom of GOD*, (as by our Lord in the Text) and sometimes, *the Kingdom of Heaven*. It is termed *the Kingdom of GOD*, because it is the immediate Fruit of GOD's reigning in the Soul. So soon as ever he takes unto himself his mighty Power, and sets up his Throne in our Hearts, they are instantly filled with this *Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. It is called *the Kingdom of Heaven*, because it is (in a Degree) Heaven opened in the Soul. For whosoever they are that experience this, they can aver, before Angels and Men,

“ Ever-

“ Everlasting Life is won :
 Glory is on Earth begun :”

According to the constant Tenor of Scripture, which every where bears Record, *GOD hath given unto us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son (reigning in his Heart) hath Life; even Life everlasting* 1 *John* v. 11, 12. For *this is Life eternal, to know thee, the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, *John* xvii. 3. And they to whom this is given, may confidently address GOD, tho' they were in the midst of a fiery Furnace,

“ Thee — Lord, safe-shielded by thy Power,
 Thee, Son of GOD, *Jehovah*, we adore;
 In Form of Man descending to appear :
 To thee be ceaseless Hallelujah's given.
 Praise, as in Heaven thy Throne, we offer here;
 For where thy Presence is display'd, is Heaven.”

13. And this *Kingdom of GOD* or of Heaven *is at hand*. As these Words were originally spoken, they implied, that *the Time* was then *fulfilled*, GOD being *made manifest in the Flesh*, when he would set up his Kingdom among Men, and reign in the Hearts of his People. And is not the Time now fulfilled? For *lo!* saith he, *I am with you always*, you who preach Remission of Sins in my Name, *even unto the End of the World*. (*Matt.* xxviii. 20.) Wheresoever therefore the Gospel of Christ is preached, this his *Kingdom is nigh at hand*. It is not far from every one of you. Ye may this Hour enter thereinto, if so be ye hearken

hearken to his Voice, *Repent ye and believe the Gospel.*

II. 1. This is the Way. Walk ye in it. And first, Repent, that is, Know yourselves. This is the first Repentance, previous to Faith; even Conviction, or Self-Knowledge. Awake then thou that sleepest. Know thyself to be a Sinner, and what manner of Sinner thou art. Know that Corruption of thy inmost Nature, whereby thou art very far gone from Original Righteousness, whereby *the Flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit*, through that *carnal Mind which is Enmity against GOD*, which is not subject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be. Know that thou art corrupted in every Power, in every Faculty of thy Soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the Foundations being out of Course. The Eyes of thine Understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern GOD or the Things of GOD. The Clouds of Ignorance and Error rest upon thee, and cover thee with the Shadow of Death. Thou knowest nothing yet, as thou oughtest to know, neither GOD, nor the World, nor thyself. Thy Will is no longer the Will of GOD, but is utterly perverse and distorted, averse from all Good, from all which GOD loves, and prone to all Evil, to every Abomination which GOD hateth. Thy Affections are alienated from GOD, and scattered abroad over all the Earth. All thy Passions, both thy Desires and Aversions, thy Joys and Sorrows, thy Hopes and Fears, are out of Frame, are either undue in their Degree, or placed on undue Objects. So that there is no Soundness in thy Soul; but *from the Crown of the*

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Head to the Sole of the Foot (to use the strong Expression of the Prophet) there are only *Wounds and Bruises and putrifying Sores*.

2. Such is the inbred Corruption of thy Heart, of thy very inmost Nature. And what manner of Branches canst thou expect to grow, from such an evil Root? Hence springs Unbelief, ever departing from the living God: Saying, “Who is the Lord that I should serve him? Tush! Thou, God, carest not for it.” Hence Independence, affecting to be like the Most High; hence Pride in all its Forms, teaching thee to say, “I am rich, and increased in Goods, and have need of nothing.” From this evil Fountain flow forth the bitter Streams of Vanity, Thirst of Praise; Ambition, Covetousness; the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. From this arise Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Envy, Jealousy, evil Surmisings: From this all the foolish and hurtful Lusts, that now *pierce thee through with many Sorrows*, and if not timely prevented, will at length *drown thy Soul in everlasting Perdition*.

3. And what Fruits can grow on such Branches as these? Only such as are bitter and evil continually. Of Pride cometh Contention, vain boasting, seeking and receiving Praise of Men, and so robbing God of that Glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the Lust of the Flesh come Gluttony or Drunkenness, Luxury or Sensuality: Fornication, Uncleaness, variously defiling that Body, which was designed for a Temple of the Holy Ghost: Of Unbelief, every evil Word and Work. But the Time would fail, should'st thou reckon up all; all the idle Words
 thou

thou hast spoken, provoking the Most High, grieving the holy One of *Israel* : All the evil Works thou hast done, either wholly evil in themselves, or at least, not done to the Glory of God. For thy actual Sins are more than thou art able to express, more than the Hairs of thy Head. Who can number the Sands of the Sea, or the Drops of Rain, or thy Iniquities ?

4. And knowest thou not, that *the Wages of Sin is Death* ? Death not only temporal, but eternal. *The Soul that sinneth, it shall die* : For the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. It shall die the second Death. This is the Sentence, to be punished with never-ending Death, with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Knowest thou not that every Sinner *ἐνοχός ἐστι τῆ γείνης τῆ πωρός* ; not properly *is in Danger of Hell-fire* ; that Expression is far too weak : But rather, *is under the Sentence of Hell-fire*, doom'd already, just dragging to Execution. Thou art guilty of everlasting Death. It is the just Reward of thy Inward and Outward Wickedness. It is just, that the Sentence should now take place. Dost thou see, dost thou feel this ? Art thou thoroughly convinced, that thou deserveest GOD's Wrath and everlasting Damnation ? Would GOD do thee no wrong, if he now commanded the Earth to open and swallow thee up ? If thou wert now to go down quick into the Pit, into the Fire that never shall be quenched ? If GOD hath given thee truly to repent, thou hast a deep Sense that these Things are so ; and that it is of his mere Mercy thou art not consumed, swept away from the Face of the Earth.

5. And what wilt thou do to appease the Wrath of GOD, to atone for all thy Sins, and to escape the Punishment thou hast so justly deserved? Alas, thou canst do nothing: Nothing that will in any wise make amends to GOD, for one evil Work or Word or Thought. If thou couldst now do all Things well, if from this very Hour, till thy Soul should return to GOD, thou couldst perform perfect uninterrupted Obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. The not increasing thy Debt would not discharge it. It would still remain as great as ever. Yea, the present and future Obedience of all the Men upon Earth, and all the Angels in Heaven, would never make Satisfaction to the Justice of GOD for one single Sin. How vain then was the Thought, of atoning for thy own Sins by any Thing thou couldst do? It costeth far more to redeem one Soul, than all Mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other Help for a guilty Sinner, without Doubt he must have perished everlastingly.

6. But suppose perfect Obedience for the time to come, could atone for the Sins that are past, this would profit thee nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one Point. Begin now. Make the Trial. Shake off that outward Sin that so easily besetteth thee. Thou canst not. How then wilt thou change thy Life from all Evil to all Good? Indeed, it is impossible to be done, unless first thy Heart be changed. For so long as the Tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good Fruit. But art thou able to change thy own Heart, from all Sin to all Holiness? To quicken a Soul that is dead in Sin? Dead to GOD and alive only to the World? No more than
 than

than thou art able to quicken a dead Body, to raise to Life him that lieth in the Grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy Soul in any Degree, no more than to give any Degree of Life to the dead Body. Thou canst do nothing, more or less, in this Matter; thou art utterly without Strength. To be deeply sensible of this, how helpless thou art, as well as how guilty and how sinful, this is that *Repentance not to be repented of*, which is the Fore-runner of the Kingdom of GOD.

7. If to this lively Conviction of thy inward and outward Sins, of thy utter Guiltiness and Helplessness, there be added suitable Affections, Sorrow of Heart, for having despised thy own Mercies, Remorse and Self-condemnation, having the Mouth stop'd, Shame, to lift up thine Eyes to Heaven; Fear of the Wrath of GOD abiding on thee, of his Curse hanging over thy Head, and of the fiery Indignation ready to devour those who forget GOD, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ: Earnest Desire to escape from that Indignation, to cease from evil and learn to do well: Then I say unto thee, in the Name of the Lord, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of GOD.* One Step more and thou shalt enter in. Thou dost *repent.* Now, *Believe the Gospel.*

8. *The Gospel* (that is, good Tidings, good News for guilty, helpless Sinners) in the largest Sense of the Word, means, the whole Revelation made to Men by Jesus Christ: And sometimes, the whole Account of what our Lord did and suffered, while he tabernacled among Men. The Substance of all is, *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners.* Or, *GOD so loved the*
 N 3 *World,*

World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End we might not perish, but have everlasting Life. Or, he was bruised for our Transgressions, he was wounded for our Iniquities : The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.

9. Believe this and the Kingdom of GOD is thine. By Faith thou attainest the Promise. " He pardoneth and absolveth all that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." As soon as ever GOD hath spoken to thy Heart, " Be of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee," his Kingdom comes ; thou hast Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

10. Only beware thou do not deceive thy own Soul, with regard to the Nature of this Faith. It is not (as some have fondly conceived) a bare Assent to the Truth of the Bible, of the Articles of our Creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Testament. The Devils believe this, as well as I or thou ; and yet they are Devils still. But it is, over and above this, a sure Trust in the Mercy of GOD through Christ Jesus. It is a Confidence in a pardoning GOD. It is a divine Evidence or Conviction, that *GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, not imputing to them their former Trespases : And in particular, that the Son of GOD hath loved me and given himself for me : and that I, even I, am now reconciled to GOD by the Blood of the Cross.*

11. Dost thou thus believe ? Then the Peace of GOD is in thy Heart, and Sorrow and Sighing flee away. Thou art no longer in doubt of the Love of GOD : It is clear as the Noon-day Sun. Thou cryest out, *My Song shall be always of the Loving*

Loving Kindness of the Lord: With my Mouth will I ever be telling of thy Truth, from one Generation to another. Thou art no longer afraid of Hell, or Death, or him that had once the Power of Death, the Devil: No, nor painfully afraid of GOD himself; only thou hast a tender, filial Fear of offending him. Dost thou believe? Then thy Soul doth magnify the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoiceth in GOD thy Saviour. Thou rejoicest in that thou hast Redemption thro' his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins. Thou rejoicest in that Spirit of Adoption, which crieth in thy Heart, *Abba, Father!* Thou rejoicest in a Hope full of Immortality, in reaching forth unto the Mark of the Prize of thy high Calling; in an earnest Expectation of all the good Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him.

12. Dost thou now believe? Then *the Love of GOD* is now shed abroad in thy Heart. Thou lovest him, because he first loved us. And because thou lovest GOD, thou lovest thy Brother also. And being filled with Love, Peace, Joy, thou art also filled with Long-suffering, Gentleness, Fidelity, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance, and all the other Fruits of the same Spirit: In a word, with whatever Dispositions are holy, are heavenly or divine. For while thou beholdest with open, uncover'd Face, (the Veil now being taken away) *the Glory of the Lord*, his glorious Love, and the glorious Image wherein thou wast created, thou art changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

13. This Repentance, this Faith, this Peace, Joy, Love; this Change from Glory to Glory, is what the Wisdom of the World has voted to be

be Madness, mere Enthusiasm, utter Distraction. But thou, O Man of *GOD*, regard them not : Be thou moved by none of these Things. Thou knowest in whom thou hast believed. See that no Man take thy Crown. Whereunto thou hast already attained hold fast ; and follow, till thou attain all the great and precious Promises. And thou who hast not yet known him, let not vain Men make thee ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Be thou in nothing terrified by those who speak evil of the Things which they know not. *GOD* will soon turn thy Heaviness into Joy. O let not thy Hands hang down. Yet a little longer, and he will take away thy Fears, and give thee the Spirit of a sound Mind. *He is nigh that justifieth : Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died ; yea rather that rose again ; who is even now at the Right-hand of GOD, making Intercession for thee.* Now cast thyself on the Lamb of *GOD*, with all thy Sins, how many soever they be ; and *an Entrance shall now be ministred unto thee, into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !*



The First-Fruits of the Spirit.

A

S E R M O N

On ROMANS viii. 1.



ROM. viii. 1.

There is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.

1. **B**Y *them which are in Christ Jesus*, St. Paul evidently means, 'Those who truly believe in him: Those who being justified by Faith, have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. They who thus believe, do no longer walk after the Flesh, no longer follow the Motions of corrupt Nature: But after the Spirit: Both their Thoughts, Words and Works, are under the Direction of the blessed Spirit of GOD.

2. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to these. There is no Condemnation to them from GOD: For he hath justified them freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus. He hath forgiven all their Iniquities, and blotted out all their Sins. And there is no Condemnation to them from within: For they have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of GOD, that they might know the Things which are freely given to them of GOD* : Which Spirit beareth Witness with their Spirits, that they are the Children of GOD. And to this is added, the Testimony of their Conscience, that in Simpli-*

* 1 Cor. ii. 12.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

city and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of GOD, they have had their Conversation in the World.

3. But because this Scripture has been so frequently misunderstood, and that in so dangerous a Manner, because such Multitudes of *unlearned and unstable Men*, (*οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀσθένετοι*, Men untaught of GOD, and consequently unestablish'd in the Truth which is after Godliness) have wrested it to their own Destruction, I propose to shew as clearly as I can, First, Who those are which are in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit; and Secondly, How there is no Condemnation to these. I shall conclude with some practical Inferences.

I. 1. First, I am to shew, Who those are that are in Christ Jesus. And are they not, Those who believe in his Name? Those who are found in him, not having their own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith? These, who have Redemption through his Blood, are properly said, to be in Him. For they dwell in Christ and Christ in them. They are joined unto the Lord in one Spirit. They are ingrafted into him as Branches into the Vine. They are united, as Members to their Head; in a manner which Words cannot express, nor could it before enter into their Hearts to conceive.

2. Now whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; walketh not after the Flesh. The Flesh, in the usual Language of St. Paul, signifies corrupt Nature. In this Sense, he uses the Word, writing to the Galatians. *The Works of the Flesh are manifest*, Gal. v. 19. And a little before, *Walk in*

the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the Lust (or Desire) of the Flesh (v. 16.) To prove which, namely, that those who walk by the Spirit, do not fulfil the Lust of the Flesh, he immediately adds, *For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit lusteth against the Flesh (for these are contrary to each other) that ye may not do the Things which ye would.* So the Words are literally translated, (*ὥστε μὴ ἂν ἀνθέλητε, τὰυτα ποιῆτε.*) Not, *So that ye cannot do the Things that ye would,* as if the Flesh overcame the Spirit: A Translation which hath not only nothing to do with the Original Text of the Apostle, but likewise makes his whole Argument nothing worth, yea, asserts just the reverse of what he is proving.

3. *They who are of Christ, who abide in him, have crucified the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts.* They abstain from all those Works of the Flesh; from *Adultery and Fornication, from Uncleaness and Lasciviousness; from Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance; from Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Sedition, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings:* From every Design, and Word and Work, to which the Corruption of Nature leads. Altho' they feel the Root of Bitterness in themselves, yet are they endued with Power from on High, to trample it continually under Foot, so that it cannot *spring up to trouble them:* Inso-much that every fresh Assault which they undergo, only gives them fresh Occasion of Praise, of crying out, *Thanks be unto GOD, who giveth us the Victory, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.*

4. *They now walk after the Spirit, both in their Hearts and Lives.* They are taught of Him to love God and their Neighbour, with a Love

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which is *as a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life*. And by Him they are led into every holy Desire, into every divine and heavenly Temper, till every Thought which arises in their Heart is Holiness unto the Lord.

5. They who *walk after the Spirit*, are also led by him, into all Holiness of Conversation. Their Speech is *always in Grace, season'd with Salt*, with the Love and Fear of GOD. *No corrupt Communication comes out of their Mouth, but only that which is good; that which is to the Use of edifying, which is meet to minister Grace to the Hearers*. And herein likewise do they exercise themselves Day and Night, to do only the Things which please GOD: In all their outward Behaviour to follow Him, *who left us an Example that we might tread in his Steps*: In all their intercourse with their Neighbour to walk in justice, Mercy and Truth; and *whatsoever they do, in every Circumstance of Life, to do all to the Glory of GOD*.

6. These are they who indeed *walk by the Spirit*. Being filled with Faith and with the Holy Ghost, they possess in their Hearts, and shew forth in their Lives, in the whole Course of their Words and Actions, the Genuine Fruits of the Spirit of GOD, namely, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Fidelity, Meekness, Temperance*, and whatsoever else is lovely or praise-worthy. They *adorn in all Things the Gospel of GOD our Saviour*; and give full Proof to all Mankind, that they are indeed actuated by the same Spirit, *which raised up Jesus from the Dead*.

II. 1. I proposed to shew, in the second Place, *How there is no Condemnation to them, which are thus in Christ Jesus, and thus walk, not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

And, first, To Believers in Christ, walking thus, *there is no Condemnation* on account of their past Sins. GOD condemneth them not for any of these: They are as tho' they had never been. They are *cast as a Stone into the Depth of the Sea*, and he remembreth them no more. GOD having *set forth his Son to be a Propitiation for them, thro' Faith in his Blood, hath declarcd unto them his Righteousness, for the Remission of the Sins that are past.* He layeth therefore none of these to their Charge; their Memorial is perished with them.

2. And there is no Condemnation in their own Breast; no Sense of Guilt, or Dread of the Wrath of GOD. *They have the Witness in themselves; they are conscious of their Interest in the Blood of Sprinkling. They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage unto Fear, unto Doubt and racking Uncertainty; but they have received the Spirit of Adoption, crying in their Hearts, Abba, -Father. Thus being justified by Faith, they have the Peace of GOD ruling in their Hearts: Flowing from a continual Sense of his pardoning Mercy, and the Answer of a good Conscience toward GOD.*

3. If it be said, But sometimes a Believer in Christ, may lose his Sight of the Mercy of GOD; sometimes such Darkness may fall upon him, that he no longer sees him that is invisible, no longer feels that Witness in himself of his Part in the atoning Blood; and then he is inwardly con-

demn'd, he hath again *the Sentence of Death in himself*: I answer, supposing it so to be, supposing him not to see the Mercy of God, then he is not a Believer; for Faith implies Light; the Light of God shining upon the Soul. So far therefore as any one loses this Light, he for the Time loses his Faith. And no doubt a true Believer in Christ, may lose the Light of Faith. And so far as this is lost, he may for a Time fall again into Condemnation. But this is not the Case of them who now *are in Christ Jesus*, who now believe in his Name. For so long as they believe and walk after the Spirit, neither God condemns them nor their own Heart.

5. They are not condemn'd, Secondly, for any Present Sins, for now transgressing the Commandments of God. For they do not transgress them; they do not *walk after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*. This is the continual Proof of their *Love of GOD, that they keep his Commandments*: Even as St. John bears witness, *Whosoever is born of GOD doth not commit Sin. For his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD*: He cannot, so long as that Seed of God, that loving, holy Faith remaineth in him. So long as *he keepeth himself herein, that wicked one toucheth him not*. Now it is evident, he is not condemn'd for the Sins which he doth not commit at all. They therefore who are *thus led by the Spirit, are not under the Law*, (Gal. v. 18.) Not under the Curse or Condemnation of it; for it condemns none but those who break it. Thus, that Law of God, *Thou shalt not steal*, condemns none but those who do steal. Thus, *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy*, con-

condemns those only who do not keep it holy. *For against the Fruits of the Spirit, there is no Law* (v. 23.) As the Apostle more largely declares, in those memorable Words of his former Epistle to Timothy. *We know, that the Law is Good, if a Man use it lawfully; Knowing this,* (if while he uses the Law of God, in order either to convince or direct, he know and remember this) *ὅτι δικαίω νόμος ἔκείναι* (Not, That the Law is not made for a righteous Man; but) *That the Law does not lie against a righteous Man:* It has no Force against him, no Power to condemn him) *But against the Lawless and Disobedient, against the Ungodly and Sinners, against the Unholy and Profane — according to the glorious Gospel, of the blessed GOD. 1 Tim. i. 8, 9, 11.*

6. They are not condemn'd, Thirdly, for Inward Sin, even tho' it does now remain. That the Corruption of Nature does still remain, even in those who are the Children of God by Faith, that they have in them the Seeds of Pride and Vanity, of Anger, Lust and evil Desire, yea, Sin of every Kind, is too plain to be denied, being Matter of daily Experience. And on this Account it is, That St. Paul speaking to those, whom he had just before witness'd to be * *in Christ Jesus* †, to have been called of GOD into the Fellowship (or Participation) of his Son Jesus Christ, yet declares, *Brethren, I could not speak unto you as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal; even as unto Babes in Christ* (1 Cor iii. 1.) *Babes in Christ*— So we see they were *in Christ*; they were Believers in a low Degree. And yet how much of

* 1 Cor. i. 2.

† Ver. 9.

Sin remain'd in them? Of that *carnal Mind*, which is not subject to the Law of GOD?

7. And yet, for all this, they are not condemn'd. Altho' they feel the Flesh, the evil Nature in them, altho' they are more sensible day by day, that their *Heart* is *deceitful and desperately wicked*: Yet so long as they do not yield thereto, so long as they give no Place to the Devil, so long as they maintain a continual War, with all Sin, with Pride, Anger, Desire, so that the Flesh hath not Dominion over them, but they still *walk after the Spirit*: There is no *Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*. God is well-pleas'd with their sincere, tho' imperfect Obedience: And they *have Confidence toward GOD*, knowing *they are his, by the Spirit which he hath given them*. 1 John iii. 24.

8. Nay, Fourthly, altho' they are continually convinc'd of Sin cleaving to all they do; altho' they are conscious of not fulfilling the Perfect Law, either in their Thoughts, or Words, or Works; altho' they know, they do not love the Lord their God, with all their Heart, and Mind, and Soul and Strength; altho' they feel more or less of Pride or Self-will, stealing in and mixing with their best Duties; altho' even in their more immediate Intercourse with God, when they assemble themselves with the great Congregation, and when they pour out their Souls in secret to him, who seeth all the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, they are continually asham'd of their wandering Thoughts, or of the Deadness and Dulness of their Affections: Yet there is no Condemnation to them still, either from God or from their own Heart. The Consideration of these manifold Defects only gives them a deeper
Sense,

Sense, That they have always need of that Blood of Sprinkling, which speaks for them in the Ears of GOD, and that Advocate with the Father *who ever liveth, to make Intercession for them.* So far are these from driving them away from him, in whom they have believed, that they rather drive them the closer to him, whom they feel the Want of every Moment. And at the same Time, the deeper Sense they have of this Want, the more earnest Desire do they feel, and the more diligent they are, as they *have received the Lord Jesus, so to walk in Him.*

9. They are not condemn'd, Fifthly, for *Sins of Infirmary*, as they are usually called. (Perhaps it were adviseable rather to call them *Infirmities*, that we may not seem to give any Countenance to Sin, or to extenuate it in any Degree, by thus coupling it with Infirmary. But if we must retain so ambiguous and dangerous an Expression) by *Sins of Infirmary* I would mean, such involuntary Failings, as the saying a Thing we believe True, tho' in fact it prove to be False; or the Hurting our Neighbour, without knowing or designing it; perhaps when we design'd to do him Good. Tho' these are Deviations from the holy and acceptable and perfect Will of GOD, yet they are not properly Sins, nor do they bring any Guilt on the Conscience of *them which are in Christ Jesus.* They separate not between GOD and them, neither intercept the Light of his Countenance; as being no ways inconsistent with their general Character, of *walking not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

10. Lastly, *There is no Condemnation* to them for any Thing whatever which it is not in their Power to help; whether it be of an inward or
out-

outward Nature, and whether it be doing something, or leaving something undone. For Instance: The Lord's Supper is to be administer'd. But you do not partake thereof. Why do you not? You are confin'd by Sickness. Therefore you cannot help omitting it: And for the same Reason, you are not condemned. There is no Guilt; because there is no Choice. As there is a willing Mind, it is accepted, according to that a Man hath, not according to that he hath not.

11. A Believer indeed may sometimes be griev'd, because he cannot do what his Soul longs for. He may cry out, when he is detain'd from worshipping GOD in the great Congregation, *Like as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O GOD. My Soul is athirst for GOD, yea even for the living GOD: when shall I come to appear in the Presence of GOD?* He may earnestly desire (only still saying in his Heart, Not as I will, but as thou wilt) to go again with the Multitude, and bring them forth into the House of GOD. But still, if he cannot go, he feels no Condemnation, no Guilt, no Sense of GOD's Displeasure: But can cheerfully yield up those Desires, with, *O my Soul, put thy Trust in GOD: For I will yet give him Thanks, who is the Help of my Countenance and my GOD.*

12. It is more difficult to determine concerning those which are usually stiled, *Sins of Surprise*: As when one who commonly in Patience possesses his Soul, on a sudden and violent Temptation, speaks or acts in a Manner not consistent with the Royal Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. Perhaps it is not easy to fix a General Rule, concerning Transgressions of this Nature. We cannot say, either that Men are,
or

or that they are not condemn'd, for Sins of Surprise in general. But it seems, whenever a Believer is by Surprise over-taken in a Fault, there is more or less Condemnation, as there is more or less Concurrence of his Will. In proportion as a sinful Desire or Word or Action is more or less voluntary, so we may conceive, GOD is more or less displeas'd, and there is more or less Guilt upon the Soul.

13. But if so, then there may be some Sins of Surprise, which bring much Guilt and Condemnation. For in some Instances, our being surprized is owing to some wilful and culpable Neglect; or to a Sleepiness of Soul which might have been prevented, or shaken off before the Temptation came. A Man may be previously warn'd, either of GOD or Man, That Trials and Danger are at hand: And yet may say in his Heart, *A little more Slumber, a little more Folding of the Hands to Rest.* Now if such an one afterwards fall, tho' unawares, into the Snare which he might have avoided; that he fell unawares is no Excuse: He might have foreseen, and have shun'd the Danger. The falling even by Surprise, in such an Instance as this, is, in effect, a wilful Sin; and as such must expose the Sinner to Condemnation, both from GOD and his own Conscience.

14. On the other hand, there may be sudden Assaults, either from the World, or the God of this World, and frequently from our own evil Hearts, which we did not, and hardly could foresee. And by these even a Believer, while weak in Faith, may possibly be borne down, suppose into a Degree of Anger, or thinking evil of another,

other, with scarce any Concurrence of his Will. Now in such a Case, the jealous God would undoubtedly shew him that he had done foolishly. He would be convinced of having swerved from the perfect Law, from the Mind which was in Christ, and consequently *grieved* with a godly Sorrow, and lovingly *ashamed* before God. Yet need he not come into Condemnation. God layeth not Folly to his Charge, but hath Compassion upon him, *even as a Father pitieth his own Children*. And his Heart condemneth him not; in the midst of that Sorrow and Shame, he can still say, *I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my Strength and my Song; he is also become my Salvation.*

III. 1. It remains only, to draw some practical Inferences from the preceeding Considerations.

And, First, If there be *no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit*, on account of their past Sins: Then why art thou fearful, O thou of little Faith? Tho' thy Sins were once more in Number than the Sand, what is that to thee now thou art in Christ Jesus? *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth?* All the Sins thou hast committed from thy Youth up, until the Hour when thou wast *accepted in the Beloved*, are driven away as Chaff, are gone, are lost, swallowed up, remembered no more. Thou art now *born of the Spirit*: Wilt thou be troubled or afraid for what was done before thou wert born? Away with thy Fears! Thou art not called to fear; but to the *Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind.*

Mind. Know thy Calling. Rejoice in God thy Saviour, and give Thanks to God thy Father through him.

2. Wilt thou say, “ But I have again committed Sin, since I had Redemption through his Blood ? And therefore it is, that *I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*” It is meet thou shouldst abhor thyself ; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this self-same Thing. But dost thou now believe ? Hath he again enabled thee to say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth : And the Life which I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD ?* Then that Faith again cancels all that is past, and there is no Condemnation to thee. At whatsoever Time thou truly believest in the Name of the Son of God, all thy Sins antecedent to that Hour, vanish away as the Morning Dew. Now then, *Stand thou fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free.* He hath once more made thee free from the Power of Sin, as well as from the Guilt and Punishment of it. *O be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage !* Neither the vile devilish Bondage of Sin ; of evil Desires, evil Tempers, or Words or Works, the most grievous Yoke on this Side Hell : Nor the Bondage of slavish tormenting Fear, of Guilt and Self-condemnation.

3. But, secondly : Do all they which abide in Christ Jesus, walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit ? Then we cannot but infer, that whosoever now committeth Sin, hath no Part or Lot in this Matter. He is even now condemned by his own Heart. But *if our Heart condemn us, if our own Conscience beareth Witness that we are guilty, undoubtedly God doth : For he is greater than*

than our Heart, and knoweth all Things; so that we cannot deceive him, if we can ourselves. And think not to say, “I was justified once; my Sins were once forgiven me.” I know not that: Neither will I dispute whether they were or no. Perhaps, at this Distance of time, ’tis next to impossible to know with any tolerable Degree of Certainty, whether that was a true, genuine Work of GOD, or whether thou didst only deceive thy own Soul. But this I know with the utmost Degree of Certainty, *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil*. Therefore thou art of thy Father the Devil. It cannot be denied: For the Works of thy Father thou dost. O flatter not thyself with vain Hopes. Say not to thy Soul, Peace, Peace! For there is no Peace. Cry aloud! Cry unto GOD out of the Deep; if haply he may hear thy Voice. Come unto him as at first, as wretched and poor, as sinful, miserable, blind and naked. And beware thou suffer thy Soul to take no Rest, till his pardoning Love be again revealed, till he *heal thy Backslidings*, and fill thee again with the *Faith that worketh by Love*.

4. Thirdly, Is there no Condemnation to them which *walk after the Spirit*, by reason of *inward Sin* still remaining, so long as they do not give way thereto; nor by reason of *Sin cleaving* to all they do? Then fret not thyself because of Ungodliness, tho’ it still remain in thy Heart. Repine not, because thou still comest short of the glorious Image of GOD: Nor yet, because Pride, Self-will, or Unbelief, cleave to all thy Words and Works. And be not afraid to know all the Evil of thy Heart, to know thyself as also thou art known. Yea, desire of GOD, that thou mayst
not

not think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Let thy continual Prayer be

“ Shew me, as my Soul can bear,
The Depth of Inbred Sin :
All the Unbelief declare,
The Pride that lurks within !”

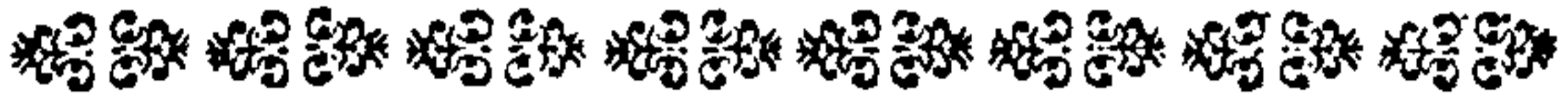
But when he heareth thy Prayer, and unveils thy Heart, when he shews thee thoroughly what Spirit thou art of: Then beware that thy Faith fail thee not, that thou suffer not thy Shield to be torn from thee. Be abased. Be humbled in the Dust. See thyself nothing, less than Nothing and Vanity. But still, *let not thy Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* Still hold fast, “ I, even I, have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so is his Love higher than even my Sins.”—Therefore GOD is merciful to thee a Sinner ! Such a Sinner as thou art ! GOD is Love ; and Christ hath died. Therefore the Father himself loveth thee. Thou art his Child. Therefore he will withhold from thee no manner of Thing that is good. Is it good, that the whole Body of Sin, which is now crucified in thee, should be destroyed ? It shall be done. Thou shalt be *cleansed from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit.* Is it good, that nothing should remain in thy Heart, but the pure Love of GOD alone ? Be of good Cheer ! *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart and Mind and Soul and Strength. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.* It is thy part, patiently to continue, in the Work of Faith, and in

the Labour of Love : And in chearful Peace, in humble Confidence, with calm and resigned, and yet earnest Expectation, to wait till *the Zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.*

5. Fourthly, If they that *are in Christ, and walk after the Spirit*, are not condemn'd for *Sins of Infirmity*, as neither for *involuntary Failings*, nor for any Thing whatever which they are not able to help : Then beware, O thou that hast Faith in his Blood, that Satan herein *gain no Advantage over thee.* Thou art still foolish and weak, blind and ignorant : More weak than any Words can express, more foolish than it can yet enter into thy Heart to conceive, knowing nothing yet as thou oughtest to know. Yet let not all thy Weakness and Folly, or any Fruit thereof, which thou art not yet able to avoid, shake thy Faith, thy filial Trust in GOD, or disturb thy Peace or Joy in the Lord. The Rule which some give as to wilful Sins, and which in that Case, may perhaps be dangerous, is undoubtedly wise and safe, if it be applied only to the Case of Weakness and Infirmities. Art thou fallen, O Man of GOD ? Yet do not lie there, fretting thyself and bemoaning thy Weakness : But meekly say, Lord, I shall fall thus every Moment, unless thou uphold me with thy Hand. And then arise ! Leap and walk. Go on thy Way. *Run with Patience the Race set before thee.*

6. Lastly, Since a Believer need not come into Condemnation, even tho' he be *surprized* into what his Soul abhors, (suppose his being surprized is not owing to any Carelessness or wilful Neglect of his own :) If thou who believest, art thus overtaken in a Fault, then grieve unto the Lord ; it shall

shall be a precious Balm : Pour out thy Heart before him, and shew him of thy Trouble. And pray with all thy Might to him who is *touched with the Feeling of thy Infirmities*, that he would stablish and strengthen and settle thy Soul, and suffer thee to fall no more. But still he condemneth thee not. Wherefore should'st thou fear ? Thou hast no Need of any *Fear that bath Torment*. Thou shalt love him that loveth thee, and it sufficeth : More Love will bring more Strength. And as soon as thou lovest him with all thy Heart, thou shalt be *perfect and entire, lacking nothing*. Wait in Peace for that Hour, when *the GOD of Peace shall sanctify thee wholly, so that thy whole Spirit, and Soul and Body may be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ !*

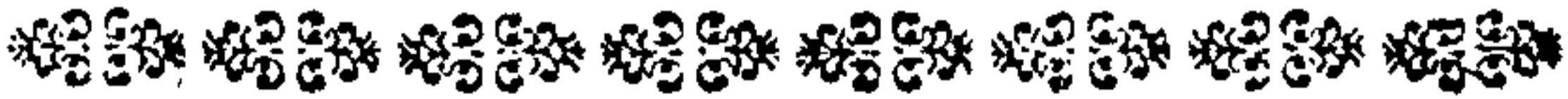


The Spirit of Bondage and of
Adoption.

A

S E R M O N

On R o m. viii. 15.



R O M. viii. 15.

Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear: But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

1. **S**T. PAUL here speaks to those who are the Children of GOD by Faith. Ye, saith he, who are indeed his Children, have drank into his Spirit. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear. But because ye are Sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!*

2. The Spirit of Bondage and Fear is widely distant from this loving Spirit of Adoption. Those who are influenced only by slavish Fear, cannot be term'd, The Sons of GOD. Yet some of them may be stiled his Servants, and are *not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.*

3. But it is to be fear'd, the Bulk of Mankind, yea, of what is call'd *The Christian World*, have not attain'd even this; but are still afar off, *neither is GOD in all their Thoughts.* A few Names may be found of those who love GOD: A few more there are that fear him. But the greater Part have neither the Fear of GOD before their Eyes, nor the Love of GOD in their Hearts.

4. Per-

4. Perhaps most of you, who by the Mercy of GOD, now partake of a better Spirit, may remember the Time, when ye were as they, when ye were under the same Condemnation. But at first ye knew it not, tho' ye were wallowing daily in your Sins and in your Blood: Till in due time ye *received the Spirit of Fear* (ye received; for this also is the Gift of GOD :) And afterwards, Fear vanish'd away, and the Spirit of Love fill'd your Hearts.

5. One who is in the first State of Mind, without Fear or Love, is in Scripture term'd a *natural Man*. One who is under the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, is sometimes said to be *under the Law*: (Altho' that Expression more frequently signifies One, who is under the *Jewish Dispensation*, who thinks himself obliged to observe all the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewish Law*.) But one who has exchanged the Spirit of Fear for the Spirit of Love, is properly said, To be *under Grace*.

Now because it highly imports us, to know what Spirit we are of, I shall endeavour to point out distinctly, First, The State of a *natural Man*, Secondly, That of one who is *under the Law*, and Thirdly, of one who is *under Grace*.

I. 1. And, First, The State of a *natural Man*. This the Scripture represents as a State of Sleep. The Voice of GOD to him is, *Awake, thou that sleepest*. For his Soul is in a deep Sleep. His Spiritual Senses are not awake: They discern neither Spiritual Good nor Evil. The Eyes of his Understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and Darkness continually

rest upon them ; for he lies in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Hence having no Inlets for the Knowledge of Spiritual Things, all the Avenues of his Soul being shut up, he is in gross, stupid, Ignorance of whatever he is most concern'd to know. He is utterly ignorant of GOD, knowing nothing concerning him at he ought to know. He is totally a Stranger to the Law of GOD, as to its True, Inward, Spiritual Meaning. He has no Conception of that Evangelical Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord ; nor of the Happiness, which they only find, whose *Life is hid with Christ in GOD*.

2. And for this very Reason, because he is fast asleep, he is, in some Sense, at rest. Because he is blind, he is also secure : He saith, *Tush, there shall no Harm happen unto me*. The Darkness which covers him on every Side, keeps him in a kind of Peace : (So far as Peace can consist with the Works of the Devil, and with an earthly, devilish Mind.) He sees not that he stands on the Edge of the Pit ; therefore he fears it not. He cannot tremble at the Danger he does not know. He has not Understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no Dread of GOD ? Because he is totally ignorant of him : If not saying in his Heart, *There is no GOD*, or, that he sitteth on the Circle of the Heavens, and humbleth not himself to behold the Things which are done on Earth ; yet satisfying himself as well, to all Epicurean Intents and Purposes, by saying, " GOD is Merciful : " Confounding and swallowing up at once, in that unwieldy Idea of Mercy, all his Holiness and Essential Hatred of Sin, all his Justice, Wisdom and Truth. He is in no Dread
of

of the Vengeance denounced against those who obey not the blessed Law of God, because he understands it not. He imagines the main Point is, *To do thus*, to be *outwardly* blameless: And sees not that it extends to every Temper, Desire, Thought, Motion of the Heart. Or he fancies, that the Obligation hereto is ceas'd; that Christ came to *destroy the Law and the Prophets*; to save his People *in*, not *from* their Sins; to bring them to Heaven, without Holiness. Notwithstanding his own Words, *Not one jot or Tittle of the Law shall pass away, till all Things are fulfilled*: And, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

3. He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of "repenting by and by;" he does not indeed exactly know when, but some time or other before he dies: Taking it for granted, That this is quite in his own Power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once set a Resolution, no fear but he will make it good.

4. But this Ignorance never so strongly glares as in those who are term'd, *Men of Learning*. If a Natural Man be one of these, he can talk at large of his Rational Faculties; of the Freedom of his Will, and the absolute Necessity of such Freedom, in order to constitute Man a Moral Agent. He reads and argues, and proves to Demonstration, That every Man may do as he will; may dispose his own Heart to Evil or Good as it seems best in his own Eyes. Thus the Glory of this World spreads a double Veil of Blindness

over his Heart, least by any Means *the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine* upon it.

5. From the same Ignorance of himself and God there may sometimes arise in the Natural Man a kind of *Joy*, in congratulating himself, upon his own Wisdom and Goodness. And what the World calls Joy, he may often possess. He may have Pleasure in various Kinds; either in gratifying the Desires of the Flesh, or the Desire of the Eye, or the Pride of Life: Particularly if he has large Possessions; if he enjoy an affluent Fortune. Then he may *cloath himself in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare sumptuously every Day*. And so long as he thus doth well unto himself, Men will doubtless *speake good of him*. They will say, He is a Happy Man: For indeed this is the Sum of Worldly Happiness: To dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.

6. It is not surprizing, if one in such Circumstances as these, dozed with the Opiates of Flattery and Sin, should imagine, among his other waking Dreams, That he walks in great *Liberty*. How easily may he persuade himself, that he is at Liberty from all *Vulgar Errors*, and from the *Prejudice* of Education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all Extremes. “I am free (may he say) from all the *Enthusiasm* of weak and narrow Souls: From *Superstition*, the Disease of Fools and Cowards, always righteous over much; and from *Bigotry*, continually incident to those who have not a free and generous Way of Thinking.” And too sure it is, That he is altogether free, from the *Wisdom which cometh from above*, from Holiness, from the Religion of the Heart, from the whole Mind which was in Christ.

7. For

7. For all this Time, he is the Servant of Sin. He commits Sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled: He “is in no Bondage;” (as some speak) he feels no Condemnation. He contents himself, (even tho’ he should profess to believe, that the Christian Revelation is of God) with, “Man is frail. We are all weak. Every Man has his Infirmity.” Perhaps he quotes Scripture: “Why, does not Solomon say, “The Righteous Man falls into Sin seven times a Day?” And doubtless, they are all Hypocrites or Enthusiasts who pretend to be better than their Neighbours.” If at any Time a serious Thought fix upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible, with, “Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for Sinners?” Thus he remains a willing Servant of Sin, content with the Bondage of Corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering Sin, but not striving to conquer, particularly That Sin, which doth so easily beset him.

8. Such is the State of every *Natural Man*; whether he be a gross, scandalous Transgressor, or a more reputable and decent Sinner, having the Form, tho’ not the Power of Godliness. But how can such an one be *convinced of Sin*? How is he brought to *repent*? To be *under the Law*? To receive the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*? This is the Point which is next to be consider’d.

II. 1. By some awful Providence, or by his Word applied with the Demonstration of his Spirit, God touches the Heart of him that lay asleep in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death. He is

terribly shaken out of his Sleep, and awakes into a Consciouſness of his Danger. Perhaps in a Moment, perhaps by Degrees, the Eyes of his Understanding are open'd, and now first (the Veil being in Part removed) discern the real State he is in. Horrid Light breaks in upon his Soul; such Light, as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless Pit, from the lowest Deep, from a Lake of Fire, burning with Brimstone. He at last sees the Loving, the Merciful God, is also *a consuming Fire*; that he is a just God and a terrible, rendring to every Man according to his Works, entering into Judgment with the Ungodly for every idle Word, yea, and for the Imaginations of the Heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy God is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; that he is an Avenger of every one who rebelleth against him, and repayeth the Wicked to his Face; and that *it is a fearful thing, to fall into the Hands of the living GOD.*

3. The Inward, Spiritual Meaning of the Law of GOD now begins to glare upon him. He perceives the *Commandment is exceeding broad, and there is nothing hid from the Light thereof.* He is convinced, that every Part of it relates not barely to outward Sin or Obedience, but to what passes in the secret Recesses of the Soul, which no Eye but GOD's can penetrate. If he now hears, *Thou shalt not kill*, GOD speaks in Thunder, *He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer.* He that saith unto his Brother, *Thou Fool*, is obnoxious to Hell-fire. If the Law say, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, the Voice of the Lord sounds in his Ears, *He that looketh on a Woman, to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his*
 VOL. I. Q Heart.

Heart. And thus in every Point, he feels the Word of GOD *quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged Sword.* It pierces even *to the dividing asunder of his Soul and Spirit, his Joints and Marrow.* And so much the more, because he is conscious *to himself* of having neglected so great Salvation; of having *trodden under Foot the Son of GOD,* who would have saved him from his Sins, and *counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy, a common, un sanctifying Thing.*

4. And as he knows *all Things are naked and open'd unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do,* so he sees himself, naked, stript of all the Fig-leaves which he had sew'd together, of all his poor Pretences to Religion or Virtue, and his wretched Excuses for sinning against GOD. He now sees himself, like the ancient Sacrifices, *τελεγαχιλισμένον,* cleft in sunder, as it were, from the Neck downward, so that all within him stands confest. His Heart is bare, and he sees it is all Sin, *deceitful above all things, desperately wicked;* that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for Tongue to express; that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but Unrighteousness and Ungodliness only; every Motion thereof, every Temper and Thought, being only Evil continually.

5. And he not only sees, but feels in himself, by an Emotion of Soul which he cannot describe, that for the Sins of his Heart, were his Life without Blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be; seeing *an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*) he deserves to be cast into *the Fire that never shall be quenched.* He feels, that *the Wages, the just Reward of Sin, of his Sin above all, is Death;*

even

even the Second Death, the Death which dieth not, the Destruction of Body and Soul in Hell.

6. Here ends his pleasing Dream, his delusive Rest, his false Peace, his vain Security. His Joy now vanishes as a Cloud : Pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the Taste ; he loaths the nauseous Sweet ; he is weary to bear them. The Shadows of Happiness flee away, and sink into Oblivion. So that he is stript of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none.

7. The Fumes of those Opiates being now dispell'd, he feels the Anguish of a wounded Spirit. He finds that Sin let loose upon the Soul (whether it be Pride, Anger or Evil Desire, whether Self-will, Malice, Envy, Revenge or any other) is perfect Misery. He feels Sorrow of Heart for the Blessings he has lost, and the Curse which is come upon him ; Remorse for having thus destroy'd himself, and despis'd his own Mercies ; Fear, from a lively Sense of the Wrath of God, and of the Consequences of his Wrath ; of the Punishment which he has justly deserv'd, and which he sees hanging over his Head ; Fear of Death, as being to him the Gate of Hell, the Entrance of Death eternal ; Fear of the Devil, the Executioner of the Wrath and righteous Vengeance of God ; Fear of Men, who if they were able to kill his Body, would thereby plunge both Body and Soul into Hell ; Fear, sometimes arising to such a Height, that the poor, sinful, guilty Soul, is terrified with every thing, with nothing, with Shades, with a Leaf shaken of the Wind. Yea sometimes it may even border upon Distraction, making a Man *drunken, tho' not with Wine,* sus-

pending the Exercise of the Memory, of the Understanding, of all the Natural Faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very Brink of Despair: So that he who trembles at the Name of Death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every Moment, to *chuse strangling rather than Life*. Well may such a Man *roar*, like him of old, *for the very Disquietness of his Heart*. Well may he cry out, *The Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities: but a wounded Spirit who can bear?*

8. Now he truly desires to break loose from Sin, and begins to struggle with it. But tho' he strive with all his Might, he cannot conquer; Sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in Prison, that he cannot get forth. He resolves against Sin, but yet sins on: he sees the Snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boasted Reason avail! Only to enhance his Guilt, and increase his Misery. Such is the Freedom of his Will! Free only to Evil; free to *drink in Iniquity like Water*; to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more *Despight to the Spirit of Grace!*

9. The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his Chains, the grievous Chains of Sin, wherewith Satan binds and *leads him Captive at his Will*: His Servant he is, tho' he repine ever so much; tho' he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in Bondage and Fear, by reason of Sin: Generally, of some outward Sin, to which he is peculiarly dispos'd, either by Nature, Custom or Outward Circumstances; But always, of some inward Sin, some evil Temper or unholy Affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but
cannot

cannot break his Chain. Thus he toils without End, repenting and finning, and repenting and finning again, till at length the poor sinful, helpless Wretch is even at his Wit's End, and can barely groan, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

10. This whole Struggle of one who is *under the Law*, under the *Spirit of Fear and Bondage*, is beautifully described by the Apostle in the foregoing Chapter, speaking in the Person of an awakened Man. *I (saith he) was alive without the Law once, v. 9. I had much Life, Wisdom, Strength and Virtue; so I thought: But when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died. When the Commandment, in its spiritual Meaning, came to my Heart, with the Power of God, my Inbred Sin was stirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my Virtue died away. And the Commandment, which was ordained to Life, I found to be unto Death. For Sin, taking occasion by the Commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me, v. 10, 11. It came upon me unawares, slew all my Hopes, and plainly shew'd, in the midst of Life I was in Death. Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment, holy and just and good, v. 12. I no longer lay the Blame on this, but on the Corruption of my own Heart. I acknowledge that the Law is Spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under Sin, v. 14. I now see both the Spiritual Nature of the Law, and my own carnal, devilish Heart; sold under Sin, totally enslaved; (like Slaves bought with Money, who were absolutely at their Master's Disposal.) For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do, v. 15. Such is the Bondage under which*

I groan ; such the Tyranny of my hard Master. *To will is present with me, but how to perform, that which is good, I find not. For the Good that I would, I do not ; but the Evil which I would not, that I do, v. 18, 19. I find a Law, an inward constraining Power, that when I would do good, Evil is present with me. For I delight in (or consent to) the Law of GOD, after the inward Man : (v. 21, 22.)* (In my Mind : So the Apostle explains himself in the Words that immediately follow ; and so ὁ ἔσω ἀνθρώπου, *the inward Man*, is understood in all other Greek Writers.) *But I see another Law in my Members, another constraining Power, warring against the Law of my Mind, or inward Man, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law, or Power, of Sin, v. 23. dragging me as it were at my Conqueror's Chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my Soul abhors. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death ! v. 24. Who shall deliver me from this helpless, dying Life ; from this Bondage of Sin and Misery ! Till this is done, I myself* (or rather, *that I, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ, that Man I am now personating) with the Mind, or inward Man, serve the Law of GOD ; my Mind, my Conscience is on God's Side : But with the Flesh ; with my Body, the Law of Sin, v. 25. being hurried away by a Force I cannot resist.*

11. How lively a Portraiture is this of one *under the Law !* One who feels the Burthen he cannot shake off ; who pants after Liberty, Power and Love, but is in Fear and Bondage still ! Until the Time that God answers the wretched Man, crying out, *Who shall deliver me ? From this Bondage of Sin, from this Body of Death ?*

Death? *The Grace of GOD, through Jesus Christ thy Lord.*

III. 1. Then it is, that this miserable Bondage ends, and he is no more *under the Law, but under Grace.* This State we are Thirdly to consider, the State of one who has found *Grace or Favour, in the Sight of GOD, even the Father, and who has the Grace, or Power of the Holy Ghost, reigning in his Heart: Who has receiv'd, in the Language of the Apostle the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he now cries, Abba, Father!*

2. *He cried unto the Lord in his Trouble, and GOD delivers him out of his Distress.* His Eyes are open'd in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving, gracious GOD. While he is calling, *I beseech thee shew me thy Glory,* he hears a Voice in his inmost Soul, *I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew Mercy to whom I will shew Mercy.* And it is not long before *the Lord descends in the Cloud, and proclaims the Name of the Lord.* Then he sees, (but not with Eyes of Flesh and Blood) *The Lord, the Lord GOD: Merciful and gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth: Keeping Mercy for thousands, and forgiving Iniquities and Transgression and Sin.*

3. Heavenly, healing Light now breaks in upon his Soul. He looks on him whom he had pierced, and GOD who out of *Darkness commanded Light to shine, shineth in his Heart.* He sees the Light of the glorious Love of GOD, in the Face of *Jesus Christ.* He hath a divine Evidence of Things not seen by Sense, even of the deep Things of GOD;
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More particularly of the Love of GOD, of his pardoning Love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the Sight, his whole Soul cries out, *My Lord, and my GOD!* For he sees all his Iniquities laid on him, who *bare them in his own Body on the Tree*: He beholds the Lamb of GOD taking away his Sins. How clearly now does he discern, that *GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself! Making him sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD through him!* And that he himself is reconciled to GOD, by that Blood of the Covenant!

4. Here end both the Guilt and Power of Sin. He can now say, *I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, even in this mortal Body, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Here end Remorse and Sorrow of Heart, and the Anguish of a wounded Spirit. *GOD turneth his Heaviness into Joy. He made sore, and now his Hands bind up.* Here ends also that Bondage unto Fear; for *his Heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord.* He cannot fear any longer the Wrath of GOD; for he knows it is now turn'd away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry Judge, but as a loving Father. He cannot fear the Devil, knowing he has *no Power, except it be given him from above.* He fears not Hell, being an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven; consequently, he has no Fear of Death; by reason whereof he was in time past, for so many Years *subject to Bondage.* Rather, knowing that *if the earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolved,*

he hath a Building of GOD, a House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens : He groaneth earnestly, desiring to be cleathed upon, with that House which is from Heaven. He groans to shake off this House of Earth, that Mortality may be swallowed up of Life : Knowing that GOD hath wrought him for the self same thing ; who hath also given him the Earnest of his Spirit.

5. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty ; Liberty not only from Guilt and Fear, but from Sin, from that heaviest of all Yokes, that basest of all Bondage. His Labour is not now in vain. The Snare is broken and he is delivered. He not only strives, but likewise prevails ; he not only fights, but conquers also. Henceforth he doth not serve Sin (Chap. vi. ver. 6. &c.) He is dead unto Sin and alive unto GOD. Sin doth not now reign, even in his mortal Body, nor doth he obey it in the Desires thereof. He does not yield his Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin, but as Instruments of Righteousness unto GOD. For being now made free from Sin, he is become the Servant of Righteousness.

6. Thus having Peace with GOD, through our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD, and having Power over all Sin, over every evil Desire and Temper, and Word and Work, he is a living Witness of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD : All of whom, being Partakers of like precious Faith, bear Record with one Voice, *We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father !*

7. It is this Spirit which continually worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure. It is he that sheds the Love of GOD abroad in
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their Hearts, and the Love of all Mankind ; thereby purifying their Hearts from the Love of the World, from the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. It is by him they are delivered from Anger and Pride, from all vile and inordinate Affections. In consequence, they are delivered from evil Words and Works, from all unholiness of Conversation ; doing no Evil to any Child of Man, and being zealous of all good Works.

8. To sum up all. The *Natural* Man neither fears nor loves GOD ; one *under the Law*, fears, one *under Grace*, loves him. The First, has no Light in the Things of GOD, but walks in utter Darkness. The Second sees the painful Light of Hell ; the Third, the joyous Light of Heaven. He that sleeps in Death, has a false Peace. He that is awakened has no Peace at all. He that believes has true Peace, the Peace of GOD filling and ruling his Heart. The Heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied Liberty, which is indeed Licentiousness : The *Jew* (or one under the *Jewish* Dispensation) is in heavy, grievous Bondage : The Christian enjoys the true glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD. An unawakened Child of the Devil, sins willingly : One that is awakened sins unwillingly : A Child of GOD *sinneth not*, but *keepeth himself*, and the wicked one *toucheth him not*. To conclude ; the Natural Man neither conquers nor fights ; the Man under the Law fights with Sin, but cannot conquer. The Man under Grace fights and conquers, yea is *more than Conqueror*, through him that loveth him.

IV. 1. From this plain Account of the three-fold State of Man, the *Natural*, the *Legal*, and the *Evangelical*, it appears; that it is not sufficient, to divide Mankind, into Sincere and Insincere. A Man may be sincere in any of these States; not only when he has the *Spirit of Adoption*, but while he has the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*. Yea, while he has neither this Fear, nor Love. For undoubtedly there may be sincere Heathens, as well as sincere *Jews* or Christians. This Circumstance then, does by no means prove, that a Man is in a State of Acceptance with God.

Examine yourselves therefore, not only whether ye are sincere, but *whether ye be in the Faith*. Examine narrowly; for it imports you much. What is the ruling Principle in your Soul? Is it the Love of God? Is it the Fear of God? Or is it neither one nor the other? Is it not rather, the Love of the World? the Love of Pleasure? or Gain? of Ease? or Reputation? If so, you are not come so far as a *Jew*. You are but a *Heathen* still. Have you Heaven in your Heart? Have you the Spirit of Adoption, ever crying, *Abba, Father*? Or do you cry unto God, as *out of the Belly of Hell*, overwhelmed with Sorrow and Fear? Or are you a Stranger to this whole Affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen, pull off the Mask. Thou hast never put on Christ. Stand barefaced. Look up to Heaven. And own before him that liveth for ever, and ever, thou hast no Part either among the Sons or Servants of God.

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Whosoever thou art, Dost thou commit Sin, or dost thou not ? If thou dost, is it willingly or unwillingly ? In either Case GOD hath told thee whose thou art, *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.* If thou committest it willingly, thou art his faithful Servant. He will not fail to reward thy Labour. If unwillingly, still thou art his Servant. GOD deliver thee out of his Hands !

Art thou daily fighting against all Sin ? and daily more than Conqueror ? I acknowledge thee for a Child of GOD. O stand fast in thy glorious Liberty. Art thou fighting, but not conquering ; striving for the Mastery, but not able to attain ? Then thou art not yet a Believer in Christ. But follow on ; and thou shalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an easy, indolent, fashionable Life ? O how hast thou dared to name the Name of Christ ! Only to make it a Reproach among the Heathen ? Awake thou Sleeper ! Call upon thy GOD : Before the Deep swallow thee up.

2. Perhaps one Reason why so many think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, why they do not discern what State they are in, is, because these several States of Soul, are often mingled together, and in some measure meet, in one and the same Person. Thus Experience shews, that the legal State, or State of Fear, is frequently mixt with the Natural. For few Men are so fast asleep in Sin, but they are sometimes, more or less awakened. As the Spirit of GOD does not *wait for the Call of Man*, so at some times he *will* be heard. He puts them in Fear, so that for a Season, at least, the Heathen *know*

themselves to be but Men. They feel the Burthen of Sin, and earnestly desire to flee from the Wrath to come. But not long. They seldom suffer the Arrows of Conviction to go deep into their Souls; but quickly stifle the Grace of God, and return to their Wallowing in the Mire.

In like manner, the Evangelical State, or State of Love, is frequently mixt with the Legal. For few of those who have the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, remain always without Hope. The wise and gracious God rarely suffers this; for he remembreth that we are but Dust. And he willeth not that *the Flesh should fail before him, or the Spirit which he hath made.* Therefore, at such times as he seeth good, he gives a Dawning of Light unto them that sit in Darkness. He causes a Part of his Goodness to pass before them, and shews he is a *GOD that heareth the Prayer.* They see the Promise which is by Faith in Christ Jesus, tho' it be yet afar off: And hereby they are encouraged to *run with Patience the Race which is set before them.*

3. Another Reason why many deceive themselves, is because they do not consider, how far a Man may go, and yet be in a Natural, or at best, a Legal State. A Man may be of a compassionate and a benevolent Temper, he may be affable, courteous, generous, friendly; he may have some Degree of Meekness, Patience, Temperance, and of many other moral Virtues. He may feel many Desires of shaking off all Vice, and attaining higher Degrees of Virtue. He may abstain from much Evil; perhaps from all that is grossly contrary to Justice, Mercy, or Truth. He may do much good, may feed the Hungry, cloath the

Naked, relieve the Widow and Fatherless. He may attend Publick Worship, use Prayer in private, read many Books of Devotion : And yet for all this, he may be a mere Natural Man, knowing neither himself nor God ; equally a Stranger to the Spirit of Fear and to that of Love ; having neither repented nor believed the Gospel.

But suppose there were added to all this, a deep Conviction of Sin, with much Fear of the Wrath of God ; vehement Desires to cast off every Sin, and to fulfil all Righteousness ; frequent Rejoicing in Hope, and Touches of Love often glancing upon the Soul : Yet neither do these prove a Man to be *under Grace*, to have True, Living, Christian Faith, unless the Spirit of Adoption abide in his Heart, unless he can continually cry, Abba Father !

4. Beware then, thou who art called by the Name of Christ, that thou come not short of the Mark of thy high Calling. Beware thou rest not, either in a Natural State, with too many that are accounted *good Christians* : Or in a Legal State, wherein those who are *highly esteemed of Men*, are generally content to live and die. Nay, but God hath prepared better Things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like Devils, but to rejoice and love, like the Angels of God. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.* Thou shalt *rejoice evermore.* Thou shalt *pray without ceasing.* Thou shalt *in every Thing give Thanks.* Thou shalt do the Will of God *on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.* O prove thou what is that good and acceptable
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and perfect Will of GOD, Now present thyself a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD. Whereunto thou hast already attained, hold fast, by reaching forth unto those Things which are before; until the GOD of Peace make thee perfect in every good Work, working in thee that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever ! Amen !



The Witnesses of the Spirit.

A

S E R M O N

On ROMANS viii. 16.



ROM. viii, 16.

The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD.

1. **H**OW many vain Men, not understanding what they spake, neither whereof they affirmed, have wrested this Scripture, to the great Loss, if not the Destruction of their Souls? How many have mistaken the Voice of their own Imagination, for this *Witness of the Spirit* of GOD? And thence idly presumed, they were the Children of GOD, while they were doing the Works of the Devil? These are truly and properly *Enthusiasts*; and indeed in the worst Sense of the Word. But with what Difficulty are they convinced thereof? Especially, if they have drank deep into that Spirit of Error. All Endeavours to bring them to the Knowledge of themselves, they will then account *fighting against GOD*. And that Vehemence and Impetuosity of Spirit, which they call *contending earnestly for the Faith*, sets them so far above all the usual Methods of Conviction, that we may well say, *With Men it is impossible*.

2. Who can then be surprized, if many reasonable Men, seeing the dreadful Effects of this Delusion, and labouring to keep at the utmost Distance from it, should sometimes lean toward another Extreme? If they are not forward to believe

lieve any who speak of having this Witness, concerning which others have so grievously erred? If they are almost ready, to set all down for *Enthusiasts*, who use the Expressions which have been so terribly abused. Yea, if they should question, whether the Witness or Testimony here spoken of, be the Privilege of *ordinary* Christians, and not rather, one of those *extraordinary* Gifts, which they suppose belonged only to the Apostolick Age.

3. But is there any Necessity laid upon us, of running either into one Extreme or the other? May we not steer a middle Course? Keep a sufficient Distance from that Spirit of Error and Enthusiasm, without denying the Gift of GOD, and giving up the great Privilege of his Children? Surely we may. In order thereto, let us consider, in the Presence and Fear of GOD,

First, What is this *Witness* or *Testimony* of our Spirit? What is the *Testimony* of GOD's Spirit? And how does he *bear Witness* with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD?

Secondly, How is this joint Testimony of GOD's Spirit and our own, clearly and solidly distinguished, from the Presumption of a Natural Mind; and from the Delusion of the Devil?

I. 1. Let us first consider, What is the *Witness* or *Testimony* of our Spirit. But here I cannot but desire all those, who are for swallowing up the *Testimony* of the Spirit of GOD, in the *rational Testimony* of our own Spirit, to observe, That in this Text the Apostle is so far from speak-
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ing of the Testimony of our own Spirit *only*, that it may be questioned, whether he speaks of it *at all*? Whether he does not speak, *only* of the Testimony of GOD's Spirit? It does not appear, but the original Text may fairly be understood thus. The Apostle had just said, in the preceding Verse, *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father*, and immediately subjoins, 'Αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα' (some Copies read τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα) συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἴσμεν τέκνα Θεῶ. Which may be translated, *The same Spirit beareth Witness to our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD* (the Preposition *σὺν* only denoting, that he witnesses this *at the same time* that he enables us to cry, Abba, Father!) But I contend not; seeing so many other Texts, with the Experience of all real Christians, sufficiently evince, that there is, in every Believer, both the Testimony of GOD's Spirit, and the Testimony of his own, that he is a Child of GOD.

2. With regard to the latter, the Foundation thereof is laid in those numerous Texts of Scripture, which describe the Marks of the Children of GOD, and that so plain, that he which runneth may read them. These are also collected together, and placed in the strongest Light, by many both ancient and modern Writers. If any need farther Light, he may receive it by attending on the Ministry of GOD's Word; by meditating thereon before GOD in secret, and by conversing with those who have the Knowledge of his Ways. And by the Reason or Understanding that GOD has given him (which Religion was designed not to extinguish, but to perfect: According to that of the Apostle, *Brethren, be not Children*
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dren in Understanding ; in Malice (or Wickedness) be ye Children ; but in Understanding be ye Men, 1 Cor. xiv. 20.) Every Man applying those scriptural Marks to himself, may know, whether he is a Child of GOD. Thus if he know, First, *As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, into all holy Tempers and Actions, they are the Sons of GOD,* (for which he has the infallible Assurance of holy Writ ;) Secondly, *I am thus led by the Spirit of GOD ;* he will easily conclude, Therefore I am a Son of GOD.

3. Agreeable to this are all those plain Declarations of St. John, in his first Epistle, *Hereby we know, that we do know him, if we keep his Commandments, Chap. ii. ver. 3. Whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of GOD perfected ; hereby know we, that we are in him, that we are indeed the Children of God, ver. 5. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth Righteousness is born of him, ver. 29. We know, that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren, Chap. 3. ver. 4. Hereby we know, that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, ver. 18. Namely, because we love one another, not in Word, neither in Tongue ; but in Deed and in Truth. Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his (loving) Spirit, Chap. iv. 13. And, Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the (obedient) Spirit which he hath given us, Chap. iii. 24.*

4. It is highly probable, there never were any Children of GOD, from the Beginning of the World unto this Day, who were farther advanced in the Grace of GOD, and the Knowledge of
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our Lord Jesus Christ, than the Apostle *John*, at the Time when he wrote these Words, and the *Fathers in Christ* to whom he wrote. Notwithstanding which, it is evident, both the Apostle himself, and all those Pillars in God's Temple, were very far from despising these Marks, of their being the Children of God; and that they applied them to their own Souls, for the Confirmation of their Faith. Yet all this is no other than rational Evidence; the *Witness of our Spirit*, our Reason or Understanding. It all resolves into this: Those who have these Marks, they are the Children of God. But we have these Marks. Therefore we are Children of God.

5. But how does it appear, that we have these Marks? This is a Question which still remains. How does it appear, that we do love God and our Neighbour? And that we keep his Commandments? Observe, that the Meaning of the Question is, How does it appear to *ourselves* (not to *others*.) I would ask him then that proposes this Question, How does it appear to you, That you are alive? And that you are now in Ease and not in Pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate Consciousness you will know, if your Soul is alive to God: If you are saved from the Pain of proud Wrath, and have the Ease of a meek and quiet Spirit. By the same Means you cannot but perceive, if you love, rejoice and delight in God. By the same, you must be directly assured, if you love your Neighbour as your self; if you are kindly affection'd to all Mankind, and full of Gentleness and Long-suffering. And with regard to the Outward Mark of the Children of God, which

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is (according to St. *John*) the keeping his Commandments, You undoubtedly know in your own Breast, if, by the Grace of GOD, it belongs to you. Your Conscience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the Name of GOD within your Lips, unless with Seriousness and Devotion, with Reverence and godly Fear: If you remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; if you honour your Father and Mother; if you do to all as you would they should do unto you: if you possess your Body in Sanctification and Honour; and if whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the Glory of GOD.

6. Now this is properly the *Testimony of our own Spirit*; even the Testimony of our Conscience, that GOD hath given us to be holy of Heart, and holy in outward Conversation. It is a Consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of Adoption, the Tempers mention'd in the Word of GOD, as belonging to his adopted Children: Even a loving Heart toward GOD and toward all Mankind, hanging with childlike Confidence on GOD our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our Care upon him, and embracing every Child of Man, with earnest, tender Affection; so as to be ready to lay down our Life for our Brother, as Christ laid down his Life for us: A Consciousness, that we are inwardly conform'd, by the Spirit of GOD to the Image of his Son, and that we walk before him in Justice, Mercy and Truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his Sight.

7. But what is that Testimony of GOD's Spirit, which is super-added to and conjoin'd with
this?

this? How does he *bear witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD.* It is hard to find Words in the Language of Men, to explain *the deep Things of GOD.* Indeed there are none that will adequately express, what the Children of GOD experience. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of GOD, to correct, to soften or strengthen the Expression) The Testimony of the Spirit, is an inward Impression on the Soul, whereby the Spirit of GOD directly *witnesses to my Spirit, That I am a Child of GOD;* that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me: That all my Sins are blotted out, and I even I, am reconciled to GOD.

8. That this *Testimony of the Spirit of GOD* must needs, in the very Nature of Things, be antecedent to the *Testimony of our own Spirit,* may appear from this single Consideration. We must be holy of Heart and holy in Life, before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have *the Testimony of our Spirit,* that we are inwardly and outwardly Holy. But we must love GOD, before we can be holy at all; this being the Root of all Holiness. Now we cannot love GOD, till we know he loves us. *We love Him, because he first loved us.* And we cannot know his Pardoning Love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our Spirit. Since therefore this *Testimony of his Spirit* must precede the Love of GOD and all Holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward Consciousness thereof, or, *The Testimony of our Spirit* concerning them.

9. Then and not till then, when the Spirit of God beareth that Witness to our Spirit, "God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the Propitiation for thy Sins ; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy Sins in his Blood :"*We love God, because he first loved us, and for his Sake we love our Brother also.* And of this we cannot but be conscious to ourselves : *We know the Things that are freely given to us of GOD.* We know that we love God and keep his Commandments. And *hereby also we know that we are of GOD.* This is that Testimony of our own Spirit ; which, so long as we continue to love God and keep his Commandments, continues joined with the Testimony of God's Spirit, *that we are the Children of GOD.*

10. Not that I would, by any means, be understood, by any Thing which has been spoken concerning it, to exclude the Operation of the Spirit of God, even from the *Testimony of our own Spirit.* In no wise. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of Thing that is good, but also shines upon his own Work, and clearly shews what he has wrought. Accordingly this is spoken of by *St. Paul*, as one great End of our receiving the Spirit, *That we may know the Things which are freely given to us of GOD :* that he may strengthen the Testimony of our Conscience, touching our *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, and give us to discern in a fuller and stronger Light, that we now do the Things which please him.

11. Should it still be enquired, How does the Spirit of God, *bear Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD,* so as to exclude all
Doubt,

Doubt, and evince the Reality of our Sonship ? The Answer is clear, from what has been observed above. And first, as to the Witness of our Spirit. The Soul as intimately and evidently perceives, when it loves, delights, and rejoices in GOD, as when it loves and delights in any Thing on Earth. And it can no more doubt, whether it loves, delights and rejoices, or no, than whether it exists, or no. If therefore this be just Reasoning,

He that now loves GOD, that delights and rejoices in him, with an humble Joy, an holy Delight, and an obedient Love, is a Child of God :

But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in GOD ;

Therefore I am a Child of God :

Then a Christian can in no wise doubt, of his being a Child of GOD. Of the Former Proposition, he has as full an Assurance, as he has that the Scriptures are of GOD. And of his thus loving GOD, he has an Inward Proof, which is nothing short of Self-evidence. Thus the *Testimony of our own Spirit* is with the most intimate Conviction manifested to our Hearts ; in such a Manner, as beyond all reasonable Doubt, to evince the Reality of our Sonship.

12. The *Manner* how the Divine Testimony is manifested to the Heart, I do not take upon me to explain. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me ; I cannot attain unto it. The Wind bloweth : And I hear the Sound thereof. But I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth.* As no one knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of a Man that is in him ; so the *Manner* of the Things of GOD knoweth no one,

save the Spirit of God. But the Fact we know : namely, that the Spirit of God does give a Believer such a Testimony of his Adoption, that while it is present to the Soul, he can no more doubt the Reality of his Sonship, than he can doubt of the Shining of the Sun, while he stands in the full Blaze of his Beams.

II. 1. How this joint Testimony of God's Spirit and our Spirit, may be clearly and solidly distinguished, from the Presumption of a natural Mind, and from the Delusion of the Devil, is the next Thing to be considered. And it highly imports all who desire the Salvation of God, to consider it with the deepest Attention, as they would not deceive their own Souls. An Error in this is generally observed to have the most fatal Consequences ; the rather, because he that errs seldom discovers his Mistake, till it is too late to remedy it.

2. And first, how is this Testimony to be distinguished from the Presumption of a natural Mind ? It is certain, one who was never convinced of Sin, is always ready to flatter himself, and to think of himself, especially in spiritual Things, more highly than he ought to think. And hence, it is in no wise strange if one who is vainly puffed up by his fleshly Mind, when he hears of this Privilege of true Christians, among whom he undoubtedly ranks himself, should soon work himself up into a Persuasion, that he is already possesser thereof. Such Instances now abound in the World, and have abounded in all Ages. How then may the real Testimony of the Spirit with our Spirit, be distinguished from this damning Presumption ?

3. I answer, the Holy Scriptures abound with Marks, whereby the one may be distinguished from the other. They describe in the plainest Manner the Circumstances which go before, which accompany, and which follow, the true, genuine Testimony of the Spirit of God with the Spirit of a Believer. Whoever carefully weighs and attends to these, will not need to put Darkness for Light. He will perceive so wide a Difference with respect to all these, between the Real and the Pretended Witness of the Spirit, that there will be no Danger, I might say, no Possibility of confounding the one with the other.

4. By these, one who vainly presumes on the Gift of God, might surely know, if he really desired it, that he hath been hitherto *given up to a strong Delusion*, and suffered to *believe a Lie*. For the Scriptures lay down those clear, obvious Marks as preceding, accompanying and following that Gift, which a little Reflection would convince him, beyond all Doubt, were never found in his Soul. For Instance, the Scripture describes Repentance, or Conviction of Sin, as constantly going before this Witness of Pardon. So, *Repent ; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, Matt. iii. 2. *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*, Mark i. 15. *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the Remission of Sins*, Acts ii. 38. *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*. Chap. iii. 19. In Conformity whereto our Church also continually places Repentance, before Pardon or the Witness of it. “ He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Gospel.” “ Almighty God — hath promised Forgiveness

of Sins to all them, who with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him." But he is a Stranger even to this Repentance. He hath never known *a broken and a contrite Heart*. *The Remembrance of his Sins* was never grievous unto him, nor *the Burthen of them intolerable*. In repeating those Words, he never meant what he said; he merely paid a Compliment to GOD. And were it only from the Want of this previous Work of GOD, he hath too great Reason to believe, that he hath grasped a mere Shadow, and never yet known the real Privilege of the Sons of GOD.

5. Again, the Scriptures describe the being born of GOD, which must precede the Witness that we are his Children, as a vast and mighty Change, a Change *from Darknes to Light*, as well as *from the Power of Satan unto GOD*: As a *passing from Death unto Life*, a Resurrection from the Dead. Thus the Apostle to the *Ephesians*; *You hath he quickned who were dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Chap. ii. ver. 1. And again, *When we were dead in Sins, he hath quickned us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly Places, in Christ Jesus*, ver. 5, 6. But what knoweth he concerning whom we now speak, of any such Change as this? He is altogether unacquainted with this whole Matter. This is a Language which he does not understand. He tells you, "He always was a Christian. He knows no Time when he had need of such a Change." By this also, if he give himself leave to think, may he know, that he is not born of the Spirit: That he has never yet known GOD; but has mistaken the Voice of Nature for the Voice of GOD.

6. But waving the Consideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time past ; by the present Marks may we easily distinguish a Child of GOD, from a presumptuous Self-deceiver. The Scriptures describe that Joy in the Lord which accompanies the Witness of his Spirit, as an humble Joy, a Joy that abases to the Dust ; that makes a pardon'd Sinner cry out, " I am vile ! What am I or my Father's House ? — Now mine Eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in Dust and Ashes ! " And wherever Lowliness is, there is Meekness, Patience, Gentleness, Long-suffering. There is a soft, yielding Spirit ; a Mildness and Sweetness ; a Tenderness of Soul which Words cannot express. But do these Fruits attend that *supposed* Testimony of the Spirit, in a Presumptuous Man ? Just the Reverse. The more confident he is of the Favour of GOD, the more is he lifted up. The more does he exalt himself ; the more haughty and assuming is his whole Behaviour. The stronger Witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him, the more incapable of receiving any Reproof, the more impatient of Contradiction. Instead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more *swift to hear, and slow to speak*, he is more slow to hear and swift to speak, more unready to learn of any one ; more fiery and vehement in his Temper, and eager in his Conversation. Yea, perhaps, there will sometimes appear a kind of Fierceness, in his Air, his manner of Speaking, his whole Deportment, as if he were just going to take the Matter out of GOD's Hands, and himself to *devour the Adversaries*.

7. Once more. The Scriptures teach, *this is the Love of GOD* (the sure Mark thereof) *that we keep his Commandments*, 1 John v. 3. And our Lord himself saith, *he that keepeth my Commandments, he it is that loveth me*, John xiv. 21. Love rejoices to obey; to do in every Point, whatever is acceptable to the Beloved. A true Lover of GOD hastens to do his Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven. But is this the Character of the presumptuous Pretender to the Love of GOD? Nay, but his Love gives him a Liberty to disobey, to break, not keep, the Commandments of GOD. Perhaps when he was in Fear of the Wrath of GOD, he did labour to do his Will. But now looking on himself as *not under the Law*, he thinks he is no longer obliged to observe it. He is therefore less zealous of good Works, less careful to abstain from Evil; less watchful over his own Heart, less jealous over his Tongue. He is less earnest to deny himself, and to take up his Cross daily. In a word, the whole Form of his Life is changed, since he has fancied himself to be *at Liberty*. He is no longer *exercising himself unto Godliness*; *wrestling not only with Flesh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, enduring Hardships, agonizing to enter in at the strait Gate*. No; he has found an easier Way to Heaven; a broad, smooth, flowry Path; in which he can say to his Soul, “Soul, take thy Ease; eat, drink and be merry.” It follows with undeniable Evidence, that he has not the true Testimony of his own Spirit. He cannot be conscious of having those Marks which he hath not; that Lowliness, Meekness and Obedience. Nor yet can the Spirit of the GOD of Truth bear
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Witness to a Lie ; or testify that he is a Child of God, when he is manifestly a Child of the Devil.

8. Discover thyself, thou poor Self-deceiver ! Thou who art confident of being a Child of God, thou who sayest, “ I have the Witness in myself,” and therefore defiest all thy Enemies. Thou art weighed in the Balance and found wanting ; even in the Balance of the Sanctuary. The Word of the Lord hath tried thy Soul, and proved thee to be reprobate Silver. Thou art not lowly of Heart. Therefore thou hast not received the Spirit of Jesus unto this Day. Thou art not gentle and meek ; therefore thy Joy is nothing worth : It is not Joy in the Lord. Thou dost not keep his Commandments ; therefore thou lovest him not, neither art thou Partaker of the Holy Ghost. It is consequently, as certain and as evident, as the Oracles of God can make it, his Spirit doth not bear Witness with thy Spirit, that thou art a Child of God. O cry unto him, that the Scales may fall off thine Eyes, that thou mayst know thyself as thou art known ; that thou mayst receive the Sentence of Death in thyself, till thou hear the Voice that raises the Dead, saying, “ Be of good Cheer : Thy Sins are forgiven ; thy Faith hath made thee whole.”

9. “ But how may one who has the real Witness in himself distinguish it from Presumption ?” How, I pray, do you distinguish Day from Night ? How do you distinguish Light from Darkness ? Or the Light of a Star, or glimmering Taper, from the Light of the Noon-day Sun ? Is there not an inherent, obvious, essential Difference between the one and the other ? And do you not
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immediately and directly perceive that Difference, provided your Senses are rightly disposed? In like manner, there is an inherent, essential Difference between Spiritual Light and Spiritual Darknes: And between the Light wherewith the Sun of Righteousness shines upon our Heart, and that glimmering Light, which arises only from *Sparks of our own Kindling*. And this Difference also is immediately and directly perceived, if our Spiritual Senses are rightly disposed.

10. To require a more minute and philosophical Account of the *Manner* whereby we distinguish these, and of the *Criteria*, or intrinsic Marks, whereby we know the Voice of God, is to make a Demand which can never be answer'd; no, not by one who has the deepest Knowledge of God. Suppose, when *Paul* answer'd before *Agrippa*, the wise *Roman* had said, "Thou talkest of hearing the Voice of the Son of God. How dost thou know, it was his Voice? By what *Criteria*, what intrinsic Marks, dost thou know the Voice of God? Explain to me, the *Manner* of distinguishing this, from a Human or Angelick Voice." Can you believe, the Apostle himself would have once attempted to answer so idle a Demand? And yet doubtless the Moment he heard that Voice, he knew it was the Voice of God. But *how* he knew this, who is able to explain? Perhaps neither Man nor Angel.

11. To come yet closer. Suppose God were now to speak to any Soul, "Thy Sins are forgiven thee." He must be willing, that Soul should know his Voice; otherwise he would speak in vain. And he is able to effect this; for when-
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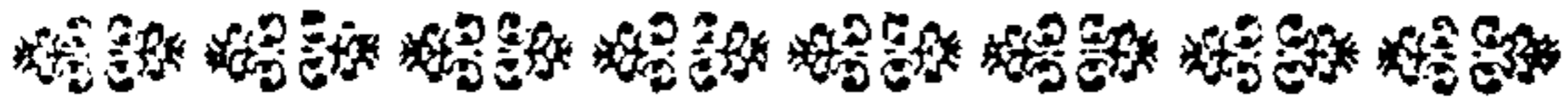
ever he wills, to do is present with him. And he does effect it. That Soul is absolutely assur'd, "This Voice is the Voice of God." But yet he who hath that Witness in himself, cannot explain it to one who hath not. Nor indeed is it to be expected that he should. Were there any natural Medium to prove, or natural Method to explain the Things of God, to unexperienced Men; then the natural Man might discern and know the Things of the Spirit of God. But this is utterly contrary to the Assertion of the Apostle, that *he cannot know them; because they are spiritually discern'd*; even by spiritual Senses, which the natural Man hath not.

12. "But how shall I know, that my spiritual Senses are rightly disposed?" This also is a Question of vast Importance. For if a Man mistake in this, he may run on in endless Error and Delusion. And how am I assured, that this is not my Case; and that I do not mistake the Voice of the Spirit?" Even by the *Testimony of your own Spirit*; by the *Answer of a good Conscience toward GOD*. By the Fruits which he hath wrought in your Spirit, you shall know the *Testimony of the Spirit of GOD*. Hereby you shall know, that you are in no Delusion, that you have not deceived your own Soul. The immediate Fruits of the Spirit, ruling in the Heart, are *Love, Joy, Peace; Bowels of Mercies, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Gentleness, Long-suffering*. And the outward Fruits are, The doing Good to all Men; the doing no Evil to any; and the walking in the Light; a zealous, uniform Obedience to all the Commandments of God.

13. By the same Fruits shall you distinguish
this

this Voice of GOD, from any Delusion of the Devil. That proud Spirit cannot humble thee before GOD. He neither can nor would soften thy heart, and melt it first into earnest Mourning after GOD, and then into filial Love. It is not the Adversary of GOD and Man, that enables thee to love thy Neighbour ; or to put on Meekness, Gentleness, Patience, Temperance, and the whole Armour of GOD. He is not divided against himself, or a Destroyer of Sin, his own Work. No ; it is none but the Son of GOD who cometh *to destroy the Works of the Devil*. As surely therefore as Holiness is of GOD, and as Sin is the Work of the Devil, so surely the Witness thou hast in thyself is not of Satan, but of GOD.

14. Well then mayst thou say, *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable Gift !* Thanks be unto GOD, who giveth me to *know in whom I have believed : Who hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into my Heart, crying, Abba, Father, and even now bearing witness with my Spirit, that I am a Child of GOD !* And see, that not only thy Lips, but thy Life shew forth his Praise. He hath sealed thee for his own ; *glorify him then in thy Body and thy Spirit which are his*. Beloved, if thou hast this Hope in thyself, *purify thyself as he is pure*. While thou beholdest *what manner of Love the Father hath given thee, that thou shouldst be called a Child of GOD ; cleanse thyself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of GOD : And let all thy Thoughts, Words and Works be a spiritual Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD through Christ Jesus !*

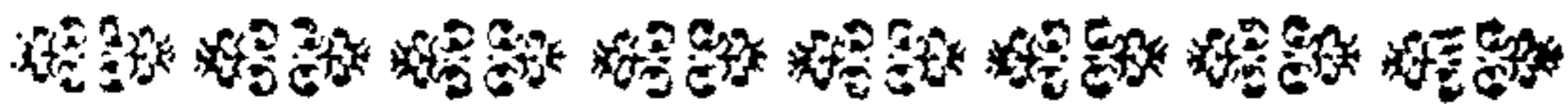


The Witnesses of our own Spirit.

A

S E R M O N

On 2 C O R. i. 12.



Vol. I.

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2 COR. i. 12.

This is our Rejoicing, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of GOD, we have had our Conversation in the World.

1. **S**UCH is the Voice of every true Believer in Christ, so long as he abides in Faith and Love. *He that followeth me, saith our Lord, walketh not in Darkness: And while he hath the Light, he rejoiceth therein. As he hath received the Lord Jesus Christ, so he walketh in him. And while he walketh in him, the Exhortation of the Apostle takes place in his Soul day by day, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.*

2. But that we may not build our House upon the Sand, (least, when the rains descend, and the Winds blow, and the Floods arise and beat upon it, it fall, and great be the Fall thereof) I intend, in the following Discourse, to shew, what is the Nature and Ground of a Christian's Joy. We know, in general, it is that happy Peace, that calm Satisfaction of Spirit, which arises from such a Testimony of his Conscience, as is here described by the Apostle. But in order to understand this the more thoroughly, it will be requisite to weigh all his Words: Whence will easily

appear, both what we are to understand by *Conscience*, and what, by the *Testimony* thereof; and also, How he that hath this *Testimony* rejoiceth evermore.

3. And, first, What are we to understand by *Conscience*? What is the Meaning of this Word that is in every one's Mouth? One would imagine, it was an exceeding difficult Thing, to discover this, when we consider, how large and numerous Volumes have been from time to time wrote on this Subject: And how all the Treasures of ancient and modern Learning have been ranfack'd, in order to explain it. And yet it is to be fear'd, it has not received much Light from all those elaborate Enquiries. Rather, have not most of those Writers puzzled the Cause; *darkening Counsel by Words without Knowledge*; perplexing a Subject, plain in itself, and easy to be understood? For set aside but hard Words, and every Man of an honest Heart will soon understand the Thing.

4. GOD has made us Thinking Beings, capable of perceiving what is present, and of reflecting or looking back on what is past. In particular, we are capable of perceiving, whatsoever passes in our own Hearts or Lives; of knowing whatsoever we feel or do; and that either while it passes, or when it is past. This we mean when we say, Man is a *conscious* Being: He hath a *Consciousness* or inward Perception, both of Things present and past relating to himself, of his own Tempers and outward Behaviour. But what we usually term *Conscience*, implies somewhat more than this. It is not barely, The Knowledge of our present, or the Remembrance
of

of our preceding Life. To remember, to bear witness either of past or present Things, is only one, and the least Office of Conscience. Its main Business is to excuse or accuse, to approve or disapprove, to acquit or condemn.

5. Some late Writers indeed have given a new Name to this, and have chose to stile it, a *moral Sense*. But the old Word seems preferable to the new, were it only on this Account, That it is more common and familiar among Men, and therefore easier to be understood. And to Christians it is undeniably preferable, on another Account also; namely, because it is Scriptural; because it is the Word which the Wisdom of GOD hath chose to use in the Inspir'd Writings.

And according to the Meaning wherein it is generally used there, particularly in the Epistles of St. *Paul*, we may understand by Conscience, A Faculty or Power, implanted by GOD in every Soul that comes into the World, of perceiving what is Right or Wrong in his own Heart or Life, in his Tempers, Thoughts, Words and Actions.

6. But what is the *Rule* whereby Men are to judge of Right and Wrong? Whereby their Conscience is to be directed? The Rule of Heathens, (as the Apostle teaches elsewhere) is *the Law written in their Hearts*. *These*, saith he, *not having the (outward) Law, are a Law unto themselves: Who shew the Work of the Law (that which the outward Law prescribes) written in their Heart, by the Finger of GOD; their Conscience also bearing witness, whether they walk by this Rule, or not; and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or even excusing, acquitting, de-*

fending them, (*ἢ καὶ ἀπολογεμένων*) *Rom. ii. 14, 15.* But the Christian Rule of Right and Wrong is the Word of GOD, the Writings of the Old and New Testament: All which the Prophets and *Holy Men of Old* wrote, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: All that Scripture* which was given by *Inspiration of GOD*, and which is indeed profitable for *Doctrine*, or teaching the whole Will of GOD; for *Reproof* of what is contrary thereto; for *Correction of Error*, and for *Instruction* (or training us up) in *Righteousness.* *2 Tim. iii. 16.*

This is a *Lanthorn unto a Christian's Feet*, and a *Light in all his Paths.* This alone he receives as his Rule of Right or Wrong, of whatever is really Good or Evil. He esteems nothing Good, but what is here enjoin'd, either directly or by plain Consequence. He accounts nothing Evil but what is here forbidden, either in Terms, or by undeniable Inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, (either directly, or by plain Consequence) he believes to be of an indifferent Nature, to be in itself neither Good nor Evil: This being the whole and sole outward Rule, whereby his Conscience is to be directed in all Things.

7. And if it be directed thereby in fact, then hath he *the Answer of a good Conscience toward GOD.* A good Conscience is what is elsewhere termed by the Apostle, a *Conscience void of Offence.* So, what he at one time expresses thus, *I have lived in all good Conscience before GOD until this Day,* *Acts xxiii. 1.* he denotes at another, by that Expression, *Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward GOD and toward Man,* *ch. xxiv. 16.*

Now

Now in order to this, there is absolutely requir'd, First, A Right Understanding of the Word of GOD, of his *holy and acceptable and perfect Will* concerning us, as it is revealed therein. For it is impossible we should walk by a Rule, if we do not know what it means. There is, Secondly, required (which how few have attain'd?) a true Knowledge of ourselves; a Knowledge both of our Hearts and Lives, of our inward Tempers and outward Conversation: Seeing, if we know them not, it is not possible that we should compare them with our Rule. There is requir'd, Thirdly, An Agreement of our Hearts and Lives, of our Tempers and Conversation, of our Thoughts and Words and Works with that Rule, with the written Word of GOD. For without this, if we have any Conscience at all, it can be only an evil Conscience. There is, Fourthly, requir'd, an inward Perception, of this Agreement with our Rule. And this habitual Perception, this inward Consciousness itself, is properly a *Good Conscience*; or (in the other Phrase of the Apostle) *A Conscience void of Offence, toward GOD and toward Man.*

8. But whoever desires to have a Conscience thus void of Offence, let him see that he lay the right Foundation. Let him remember, *Other Foundation of this can no Man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.* And let him also be mindful, that no Man buildeth on him but by Living Faith; that no Man is a Partaker of Christ, until he can clearly testify, *The Life which I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD; in him who is now revealed in my Heart; who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Faith alone

alone is that Evidence, that Conviction, that Demonstration of Things invisible, whereby the Eyes of our Understanding being open'd, and Divine Light poured in upon them, we *see the wondrous Things of GOD's Law*, the Excellency and Purity of it; the Height and Depth and Length and Breadth thereof, and of every Commandment contained therein. It is by Faith, that beholding *the Light of the Glory of GOD, in the Face of Jesus Christ*, we perceive, as in a Glass, all that is in ourselves, yea, the inmost Motions of our Souls. And by this alone can that blessed Love of GOD be *shed abroad in our Hearts*, which enables us so to love one another, as Christ loved us. By this, is that gracious Promise fulfilled, unto all the *Israel of GOD, I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write (or engrave) them in their Hearts*, Heb. viii. 10. Hereby producing in their Souls, an entire Agreement with his holy and perfect Law, and *bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*.

And as an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, so a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit. As the Heart therefore of a Believer, so likewise his Life is thoroughly conformed to the Rule of GOD's Commandments. In a Conscience whereof, he can give glory to GOD, and say, with the Apostle, *This is our Rejoicing, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of GOD, we have had our Conversation in the World*.

9. *We have had our Conversation*. The Apostle in the Original, expresses this by one single Word (*ἀνεσγάφημεν*). But the Meaning thereof is

exceeding broad, taking in our whole Deportment, yea, every inward as well as outward Circumstance, whether relating to our Soul or Body. It includes every Motion of our Heart, of our Tongue, of our Hands and bodily Members. It extends to all our Actions and Words; to the Employment of all our Powers and Faculties; to the manner of using every Talent we have received, with respect either to God or Man.

10. *We have had our Conversation in the World; even in the World of the Ungodly: Not only among the Children of God (that were, comparatively, a little Thing :) But among the Children of the Devil, among those that lie in Wickedness, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, in the Wicked one.* What a World is this! How thoroughly impregnated with the Spirit it continually breathes! As our God is good and doth good, so the God of this World, and all his Children, are evil, and do evil, (so far as they are suffered) to all the Children of God. Like their Father, they are always lying in wait, or *walking about, seeking whom they may devour*: Using Fraud or Force, secret Wiles or open Violence, to destroy those who are not of the World: Continually warring against our Souls, and by old or new Weapons and Devices of every kind, labouring to bring them back into the Snare of the Devil, into the broad Road that leadeth to Destruction.

11. *We have had our whole Conversation in such a World, in Simplicity and godly Sincerity. First, in Simplicity.* This is what our Lord recommends, under the Name of a *Single Eye*. *The Light of the Body, saith he, is the Eye. If therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full*

full of Light. The Meaning whereof is this. What the Eye is to the Body, that the Intention is, to all the Words and Actions. If therefore this Eye of thy Soul be single, all thy Actions and Conversation, shall be *full of Light*, of the Light of Heaven; of Love and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

We are then simple of Heart, when the Eye of our Mind is singly fixt on GOD: When in all Things we aim at GOD alone, as our GOD, our Portion, our Strength, our Happiness, our exceeding great Reward, our All, in Time and Eternity. This is Simplicity; when a steady View, a single Intention of promoting his Glory, of doing and suffering his blessed Will, runs thro' our whole Soul, fills all our Heart, and is the constant Spring of all our Thoughts, Desires and Purposes.

∴ 12. *We have had our Conversation in the World, Secondly, in godly Sincerity.* The Difference between Simplicity and Sincerity seems to be chiefly this: Simplicity regards the Intention itself, Sincerity, the Execution of it. And this Sincerity relates not barely to our Words, but to our whole Conversation, as described above. It is not here to be understood in that narrow Sense, wherein *St. Paul* himself sometimes uses it, for speaking the Truth, or abstaining from Guile, from Craft and Dissimulation. But in a more extensive Meaning, as actually hitting the Mark which we aim at by Simplicity. Accordingly it implies in this Place, that we do in fact speak and do all to the Glory of GOD; that all our Words are not only pointed at this, but actually conducive thereto; that all our Actions flow on in an even Stream,

Stream, uniformly subservient to this great End : And that in our whole Lives, we are moving strait toward GOD, and that continually ; walking steddily on in the High-way of Holiness, in the Paths of Justice, Mercy and Truth.

13. This Sincerity is term'd by the Apostle, Godly Sincerity, or the Sincerity of GOD, (*ἐπικρινεια Θεου*,) to prevent our mistaking or confounding it with the Sincerity of the Heathens : (For they had also a kind of Sincerity among them, for which they professed no small Veneration) Likewise, to denote the Object and End of this, as of every Christian Virtue ; seeing whatever does not ultimately tend to GOD, sinks among *the beggarly Elements of the World*. By styling it, the Sincerity of GOD, he also points out the Author of it, the *Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift descendeth* : Which is still more clearly declared in the following Words, *Not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of GOD.*

14. *Not with fleshly Wisdom.* As if he had said, We cannot thus converse in the World, by any natural Strength or Understanding, neither by any naturally-acquired Knowledge or Wisdom. We cannot gain this Simplicity, or practise this Sincerity, by the Force either of Good-Sense, Good-Nature or Good-Breeding. It overshoots all our Native Courage and Resolution, as well as all our Precepts of Philosophy. The Power of Custom is not able to train us up to this, nor the most exquisite Rules of Human Education. Neither could I *Paul* ever attain hereto, notwithstanding all the Advantages I enjoy'd, so long as I

I was *in the Flesh*, in my natural State, and pursued it only by *fleshly*, natural *Wisdom*.

And yet surely, if any Man could, *Paul* himself might have attain'd thereto by that *Wisdom*. For we can hardly conceive any, who was more highly favour'd with all the Gifts both of Nature and Education. Besides his natural Abilities, probably not inferior to those of any Person then upon the Earth, he had all the Benefits of Learning, studying at the University of *Tarsus*, afterwards brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, the Person of the greatest Account both for Knowledge and Integrity, that was then in the whole *Jewish* Nation. And he had all the possible Advantages of Religious Education, being a Pharisee, the Son of a Pharisee, train'd up in the very strictest Sect or Profession, distinguish'd from all others by a more eminent Strictness. And herein he had *profited above many others, who were his Equals in Years, being more abundantly zealous of whatever he thought would please GOD, and as touching the Righteousness of the Law blameless*. But it could not be, that he should hereby attain this Simplicity and godly Sincerity. It was all but lost Labour; in a deep, piercing Sense of which he was at length constrain'd to cry out, *The Things which were Gain to me, those I counted Loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Phil. iii. 7, 8.*

15. It could not be that ever he should attain to this, but by the *excellent Knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord: Or by the Grace of GOD*; another Expression of nearly the same Import. *By the Grace of GOD* is sometimes to be understood,

lood, that free Love, that unmerited Mercy, by which I a Sinner, thro' the Merits of Christ, am now reconciled to GOD. But in this Place it rather means, that Power of GOD the Holy Ghost, which *worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.* As soon as ever the Grace of GOD, in the former Sense, his pardoning Love is manifested to our Soul, the Grace of GOD, in the latter Sense, the Power of his Spirit, takes Place therein. And now we can perform, thro' GOD, what to Man was impossible. Now we can order our Conversation aright. We can do all Things in the Light and Power of that Love, thro' Christ which strengtheneth us. We now have *the Testimony of our Conscience,* which we could never have by fleshly Wisdom, *that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have our Conversation in the World.*

16. This is properly the Ground of a Christian's Joy. We may now therefore readily conceive, How he that hath this Testimony in himself, *rejoiceth evermore.* *My Soul,* may he say, *doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit rejoiceth in GOD my Saviour.* I rejoice in him, who of his own unmerited Love, of his own free and tender Mercy, *hath called me into this State of Salvation,* wherein thro' his Power I now stand. I rejoice because his Spirit beareth witness to my Spirit, that I am bought with the Blood of the Lamb, and that believing in him, "I am a Member of Christ, a Child of GOD, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." I rejoice because the Sense of GOD's Love to me, hath by the same Spirit wrought in me to love him, and to love for his Sake every Child of Man, every Soul that

he hath made. I rejoyce, because he gives me to feel in myself *the Mind that was in Christ*: Simplicity, a single Eye to him, in every Motion of my Heart; Power always to fix the loving Eye of my Soul on him who *loved me, and gave himself for me*, to aim at him alone, at his glorious Will, in all I think or speak or do: Purity, desiring nothing more but GOD, *crucifying the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, setting my Affections on Things above, not on Things of the Earth*: Holiness, a Recovery of the Image of GOD, a Renewal of Soul after his Likeness: And godly Sincerity, directing all my Words and Works, so as to conduce to his Glory. In this I likewise rejoyce, yea and will rejoyce, because my Conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the Light he continually pours in upon it, that I *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith I am called*: that I *abstain from all Appearance of Evil, fleeing from Sin as from the Face of a Serpent*; that as I have Opportunity, I do all possible Good, in every kind, to all Men; that I follow my Lord in all my Steps, and do what is acceptable in his Sight. I rejoyce because I both see and feel, through the Inspiration of GOD's Holy Spirit, that all my Works are wrought in him, yea and that it is he who worketh all my Works in me. I rejoyce in seeing, thro' the Light of GOD which shines in my Heart, that I have Power to walk in his Ways, and that thro' his Grace, I turn not therefrom, to the Right Hand or to the Left.

17. Such is the Ground and the Nature of that Joy, whereby a Christian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may easily infer, First, That this is not a *natural* Joy. It does
not

not arise from any natural Cause : Not from any sudden Flow of Spirits. This may give a transient Start of Joy. But the Christian *rejoiceth always*. It cannot be owing to bodily Health or Ease ; to Strength and Soundness of Constitution. For it is equally strong in Sicknes and Pain ; yea perhaps far stronger than before. Many Christians have never experienced any Joy, to be compared with that which then filled their Soul, when the Body was well nigh worn out with Pain, or consumed away with pining Sicknes. Least of all can it be ascribed to outward Prosperity, to the Favour of Men or Plenty of worldly Goods. For then chiefly, when their Faith has been tried as with Fire, by all manner of outward Afflictions, have the Children of God rejoiced in him, *whom unseen they loved, even with Joy unspeakable*. And never surely did Men rejoice like those, who were used as *the Filth and Off-scouring of the World* ; who wander'd to and fro, being in want of all Things ; in Hunger, in Cold, in Nakedness : Who *had Trials, not only of cruel Mockings, but moreover of Bonds and Imprisonments* : Yea, who at last *counted not their Lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their Course with Joy*.

18. From the preceding Considerations, we may, Secondly, infer, That the Joy of a Christian does not arise from any *Blindness of Conscience*, from his not being able to discern Good from Evil. So far from it, that he was an utter Stranger to this Joy, till the Eyes of his Understanding were open'd ; that he knew it not, until he had spiritual Senses, fitted to discern spiritual Good and Evil. And now the Eye of his

Soul waxeth not dim. He was never so sharp-sighted before. He has so quick a Perception of the smallest Things, as is quite amazing to the natural Man. As a Mote is visible in the Sun-beam, so to him who is walking in the Light, in the Beams of the uncreated Sun, every Mote of Sin is visible. Nor does he close the Eyes of his Conscience any more. That Sleep is departed from him. His Soul is always broad awake : No more Slumber or folding of the Hands to Rest ! He is always standing on the Tower, and hearkning what his Lord will say concerning him : And always rejoicing in this very Thing, in *seeing him that is invisible*.

19. Neither does the Joy of a Christian arise, Thirdly, from any *Dulness* or *Callousness of Conscience*. A Kind of Joy, it is true, may arise from this, in those whose *foolish Hearts are darkned* ; whose Heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of Sense ; and consequently, without spiritual Understanding. Because of their senseless, unfeeling Hearts, they may rejoice even in committing Sin : And this they may probably call *Liberty* ! Which is indeed mere Drunkenness of Soul : A fatal Numbness of Spirit, the stupid Insensibility of a seared Conscience. On the contrary, a Christian has the most exquisite Sensibility ; such as he could not have conceived before. He never had such a Tenderness of Conscience as he has had, since the Love of God has reigned in his Heart. And this also is his Glory and Joy ; that God hath heard his daily Prayer :

“ O that my tender Soul might fly
The first, abhor’d Approach of Ill :
Quick, as the Apple of an Eye
The flightest Touch of Sin to feel.”

20. To conclude. Christian Joy, is Joy in Obedience: Joy in loving God and keeping his Commandments. And yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the Terms of the *Covenant of Works*; as if by any Works or Righteousness of ours, we were to *procure* Pardon and Acceptance with God. Not so: We are already pardoned and accepted, thro' the Mercy of God in Christ Jesus—Not as if we were by our own Obedience to *procure* Life, Life from the Death of Sin. This also we have already thro' the Grace of God. *Us hath he quicken'd, who were dead in Sin.* And now we are *alive to GOD, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.* But we rejoice in walking, according to the *Covenant of Grace*, in holy Love and happy Obedience. We rejoice in knowing, *That being justified thro' his Grace, we have not received that Grace of GOD in vain;* That God having freely (not for the Sake of our willing or running, but thro' the Blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run in the Strength which he hath given us, the *Way of his Commandments.* He hath *girded us with Strength unto the War,* and we gladly *fight the good Fight of Faith.* We rejoice, thro' him who liveth in our Hearts by Faith, to *lay hold of eternal Life.* This is our Rejoicing; that as our *Father worketh hitherto,* so (not by our own Might or Wisdom, but through the Power of his Spirit freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the Works of God. And may he work in us, whatsoever is well-pleasing in his Sight! To whom be the Praise for ever and ever!



The Means of Grace.

A

S E R M O N

On MALACHI iii. 7.



MALACHI iii. 7.

Ye are gone away from mine Ordinances, and have not kept them.

1. **B**UT are there any *Ordinances* now, since Life and Immortality were brought to Light by the Gospel? Are there under the Christian Dispensation, any *Means* ordain'd of GOD, as the usual Channels of his Grace? This Question could never have been proposed, in the Apostolical Church, unless by one who openly avow'd himself to be a Heathen; the whole Body of Christians being agreed, that Christ had ordain'd certain outward Means, for conveying his Grace into the Souls of Men. Their constant Practice set this beyond all Dispute; for so long as *all that believed were together, and had all Things common, (Acts ii. 44.) they continued stedfastly in the teaching of the Apostles, and in the breaking of Bread and in Prayers, v. 42.*

2. But in Process of Time, when *the Love of many waxed cold*, some began to mistake the *Means* for the *End*, and to place Religion, rather in doing those outward Works, than in a Heart renewed after the Image of GOD. They forgot, that *the End of every Commandment is Love, out of a pure Heart, with Faith unfeigned: The loving*

loving the Lord their God with all their Heart, and their Neighbour as themselves ; and the being purified from Pride, Anger and evil Desire, by a *Faith of the Operation of GOD*. Others seemed to imagine, that tho' Religion did not principally consist in these outward Means, yet there was something in them wherewith God was well pleased, something that would still make them acceptable in his Sight, tho' they were not exact in the weightier Matters of the Law, in Justice, Mercy and the Love of God.

3. It is evident, in those who abused them thus, they did not conduce to the End for which they were ordain'd. Rather, the Things which should have been for their Health, were to them an Occasion of falling. They were so far from receiving any Blessing therein, that they only drew down a Curse upon their Head : So far from growing more heavenly in Heart and Life, that they were twofold more the Children of Hell than before. Others clearly perceiving, That these Means did not convey the Grace of God to those Children of the Devil, began from this particular Case to draw a General Conclusion, " That they were not Means of conveying the Grace of God."

4. Yet the Number of those who *abused* the Ordinances of God, was far greater than of those who *despised* them, till certain Men arose, not only of great Understanding, (sometimes join'd with considerable Learning) but who likewise appear'd to be Men of Love, experimentally acquainted with true, Inward Religion. Some of these were burning and shining Lights, Persons famous in their Generations, and such as had
well

well deserved of the Church of Christ, for standing in the Gap against the Overflowings of Ungodliness.

It cannot be supposed, that these holy and venerable Men, intended any more at first, than to shew that Outward Religion is nothing worth, without the Religion of the Heart: That *GOD is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth*: That therefore external Worship is lost Labour, without a Heart devoted to God: That the Outward Ordinances of God then profit much, when they advance Inward Holiness, but when they advance it not, are unprofitable and void, are lighter than Vanity: Yea, that when they are used, as it were, *in the Place* of This, they are an utter Abomination to the Lord.

5. Yet it is not strange, if some of these, being strongly convinced, of that horrid Profanation of the Ordinances of God, which had spread itself over the whole Church, and well nigh driven True Religion out of the World; in their fervent Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Recovery of Souls from that fatal Delusion, spake as if Outward Religion were *absolutely nothing*, as if it had *no Place* in the Religion of Christ. It is not surprizing at all, if they should not always have expressed themselves with sufficient Caution. So that unwary Hearers might believe, they condemn'd all Outward Means, as altogether unprofitable; and as not designed of God to be the Ordinary Channels of conveying his Grace into the Souls of Men.

Nay, it is not impossible, some of these holy Men did at length themselves fall into this Opin-

nion: In particular, those who, not by Choice, but by the Providence of GOD, were cut off from all these Ordinances: Perhaps wandring up and down, having no certain Abiding-place, or dwelling in Dens and Caves of the Earth. These experiencing the Grace of GOD in themselves, tho' they were depriv'd of all Outward Means, might infer, that the same Grace would be given to them, who of set Purpose abstain'd from them.

6. And Experience shews, how easily this Notion spreads, and insinuates itself into the Minds of Men: Especially of those who are thoroughly awaken'd out of the Sleep of Death, and begin to feel the Weight of their Sins, a Burthen too heavy to be born. These are usually impatient of their present State, and trying every Way to escape from it. They are always ready to catch at any new Thing, - any new Proposal of Ease or Happiness. They have probably tried most Outward Means, and found no Ease in Them: It may be, more and more of Remorse and Fear and Sorrow and Condemnation. It is easy therefore to persuade these, That it is better for them to abstain from all those Means. They are already weary of striving (as it seems) in vain, of labouring in the Fire: And are therefore glad of any Pretence to cast aside that, wherein their Soul has no Pleasure; to give over the painful Strife, and sink down into an indolent Inactivity.

II. 1. In the following Discourse, I propose to examine at large, Whether there are any Means of Grace?

By

By *Means of Grace* I understand, Outward Signs, Words or Actions, ordain'd of GOD, and appointed for this End, to be the *Ordinary Channels* whereby he might convey to Men, preventing, justifying or sanctifying Grace.

I use this Expression, "Means of Grace," because I know none better, and because it has been generally used in the Christian Church for many Ages: In particular, by our own Church, which directs us to bless GOD, both for the "*Means of Grace* and Hopes of Glory;" and teaches us, that a Sacrament is "An Outward Sign of Inward Grace, and a *Means* whereby we receive the same."

The Chief of these Means are Prayer, whether in secret, or with the great Congregation; searching the Scriptures (which implies Reading, Hearing and Meditating thereon) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating Bread and drinking Wine in Remembrance of him; and these we believe to be ordain'd of GOD, as the ordinary Channels of conveying his Grace to the Souls of Men.

2. But we allow, That the whole Value of the Means depends on their actual Subservience to the End of Religion; That consequently all these Means, when separate from the End, are less than nothing and Vanity; That if they do not actually conduce to the Knowledge and Love of GOD, they are not acceptable in his Sight; yea, rather, they are an Abomination before him; a Stink in his Noftrils; he is weary to bear them. Above all, if they are used as a kind of *Commutation* for the Religion they were design'd to subserv. It is not easy to find Words for the

enormous Folly and Wickedness, of thus turning GOD's Arms against himself; of keeping Christianity out of the Heart by those very Means, which were ordain'd for the bringing it in.

3. We allow likewise, that all Outward Means whatever, if separate from the Spirit of GOD, cannot profit at all, cannot conduce in any Degree, either to the Knowledge or Love of GOD. Without Controversy, the Help that is done upon Earth, he doth it himself. It is He alone, who by his own Almighty Power, worketh in us what is pleasing in his Sight. And all outward Things, unless he work in them and by them, are mere weak and beggarly Elements. Whosoever therefore imagines, there is any Intrinsic *Power*, in any Means whatsoever, does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the Power of GOD. We know that there is no inherent Power, in the Words that are spoken in Prayer; in the Letter of Scripture read, the Sound thereof heard, or the Bread and Wine receiv'd in the Lord's Supper: But that it is GOD alone who is the Giver of every good Gift, the Author of all Grace; that the whole Power is of him, whereby thro' any of these, there is any Blessing convey'd to our Soul. We know likewise, that he is able to give the same Grace, tho' there were no Means on the Face of the Earth. In this Sense we may affirm, that "with regard to GOD, there is no such Thing as Means:" Seeing he is equally able to work whatsoever pleaseth him, by Any, or by none at all.

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4. We allow farther, That the Use of all Means whatever, will never atone for one Sin; That it is the Blood of Christ alone, whereby any Sinner can be reconciled to God; there being no other Propitiation for our Sins, no other Fountain for Sin and Uncleanness. Every Believer in Christ is deeply convinced, that there is no *Merit*, but in Him: That there is no *Merit* in any of his own Works; not in uttering the Prayer, or searching the Scripture, or hearing the Word of God, or eating of that Bread and drinking of that Cup. So that if no more be intended by the Expression some have used, "Christ is the Only Means of Grace," than this, 'That he is the Only *Meritorious Cause* of it, it cannot be gain-said by any who know the Grace of God.

5. Yet once more. We allow (tho' it is a melancholy Truth) that a large Proportion of those who are called Christians, do to this Day abuse the Means of Grace, to the Destruction of their Souls. This is doubtless the Case with all those who rest content, in the Form of Godliness without the Power. Either they fondly presume, They are Christians already, because they do thus and thus; altho' Christ was never yet reveal'd in their Hearts, nor the Love of God shed abroad therein: Or else they suppose, They shall infallibly be so, barely because they use these Means: Idly dreaming (tho' perhaps hardly conscious thereof) either that there is some Kind of *Power* therein, whereby sooner or later (they know not when) they shall certainly be made Holy: Or that there is a Sort of *Merit* in using them,

them, which will surely move GOD to give them Holiness, or accept them without it.

6. So little do they understand that great Foundation of the whole Christian Building, *By Grace ye are saved*. Ye are saved from your Sins, from the Guilt and Power thereof, ye are restored to the Favour and Image of GOD, not for any Works, *Merits* or Deservings of yours, but by the free *Grace*, the mere Mercy of GOD, thro' the *Merits* of his well-beloved Son. Ye are thus saved, not by any *Power*, Wisdom or Strength, which is in you, or in any other Creature; but merely thro' the *Grace* or *Power* of the Holy Ghost, which worketh all in all.

7. But the main Question remains. We know this Salvation is the Gift and the Work of GOD. But how (may one say, who is convinced he hath it not) may I attain thereto? If you say, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved:" He answers, True; but how shall I believe? You reply, Wait upon GOD — Well. But how am I to wait? In the Means of Grace, or out of them? Am I to wait for the Grace of GOD which bringeth Salvation, by using these Means, or by laying them aside?

8. It cannot possibly be conceived, that the Word of GOD should give no Direction in so important a Point: Or that the Son of GOD, who came down from Heaven for us Men and for our Salvation, should have left us undetermined with regard to a Question, wherein our Salvation is so nearly concern'd.

And in fact, he hath not left us undetermin'd; he hath shewn us the Way wherein we should go. We have only to consult the Oracles of
GOD,

God, to inquire what is written there ? And if we simply abide by their Decision, there can no possible Doubt remain.

III. 1. According to this, according to the Decision of Holy Writ, all who desire the Grace of God, are to wait for it, in the Means which he hath ordained ; in using, not in laying them aside.

And first : All who desire the Grace of God, are to wait for it in the Way of *Prayer*. This is the express Direction of our Lord himself. In his Sermon upon the Mount, after explaining at large whercin Religion consists, and describing the main Branches of it, he adds, *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (Matt. vii. 7, 8.)* Here we are in the plainest Manner directed to ask, in order to, or as a *Means* of receiving ; to seek in order to find, the Grace of God, the Pearl of great Price ; and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his Kingdom.

2. That no Doubt might remain, our Lord labours this Point in a more peculiar Manner. He appeals to every Man's own Heart. *What Man is there of you, who if his Son ask Bread, will give him a Stone ? Or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent ? If ye then being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, the Father of Angels and Men, the Father of the*

Spirits of all Flesh, *give good things to them that ask him?* ver. 9, 10, 11. Or, as he expresses himself on another Occasion, including all good things in one, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke xi. 13. It should be particularly observed here, that the Persons directed to ask, had not then received the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless our Lord directs them to use this Means, and promises that it should be effectual; that upon asking they should receive the Holy Spirit, from him whose Mercy is over all his Works.

3. The absolute Necessity of using this Means, if we would receive any Gift from God, yet farther appears from that remarkable Passage which immediately precedes these Words: *And he said unto them, (whom he had just been teaching, how to pray) which of you shall have a Friend, and shall go unto him at Midnight, and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three Loaves — and he from within shall answer, Trouble me not — I cannot rise and give thee: I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his Friend, yet because of his Importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you.* Luke xi. 5, 7, 8, 9. *Though he will not give him, because he is his Friend, yet because of his Importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.* How could our blessed Lord more plainly declare, That we may receive of God, by this Means, by importunately asking, what otherwise we should not receive at all?

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4. He spake also another Parable to this End, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint, till through this Means they should receive of GOD, whatsoever Petition they asked of him. There was in a City a Judge which feared not GOD, neither regarded Man. And there was a Widow in that City, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my Adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterwards he said with himself, Though I fear not GOD, nor regard Man, yet because this Widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. Luke xviii. 1,—4. The Application of this our Lord himself hath made. Hear what the unjust Judge saith! Because she continues to ask, because she will take no Denial, therefore I will avenge her. And shall not GOD avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily—if they pray and faint not.

5. A Direction equally full and express, to wait for the Blessings of GOD in private Prayer, together with a positive Promise, that by this Means we shall obtain the Request of our Lips, he hath given us in those well-known Words: Enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matt. vi. 6.

6. If it be possible for any Direction to be more clear, it is that which GOD hath given us by the Apostle, with regard to Prayer of every kind, publick or private, and the Blessing annex thereto. If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask
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of GOD, that giveth to all Men liberally, (if they ask; otherwise ye have not, because ye ask not, Jam. iv. 2.) and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him, ch. i. 5.

If it be objected, “But this is no Direction to Unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning Grace of God: For the Apostle adds, *But let him ask in Faith: otherwise, let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*” I answer, The Meaning of the Word *Faith* in this Place, is fix’d by the Apostle himself, (as if it were on purpose to obviate this Objection) in the Words immediately following: *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering, nothing doubting, μηδεν διακρινόμενος.* Not doubting but GOD heareth his Prayer, and will fulfil the Desire of his Heart.

The gross, blasphemous Absurdity of supposing *Faith* in this Place to be taken in the full christian Meaning, appears hence: It is supposing the Holy Ghost to direct a Man who knows he has not this Faith (which is here term’d *Wisdom*) to ask it of GOD, with a positive Promise that *it shall be given him*; and then immediately to subjoin, That it shall not be given him, unless he have it before he asks for it! But who can bear such a Supposition? From this Scripture, therefore, as well as those cited above, we must infer, that all who desire the Grace of GOD, are to wait for it in the Way of Prayer.

7. Secondly, All who desire the Grace of GOD, are to wait for it in *searching the Scriptures.*

Our Lord’s Direction with regard to the Use of this Means, is likewise plain and clear. *Search the*
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the Scriptures, faith he to the unbelieving *Jews*, — *for they testify of me*, John v. 39. And for this very End did he direct them to search the Scriptures, that they might *believe in him*.

The Objection, “That this not a Command, but only an Assertion, that they did search the Scriptures,” is shamelessly false. I desire those who urge it, to let us know, how a Command can be more clearly express’d, than in those Terms, Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς; It is as peremptory as so many Words can make it.

And what a Blessing from God attends the Use of this Means, appears from what is recorded concerning the *Bereans*; who after hearing *St. Paul*, *searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so? Therefore many of them believed*; found the Grace of God, in the Way which he had ordained. *Acts xvii. 12, 13.*

It is probable, indeed, that in some of those who had *received the Word with all Readiness of Mind, Faith came* (as the same Apostle speaks) *by hearing*, and was only confirm’d by *reading* the Scriptures. But it was observed above, that under the general Term of *searching the Scriptures*, both *Hearing, Reading, and Meditating*, are contained.

8. And that this is a Means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases true Wisdom, we learn from the Words of *St. Paul* to *Timothy*: *From a Child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, thro’ Faith which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. The same Truth (namely, that this is the great Means God has ordained for conveying

conveying his manifold Grace to Man) is delivered, in the fullest Manner that can be conceived, in the Words which immediately follow: *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of GOD; (consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true;) and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: To the End that the Man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good Works, ver. 16, 17.*

9. It should be observed, that this is spoken primarily and directly, of the Scriptures which Timothy had known from a Child; which must have been those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. Paul (though he was not a *Whit* behind the very Chief of the Apostles, nor therefore, I presume, behind any Man now upon Earth) from making light of the Old Testament! Behold this, lest ye one Day wonder and perish, ye who make so small Account of one Half of the Oracles of God! Yea, and that Half of which the Holy Ghost expressly declares, That it is profitable, as a Means ordained of God, for this very thing, *for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: to the End the Man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good Works.*

10. Nor is this profitable only for the Men of God, for those who walk already in the Light of his Countenance; but also for those who are yet in Darkness, seeking him whom they know not. Thus St. Peter, *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy: Literally, And we have*

have the prophetick Word more sure : (Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον· confirmed by our being Eye-witnesses of his Majesty, and hearing the Voice which came from the excellent Glory) unto which (prophetick Word ; so he stiles the holy Scriptures) ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your Hearts, 2 Pet. i. 19. Let all, therefore, who desire that Day to dawn upon their Hearts, wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

II. Thirdly, All who desire an Increase of the Grace of God, are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's Supper. For this also is a Direction himself hath given. *The same Night in which he was betrayed, he took Bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is my Body, (that is, the sacred Sign of my Body.) This do in Remembrance of me. Likewise, he took the Cup, saying, This Cup is the New Testament, or Covenant, in my Blood, (the sacred Sign of that Covenant) this do ye—in Remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come, 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.* Ye openly exhibit the same, by these visible Signs, before God, and Angels, and Men. Ye manifest your solemn Remembrance of his Death, till he cometh in the Clouds of Heaven.

Only let a Man first examine himself, whether he understand the Nature and Design of this holy Institution, and whether he really desire to be himself made conformable to the Death of Christ :

Christ : *and so, nothing doubting, let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, v. 28.*

Here then the Direction first given by our Lord, is expressly repeated by the Apostle. Let him eat ; let him drink : (*ἔσθιέτω πινέτω* both in the Imperative Mood.) Words not implying a bare Permission only, but a clear explicit Command ; a Command to all those either who already are filled with Peace and Joy in believing, or who can truly say, “The Remembrance of our Sins is grievous unto us, the Burden of them is intolerable.”

12. And that this is also an ordinary stated Means of receiving the Grace of God, is evident from those Words of the Apostle, which occur in the preceding Chapter ; *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion, or Communication of the Blood of Christ ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ?* (1 Cor. x. 16.) Is not the eating of that Bread, and the drinking of that Cup, the outward, visible Means, whereby God conveys into our Souls all that spiritual Grace, that Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the Body of Christ once broken, and the Blood of Christ once shed for us ? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the Grace of God, eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.

IV. 1. But as plainly as God hath pointed out the Way, wherein he will be inquired after, innumerable are the Objections which Men,

wife in their own Eyes, have from time to time raised against it. It may be needful to consider a few of these ; not because they are of Weight in themselves, but because they have so often been used, especially of late Years, to turn the Lame out of the Way ; yea, to trouble and subvert those who did run well, till Satan appeared as an Angel of Light.

The First and Chief of these is, “ You cannot use these Means (as you call them) without *trusting* in them.” I pray, where is this written ? I expect you should shew me plain Scripture for your Assertion. Otherwise I dare not receive it : Because I am not convinced, that you are wiser than God.

If it really had been as you assert, it is certain Christ must have known it. And if he had known it, he would surely have warned us, he would have revealed it long ago. Therefore because he has not, because there is no Tittle of this in the whole Revelation of Jesus Christ, I am as fully assured your Assertion is false, as that this Revelation is of God.

“ However leave them off for a short time, to see whether you trusted in them or no.” So I am to disobey God, in order to know, whether I trust in obeying him ! And do you avow this Advice ? Do you deliberately teach, to *do Evil, that Good may come ?* O tremble at the Sentence of God against such Teachers ! Their *Damnation is just.*

“ Nay, if you are troubled, when you leave them off, it is plain, you trusted in them.” By no means. If I am troubled when I wilfully disobey God, it is plain his Spirit is still striving

with me. But if I am not troubled at wilful Sin, it is plain, I am given up to a reprobate Mind.

But what do you mean by “*Trusting* in them?” Looking for the Blessing of God therein? Believing, that if I wait in this Way I shall attain, what otherwise I should not? So I do. And so I will, God being my Helper, even to my Live’s End. By the Grace of God, I will *thus* trust in them, till the Day of my Death; that is, I will believe, that whatever God hath promised, he is faithful also to perform. And seeing he hath promised to bless me in this Way, I *trust* it shall be according to his Word.

2. It has been, secondly, objected, “This is seeking Salvation by Works.” Do you know the Meaning of the Expression you use? What is, “Seeking Salvation by Works?” In the Writings of St. *Paul*, it means, either seeking to be saved, by observing the Ritual Works of the Mosaic Law, or expecting Salvation for the Sake of our own Works, by the Merit of our own Righteousness. But how is either of these implied, in my waiting in the Way God has ordained, and expecting that he will meet me there, because he has promised so to do?

I do expect, that he will fulfil his Word, that he will meet and bless me in this Way. Yet not for the Sake of any Works which I have done, not for the Merit of my Righteousness: But merely through the Merits and Sufferings and Love of his Son, in whom he is always well-pleased.

3. It has been vehemently objected, Thirdly, that Christ is the only Means of Grace. I answer, this is mere playing upon Words. Explain your Term, and the Objection vanishes away.

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When we say, “Prayer is a Means of Grace,” we understand, a Channel through which the Grace of GOD is convey’d. When you say, “Christ is the Means of Grace,” you understand, the sole Price and Purchaser of it: Or, that *no Man cometh unto the Father, but thro’ him.* And who denies it? But this is utterly wide of the Question.

4. But does not the Scripture (it has been objected, Fourthly) direct us to *wait* for Salvation? Does not *David* say, *My Soul waiteth upon GOD: for of him cometh my Salvation?* And does not *Isaiab* teach us the same Thing, saying, *O Lord, we have waited for thee?* All this cannot be denied. Seeing it is the Gift of GOD, we are undoubtedly to *wait* on him for Salvation. But how shall we wait? If GOD himself has appointed a *Way*, can you find a better *Way* of waiting for him? But, that he hath appointed a *Way*, hath been shewn at large, and also what that *Way* is. The very Words of the Prophet which you cite, put this out of all Question. For the whole Sentence runs thus; *In the Way of thy Judgments, or Ordinances, O Lord, have we waited for thee.* (*Isai. xxvi. 8.*) And in the very same *Way* did *David* wait, as his own Words abundantly testify. *I have waited for thy saving Health, O Lord, and have kept thy Law. Teach me, O Lord, the Way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the End.*

5. “Yea, say some, but GOD has appointed another *Way*, *Stand still and see the Salvation of GOD.*”

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Let us examine the Scriptures to which you refer. The first of them, with the Context, runs thus :

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the Children of Israel lift up their Eyes — and they were sore afraid. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the Wilderness? And Moses said unto the People, Fear ye not : Stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the Children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift thou up thy Rod, and stretch out thine Hand over the Sea and divide it. And the Children of Israel shall go on dry Ground through the midst of the Sea, Exod. xiv. 10, &c.

This was the *Salvation of God*, which they stood still to see, by marching forward with all their Might !

The other Passage wherein this Expression occurs, stands thus. *There came some that told Jehoshaphat saying, There cometh a great Multitude against thee, from beyond the Sea. And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a Fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together to ask Help of the Lord, even out of all the Cities they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the Congregation, in the House of the Lord — Then upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the Lord. — And he said, — Be not dismayed by reason of this great Multitude — To-morrow go ye down against them, ye shall not need to fight in this Battle. Set yourselves : Stand ye still, and see the Salvation of the Lord — And they rose early in the Morning and went forth. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set*

set Ambushments against the Children of Moab, Ammon, and Mount-Seir — and every one helped to destroy another, 2 Chron. xx. 2, &c.

Such was the Salvation which the Children of *Judah* saw. But how does all this prove, that we ought not to wait for the Grace of God, in the Means which he hath ordained ?

6. I shall mention but one Objection more, which indeed does not properly belong to this Head. Nevertheless, because it has been so frequently urged, I may not wholly pass it by.

“ Does not St. Paul say, *If ye be dead with Christ, why are ye subject to Ordinances ? Col. ii. 20.* Therefore, a Christian, one that is *dead with Christ*, need not use the Ordinances any more.”

So you say, “ If I am a Christian, I am not subject to the Ordinances of Christ !” Surely, by the Absurdity of this, you must see at the first Glance, that the Ordinances here mentioned cannot be the Ordinances of Christ ! That they must needs be the *Jewish* Ordinances, to which it is certain, a Christian is no longer subject.

And the same undeniably appears from the Words immediately following, *Touch not, taste not, handle not* — all evidently referring to the ancient Ordinances of the *Jewish* Law.

So that this Objection is the weakest of all. And in spite of all, that great Truth must stand unshaken, That all who desire the Grace of God, are to wait for it, in the Means which he hath ordained.

V. 1. But this being allowed, that all who desire the Grace of God, are to wait for it in the Means he hath ordained : It may still be enquired,

how those Means should be used, both as to the *Order*, and the *Manner* of using them ?

With regard to the former, we may observe, there is a Kind of Order, wherein God himself is generally pleased, to use these Means, in bringing a Sinner to Salvation. A stupid, senseless Wretch is going on in his own Way, not having God in all his Thoughts, when God comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening Sermon or Conversation, perhaps by some awful Providence ; or it may be by an immediate Stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward Means at all. Having now a Desire to flee from the Wrath to come, he purposely goes to *hear*, how it may be done. If he finds a Preacher who speaks to the Heart, he is amazed, and begins *searching the Scriptures*, whether these Things are so ? The more he *hears* and *reads*, the more convinced he is ; and the more he *meditates* thereon, Day and Night. Perhaps he finds some other Book, which explains and inforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all these Means, the Arrows of Conviction sink deeper into his Soul. He begins also to *talk* of the Things of God, which are ever uppermost in his Thoughts : Yea, and to talk with God, to *pray* to him, altho' through Fear and Shame, he scarce knows what to say. But whether he can speak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in *Groans which cannot be uttered*. Yet being in doubt, whether *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity*, will regard such a Sinner as him, he wants to pray with those who know God, with the Faithful, in the *Great Congregation*. But here he observes others go up to the *Table of*
the

the Lord. He confiders, Chrift has faid, “ Do this ! ” How is it, that I do not ? I am too great a Sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After struggling with thefe Scruples a while, he breaks through. And thus he continues in GOD’S Way, in hearing, reading, meditating, praying, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper, till GOD, in the manner that pleafes him, fpeaks to his Heart, *Thy Faith hath faved thee : Go in Peace.*

2. By obferving this Order of GOD, we may learn what Means to recommend to any particular Soul. If any of thefe will reach a ftupid, carelefs Sinner, it is probably *Hearing* or *Conversation*. To fuch therefore we might recommend thefe, if he has ever any Thought about Salvation. To one who begins to feel the Weight of his Sins, not only Hearing the Word of GOD, but *Reading* it too, and perhaps other *ferious Books*, may be a Means of deeper Conviction. May you not advife him alfo, to *meditate* on what he reads, that it may have its full Force upon his Heart ? Yea, and to *ſpeak* thereof and not be afhamed, particularly among thofe who walk in the fame Path. When Trouble and Heavinefs take hold upon him, ſhould you not then earneſtly exhort him, to pour out his Soul before GOD ? Always *to pray* and *not to faint* ? And when he feels the worthleſnefs of his own Prayers, are you not to work together with GOD, and remind him of going up into *the Houſe of the Lord*, and praying with all them that fear him ? But if he does this, the *dying Word* of his Lord, will ſoon be brought to his Remembrance : A plain Intimation, that this is the Time, when we ſhould ſecond the Motions of the Bleſſed Spirit. And thus may we lead him
Step

Step by Step, through all the Means which God has ordained ; not according to our own Will, but just as the Providence and the Spirit of God go before and open the Way.

3. Yet as we find no Command in holy Writ, for any particular Order to be observed herein, so neither do the Providence and the Spirit of God, adhere to any without Variation : But the Means into which different Men are led, and in which they find the Blessing of God, are varied, transposed and combined together, a thousand different Ways. Yet still our Wisdom is, to follow the Leadings of his Providence and his Spirit : To be guided herein (more especially as to the Means wherein we ourselves seek the Grace of God) partly by his outward Providence, giving us the Opportunity of using sometimes one Means, sometimes another : Partly by our Experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleased most to work in our Heart. And in the mean time, the sure and general Rule for all who groan for the Salvation of God, is this, Whenever Opportunity serves, use all the Means which God has ordained. For who knows, in which God will meet thee, with the Grace that bringeth Salvation ?

4. As to the *Manner* of using them, whereon indeed it wholly depends, whether they should convey any Grace at all to the User, it behoves us, First, always to retain a lively Sense, that God is above all Means. Have a care therefore of limiting the Almighty. He doth whatsoever and whensoever it pleaseth him. He can convey his Grace, either in or out of any of the Means which he hath appointed. Perhaps he will. *Who*

hath known the Mind of the Lord ? Or who hath been his Counsellor ? Look then every Moment for his Appearing ! Be it at the Hour you are employed in his Ordinances ; or before, or after that Hour. Or when you are hindered therefrom. He is not hindered. He is always ready : Always able, always willing to save. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good !*

Secondly, *Before* you use any Means, let it be deep imprest on your Soul, “ There is no *Power* in this. It is in itself a poor, dead, empty Thing : Separate from GOD, it is a dry Leaf, a Shadow. Neither is there any *Merit* in my using this ; nothing intrinsically pleasing to GOD, nothing whereby I deserve any Favour at his Hands, no, not a Drop of Water to cool my Tongue. But because GOD bids, therefore I do ; because he directs me to wait in this Way, therefore here I wait for his free Mercy, whereof cometh my Salvation.

Settle this in your Heart, that the *Opus operatum*, the mere Work done profiteth nothing : That there is no *Power* to save, but in the Spirit of GOD ; no *Merit*, but in the Blood of Christ : That consequently, even what GOD ordains, conveys no Grace to the Soul, if you trust not in him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly trust in him, cannot fall short of the Grace of GOD, even tho’ he were cut off from every Outward Ordinance, tho’ he were shut up in the Center of the Earth.

Thirdly, *In* using all Means, seek GOD alone. In and through every Outward Thing, look singly to the *Power* of his Spirit, and the *Merits* of his Son. Beware you do not stick in the
Work

Work itself ; if you do, it is all lost Labour. Nothing short of GOD can satisfy your Soul. Therefore eye him, in all, through all and above all.

Remember also, to use all Means, *as Means* : As ordain'd, not for their own Sake, but in order to the Renewal of your Soul in Righteousness and true Holiness. If therefore they actually tend to this, well. But if not, they are Dung and Dross.

Lastly, *After* you have used any of these, take care, how you value yourself thereon : How you congratulate yourself, as having done some great Thing. This is turning all into Poison. Think, " If GOD was not there, what does this avail ? Have I not been adding Sin to Sin ? How long ! O Lord, save or I perish ! O lay not this Sin to my Charge ! " If GOD was there, if his Love flowed into your Heart, you have forgot, as it were, the Outward Work. You see, you know, you feel, GOD is All in All. Be abased. Sink down before him. Give him all the Praise. Let GOD *in all Things be glorified through Christ Jesus*. Let all your Bones cry out, *My Song shall be always of the Loving-kindness of the Lord : With my Mouth will I ever be telling of thy Truth, from one Generation to another !*

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