



# SERMONS

ON

## Several Occasions.

VOL. III.



# SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions :

IN

THREE VOLUMES.

---

BY

JOHN WESLEY, *M. A.*

Fellow of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

---

VOL. III.

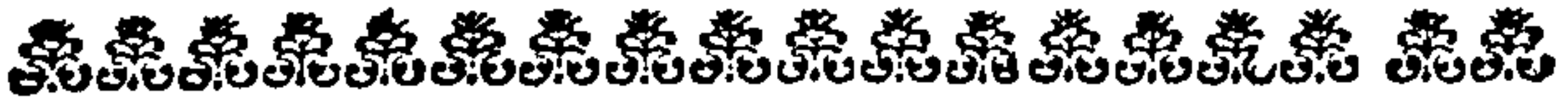
---

---

LONDON :

Printed by W. STRAHAN : And Sold by  
T. TRYE, near Gray's-Inn Gate, Holbourn ;  
J. ROBINSON, Ludgate-Street ; at the Foundery,  
near Upper Moorfields ; and at the School Room  
in the Horse-Fair, BRISTOL.

MDCCCL.



DISCOURSE the Tenth,  
UPON OUR  
LORD's SERMON  
ON THE  
*MOUNT.*



---



---

 MATTH. vii. 1—12.

*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

*For with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what Measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

*And why beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?*

*Or how wilt thou say to thy Brother, Let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye; and behold a Beam is in thine own Eye?*

*Thou Hypocrite, first cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.*

*Give not that which is holy unto Dogs, neither cast your Pearls before Swine; lest they trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rent you.*

*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.*

*Or what Man is there of you, who, if his Son ask Bread, will give him a Stone?*

*Or if he ask a Fish, will 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, give good Things to them that ask him?*

*Therefore all Things whatsoever you would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

1. **O**UR blessed Lord, having now finished his main Design, having, first, delivered the Sum of true Religion, carefully guarded against those Glosses of Men, whereby they would make the Word of God of none Effect: And having, next, laid down Rules touching that right Intention, which we are to preserve in all our inward Actions: Now proceeds to point out the main Hindrances of this Religion, and concludes all with a suitable Application.

2. In the fifth Chapter our great Teacher has fully described inward Religion in its various Branches. He has there laid before us those Dispositions

positions of Soul, which constitute real Christianity; the Tempers contained in that Holiness, *without which no Man shall see the Lord*; the Affections which when flowing from their proper Fountain, from a living Faith in GOD through Christ Jesus, are intrinsically and essentially good, and acceptable to GOD. In the sixth he has shewn, how all our Actions likewise, even those that are indifferent in their own Nature, may be made holy and good, and acceptable to GOD, by a pure and holy Intention. Whatever is done without this, he declares is of no Value with GOD: Whereas whatever outward Works are thus consecrated to GOD, are in his Sight of great Price.

3. In the former Part of this Chapter he points out the most common and most fatal Hindrances of this Holiness. In the latter, he exhorts us by various Motives, to break thro' all, and secure that Prize of our high Calling.

4. The first Hindrance he cautions us against is Judging. *Judge not, that ye be not judged. Judge not others, that ye be not judged of the Lord, that ye bring not Vengeance on your own Heads. For with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what Measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again*: A plain and equitable Rule, whereby GOD permits you to determine for yourselves, in what Manner he shall deal with you in the Judgment of the great Day.

5. There is no Station of Life, nor any Period of Time, from the Hour of our first repenting and believing the Gospel, till we are made perfect in Love, wherein this Caution is not needful for every Child of GOD. For Oc-

cautions of Judging can never be wanting. And the Temptations to it are innumerable: Many whereof are so artfully disguised, that we fall into the Sin, before we suspect any Danger. And unspeakable are the Mischiefs produced hereby: Always to him that judges another, thus wounding his own Soul, and exposing himself to the righteous Judgment of GOD: And frequently to those who are judged, whose Hands hang down, who are weakened and hindred in their Course, if not wholly turned out of the Way, and caused to draw back even to Perdition. Yea, how often, when this *Root of Bitterness springs up*, are many defiled thereby: By Reason whereof the Way of Truth itself is evil spoken of, and that worthy Name blasphemed whereby we are called.

6. Yet it does not appear, that our Lord designed this Caution, only or chiefly for the Children of GOD: But rather for the Children of the World, for the Men who know not GOD. These cannot but hear of those, who are not of the World, who follow after the Religion above-described: Who endeavour to be humble, serious, gentle, merciful and pure in Heart; who earnestly desire such Measures of these holy Tempers, as they have not yet attained: And wait for them in doing all Good to all Men, and patiently suffering Evil. Whoever go but thus far, cannot be hid, no more than *a City set upon a Hill*. And why do not those, who *see* their good Works, glorify their Father which is in Heaven? What Excuse have they, for not treading in their Steps? For not imitating their Example, and being Followers of them, as they are also of Christ?

Christ? Why, in order to provide an Excuse for themselves, they condemn those whom they ought to imitate. They spend their Time in finding out their Neighbour's Faults, instead of amending their own. They are so busied about others going out of the Way, that themselves never come into it at all: At least, never get forward, never go beyond a poor dead Form of Godliness without the Power.

7. It is to these more especially that our Lord says, *Why beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, the Infirmities, the Mistakes, the Imprudence, the Weakness of the Children of GOD; but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?* Thou considerest not the damnable Impenitence, the satanic Pride, the accursed Self-will, the idolatrous Love of the World, which are in thyself, and which make thy whole Life an Abomination to the Lord. Above all, with what supine Carelessness and Indifference art thou dancing over the Mouth of Hell? And *how then, with what Grace, with what Decency or Modesty, wilt thou say to thy Brother, Let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye, the Excess of Zeal for GOD, the Extreme of Self-denial, the too great Disengagement from worldly Cares and Employments, the Desire to be Day and Night in Prayer, or hearing the Words of eternal Life? And behold a Beam in thine own Eye!* not a Mote, like one of these. *Thou Hypocrite!* who pretendest to care for others and hast no Care for thy own Soul! who maketh a Show of Zeal for the Cause of GOD, when in Truth thou neither lovest nor fearest him! *First cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye. Cast out the Beam of Impenitence,*



nitence. Know thyself. See and feel thyself a Sinner. Feel, that thy inward Parts are very Wickedness, that thou art altogether corrupt and abominable, and that the Wrath of GOD abideth on thee. Cast out the Beam of Pride. Abhor thyself. Sink down as in Dust and Ashes. Be more and more little and mean, and base and vile in thine own Eyes. Cast out the Beam of Self-will. Learn what that meaneth, *If any Man will come after me, let him renounce himself.* Deny thyself and take up thy Cross daily. Let thy whole Soul cry out, *I came down from Heaven* (for so thou didst, thou never-dying Spirit, whether thou knowest it or no) *not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.* Cast out the Beam of Love of the World. Love not the World, neither the Things of the World. Be thou crucified unto the World, and the World crucified unto thee. Only use the Word, but enjoy GOD. Seek all thy Happiness in him. Above all, cast out the grand Beam, that supine Carelessness and Indifference. Deeply consider, that *one Thing is needful*, the one Thing which thou hast scarce ever thought of. Know and feel, that thou art a poor, vile, guilty Worm, quivering over the great Gulph! What art thou? A Sinner born to die: A Leaf driven before the Wind: A Vapour ready to vanish away: Just appearing, and then scattered into Air, to be no more seen! See this, *And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.* Then, if thou hast Leisure from the Concerns of thy own Soul, thou shalt know how to correct thy Brother also.

8. But what is properly the Meaning of this Word, *Judge not*? What is the *Judging* which is here

here forbidden? It is not the same as Evil-speaking, altho' it is frequently joined therewith. Evil-speaking is, the relating any Thing that is evil, concerning an absent Person: Whereas *Judging* may indifferently refer, either to the absent or the present. Neither does it necessarily imply the speaking at all, but only the *thinking Evil* of another. Not that all Kind of thinking Evil of others, is that *Judging* which our Lord condemns. If I see one commit Robbery or Murder, or hear him blaspheme the Name of GOD, I cannot refrain from thinking ill of the Robber or Murderer. Yet this is not evil *Judging*: There is no Sin in this, nor any Thing contrary to tender Affection.

9. The Thinking of another, in a Manner that is contrary to Love, is that *Judging* which is here condemned, and this may be of various Kinds. For, first, we may think another to blame when he is not. We may lay to his Charge (at least in our own Mind) the Things of which he is not guilty: The Words which he has never spoke, or the Actions which he has never done. Or we may think his *Manner* of acting was wrong, altho' in Reality it was not. And even where nothing can justly be blamed, either in the Thing itself, or in the Manner of doing it, we may suppose, his *Intention* was not good, and so condemn him on that Ground: At the same time that he who searches the Heart, sees his Simplicity and godly Sincerity.

10. But we may not only fall into the Sin of *Judging*, by condemning the Innocent, but also, secondly, by condemning the Guilty, in a higher Degree than he deserves. This Species of *Judging*  
ing

ing is likewise an Offence against Justice as well as Mercy : And yet such an Offence as nothing can secure us from, but the strongest and tenderest Affection. Without this, we readily suppose one who is acknowledged to be in Fault, to be more in Fault than he really is. We undervalue whatever Good is found in him. Nay, we are not easily induced to believe, that any Thing good can remain in him, in whom we have found any Thing that is evil.

11. All this shews a manifest Want of that Love, which ε λογίζεται κακόν *Thinketh no Evil* : Which never draws an unjust or unkind Conclusion, from any Premises whatsoever. Love will not infer, from a Person's falling once into an Act of open Sin, that he is accustomed so to do, that he is habitually guilty of it. And if he was habitually guilty once, Love does not conclude, he is so still : Much less, that if he is now guilty of this, therefore he is guilty of other Sins also. These evil Reasonings all pertain to that sinful *Judging*, which our Lord here guards us against : And which we are in the highest Degree concerned to avoid, if we love either GOD or our own Souls.

12. But supposing we do not condemn the Innocent, neither the Guilty any farther than they deserve : Still we may not be altogether clear of this Snare. For there is a third Sort of sinful *Judging*, which is the condemning any Person at all where there is not sufficient Evidence. And be the Facts we suppose ever so true, yet that does not acquit us. For they ought not to have been supposed but proved, and till they were, we ought to have formed no Judgment, I say, till they

they were: For neither are we excused, altho' the Facts admit of ever so strong Proof, unless that Proof be produced before we pass Sentence, and compared with the Evidence on the other Side. Nor can we be excused, if ever we pass a full Sentence, before the Accused has spoken for himself. Even a Jew might teach us this, as a mere Lesson of Justice abstracted from Mercy and brotherly Love. *Doth our Law, says Nicodemus, judge any Man before it hear him and know what he doth? Job. xvii. 51.* Yea, a Heathen cou'd reply, when the Chief of the Jewish Nation desired to have Judgment against his Prisoner. *It is not the Manner of the Romans to judge any Man before he that is accused have the Accusers Face to Face, and have Licence to answer for himself, concerning the Crime laid against him.*

13. Indeed we cou'd not easily fall into sinful *Judging*, were we only to observe that Rule, which \* another of those Heathen *Romans* affirms to have been the Measure of his own Practice. "I am so far, says he, from lightly believing every Man's, or any Man's Evidence against another, that I do not easily or immediately believe a Man's Evidence against himself. I always allow him second Thoughts, and many Times Council too." Go thou who art called a Christian, and do likewise, lest the Heathen rise and condemn thee in that Day.

14. But how rarely should we condemn or judge one another, at least, how soon would that Evil be remedied, were we to walk by that clear and express Rule, which our Lord himself has taught us? *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee,*

\* *Seneca,*

(or if thou hear, or believe that he hath) go and tell him of his Fault, between him and thee alone. This is the first Step thou art to take. But if he will not hear, take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word may be established. This is the second Step. If he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; either to the Overseers thereof, or to the whole Congregation. Thou hast then done thy Part. Then think of it no more, but commend the whole to GOD.

15. But supposing thou hast, by the Grace of GOD, cast the Beam out of thine own Eye, and dost now clearly see the Mole or the Beam which is in thy Brother's Eye, yet beware thou dost not receive Hurt thyself, by endeavouring to help him. Still give not that which is holy unto Dogs. Do not lightly account any to be of this Number. But if it evidently appear, that they deserve the Title, then cast ye not your Pearls before Swine. Beware of that Zeal which is not according to Knowledge. For this is another great Hindrance in their Way, who would be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. They who desire this, cannot but desire that all Mankind should partake of the common Blessing. And when we ourselves first partake of the heavenly Gift, the Divine Evidence of Things not seen, we wonder, that all Mankind do not see, the Things which we see so plainly, and make no doubt at all but we shall open the Eyes of all we have any Intercourse with. Hence we are for attacking all we meet without Delay, and constraining them to see, whether they will or no. And by ill Success of this intemperate Zeal, we often suffer

suffer in our own Souls. To prevent this spending our Strength in vain, our Lord adds this needful Caution (needful to All, but more especially to those who are now warm in their first Love :) *Give not that which is holy unto the Dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before Swine : lest they trample them under Foot, and turn again and rent you.*

16. *Give not that which is holy unto the Dogs.* Beware of thinking; that any deserve this Appellation, till there is full and incontestable Proof, such as you can no longer resist. But when it is clearly and indisputably proved, that they are unholy and wicked Men, not only Strangers to, but Enemies to G O D, to all Righteousness and true Holiness; *Give not that which is holy, τὸ ἅγιον*, the holy Thing, emphatically so called, unto these. The holy, the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel, such as were *hid from the Ages and Generations* of old, and are now made known to us, only by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and the Inspiration of his holy Spirit; are not to be prostituted unto these Men, who know not if there be any Holy Ghost. Not indeed that the Ambassadors of Christ can refrain, from declaring them in the great Congregation, wherein some of these may probably be. We must speak, whether Men will hear or whether they will forbear. But this is not the Case with private Christians. They do not bear that awful Character; nor are they under any Manner of Obligation, to force these great and glorious Truths, on them who contradict and blaspheme. who have a rooted Enmity against them. Nay, they ought not so to do, but rather to lead

VOL. III. B them,

them, as they are able to bear. Do not begin a Discourse with these, upon Remission of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost. But talk with them in their own Manner, and upon their own Principles. With the rational, honourable, unjust Epicure, *reason of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.* This is the most probable Way to make *Felix tremble.* Reserve higher Subjects for Men of higher Attainments.

17. *Neither cast ye your Pearls before Swine.* Be very unwilling to pass this Judgment on any Man. But if the Fact be plain and undeniable, if it is clear, beyond all Dispute, if the Swine do not endeavour to disguise themselves, but rather glory in their Shame, making no Pretence to Purity either of Heart or Life, but working all Uncleaness with Greediness : Then *cast not ye your Pearls before them.* Talk not to them of the Mysteries of the Kingdom : of the Things *which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard ;* which of consequence, as they have no other Inlets of Knowledge, no spiritual Senses, it cannot enter into their Hearts to conceive. Tell not them of the *exceeding great and precious Promises,* which G O D hath given us, in the Son of his Love. What Conception can they have, of being *made Partakers of the divine Nature,* who do not even desire to *escape the Corruption that is in the World thro' Lust ?* Just as much Knowledge as Swine have of Pearls, and as much Relish as they have for them, so much Relish have they for the deep Things of G O D, so much Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Gospel, who are immersed in the Mire of this World, in worldly Pleasures, Desires and Cares. *O cast not those Pearls before these,*

these, lest they trample them under their Feet, least they utterly despise what they cannot understand, and speak Evil of the Things which they know not. Nay, 'tis probable, this would not be the only Inconvenience which would follow. It would not be strange, if they were, according to their Nature, to *turn again, and rent you*: If they were to return you Evil for Good, Cursing for Blessing, and Hatred for your Good-will. Such is the Enmity of the carnal Mind, against G O D and all the Things of G O D. Such the Treatment you are to expect from these, if you offer them the unpardonable Affront, of endeavouring to save their Souls from Death, to pluck them as Brands out of the Burning!

18. And yet you need not utterly despair even of these, who for the present *turn again and rent you*. For if all your Arguments and Persuasives fail, there is yet another Remedy left; and one that is frequently found effectual, when no other Method avails. This is Prayer. Therefore whatever you desire or want, either for others or for your own Soul, *Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you*. The Neglect of this is a third grand Hindrance of Holiness. Still we *have not, because we ask not*. O how meek and gentle, how lowly in Heart, how full of Love both to G O D and Man, might ye have been at this Day, if you had only asked? If you had *continued instant in Prayer!* Therefore now, at least, *Ask, and it shall be given unto you*. *Ask*, that ye may thoroughly experience and perfectly practise the whole of that Religion, which our Lord has here so beautifully described. *It shall then be*  
 B 2. *given.*



*given you*, to be holy as he is holy, both in Heart and in all Manner of Conversation. *Seek*, in the Way he hath ordained, in searching the Scriptures, in hearing his Word, in meditating thereon, in Fasting, in partaking of the Supper of the Lord, and surely *ye shall find*. Ye shall find that Pearl of great Price, that Faith which overcometh the World, that Peace which the World cannot give, that Love which is the Earnest of your Inheritance. *Knock* : Continue in Prayer, and in every other Way of the Lord. Be not weary or faint in your Mind. Press on to the Mark. Take no Denial. Let him not go until he bless you. And the Door of Mercy, of Holiness, of Heaven *shall be opened unto you*.

19. It is in Compassion to the Hardness of our Hearts, so unready to believe the Goodness of GOD, that our Lord is pleased to enlarge upon this Head, and to repeat and confirm what he hath spoken. *For every one, saith he, that asketh, receiveth* : so that none need come short of the Blessing : *And he that seeketh, even every one that seeketh, findeth, the Love and the Image of GOD* : *And to him that knocketh, to every one that knocketh, the Gate of Righteousness shall be opened*. So that here is no Room for any to be discouraged, as tho' they might ask or seek or knock in vain. Only remember, *always to pray, to seek, to knock and not to be faint*. And then the Promise standeth sure. It is firm as the Pillars of Heaven. Yea, more firm ; for Heaven and Earth shall pass away : but his World shall not pass away.

20. To cut off every Pretence for Unbelief, our blessed Lord, in the following Verses, illustrates

illustrates yet farther what he had said, by an Appeal to what passes in our own Breasts. *What Man, saith he, is there of you, who, if his Son ask Bread will give him a Stone? Will even natural Affection permit you to refuse the reasonable Request of one you love? Or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent? Will he give him hurtful, instead of profitable Things? So that even from what you feel and do yourselves, you may receive the fullest Assurance, as, on the one Hand, that no ill Effect, can possibly attend your asking, so on the other, that it will be attended with that good Effect, a full Supply of all your Wants. For if ye being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, who is pure, unmixt, essential Goodness, give good Things to them that ask him? Or, (as he expresses it on another Occasion) give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him? In him are included all good Things; all Wisdom, Peace, Joy, Love: the whole Treasures of Holiness and Happiness: all that GOD hath prepared for them that love him.*

21. But that your Prayer may have its full Weight with GOD, see that ye be in Charity with all Men. For otherwise, it is more likely to bring a Curse than a Blessing on your own Head: Nor can you expect, to receive any Blessing from GOD, while you have not Charity towards your Neighbour. Therefore let this Hindrance be removed without Delay. Confirm your Love towards one another and towards all Men. And love them, not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth. *Therefore all Things what-*

*Soever ye would, that Men should do to you, do ye even so unto them : for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

22. This is that royal Law, that golden Rule of Mercy as well as Justice, which even the Heathen Emperor caused to be written, over the Gate of his Palace : a Rule, which many believe to be naturally engraved on the Minds of every one that comes into the World. And thus much is certain, that it commends itself, as soon as heard, to every Man's Conscience and Understanding : Infomuch that no Man can knowingly offend against it, without carrying his Condemnation in his own Breast.

23. *This is the Law and the Prophets.* Whatsoever is written in that Law which G O D of old revealed to Mankind ; and whatsoever Precepts G O D has given by *his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began,* they are all summed up in these few Words, they are all contained in this short Direction. And this rightly understood comprizes the Whole of that Religion, which our Lord came to establish upon Earth.

24. It may be understood, either in a positive or negative Sense. If understood in a negative Sense, the Meaning is, " Whatever ye would not that Men should do to you, do not ye unto them." Here is a plain Rule, always ready at hand, always easy to be applied. In all Cases relating to your Neighbour, make his Case your own. Suppose the Circumstances to be changed, and yourself to be just as he is now. And then beware that you indulge no Temper or Thought, that no Word pass out of your Lips, that you take no Step which you should have condemned  
I
in

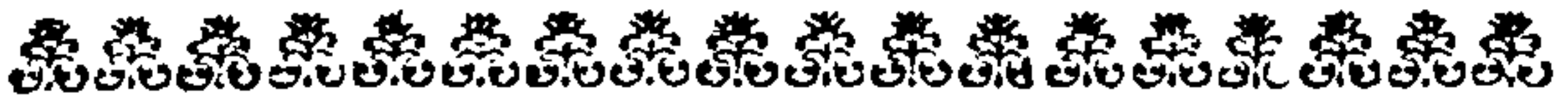
in him, upon such a Change of Circumstances. If understood in a direct and positive Sense, the plain Meaning of it is, “Whatsoever you could reasonably desire of him, supposing yourself to be in his Circumstance, that do, to the uttermost of your Power, to every Child of Man.”

25. To apply this in one or two obvious Instances. It is clear to every Man’s own Conscience, we would not that others should *judge* us, should causelessly or lightly think evil of us. Much less would we that any should speak evil of us, should publish our real Faults or Infirmities. Apply this to yourself. Do not unto another what you would not he should do unto you ; and you will never more *judge* your Neighbour, never causelessly or lightly think evil of any one. Much less will you speak evil : You will never mention even the real Fault of an absent Person, unless so far as you are convinced, it is absolutely needful, for the Good of other Souls.

26. Again. We would that all Men should love and esteem us, and behave towards us, according to Justice, Mercy and Truth. And we may reasonably desire, that they should do us all the Good, they can do without injuring themselves : Yea, that in outward Things, (according to the known Rule) their Superfluities should give way to our Conveniencies, their Conveniencies to our Necessities, and their Necessities to our Extremities. Now then let us walk by the same Rule : Let us do unto all, as we would they should do to us. Let us love and honour all Men. Let Justice, Mercy and Truth govern all our Minds and Actions. Let our Superfluities give way to our Neighbour’s Conveniencies : (and who then will  
have

have any Superfluities left?) Our Conveniencies to our Neighbour's Necessities, our Necessities to his Extremities.

27. This is pure and genuine Morality. This do and thou shalt live. *As many as walk by this Rule, Peace be to them and Mercy*: for they are *the Israel of G O D*. But then be it observed, none can walk by this Rule (nor ever did from the Beginning of the World) none can love his Neighbour as himself, unless he first love G O D. And none can love G O D, unless he believe in Christ, unless he have Redemption thro' his Blood, and the Spirit of G O D bearing Witness with his Spirit, that he is a Child of G O D. Faith therefore is still the Root of all, of present as well as future Salvation. Still we must say to every Sinner, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Thou shalt be saved now, that thou may'st be saved for ever; saved on Earth, that thou may'st be saved in Heaven. Believe in him and thy Faith will work by Love. Thou wilt love the Lord thy G O D, because he hath loved thee: Thou wilt love thy Neighbour as thyself. And then it will be thy Glory and Joy, to exert and increase this Love, not barely by abstaining from what is contrary thereto, from every unkind Thought, Word and Action, but by shewing all that Kindness to every Man, which thou wouldst he should shew unto thee..



DISCOURSE the Eleventh,  
UPON OUR  
LORD'S SERMON  
ON THE  
*MOUNT.*



---



---

MATT. vii. 13, 14.

*Enter ye in at the strait Gate; for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way which leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

*Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.*

1. **O**UR Lord having warned us of the Dangers which easily beset us at our first Entrance upon real Religion, the Hindrances which naturally arise from within, from the Wickedness of our own Hearts: Now proceeds to apprise us of the Hindrances from without, particularly ill Example and ill Advice. By one or the other of these, Thousands who once ran well, have drawn back unto Perdition: Yea, many of those who were not Novices in Religion, who had made some Progress in Righteousness. His Caution therefore against these, he presses upon us, with all possible Earnestness, and repeats again and again, in Variety of Expressions, lest by any Means we should let it slip. Thus, effectually to guard us against the former, *Enter ye in, saith he, at the strait Gate: For wide is the Gate*

*Gate*

*Gate and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : Because strait is the Gate and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. To secure us from the latter, Beware, saith he, of false Prophets. We shall at present consider the former only.*

2. *Enter ye in, saith our blessed Lord, at the strait Gate ; for wide is the Gate and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.*

3. In these Words we may observe, First, The inseparable Properties of the Way to Hell : *Wide is the Gate, broad the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be that go in thereat : Secondly, The inseparable Properties of the Way to Heaven : Strait is that Gate, and few there be that find it : Thirdly, A serious Exhortation grounded thereon, Enter ye in at the strait Gate.*

I. 1. We may observe, First, The inseparable Properties of the Way to Hell : *Wide is the Gate and broad is the Way, that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.*

Wide indeed is the Gate, and broad the Way that leadeth to Destruction. For Sin is the Gate of Hell, and Wickedness the Way to Destruction. And how wide a Gate is that of Sin ? How broad is the Way of Wickedness ? The *Commandment of GOD is exceeding broad, as extending not only to all our Actions, but to every Word which goeth out of our Lips, yea, every Thought that rises in our Heart. And Sin is*  
equally



equally broad with the Commandment, seeing any Breach of the Commandment is Sin. Yea, rather it is a thousand Times broader : Since there is only one Way of keeping the Commandment : For we do not properly keep it, unless both the Thing done, the Manner of doing it, and all the other Circumstances are right. But there are a thousand Ways of breaking every Commandment. So that this Gate is wide indeed.

3. To consider this a little more particularly. How wide do those Parent Sins extend, from which all the rest derive their Being ? *That carnal Mind, which is Enmity against G O D, Pride of Heart, Self-will and Love of the World ?* Can we fix any Bounds to them ? Do they not diffuse themselves thro' all our Thoughts, and mingle with all our Tempers ? Are they not the Leaven which leavens, more or less, the whole Mass of our Affections ? May we not, on a close and faithful Examination of ourselves, perceive these Roots of Bitterness, continually springing up, infecting all our Words, and tainting all our Actions ? And how innumerable an Offspring do they bring forth, in every Age and Nation ? Even enough to cover the whole Earth with *Darkness and cruel Habitations.*

4. O who is able to reckon up their accursed Fruits ? To count all the Sins, whether against G O D or our Neighbour, not which Imagination might paint, but which may be Matter of daily, melancholy Experience ? Nor need we range over all the Earth to find them. Survey any one Kingdom, any single Country, or City or Town, and how plenteous is this Harvest ? And let it not be one of these, which are still

overspread with Mahometan or Pagan Darkness : But of those which name the Name of Christ, which profess to see the Light of his glorious Gospel. Go no farther than the Kingdom to which we belong, the City wherein we are now. We call ourselves Christians : Yea, and that of the purest Sort ; we are Protestants ; reformed Christians ! But alas ! who shall carry on the Reformation of our Opinions into our Hearts and Lives ? Is there not a Cause ? For how innumerable are our Sins ? And those of the deepest Dye ? Do not the grossest Abominations of every Kind ; abound among us from Day to Day ? Do not Sins of every Sort cover the Land, as the Waters cover the Sea ? Who can count them ? Rather go and count the Drops of Rain, or the Sands on the Sea-shore. *So wide is the Gate, so broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction.*

5. *And many there be who go in at that Gate : Many who walk in that Way. Almost as many as go in at the Gate of Death, as sink into the Chambers of the Grave. For it cannot be denied, (tho' neither can we acknowledge it but with Shame and Sorrow of Heart) that even in this which is called a Christian Country, the Generality of every Age and Sex, of every Profession and Employment, of every Rank and Degree, high and low, rich and poor, are walking in the Way of Destruction. The far greater Part of the Inhabitants of this City, to this Day live in Sin ; in some palpable, habitual, known Transgression of the Law they profess to observe : Yea, in some outward Transgression, some gross, visible Kind of Ungodliness or Unrighteousness ;*  
*some*

some open Violation of their Duty, either to GOD or Man. These then, none can deny, are all in the Way that leadeth to Destruction. Add to these, those who *have a Name indeed that they live*, but were never yet alive to GOD: Those that outwardly appear fair to Men, but are inwardly full of all Uncleanness: Full of Pride or Vanity; of Anger, or Revenge; of Ambition or Covetousness: Lovers of themselves, Lovers of the World, Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of GOD. These indeed may be highly esteemed of Men; but they are an Abomination to the Lord. And how greatly will these Saints of the World, swell the Number of the Children of Hell? Yea, add all, whatever they be in other Respects, whether they have more or less of the Form of Godliness, who *being ignorant of GOD's Righteousness, and seeking to establish their own Righteousness*, as the Ground of their Reconciliation to GOD and Acceptance with him, of Consequence have *not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith*. Now all these Things joined together in one, how terribly true is our Lord's Assertion, *Wide is the Gate and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be who go in thereat*.

6. Nor does this only concern the vulgar Herd, the poor, base, stupid Part of Mankind. Men of Eminence in the World, Men who have many Fields and Yoke of Oxen, do not desire to be excused from this. On the contrary, *many wise Men after the Flesh*, according to the human Methods of judging, *many mighty*, in Power, in Courage, in Riches, *many noble are called*:  
 C 2 Called

Called into the broad Way, by the World, the Flesh and the Devil; and they are not disobedient to that Calling. Yea, the higher they are raised in Fortune and Power, the deeper do they sink into Wickedness. The more Blessings they have received from GOD, the more Sins do they commit: Using their Honour or Riches, their Learning or Wisdom, not as Means of working out their Salvation, but rather of excelling in Vice, and so infuring their own Destruction.

II. 1. And the very Reason why many of these go on so securely in the *broad Way*, is because it is broad: Not considering that this is the inseparable Property of the Way to Destruction. *Many there be, saith our Lord, who go in thereat: for the very Reason why they should flee from it: Even because strait is the Gate and narrow the Way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.*

2. This is an inseparable Property of the Way to Heaven. So narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life, unto Life everlasting, so strait the Gate, that nothing unclean, nothing unholy can enter. No Sinner can pass thro' that Gate, until he is saved from all his Sins. Not only from his outward Sins; from his evil *Conversation received by Tradition from his Fathers*. It will not suffice, that he hath *ceased to do evil, and learned to do well*. He must not only be saved from all sinful Actions, and from all evil and useless Discourse; but inwardly changed, thoroughly renewed in the Spirit of his Mind. Otherwise he cannot pass thro' the Gate of Life, he cannot enter into Glory.

3. For

3. For *narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life* : The Way of universal Holiness. Narrow indeed is the Way of Poverty of Spirit, the Way of holy Mourning : The Way of Meekness, and that of hungering and thirsting after Righteousness. Narrow is the Way of Mercifulness, of Love unfeigned ; the Way of Purity of Heart ; of doing Good unto all Men, and of gladly suffering Evil, all Manner of Evil for Righteousness-sake.

4. *And few there be that find it.* Alas, how few find even the Way of Heathen Honesty ? How few are there, that do nothing to another, which they would not another should do unto them ? How few, that are clear before G O D, from Acts either of Injustice or Unkindness ? How few, that do not *offend with their Tongue* ; that speak nothing unkind, nothing untrue ? What a small Proportion of Mankind, are innocent even of outward Transgressions ? And how much smaller a Proportion have their Hearts right before G O D ? Clean and holy in his Sight ? Where are they, whom his all-searching Eye, discerns to be truly humble ? To abhor themselves in Dust and Ashes, in the Presence of GOD their Saviour ? To be deeply and steadily serious, feeling their Wants, and *passing the Time of their Sojourning with Fear* ? Truly meek and gentle, never overcome of Evil, but overcoming Evil with Good ? Thoroughly a Thirst for G O D, and continually panting after a Renewal in his Likeness ? How thinly are they scattered over the Earth, whose Souls are enlarged in Love to all Mankind ? And who love GOD with all their Strength, who have given him their Hearts, and desire nothing else in Earth or Heaven ? How

few are those Lovers of G O D and Man, that spend their whole Strength in doing Good unto all Men ? And are ready to suffer all Things, yea, Death itself, to save one Soul from eternal Death ?

5. But while so few are found in the Way of Life, and so many in the Way of Destruction, there is great Danger, lest the Torrent of Example, should bear us away with them. Even a single Example, if it be always in our Sight, is apt to make much Impression upon us. Especially when it has Nature on its Side ; when it falls in with our own Inclinations. How great then must be the Force of so numerous Examples, continually before our Eyes ; and all conspiring together with our own Hearts, to carry us down the Stream of Nature ? How difficult must it be, to stem the Tide, and to keep ourselves *unspotted in the World* ?

6. What heightens the Difficulty still more is, that they are not the rude and senseless Part of Mankind, at least not these alone, who set us the Example, who throng the downward Way : But the polite, the well-bred, the genteel, the wise, the Men who understand the World : The Men of Knowledge, of deep and various Learning, the rational, the eloquent ! These are all, or nearly all, against us. And how shall we stand against these ? Does not their Tongue drop Manna ? And have they not learned all the Arts of soft Persuasion ? And of reasoning too : For these are versed in all Controversies and Strife of Words. It is therefore a small Thing with them to prove, That the Way is *right*, because it is *bread* : That he who follows a Multitude, can-

not do Evil, but only he who will not follow them: That your Way, must be *wrong*, because it is *narrow*; and because there are so few that find it. These will make it clear, to a Demonstration, that Evil is Good, and Good is Evil: That the Way of Holiness is the Way of Destruction, and the Way of the World, the only Way to Heaven.

7. O how can unlearned and ignorant Men, maintain their Cause against such Opponents! And yet these are not all with whom they must contend, however unequal to the Task. For there are many mighty and noble and powerful Men, as well as wise, in the Road that leadeth to Destruction. And these have a shorter Way of confuting, than that of Reason and Argument. They usually apply, not to the Understanding, but to the Fears of any that oppose them. A Method that seldom fails of Success, even where Argument profits nothing: As lying level to the Capacities of all Men: For all can fear, whether they can reason or no. And all who have not a firm Trust in GOD, a sure Reliance both on his Power and Love, cannot but fear to give any Disgust to those, who have the Power of the World in their Hands. What Wonder therefore if the Example of these is a Law, to all who know not GOD?

8. Many Rich are likewise in the broad Way. And these apply to the Hopes of Men, and to all their foolish Desires, as strongly and effectually as the Mighty and Noble to their Fears. So that hardly can you hold on in the Way of the Kingdom, unless you are dead to all below, unless you are crucified to the World and the World cruci-

fixed to you, unless you desire nothing more but **GOD**.

9. For how dark, how uncomfortable, how forbidding, is the Prospect on the opposite Side? A strait Gate! A narrow Way! And few finding that Gate! Few walking in the Way. Besides, even those few, are not wise Men, not Men of Learning or Eloquence. They are not able to reason either strongly or clearly; they cannot propose an Argument to any Advantage. They know not how to prove what they profess to believe; or to explain even what they say they experience. Surely such Advocates as they will never recommend, but rather discredit the Cause they have espoused.

10. Add to this, that they are not noble, not honourable Men: (if they were, you might bear with their Folly.) They are Men of no Interest, no Authority, of no Account in the World. They are mean and base, low in Life; and such as have no Power, if they had the Will to hurt you. Therefore there is nothing at all to be feared from them: And there is nothing at all to hope. For the greater Part of them may say, *Silver and Gold have I none*: At least a very moderate Share. Nay, some of them have scarce Food to eat or Raiment to put on. For this Reason, as well as because their Ways are not like those of other Men, they are every where spoken against, are despised, have their Names cast out as evil, are variously persecuted, and treated as the Filth and Offscouring of the World. So that both your Fears, your Hopes, and all your Desires, (except those which you have immediately from **G O D**) yea, all your natural Passions.

continually



continually incline you to return into the broad Way.

III. 1. Therefore it is, that our Lord so earnestly exhorts, *Enter ye in at the strait Gate.* Or (as the same Exhortation is elsewhere expressed) *Strive to enter in.* Ἀγωνίζεθε εἰσελθεῖν. Strive as in an Agony. For many, saith our Lord, shall seek to enter in, indolently strive, and shall not be able.

2. 'Tis true, he intimates what may seem another Reason for this, for their *not being able to enter in*, in the Words which immediately follow these. For after he had said, *Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, he subjoins, *When once the Master of the House is risen up and hath shut to the Door, and ye begin to stand without* (ἄρξτε ἐξω ἑστάναι. Rather, *Ye stand without*; for ἄρξτε seems to be only an elegant Expletive) *and to knock at the Door, saying Lord, Lord, open unto us: He shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not. Depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.* Luke xiii. 26, &c.

3. It may appear, upon a transient View of these Words, that their delaying to seek at all, rather than their Manner of seeking, was the Reason why they were not able to enter in. But it comes, in Effect, to the same Thing. They were therefore commanded to depart, because they had been *Workers of Iniquity*, because they had walked in the broad Road: In other Words, Because they had not agonized to enter in at the strait Gate. Probably they did *seek*, before the Door was shut: But that did not suffice. And they

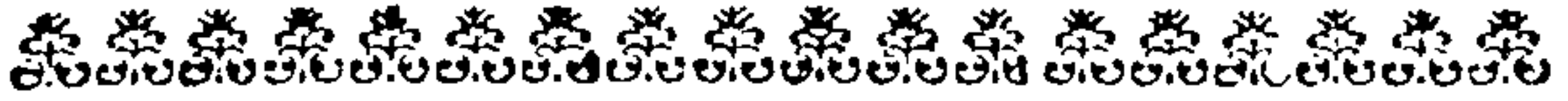
they did *strive*, after the Door was shut. But then it was too late.

4. Therefore, *strive* ye now, in this your Day, *to enter in at the strait Gate*. And in order hereto, settle it in your Heart, and let it be ever uppermost in your Thoughts, That if you are in a broad Way, you are in the Way that leadeth to Destruction. If many go with you, as sure as GOD is true, both they and you are going to Hell. If you are walking as the Generality of Men walk, you are walking to the bottomless Pit. Are many wise, many rich, many mighty or noble travelling with you in the same Way? By this Token, without going any farther, you know, it does not lead to Life. Here is a short, a plain, an infallible Rule, before you enter into Particulars. In whatever Profession you are engaged, you must be singular or be damn'd. The Way to Hell has nothing singular in it; but the Way to Heaven is Singularity all over: If you move but one Step towards GOD, you are not as other Men are. But regard not this. 'Tis far better to stand alone, than to fall into the Pit. Run then with Patience the Race which is set before thee, tho' thy Companions therein are but few. They will not always be so. Yet a little while and thou wilt *come to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First born, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect*.

5. Now then *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, being penetrated with the deepest Sense, of the inexpressible Danger your Soul is in, so long as you are in a broad Way: So long as you are void of Poverty of Spirit and all that inward Religion,  
which

which the Many, the Rich, the Wise account Madness. *Strive to enter in*, being pierced with Sorrow and Shame, for having so long run on with the unthinking Crowd, utterly neglecting if not despising that *Holiness, without which no Man can see the Lord.* *Strive* as in an Agony of holy Fear, lest, a Promise being made you of entering into his Rest, even that Rest which remaineth for the People of GOD, you should nevertheless come short of it. *Strive* in all the Fervor of Desire, with *Groanings which cannot be uttered.* *Strive* by Prayer without ceasing, at all Times, in all Places lifting up your Heart to GOD, and giving him no Rest, till you *awake up after his Likeness* and are *satisfied with it.*

6. To conclude. *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, not only by this Agony of Soul, of Conviction, of Sorrow, of Shame, of Desire, of Fear, of unceasing Prayer, but likewise by *ordering thy Conversation right*, by walking with all thy Strength, in all the Ways of GOD, the Way of Innocence, of Piety and of Mercy. Abstain from all Appearance of Evil : Do all possible Good to all Men : Deny thyself, thy own Will, in all Things, and take up thy Cross daily. Be ready to cut off thy right Hand, to pluck out thy right Eye and cast it from thee : To suffer the Loss of Goods, Friends, Health, all Things on Earth, so thou mayst enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.



DISCOURSE the Twelfth,  
UPON OUR  
LORD'S SERMON  
ON THE  
*MOUNT.*



---

MATT. vii. 15—20.

*Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheep's Cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.*

*Ye shall know them by their Fruits. Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles?*

*Even so every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit: But a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit.*

*A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit.*

*Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire.*

*Wherefore by their Fruits ye shall know them.*

1. **I**T is scarce possible to express or conceive, what Multitudes of Souls run on to Destruction, because they would not be persuaded to walk in a narrow Way, even tho' it were the Way to everlasting Salvation. And the same

Thing we may still observe daily. Such is the Folly and Madness of Mankind, that Thousands of Men still rush on in the Way to Hell, only because it is a broad Way. They walk in it themselves, because others do: Because so many perish, they will add to the Number. Such is the amazing Influence of Example, over the weak, miserable Children of Men! It continually peoples the Regions of Death, and drowns numberless Souls in everlasting Perdition.

2. To warn Mankind of this, to guard as many as possible against this spreading Contagion, GOD has commanded his Watchmen to cry aloud, and shew the People the Danger they are in. For this End he has sent his Servants the Prophets, in their succeeding Generations, to point out the narrow Path, and exhort all Men, not to be conformed to this World. But what if the Watchmen themselves fall into the Snare, against which they should warn others? What if *the Prophets prophesie Deceits*? If they *cause the People to err from the Way*? What shall be done, if they point out as the Way to eternal Life, what is in Truth the Way to eternal Death? And exhort others to walk, as they do themselves, in the broad, not the narrow Way?

3. Is this an unheard of, is it an uncommon Thing? Nay, GOD knoweth, it is not. The Instances of it are almost innumerable. We may find them in every Age and Nation. But how terrible is this? When the Ambassadors of GOD; turn Agents for the Devil? When they who are commissioned to teach Men the Way to Heaven, do in Fact teach them the Way to Hell? These are like the Locusts of *Egypt, which eat up*  
the

*the Residue that had escaped, that had remained after the Hail.* They devour even the Residue of Men that had escaped, that were not destroyed by ill Example. It is not therefore without Cause that our wise and gracious Master, so solemnly cautions us against them: *Beware, saith he, of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheep's Cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.*

4. A Caution this of the utmost Importance. That it may the more effectually sink into our Hearts, let us inquire, First, who these false Prophets are, Secondly, what Appearance they put on, and Thirdly, how we may know what they really are, notwithstanding their fair Appearance.

I. 1. We are, First, to enquire, who these false Prophets are. And this it is needful to do the more diligently, because these very Men have so laboured to *wrest this Scripture, to their own* (tho' not only their own) *Destruction.* In order therefore to cut off all Dispute, I shall raise no Dust (as the Manner of some is) neither use any loose, rhetorical Exclamations, to deceive the Hearts of the simple, but speak rough, plain Truths, such as none can deny, who has either Understanding or Modesty left: And such Truths, as have the closest Connexion, with the whole Tenor of the preceding Discourse. Whereas too many have interpreted these Words, without any Regard to all that went before: As if they bore no Manner of Relation to the Sermon, in the Close of which they stand.

2. By *Prophets* here (as in many other Passages of Scripture, particularly in the New Testament) are

are meant, not those who foretel Things to come, but those who speak in the Name of GOD : Those Men, who profess to be sent of GOD, to teach others the Way to Heaven.

Those are *false Prophets*, who teach a false Way to Heaven, a Way which does not lead thither. Or (which comes in the End to the same Point) who do not teach the True.

3. Every broad Way is infallibly a false one. Therefore this is one plain, sure Rule, “ They who teach Men to walk in a broad Way, a Way that many walk in, are *false Prophets*.”

Again, the true Way to Heaven is a narrow Way. Therefore this is another plain, sure Rule, “ They who do not teach Men to walk in a narrow Way, to be singular, are *false Prophets*.”

4. To be more particular. The only true Way to Heaven, is that pointed out in the preceding Sermon. Therefore they are *false Prophets* who do not teach Men to walk in *this Way*.

Now the Way to Heaven pointed out in the preceding Sermon, is the Way of Lowliness, Mourning, Meekness, and holy Desire, Love of GOD and of our Neighbour, doing Good, and suffering Evil for Christ's Sake. They are therefore false Prophets, who teach as the Way to Heaven, any other Way than *This*.

5. It matters not, what they call that other Way. They may call it *Faith*, or *good Works* : Or *Faith and Works* : Or *Repentance* : Or *Repentance, Faith and New Obedience*. All these are good Words. But if under these, or any other Terms whatever, they teach Men any Way distinct from *this*, they are properly *false Prophets*.

6. How



6. How much more do they fall under that Condemnation, who speak evil of this good Way? But above all, they who teach the directly opposite Way? The Way of Pride, of Levity, of Passion, of worldly Desires, of loving Pleasure more than GOD, of Unkindness to our Neighbour, of Unconcern for good Works, and suffering no Evil, no Persecution for Righteousness-sake?

7. If it be asked, why who ever did teach this? Or who does teach it, as the Way to Heaven? I answer, Ten thousand wise and honourable Men: Even all those, of whatever Denomination, who encourage the Proud, the Trifler, the Passionate, the Lover of the World, the Man of Pleasure, the unjust or unkind, the easy, careless, harmless, useless Creature, the Man who suffers no Reproach for Righteousness-sake, to imagine he is in the Way to Heaven. These are false Prophets in the highest Sense of the Word. These are Traitors both to GOD and Man. These are no other than the First-born of Satan: The eldest Sons of Apollyon, the Destroyer. These are far above the Rank of ordinary Cut throats; for they murder the Souls of Men. They are continually peopling the Realms of Night: And whenever they follow the poor Souls whom they have destroyed, *Hell shall be moved from beneath, to meet them at their Coming.*

II. 1. But do they come now, in their own Shape? By no Means. If it were so, they could not destroy. You would take the Alarm, and flee for your Life. Therefore they put on a quite  
con-

contrary Appearance : (Which was the second Thing to be considered.) *They come to you in Sheeps Cloathing, altho' inwardly they are ravening Wolves.*

2. *They come to you in Sheeps Cloathing ; that is, with an Appearance of Harmlessness. They come in the most mild, inoffensive Manner, without any Mark or Token of Enmity. Who can imagine, that these quiet Creatures, wou'd do any Hurt to any one ? Perhaps they may not be so zealous and active in doing Good, as one would wish they were. However, you see no Reason to suspect, that they have even the Desire to do any Harm. But this is not all :*

3. *They come, Secondly, with an Appearance of Usefulness. Indeed to this, to do Good they are particularly called. They are set apart for this very Thing. They are particularly commissioned, to watch over your Soul and to train you up to eternal Life. 'Tis their whole Business, to go about doing Good, and healing those that are oppressed of the Devil. And you have been always accustomed to look upon them in this Light, as Messengers of GOD, sent to bring you a Blessing.*

4. *They come, Thirdly, with an Appearance of Religion. All they do, is for Conscience Sake ! They assure you, it is out of mere Zeal for GOD, that they are making GOD a Liar. It is out of pure Concern for Religion, that they would destroy it, Root and Branch. All they speak, is only from a Love of Truth, and a Fear least it should suffer. And, it may be, from a Regard for the Church, and a Desire to defend her from all her Enemies.*

I

5. Above

5. Above all, they come with an Appearance of Love. They take all these Pains, only for *your* Good. They shou'd not trouble themselves about you, but that they have a Kindness for you. They will make large Professions of their Goodwill, of their Concern for the Danger you are in, and of their earnest Desire, to preserve you from Error, from being intangled in new and mischievous Doctrines. They should be very sorry to see one who *means* so well, hurried into any Extreme, perplext with strange and unintelligible Notions, or deluded into Enthusiasm. Therefore it is, that they advise you, to keep still, in the plain middle Way: And to beware of *being righteous overmuch*, lest you should *destroy yourself*.

III. 1. But how may we know, what they really are, notwithstanding their fair Appearance? This was the third Thing into which it was proposed to inquire.

Our blessed Lord saw how needful it was for all Men to know *false Prophets*, however disguised. He saw likewise, how unable most Men were, to deduce a Truth thro' a long Train of Consequences. He therefore gives us a short and plain Rule, easy to be understood by Men of the meanest Capacities, and easy to be applied upon all Occasions. *Ye shall know them by their Fruits*.

2. Upon all Occasions you may easily apply this Rule. In order to know whether any who speak in the Name of GOD, are false or true Prophets, it is easy to observe, First, What are the Fruits of their Doctrine, as to themselves? What Effect has it had upon their Lives? Are they

they holy and unblamable in all Things? What Effect has it had upon their Hearts? Does it appear by the general Tenor of their Conversation that their Tempers are holy, heavenly, divine? That the Mind is in them which was in Christ Jesus? That they are meek, lowly, patient Lovers of GOD and Man, and zealous of good Works?

3. You may easily observe, Secondly, What are the Fruits of their Doctrine, as to those that hear them? In many, at least, tho' not in all: For the Apostles themselves did not convert all that heard them. Have these the Mind that was in Christ? And do they walk as he also walked? And was it by hearing these Men, that they began so to do? Were they inwardly and outwardly wicked, till they heard them? If so, it is a manifest Proof, That those are true Prophets, Teachers sent of GOD. But if it is not so, if they do not effectually teach either themselves or others to love and serve GOD; it is a manifest Proof, that they are false Prophets; that GOD hath not sent them.

4. An hard Saying this! How few can bear it? This our Lord was sensible of, and therefore condescends to prove it at large, by several clear and convincing Arguments. *Do Men, says he, gather Grapes of Thorns or Figs of Thistles? v. 16.* Do you expect that these evil Men should bring forth good Fruit? As well might you expect that Thorns should bring forth Grapes, or that Figs should grow upon Thistles! *Every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit: but a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit. v. 17.* Every true Prophet, every Teacher whom I have sent, bringeth forth the good Fruit of Holiness. But a false Prophet

Prophet, a Teacher whom I have not sent, brings forth only Sin and Wickedness. *A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit.* A true Prophet, a Teacher sent from GOD, does not bring forth good Fruit, sometimes only, but always; not accidentally, but by a kind of Necessity. In like Manner, a false Prophet, one whom GOD hath not sent, does not bring forth evil Fruit, accidentally or sometimes only, but always and of Necessity. *Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire. v. 19.* Such infallibly will be the Lot of those Prophets, who bring not forth good Fruit, who do not save Souls from Sin, who do not bring Sinners to Repentance. *Wherefore let this stand as an eternal Rule, By their Fruits ye shall know them. v. 20.* They who in Fact bring the proud, passionate, unmerciful Lovers of the World, to be lowly, gentle Lovers of GOD and Man: They are true Prophets, they are sent from GOD, who therefore confirms their Word. On the other hand, they whose Hearers, if unrighteous before, remain unrighteous still, or at least, void of any Righteousness which *exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*: They are false Prophets; they are not sent of GOD; therefore their Word falls to the Ground. And without a Miracle of Grace they and their Hearers together, will fall into the bottomless Pit.

5. *O beware of these false Prophets!* For tho' they come in *Sheeps Cloathing*, yet *inwardly they are ravening Wolves*. They only destroy and devour the Flock: They tear them in Pieces, if there is none to help them. They will not, cannot lead  
you

you in the Way to Heaven. How should they ? When they know it not themselves. O beware they do not turn you out of the Way, and cause you to *lose what you have wrought.*

6. But perhaps you will ask, If there is such Danger in hearing them, ought I to hear them at all ? It is a weighty Question, such as deserves the deepest Consideration, and ought not to be answered, but upon the calmest Thought, the most deliberate Reflection. For many Years, I have been almost afraid, to speak at all concerning it : Being unable to determine one Way or the other, or to give any Judgment upon it. Many Reasons there are which readily occur, and incline me to say, “ Hear them not.” And yet what our Lord speaks concerning the false Prophets of his own Times, seems to imply the contrary. *Then spake Jesus unto the Multitude and to his Disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ Seat, are the ordinary, stated Teachers in your Church : All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their Works ; for they say and do not.* Now that these were false Prophets in the highest Sense, our Lord had shewn during the whole Course of his Ministry : As indeed he does in those very Words, *They say and do not.* Therefore by their Fruits his Disciples could not but know them, seeing they were open to the View of all Men. Accordingly he warns them again and again, to *beware of these false Prophets.* And yet he does not forbid them to hear even these. Nay, he in Effect commands them so to do, in those Words, *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* For unless they heard them  
them

them, they cou'd not know, much less *observe whatsoever they bid them do*. Here then our Lord himself gives a plain Direction, both to his Apostles and the whole Multitude, in some Circumstances to hear even false Prophets, known and acknowledged so to be.

7. But perhaps it will be said, he only directed to hear them, when they read the Scripture to the Congregation. I answer, at the same Time that they thus read the Scripture, they generally expounded it too. And here is no kind of Intimation, that they were to hear the one, and not the other also. Nay the very Terms, *All Things whatsoever they bid you observe*, exclude any such Limitation.

8. Again, unto them, unto false Prophets, undeniably such, is frequently committed (O Grief to speak! For surely these Things ought not so to be) the Administration of the Sacraments also. To direct Men therefore, not to hear them, would be in effect to cut them off from the Ordinances of GOD. But this we dare not do, considering the Validity of the Ordinance doth not depend on the Goodness of him that administers, but on the Faithfulness of him that ordained it, who will and doth meet us in his appointed Ways. Therefore on this Account likewise I scruple to say, hear not even the false Prophets. Even by these who are under a Curse themselves, GOD can, and doth give us his Blessing. For the Bread which they break we have experimentally known to be *the Communion of the Body of Christ*. And the Cup which GOD blest even by their unhallow'd Lips, was to us the Communion of the Blood of Christ.

9. All therefore which I can say is this : In any particular Case, wait upon GOD by humble and earnest Prayer, and then act according to the best Light you have. Act according to what you are persuaded, upon the whole, will be most for your spiritual Advantage. Take great Care that you do not judge rashly; that you do not lightly think any to be false Prophets. And when you have full Proof, see that no Anger or Contempt have any Place in your Heart. After this, in the Presence and in the Fear of GOD, determine for yourself. I can only say, if by Experience you find, that the Hearing them hurts your Soul, then hear them not : Then quietly refrain, and hear those that profit you. If on the other Hand, you find, it does not hurt your Soul, you then may hear them still. Only *take heed how you hear : Beware of* them and of their Doctrine. Hear with Fear and Trembling, lest you should be deceived, and given up, like them, to a strong Delusion. As they continually mingle Truth and Lies, how easily may you take in both together ? Hear with fervent and continual Prayer, to him who alone teacheth Man Wisdom. And see that you bring whatever you hear, *to the Law and to the Testimony*. Receive nothing untried, nothing till it is weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary. Believe nothing they say, unless it is clearly confirmed by plain Passages of Holy Writ. Wholly reject whatsoever differs therefrom, whatever is not confirmed thereby. And in particular, reject, with the utmost Abhorrence, whatsoever is described as the Way of Salvation, that is either different from or short of the Way, our Lord has mark'd out in the foregoing Discourse.



10. I cannot conclude, without addressing a few plain Words, to those of whom we have now been speaking. O ye false Prophets, O ye dry Bones, hear ye for once the Word of the Lord. How long will ye lie in the Name of GOD? Saying GOD hath spoken: And GOD hath not spoken by you. How long will ye pervert the right Ways of the Lord, putting Darknefs for Light, and Light for Darknefs? How long will ye teach the Way of Death, and call it the Way of Life? How long will ye deliver to Satan the Souls, whom you profess to bring unto GOD?

11. *Wo unto you, ye blind Leaders of the Blind! For ye shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men. Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.* Them that would strive to enter in at the strait Gate, ye call back into the broad Way. Them that have scarce gone one Step in the Ways of GOD, you devilishly caution against *going too far*. Them that just begin to hunger and thirst after Righteousness, you warn, not to be *righteous overmuch*. Thus you cause them to stumble at the very Threshold; yea, to fall and rise no more. O wherefore do ye this? What Profit is there in their Blood, when they go down to the Pit? Miserable Profit to you. *They shall perish in their Iniquity: but their Blood will GOD require at your Hands!*

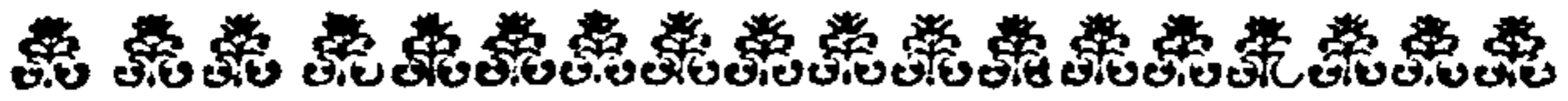
12. Where are your Eyes? Where is your Understanding? Have ye deceiv'd others, till you have deceived yourselves also? Who hath required this at your Hands, to *teach* a Way which ye never *knew*? Are you *given up to so strong a Delusion*, that ye not only teach but *believe a Lie*? And can you possibly believe, that GOD hath

sent you? That ye are *his* Messengers? Nay; if the Lord had sent you, the *Work of the Lord* would prosper in your Hand. As the Lord liveth, if ye were Messengers of GOD, he would confirm the *Word of his Messengers*. But the *Work of the Lord* doth not prosper in your Hand: You bring no Sinners to Repentance. The Lord doth not confirm your Word: For you save no Souls from Death.

13. How can you possibly evade the Force of our Lord's Words? So full, so strong, so express? How can ye evade *knowing* yourselves by your *Fruits*? Evil Fruits of evil Trees! And how should it be otherwise! *Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns or Figs of Thistles?* Take this to yourselves, ye to whom it belongs. O ye barren Trees, why cumber ye the Ground? *Every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit.* See ye not, that here is no Exception? Take Knowledge then, ye are not good Trees: For ye do not bring forth good Fruit. *But a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit.* And so have ye done from the Beginning. Your speaking as from GOD has only confirm'd them that heard you, in the Tempers, if not Works, of the Devil. O take Warning of him in whose Name ye speak, before the Sentence he hath pronounced take place. *Every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire.*

14. My dear Brethren, harden not your Hearts. You have too long shut your Eyes against the Light. Open them now before it is too late; before you are cast into outer Darknes. Let not any temporal Consideration weigh with you: For Eternity is at stake. Ye have run before ye were  
sent

sent. O go no farther. Do not persist to damn yourselves and them that hear you ! You have no Fruit of your Labours. And why is this ? Even because the Lord is not with you. But can you go this Warfare at your own Cost ? It cannot be. Then humble yourselves before him. Cry unto him out of the Dust, that he may first quicken *thy* Soul : Give *thee* the Faith that worketh by Love : That is lowly and meek, pure and merciful, zealous of good Works ; rejoicing in Tribulation, in Reproach, in Distress, in Persecution for Righteousness Sake. So shall *the Spirit of Glory and of Christ rest upon thee*, and it shall appear, that GOD hath sent thee. So shalt thou indeed *do the Work of an Evangelist, and make full Proof of thy Ministry*. So shall the Word of GOD in thy Mouth be *an Hammer that breaketh the Rocks in Pieces*. It shall then be known by thy Fruits, that thou art a Prophet of the Lord, even by the Children whom GOD hath given thee. And having *turned many to Righteousness, thou shalt shine as the Stars for ever and ever !*



**DISCOURSE** the Thirteenth,  
UPON OUR  
**LORD'S SERMON**  
ON THE  
*MOUNT.*



MATT. vii. 21---27.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: But he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

*Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have cast out Devils? And in thy Name done many wonderful Works?*

*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity.*

*Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise Man, which built his House upon a Rock.*

*And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House: And it fell not, for it was founded upon a Rock.*

*And every one that heareth these Sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened*

*likened unto a foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand :*

*And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House : And it fell, and great was the Fall of it.*

1. **O**UR Divine Teacher having declared the whole Counsel of GOD, with regard to the Way of Salvation, and observed the chief Hindrances of those, who desire to walk therein : Now closes the whole with these weighty Words ; thereby as it were setting his Seal to his Prophecy, and impressing his whole Authority on what he had delivered, that it might stand firm to all Generations.

2. For thus saith the Lord, that none may ever conceive, there is any other Way than this, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord ; have we not prophesied in thy Name ? And in thy Name have cast out Devils ? And in thy Name done many wonderful Works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : Depart from me ye that work Iniquity. Therefore every one that heareth these Sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish Man which built his House upon the Sand. And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House : And it fell, and great was the Fall of it.*

3. I design in the following Discourse, First, To consider the Case of him, who thus builds  
his

his House upon the Sand: Secondly, To shew the Wisdom of him who builds upon a Rock, and Thirdly, To conclude with a practical Application.

I. 1. And, First, I am to consider the Case of him who builds his House upon the Sand. It is concerning him our Lord saith, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And this is a Decree which cannot pass; which standeth fast for ever and ever. It therefore imports us in the highest Degree, thro'ly to understand the Force of these Words. Now what are we to understand by that Expression, *That saith unto me, Lord, Lord?* It undoubtedly means, "that thinks of going to Heaven by any other Way than that which I have now described." It therefore implies, (to begin at the lowest point) all good Words, all verbal Religion. It includes, whatever Creeds we may rehearse, whatever Professions of Faith we make: Whatever Number of Prayers we may repeat, whatever Thanksgivings we read or say to GOD. We may speak Good of his Name; and declare his Loving-kindness to the Children of Men. We may be talking of all his mighty Acts, and telling of his Salvation from Day to Day. By comparing spiritual Things with spiritual, we may shew the Meaning of the Oracles of GOD. We may explain the Mysteries of his Kingdom, which have been hid from the Beginning of the World. We may speak with the Tongue of Angels rather than Men, concerning the deep Things of GOD. We may proclaim to Sinners, *Behold the Lamb of GOD, who taketh away the*  
*Sin*

*Sin of the World.* Yea, we may do this with such a Measure of the Power of GOD, and such Demonstration of his Spirit; as to save many Souls from Death, and hide a Multitude of Sins. And yet 'tis very possible, all this may be no more than *saying, Lord, Lord.* After I have thus successfully preached to others, still I myself may be a Cast-away. I may in the Hand of GOD, snatch many Souls from Hell, and yet drop into it, when I have done. I may bring many others to the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet myself never enter there. Reader, if GOD hath ever blest my Word to *thy* Soul, pray that he may be merciful to *me* a Sinner !

2. The *saying, Lord, Lord!* may, Secondly, imply, the doing no Harm. We may abstain from every presumptuous Sin, from every Kind of outward Wickedness. We may refrain from all those Ways of acting or speaking, which are forbidden in Holy Writ. We may be able to say to all those among whom we live, Which of you convinceth me of Sin? We may have a Conscience void of any external Offence, towards GOD and towards Man. We may be clear of all Uncleanness, Ungodliness and Unrighteousness, as to the outward Act : Or (as the Apostle testifies concerning himself,) *touching the Righteousness of the Law, i. e. outward Righteousness, blameless.* But yet we are not hereby justified. Still this is no more than *saying Lord, Lord!* And if we go no farther than this, we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. The *saying, Lord, Lord,* may imply, Thirdly, many of what are usually stiled Good Works. A Man may attend the Supper of the Lord, may



hear Abundance of excellent Sermons, and omit no Opportunity of partaking all the other Ordinances of GOD. I may do Good to my Neighbour, deal my Bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with a Garment. I may be so zealous of good Works, as even to *give, all my Goods to feed the Poor.* Yea, and I may do all this, with a Desire to please GOD, and a real Belief that I do please him thereby : (which is undeniably the Case of those our Lord introduces, *saying unto him, Lord, Lord !*) and still I may have no Part, in the Glory which shall be revealed.

4. If any Man marvels at this, let him acknowledge he is a Stranger to the whole Religion of Jesus Christ : And in particular, to that perfect Portraiture thereof, which he has set before us in this Discourse. For how far short is all this, of that Righteousness and true Holiness, which he has described therein ? How widely distant from that inward Kingdom of Heaven, which is now opened in the believing Soul ? Which is first sown in the Heart as a Grain of Mustard-seed, but afterwards putteth forth great Branches, on which grow all the Fruits of Righteousness, every good Temper and Word and Work.

5. Yet as clearly as he had declared this, as frequently as he had repeated, That none who have not this Kingdom of GOD within them, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven : Our Lord well knew, that many would not receive this Saying, and therefore confirms it yet again. *Many,* (saith he ; not one ; not a few only ; it is not a rare or an uncommon Case) *shall say unto me in that Day :* Not only, we have said many

Prayers ; we have spoken thy Praise ; we have refrained from Evil ; we have exercised ourselves in doing Good : But what is abundantly more than this, *We have prophesied in thy Name. In thy Name have we cast out Devils ; in thy Name done many wonderful Works. We have prophesied : we have declared thy Will to Mankind ; we have shewed Sinners the Way to Peace and Glory. And we have done this, in thy Name, according to the Truth of thy Gospel. Yea, and by thy Authority, who didst confirm the Word, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. For in or by thy Name, by the Power of thy Word and of thy Spirit, have we cast out Devils ; out of the Souls which they had long claimed as their own, and whereof they had full and quiet Possession. And in thy Name, by thy Power, not our own, have we done many wonderful Works : Infomuch that even the dead heard the Voice of the Son of GOD speaking by us, and lived. And then will I profess even unto them, I never knew you : No, not then, when you were casting out Devils in my Name. Even then I did not know you as my own : For your Heart was not right toward GOD. Ye were not yourselves meek and lowly, ye were not Lovers of GOD and of all Mankind : Ye were not renewed in the Image of GOD. Ye were not holy as I am holy. Depart from me, ye who notwithstanding all this, are Workers of Iniquity ; ἀνομία. Ye are Transgressors of my Law, my Law of holy and perfect Love.*

6. It is to put this beyond all Possibility of Contradiction, that our Lord confirms it by that opposite Comparison. *Every one, saith he, who heareth these Sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall*

shall be likened unto a foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand. And the Rain descended, and the Floods came and the Winds blew and beat upon that House : As they will surely do, sooner or later, upon every Soul of Man ; even the Floods of outward Affliction, or inward Temptation : The Storms of Pride, Anger, Fear or Desire. And it fell and great was the Fall of it : So that it perished for ever and ever. Such must be the Portion of all, who rest in any Thing short of that Religion which is above described. And the greater will their Fall be, because they heard those Sayings, and yet did them not.

II. 1. I am, Secondly, To shew the Wisdom of him that doth them, that *buildeth his House upon a Rock*. He indeed is wise, *who doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*. He is truly wise, whose *Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*. He is poor in Spirit ; knowing himself even as also he is known. He sees and feels all his Sin, and all his Guilt, till it is washed away by the atoning Blood. He is conscious of his lost Estate, of the Wrath of GOD abiding on him, and of his utter Inability to help himself, till he is filled with Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. He is meek and gentle, patient toward all Men, never *returning Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing*, till he overcomes Evil with Good. His Soul is athirst for nothing on Earth, but only for GOD, the living GOD. He has Bowels of Love for all Mankind, and is ready to lay down his Life for his Enemies. He loves the Lord his GOD with all his Heart, and with all his Mind and Soul and Strength. He alone shall enter into the Kingdom

dom of Heaven, who in this Spirit doth good unto all Men ; and who being for this Cause despised and rejected of Men ; being hated, reproached and persecuted, *rejoices and is exceeding glad*, knowing in whom he hath believed ; and being assured, these light, momentary Afflictions will *work out for him an eternal Weight of Glory*.

2. How truly wise is this Man ! He knows himself : An everlasting Spirit, which came forth from GOD, and was sent down into an House of Clay, not to do his own Will, but the Will of him that sent him. He knows the World ; the Place in which he is to pass a few Days or Years, not as an Inhabitant, but as a Stranger and Sojourner, in his Way to the everlasting Habitations : And accordingly he uses the World, as not abusing it, and as knowing the Fashion of it passes away. He knows GOD, his Father and his Friend, the Parent of all Good, the Center of the Spirits of all Flesh, the sole Happiness of all intelligent Beings. He sees, clearer than the Light of the Noon-day Sun, that this is the End of Man, To glorify Him who made him for himself and to love and enjoy him for ever. And with equal Clearness he sees the Means to that End, to the Enjoyment of GOD in Glory, even now to know, to love, to imitate GOD, and to believe in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

3. He is a wise Man, even in GOD's Account ; for *he buildeth his House upon a Rock* : Upon the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Fitly is he so called ; for he changeth not. He is *the same Yesterday, Today and for ever*. To Him both the Man of GOD of old, and the Apostle citing his Words bear

bear Witness, *Thou, Lord, in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thine Hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest ; they all shall wax old as doth a Garment. And as a Vesture shall thou fold them up and they shall be changed : But thou art the same and thy Years shall not fail. Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.* Wise therefore is the Man who buildeth on Him ; who layeth Him for his only Foundation ; who builds only upon his Blood and Righteousness, upon what he hath done and suffered for us. On this Corner-stone he fixes his Faith, and rests the whole Weight of his Soul upon it. He is taught of GOD to say, Lord, I have sinned : I deserve the nethermost Hell. But I am *justified freely by thy Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And the Life I now live, I live by Faith in him, who loved me and gave himself for me. The Life I now live : Namely, a divine, heavenly Life, a Life which is hid with Christ in GOD.* I now live even in the Flesh, a Life of Love, of pure Love both to GOD and Man : A Life of Holiness and Happiness, praising GOD and doing all Things to his Glory.

4. Yet let not such an one think, That he shall not see War any more, that he is now out of the Reach of Temptation. It still remains, for GOD to prove the Grace he hath given : He shall be tried as Gold in the Fire. He shall be tempted not less than they who know not GOD : Perhaps abundantly more. For Satan will not fail to try to the uttermost, those whom he is not able to destroy. Accordingly, *the Rain will impetuously descend* : Only at such Times and in such a Manner, as seems good, not to the Prince

Prince of the Power of the Air, but to Him *whose Kingdom ruleth over all. The Floods, or Torrents, will come ; they will lift up their Waves and rage horribly. But to them also, the Lord that sitteth above the Water-floods, that remaineth a King for ever, will say, Hitherto shall ye come and no farther : Here shall your proud Waves be stayed. The Winds will blow and beat upon that House, as tho' they would tear it up from the Foundation. But they cannot prevail : It falleth not ; for it is founded upon a Rock. He buildeth on Christ by Faith and Love : Therefore he shall not be cast down. He shall not fear, tho' the Earth be moved and tho' the Hills be carried into the Midst of the Sea. Tho' the Waters thereof rage and swell, and the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same : Still he dwelleth under the Defence of the most High, and is safe under the Shadow of the Almighty.*

III. 1. How nearly then does it concern every Child of Man, practically to apply these Things to himself ? Diligently to examine, on what Foundation he builds, whether on a Rock or on the Sand ? How deeply are *you* concerned to inquire, what is the Foundation of *my* Hope ? Whereon do I build my Expectation of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven ? Is it not built on the Sand ? Upon my *Orthodoxy* or right Opinions, (which by a gross Abuse of Words I have called *Faith* !) Upon my having a Set of Notions (suppose more rational or scriptural than many others have.) Alas ! What Madness is this ? Surely this is building on the Sand : Or rather on the Froth of the Sea ! Say, I am convinced

vinced of this. Am I not again building my Hope on what is equally unable to support it? Perhaps on my belonging to “so excellent a Church: Reformed after the true Scripture-model: Blest with the purest Doctrine, the most primitive Liturgy, the most apostolical Form of Government.” These are doubtless so many Reasons for praising G O D, as they may be so many Helps to Holiness. But they are not Holiness itself. And if they are separate from it, they will profit me nothing. Nay, they will leave me the more without Excuse, and exposed to the greater Damnation. Therefore if I build my Hope upon this Foundation, I am still building upon the Sand.

2. You cannot, you dare not rest here. Upon what next will you build your Hope of Salvation? Upon your Innocence? Upon your doing no Harm? Your not wronging or hurting any one? Well; allow this Plea to be true. You are just in all your Dealings: You are a downright honest Man. You pay every Man his own: You neither cheat, nor extort: You act fairly with all Mankind. And you have a Conscience towards GOD: You do not live in any known Sin. Thus far is well. But still it is not the Thing. You may go thus far, and yet never come to Heaven. When all this Harmlessness flows from a right Principle, it is the *least Part* of the Religion of Christ. But in you it does not flow from a right Principle, and therefore is no Part at all of Religion. So that in grounding your Hope of Salvation on this, you are still building upon the Sand.

3. Do

3. Do you go farther yet? Do you add to the doing no Harm, the attending all the Ordinances of GOD? Do you at all Opportunities partake of the Lord's Supper? Use publick and private Prayer? Fast often? Hear and search the Scriptures, and meditate thereon? These Things likewise ought you to have done, from the Time you first set your Face towards Heaven. Yet these Things also are nothing, being alone. They are nothing without the weightier Matters of the Law. And those you have forgotten. At least you experience them not; Faith, Mercy, and the Love of GOD: Holiness of Heart: Heaven opened in the Soul. Still therefore you build upon the Sand.

4. Over and above all this, are you zealous of good Works? Do you, as you have Time, do Good to all Men? Do you feed the Hungry and cloath the Naked and visit the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction? Do you visit those that are sick? Relieve them that are in Prison? Is any a Stranger and do you take him in? Friend, come up higher. Do you *prophezie in the Name of Christ*? Do you preach the Truth as it is in Jesus? And does the Influence of his Spirit attend your Word, and make it the Power of GOD unto Salvation? Does he enable you to bring Sinners from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan unto GOD? Then go and learn what thou hast so often taught, *By Grace ye are saved thro' Faith. Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but of his own Mercy he saveth us.* Learn to hang naked upon the Cross of Christ, counting all thou hast done but Dung and Dross. Apply to him just in the Spirit  
of.



of the dying Thief, of the Harlot with her seven Devils. Else thou art still on the Sand, and after saving others, thou wilt lose thy own Soul.

5. Lord ! Increase my Faith, if I now believe ! Else, give me Faith, tho' but as a Grain of Mustard-seed !—But *what doth it profit, if a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works ? Can that Faith save him ?* O no ! That Faith which hath not Works, which doth not produce both inward and outward Holiness, which does not stamp the whole Image of God on the Heart, and purify us as he is pure : That Faith which does not produce the whole of the Religion described in the foregoing Chapters, is not the Faith of the Gospel, not the Christian Faith, not the Faith which leads to Glory. O beware of this, above all other Snares of the Devil, of resting on unholy, unfaving Faith ! If thou layest stress on this, thou art lost for ever : Thou still buildest thy House upon the Sand. *When the Rain descends and the Floods come it will surely fall, and great will be the Fall of it.*

6. Now therefore, build thou upon a Rock. By the Grace of GOD, know thyself. Know and feel, that thou wast shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin did thy Mother conceive thee : And yet thou thyself hast been heaping Sin upon Sin, ever since thou couldst discern Good from Evil. Own thyself guilty of eternal Death : And renounce all Hope of ever being able to save thyself. Be it all thy Hope, to be washed in his Blood, and purified by his Spirit, *who himself bore all thy Sins, in his own Body upon the Tree.* And if thou knowest he hath taken away thy Sins, so much the more abase thyself before him,  
in

in a continued Sense of thy total Dependance on Him, for every good Thought and Word and Work, and of thy utter Inability to all Good, unless He *water thee every Moment.*

7. Now weep for your Sins, and mourn after GOD till he turns your Heaviness into Joy. And even then weep with them that weep : And for them that weep not for themselves. Mourn for the Sins and Miseries of Mankind : And see, but just before your Eyes, the immense Ocean of Eternity, without a Bottom or a Shore ; which has already swallowed up Millions of Millions of Men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain. See here the House of GOD, eternal in the Heavens ; there, Hell and Destruction without a Covering. And thence learn the Importance of every Moment, which just appears, and is gone for ever !

8. Now add to your Seriousness, Meekness of Wisdom. Hold an even Scale as to all your Passions, but in particular, as to Anger, Sorrow and Fear. Calmly acquiesce in whatsoever is the Will of GOD. Learn in every State wherein you are, therewith to be content. Be mild to the good : Be gentle toward all Men ; but especially toward the evil and the unthankful. Beware not only of outward Expressions of Anger, such as calling thy Brother *Raca*, or thou Fool ! But of every inward Emotion contrary to Love, tho' it go no farther than the Heart. Be angry at Sin, at an Affront offered to the Majesty of Heaven ; but love the Sinner still : Like our Lord, who *looked round about upon the Pharisees with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts.*

*Hearts.* He was grieved at the Sinners, angry at the Sin. Thus *be thou angry and sin not.*

9. Now do thou hunger and thirst not for *the Meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting Life.* Trample under Foot the World and the Things of the World: All these Riches, Honours, Pleasures. What is the World to thee? Let the dead bury their dead: But follow thou after the Image of GOD. And beware of quenching that blessed Thirst, if it is already excited in thy Soul, by what is vulgarly called Religion, a poor, dull Farce, a Religion of Form, of outside Show, which leaves the Heart still cleaving to the Dust, as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the Power of Godliness, but a Religion that is Spirit and Life; the dwelling in GOD and GOD in thee; the being an Inhabitant of Eternity; the entering in by the Blood of sprinkling *within the Veil,* and *sitting in heavenly Places with Christ Jesus.*

10. Now, seeing thou canst do all Things thro' Christ strengthening thee, be merciful as thy Father in Heaven is merciful. Love thy Neighbour as thyself. Love Friends and Enemies as thy own Soul. And let thy Love be *long suffering,* and patient towards all Men. Let it be *kind,* soft, benign: Inspiring thee with the most amiable Sweetness, and the most fervent and tender Affection. Let it *rejoice in the Truth,* wheresoever it is found, the Truth that is after Godliness. Enjoy whatsoever brings Glory to GOD, and promotes Peace and Good-will among Men. In Love *cover all Things,* of the dead and the  
absent

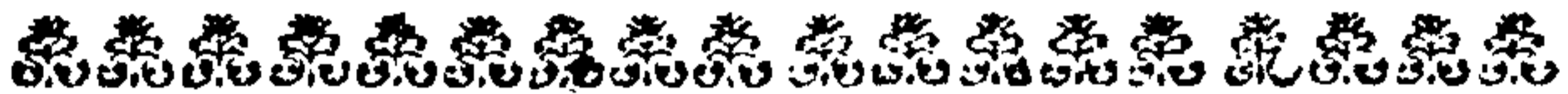
absent speaking nothing but Good : *Believe all Things*, which may any Way tend to clear your Neighbour's Character : *Hope all Things*, in his Favour, and *endure all Things*, triumphing over all Opposition. For true *Love never faileth*, in Time or in Eternity.

11. Now be thou *pure in Heart* ; purified thro' Faith from every unholy Affection, *cleansing thyself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfecting Holiness in the Fear of G O D.* Being thro' the Power of his Grace purified from Pride by deep Poverty of Spirit, from Anger, from every unkind or turbulent Passion, by Meekness and Mercifulness, from every Desire but to please and enjoy GOD, by Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness ; now love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart and with all thy Strength.

12. In a Word. Let thy Religion be the Religion of the Heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmost Soul. Be thou little and base, and mean and vile, (beyond what Words can express) in thy own Eyes ; amazed and humbled to the Dust, by the Love of GOD which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole Stream of thy Thoughts, Words and Actions flow from the deepest Conviction, that thou standest on the Edge of the great Gulph, thou and all the Children of Men, just ready to drop in, either into everlasting Glory or everlasting Burnings. Let thy Soul be filled with Mildness, Gentleness, Patience, Long-suffering towards all Men : At the same Time that all which is in thee is athirst for GOD, the living GOD ; longing  
to

to awake up after his Likeness, and to be satisfied with it. Be thou a Lover of GOD and of all Mankind. In this Spirit do and suffer all Things. Thus shew thy Faith by thy Works : Thus *do the Will of thy Father which is in Heaven.* And as sure as thou now walkest with GOD on Earth, thou shalt also reign with him in Glory.





*The Original, Nature, Properties and  
Use of the LAW.*

A

**S E R M O N**

**On Rom. vii. 12.**



## ROM. vii. 12.

*Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy and just and good.*

1. **P**ERhaps there are few Subjects within the whole Compass of Religion, so little understood as this. The Reader of this Epistle is usually told, by *the Law* St. Paul means the *Jewish Law*: And so apprehending himself to have no Concern therewith, passes on without farther Thought about it. Indeed some are not satisfied with this Account: But observing the Epistle is directed to the *Romans*, thence infer, that the Apostle in the Beginning of this Chapter, alludes to the old *Roman Law*. But as they have no more Concern with this, than with the *Ceremonial Law* of *Moses*, so they spend not much Thought, on what they suppose is occasionally mentioned, barely to illustrate another Thing.

2. But a careful Observer of the Apostle's Discourse, will not be content with these slight Explications of it. And the more he weighs the Words, the more convinced he will be, that St. Paul by *the Law* mentioned in this Chapter, does not mean either the antient Law of *Rome*, or the ceremonial Law of *Moses*. This will clearly appear to all who attentively consider the Tenor of his Discourse. He begins the Chapter, *Know*

ye not, Brethren (for I speak to them that know the Law, to them who have been instructed therein from their Youth) *That the Law hath Dominion over a Man, as long as he liveth?* v. 1. (What the Law of Rome only, or the ceremonial Law? No surely; but the moral Law) for, to give a plain Instance, *the Woman that hath an Husband, is bound by the (moral) Law to her Husband as long as he liveth. But if her Husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of her Husband.* v. 2. So then, *if while her Husband liveth, she be married to another Man, she shall be called an Adulteress: But if her Husband be dead. she is free from that Law, so that she is no Adulteress, tho' she be married to another Man.* v. 3. From this particular Instance the Apostle proceeds to draw that general Conclusion. *Wherefore, my Brethren, by a plain Parity of Reason, ye also are become dead to the Law, the whole Mosaic Institution, by the Body of Christ offered for you, and bringing you under a new Dispensation: That ye should without any Blame be married to another, even to him who is raised from the Dead, and hath thereby given Proof of his Authority to make the Change, that ye should bring forth Fruit unto GOD.* v. 4. And this we can do now, whereas before we cou'd not: *For when we were in the Flesh, under the Power of the Flesh, that is, of corrupt Nature, (which was necessarily the Case till we knew the Power of Christ's Resurrection) the Motions of Sins, which were by the Law, which were shewn and inflamed by the Mosaic Law, not conquered, did work in our Members, broke out various Ways, to bring forth Fruit unto Death.* v. 5. *But now we are delivered from the Law, from that whole moral as well*



well as ceremonial OEconomy; *that being dead whereby we were held*: That intire Institution being now as it were dead, and having no more Authority over us, than the Husband when dead hath over his Wife: *That we should serve him who died for us and rose again, in Newness of Spirit, in a new spiritual Dispensation, and not in the Oldness of the Letter, v. 6.* with a bare outward Service, according to the Letter of the *Mosaic Institution*.

3. The Apostle having gone thus far, in proving that the Christian had set aside the Jewish Dispensation, and that the moral Law itself, tho' it could never pass away, yet stood on a different Foundation from what it did before, now stops to propose and answer an Objection. *What shall we say then? Is the Law Sin?* So some might infer from a Misapprehension of those Words, *the Motions of Sin which were by the Law. GOD forbid!* saith the Apostle, that we should say so. Nay, the Law is an irreconcilable Enemy to Sin; searching it out wherever it is. *I had not known Sin but by the Law. I had not known Lust, evil Desire to be Sin, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet, v. 7.* After opening this farther in the four following Verses, he subjoins this general Conclusion, with regard more especially to the moral Law, from which the preceding Instance was taken: *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy and just and good.*

4. In order to explain and enforce these deep Words, so little regarded, because so little understood, I shall endeavour to shew, First, The Original of this Law, Secondly, The Nature thereof;

hereof ; Thirdly, The Properties, that it is *holy and just and good*, and Fourthly, The Uses of it.

I. 1. I shall, First, endeavour to shew the Original of the moral Law. often called *the Law*, by Way of Eminence. Now this is not, as some may possibly have imagined, of so late an Institution as the Time of *Moses*. *Noah* declared it to Men long before that Time, and *Enoch* before him. But we may trace its Original higher still, even beyond the Foundation of the World to that Period, unknown indeed to Men, but doubtless inrolled in the Annals of Eternity, when *the morning Stars first sang together*, being newly called into Existence. It pleased the great Creator to make these his first born Sons, intelligent Beings, that they might know him that created them. For this End he endued them with Understanding, to discern Truth from Falshood, Good from Evil : And as a necessary Result of this, with Liberty, a Capacity of chusing the one and refusing the other. By this they were likewise enabled to offer him a free and willing Service : A Service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master.

2. To employ all the Faculties which he had given them, particularly their Understanding and Liberty, he gave them a Law, a compleat Model of all Truth, so far as intelligible to a finite Being, and of all Good, so far as angelic Minds were capable of embracing it. It was also the Design of their beneficent Governor herein, to make way for a continual Increase of their Happiness : Seeing every Instance of Obedience to that Law, would both add to the Perfection of  
their

their Nature, and intitle them to an higher Reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its Season.

3. In like manner, when GOD in his appointed Time, had created a new Order of intelligent Beings, when he had raised Man from the Dust of the Earth, breathed into him the Breath of Life, and caused him to become a living Soul, endued with Power to chuse Good or Evil: He gave to this free, intelligent Creature, the same Law as to his first-born Children: Not wrote indeed upon Tables of Stone, or any corruptible Substance, but engraven on his Heart by the Finger of GOD, wrote in the inmost Spirit both of Men and of Angels: To the Intent it might never be far off, never hard to be understood; but always at hand, and always shining with clear Light, even as the Sun in the Midst of Heaven.

4. Such was the Original of the Law of GOD. With regard to Man, it was co-eval with his Nature. But with regard to the elder Sons of GOD, it shone in its full Splendor, *or ever the Mountains were brought forth, or the Earth and the round World were made.* But it was not long before Man rebelled against GOD, and by breaking this glorious Law, well nigh effaced it out of his Heart; *the Eyes of his Understanding being darkend,* in the same Measure as his Soul was *alienated from the Life of GOD.* And yet GOD did not despise the Work of his own Hands: But being reconciled to Man thro' the Son of his Love, he in some Measure re-inscribed his Law, on the Heart of his dark, sinful Creature. *He again shewed thee, O Man what is good* (altho' not as in  
the

the Beginning) *even to do justly and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD.*

5. And this he shewed not only to our first Parents, but likewise to all their Posterity, by *that true Light which enlightens every Man that cometh into the World.* But notwithstanding this Light, all Flesh had in Process of Time *corrupted their Way before him:* 'Till he chose out of Mankind a peculiar People, to whom he gave a more perfect Knowledge of his Law. And the Heads of this, because they were slow of Understanding, he wrote on two Tables of Stone; which he commanded the Fathers to teach their Children, thro' all succeeding Generations.

6. And thus it is, that the Law of GOD is now made known to them that know not GOD. They hear, with the Hearing of the Ear, the Things that were written aforetime for our Instruction. But this does not suffice. They cannot by this Means comprehend the Height and Depth and Length and Breadth thereof. GOD alone can reveal this by his Spirit. And so he does to all that truly believe, in Consequence of that gracious Promise, made to all the Israel of GOD: *Behold, the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel. And this shall be the Covenant that I will make, I will put my Law in their inward Parts. and write it in their Hearts, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my People. Jer. xxxi. 31. &c.*

II. 1. The Nature of that Law which was originally given to Angels in Heaven and Man in Paradise, and which GOD has so mercifully promised

mised to write afresh, in the Hearts of all true Believers, was the second Thing I proposed to shew. In order to which I would first observe, That altho' *the Law* and *the Commandment* are sometimes differently taken, (the Commandment meaning but a Part of the Law) yet in the Text they are used as equivalent Terms, implying one and the same Thing. But we cannot understand here, either by one or the other, the ceremonial Law. 'Tis not the ceremonial Law, whereof the Apostle says, in the Words above-recited, *I had not known Sin but by the Law*: This is too plain to need a Proof. Neither is it the ceremonial Law which saith, in the Words immediately subjoin'd, *Thou shalt not covet*. Therefore the ceremonial Law, has no Place in the present Question.

2. Neither can we understand by the Law mentioned in the Text, the *Mosaic Dispensation*. 'Tis true, the Word is sometimes so understood: As when the Apostle says, speaking to the *Galatians*, (c. iii. v. 17.) *The Covenant which was confirmed before* (namely with *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful) *the Law*, i. e. the *Mosaic Dispensation*, *which was four hundred and thirty Years after, cannot disannul*. But it cannot be so understood in the Text; for the Apostle never bestows, so high Commendations as these upon that imperfect and shadowy Dispensation. He no where affirms, the *Mosaic* to be a *spiritual Law*: Or, that it is *holy and just and good*. Neither is it true, that *GOD* will *write* that Law in the Hearts of them whose *Iniquities he remembers no more*. It remains, that *the Law*, eminently so termed, is no other than the moral Law.

3. Now

3. Now this Law is, an incorruptible Picture of the high and holy One that inhabiteth Eternity. It is he whom in his Essence no Man hath seen or can see, made visible to Men and Angels. It is the Face of GOD unveil'd : GOD manifested to his Creatures as they are able to bear it : Manifested to give and not to destroy Life ; that they may see GOD and live. It is the Heart of GOD disclosed to Man. Yea, in some Sense we may apply to this Law, what the Apostle says of his Son, it is ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. *The streaming forth or outbeaming of his Glory, the express Image of his Person.*

4. “ If Virtue, said the antient Heathen, could assume such a Shape as that we cou'd behold her with our Eyes, what wonderful Love wou'd she excite in us ! ” If Virtue cou'd do this ! It is done already. The Law of GOD is all Virtues in one, in such a Shape, as to be beheld with open Face, by all those whose Eyes GOD hath enlightened. What is the Law, but divine Virtue and Wisdom, assuming a visible Form ? What is it, but the original Ideas of Truth and Good, which were lodged in the uncreated Mind from Eternity, now drawn forth and cloathed with such a Vehicle, as to appear even to human Understanding ?

5. If we survey the Law of GOD in another Point of View, it is supreme, unchangeable Reason : It is unalterable Rectitude : It is the everlasting Fitness of all Things that are or ever were created. I am sensible, what a Shortness, and even Impropriety there is, in these and all other human Expressions, when we endeavour by these faint Pictures, to shadow out the deep

Things of GOD. Nevertheless we have no better, indeed no other Way, during this our infant State of Existence. As *we now know but in part, so we are constrained to prophesy, i. e. speak of the Things of GOD, in part also. We cannot order our Speech by Reason of Darkness, while we are in this House of Clay. While I am a Child I must speak as a Child. But I shall soon put away childish Things. For when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*

6. But to return. The Law of GOD, (speaking after the Manner of Men) is a Copy of the eternal Mind, a Transcript of the divine Nature: Yea it is the fairest Offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest Efflux of his essential Wisdom, the visible Beauty of the Most High. It is the Delight and Wonder of Cherubim and Seraphim and all the Company of Heaven, and the Glory and Joy of every wise Believer, every well instructed Child of GOD upon Earth.

III. 1. Such is the Nature of the ever-blessed Law of GOD. I am, in the third Place, to shew the Properties of it: Not all; for that wou'd exceed the Wisdom of an Angel. But those only which are mentioned in the Text. These are three: *He is holy, just and good.* And first, *The Law is holy.*

2. In this Expression the Apostle does not appear to speak of its Effects, but rather of its Nature: As St. *James* speaking of the same Thing under another Name, says, *The Wisdom from above* (which is no other than this Law, written in our Heart) *is first pure, c. iii. 17. ἀγνή, chaste, spotless, internally, and essentially holy. And consequently,*

frequently, when it is transcribed into the Life, as well as the Soul, it is (as the same Apostle terms it,) c. i. 27. ὁρθοκεία καθαρά καὶ ἀμίαντος *Pure Religion and undefiled*; or, the pure, clean, unpolluted Worship of GOD.

3. It is indeed, in the highest Degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy. Otherwise it could not be the immediate Offspring, and much less the express Resemblance of GOD, who is essential Holiness. It is pure from all Sin, clean and unspotted from any Touch of Evil. It is a chaste Virgin, incapable of any Defilement, of any Mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no Fellowship with Sin of any kind. For *what Communion hath Light with Darkness?* As Sin is in its very Nature Enmity to GOD, so his Law is Enmity to Sin.

4. Therefore it is, that the Apostle rejects with such Abhorrence, that blasphemous Supposition, that *the Law of GOD is either Sin itself, or the Cause of Sin.* *GOD forbid*, that we should suppose, it is the Cause of Sin, because it is the Discoverer of it: Because it detects the hidden Things of Darkness, and drags them out into open Day. 'Tis true, by this Means, (as the Apostle observes, v. 13.) *Sin appears to be Sin.* All its Disguises are torn away, and it appears in its native Deformity. 'Tis true likewise, that *Sin by the Commandment becomes exceeding sinful.* Being now committed against Light and Knowledge, being stript even of the poor Plea of Ignorance, it loses its Excuse as well as Disguise, and becomes far more odious both to GOD and Man. Yea, and it is true, that *Sin worketh Death by that which is good*, which itself is pure  
and



and holy. When it is dragged out to Light, it rages the more: When it is restrained, it bursts out with greater Violence. Thus the Apostle, (speaking in the Person of one, who was convinced of Sin, but not yet delivered from it) *Sin taking Occasion by the Commandment*, detecting and endeavouring to restrain it, disdained the Restraint, and so much the more *wrought in me all Manner of Concupiscence*, v. 8. All Manner of foolish and hurtful Desire, which that Commandment sought to restrain. Thus *when the Commandment came, Sin revived*, v. 9. It fretted and raged the more. But this is no Stain on the Commandment. Tho' it is abused it cannot be defiled. This only proves, that *the Heart of Man is desperately wicked*. But *the Law of GOD is holy still*.

5. And it is, Secondly, *just*. It renders to all their Due. It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said or thought both with regard to the Author of our Being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every Creature which he has made. It is adapted in all Respects to the Nature of Things, of the whole Universe and every Individual. It is suited to all the Circumstances of each, and to all their mutual Relations, whether such as have existed from the Beginning, or such as commenced in any following Period. It is exactly agreeable to the Fitnesses of Things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any Degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the Word be taken in that Sense, there is nothing *arbitrary* in the Law of GOD. Altho' still the whole and every Part thereof, is totally dependent upon his

Will: So that *thy Will be done*, is the supreme universal Law both in Earth and Heaven.

6. " But is the Will of GOD the Cause of his Law? Is his Will the Original of Right and Wrong? Is a Thing therefore right, because GOD wills it? Or does he will it, because it is right?

I fear, this celebrated Question is more curious than useful. And perhaps, in the Manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the Regard that is due from a Creature, to the Creator and Governor of all Things. 'Tis hardly decent from Man, to call the supreme GOD, to give an Account to him! Nevertheless, with Awe and Reverence we may speak a little. The Lord pardon us, if we speak amiss!

7. It seems then, that the whole Difficulty arises, from considering GOD's Will as distinct from GOD. Otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt, but GOD is the Cause of the Law of GOD. But the Will of GOD is GOD himself. It is GOD considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say, That the Will of GOD, or that GOD himself is the Cause of the Law, is one and the same Thing.

8. Again; If the Law, the immutable Rule of Right and Wrong, depends on the Nature and Fitnesses of Things, and on their essential Relations to each other: (I do not say, their eternal Relations; because the eternal Relations of Things existing in Time, is little less than a Contradiction:) If, I say, this depends on the Nature and Relations of Things, then it must depend on GOD, or the Will of GOD: Because those Things themselves, with all their Relations, are the  
the

the Work of his Hands. By his Will, *for his Pleasure* alone, *they all are and were created.*

9. And yet it may be granted (which is probably all that a considerate Person would contend for) that in every particular Case, GOD wills this or this (suppose that Men should honour their Parents) because it is right, agreeable to the Fitness of Things, to the Relation wherein they stand.

10. The Law then is right and just concerning all Things. And it is *good* as well as *just*. This we may easily infer from the Fountain whence it flow'd. For what was this, but the Goodness of GOD? What but Goodness alone inclined him to impart that divine Copy of himself to the holy Angels? To what else can we impute his bestowing upon Man the same Transcript of his own Nature? And what but tender Love constrained him afresh to manifest his Will to fallen Man? Either to *Adam*, or any of his Seed, who like him, were *come short of the Glory of GOD*? Was it not mere Love that moved him to publish his Law, after the Understandings of Men were darkened? And to send his Prophets to declare that Law, to the blind, thoughtless Children of Men? Doubtless his Goodness it was which raised up *Enoch* and *Noah*, to be Preachers of Righteousness; which caused *Abraham*, his Friend, and *Iaac* and *Jacob*, to bear Witness to his Truth. It was his Goodness alone, which when *Darkness* had covered the Earth, and thick *Darkness* the People, gave a written Law to *Moses*, and thro' him, to the Nation whom he had chosen. It was his Love which explained these living Oracles by *David* and all the Prophets that followed; Until,

H. 3

when

when the Fulness of Time was come, he sent his only-begotten Son, *not to destroy the Law but to fulfil*, to confirm every Jot and Tittle thereof, till having wrote it in the Hearts of all his Children, and put all his Enemies under his Feet, *he shall deliver up his mediatorial Kingdom to the Father, that GOD may be all in all.*

11. And this Law which the Goodness of GOD gave at first, and has preserv'd thro' all Ages, is, like the Fountain from whence it springs, full of Goodness and Benignity: It is mild and kind; it is (as the Psalmist expresses it) *sweeter than Honey and the Honey-comb.* It is winning and amiable. It includes *whatsoever Things are lovely or of good Report.* If there be any *Virtue*, if there be any *Praise* before GOD and his holy Angels. they are all comprized in this: Wherein are hid all the Treasures of the divine Wisdom and Knowledge and Love.

12. And it is *good* in its Effects, as well as in its Nature. As the Tree is, so are its Fruits. The Fruits of the Law of GOD written in the Heart, are *Righteousness and Peace and Assurance for ever.* Or rather, the Law itself is Righteousness, filling the Soul with a Peace that passeth all Understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the Testimony of a good Conscience toward GOD. It is not so properly a Pledge, as *an Earnest of our Inheritance*, being a Part of the purchased Possession. It is GOD made manifest in our Flesh, and bringing with him eternal Life: Assuring us by that pure and perfect Love, that we are *sealed unto the Day of Redemption*: That he will spare us as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him, in the Day when he maketh up his Jewels,

*Jewels, and that there remaineth for us a Crown of Glory which fadeth not away.*

IV. 1. It remains only, To shew, in the fourth and last Place, the Uses of the Law. And the first Use of it without Question is, to convince the World of Sin. This is indeed the peculiar Work of the Holy Ghost: Who can work it without any Means at all, or by whatever Means it pleaseth him, however insufficient in themselves, or even improper to produce such an Effect. And accordingly some there are whose Hearts have been broken in Pieces in a Moment, either in Sicknes or in Health, without any visible Cause, or any outward Means whatever. And others (one in an Age) have been awakened to a Sense of the *Wrath of GOD abiding on them, by hearing, That GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself.* But it is the ordinary Method of the Spirit of GOD, to convict Sinners by the Law. It is this, which being set home on the Conscience, generally breaketh the Rocks in Pieces. It is more especially this Part of the *Word of GOD*, which is *ζώνη ἐνεργητικὴ*. *quick and powerful, full of Life and Energy, and sharper than any two-edged Sword.* This in the Hand of GOD and of those whom he hath sent, pierces thro' all the Folds of a deceitful Heart, and divides asunder even the Soul and Spirit, yea, as it were, the very *Joints and Marrow.* By this is the Sinner discovered to himself. All his Fig-leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is *wretched and poor and miserable and blind and naked.* The Law flashes Conviction on every Side. He feels himself a mere Sinner. He has nothing to pay.  
His

His *Mouth is stopt*, and he stands *guilty before GOD*.

2. To slay the Sinner is then the first Use of the Law ; to destroy the Life and Strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth ; not only under Sentence of Death, but actually dead unto GOD, void of all spiritual Life, *dead in Trespasses and Sins*. The second Use of it is, to bring him unto Life, unto Christ, that he may live. 'Tis true, in performing both these Offices, it acts the Part of a severe Schoolmaster. It drives us by Force, rather than draws us by Love. And yet Love is the Spring of all. It is the Spirit of Love, which by this painful Means, tears away our Confidence in the Flesh, which leaves us no broken Reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the Sinner stript of all, to cry out in the Bitterness of his Soul, or groan in the Depth of his Heart,

“ I Give up every Plea beside

“ Lord, I am damn'd—But thou hast died.

3. The third Use of the Law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand Means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the Believer for larger Communications of the Life of GOD.

I am afraid this great and important Truth is little understood, not only by the World, but even by many whom GOD hath taken out of the World, who are real Children of GOD by Faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned Truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the Law ; and that in *this* Sense, *Christ is the End of the Law, to every one that believeth.*

*The End of the Law.* So he is, for *Righteousness*, for *Justification to every one that believeth*. Here- in the Law is at an End. It justifies none; but only brings them to Christ. Who is also in another respect, *the End or Scope of the Law*, the Point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to him, it has yet a farther Office, namely, To keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all Believers, the more they see of its Height and Depth and Length and Breadth, to exhort one another so much the more,

“ Closer and closer let us cleave  
 To his beloved Embrace :  
 Expect his Fulness to receive,  
 And Grace to answer Grace.

4. Allowing then that every Believer has done with the Law, as it means the *Jewish ceremonial Law*, or the entire *Mosaic Dispensation* (for these *Christ hath taken out of the Way*). Yea, allowing we have done with the *Moral Law*, as a Means of procuring our Justification (for we are *justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus*) Yet in another Sense, we have not done with this Law. For it is still of unspeakable Use, First, in convincing us of the Sin that yet remains both in our Hearts and Lives, and thereby keeping us close to Christ, that his Blood may cleanse us every Moment; Secondly, in deriving Strength from our Head into his living Members, whereby he impowers them to do what his Law commands; and Thirdly, in confirming our Hope of whatsoever it commands,  
 and

and we have not yet attained, of receiving Grace upon Grace, till we are in actual Possession of the Fulness of his Promises.

5. How clearly does this agree with the Experience of every true Believer ! While he cries out, *O what Love have I unto thy Law ! all the Day long is my Study in it ;* He sees daily in that divine Mirror, more and more of his own Sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a Sinner in all Things ; that neither his Heart nor his Ways are right before GOD. And that every Moment sends him to Christ. This shews him the Meaning of what is written, *Thou shalt make a Plate of pure Gold, and grave upon it, Holiness to the Lord. And it shall be upon Aaron's Forehead* (the Type of our great High-priest) *that Aaron may bear the Iniquities of the holy Things, which the Children of Israel shall hallow, in all their holy Gifts : (so far are our Prayers or holy Things from atoning for the rest of our Sins !)* *And it shall be always upon his Forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. Exodus xxviii. 36, 38.*

6. To explain this by a single Instance. The Law says, *Thou shalt not kill,* and hereby (as our Lord teaches) forbids not only outward Acts, but every unkind Word or Thought. Now the more I look into this perfect Law, the more I feel how far I come short of it : And the more I feel this, the more I feel my Need of his Blood to atone for all my Sin ; and of his Spirit to purify my Heart, and make me *perfect and entire, lacking nothing.*

7. Therefore I cannot spare the Law one Moment, no more than I can spare Christ : See-  
ing



ing I now want it as much, to keep me to Christ, as ever I wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise, this *evil Heart of Unbelief* would immediately *depart from the living GOD*. Indeed each is continually sending me to the other, the Law to Christ, and Christ to the Law. On the one Hand, the Height and Depth of the Law constrain me to fly to the Love of GOD in Christ. On the other, the Love of GOD in Christ, endears the Law to me *above Gold or precious Stones* : Seeing I know every Part of it, is a gracious Promise, which my Lord will fulfil in its Season.

8. Who art thou then, O Man, that *judgest the Law, and speakest evil of the Law* ? That rankest it with Sin, Satan and Death, and sendest them all to Hell together ! The Apostle *James* esteemed *judging or speaking evil of the Law*, so enormous a Piece of Wickedness, that he knew not how to aggravate the Guilt of judging our Brethren, more than by shewing it included this. *So now, says he, thou art not a Doer of the Law but a Judge !* A Judge of that which GOD hath ordained to judge thee. So thou hast set up thyself in the Judgment-seat of Christ, and cast down the Rule whereby he will judge the World ! O take Knowledge what Advantage Satan hath gained over thee ! And for the Time to come never think or speak lightly of, much less dress up as a Scare-crow this blessed Instrument of the Grace of GOD. Yea, love and value it for the Sake of him from whom it came, and of him to whom it leads. Let it be thy Glory and Joy, next to the Cross of Christ. Declare its Praise, and make it honourable before all Men.

9. And

9. And if thou art thoroughly convinced, That it is the Offspring of GOD, that it is the Copy of all his imitable Perfections, and that it *is holy and just and good*, but especially to them that believe : Then instead of casting it away as a polluted Thing, see that thou cleave to it more and more. Never let the Law of Mercy and Truth, of Love to GOD and Man, of Lowliness, Meekness and Purity forsake thee. *Bind it about thy Neck : Write it on the Table of thy Heart.* Keep close to the Law, if thou wilt keep close to Christ : Hold it fast : Let it not go. Let this continually lead thee to the atoning Blood, continually confirm thy Hope, till all *the Righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in thee*, and thou art *filled with all the Fulness of GOD*.

10. And if thy Lord hath already fulfilled his Word, if he hath already *written his Law in thy Heart*, then *stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made thee free*. Thou art not only made free from *Jewish Ceremonies*, from the Guilt of Sin and the Fear of Hell : (These are so far from being the Whole, that they are the least and lowest Part, of Christian Liberty :) but what is infinitely more, from the Power of Sin, from serving the Devil, from offending GOD. O stand fast in this Liberty, in Comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named. Stand fast in loving GOD with all thy Heart, and serving him with all thy Strength. This is perfect Freedom ; thus to keep his Law, and to walk in all his Commandments blameless. *Be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage*. I do not mean of *Jewish Bondage* : Nor yet of Bondage to the Fear of Hell : These, I trust, are far  
from

from thee. But beware of being intangled again with the Yoke of Sin, of any inward or outward Transgression of the Law. Abhor Sin far more than Death or Hell ; abhor Sin itself, far more than the Punishment of it. Beware of the Bondage of Pride, of Desire, of Anger ; of every evil Temper or Word or Work. *Look unto Jesus, and in order thereto, look more and more into the perfect Law, the Law of Liberty. And continue therein : So shalt thou daily grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*



*The Law established thro' Faith.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

ROMANS iii. 31.



## ROM. iii. 31.

*Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith? GOD forbid. Yea we establish the Law.*

1. **S**T Paul having in the Beginning of this Epistle, laid down his general Proposition, namely, *That the Gospel of Christ is the Power of GOD unto Salvation, to every one that believeth:* The powerful Means, whereby GOD makes every Believer a Partaker of present and eternal Salvation, goes on to shew, that there is no other Way under Heaven, whereby Men can be saved. He speaks particularly of Salvation from the Guilt of Sin, which he commonly terms Justification. And that all Men stood in Need of this, that none cou'd plead their own Innocence, he proves at large by various Arguments, address'd to the Jews as well as the Heathens. Hence he infers (in the 19th Verse of this Chapter), *That every Mouth, whether of Jew or Heathen, must be stop't from excusing or justifying himself, and all the World become guilty before GOD.* Therefore, saith he, by his own Obedience, *by the Works of the Law, shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, v. 20.* But now the Righteousness of GOD without the Law, without our previous Obedience thereto, is manifested, v. 21. *Even the Righteousness of GOD, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe, v. 22.* For

*there is no Difference, as to their need of Justification, or the manner wherein they attain it. For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God, (v. 23.) the glorious Image of GOD wherein they were created: And all (who attain) are justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ: v. 24. Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood—v. 25. That he might be just, and yet the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus; v. 26. that without any Impeachment to his Justice, he might shew him Mercy, for the sake of that Propitiation. Therefore we conclude, (which was the grand Position he had undertaken to establish) That a Man is justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law. v. 28.*

2. It was easy to foresee an Objection which might be made, and which has in Fact been made in all Ages: namely, That to say *we are justified without the Works of the Law*, is to abolish the Law. The Apostle, without entering into a formal Dispute, simply denies the Charge. *Do we then, says he, make void the Law through Faith? GOD forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.*

3. The strange Imagination of some, that St. Paul, when he says, *A Man is justified without the Works of the Law*, means only the Ceremonial Law, is abundantly confuted by these very Words. For did St. Paul establish the Ceremonial Law? It is evident, he did not. He did *make void* that Law through Faith, and openly avowed his doing so. It was the *Moral Law* only of which he might truly say, *We do not make void but establish this through Faith.*

4. But all Men are not herein of his Mind. Many there are who will not agree to this. Many  
in

in all Ages of the Church, even among those who bore the Name of Christians, have contended, That *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, was designed to make void the whole Law. They would no more spare the Moral than the Ceremonial Law, but were for *hewing*, as it were, *both in pieces before the Lord*: Vehemently maintaining, “If you establish any Law, *Christ shall profit you nothing: Christ is become of no Effect to you: ye are fallen from Grace.*”

5. But is the Zeal of these Men according to Knowledge? Have they observed the Connection between the Law and Faith? And that considering that close Connection between them, to destroy one is indeed to destroy both? That to abolish the Moral Law is in Truth, to abolish Faith and the Law together? As leaving no proper means, either of bringing us to Faith, or of *stirring up that Gift of God* in our Soul.

6. It therefore behoves all who desire either to come to Christ, or to *walk in him whom they have received*, to take heed how they *make void the Law through Faith*; To secure us effectually against which, let us enquire, First, which are the most usual Ways of *making void the Law thro' Faith*, and Secondly, How we may follow the Apostle, and by Faith *establish the Law*.

I. 1. Let us, First, inquire, Which are the most usual Ways of *making void the Law through Faith*. Now the Way for a Preacher to make it all void at a Stroke, is, Not to preach it at all. This is just the same thing, as to blot it out of the Oracles of God. More especially when it is done with Design; when it is made a Rule, “Not to preach the Law:” And the very Phrase, “A  
Preacher

Preacher of the Law," is used as a Term of Re-  
proach, as tho' it meant little less than, "an  
Enemy to the Gospel."

2. All this proceeds from the deepest Ignorance  
of the Nature, Properties and Use of the Law :  
And proves that those who act thus, either know  
not Christ, are utter Strangers to the living Faith :  
Or at least, that they are but Babes in Christ,  
and as such *unskilled in the Word of Righteousness*.

3. Their grand Plea is this : " That preach-  
ing the Gospel (that is. according to their Judg-  
ment, the speaking of nothing but the Sufferings  
and Merits of Christ) answers all the Ends of the  
Law." But this we utterly deny. It does not  
answer the very first End of the Law, namely,  
The convincing Men of Sin, the awakening  
those who are still asleep on the Brink of Hell.  
There may have been here and there an exempt  
Case. One in a thousand may have been a-  
wakened by the Gospel. But this is no general  
Rule. The ordinary Method of GOD, is to  
convict Sinners by the Law, and that only. The  
Gospel is not the Means which GOD hath or-  
dained, or which our Lord himself used, for this  
End. We have no Authority in Scripture for  
applying it thus, nor any Ground to think it will  
prove effectual. Nor have we any more Ground  
to expect this, from the Nature of the Thing.  
*They that be whole, as our Lord himself observes,  
need not a Physician, but they that be sick.* It is ab-  
surd therefore to offer a Physician to them that  
are whole, or that at least imagine themselves so  
to be. You are first, to convince them, that  
they are sick. Otherwise they will not thank  
you for your Labour. It is equally absurd to offer  
Christ to them, whose Heart is whole, having ne-  
ver



·ver yet been broken. It is in the proper Sense, *casting Pearls before Swine*. Doubtless *they will trample them under Foot*. And it is no more than you have Reason to expect, if they also *turn again and rent you*.

4. “But altho’ there is no Command in Scripture, to offer Christ to the careless Sinner, yet are there not scriptural Precedents for it?” I think not: I know not any. I believe you can’t produce one, either from the four Evangelists, or the *Acts of the Apostles*. Neither can you prove this to have been the Practice of any of the Apostles, from any Passage in all their Writings.

5. “Nay, does not the Apostle Paul say, in his former Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *We preach Christ crucified?* c. i. v. 23. And in his latter, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord?* c. v. v. 4.”

We consent to rest the Cause on this Issue: To tread in his Steps, to follow his Example. Only preach you, just as St. Paul preached, and the Dispute is at an End.

For altho’ we are certain he *preached Christ*, in as perfect a Manner as the very Chief of the Apostles, yet who *preached the Law* more than St. Paul? Therefore he did not think the Gospel answered the same End.

6. The very first Sermon of St. Paul’s, which is recorded, concludes in these Words. *By Him all that believe are justified from all Things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Beware therefore lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the Prophets, Behold ye Despisers and wonder and perish. For I work a Work in your Days, a Work which you will in no wise believe,*  
*the*

*tho' a Man declare it unto you, Acts xiii. 39, &c.* Now it is manifest, all this is *preaching the Law*, in the Sense wherein you understand the Term: Even altho' great Part of, if not all his Hearers, were either *Jews or religious Profelytes*, v. 43. and therefore probably many of them, in some Degree at least, convinced of Sin already. He first reminds them, That they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*, but only by Faith in Christ: And then severely threatens them with the Judgments of GOD, which is in the strongest Sense *preaching the Law*.

7. In his next Discourse, that to the Heathens at *Lystra*, (c. xiv. v. 15, &c.) we do not find so much as the Name of Christ. The whole Purport of it is, That they should *turn from those vain Idols, unto the living GOD*. Now confess the Truth. Do not you think, If you had been there, you could have preached much better than he? I should not wonder, if you thought too, That his *preaching so ill*, occasioned his being *so ill treated*: And that his being *stoned*, was a just Judgment upon him, for not *preaching Christ*!

8. To the Jaylor indeed, when *he sprang in and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved*, he immediately said, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. (c. xvi. v. 29, &c.) And in the Case of one so deeply convinced of Sin, who would not have said the same? But to the Men of *Athens* you find him speaking in a quite different Manner, reproving their Superstition, Ignorance and Idolatry, and strongly moving them to repent, from the Consideration of future Judgment, and of the Resurrection from the dead, (c. xvii. v. 24—31.)  
Like-

Likewise *when Felix sent for Paul, on Purpose that he might hear him concerning the Faith in Christ*; instead of preaching Christ in *your Sense* (which would probably have caused the Governor either to mock, or to contradict and blaspheme) *he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, till Felix (hardened as he was) trembled.* (c. xxiv. v. 24, 25.) Go thou and tread in his Steps. *Preach Christ to the careless Sinner, by reasoning of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come!*

9. If you say, “But he *preached Christ* in a different Manner in his Epistles:” I answer, He did not there preach at all: Not in that Sense wherein we speak: For *preaching* in our present Question, means, speaking before a Congregation. But waving this, I answer, 2. His Epistles are directed, not to Unbelievers, such as those we are now speaking of, but *to the Saints of GOD in Rome, Corinth, Philippi* and other Places. Now unquestionably he would speak more of Christ to these, than to those who were without GOD in the World. And yet, 3. Every one of these is full of the Law, even the Epistles to the *Romans* and the *Galatians*: In both of which he does what you term preaching the Law, and that to Believers as well as Unbelievers.

10. From hence 'tis plain, you know not what it is, to *preach Christ*, in the Sense of the Apostle. For doubtless St. *Paul* judged himself to be *preaching Christ*, both to *Felix*, and at *Antioch, Lystra, and Athens*. From whose Example every thinking Man must infer, That not only the declaring the Love of Christ to Sinners, but also the declaring that he will come from Heaven in flaming  
Fire,

Fire, is, in the Apostle's Sense, *preaching Christ*. Yea, in the full scriptural Meaning of the Word. To *preach Christ*, is, To preach what he has revealed, either in the Old or New Testament: So that you are then as really preaching Christ, when you are saying, *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget GOD*, as when you are saying, *Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the Sin of the World!*

10. Consider this well; That to *preach Christ*, is to preach all Things that Christ hath spoken; all his Promises, all his Threatnings and Commands; all that is written in his Book. And then you will know how to preach Christ, without making void the Law.

11. "But does not the greatest Blessing attend those Discourses, wherein we peculiarly preach the Merits and Sufferings of Christ?"

Probably, when we preach to a Congregation of Mourners or of Believers, these will be attended with the greatest Blessing: Because such Discourses are peculiarly suited to their State. At least, these will usually convey the most Comfort. But this is not always the greatest Blessing. I may sometimes receive a far greater, by a Discourse that cuts me to the Heart and humbles me to the Dust. Neither should I receive that Comfort, if I were to preach or to hear no Discourses but on the Sufferings of Christ. These by constant Repetition would lose their Force and grow more and more flat and dead: Till at length they would become a dull Round of Words, without any Spirit or Life or Virtue. So that thus to *preach Christ*, must in Process of Time, make void the Gospel as well as the Law.

II. 1. A second Way of *making void the Law thro' Faith*, is, the teaching that Faith supercedes the Necessity of Holiness. This divides itself into a thousand smaller Paths: And many there are that walk therein. Indeed there are few that wholly escape it: Few who are convinced, we *are saved by Faith*, but are sooner or later, more or less, drawn aside into this By-way.

2. All those are drawn into this By-way, who if it be not their settled Judgment, that Faith in Christ intirely sets aside the Necessity of keeping his Law, yet suppose either. 1. That Holiness is less necessary now than it was before Christ: or, 2. That a less Degree of it is necessary, or, 3. That it is less necessary to Believers than to others. Yea, and so are all those, who altho' their Judgment be right in the general, yet think they may take more Liberty in particular Cases, than they cou'd have done before they believed. Indeed the using the Term *Liberty*, in such a manner, for "Liberty from Obedience or Holiness," shews at once, that their Judgment is perverted, and that they are guilty of what they imagined to be far from them, namely of *making void the Law thro' Faith*, by supposing Faith to supercede Holiness.

3. The first Plea of those who teach this expressly, is, that "we are now under the Covenant of Grace, not Works: And therefore we are no longer under the Necessity of performing the Works of the Law."

And who ever was under the Covenant of Works? None but *Adam* before the Fall. He was fully and properly under that Covenant, which

required perfect, universal Obedience, as the one Condition of Acceptance; and left no Place for Pardon, upon the very least Transgression. But no Man else was ever under this, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither before Christ nor since. All his Sons were and are under the Covenant of Grace; the Manner of their Acceptance is this: The free Grace of GOD thro' the Merits of Christ, gives Pardon to them that believe, that believe with such a Faith as working by Love, produces all Obedience and Holiness.

4. The Case is not therefore as you suppose, that Men were *once* more obliged to obey GOD, or to work the Works of his Law than they are *now*. This is a Supposition you cannot make good. But, we should have been obliged, if we had been under the Covenant of Works, to have done those Works antecedent to our Acceptance. Whereas now all good Works, tho' as necessary as ever, are not antecedent to our Acceptance but consequent upon it. Therefore the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, gives you no Ground no Encouragement at all, to set aside any Instance or Degree of Obedience, any Part or Measure of Holiness.

5. "But are we not *justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law?*" Undoubtedly we are, without the Works either of the Ceremonial or the Moral Law. And wou'd to God all Men were convinced of this. It wou'd prevent innumerable Evils: Antinomianism, in particular; for generally speaking, they are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians. Running into an Extreme so palpably contrary to Scripture, they occasion others to run into the opposite one. These  
 seeking

seeking to be justified by Works, affright those from allowing any Place for them.

6. But the Truth lies between both. We are doubtless *justified by Faith*. This is the Corner-Stone of the whole Christian Building. We are *justified without the Works of the Law*, as any previous Condition of Justification. But they are an immediate Fruit of that Faith, whereby we are justified. So that if Good Works do not follow our Faith, even all inward and outward Holiness, it is plain our Faith is nothing worth: We are yet in our Sins. Therefore, that *we are justified by Faith*, even by *Faith without Works*, is no Ground for *making void the Law thro' Faith*: or for imagining that Faith is a Dispensation, from any Kind or Degree of Holiness.

7. “Nay, but does not St. Paul expressly say, *Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness?* And does it not follow from hence, That Faith is to a Believer in the room, in the place of Righteousness? But if Faith is in the room of Righteousness or Holiness, what need is there of this too?”

This, it must be acknowledged, comes home to the Point, and is indeed the main Pillar of Antinomianism. And yet it needs not a long or laboured Answer. We allow, 1. That GOD *justifies the Ungodly*, him that till that Hour is totally ungodly, full of all Evil, void of all Good. 2. That he justifies *the Ungodly that worketh not*, that till that Moment worketh no Good Work: neither can he; for an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit. 3. That he justifies him *by Faith alone*, without any Goodness or Righteousness preced-

required perfect, universal Obedience, as the one Condition of Acceptance; and left no Place for Pardon, upon the very least Transgression. But no Man else was ever under this, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither before Christ nor since. All his Sons were and are under the Covenant of Grace; the Manner of their Acceptance is this: The free Grace of GOD thro' the Merits of Christ, gives Pardon to them that believe, that believe with such a Faith as working by Love, produces all Obedience and Holiness.

4. The Case is not therefore as you suppose, that Men were *once* more obliged to obey GOD, or to work the Works of his Law than they are *now*. This is a Supposition you cannot make good. But, we should have been obliged, if we had been under the Covenant of Works, to have done those Works antecedent to our Acceptance. Whereas now all good Works, tho' as necessary as ever, are not antecedent to our Acceptance but consequent upon it. Therefore the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, gives you no Ground no Encouragement at all, to set aside any Instance or Degree of Obedience, any Part or Measure of Holiness.

5. "But are we not *justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law?*" Undoubtedly we are, without the Works either of the Ceremonial or the Moral Law. And wou'd to God all Men were convinced of this. It wou'd prevent innumerable Evils: Antinomianism, in particular; for generally speaking, they are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians. Running into an Extreme so palpably contrary to Scripture, they occasion others to run into the opposite one. These  
seeking



seeking to be justified by Works, affright those from allowing any Place for them.

6. But the Truth lies between both. We are doubtless *justified by Faith*. This is the Corner-Stone of the whole Christian Building. We are *justified without the Works of the Law*, as any previous Condition of Justification. But they are an immediate Fruit of that Faith, whereby we are justified. So that if Good Works do not follow our Faith, even all inward and outward Holiness, it is plain our Faith is nothing worth: We are yet in our Sins. Therefore, that *we are justified by Faith*, even by *Faith without Works*, is no Ground for *making void the Law thro' Faith*: or for imagining that Faith is a Dispensation, from any Kind or Degree of Holiness.

7. “Nay, but does not St. Paul expressly say, *Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness?* And does it not follow from hence, That Faith is to a Believer in the room, in the place of Righteousness? But if Faith is in the room of Righteousness or Holiness, what need is there of this too?”

This, it must be acknowledged, comes home to the Point, and is indeed the main Pillar of Antinomianism. And yet it needs not a long or laboured Answer. We allow, 1. That God *justifies the Ungodly*, him that till that Hour is totally ungodly, full of all Evil, void of all Good. 2. That he justifies *the Ungodly that worketh not*, that till that Moment worketh no Good Work: neither can he; for an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit. 3. That he justifies him *by Faith alone*, without any Goodness or Righteousness preced-

ing; and, 4. That *Faith* is then counted to him for *Righteousness*, namely, for *preceding Righteousness*: *i. e.* GOD, thro' the Merits of Christ, accepts him that believes, as if he had already fulfilled all *Righteousness*. But what is all this to your point? The Apostle does not say, either here or elsewhere, That this *Faith* is counted to him for *subsequent Righteousness*. He does teach, That there is no *Righteousness before Faith*. But where does he teach, That there is none *after* it? He does assert, *Holiness cannot precede Justification*: But not, That it need not *follow* it. *St. Paul* therefore gives you no colour for *making void the Law*, by teaching that *Faith* supercedes the necessity of *Holiness*.

III. 1. There is yet another *Way of making void the Law thro' Faith*, which is more common than either of the former. And that is, The doing it *Practically*: The making it void in *Fact*, tho' not in *Principle*: The *living*, as if *Faith* was designed to excuse us from *Holiness*.

How earnestly does the Apostle guard us against this, in those well-known Words: *What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? GOD forbid! Rom. vi. 15.* A caution which it is needful thoroughly to consider, because it is of the last Importance.

2. The being *under the Law* may here mean,  
 1. The being obliged to observe the Ceremonial Law. 2. The being obliged to conform to the whole *Mosaic* Institution. 3. The being obliged to keep the whole *Moral* Law, as the Condition of our Acceptance with God: and, 4. The being under the Wrath and Curse of GOD, under Sentence of *Eternal Death*: under a Sense of  
 Guilt

Guilt and Condemnation, full of Horror and slavish Fear.

3. Now altho' a Believer is *not without Law to GOD, but under the Law to Christ*, yet from the Moment he believes, he is not *under the Law*, in any of the preceding Senses. On the contrary, he is *under Grace*, under a more benign, gracious Dispensation. As he is no longer under the Ceremonial Law, nor under the *Mosaic* Institution; as he is not obliged to keep even the Moral Law, as the Condition of his Acceptance: So he is delivered from the Wrath and the Curse of GOD, from all Sense of Guilt and Condemnation, and from all that Horror and Fear of Death and Hell, whereby he was *all his Life* before *subject to Bondage*. And he now performs (which while *under the Law* he could not do) a willing and universal Obedience. He obeys not from the Motive of slavish Fear, but on a nobler Principle, namely, The Grace of GOD ruling in his Heart, and causing all his Works to be wrought in Love.

4. What then? Shall this Evangelical Principle of Action, be less powerful than the Legal? Shall we be less obedient to GOD from filial Love, than we were from servile Fear?

'Tis well, if this is not a common Case; if this Practical Antinomianism, this unobserved Way of *making void the Law through Faith*, has not infected 'Thousands of Believers.

Has it not infected you? Examine yourself honestly and closely. Do you not do now, what you durst not have done when you was *under the Law*, or (as we commonly call it) *under Conviction*? For instance. You durst not then indulge yourself in Food. You took just what was need-

ful, and that of the cheapest Kind. Do you not allow yourself more Latitude now? Do you not indulge yourself a *little* more than you did? O beware, lest you *sin, because you are not under the Law, but under Grace!*

5. When you was under Conviction, you durst not indulge the Lust of the Eye in any Degree. You would not do any thing, great or small, merely to gratify your Curiosity. You regarded only Cleanliness and Necessity, or at most very moderate Convenience, either in Furniture or Apparel; Superfluity and Finery of whatever kind, as well as fashionable Elegance, were both a Terror and an Abomination to you.

Are they so still? Is your Conscience as tender now in these Things, as it was then? Do you still follow the same Rule both in Furniture and Apparel, trampling all Finery, all Superfluity, every thing useles, every thing merely ornamental, however fashionable, under foot? Rather, Have you not resumed what you had once laid aside, and what you could not then use without wounding your Conscience? And have you not learned to say, “O, I am not *so scrupulous* now.” I would to GOD you were! Then you would not *sin* thus, *because you are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

6. You was once scrupulous too of commending any to their face, and still more, of suffering any to commend *you*. It was a Stab to your Heart: You could not bear it: You sought the Honour that cometh of GOD only. You could not endure such Conversation: nor any Conversation which was not good, to the Use of edifying. All idle Talk, all trifling Discourse you abhorred;

you hated as well as feared it, being deeply sensible of the Value of Time, of every precious, fleeting Moment. In like manner, you dreaded and abhorred idle Expence ; valuing your Money only less than your Time, and trembling lest you should be found an unfaithful Steward even of the Mammon of Unrighteousness.

Do you now look upon Praise as deadly Poison, which you can neither give nor receive but at the Peril of your Soul ? Do you still dread and abhor all Conversation, which does not tend to the Use of edifying ; and labour to improve every Moment, that it may not pass without leaving you better than it found you ? Are not you less careful as to the Expence both of Money and Time ? Cannot you now lay out either, as you could not have done once ? Alas ! How has that *which should have been for your Health, proved to you an Occasion of falling ?* How have you sinned, because you was not under the Law, but under Grace !

7. GOD forbid you should any longer continue thus to *turn the Grace of GOD into Lasciviousness !* O remember, how clear and strong a Conviction you once had, concerning all these things. And at the same time you was fully satisfied, from whom that Conviction came. The World told you, you was in a Delusion : But you knew, It was the Voice of GOD. In these things you was not *too scrupulous* then ; but you are not now *scrupulous enough*. GOD kept you longer in that painful School, that you might learn those great Lessons the more perfectly. And have you forgot them already ? O recollect them, before it is too late,

late. Have you suffered so many things in vain? I trust, it is not yet in vain. Now use the Conviction without the Pain: Practise the Lesson without the Rod. Let not the Mercy of GOD weigh less with you now, than his fiery Indignation did before. Is Love a less powerful Motive than Fear? If not, let it be an invariable Rule, “I will do nothing now I am *under Grace*, which I durst not have done when *under the Law*.”

8. I cannot conclude this Head, without exhorting you to examine yourself likewise touching Sins of Omission. Are you as clear of these, now *you are under Grace*, as you was when *under the Law*? How diligent was you then in hearing the Word of GOD? Did you neglect any Opportunity? Did you not attend thereon Day and Night? Would a small Hindrance have kept you away? A little Business? A Visitant? A slight Indisposition? A soft Bed? A dark or cold Morning?—Did not you then fast often? Or use Abstinence to the uttermost of your power? Was not you much in Prayer, (cold and heavy as you was) while you was hanging over the Mouth of Hell? Did you not speak and not spare, even for an unknown GOD? Did you not boldly plead his Cause? Reprove Sinners? And avow the Truth, before an adulterous Generation?—And are you now a Believer in Christ? Have you the *Faith that overcometh the World*? What! and are less zealous for your Master now, than you was when you knew him not? Less diligent in Fasting, in Prayer, in hearing his Word, in calling Sinners to GOD? O repent. See and feel your grievous Loss! Remember from  
whence

whence you are fallen! Bewail your Unfaithfulness! Now be zealous and do the first Works; lest if you continue to *make void the Law through Faith*, GOD cut you off, and *appoint you your Portion with the Unbelievers!*

---



*The Law established thro' Faith.*

A

S E R M O N

· O N ·

R O M A N S iii. 31.





## ROM. iii. 31.

*Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith? GOD forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.*

I. **I**T has been shewn in the preceding Discourse, which are the most usual Ways of *making void the Law thro' Faith*: Namely, First, The not preaching it at all, which effectually makes it all void at a Stroke: And this under Colour of *preaching Christ* and magnifying the Gospel, tho' it be in Truth, destroying both one and the other: Secondly, The Teaching (whether directly or indirectly) that Faith supersedes the Necessity of Holiness: That this is less necessary now, or a less Degree of it necessary, than before Christ came: That it is less necessary to us, because we believe, than otherwise it would have been: Or, that Christian Liberty is a Liberty from any Kind or Degree of Holiness: (So perverting those great Truths, that we are now under the *Covenant of Grace* and not of *Works*: That a *Man is justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law*; and that *to him that worketh not but believeth, his Faith is counted for Righteousness*;) Or, Thirdly, The doing this practically; the making void the Law in Practice tho' not in

VOL. III. L Principle:

Principle : 'The living or acting, as if Faith was designed to excuse us from Holiness : The allowing ourselves in Sin, *because we are not under the Law, but under Grace.* It remains to enquire, how we may follow a better Pattern, how we may be able to say with the Apostle, *Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith? GOD forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.*

2. We do not indeed establish the old ceremonial Law : We know that is abolished for ever. Much less do we establish the whole *Mosaick* Dispensation. 'This, we know, our Lord has *nailed to his Cross.* Nor yet do we so establish the moral Law (which it is to be feared, too many do) as if the fulfilling it, the keeping all the Commandments, were the Condition of our Justification. If it were so, surely *in his Sight, shou'd no Man living be justified.* But all this being allowed, we still in the Apostle's Sense, *establish the Law,* the moral Law.

I. 1. *We establish the Law,* First, By our Doctrine : By endeavouring to preach it in its whole Extent, to explain and enforce every Part of it, in the same manner as our great Teacher did, while upon Earth. We establish it, by following St. Peter's Advice, *If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of GOD ;* as the holy Men of old moved by the Holy Ghost, spoke and wrote for our Instruction, and as the Apostles of our blessed Lord, by the Direction of the same Spirit. We establish it whenever we speak in his Name, by keeping back nothing from them that hear ; by declaring to them any without Limitation or Reserve, the whole Counsel of GOD. And in order

der the more effectually to establish it, we use herein great Plainness of Speech. *We are not as many that corrupt the Word of GOD, κωπηλεύεσι* (as artful Men their bad Wines) we do not cauponize, mix, adulterate or soften it, to make it suit the Taste of the Hearers. *But as of Sincerity, but as of GOD in the Sight of GOD, speak we in Christ*: As having no other Aim, than by *Manifestation of the Truth, to commend ourselves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of GOD.*

2. We then by our Doctrine establish the Law, when we thus openly declare it to all Men: And that, in the Fulness wherein it is delivered by our blessed Lord and his Apostles: When we publish it in the Height and Depth and Length and Breadth thereof. We then establish the Law, when we declare every Part of it, every Commandment contained therein, not only in its full literal Sense, but likewise in its spiritual Meaning: Not only with Regard to the outward Actions, which it either forbids or enjoins: But also with Respect to the inward Principle, to the Thoughts, Desires and Intents of the Heart.

3. And indeed this we do the more diligently, not only because it is of the deepest Importance; inasmuch as all the Fruit, every Word and Work, must be only Evil continually, if the Tree be evil, if the Dispositions and Tempers of the Heart, be not right before GOD: But likewise, because as important as these Things are, they are little considered or understood. So little, that we may truly say of the Law too, when taken in its full spiritual Meaning, *It is a Mystery which was hid from Ages and Generations since the World began.* It was utterly hid from the Hea-

then World. They, with all their boasted Wisdom, neither *found out GOD*, nor the Law of GOD, not in the Letter, much less in the Spirit of it. *Their foolish Hearts were more and more darkened, while professing themselves wise, they became Fools.* And it was almost equally hid, as to its spiritual Meaning, from the Bulk of the Jewish Nation. Even these who were so ready to declare concerning others, *this People that know not the Law, is accursed*, pronounced their own Sentence therein, as being under the same Curse, the same dreadful Ignorance. Witness our Lord's continual Reproof of the wisest among them, for their gross Misinterpretations of it. Witness the Supposition almost universally received among them, that they needed only to make clean the Outside of the Cup: that the paying Tythe of Mint, Anise and Cummin, outward Exactness wou'd atone for inward Unholiness; for the total Neglect both of Justice and Mercy, of Faith and the Love of GOD. Yea, so absolutely was the spiritual Meaning of the Law hidden from the wisest of them, that one of their most eminent Rabbi's comments thus, on those Words of the Psalmist, *If I incline unto Iniquity with my Heart, the Lord will not bear me*: that is, saith he, if it be only in my Heart, if I do not commit outward Wickedness, the Lord will not regard it; he will not punish me, unless I proceed to the outward Act!

4. But alas! The Law of GOD, as to its inward spiritual Meaning, is not hid from the Jews or Heathens only, but even from what is called the Christian World; at least, from a vast Majority of them. The spiritual Sense of the  
Com-

Commandments of GOD, is still a Mystery to these also. Nor is this observable only in those Lands, which are overspread with *Romish* Darknes and Ignorance. But this is too sure, that the far greater Part, even of those, who are called *reformed Christians*, are utter Strangers at this Day to the Law of Christ, in the Purity and Spirituality of it.

5. Hence it is that to this Day *the Scribes and Pharisees*, the Men who have the Form but not the Power of Religion, and who are generally wise in their own Eyes, and righteous in their own Conceits; *bearing these Things are offended*: Are deeply offended, when we speak of the Religion of the Heart, and particularly when we shew, that without this, were we to *give all our Goods to feed the Poor*, it wou'd profit us nothing. But offended they must be: For we cannot but speak the Truth as it is in Jesus. It is our Part, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, to deliver our own Soul. All that is written in the Book of GOD we are to declare, not as pleasing Men, but the Lord. We are to declare not only all the Promises, but all the Threatnings too which we find therein. At the same Time that we proclaim all the Blessings and Privileges, which GOD had prepared for his Children, we are likewise to *teach all the Things, whatsoever he hath commanded*. And we know, that all these have their Use; either for the awakening those that sleep, the instructing the Ignorant, the comforting the Feeble-minded, or the building up and perfecting of the Saints. We know that *all Scripture, given by Inspiration of GOD, is profitable either for Doctrine, or for Reproof, either for Correction or for Instruction in Righteousness*: And that the Man

*of GOD*, in the Proceſs of the Work of GOD in his Soul, has need of every Part thereof, that he may at length be perfect, thro'ly furniſh'd unto all good Works.

6. It is our Part, thus to *preach Chriſt*, by preaching all Things whatſoever he hath revealed. We may indeed without Blame, yea, and with a peculiar Bleſſing from GOD, declare the Love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We may ſpeak, in a more eſpecial Manner, *of the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. We may expatiate upon the Grace of GOD in Chriſt, *reconciling the World unto himſelf*. We may, at proper Opportunities, dwell upon his Praise, as bearing *the Iniquities of us all*, as wounded for our *Transgreſſions* and bruised for our *Iniquities*, that by his *Stripes* we might be healed. But ſtill we ſhou'd not *preach Chriſt*, according to his Word, if we were wholly to confine ourſelves to this. We are not ourſelves clear before GOD, unleſs we proclaim him in all his Offices. To *preach Chriſt*, as a Workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, is to preach him not only as our great *High-prieſt*, taken from among Men, and ordained for Men, in Things pertaining to GOD; as ſuch, *reconciling us to GOD by his Blood*, and ever living to make *Interceſſion for us*: But likewise as the Prophet of the Lord, *who of GOD is made unto us Wiſdom*: Who by his Word and his Spirit, *is with us always*, guiding us into *all Truth*: Yea, and as remaining a King for ever; as giving Laws to all whom he has bought with his Blood: As reſtoring thoſe to the Image of GOD, whom he had firſt re-inſtated in his Favour: As reigning in all believing Hearts, until he has *ſubdued all Things to himſelf*; until he hath

hath utterly cast out all Sin, and *brought in everlasting Righteousness.*

II. 1. *We establish the Law,* Secondly, when we so preach Faith in Christ, as not to supersede, but produce Holiness: To produce all Manner of Holiness, negative and positive, of the Heart and of the Life.

In order to this, we continually declare (what shou'd be frequently and deeply considered, by all who wou'd not *make void the Law thro' Faith*) that Faith itself, even Christian Faith, the Faith of GOD's Elect, the Faith of the Operation of GOD, still is only the Handmaid of Love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the End of the Commandment. GOD hath given this Honour to Love alone: Love is the End of all the Commandments of GOD. Love is the End, the sole End of every Dispensation of GOD, from the Beginning of the World, to the Consummation of all Things. And it will endure when Heaven and Earth flee away; for *Love alone never faileth.* Faith will totally fail: It will be swallowed up in Sight, in the everlasting Vision of GOD. But even then Love

“ Its Nature and its Office still the same,  
Lasting its Lamp and unconsum'd its Flame,  
In deathless Triumph shall for ever live,  
And endless Good diffuse, and endless Praise  
receive.”

2. Very excellent Things are spoken of Faith, and whosoever is a Partaker thereof, may well say with the Apostle, *Thanks be to GOD, for his*

*unspeakable Gift.* Yet still it loses all its Excellence, when brought into a Comparison with Love. What St. *Paul* observes concerning the superior Glory of the Gospel, above that of the Law, may with great Propriety be spoken of the superior Glory of Love, above that of Faith. *Even that which was made glorious, hath no Glory in this respect, by reason of the Glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more doth that which remaineth exceed in Glory.* Yea; all the Glory of Faith before it is done away, arises hence, That it ministers to Love. It is the great temporary Means which GOD has ordained to promote that eternal End.

3. Let those who magnify Faith beyond all Proportion, so as to swallow up all Things else, and who so totally misapprehend the Nature of it, as to imagine it stands in the Place of Love, consider farther, That as Love will exist after Faith, so it did exist long before it. The Angels, who from the Moment of their Creation, beheld the Face of their Father that is in Heaven, had no Occasion for Faith, in its general Notion, as it is the Evidence of Things not seen. Neither had they Need of Faith, in its more particular Acceptation, Faith in the Blood of Jesus : for he took not upon him the Nature of Angels ; but only the Seed of *Abraham*. There was therefore no Place before the Foundation of the World, for Faith either in the general or particular Sense. But there was for Love. Love existed from Eternity, in GOD, the great Ocean of Love. Love had a Place in all the Children of GOD, from the Moment of their Creation. They received



ceived at once from their gracious Creator, to exist, and to love.

4. Nor is it certain (as ingeniously and plausibly as many have descanted upon this) That Faith, even in the general Sense of the Word, had any Place in Paradise. It is highly probable, from that short and uncircumstantial Account which we have in Holy Writ, That *Adam* before he rebelled against GOD, walked with him by Sight and not by Faith.

“ For then his Reason’s Eye was strong and clear,  
And as an Eagle can behold the Sun,  
Might have beheld his Maker’s Face as near,  
As th’ intellectual Angels cou’d have done.”

He was then able to talk with him Face to Face, whose Face we cannot now see and live. And consequently had no Need of that Faith, whose Office it is, to supply the Want of Sight.

5. On the other Hand, it is absolutely certain, Faith in its particular Sense had then no Place. For in that Sense it necessarily presupposes Sin, and the Wrath of GOD declared against the Sinner : Without which there is no Need of an Atonement for Sin, in order to the Sinner’s Reconciliation with GOD. Consequently, as there was no Need of an Atonement before the Fall, so there was no Place for Faith in that Atonement : Man being then pure from every Stain of Sin, holy as GOD is holy. But Love even then filled his Heart. It reigned in him without a Rival. And it was only when Love was lost by Sin, that Faith was added, not for its own Sake, nor with  
any

any Design, that it should exist any longer than until it had answered the End for which it was ordained, namely, To restore Man, to the Love from which he was fallen. At the Fall therefore was added this Evidence of Things unseen, which before was utterly needless: This Confidence in redeeming Love, which could not possibly have any Place, till the Promise was made, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head.

6. Faith then was originally designed of GOD, to re-establish the Law of Love. Therefore in speaking thus, we are not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due Praise: But on the contrary shewing its real Worth, exalting in its just Proportion, and giving it that very Place which the Wisdom of GOD assigned it from the Beginning. It is the grand Means of restoring that holy Love, wherein Man was originally created. It follows, that altho' Faith is of no Value in itself (as neither is any other Means whatsoever) yet as it leads to that End, the establishing anew the Law of Love in our Hearts, and as, in the present State of Things, it is the only Means under Heaven for effecting it: it is, on that Account, an unspeakable Blessing to Man, and of unspeakable Value before GOD.

III. 1. And this naturally brings us to observe, Thirdly, The most important Way of *establishing the Law*: Namely, The establishing it in our own Hearts and Lives. Indeed without this, what would all the rest avail? We might establish it by our Doctrine; we might preach it in its whole Extent, might explain and inforce every  
Part

Part of it. We might open it in its most spiritual Meaning, and declare the Myſteries of the Kingdom; We might preach Chriſt in all his Offices, and Faith in Chriſt, as opening all the Treasures of his Love. And yet all this Time, if the Law we preached, were not eſtabliſhed in our Hearts, we ſhould be of no more Account before GOD, than *founding Brafs or tinkling Cymbals*. All our Preaching would be ſo far from profiting ourſelves, that it would only increaſe our Damnation.

2. This is therefore the main Point to be conſidered, How may we eſtabliſh the Law in our own Hearts, ſo that it may have its full Influence on our Lives? And this can only be done by Faith.

Faith alone it is, which effectually answers this End, as we learn from daily Experience. For ſo long as we walk by Faith not by Sight, we go ſwiftly on in the Way of Holineſs. While we ſteadily look, not at the Things which are ſeen, but at thoſe which are not ſeen, we are more and more crucified to the World and the World crucified to us. Let but the Eye of the Soul be conſtantly fix'd, not on the Things which are temporal, but on thoſe which are eternal, and our Affections are more and more looſened from Earth, and fix'd on Things above. So that Faith in general is the moſt direct and effectual Means of promoting all Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs: Of eſtabliſhing the holy and ſpiritual Law, in the Hearts of them that believe.

3 And by Faith, taken in its more particular Meaning, for a Confidence in a pardoning GOD, we eſtabliſh his Law in our own Hearts, in a

still more effectual Manner. For there is no Motive which so powerfully inclines us to love GOD, as the Sense of the Love of GOD in Christ. Nothing enables us like a piercing Conviction of this, to give our Hearts to him who was given for us. And from this Principle of grateful Love to God, arises Love to our Brother also. Neither can we avoid loving our Neighbour, if we truly believe the Love wherewith GOD hath loved us. Now this Love to Man grounded on Faith and Love to GOD, *worketh no Ill to our Neighbour.* Consequently, it is (as the Apostle observes) *the fulfilling of the whole negative Law.* For this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Thou shalt not covet:* And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprhended in this Saying, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* Neither is Love content with barely working no Evil to our Neighbour. It continually incites us to do Good: As we have Time, and Opportunity, to do Good in every possible Kind and in every possible Degree to all Men. It is therefore the fulfilling of the positive likewise, as well as of the negative Law of GOD.

4. Nor does Faith fulfil either the negative or positive Law, as to the external Part only: But it works inwardly by Love, to the purifying of the Heart, the cleansing it from all vile Affections. *Every one that hath this Faith in himself, purifieth himself even as he is pure:* Purifieth himself from every earthly, sensual Desire, from all vile and inordinate Affections: Yea, from the Whole of that carnal Mind, which is Enmity against GOD.

At

At the same Time, if it have its perfect Work, it fills him with all Goodness, Righteousness and Truth. It brings all Heaven into his Soul, and causes him to walk in the Light even as GOD is in the Light.

5. Let us thus endeavour to establish the Law in ourselves : Not sinning, *because we are under Grace*, but rather using all the Power we receive thereby, *to fulfil all Righteousness*. Calling to Mind, what Light we received from GOD, while his Spirit was convincing us of Sin, let us beware we do not put out that Light; what we had then attained let us hold fast. Let nothing induce us to build again what we have destroyed; to resume any Thing, small or great, which we then clearly saw was not for the Glory of GOD, or the Profit of our own Soul : Or to neglect any thing, small or great, which we could not then neglect, without a Check from our own Conscience. To increase and perfect the Light which we had before, let us now add the Light of Faith. Confirm we the former Gift of GOD, by a deeper Sense of whatever he had then shewn us : By a greater Tenderness of Conscience, and a more exquisite Sensibility of Sin. Walking now with Joy and not with Fear, in a clear, steady Sight of Things eternal, we shall look on Pleasure, Wealth, Praise, all the Things of Earth, as on Bubbles upon the Water : Counting nothing important, nothing desirable, nothing worth a deliberate Thought, but only what is *within the Veil*, where *Jesus sitteth at the right Hand of GOD*.

6. Can you say, *Thou art merciful to my Unrighteousness : My Sins thou rememberest no more ?*

Then for the Time to come, see that you fly from Sin, as from the Face of a Serpent. For how exceeding sinful does it appear to you now? How heinous above all Expression? On the other Hand, in how amiable a Light do you now see the holy and perfect Will of GOD? Now therefore labour that it may be fulfilled, both in you, by you and upon you. Now watch and pray that you may sin no more, that you may see and shun the least Transgression of his Law. You see the Motes which you could not see before, when the Sun shines into a dark Place. In like Manner, you see the Sins which you could not see before, now the Sun of Righteousness shines in your Heart. Now then do all Diligence to walk in every respect, according to the Light you have received. Now be zealous to receive more Light daily, more of the Knowledge and Love of GOD, more of the Spirit of Christ, more of his Life, and of the Power of his Resurrection. Now use all the Knowledge and Love and Life and Power you have already attained. So shall you continually go on from Faith to Faith. So shall you daily increase in holy Love, till Faith is swallowed up in Sight, and the Law of Love established to all Eternity.



*The Nature of Enthusiasm.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

A C T S xxvi. 24.



## ACTS xxvi. 24.

*And Festus said with a loud Voice,  
Paul, Thou art beside thyself.*

1. **A**ND so say all the World, the Men who know not GOD, of all that are of *Paul's* Religion ; of every one who is so a Follower of him, as he was of Christ. It is true, there is a Sort of Religion, nay and it is called Christianity too, which may be practised without any such Imputation, which is generally allowed to be consistent with common Sense. That is, a Religion of Form, a Round of outward Duties, performed in a decent, regular Manner. You may add Orthodoxy thereto, a System of right Opinions, yea, and some Quantity of Heathen Morality. And yet not many will pronounce, *That much Religion hath made you mad.* But if you aim at the Religion of the Heart, if you talk of Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, then it will not be long before *your* Sentence is past, *Thou art beside thyself.*

2. And it is no Compliment which the Men of the World pay you herein. They, for once, mean what they say. They not only affirm, but cordially believe, That every Man is *beside himself*, who says, The Love of GOD is shed abroad in his Heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto him,



and that GOD has enabled him to rejoice in Christ, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. If a Man is indeed alive to GOD, and dead to all Things here below; if he continually sees him that is invisible, and accordingly walks by Faith and not by Sight : Then they account it a clear Case; beyond all Dispute, *much Religion hath made him mad.*

3. It is easy to observe, That the determinate Thing which the World accounts Madness, is that utter Contempt of all temporal Things, and steady Pursuit of Things eternal; that divine Conviction of Things not seen; that rejoicing in the Favour of GOD; that happy, holy Love of GOD; and that Testimony of his Spirit, with our Spirit that we are the Children of GOD. That is, in Truth, the whole Spirit and Life and Power of the Religion of Jesus Christ.

4. They will however allow, in other Respects, the Man acts and talks like one in his Senses. In other Things, he is a reasonable Man : 'Tis in these Instances only his Head is touched. It is therefore acknowledged, that the Madness under which he labours, is of a particular Kind. And accordingly they are accustomed to distinguish it by a particular Name, ENTHUSIASM.

5. A Term this, which is exceeding frequently used, which is scarce ever out of some Men's Mouths. And yet it is exceeding rarely understood, even by those who use it most. It may be therefore not unacceptable to serious Men, to all who desire to understand what they speak or hear, if I endeavour to explain the Meaning of this Term, to shew what *Enthusiasm* is. It may be an

an Encouragement to those who are unjust charged therewith : And may possibly be of Use, to some who are justly charged with it, at least to others, who might be so, were they not cautioned against it.

6. As to the Word itself, it is generally allowed to be of *Greek* Extraction. But whence the *Greek* Word ἐνθουσιασμός, is derived, none has yet been able to shew. Some have endeavoured to derive it from ἐν Θεῷ, *in GOD*, because all *Enthusiasm* has Reference to Him. But this is quite forced ; there being small Resemblance between the Word derived, and those they strive to derive it from. Others would derive it from ἐν Δυσία, *in Sacrifice*, because many of the *Enthusiasts* of old, were affected in the most violent Manner, during the Time of Sacrifice. Perhaps it is a fictitious Word, invented from the Noise, which some of those made who were so affected.

7. It is not improbable, that one Reason why this uncouth Word has been retained in so many Languages, was because Men were no better agreed, concerning the Meaning than concerning the Derivation of it. They therefore adopted the *Greek* Word, because they did not understand it : They did not translate it into their own Tongues, because they knew not how to translate it : It having been always a Word of a loose, uncertain Sense, to which no determinate Meaning was affix'd.

8. It is not therefore at all surprizing, that it is so variously taken at this Day : Different Persons understanding it in different Senses, quite inconsistent with each other. Some take it in a  
good

good Sense, for a divine Impulse or Impression, superior to all the natural Faculties, and suspending for the Time, either in whole or in Part, both the Reason and the outward Senses. In this Meaning of the Word, both the Prophets of old, and the Apostles were proper *Enthusiasts*: Being at divers Times so filled with the Spirit, and so influenced by Him who dwelt in their Hearts, that the Exercise of their own Reason, their Senses, and all their natural Faculties being suspended, they were wholly actuated by the Power of GOD, and *spake only as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

9. Others take the Word in an indifferent Sense, such as is neither morally good nor evil. Thus they speak of the *Enthusiasm* of the Poets; of *Homer* and *Virgil* in particular. And this a late eminent Writer extends so far as to assert, there is no Man excellent in his Profession, whatsoever it be, who has not in his Temper a strong Tincture of *Enthusiasm*. By *Enthusiasm* these appear to understand, an uncommon Vigour of Thought, a peculiar Fervor of Spirit, a Vivacity and Strength not to be found in common Men: Elevating the Soul to greater and higher Things, than cool Reason could have attained.

10. But neither of these is the Sense wherein the Word *Enthusiasm* is most usually understood. The Generality of Men, if no farther agreed, at least agree thus far concerning it, That it is something Evil: And this is plainly the Sentiment of all those, who call the Religion of the Heart, *Enthusiasm*. Accordingly I shall take it in the following Pages, as an Evil; a Misfortune, if not a Fault.

11. As to the Nature of *Enthusiasm*, it is undoubtedly a Disorder of the Mind; and such a Disorder, as greatly hinders the Exercise of Reason. Nay sometimes, it wholly sets it aside: It not only dims, but shuts the Eyes of the Understanding. It may therefore well be accounted a Species of Madness; of Madness rather than of Folly: Seeing a Fool is properly one who draws wrong Conclusions from right Premises: Whereas a Madman draws right Conclusions, but from wrong Premises. And so does an Enthusiast. Suppose his Premises true, and his Conclusions would necessarily follow. But here lies his Mistake, his Premises are false. He imagines himself to be what he is not. And therefore setting out wrong, the farther he goes, the more he wanders out of the Way.

12. Every *Enthusiast* then is properly a Madman. Yet his is not an ordinary, but a religious Madness. By religious, I do not mean, that it is any Part of Religion. Quite the reverse: Religion is, the Spirit of a sound Mind: And consequently stands in direct Opposition to Madness of every Kind. But I mean, it has Religion for its Object; it is conversant about Religion. And so the *Enthusiast* is generally talking of Religion, of GOD or of the Things of GOD: But talking in such a Manner that every reasonable Christian may discern the Disorder of his Mind. *Enthusiasm* in general may then be described in some such Manner as this: A religious Madness arising from some falsely imagined Influence or Inspiration of GOD: At least, from imputing something to GOD which ought not to be imputed to him,

him, or expecting something from GOD which ought not to be expected from him.

13. There are innumerable Sorts of *Enthusiasm*. Those which are most common and for that Reason most dangerous, I shall endeavour to reduce under a few general Heads, that they may be more easily understood and avoided.

The First Sort of *Enthusiasm* which I shall mention, is that of those who imagine they have the *Grace* which they have not. Thus some Imagine, when it is not so, that they have *Redemption* thro' Christ, *even the Forgiveness of Sin*. These are usually such as *have no Root in themselves*; no deep Repentance, or thorough Conviction. *Therefore they receive the Word with Joy*. And *because they have no Deepness of Earth*, no deep Work in their Heart, therefore the Seed *immediately springs up*. There is immediately a superficial Change, which together with that light Joy, striking in with the Pride of their unbroken Heart, and with their inordinate Self-love, easily persuades them, they have already *tasted the good Word of GOD, and the Powers of the World to come*.

14. This is properly an Instance of the first Sort of *Enthusiasm*: It is a Kind of Madness, arising from the Imagination, that they have that Grace which in Truth they have not: So that they only deceive their own Souls. Madness it may justly be termed: For the Reasonings of these poor Men are right, were their Premises good: But as those are a mere Creature of their own Imagination, so all that is built on them falls to the Ground. The Foundation of all their *Reveries* is this: They imagine themselves to  
have

have Faith in Christ. If they had this, they would be *Kings and Priests to GOD*, possessors of a Kingdom which cannot be moved. But they have it not. Consequently, all their following Behaviour, is as wide of Truth and Soberness, as that of the ordinary Madman, who fancying himself an earthly King, speaks and acts in that Character.

\* 15. There are many other *Enthusiasts* of this Sort. Such, for instance, is the fiery Zealot for Religion; or (more probably) for the Opinions and Modes of Worship, which he dignifies with that Name. This Man also strongly imagines himself, to be a Believer in Jesus, yea, that he is a Champion for the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints. Accordingly all his Conduct is formed, upon that vain Imagination. And allowing his Supposition to be just, he would have some tolerable Plea for his Behaviour: Whereas now it is evidently the Effect of a distempered Brain, as well as of a distempered Heart.

16. But the most common of all the *Enthusiasts* of this Kind, are those who imagine themselves Christians, and are not. These abound not only in all Parts of our Land, but in most Parts of the habitable Earth. That they are not Christians is clear and undeniable, if we believe the Oracles of GOD. For Christians are holy; these are unholy: Christians love GOD; these love the World. Christians are humble; these are proud: Christians are gentle; these are passionate. Christians have the Mind which was in Christ; these are at the utmost Distance from it. Consequently, they are no more Christians, than  
they

they are Archangels. Yet they imagine themselves so to be; and they can give several Reasons for it. For they have been *called so* ever since they can remember: They were *christen'd* many Years ago: They embrace the *Christian Opinions*, vulgarly termed, The Christian or Catholick Faith. They use the *Christian Modes of Worship*, as their Fathers did before them. They live what is called a good, *Christian Life*, as the rest of their Neighbours do. And who shall presume to think or say, that these Men are not Christians? Tho' without one Grain of true Faith in Christ, or of real, inward Holiness! without ever having tasted the Love of GOD, or been *made Partakers of the Holy Ghost!*

17. Ah poor Self-deceivers! Christians ye are not. But you are *Enthusiasts* in an high Degree. Physicians, heal yourselves. But first, know your Disease: Your whole Life is *Enthusiasm*: As being all suitable to the Imagination, that you have received that Grace of GOD which you have not. In Consequence of this grand Mistake, you blunder on, Day by Day, speaking and acting under a Character, which does in no wise belong to you. Hence arises that palpable, glaring Inconsistency, that runs thro' your whole Behaviour: Which is an awkward Mixture of real Heathenism and imaginary Christianity. Yet still, as you have so vast a Majority on your Side, you will always carry it by mere Dint of Numbers, "That you are the only Men in your Senses, and all are Lunatics who are not as you are." But this alters not the Nature of Things. In the Sight of GOD and his holy Angels, yea, and all the Children of GOD upon Earth,

Earth, you are mere Madmen, mere *Enthusiasts* all. Are you not? Are you not *walking in a vain Shadow*, a Shadow of Religion, a Shadow of Happiness? Are you not still *disquieting yourselves in vain*? With Misfortunes as imaginary as your Happiness or Religion? Do you not fancy yourselves great or good? Very knowing, and very wise! How long? Perhaps till Death brings you back to your Senses; to bewail your Folly for ever and ever!

18. A second Sort of *Enthusiasm*, is that of those, who imagine they have such *Gifts* from **GOD** as they have not. Thus some have imagined themselves to be endued with a Power of working Miracles, of healing the Sick by a Word or a Touch, of restoring Sight to the Blind; yea, even of raising the Dead, a notorious Instance of which is still fresh in our own History. Others have undertaken to prophesy, to foretel Things to come, and that with the utmost Certainty and Exactness. But a little Time usually convinces these *Enthusiasts*. When plain Facts run counter to their Predictions, Experience performs what Reason cou'd not, and sinks them down into their Senses.

19. To the same Class belong those, who in Preaching or Prayer, imagine themselves to be so influenced by the Spirit of **GOD** as in Fact they are not. I am sensible indeed, that without him we can do nothing; more especially in our publick Ministry: That all our Preaching is utterly vain, unless it be attended with his Power, and all our Prayer, unless his Spirit therein help our Infirmities. I know, if we do not both preach and pray by the Spirit, it is all but lost Labour:



Seeing the Help that is done upon Earth, he doth it himself, who worketh all in all. But this does not affect the Case before us. Tho' there is a real Influence of the Spirit of GOD, there is also an imaginary one; and many there are who mistake the one for the other. Many suppose themselves to be under that Influence, when they are not, when it is far from them. And many others suppose, they are more under that Influence than they really are. Of this Number, I fear, are all they who imagine, that GOD dictates the very Words they speak: And that consequently, it is impossible they should speak any Thing amiss, either as to the Matter or Manner of it. It is well known, how many *Enthusiasts* of this Sort also, have appeared during the present Century: Some of whom speak in a far more authoritative Manner, than either *St. Paul* or any of the Apostles.

20. The same Sort of *Enthusiasm*, tho' in a lower Degree, is frequently found in Men of a private Character. They may likewise imagine themselves to be influenced or directed by the Spirit, when they are not. I allow, *if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*: And that if ever we either think speak or act aright, it is thro' the Assistance of that blessed Spirit. But how many impute Things to him, or expect Things from him, without any rational or scriptural Ground? Such are they who imagine, they either do or shall, receive *particular Directions* from GOD, not only in Points of Importance, but in Things of no Moment, in the most trifling Circumstances of Life. Whereas in these Cases GOD has given us our own Reason for a Guide:  
Tho'

Tho' never excluding the *secret Assistance* of his Spirit.

21. To this Kind of *Enthusiasm* they are peculiarly exposed, who expect to be directed of GOD, either in spiritual Things or in common Life, in what is justly called, an *extraordinary Manner*. I mean, by Visions or Dreams, by strong Impressions or sudden Impulses on the Mind. I do not deny, that GOD has of old Times manifested his Will in this Manner. Or, that he can do so now. Nay, I believe, he does, in some very rare Instances. But how frequently do Men mistake herein? How are they misled by Pride and a warm Imagination, to ascribe such Impulses or Impressions, Dreams or Visions to GOD, as are utterly unworthy of him? Now this is all pure *Enthusiasm*, all as wide of Religion, as it is of Truth and Soberness.

22. Perhaps some may ask, "Ought we not then to enquire, What is *the Will of GOD* in all Things? And ought not his Will to be the Rule of our Practice?" Unquestionably it ought. But how is a sober Christian to make this Enquiry? To know, what is *the Will of GOD*? Not by waiting for supernatural Dreams. Not by expecting GOD to reveal it in Visions. Not by looking for any *particular Impressions*, or sudden Impulses on his Mind. No: But by consulting the Oracles of GOD. *To the Law and to the Testimony*. This is the general Method of knowing what is *the holy and acceptable Will of GOD*.

23. "But how shall I know what is *the Will of GOD*, in such and such a particular Case? The Thing proposed is in itself of an indifferent Nature, and so left undetermined in Scripture." I answer, The Scripture itself gives you a ge-

neral Rule, applicable to all particular Cases. *The Will of GOD is our Sanctification.* It is his Will that we should be inwardly and outwardly holy; that we should *be good and do Good* in every Kind, and in the highest Degree whereof we are capable. Thus far we tread upon firm Ground. This is as clear as the shining of the Sun. In order therefore to know, what is *the Will of GOD* in a particular Case, we have only to apply this general Rule.

24. Suppose, for Instance, it were proposed to a reasonable Man, to marry, or to enter into a new Business: In order to know, whether this is *the Will of GOD*, being assured, “It is *the Will of GOD* concerning me, that I should be as holy and do as much Good as I can,” he has only to inquire, “In which of these States can I be most holy, and do the most Good?” And this is to be determined, partly by Reason, and partly by Experience. Experience tells him what Advantages he has in his present State, either for being or doing Good: And Reason is to shew, what he certainly or probably will have in the State proposed. By comparing these, he is to judge, which of the two may most conduce to his being and doing Good: And as far as he knows this, so far he is certain, what is *the Will of GOD*.

25. Meantime, the Assistance of his Spirit is supposed, during the whole Process of the Inquiry. Indeed 'tis not easy to say, in how many Ways, that Assistance is conveyed. He may bring many Circumstances to our Remembrance, may place others in a stronger and clearer Light; may insensibly open our Mind to receive Conviction,  
and

and fix that Conviction upon our Heart. And to a Concurrence of many Circumstances of this Kind, in Favour of what is acceptable in his Sight, he may superadd such an unutterable Peace of Mind, and so uncommon a Measure of his Love, as will leave us no Possibility of doubting, That *this* even *this*, is his Will concerning us.

26. This is the plain, scriptural, rational Way to know, what is *the Will of GOD* in a particular Case. But considering how seldom this Way is taken, and what a Flood of *Enthusiasm* must needs break in, on those who endeavour to know *the Will of GOD*, by unscriptural, irrational Ways: It were to be wished, that the Expression itself, were far more sparingly used. The using it, as some do, on the most trivial Occasions, is a plain Breach of the third Commandment. It is a gross Way of taking the Name of GOD in vain, and betrays great Irreverence toward him. Wou'd it not be far better then, to use other Expressions, which are not liable to such Objections? For example. Instead of saying, on any particular Occasion, "I want to know what is *the Will of GOD*." Wou'd it not be better to say, "I want to know, what will be most for my Improvement: And, what will make me most useful." This Way of speaking is clear and unexceptionable. It is putting the Matter on a plain, scriptural Issue, and that without any Danger of *Enthusiasm*.

27. A third very common Sort of *Enthusiasm* (if it does not co-incide with the former) is that of those who think to attain the End without using the Means, by the immediate Power of GOD. If indeed those Means were providentially withheld, they would not fall under this

Charge. GOD can, and sometimes does, in Cases of this Nature, exert his own immediate Power. But they who expect this when they have those Means, and will not use them, are proper *Enthusiasts*. Such are they who expect to understand the holy Scriptures, without reading them and meditating thereon: Yea, without using all such Helps as are in their Power, and may probably conduce to that End. Such are they who *designedly* speak in the publick Assembly, without any Premeditation. I say *designedly*: Because there may be such Circumstances, as at some times make it unavoidable. But whoever *despises* that great Means of speaking profitably, is so far an *Enthusiast*.

28. It may be expected that I should mention what some have accounted, a fourth Sort of *Enthusiasm*, namely, The imagining those Things to be owing to the Providence of GOD, which are not owing thereto. But I doubt. I know not what Things they are, which are not owing to the Providence of GOD: In ordering, or, at least, in governing of which, this is not either directly or remotely concerned. I except nothing but Sin: And even in the Sins of others, I see the Providence of GOD to *me*. I do not say, his *general Providence*; for this I take to be a founding Word, which means just nothing. And if there be a *particular Providence*, it must extend to all Persons and all Things. So our Lord understood it, or he could never have said, *Even the Hairs of your Head are all numbred*. And, *Not a Sparrow falleth to the Ground, without the Will of your Father which is in Heaven*. But if it be so, if GOD *presides univcrsis tanquam singulis, et singulis tanquam univcrsis*; over the whole Universe

as

as over every single Person, over every single Person as over the whole Universe : What is it (except only our own Sins) which we are not to ascribe to the Providence of GOD ? So that I cannot apprehend, there is any Room here, for the Charge of *Enthusiasm*.

29. If it be said, The Charge lies here : “ When you impute *this* to Providence, you imagine yourself the peculiar Favourite of Heaven.” I answer, you have forgot some of the last Words I spoke, *Præsidet universis tanquam singulis*. His Providence is over all Men in the Universe, as much as over any single Person. Don't you see, that he who believing this, imputes any Thing which befalls him to Providence, does not therein make himself any more the Favourite of Heaven, than he supposes every Man under Heaven to be ? Therefore you have no Pretence, upon this Ground, to charge him with *Enthusiasm*.

30. Against every Sort of this, it behoves us to guard, with the utmost Diligence : Considering the dreadful Effects it has so often produced, and which indeed naturally result from it. Its immediate Offspring is Pride ; it continually increases this Source from whence it flows, and hereby it alienates us more and more, from the Favour and from the Life of GOD. It dries up the very Springs of Faith and Love ; of Righteousness and true Holiness. Seeing all these flow from Grace. But GOD *resisteth the Proud and giveth Grace only to the humble*.

31. Together with Pride there will naturally arise an unadvisable and unconvincible Spirit. So that into whatever Error or Fault the *Enthusiast* falls, there is small Hope of his Recovery.  
For

For Reason will have little Weight with him (as has been justly and frequently observed) who imagines he is led by an higher Guide, by the immediate Wisdom of GOD. And as he grows in Pride, so he must grow in Unadvisableness and in Stubbornness also. He must be less and less capable of being convinced, less susceptible of Persuasion; more and more attached to his own Judgment and his own Will, till he is altogether fixt and immovable.

32. Being thus fortified both against the Grace of GOD, and against all Advice and help from Man, he is wholly left to the Guidance of his own Heart, and of the King of the Children of Pride. No Marvel then that he is daily more rooted and grounded in Contempt of all Mankind, in furious Anger, in every unkind Disposition, in every earthly and devilish Temper. Neither can we wonder at the terrible outward Effects, which have flow'd from such Dispositions in all Ages: Even all Manner of Wickedness, all the Works of Darknes, committed by those who called themselves Christians, while they wrought with Greediness such Things, as were hardly named even among the Heathens.

Such is the Nature, such the dreadful Effects, of that many-headed Monster *Enthusiasm*! From the Consideration of which, we may now draw some plain Inferences, with regard to our own Practice.

33. And, First, If *Enthusiasm* be a Term, tho' so frequently used, yet so rarely understood, take you Care, not to talk of you know not what, not to use the Word, till you understand it. As  
in

in all other Points, so likewise in this, learn to think before you speak. First, know the Meaning of this hard Word ; and then use it, if Need require.

34. But if so few, even among Men of Education and Learning, much more among the common Sort of Men, understand this dark, ambiguous Word, or have any fixt Notion of what it means : Then, Secondly, Beware of judging or calling any Man an *Enthusiast* upon common Report. This is by no Means a sufficient Ground, for giving any Name of Reproach to any Man : Least of all is it a sufficient Ground, for so black a Term of Reproach as this. The more Evil it contains, the more cautious you should be, how you apply it to any one : To bring so heavy an Accusation without full Proof, being neither consistent with Justice nor Mercy.

35. But if *Enthusiasm* be so great an Evil, beware you are not intangled therewith yourself. Watch and pray that you fall not into the Temptation. It easily besets those who fear or love GOD. O beware you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do not imagine you have attained that Grace of GOD, to which you have not attained. You may have much Joy : You may have a Measure of Love, and yet not have living Faith. Cry unto GOD that he would not suffer you, blind as you are, to go out of the Way : That you may never fancy yourself a Believer in Christ, till Christ is revealed in you, and till his Spirit witnesses with your Spirit, and that you are a Child of GOD.

36. Beware you are not a fiery, persecuting *Enthusiast*. Do not imagine that GOD has called



called you, (just contrary to the Spirit of him you stile your Master) to destroy Men's Lives, and not to save them. Never dream of forcing Men into the Ways of GOD. Think yourself, and let think. Use no Constraint in Matters of Religion. Even those who are farthest out of the Way, never *compell to come in*, by any other Means, than Reason, Truth and Love.

37. Beware you do not run with the common Herd of *Enthusiasts*, fancying you are a Christian when you are not. Presume not to assume that venerable Name, unless you have a clear, scriptural Title thereto : Unless you have the Mind which was in Christ, and walk as he also walked.

38. Beware you do not fall into the second Sort of *Enthusiasm*, fancying you have those *Gifts* from GOD which you have not. Trust not in Visions or Dreams ; in sudden Impressions, or strong Impulses of any Kind. Remember, it is not by these you are to know, what is *the Will of GOD* on any particular Occasion ; but by applying the plain Scripture-Rule, with the Help of Experience and Reason, and the ordinary Assistance of the Spirit of GOD. Do not lightly take the Name of GOD in your Mouth : Do not talk of *the Will of GOD* on every trifling Occasion. But let your Words as well as your Actions be all tempered with Reverence and godly Fear.

39. Beware, lastly, of imagining you shall obtain the End, without using the Means conducive to it. GOD *can* give the End, without any Means at all : But you have no Reason to think he *will*. Therefore constantly and carefully use all these Means, which he has appointed to be the ordinary Channels of his Grace. Use  
every

every Means which either Reason or Scripture recommends, as conducive (thro' the free Love of GOD in Christ) either to the obtaining, or increasing any of the Gifts of GOD. Thus expect a daily Growth in that pure and holy Religion, which the World always did, and always will call *Enthusiasm* : But which to all who are saved from real *Enthusiasm*, from merely nominal Christianity, is the Wisdom of GOD and the Power of GOD, the glorious Image of the most High : Righteousness and Peace : A Fountain of living Water, springing up into everlasting Life !

---



*A Caution against* BIGOTRY.

A

S E R M O N

O N

MARK ix. 38, 39.



---

---

MARK ix. 38, 39.

*And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.*

*And Jesus said, Forbid him not.*

1. **I**N the preceding Verses we read, That after the Twelve had been disputing, *which of them should be the greatest*, Jesus took a little Child, and set him in the *Midst of them*, and taking him in his Arms, said unto them, *Whosoever shall receive one of these little Children in my Name receiveth me: And whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me (only) but him that sent me.* Then John answered (that is, said with Reference to what our Lord had spoken just before) *Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.* As if he had said, “Ought we to have received him? In receiving him, should we have received thee? Ought we not rather to have forbidden him? Did not we do well therein? *But Jesus said, Forbid him not.*

2. The same Passage is recited by St. Luke, and almost in the same Words. But it may be asked, What is this to us? Seeing no Man now casts out Devils. Has not the Power of doing this been withdrawn from the Church, for twelve

or fourteen hundred Years? How then are *we* concerned in the Case here proposed, or in our Lord's Decision of it?

3. Perhaps more nearly than is commonly imagined, the Case proposed being no uncommon Case. That we may reap our full Advantage from it I design to shew, First, In what Sense Men may and do now *cast out Devils*; Secondly, What we may understand by, *He followeth not us*. I shall, Thirdly, explain our Lord's Direction, *Forbid him not*, and conclude with an Inference from the whole.

I. 1. I am, in the first Place to shew, in what Sense Men may, and do now *cast out Devils*.

In order to have the clearest View of this, we should remember, that (according to the scriptural Account) as GOD dwells and works in the Children of Light, so the Devil dwells and works in the Children of Darknes. As the holy Spirit possessies the Souls of good Men, so the evil Spirit possessies the Souls of the Wicked. Hence it is that the Apostle terms him, *The God of this World*: From the uncontrolled Power he has over worldly Men. Hence our blessed Lord stiles him *the Prince of this World*: so absolute is his Dominion over it. And hence St. *John*, *We know that we are of GOD*, and all who are not of GOD, *the whole World*, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ καὶ τῷ τῶν. Not, lieth in Wickedness: But *lieth in the wicked One*; lives and moves in him, as they who are not of the World, do in GOD.

2. For the Devil is not to be considered only as a *roaring Lion*, going about and seeking whom he may devour: Nor barely as a subtile Enemy, who cometh

cometh unawares upon poor Souls and *leads them Captive at his Will* : But as he who dwelleth in them and walketh in them ; who *ruleth the Dark-ness* or Wickedness of *this World*, of worldly Men and all their dark Designs and Actions, by keeping Possession of their Hearts, setting up his Throne there, and bringing every Thought into Obedience to himself. Thus the *strong one armed keepeth his House* ; and if this *unclean Spirit* sometime go out of a Man, yet he often returns with *seven Spirits worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell there*. Nor can he be idle in his Dwelling. He is continually *working in these Children of Disobedience*. He works in them with Power, with mighty Energy, transforming them into his own Likeness, effacing all the Remains of the Image of GOD, and preparing them for every evil Word or Work.

3. It is therefore an unquestionable Truth, that the God and Prince of this World, still possesses all who know not GOD. Only the Manner wherein he possesses them now, differs from that wherein he did it of old Time. Then he frequently tormented their Bodies as well as Souls, and that openly, without any Disguise. Now he torments their Souls only, (unless in some rare Cases) and that as covertly as possible. The Reason of this Difference is plain. It was then his Aim to drive Mankind into Superstition. Therefore he wrought as openly as he cou'd. But 'tis his Aim to drive us into Infidelity. Therefore he works as privately as he can ; for the more secret he is, the more he prevails.

4. Yet, if we may credit Historians, there are Countries even now, where he works as openly

as aforetime. “ But why in savage and barbarous Countries only? Why not in *Italy, France* or *England?*” For a very plain Reason: He knows his Men. And he knows what he hath to do with each. To *Laplanders*, he appears barefaced: Because he is to fix them in Superstition and gross Idolatry. But with you he is pursuing a different Point. He is to make you idolize yourselves: To make you wiser in your own Eyes than GOD himself, than all the Oracles of GOD. Now in order to this, he must not appear in his own Shape: That would frustrate his Design. No: he uses all his Art, to make you deny his Being, till he has you safe in his own Place.

5. He reigns therefore, altho’ in a different Way, yet as absolute in one Land as in the other. He has the gay *Italian* Infidel in his Teeth, as sure as the wild *Tartar*. But he is fast asleep in the Mouth of the Lion, who is too wise to wake him out of Sleep. So he only plays with him for the present, and when he pleases swallows him up.

The God of this World holds his *English* Worshipers full as fast as those in *Lapland*. But it is not his Business to affright them, lest they should fly to the GOD of Heaven. The Prince of Darkness therefore does not appear, while he rules over these his willing Subjects. The Conqueror holds his Captives so much the safer, because they imagine themselves at Liberty. Thus the *strong One armed keepeth his House, and his Goods are in Peace*: Neither the Deist nor nominal Christian suspects he is there; so he and they are perfectly at Peace with each other.

6. All

6. All this while he works with Energy in them. He blinds the Eyes of their Understanding, so that the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, cannot shine upon them. He chains their Souls down to Earth and Hell, with the Chains of their own vile Affections. He binds them down to the Earth, by Love of the World, Love of Money, of Pleasure, of Praise. And by Pride, Envy, Anger, Hate, Revenge, he causes their Souls to draw nigh unto Hell: Acting the more secure and uncontrolled, because they know not that he acts at all.

7. But how easily may we know the Cause from its Effects? These are sometimes gross and palpable. So they were in the most refined of the Heathen Nations. Go no farther than the admired, the virtuous *Romans*. And you will find these, when at the Height of their Learning and Glory, *filled with all Unrighteousness; Fornication, Wickedness, Coviciousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity: Whisperers, Backbiters, spiteful, proud Boasters, disobedient to Parents: Covenant-breakers, without natural Affection; implacable, unmerciful.*

8. The strongest Parts of this Description are confirmed by one, whom some may think a more unexceptionable Witness. I mean, their Brother-heathen, *Dion Cassius*: who observes, that before *Cesar's* Return from *Gaul*, not only Gluttony and Lewdness of every Kind, were open and bare-faced; not only Falshood, Injustice and Unmercifulness abounded, in publick Courts as well as private Families: But the most outrageous Robberies, Rapine and Murders, were so frequent in all Parts of *Rome*, that few Men went out of  
Doors



Doors without making their Wills, as not knowing if they should return alive.

9. As gross and palpable are the Works of the Devil, among many (if not all) the modern Heathens. The *natural Religion* of the *Creeks*, *Cherikees*, *Chicasaws*, and all other *Indians*, bordering on our southern Settlements (not of a few single Men, but of entire Nations) is, to torture all their Prisoners from Morning to Night, till at length they roast them to Death ; and upon the slightest, undesigned Provocation, to come behind and shoot any of their own Countrymen. Yea, it is a common Thing among them, for the Son, if he thinks his Father lives too long, to knock out his Brains : And for a Mother, if she is tired of her Children, to fasten Stones about their Necks, and throw three or four of them into the River, one after another.

10. It were to be wished that none but Heathens had practised such gross, palpable Works of the Devil. But we dare not say so. Even in Cruelty and Bloodshed, how little have the Christians come behind them ? And not the *Spaniards* or *Portuguese* alone, butchering Thousands in *South-America*. Not the *Dutch* only in the *East-Indies*, or the *French* in *North-America*, following the *Spaniard* Step by Step. Our own Countrymen too have wantoned in Blood, and exterminated whole Nations : Plainly proving thereby, what Spirit it is, that dwells and works in the Children of Disobedience.

11. These Monsters might almost make us overlook the Works of the Devil that are wrought in our own Country. But alas ! We cannot open our Eyes even here, without seeing them on  
every

every Side. Is it a small Proof of his Power, that common Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Adulterers, Thieves, Robbers, Sodomites, Murderers, are still found in every Part of our Land? How triumphant does the Prince of this World reign, in all these Children of Disobedience?

12. He less openly, but no less effectually works in Dissemblers, Talebearers, Liars, Slanders: In Oppressors and Extortioners; in the Perjured, the Seller of his Friend, his Honour, his Conscience, his Country. And yet these may talk of Religion or Conscience still! of Honour, Virtue and publick Spirit. But they can no more deceive Satan than they can GOD. He likewise knows those that are his: And a great Multitude they are, out of every Nation and People of whom he has full Possession at this Day.

13. If you consider this, you cannot but see in what Sense, Men may now also *cast out Devils*: Yea, and every Minister of Christ does cast them out, if his Lord's Work prosper in his Hand.

By the Power of GOD attending his Word, he brings these Sinners to Repentance: An entire inward as well as outward Change, from all Evil to all Good. And this is in a sound Sense, *to cast out Devils*, out of the Souls wherein they had hitherto dwelt. The strong One can no longer keep his House. A stronger than he is come upon him, and hath cast him out, and taken Possession for himself, and made it an Habitation of GOD thro' his Spirit. Here then the Energy of Satan ends, and the Son of GOD *destroys the Works of the Devil*. The Understanding of the Sinner is now enlightned, and his

his Heart sweetly drawn to GOD. His Desires are refined, his Affections purified : And being filled with the Holy Ghost, he grows in Grace till he is not only holy 'n-Heart, but in all manner of Conversation.

14. All this is indeed the Work of GOD. It is GOD alone who can cast out Satan. But he is generally pleased to do this by Man, as an Instrument in his Hand ; who is then said, *to cast out Devils in his Name*, by his Power and Authority. And he sends whom he will send upon this great Work : But usually such as Man would never have thought of. For *his Ways are not as our Ways, neither his Thoughts as our Thoughts*. Accordingly he chuses the Weak to confound the Mighty; the Foolish, to confound the Wise : For this plain Reason, That he may secure the Glory to himself ; that *no Flesh may glory in his Sight*.

II. 1. But shall we not *forbid* one who thus *casteth out Devils*, if *he followeth not us* ? This it seems was both the Judgment and Practice of the Apostle, till he referred the Case to his Master. *We forbid him*, saith he, *because he followeth not us*, which he supposed to be a very sufficient Reason. What we may understand by this Expression, *He followeth not us*, is the next Point to be considered.

The lowest Circumstance we can understand thereby, is, He has no outward Connexion with us. We do not labour in Conjunction with each other. He is not our Fellow-helper in the Gospel. And indeed whensoever our Lord is pleased, to send many Labourers into his Harvest, they cannot all act, in Subordination to, or Connexion with

with each other. Nay, they cannot all have personal Acquaintance with, nor be so much as known to one another. Many there will necessarily be in different Parts of the Harvest, so far from having any mutual Intercourse, that they will be as absolute Strangers to each other, as if they had lived in different Ages. And concerning any of these whom we know not, we may doubtless say, *He followeth not us.*

2. A second Meaning of this Expression may be, *He is not of our Party.* It has long been Matter of melancholy Consideration, to all who pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, that so many several Parties are still subsisting, among those who are all stiled Christians. This has been particularly observable in our own Countrymen, who have been continually dividing from each other, upon Points of no Moment, and many times such as Religion had no Concern in. The most trifling Circumstances have given Rise to different Parties, which have continued for many Generations. And each of these would be ready to object to one who was on the other Side, *He followeth not us.*

3. That Expression may mean, Thirdly, *He differs from us, in our Religious Opinions.* There was a time, when all Christians were of one Mind, as well as of one Heart. So great Grace was upon them all, when they were first filled with the Holy Ghost. But how short a Space did this Blessing continue? How soon was that Unanimity lost, and Difference of Opinion sprang up again, even in the Church of Christ? And that not in nominal, but in real Christians: Nay in the very chief of them, the Apostles themselves? Nor does it appear, That the Difference which  
then

then began, was ever entirely removed. We do not find, that even those Pillars in the Temple of GOD, so long as they remained upon Earth, were ever brought to think alike, to be of one Mind, particularly with regard to the Ceremonial Law. 'Tis therefore no way surprizing, that infinite Varieties of Opinion should now be found in the Christian Church. A very probable Consequence of this is, That whenever we see any *casting out Devils*, he will be one that, in this Sense, *followeth not us*: that is not of our Opinion. 'Tis scarce to be imagined he will be of our Mind, in all Points, even of Religion. He may very probably think in a different manner from us, even on several Subjects of Importance: Such as, the Nature and Use of the Moral Law, the Eternal Decrees of GOD, the Sufficiency and Efficacy of his Grace, and the Perseverance of his Children.

4. He may differ from us, Fourthly, not only in Opinion, but likewise in some Points of Practice. He may not approve of that manner of worshipping GOD, which is practised in our Congregation: And may judge that to be more profitable for his Soul, which took its Rise from *Mr. Calvin*, or *Martin Luther*. He may have many Objections to that Liturgy, which we approve of, beyond all others: Many Doubts concerning that Form of Church-Government, which we esteem both Apostolical and Scriptural. Perhaps he may go farther from us yet: He may, from a Principle of Conscience, refrain from several of those, which we believe to be the Ordinances of Christ. Or if we both agree, That they are ordained of GOD, there may still remain

main a Difference between us, either as to the Manner of administering those Ordinances, or the Persons to whom they should be administered. Now the unavoidable Consequence of any of these Differences, will be, that he who thus differs from us, must separate himself with regard to those Points from our Society. In this respect therefore *he followeth not us* : He is *not* (as we phrase it) *of our Church*.

5. But in a far stronger Sense, *he followeth not us*, who is not only of a different Church, but of such a Church as we account to be in many respects Antiscriptural and Antichristian : A Church which we believe to be utterly false and erroneous in her Doctrines, as well as very dangerously wrong in her Practice, guilty of gross Superstition as well as Idolatry. A Church that has added many Articles to the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints ; that has dropt one whole Commandment of GOD, and made void several of the rest by her Traditions : And that pretending the highest Veneration for, and strictest Conformity to the Antient Church, has nevertheless brought in numberless Innovations, without any Warrant either from Antiquity or Scripture. Now most certainly *he followeth not us*, who stands at so great a distance from us.

6. And yet there may be a still wider Difference than this. He who differs from us in Judgment or Practice, may possibly stand at a greater distance from us, in Affection than in Judgment. And this indeed is a very natural and a very common Effect of the other. The Differences which begin in Points of Opinion, seldom terminate there. They generally spread into the Affections, and then separate chief Friends. Nor ar any

Animosities so deep and irreconcilable, as those that spring from Disagreement in Religion. For this Cause the bitterest Enemies of a Man, are those of his own Household. For this the Father rises against his own Children, and the Children against the Father; and perhaps persecute each other even to the Death, thinking all the time they are doing GOD Service. It is therefore nothing more than we may expect, if those who differ from us either in Religious Opinions or Practice, soon contract a Sharpness, yea Bitterness toward us; if they are more and more prejudiced against us, till they conceive as ill an Opinion of our Persons as of our Principles. An almost necessary Consequence of this will be, they will speak in the same manner as they think of us. They will set themselves in opposition to us, and as far as they are able hinder our Work: seeing it does not appear to them to be the Work of GOD, but either of Man or of the Devil. He that thinks, speaks and acts in such a manner as this, in the highest Sense, *followeth not us.*

7. I do not indeed conceive, That the Person of whom the Apostle speaks in the Text (altho' we have no particular Account of him, either in the Context, or in any other Part of Holy Writ) went so far as this. We have no ground to suppose, That there was any material Difference between him and the Apostles; much less that he had any Prejudice either against them or their Master. It seems we may gather thus much from our Lord's own Words, which immediately follow the Text, *There is no Man which shall do a Miracle in my Name, that can lightly speak evil of me.* But I purposely put the Case in the strongest Light, adding all the Circumstances which can  
well

well be conceived : That being forewarned of the Temptation in its full Strength, we may in no case yield to it, and fight against GOD.

III. 1. Suppose then a Man have no Intercourse with us, suppose he be not of our Party, suppose he separate from our Church, yea and widely differ from us, both in Judgment, Practice, and Affection : Yet if we see even this Man *casting out Devils, Jesus saith, Forbid him not.* This important Direction of our Lord, I am, in the Third Place, to explain.

2. If we see this Man casting out Devils—But 'tis well, if in such a Case, we would believe even what we saw with our Eyes, if we did not give the lie to our own Senses. He must be little acquainted with Human Nature, who does not immediately perceive, How extremely unready we should be, to believe that any Man does cast out Devils, who *followeth not us*, in all, or most of the Senses above-recited. I had almost said, In any of them : Seeing we may easily learn even from what passes in our own Breasts, How unwilling Men are, to allow any thing Good in those, who do not in all things agree with themselves.

3. “ But what is a sufficient, reasonable Proof that a Man does (in the Sense above) cast out Devils ? ” The Answer is easy. Is there full Proof, 1. That a Person before us was a gross, open Sinner ? Secondly, That he is not so now ; that he has broke off his Sins, and lives a Christian Life ? And, Thirdly, That his Change was wrought by his hearing this Man preach ? If these three Points be plain and undeniable, then you have sufficient, reasonable Proof, such as you cannot re-



list without wilful Sin, That this man casts out Devils.

4. Then *forbid him not*. Beware how you attempt to hinder him, either by your Authority or Arguments or Persuasions. Do not in any wise strive to prevent his using all the Power which GOD has given him. If you have *Authority* with him, do not use that Authority, to stop the Work of GOD. Do not furnish him with *Reasons*, why he ought not any more to speak in the Name of Jesus. Satan will not fail to supply him with these, if you do not second him therein. *Persuade* him not, to depart from the Work. If he should give place to the Devil and you, many Souls might perish in their Iniquity, but their Blood would GOD require at *your* Hands.

5. “But what if he be only a *Layman* who casts out Devils? Ought I not to forbid him then?”

Is the Fact allowed? Is there reasonable Proof, That this Man has or does *cast out Devils*? If there is, forbid him not: No, not at the Peril of your Soul. Shall not GOD work by whom he will work? *No Man can do these Works unless GOD is with him*. unless GOD hath sent him for this very thing. But if GOD hath sent him, will you call him back? Will you forbid him to go?

6. “But I do not know, That he is sent of GOD.” *Now herein is a marvellous thing* (may any of the Seals of his Mission say, any whom he hath brought from Satan to GOD) *that ye know not whence this Man is, and behold he hath opened mine Eyes!* If this Man were not of GOD, he could do nothing. If you doubt the Fact, send for the Parents of the Man: Send for his Brethren, Friends,

Friends, Acquaintance. But if you cannot doubt this, if you must needs acknowledge, *That a notable Miracle hath been wrought*, then with what Conscience, with what Face can you charge him whom GOD hath sent, *not to speak any more in his Name?*

7. I allow, That it is *highly expedient*, whoever preaches in his Name, should have an outward as well as an inward Call. But that it is *absolutely necessary* I deny.

“Nay, is not the Scripture exprefs? *No Man taketh this Honour unto himself, but he that is called of GOD, as was Aaron?*” *Heb. v. 4.*

Numberless times has this Text been quoted on the Occasion, as containing the very Strength of the Cause. But surely never was so unhappy a Quotation. For, first, *Aaron* was not called to preach at all. He was called *to offer Gifts and Sacrifice for Sin*. That was his peculiar Employment. Secondly, These Men do not offer Sacrifice at all; but only preach, which *Aaron* did not. Therefore it is not possible to find one Text in all the Bible, which is more wide of the Point than this.

8. “But what was the Practice of the Apostolick Age?” You may easily see in the *Acts of the Apostles*. In the 8th Chapter we read, *There was a great Persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem: And they were all scattered abroad throughout the Regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. ver. 1. Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every-where preaching the Word. ver. 4.* Now were all these outwardly called to preach? No Man in his Senses can think so. Here then is an undeniable Proof, what

was the Practice of the Apostolick Age. Here you see not one, but a Multitude of *Lay-Preachers*, Men that were only sent of GOD.

9. Indeed so far is the Practice of the Apostolick Age, from inclining us to think it was *unlawful*, for a Man to preach before he was ordained, that we have reason to think, it was then accounted *necessary*. Certainly the Practice and the Direction of the Apostle *Paul* was, To *prove* a Man before he was ordained at all. *Let these*, (the Deacons) says he, *first be proved; then let them use the Office of a Deacon*—1 Tim. iii. 10. Proved? How? By setting them to construe a Sentence of *Greek*? And asking them a few common-place Questions? O amazing Proof of a Minister of Christ! Nay: But by making a clear, open Trial (as is still done by most of the Protestant Churches in *Europe*) not only whether their Lives be holy and unblameable, but whether they have such Gifts as are absolutely and indispensably necessary, in order to edify the Church of Christ.

10. “But what if a Man has these? And has brought Sinners to Repentance? And yet the Bishop will not ordain him?” Then the Bishop does *forbid him to cast out Devils*. But I dare not forbid him. I have published my Reasons to all the World. Yet ’tis still insisted, I ought to do it. You who insist upon it, answer those Reasons. I know not that any had done this yet, or even made a feint of doing it. Only some have spoken of them as very weak and trifling. And this was prudent enough. For ’tis far easier to despise, at least, seem to despise an Argument than to answer it. Yet till this is done I must say,  
when

when I have reasonable Proof, that any Man does cast out Devils, whatever others do, I dare not forbid him, least I be found even to fight against GOD.

11. And whosoever thou art that fearest GOD, *forbid him not*, either directly or indirectly. There are many ways of doing this. You indirectly forbid him, if you either wholly deny, or despise and make little account of the Work which GOD has wrought by his Hands. You indirectly forbid him, when you discourage him in his Work, by drawing him into Disputes concerning it, by raising Objections against it, or frightening him with Consequences, which very possibly will never be. You forbid him, when you shew any Unkindness toward him, either in Language or Behaviour: And much more, when you speak of him to others, either in an unkind or a contemptuous manner: When you endeavour to represent him to any, either in an odious or a despicable Light. You are forbidding him all the time you are speaking evil of him, or making no account of his Labours. O forbid him not in any of these Ways: Nor by forbidding others to hear him, by discouraging Sinners from hearing that Word, which is able to save their Souls.

12. Yea, if you would observe our Lord's Directions in its full Meaning and Extent, then remember his Word, *He that is not for us is against us, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.* He that gathereth not Men into the Kingdom of GOD, assuredly scatters them from it. For there can be no Neuter in this War. Every one is either on GOD's Side or on Satan's. Are you on GOD's Side? Then you will not only not forbid

forbid any Man that *casts out Devils*, but you will labour to the uttermost of your Power, to forward him in the Work. You will readily acknowledge the Work of GOD, and confess the Greatness of it. You will remove all Difficulties and Objections, as far as may be out of his Way. You will strengthen his Hands by speaking honourably of him before all Men, and avowing the Things which you have seen and heard. You will encourage others to attend upon his Word, to hear him whom GOD hath sent. And you will omit no actual Proof of tender Love, which GOD gives you an Opportunity of shewing him.

IV. 1. If we willingly fail in any of these Points, if we either directly or indirectly forbid him, *because he followeth not us*, then we are *Bigots*. This is the Inference I draw from what has been said. But the Term *Bigotry*, I fear, as frequently as it is used, is almost as little understood as *Enthusiasm*. It is, too strong an Attachment to, or Fondness for, our own Party, Opinion, Church and Religion. Therefore he is a *Bigot*, who is so fond of any of these, so strongly attached to them, or to forbid any who cast out Devils, because he differs from himself, in any or all these Particulars.

2. Do *you* beware of this. Take care, 1. That you do not convict yourself of *Bigotry*, by your Unreadiness to believe, that any Man does cast out Devils, who differs from you. And if you are clear thus far, if you acknowledge the Fact, then examine yourself, Secondly, Am I not convicted of *Bigotry* in this, in forbidding him, di-  
rectly

rectly or indirectly? Do I not directly forbid him, on this Ground, because he is not of my *Party*? Because he does not fall in with my *Opinions*? Or because he does not worship GOD according to that Scheme of *Religion*, which I have received from my Fathers?

3. Examine yourself, Do I not indirectly at least forbid him, on any of these Grounds! Am I not sorry, that GOD should thus own and bless a Man that holds such erroneous *Opinions*? Do I not discourage him, because he is not of my Church? By disputing with him concerning it, by raising *Objections*, and by perplexing his Mind with distant *Consequences*? Do I shew no *Anger*, *Contempt* or *Unkindness* of any Sort, either in my *Words* or *Actions*? Do I not mention behind his Back, his (real or supposed) *Faults*? His *Defects* or *Infirmities*? Do not I hinder *Sinners* from hearing his *Word*? If you do any of these Things, you are a *Bigot* to this Day.

4. *Search me, O Lord, and prove me. Try out my Reins and my Heart! Look well if there be any Way of Bigotry in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting.* In order to examine ourselves thro'ly, let the Case be proposed in the strongest Manner. What if I were to see a *Papist*, an *Arian*, a *Socinian* casting out Devils? If I did, I cou'd not forbid even him, without convicting myself of *Bigotry*. Yea, if it could be supposed, that I shou'd see a *Jew*, a *Deist* or a *Turk* doing the same, were I to forbid him either directly or indirectly, I should be no better than a *Bigot* still.

5. O stand clear of this. But be not content with not forbidding any that casts out Devils.

vils. 'Tis well, to go thus far, but do not stop here. If you will avoid all *Bigotry*, go on. In every Instance of this Kind, whatever the Instrument be, acknowledge the Finger of GOD. And not only acknowledge but rejoice in his Work and praise his Name with Thanksgiving. Encourage whomsoever GOD is pleased to employ, to give himself wholly up thereto. Speak well of him wheresoever you are: Defend his Character and his Mission. Enlarge as far as you can his Sphere of Action. Shew him all Kindness in Word and Deed. And cease not to cry to GOD in his Behalf, that he may save both himself and them that hear him.

6. I need add but one Caution. Think not, the *Bigotry* of another, is any Excuse for your own. 'Tis not impossible, that one who casts out Devils himself, may yet forbid you so to do. You may observe, this is the very Case mentioned in the Text. The Apostles forbid another to do what they did themselves. But beware of retorting. It is not your Part, to return Evil for Evil. Another's not observing the Direction of our Lord, is no Reason why you should neglect it. Nay, but let him have all the *Bigotry* to himself. If he forbids *you*, do not you forbid *him*. Rather labour and watch and pray the more, to confirm your Love toward him. If he speaks all Manner of Evil of *you*, speak all Manner of Good (that is true) of *him*. Imitate herein that glorious Saying of a great Man (O that he had always breathed the same Spirit!) "Let *Luther* call me an hundred Devils: I will still reverence him as a Messenger of GOD."



*Catholick Spirit.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

2 KINGS X. 15.





## 2 KINGS X. 15.

*And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the Son of Rechab coming to meet him. And he saluted him and said, Is thine Heart right as my Heart is with thy Heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, Give me thine Hand.*

1. **I**T is allowed even by those who do not pay this great Debt, that Love is due to all Mankind: The royal Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, carrying its own Evidence to all that hear it. And that, not according to the miserable Construction put upon it by the Zealots of old Times, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, thy Relation, Acquaintance, Friend, and hate thine Enemy*: Not so. *I say unto you, saith our Lord, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you: Do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you: That ye may be the Children, may appear so to all Mankind, of your Father which is in Heaven, who maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust.*

2. But it is sure, there is a peculiar Love which we owe to those that love GOD. So *David, all my Delight is upon the Saints that are in the Earth and upon such as excel in Virtue.* And so a greater than he, *a new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another : As I have loved you, that ye also love another. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. John xiii. 34, 35.* This is that Love on which the Apostle *John* so frequently and strongly insists. *This, saith he, is the Message that ye heard from the Beginning, that we should love one another, 1 John c.iii. 11. Hereby perceive we the Love of GOD, because he laid down his Life for us. And we ought, if Love should call us thereto, to lay down our Lives for the Brethren, v. 16. And again, Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of GOD. He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD : For GOD is Love, c. iv. 7, 8. Not that we loved GOD, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. Beloved, if GOD so loved us, we ought also to love one another, v. 10, 11.*

3. All Men approve of this. But do all Men practise it? Daily Experience shews the contrary. Where are even the Christians who *love one another, as He hath given us Commandment?* How many Hindrances lie in the Way? The two grand, general Hindrances are, First, That they can't all think alike: And, in Consequence of this, Secondly, They can't all walk alike: But in several smaller Points their Practice must differ, in Proportion to the Difference of their Sentiments.

4. But altho' a Difference in Opinions or Modes of Worship, may prevent an intire external Union, yet need it prevent our Union in Affection?

Affection? Tho' we can't think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one Heart, tho' we are not of one Opinion? Without all Doubt we may. Herein all the Children of GOD may unite, notwithstanding these smaller Differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another, in Love and in good Works.

5. Surely in this respect, the Example of *Jehu* himself, as mixt a Character as he was of, is well worthy both the Attention and Imitation, of every serious Christian. *And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the Son of Rechab coming to meet him. And he saluted him and said, Is thine Heart right, as my Heart is with thy Heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, Give me thine Hand.*

The Text naturally divides itself into two Parts, First, A Question proposed by *Jehu* to *Jehonadab*, *Is thine Heart right, as my Heart is with thy Heart?* Secondly, An Offer made on *Jehonadab's* answering, *It is. If it be, Give me thine Hand.*

I. 1. And, First, Let us consider the Question proposed by *Jehu* to *Jehonadab*, *Is thine Heart right, as my Heart is with thy Heart?*

The very first Thing we may observe in these Words, is that here is no Enquiry concerning *Jehonadab's* Opinions. And yet 'tis certain, he held some which were very uncommon, indeed quite peculiar to himself: And some which had a close Influence upon Practice; on which likewise he laid so great a Stress, as to intail them upon his Children's Children, to their latest Posterity.

This

This is evident from the Account given by *Jeremiah*, many Years after his Death. I took *Jaazaniah* and his Brethren, and all his Sons, and the whole House of the *Rechabites*—And set before them Pots full of Wine and Cups, and said unto them, Drink ye Wine. But they said, we will drink no Wine; for *Jonadab* (or *Jehonadab*) the Son of *Rechab* our Father (It would be less ambiguous if the Words were placed thus, *Jehonadab* our Father the Son of *Rechab*: Out of Love and Reverence to whom he probably desired his Descendants might be called by his Name) commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no Wine, neither ye nor your Sons for-ever. Neither shall ye build House, nor sow Seed, nor plant Vineyard, nor have any; but all your Days ye shall dwell in Tents—And we have obeyed and done according to all that *Jonadab* our Father commanded us, *Jer. xxxv. 3—10.*

2. And yet *Jehu* (altho' it seems to have been his Manner, both in Things secular and religious, to drive furiously) does not concern himself at all with any of these Things, but lets *Jehonadab* abound in his own Sense. And neither of them appears to have given the other the least Disturbance, touching the Opinions which he maintained.

3. 'Tis very possible, that many good Men now also may entertain peculiar Opinions: And some of them may be as singular herein, as even *Jehonadab* was. And 'tis certain, so long as we know but in Part, that all Men will not see all Things alike. It is an unavoidable Consequence of the present Weakness and Shortness of human Understanding, that several Men will be of several Minds, in Religion as well as in common Life.

So

So it has been from the Beginning of the World, and so it will be *till the Restitution of all Things*.

4. Nay farther : Altho' every Man necessarily believes, that every particular Opinion which he holds is true (for, to believe any Opinion is not true, is the same Thing as, not to hold it :) Yet can no Man be assured, That all his own Opinions, taken together, are true. Nay every thinking Man is assured, They are not : Seeing *Humanum est errare et nescire*. To be ignorant of many Things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary Condition of Humanity. This therefore he is sensible is his own Case. He knows in the general, that he himself is mistaken. Altho' in what Particulars he mistakes, he does not, perhaps cannot know.

5. I say, perhaps he cannot know. For who can tell how far invincible Ignorance may extend ? Or (that comes to the same Thing) invincible Prejudice : Which is so often fixt in tender Minds, that it is afterwards impossible to tear up what has taken so deep a Root. And who can say, unless he knew every Circumstance attending it, how far any Mistake is culpable ? Seeing all Guilt must suppose some Concurrence of the Will : Of which he only can judge who searcheth the Heart.

6. Every wise Man therefore will allow others the same Liberty of thinking, which he desires they should allow him : And will no more insist on their embracing his Opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him, with whom he desires to unite in Love,

that single Question, *Is thine Heart right, as my Heart is with thy Heart ?*

7. We may, Secondly, observe, That here is no Enquiry made, concerning *Jehonadab's* Mode of Worship : Altho' 'tis highly probable, there was in this respect also, a very wide Difference between them. For we may well believe *Jehonadab* as well as all his Posterity, worshipped **GOD** at *Jerusalem* : Whereas *Jehu* did not ; he had more Regard to State-Policy than Religion. And therefore altho' he slew the Worshippers of *Baal*, and destroyed *Baal* out of Israel : Yet from the convenient *Sin* of *Jeroboam*, the Worship of the golden Calves, he departed not. 2 Kings x. 29.

8. But even among Men of an upright Heart, Men who desire to *have a Conscience void of Offence*, it must needs be, that as long as there are various Opinions, there will be various Ways of worshipping **GOD** : Seeing a Variety of Opinion necessarily implies a Variety of Practice. And as in all Ages, Men have differed in nothing more than in their Opinions concerning the Supreme Being, so in nothing have they more differed from each other, than in the Manner of worshipping him. Had this been only in the Heathen World, it would not have been at all surprizing. For we know these *by their Wisdom knew not GOD* ; nor therefore could they know how to worship him. But is it not strange, That even in the Christian World, altho' they all agree in the general, *GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth* : Yet the particular Modes of worshipping **GOD**, are almost as various as among the Heathens ?

9. But

9. And how shall we chuse, among so much Variety? No Man can chuse for, or prescribe to another. But every one must follow the Dictates of his own Conscience, in Simplicity and godly Sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own Mind, and then act according to the best Light he has. Nor has any Creature Power, to constrain another to walk by his own Rule. GOD has given no Right to any of the Children of Men, thus to lord it over the Conscience of his Brethren. But every Man must judge for himself, as every Man must give an Account of himself to GOD.

10. Altho' therefore every Follower of Christ is obliged by the very Nature of the Christian Institution, to be a Member of some particular Congregation or other, some Church, as it is usually term'd: (Which implies a particular Manner of worshipping GOD; for *two cannot walk together unless they be agreed*;) Yet none can be obliged by any Power on Earth, but that of his own Conscience, to prefer this or that Congregation to another, this or that particular Manner of Worship. I know it is commonly supposed, That the Place of our Birth, fixes the Church to which we ought to belong: That one, for Instance, who is born in *England* ought to be a Member of that which is stiled *The Church of England*, and consequently to worship GOD in the particular Manner which is prescribed by that Church. I was once a zealous Maintainer of this: But I find many Reasons to abate of this Zeal. I fear, it is attended with such Difficulties, that no reasonable Man can get over. Not  
the

the least of which is, that if this Rule had took Place, there could have been no Reformation from Popery : Seeing it intirely destroys the Right of private Judgment, on which that whole Reformation stands.

11. I dare not therefore presume to impose my Mode of Worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical. But my Belief is no Rule for another. I ask not therefore of him with whom I would unite in Love, “ Are you of my Church ? Of my Congregation ? Do you receive the same Form of Church-Government, and allow the same Church-Officers with me ? Do you join in the same Form of Prayer, wherein I worship GOD ? ” I inquire not, Do you receive the Supper of the Lord, in the same Posture and Manner that I do ? Nor, whether in the Administration of Baptism, you agree with me, in admitting Sureties for the Baptized ? In the Manner of administering it ? Or the Age of those to whom it should be administered ? Nay, I ask not of you (as clear as I am in my own Mind) Whether you allow Baptism and the Lord’s Supper at all ? Let all these Things stand by : We will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient Season. My only Question at present is this, *Is thine Heart right, as my Heart is with thy Heart ?*

12. But what is properly implied in the Question ? I do not mean what did *Jehu* imply therein ? But what should a Follower of Christ understand thereby, when he proposes it to any of his Brethren ?

The first Thing implied in this : Is thy Heart right with GOD ? Dost thou believe his Being,  
and



and his Perfections? His Eternity, Immensity, Wisdom, Power: His Justice, Mercy and Truth? Dost thou believe, that he now *upholdeth all Things, by the Word of his Power?* And that he governs even the most minute, even the most noxious, to his own Glory and the Good of them that love him? Hast thou a divine Evidence, a supernatural Conviction, of the Things of GOD? Dost thou *walk by Faith not by Sight? Looking not at temporal Things, but Things eternal?*

13. Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, GOD over all, *blessed for ever?* Is he revealed in thy Soul? Dost thou *know Jesus Christ and him crucified?* Does he dwell in thee, and thou in him? Is he formed in thy Heart by Faith? Having absolutely disclaimed all thy own Works, thy own Righteousness, hast thou *submitted thyself unto the Righteousness of GOD, which is by Faith in Christ Jesus?* Art thou *found in him, not having thy own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is by Faith?* And art thou, thro' him, *fighting the good Fight of Faith, and laying hold of eternal Life?*

14. Is thy Faith *ἐνεργητικὴ καὶ ἀγάπητος* Filled with the Energy of Love? Dost thou love GOD? I do not say, *a'ove all Things*; for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous Expression: But *with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Soul and with all thy Strength?* Dost thou seek all thy Happiness in him alone? And dost thou find what thou seekest? Does thy Soul continually *magnify the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoice in GOD thy Saviour?* Having learned in every Thing to give Thanks, dost thou find, *it is a joyful and a pleasant Thing to be thankful?*

*thankful? Is GOD the Center of thy Soul? The Sum of all thy Desires? Art thou accordingly laying up thy Treasure in Heaven, and counting all Things else Dung and Dross? Hath the Love of GOD cast the Love of the World out of thy Soul? Then thou art crucified to the World. Thou art dead to all below and thy Life is hid with Christ in GOD.*

15. Art thou employed in doing *not thy own Will, but the Will of him that sent thee?* Of him that sent thee down to sojourn here a while, to spend a few Days in a strange Land, till having finished the Work he hath given thee to do, thou return to thy Father's House? Is it thy Meat and Drink *to do the Will of thy Father which is in Heaven?* Is thine Eye single in all Things? Always fixt on him? Always looking unto Jesus? Dost thou point at him in whatsoever thou dost? In all thy Labour, thy Business, thy Conversation? Aiming only at the Glory of GOD in all? *Whatsoever thou dost, either in Word or Deed, doing it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks unto GOD even the Father thro' Him?*

16. Does the Love of GOD constrain thee to *serve him with Fear?* To rejoice unto him with *Reverence?* Art thou more afraid of displeasing GOD, than either of Death or Hell? Is nothing so terrible to thee as the Thought of *offending the Eyes of his Glory?* Upon this Ground dost thou *hate all evil Ways;* every Transgression of his holy and perfect Law? And herein exercise thyself, to have a Conscience void of *Offen. e toward GOD and toward Man?*

17. Is thy Heart right toward thy Neighbour? Dost thou *love as thyself*, all Mankind without Exception? *If you love those only that love you, what Thank have you?* Do you love your Enemies? Is your Soul full of Good-will, of tender Affection toward them? Do you love even the Enemies of GOD? The Unthankful and Unholy? Do your Bowels yearn over them? Could you *wish yourself* (temporally) *accurst* for their Sake? And do you shew this, by  *blessing them that curse you, and praying for those that despightfully use you and persecute you?*

18. Do you shew your Love by your Works? While you have Time, as you have Opportunity, do you in Fact *do Good to all Men*, Neighbours or Strangers, Friends or Enemies, Good or Bad? Do you do them all the Good you can? Endeavouring to supply all their Wants, assisting them both in Body and Soul, to the uttermost of your Power? If thou art thus minded, may every Christian say, yea, if thou art but sincerely desirous of it, and following on till thou attain, then *thy Heart is right, as my Heart is with thy Heart.*

II. 1. *If it be, give me thy Hand.* I do not mean, “Be of my Opinion.” You need not. I do not expect nor desire it. Neither do I mean, “I will be of your Opinion.” I cannot. It does not depend on my Choice: I can no more think, than I can see or hear as I will. Keep you your Opinion, I mine: And that as steadily as ever. You need not even endeavour to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute those Points, or to hear or  
speak

ſpeak one Word concerning them: Let all Opinions alone on one Side and the other. Only *give me thy Hand.*

2. I do not mean, “ Embrace my Modes of Worship ; or, I will embrace yours.” This alſo is a Thing which does not depend either on your Choice or mine. We muſt both act, as each is fully perſuaded in his own Mind. Hold you faſt that which you believe is moſt acceptable to GOD, and I will do the ſame. I believe the *Episcopal* Form of Church-Government to be ſcriptural and apoſtolic. If you think the *Presbyterian* or *Independent* is better, think ſo ſtill and act accordingly. I believe Infants ought to be baptized, and that this may be done either by Dipping or Sprinkling. If you are otherwiſe perſuaded, be ſo ſtill, and follow your own Perſuaſion. It appears to me, That Forms of Prayer are of excellent Uſe, particularly in the great Congregation. If you judge extemporary Prayer to be of more Uſe, act ſuitably to your own Judgment. My Sentiment is, That I ought not to forbid Water, wherein Perſons may be baptized : And, That I ought to eat Bread and drink Wine, as a Memorial of my dying Maſter. However, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the Light you have. I have no Deſire to diſpute with you one Moment, upon any of the preceding Heads. Let all theſe ſmaller Points ſtand aſide. Let them never come into Sight. *If thine Heart is as my Heart,* if thou loveſt GOD and all Mankind, I aſk no more : *Give me thine Hand.*

3. I mean, Firſt, Love me. And that not only as thou loveſt all Mankind ; not only as  
thou

thou lovest thine Enemies, or the Enemies of GOD, those that hate thee, that *despitefully use thee and persecute thee* : Not only as a Stranger, as one of whom thou knowest neither Good nor Evil. I am not satisfied with this. No: *If thine Heart be right, as mine with thy Heart*, then love me with a very tender Affection, as a Friend that is closer than a Brother: As a Brother in Christ, a Fellow-citizen of the new Jerufalem, a Fellow-foldier engaged in the same Warfare, under the same Captain of our Salvation. Love me as a Companion in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus, and a Joint-heir of his Glory.

4. Love me (but in an higher Degree, than thou dost the Bulk of Mankind) with the Love that is *long-suffering and kind*, that is patient, if I am ignorant or out of the Way, bearing and not increasing my Burthen, and is tender, soft and compassionate still: That *envieth not*, if at any Time it please GOD, to prosper me in this Work even more than thee. Love me with the Love that *is not provoked* either at my Follies or Infirmities; or even at my acting (if it should sometimes so appear to thee) not according to the Will of GOD. Love me so as to *think no Evil* of me, to put away all Jealousy and evil Surmising. Love me with the Love that *covereth all Things*, that never reveals either my Faults or Infirmities; that *believeth all Things*, is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest Construction on all my Words and Actions: That *hopeth all Things*; either that the Thing related was never done; or not done with such Circumstances as are related: Or at least, that it was done with a good Intention: Or in sudden

Stress of Temptation. And hope to the End, that whatever is amiss, will by the Grace of GOD be corrected, and whatever is wanting supplied, thro' the Riches of his Mercy in Christ Jesus.

5. I mean, Secondly, Commend me to GOD in all thy Prayers, wrestle with him in my Behalf, that he would speedily correct what he sees amiss, and supply what is wanting in me. In thy nearest Access to the Throne of Grace, beg of him who is then very present with thee, That my Heart may be more as thy Heart, more right both toward GOD and toward Man: That I may have a fuller Conviction of Things not seen, and a stronger View of the Love of GOD in Christ Jesus: May more steadily walk by Faith, not by Sight, and more earnestly grasp eternal Life. Pray, that the Love of GOD and of all Mankind, may be more largely poured into my Heart; that I may be more fervent and active in doing the Will of my Father which is in Heaven; more zealous of good Works, and more careful to abstain from all Appearance of Evil.

6. I mean, Thirdly, Provoke me to Love and to good Works. Second thy Prayer as thou hast Opportunity, by speaking to me in Love whatsoever thou believest to be for my Soul's Health. Quicken me in the Work which GOD has given me to do, and instruct me how to do it more perfectly. *Yea smite me friendly and reprove me,* wherein soever I appear to thee, to be doing rather my own Will, than the Will of him that sent me. O speak and spare not, whatever thou believest may conduce, either to the amending my Faults, the strengthening my Weakness, the building me up in Love, or the making

ing

ing me more fit in any Kind for the Master's Use.

7. I mean, Lastly, Love me not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth. So far as in Conscience thou canst (retaining still thy own Opinions, and thy own Manner of worshipping GOD) join with me in the Work of GOD, and let us go on Hand in Hand. And thus far, it is certain, thou mayst go. Speak honourably wherever thou art, of the Work of GOD by whomsoever he works, and kindly of his Messengers. And if it be in thy Power, not only sympathize with them when they are in any Difficulty or Distress, but give them a chearful and effectual Assistance, that they may glorify GOD on thy Behalf.

8. Two Things should be observed, with regard to what has been spoken under this last Head. The one, that whatsoever Love, whatsoever Offices of Love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal Assistance, I claim from him whose Heart is right, as my Heart is with his: The same I am ready, by the Grace of GOD, according to my Measure, to give him. The other, that I have not made this Claim, in Behalf of myself only, but of all whose Heart is right toward GOD and Man, that we may all love another, as Christ hath loved us.

III. 1. One Inference we may make from what has been said. We may learn from hence, *What is a Catholick Spirit.*

There is scarce any Expression which has been more grossly misunderstood, and more dangerously misapplied than this. But it will be easy for

any who calmly consider the preceding Observations, to correct any such Misapprehensions of it, and to prevent any such Misapplication.

For from hence we may learn, First, That a *Catholick Spirit*, is not *speculative Latitudinarianism*. It is not an Indifference to all Opinions. This is the Spawn of Hell, not the Offspring of Heaven. This Unsettledness of Thought, this being *driven to and fro and tost about with every Wind of Doctrine*, is a great Curse not a Blessing; an irreconcilable Enemy not a Friend to true *Catholicism*. A Man of a truly *Catholick Spirit*, has not now his Religion to seek. He is fixt as the Sun in his Judgment concerning the main Branches of Christian Doctrine. 'Tis true, he is always ready to hear and weigh, whatsoever can be offered against his Principles. But as this does not shew any wavering in his own Mind, so neither does it occasion any. He does not halt between two Opinions, nor vainly endeavour to blend them into one. Observe this, you who know not what Spirit ye are of: Who call yourselves Men of a *Catholick Spirit*, only because you are of a muddy Understanding: Because your Mind is all in a Mist: Because you have no settled, consistent Principles, but are for jumbling all Opinions together. Be convinced, that you have quite missed your Way: You know not where you are. You think you are got into the very Spirit of Christ; when in Truth you are nearer the Spirit of Antichrist. Go first and learn the first Elements of the Gospel of Christ, and then shall you learn to be of a truly *Catholick Spirit*.



2. From what has been said we may learn, Secondly, That a *Catholick Spirit* is not any Kind of *practical Latitudinarianism*. It is not Indifference as to publick Worship, or as to the outward Manner of performing it. This likewise would not be a Blessing but a Curse. Far from being an Help thereto, it would so long as it remained be an unspeakable Hindrance to the worshipping of GOD in Spirit and in Truth. But the Man of a truly *Catholick Spirit*, having weighed all Things in the Balance of the Sanctuary, has no Doubt, no Scruple at all concerning that particular Mode of Worship wherein he joins. He is clearly convinced, that *this* Manner of worshipping of GOD is both scriptural and rational. He knows none in the World, which is more scriptural, none which is more rational. Therefore without rambling hither and thither, he cleaves close thereto, and praises G O D for the Opportunity of so doing.

3. Hence we may, Thirdly, learn, That a *Catholick Spirit* is not Indifference to all Congregations. This is another Sort of Latitudinarianism, no less absurd and unscriptural than the former. But it is far from a Man of a truly *Catholick Spirit*. He is fixt in his Congregation as well as his Principles. He is united to One, not only in Spirit, but by all the outward Ties of Christian Fellowship. There he partakes of all the Ordinances of GOD. There he receives the Supper of the Lord. There he pours out his Soul in publick Prayer, and joins in publick Praise and Thanksgiving. There he rejoices to hear the Word of Reconciliation, the Gospel of the Grace of GOD. With these his nearest, his

best beloved Brethren, on solemn Occasions he seeks GOD by fasting. These particularly he watches over in Love, as they do over his Soul, admonishing, exhorting, comforting, reproofing, and every Way building up each other in the Faith. These he regards as his own Household, and therefore according to the Ability GOD has given him, naturally cares for them, and provides that they may have all the Things that are needful for Life and Godliness.

4. But while he is steddily fixt in his religious Principles, in what he believes to be the Truth as it is in Jesus; while he firmly adheres to that Worship of GOD, which he judges to be most acceptable in his Sight, and while he is united by the tenderest and closest Ties, to one particular Congregation: His Heart is enlarged toward all Mankind, those he knows and those he does not: He embraces with strong and cordial Affection, Neighbours and Strangers, Friends and Enemies. This is catholick or universal Love. And he that has this, is of a *Catholick Spirit*. For Love alone gives the Title to this Character. Catholick Love is a *Catholick Spirit*.

5. But if we take this Word in the strictest Sense, a Man of a *Catholick Spirit*, is one who in the Manner above mentioned, *gives his Hand*, to all whose *Hearts are right with his Heart*. One who knows how to value, and praise GOD for all the Advantages he enjoys; with regard to the Knowledge of the Things of GOD, the true, scriptural Manner of worshipping him; and above all, his Union with a Congregation, fearing GOD and working Righteousness. One who retaining these Blessings with the strictest Care,  
 keeping

keeping them as the Apple of his Eye, at the same time loves as Friends, as Brethren in the Lord, as Members of Christ and Children of GOD, as joint Partakers now of the present Kingdom of GOD, and Fellow-heirs of his eternal Kingdom, all of whatever Opinion or Worship or Congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; who love GOD and Man; who rejoicing to please and fearing to offend GOD, are careful to abstain from Evil and zealous of good Works. He is the Man of a truly *Catholick Spirit*, who bears all these continually upon his Heart, who having an unspeakable Tenderness for their Persons, and longing for their Welfare, does not cease to commend them to GOD in Prayer, as well as to plead their Cause before Men: Who speaks comfortably to them, and labours by all his Words, to strengthen their Hands in GOD. He assists them to the uttermost of his Power in all Things, spiritual and temporal. He is ready *to spend and be spent for them; yea, to lay down his Life for their Sake.*

6. Thou, O Man of GOD, think on these Things. If thou art already in this Way, go on. If thou hast heretofore mistook the Path, bless GOD who hath brought thee back. And now run the Race which is set before thee, in the royal Way of universal Love. Take heed, lest thou be either wavering in thy Judgment, or straitened in thy Bowels. But keep an even Pace, rooted in the Faith once delivered to the Saints, and grounded in Love, in true, Catholick Love, till thou art swallowed up in Love for ever and ever.



*Christian Perfection.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

PHILIPPIANS iii. 12.



---

---

PHIL. iii. 12.

*Not as tho' I had already attained,  
either were already perfect.*

1. **T**HERE is scarce any Expression in Holy Writ, which has given more Offence than this. The Word *Perfect* is what many cannot bear. The very Sound of it is an Abomination to them. And whosoever *preaches Perfection* (as the Phrase is) *i. e.* asserts that it is attainable in this Life, runs great Hazard of being accounted by them, worse than a Heathen Man or a Publican.

2. And hence some have advised, wholly to lay aside the Use of those Expressions ; “ because they have given so great Offence.” But are they not found in the Oracles of GOD ? If so, by what Authority, can any Messenger of GOD lay them aside, even tho' all Men should be offended ? We have not so learned Christ ; neither may we thus give Place to the Devil. Whatsoever GOD hath spoken, that will we speak, whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear : Knowing that then alone can any Minister of Christ be *pure from the Blood of all Men*, when he hath not shunned to declare unto them all the Counsel of GOD.

3. We

3. We may not therefore lay these Expressions aside, seeing they are the Words of GOD, and not of Man. But we may, and ought to explain the Meaning of them ; that those who are sincere of Heart, may not err to the Right-hand or to the Left, from the Mark of the Prize of their high Calling. And this is the more needful to be done, because in the Verse already repeated, the Apostle speaks of himself as not perfect ; *Not,* saith he, *as tho' I were already perfect.* And yet immediately after, in the fifteenth Verse, he speaks of himself, yea and many others, as perfect. *Let us,* saith he, *as many as be perfect, be thus minded.*

4. In order therefore to remove the Difficulty arising from this seeming Contradiction, as well as to give Light to them who are pressing forward to the Mark, and that those who are lame be not turned out of the Way, I shall endeavour to shew,

*First,* In what Sense Christians are *not,* and,  
*Secondly,* In what Sense they are *perfect.*

I. 1. In the first Place I shall endeavour to shew, in what Sense Christians are *not perfect.* And both from Experience and Scripture it appears, first, that they are not perfect in Knowledge : They are not *so* perfect in this Life, as to be free from Ignorance. They know, it may be, in common with other Men, many Things relating to the present World : And they know, with regard to the World to come, the general Truths which GOD hath revealed. They know likewise (what *the natural Man receiveth not* ; for these Things are *spiritually discerned*) *What Man-*  
ner

ner of Love it is, wherewith the Father hath loved them, that they should be called the Sons of GOD ; They know the mighty Working of his Spirit in their Hearts, and the Wisdom of his Providence, directing all their Paths, and causing all Things to work together for their Good. Yea, they know in every Circumstance of Life, what the Lord requireth of them, and how to keep a Conscience void of Offence loth toward GOD and toward Man.

2. But innumerable are the Things which they know not. Touching the Almighty Himself, they cannot search Him out to Perfection. Lo, these are but a Part of his Ways ; but the Thunder of his Power, who can understand ? They cannot understand, I will not say, how there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One ; Or how the eternal Son of GOD took upon himself the Form of a Servant : But not any one Attribute, not any one Circumstance of the Divine Nature. Neither is it for them to know the Times and Seasons, when GOD will work his great Works upon the Earth ; no, not even those which he hath in Part revealed, by his Servants and Prophets, since the World began. Much less do they know, when GOD having accomplished the Number of his Elect will hasten his Kingdom : When the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat.

3. They know not the Reasons even of many of his present Dispensations with the Sons of Men : But are constrained to rest here, Tho' Clouds and Darknes are round about him, Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Seat.

Yea, often with regard to his Dealings with themselves doth their Lord say unto them, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* And how little do they know, of what is ever before them, of even the visible Works of his Hands? How he *spreadeth the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing?* How he unites all the Parts of this vast Machine by a secret Chain which cannot be broken? So great is the Ignorance, so very little the Knowledge of even the best of Men.

2.) 4. No one then is so perfect in this Life, as to be free from Ignorance. Nor, secondly, from Mistake, which indeed is almost an unavoidable Consequence of it; seeing those who *know but in part*, are ever liable to err, touching the Things which they know not. 'Tis true, the Children of GOD do not mistake, as to the Things essential to Salvation. They do not *put Darkness for Light, or Light for Darkness*, neither *seek Death in the Error of their Life.* For they are *taught of GOD*, and the Way which he teaches them, the Way of Holiness is so plain, that *the wayfaring Man, tho' a Fool, need not err therein.* But in Things unessential to Salvation, they do err, and that frequently. The best and wisest of Men are frequently mistaken, even with regard to Facts: Believing those Things not to have been, which really were, or those to have been done, which were not. Or suppose they are not mistaken as to the Fact itself, they may be, with regard to its Circumstances; believing them, or many of them, to have been quite different, from what in Truth they were. And hence cannot but arise many farther Mistakes.

Hence



Hence they may believe either past or present Actions, which were, or are evil, to be good; and such as were, or are good, to be evil. Hence also they may judge, not according to Truth, with regard to the Characters of Men: And that not only by supposing good Men to be better, or wicked Men to be worse than they are; but by believing them to have been, or to be good Men, who were, or are very wicked: Or, perhaps, those to have been, or to be wicked Men, who were, or are holy and unreprieveable.

5. Nay, with regard to the Holy Scriptures themselves, as careful as they are to avoid it, the best of Men are liable to mistake, and do mistake Day by Day: Especially, with respect to those Parts thereof, which less immediately relate to Practice. Hence even the Children of GOD are not agreed, as to the Interpretation of many Places in Holy Writ: Nor is their Difference of Opinion any Proof that they are not the Children of GOD on either Side. But it is a Proof, that we are no more to expect any living Man, to be *infallible* than to be *omniscient*.

6. If it be objected to what has been observed under this and the preceding Head, that St *John* speaking to his Brethren in the Faith, says, *We have an Unction from the holy One, and know all Things*, 1 John ii. 20. The Answer is plain, “Ye know all Things that are needful for your Soul’s Health.” That the Apostle never designed to extend this farther, that he could not speak it in an absolute Sense, is clear first from hence, that otherwise he would describe the Disciple as *above his Master*; seeing Christ Himself, as Man, knew not all Things.—*Of that Hour*, saith he,

*knoweth no Man, no not the Son, but the Father only.* It is clear, secondly, from the Apostle's own Words that follow, *These Things have I written unto you concerning them that deceive you:* as well as from his frequently repeated Caution, *Let no Man deceive you;* which had been altogether needless, had not those very Persons, who had that Unction from the Holy One, been liable not to Ignorance only; but to mistake also.

7. Even Christians therefore are not *so* perfect, as to be free either from Ignorance or Error. We may, thirdly, add; nor from Infirmities. Only let us take Care to understand this Word aright. Only let us not give that soft Title to known Sins, as the Manner of some is. So, one Man tells us, "Every Man has his Infirmity, and mine is Drunkenness:" Another has the Infirmity of Uncleanness; another of taking God's holy Name in vain. And yet another has the Infirmity of calling his Brother, *Thou Fool*, or returning *Railing for Railing*. It is plain, that all you who thus speak, if ye repent not, shall with your Infirmities, go quick into Hell. But I mean hereby, not only those which are properly termed *bodily Infirmities*, but all those inward or outward Imperfections, which are not of a moral Nature. Such are Weakness or Slowness of Understanding, Dullness or Confusedness of Apprehension, Incoherency of Thought, irregular Quickness or Heaviness of Imagination. Such (to mention no more of this Kind) is the Want of a ready or retentive Memory. Such in another Kind are, those which are commonly in some Measure consequent upon these: Namely, Slowness of Speech, Impropriety of Language,

Language, Ungracefulness of Pronunciation ; to which one might add a thousand nameless Defects, either in Conversation or Behaviour. These are the Infirmities which are found in the best of Men, in a larger or smaller Proportion. And from these none can hope to be perfectly freed, till the Spirit returns to GOD that gave it.

8. Nor can we expect till then, to be wholly free from Temptation. Such Perfection belongeth not to this Life. It is true, there are those who being given up to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs, ſcarce perceive the Temptations which they reſiſt not, and ſo ſeem to be without Temptation. There are alſo many whom the wiſe Enemy of Souls ſeeing to be ſat aſleep in the dead Form of Godlineſs, will not tempt to groſs Sin, leſt they ſhould awake, before they drop into everlaſting Burnings. I know, there are alſo Children of GOD, who being now *juſtified freely*, having found *Redemption in the Blood of Chriſt*, for the preſent feel no Temptation. GOD hath ſaid to their Enemies, *Touch not my Anointed, and do my Children no Harm.* And for this Seafon, it may be for Weeks or Months, he cauſeth them to *ride on high Places*, he beareth them as on Eagles Wings, above all the fiery Darts of the wicked One. But this State will not laſt always, as we may learn from that ſingle Conſideration, that the Son of GOD himſelf, in the Days of his Fleſh, was tempted even to the End of his Life. Therefore ſo let his Servant expect to be ; for *it is enough that he be as his Maſter.*

9. Christian Perfection therefore does not imply (as some Men seem to have imagin'd) an Exemption either from Ignorance or Mistake, or Infirmities or Temptations. Indeed it is only another Term for Holiness. They are two Names for the same Thing. Thus, every one that is holy, is in the Scripture Sense, perfect. Yet we may, lastly, observe, that neither in this Respect is there any absolute Perfection on Earth. There is no *Perfection of Degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual Increase. So that how much soever any Man has attained, or in how high a Degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to *grow in Grace*, and daily to advance in the Knowledge and Love of God his Saviour.

II.) 1. In what Sense then are Christians perfect? This is what I shall endeavour, in the second Place, to shew. But it should be premised, that there are several Stages in Christian Life as in Natural: Some of the Children of GOD being but new-born Babies; others having attained to more Maturity. And accordingly St. *John*, in his first Epistle (c. ii. 12. &c.) applies himself severally, to those he terms little Children, those he styles young Men, and those whom he intitles Fathers. *I write unto you, little Children, saith the Apostle, because your Sins are forgiven you: Because thus far you have attained, being justified freely, you have Peace with GOD, thro' Jesus Christ. I write unto you, young Men, because ye have overcome the wicked One; or (as he afterwards add.) because ye are strong, and the Word of GOD abideth in you. Ye have quenched the fiery Darts*  
of

of the wicked One, the Doubts and Fears, wherewith he disturbed your first Peace, and the Witness of GOD that your Sins are forgiven, now *abideth in your Heart*. *I write unto you, Fathers, because ye have known him that is from the Beginning*. Ye have known both the Father and the Son, and the Spirit of Christ in your inmost Soul. Ye are *perfect Men, being grown up to the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ*.

2. It is of these chiefly I speak in the latter Part of this Discourse. For these only are perfect Christians. But even Babes in Christ are in such a Sense perfect, or *born of GOD* (an Expression taken also in divers Senses) as first, Not to commit Sin. If any doubt of this Privilege of the Sons of GOD, the Question is not to be decided by abstract Reasonings, which may be drawn out into an endless Length, and leave the Point just as it was before. Neither is it to be determined by the Experience of this or that particular Person. Many may suppose they do not commit Sin, when they do; but this proves nothing either Way. *To the Law and to the Testimony we appeal. Let GOD be true, and every Man a Liar*. By his Word will we abide, and that alone. Hereby we ought to be judged.

3. Now the Word of GOD plainly declares, that even those who are justified, who are born again in the lowest Sense, *do not continue in Sin*; that they cannot *live any longer therein* (Rom. vi. 1, 2.) that they are *planted together in the Likeness of the Death of Christ* (Verse 5.) That their *old Man is crucified with him, the Body of Sin being destroyed, so that thenceforth they do not serve Sin*: that being *dead with Christ, they are freed from Sin* (Verses

(Verses 6, 7.) That they are *dead unto Sin*, and *alive unto GOD* (Verse 11.) That *Sin hath no more Dominion over them*, who are *not under the Law*, but *under Grace*; but that these *being free from Sin*, are *become the Servants of Righteousness*, Verses 14, 18.

4. The very least which can be implied in these Words, is, that the Persons spoken of therein, namely, all real Christians or Believers in Christ, are made free from outward Sin. And the same Freedom which St. Paul here expresses in such Variety of Phrases, St. Peter expresses in that one (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.) *He that hath suffered in the Flesh, hath ceased from Sin,—that he no longer should live—to the Desires of Men, but to the Will of GOD.* For this *ceasing from Sin*, if it be interpreted in the lowest Sense, as regarding only the outward Behaviour, must denote the ceasing from the outward Act, from any outward Transgression of the Law.

5. But most express are the well known Words of St. John, in the third Chapter of his first Epistle, Verse the eighth, &c. *He that commiteth Sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the Beginning. For this Purpose the Son of GOD was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. 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.* And those in the fifth, Verse 18. *We know that whosoever is born of GOD sinneth not. But he that is begotten of GOD keepeth himself, and that wicked One toucheth him not.*

6. Indeed it is said, this means only, He sinneth not wilfully; or, he doth not commit Sin habitually;

*habitually; or, not as other Men do; or, not as he did before.* But by whom is this said? By St. *John*? No. There is no such Word in the Text: Nor in the whole Chapter; nor in all this Epistle; nor in any Part of his Writings whatsoever. Why then, the best Way to answer a bold Assertion is, simply to deny it. And if any Man can prove it from the Word of GOD, let him bring forth his strong Reasons.

7. And a Sort of Reason there is, which has been frequently brought to support these strange Assertions, drawn from the Examples recorded in the Word of GOD, “What, say they, did not *Abraham* himself commit Sin, prevaricating and denying his Wife? Did not *Moses* commit Sin, when he provoked GOD, at the *Waters of Strife*? Nay, to produce one for all, did not even *David*, the *Man after GOD’s own Heart*, commit Sin, in the Matter of *Uriah* the *Hittite*, even Murder and Adultery?” It is most sure he did. All this is true. But what is it you would infer from hence? It may be granted, *first*, That *David*, in the general Course of his Life, was one of the holiest Men among the *Jews*. And, *secondly*, That the holiest Men among the *Jews* did sometimes commit Sin. But if you would hence infer, that *all Christians* do, and *must* commit Sin, as long as they live: This Consequence we utterly deny. It will never follow from those Premises.

8. Those who argue thus, seem never to have considered that Declaration of our Lord (*Matth. xi. 11.*) *Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of Woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.* I fear

fear indeed there are some who have imagined *the Kingdom of Heaven* here, to mean the Kingdom of Glory: As if the Son of GOD had just discovered to us, that the least glorified Saint in Heaven is greater than any Man upon Earth! To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There can therefore no Doubt be made but *the Kingdom of Heaven* here, (as in the following Verse, where it is said to be *taken by Force*) or, *the Kingdom of God*, as St. *Luke* expresses it, is that Kingdom of GOD on Earth, whereunto all true Believers in Christ, all real Christians belong. In these Words then our Lord declares two Things. *First*, That before his coming in the Flesh, among all the Children of Men, there had not been one greater than *John the Baptist*: Whence it evidently follows, that neither *Abraham*, *David*, nor any *Jew* was greater than *John*. Our Lord, *secondly*, declares, that he which is least in the Kingdom of GOD (in that Kingdom which he came to set up on Earth, and which, *the Violent* now began *to take by Force*) is greater than he. Not a *greater Prophet* (as some have interpreted the Word) for this is palpably false in Fact. But greater in the Grace of GOD, and the Knowledge of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. Therefore we cannot measure the Privileges of real Christians, by those formerly given to the *Jews*. *Their Ministrations* (or Dispensations) we allow *was glorious*; but ours *exceeds in Glory*. So that whosoever would bring down the *Christian Dispensation* to the *Jewish Standard*, whosoever gleans up the Examples of Weakness, recorded in the Law and the Prophets, and thence infers, that they who have *put on Christ*, are indued with no greater Strength,



Strength, doth greatly err, neither knowing the Scriptures, not the Power of GOD.

9. “ But are there not Assertions in Scripture  
 “ which prove the same Thing, if it cannot be  
 “ inferred from those Examples? Does not the  
 “ Scripture say expressly, *Even a just Man sinneth seven Times a Day?*” I answer, No. The Scripture says no such Thing. There is no such Text in all the Bible. That which seems to be intended is the sixteenth Verse of the Twenty fourth Chapter of *the Proverbs*: The Words of which are these, *A just Man falleth seven Times, and riseth up again.* But this is quite another Thing. For, *first*, the Words *a Day*, are not in the Text. So that if a just Man falls seven Times in his Life, it is as much as is affirmed here. *Secondly*, Here is no Mention of *falling into Sin* at all; what is here mentioned is, *falling into temporal Affliction.* This plainly appears from the Verse before, the Words of which are these: *Lay not wait, O wicked Man, against the Dwelling of the Righteous; spoil not his Resting-place.* It follows, *For a just Man falleth seven Times, and riseth up again: But the Wicked shall fall into Mischief.* As if he had said, “ GOD will deliver him out of his Trouble. But when thou fallest, there shall be none to deliver thee.”

10. But however in other Places, continue the Objectors, *Solomon* does assert plainly, *There is no Man that sinneth not* (1 Kings viii. 46. 2 Chron. vi. 35.) yea, *there is not a just Man upon Earth that doth Good, and sinneth not* (Eccles. vii. 20.) I answer, Without Doubt, thus it was, in the Days of *Solomon.* Yea, thus it was, from *Adam* to *Moses*, from *Moses* to *Solomon*, and from *Solomon*

*lomon* to CHRIST. There was *then* no Man that sinned not. Even from the Day that Sin entered into the World, there was not a just Man upon Earth that did Good, and sinned not, *until* the Son of GOD was manifested *to take away our Sins*. It is unquestionably true, that *the Heir, as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant*. And that *even so* they (all the holy Men of old, who were under the *Jewish Dispensation*) were, during that Infant-state of the Church, in *Bondage under the Elements of the World*. But when *the Fulness of the Time was come*, GOD sent forth his Son, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that they might receive the *Adoption of Sons*; that they might receive that *Grace which is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Gospel*, (2 Tim. i. 10.) Now therefore they are no more *Servants, but Sons*. So that whatsoever was the Case of those under the Law, we may safely affirm with St. *John*, that since the Gospel was given, *He that is born of God, sinneth not*.

11. It is of great importance to observe, and that more carefully than is commonly done. the wide Difference that is between the *Jewish* and the *Christian Dispensation*: And that Ground of it which the same Apostle assigns in the seventh Chapter of his Gospel, Verse 38, &c. After he had there related those Words of our blessed Lord, *He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water*, he immediately subjoins, *This spake he of the Spirit*, ἃ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς αὐτόν, which  
they

they who should believe on him, were afterwards ~~to~~ receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Now the Apostle cannot mean here (as some have taught) That the Miracle-working Power of the Holy Ghost was not yet given. For this was given; our Lord had given it to all his Apostles, when he first sent them forth to preach the Gospel. He then gave them *Power over unclean Spirits to cast them out; Power to heal the Sick, yea, to raise the Dead.* But the Holy Ghost was not yet given in his sanctifying Graces, as he was after Jesus was glorified. It was then when *he ascended up on high, and led Captivity Captive,* that he received those Gifts for Men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, then first it was, that they who waited for the Promise of the Father, were made more than Conquerors over Sin, by the Holy Ghost given unto them.

12. That this great Salvation from Sin was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter also plainly testifies; where speaking of his Brethren in the *Flesh,* as now receiving the End of their Faith, the Salvation of their Souls, he adds (1 Pet. i. 9, 10, &c.) *Of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace (i. e. the gracious Dispensation) that should come unto you: Searching what, or what Manner of Time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory (the glorious Salvation.) that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, That not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister, the Things which are now reported unto you by*

VOL. III. T them

*them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven (viz. at the Day of Pentecost, and so unto all Generations, into the Hearts of all true Believers.) On this Ground, even the Grace which was brought unto them by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Apostle might well build that strong Exhortation, Wherefore girding up the Loyns of your Mind,—as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all Manner of Conversation.*

13. Those who have duly considered these Things must allow, that the Privileges of Christians, are in no wise to be measured by what the Old Testament records concerning those who were under the *Jewish Dispensation*: Seeing the Fullness of Times is now come; the Holy Ghost is now given: The great Salvation of GOD is brought unto Men, by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of Heaven is now set up on Earth; concerning which the Spirit of GOD declared of old (so far is *David* from being the Pattern or Standard of Christian Perfection) *He that is feeble among them at that Day, shall be as David: And the House of David shall be as GOD, as the Angel of the Lord before them (Zech. xii. 8.)*

14. If therefore you would prove that the Apostle's Words, *he that is born of GOD, sinneth not*, are not to be understood, according to their plain, natural, obvious Meaning, it is from the New Testament you are to bring your Proofs: Else you will fight as one that beateth the Air. And the first of these which is usually brought, is taken from the Examples recorded in the New Testament. "The Apostles themselves (it is said) committed Sin: Nay the greatest of them,  
*Peter*

*Peter* and *Paul* : *St. Paul*, by his sharp Contention with *Barnabas*, and *St. Peter*, by his Diffimulation at *Antioch*." Well ; suppose both *Peter* and *Paul* did then commit Sin : What is it you would infer from hence ? That *all the other Apostles* committed Sin sometimes ? There is no Shadow of Proof in this. Or, would you thence infer, That *all the other Christians* of the Apostolic Age committed Sin ? Worse and worse ; this is such an Inference as one would imagine a Man in his Senses could never have thought of. Or, will you argue thus ? " If two of the Apostles did once commit Sin, then *all other Christians, in all Ages*, do, and will commit Sin as long as they live." Alas, my Brother ! a Child of common Understanding, would be ashamed of such Reasoning as this. Least of all can you with any Colour of Argument infer, " That any Man *must* commit Sin at all." No ; GOD forbid we should thus speak. No Necessity of sinning was laid upon *Them*. The Grace of GOD was surely sufficient for them. And it *is* sufficient for *us* at this Day. With the Temptation which fell on *them*, there *was* a Way to escape ; as there *is* to every Soul of Man in every Temptation. So that whosoever is tempted to any Sin, *need* not yield ; for no Man is tempted above that he is able to bear.

15. " But *St. Paul* besought the Lord thrice, and yet he could not escape from his Temptation." Let us consider his own Words literally translated. *There was given to me, a Thorn, to the Flesh, an Angel, or Messenger of Satan, to buffet me. Touching this I besought the Lord thrice, that it or he might depart from me. And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee. For my Strength*

is made perfect in Weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in these my Weaknesses, that the Strength of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take Pleasure in Weaknesses,—for when I am weak, then am I strong.

16. As this Scripture is one of the strong Holds of the Patrons of Sin, it may be proper to weigh it thoroughly. Let it be observed then, *first*, It does by no Means appear, That this Thorn, whatsoever it was, occasioned St. Paul to commit Sin: Much less laid him under any Necessity of doing so. Therefore, from hence it can never be proved that any Christian *must* commit Sin. *Secondly*, The antient Fathers inform us, it was bodily Pain: A violent Head-ach, saith *Tertullian* (de Pudic.) to which both *Chrysostom* and St. *Jerom* agree. St. *Cyprian* \* expresses it a little more generally in those terms, *Many and grievous Torments of the Flesh and of the Body* †. *Thirdly*, To this exactly agree the Apostle's own Words, *A Thorn to the Flesh, to smite, beat, or buffet me. My Strength is made perfect in Weakness.* Which same Word occurs no less than four times in these two Verses only. But, *fourthly*, Whatsoever it was, it could not be either inward or outward Sin. It could no more be inward Stirrings, than outward Expressions, of Pride, Anger, or Lust. This is manifest beyond all possible Exception, from the Words that immediately follow, *Most gladly will I glory in these my Weaknesses, that the Strength of Christ may rest upon me.* What? Did he glory in Pride, in Anger, in Lust? Was it

\* De mortalitate.

† Carnis & corporis multa ac gravia tormenta.

through

through these *Weaknesses*, that the Strength of Christ rested upon him? He goes on; *Therefore I take Pleasure in Weaknesses; for when I am weak, then am I strong; i. e. When I am weak in Body, then am I strong in Spirit.* But will any Man dare to say, When I am weak by Pride or Lust, then I am strong in Spirit? I call you all to record this Day, who find the Strength of Christ resting upon you, can you glory in Anger, or Pride, or Lust? Can you take Pleasure in these Infirmities? Do these Weaknesses make you strong? Would you not leap into Hell, were it possible, to escape them? Even by yourselves then judge, whether the Apostle could glory, and take Pleasure in them! Let it be, *lastly*, observed, That this Thorn was given to St. Paul above fourteen Years before he wrote this Epistle: Which itself was wrote several Years before he finished his Course. So that he had after this a long Course to run, many Battles to fight, many Victories to gain, and great Increase to receive in all the Gifts of GOD, and the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore from any spiritual Weakness (if such had been) which he *at that Time* felt, we could by no Means infer, that he was never made strong, that Paul the Aged, the Father in Christ, still laboured under the same Weaknesses: That he was in no higher State till the Day of his Death. From all which it appears, that this Instance of St. Paul is quite foreign to the Question, and does in no wise clash with the Assertion of St. John, *He that is born of GOD, sinneth not.*

17. “ But does not St. James directly contradict this? His Words are, *In many Things we offend all,* Ch. iii. Ver. 2. And is not offending

the same as *committing Sin?*" In this place I allow it is. I allow *the Persons here spoken of* did commit Sin, yea, that they *all* committed many Sins. But who are *the Persons here spoken of?* Why, those many *Masters or Teachers*, whom GOD had not sent (probably the same *vain Men*, who taught that *Faith without Works*, which is so sharply reprov'd in the preceding Chapter.) Not the Apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the Word *we* (used by a Figure of Speech, common in all other, as well as the inspired Writings) the Apostle could not possibly include himself, or any other true Believer, appears evidently, *first*, From the same Word, in the ninth Verse; *Therewith* (saith he) *blesse* we God, and *therewith* curse we Men. *Out of the same Mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.* True; but not out of the Mouth of the Apostle, nor of any one who is in Christ a new Creature. *Secondly*, From the Verse immediately preceding the Text, and manifestly connected with it. *My Brethren, be not many Masters* (or Teachers) *knowing that we shall receive the greater Condemnation: For in many Things we offend all: We!* Who? Not the Apostles, nor true Believers; but they who knew they should receive the greater Condemnation, because of those many Offences. But this could not be spoke of the Apostle himself, or of any who trod in his Steps; seeing *there is no Condemnation for them, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* Nay, *thirdly*, The very Verse itself proves, that *we offend all*, cannot be spoken, either of all Men, or of all Christians; for in it there immediately follows the Mention of a Man who *offends not*, as the *we* first



first mentioned did: From whom therefore he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced, *a perfect Man.*

18. So clearly does St. *James* explain himself, and fix the Meaning of his own Words. Yet lest any one should still remain in doubt, St. *John*, writing many Years after St. *James*, puts the matter intirely out of Dispute, by the express Declarations above recited. But here a fresh Difficulty may arise. How shall we reconcile St. *John* with himself? In one Place he declares, "*Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin.*" And, again, *We know that he which is born of God, sinneth not.* And yet in another he saith, *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.* And again, *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us.*

19. As great a Difficulty as this may at first appear, it vanishes away if we observe, *first*, That the tenth Verse fixes the Sense of the eighth: *If we say we have no Sin*, in the former, being explained by, *If we say we have not sinned*, in the latter Verse. *Secondly*, That the Point under present Consideration is not, whether we *have or have not sinned heretofore*; and neither of these Verses asserts, that we *do sin, or commit Sin* now. *Thirdly*, That the ninth Verse explains both the eighth and tenth; *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness*: As if he had said, "I have before affirmed, the *Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* But let no Man say, I need it not: I have no Sin to be cleansed from. *If we say that we have no Sin, that we have not sinned,*

*sinned*, we deceive ourselves, and make GOD a Liar. But if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just, not only to forgive our Sins, but also to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness, that we may go and sin no more.”

20. St. *John* therefore is well consistent with himself, as well as with the other holy Writers: As will yet more evidently appear, if we place all his Assertions touching this Matter in one View. He declares, *first*, The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin. *Secondly*, No Man can say, I have not sinned, I have no Sin to be cleansed from. *Thirdly*, But GOD is ready both to forgive our past Sins, and to save us from them for the Time to come. *Fourthly*, *These Things I write unto you, saith the Apostle, that you may not Sin: But if any Man should sin, or have sinned* (as the Word might be rendered) he need not continue in Sin, seeing *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*. Thus far all is clear. But lest any Doubt should remain, in a Point of so vast Importance, the Apostle resumes this Subject in the third Chapter, and largely explains his own Meaning. *Little Children, saith he, let no Man deceive you* (as tho' I had given any Encouragement to those that continue in Sin.) *He that doth Righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous. He that committeth Sin is of the Devil: For the Devil sinneth from the Beginning. For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. 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. In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil* (Verses

(Verses 7,—10.) Here the Point, which till then might possibly have admitted of some Doubt in weak Minds, is purposely settled by the last of the inspired Writers, and decided in the clearest Manner. In Conformity therefore both to the doctrine of St. *John*, and to the whole Tenor of the New Testament, we fix this Conclusion, “A Christian is so far perfect, as not to commit Sin.”

21. This is the glorious Privilege of every Christian, yea, tho’ he be but *a Babe in Christ*. But it is only of those who *are strong in the Lord, and have overcome the wicked one*, or rather of those who *have known him that is from the Beginning*, that it can be affirmed they are in such a Sense perfect; as, *secondly*, to be freed from evil Thoughts, and evil Tempers. *First*, from evil or Sinful Thoughts. But here let it be observed, that Thoughts concerning Evil, are not always evil Thoughts: That a Thought concerning Sin, and a sinful Thought, are widely different. A Man, for Instance, may think of a Murder which another has committed, and yet this is no evil or sinful Thought. So our blessed Lord himself, doubtless thought of, or understood the Thing spoken by the Devil, when he said, *All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*. Yet had he no evil or sinful Thought, nor indeed was capable of having any. And even hence it follows, that neither have real Christians. For *every one that is perfect is as his Master* (Luke vi. 40.) Therefore, if he was free from evil or sinful Thoughts, so are they likewise.

22. And indeed, whence should evil Thoughts proceed, in the Servant who is *as his Master*? *Out of the Heart of Man* (if at all) *proceed evil Thoughts*

*Thoughts* (Mark vii. 21.) If therefore his Heart be no longer evil, then evil Thoughts can no longer proceed out of it. If the Tree were corrupt, so would be the Fruit; but the Tree is good. The Fruit therefore is good also, (*Matth. xii. 33.*) Our Lord himself bearing Witness, *Every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit. A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, as a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, Matt. vii. 17, 18.*

23. The same happy Privilege of real Christians, St. Paul asserts from his own Experience. *The Weapons of our Warfare, saith he, are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of Strong-holds : Casting down Imaginations (or Reasonings rather, for so the Word λογισμῶν signifies ; all the Reasonings of Pride and Unbelief against the Declarations, Promises or Gifts of GOD) and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of GOD ; and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5, &c.*

24. And as Christians indeed, are freed from evil Thoughts, so are they, *secondly*, from evil Tempers. This is evident from the above-mentioned Declaration of our Lord himself : *The Disciple is not above his Master ; but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.* He had been delivering just before some of the sublimest Doctrines of Christianity, and some of the most grievous to Flesh and Blood. *I say unto you, love your Enemies, do Good to them which hate you : And unto him that smiteth thee on the one Cheek, offer also the other.* Now these he well knew the World would not receive ; and therefore immediately adds, *Can the Blind lead the Blind ? Will they not both fall into the Ditch ?*

*Ditch?* As if he had said, “Do not confer with Flesh and Blood touching these Things, with Men void of spiritual Discernment, the Eyes of whose Understanding GOD hath not opened, lest they and you perish together.” In the next Verse he removes the two grand Objections, with which these wise Fools meet us at every Turn, “These Things are too grievous to be born,” or, “They are too high to be attained :” Saying, *The Disciple is not above his Master* : Therefore, if I have suffered, be content to tread in my Steps. And doubt ye not then, but I will fulfil my Word : *for every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master*. But his Master was free from all sinful Tempers. So therefore is his Disciple, even every real Christian.

25. Every one of these can say with St. Paul, *I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me* : Words that manifestly describe a Deliverance from inward, as well as from outward Sin. This is expressed both negatively, *I live not*. My evil Nature, the Body of Sin is destroyed : And positively ; *Christ liveth in me*, and therefore all that is holy, and just, and good. Indeed both these, *Christ liveth in me*, and *I live not*, are inseparably connected. For *what Communion hath Light with Darkness, or Christ with Belial?*

26. He therefore who liveth in true Believers, hath *purified their Hearts by Faith* : Inasmuch that *every one that hath Christ in him, the Hope of Glory, purifieth himself even as he is pure* (1 John iii. 3.) He is purified from Pride ; for Christ was lowly of Heart. He is pure from Self-will, or Desire ; for  
Christ

Christ desired only to do the Will of his Father, and to finish his Work. And he is pure from Anger, in the common Sense of the Word; for Christ was meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering. I say, in the common Sense of the Word; for all Anger is not Evil. We read of our Lord himself (*Mark iii. 5.*) that he once *looked round with Anger*. But with what Kind of Anger? The next Word shews; *συλλυπέμενος*, being at the same time grieved for the *Hardness of their Hearts*. So then he was angry at the Sin, and in the same Moment grieved for the Sinners. Angry or displeased at the Offence; but sorry for the Offenders. With Anger, yea, Hatred, he looked upon the Thing; with Grief and Love upon the Persons. Go thou that art perfect, and do likewise. *Be thus angry, and thou sinnest not*: Feeling a Displeasance at every Offence against GOD; but only Love and tender Compassion to the Offender.

27. Thus doth Jesus *save his People from their Sins*: And not only from outward Sins, but also from the Sins of their Hearts; from evil Thoughts, and from evil Tempers. “True, say some; we shall thus be saved from our Sins; but not till Death, not in this World.” But how are we to reconcile this with the express Words of St. John? *Herein is our Love made perfect, that we may have Boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as he is, so are we in this World*. The Apostle here beyond all Contradiction speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom (as tho’ he had foreseen this very Evasion, and set himself to overturn it from the Foundation) he flatly affirms, that

that not only at, or after Death, but *in this World*, they are as their Master, 1 *John* iv. 17.

28. Exactly agreeable to this are his Words in the first Chapter of this Epistle, (Verse 6, &c) *God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all. If we walk in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.* And again, *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.* Now it is evident, the Apostle here also speaks of a Deliverance wrought *in this World*. For he saith not, *the Blood of Christ will cleanse* (at the Hour of Death, or in the Day of Judgment) but it *cleanseth* (at the Time present) *us* (living Christians) *from all Sin.* And it is equally evident, that if *any Sin* remain, we are not cleansed from *all Sin*: If *any Unrighteousness* remain in the Soul, it is not cleansed from *all Unrighteousness*. Neither let any Sinner against his own Soul say, that this relates to Justification only, or the cleansing us from the Guilt of Sin; *first*, Because this is confounding together what the Apostle clearly distinguishes; who mentions first, *to forgive us our Sins*, and then *to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness*. *Secondly*, Because this is asserting Justification by Works in the strongest Sense possible: It is making all inward, as well as outward Holiness, necessarily previous to Justification. For if the cleansing here spoken of is no other than the cleansing us from the Guilt of Sin, then we are not cleansed from Guilt; *i. e.* are not justified, unless on condition of *walking in the Light, as he is in the Light.* It remains then, that Christians are saved in this World from all Sin, from all Unrighteousness:

U righteousness :

righteousness: That they are now in such a Sense perfect, as not to commit Sin, and to be freed from evil Thoughts and evil Tempers.

29. Thus hath the Lord fulfilled the Things he spake by his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began: By *Moses* in particular, saying (*Deut. xxx. 6.*) *I will circumcise thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul; by David crying out, Create in me a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me: And most remarkably by Ezekiel, in those Words, Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them.—Ye shall be my People, and I will be your GOD. I will also save you from all your Uncleanesses.—Thus saith the Lord your GOD, in the Day that I shall have cleansed you from all your Iniquities—the Heathen shall know that I the Lord build the ruined Places,—I the Lord have spoken it,—and I will do it, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.*

30. Having therefore these Promises, dearly Beloved, both in the Law and in the Prophets, and having the prophetic Word confirmed unto us in the Gospel, by our blessed Lord and his Apostles: *Let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of GOD. Let us fear least so many Promises being made us of entering into his Rest (which he that hath entered into, is ceased from his own Works) any of us should come short of it. This one Thing let us do; forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth*  
unto



*unto those Things which are before, Let us press toward the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of GOD in Christ Jesus : Crying unto him Day and Night, till we also are delivered from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD.*

---

---

---

THE  
P R O M I S E  
O F  
S A N C T I F I C A T I O N,  
E Z E K I E L xxxvi. 25, &c.

By the Reverend Mr. CHARLES WESLEY.

I.

**G**OD of all Power, and Truth, and Grace;  
Which shall from Age to Age endure;  
Whose Word, when Heaven and Earth shall pass,  
Remains, and stands for ever sure:

U 3

II.

## II.

*Calmly to Thee my Soul looks up,  
And waits thy Promises to prove ;  
The Object of my stedfast Hope,  
The Seal of thine Eternal Love.*

## III.

*That I thy Mercy may proclaim,  
That all Mankind thy Truth may see,  
Hallow thy great and glorious Name,  
And perfect Holiness in me.*

## IV.

*Chose from the World if now I stand  
Adorn'd in Righteousness divine,  
If brought unto the promis'd Land,  
I justly call the Saviour mine ;*

## V.

*Perform the Work Thou hast begun,  
My inmost Soul to Thee convert :  
Love me, for ever, love Thine own,  
And sprinkle with thy Blood my Heart.*

## VI.

*Thy sanctifying Spirit pour  
To quench my Thirst, and wash me clean ;  
Now, Father, let the gracious Shower  
Descend, and make me pure from Sin.*

## VII.

## VII.

*Purge me from every sinful Blot ;  
 My Idols all be cast aside :  
 Cleanse me from every evil Thought ;  
 From all the Filth of Self and Pride.*

## VIII.

*Give me a new, a perfect Heart,  
 From Doubt, and Fear, and Sorrow free ;  
 The Mind which was in Christ impart,  
 And let my Spirit cleave to Thee.*

## IX.

*O take this Heart of Stone away,  
 (Thy Rule it doth not, cannot own)  
 In me no longer let it stay :  
 O take away this Heart of Stone.*

## X.

*The Hatred of my carnal Mind  
 Out of my Flesh at once remove ;  
 Give me a tender Heart, resign'd,  
 And pure, and fill'd with Faith and Love.*

## XI.

*Within me thy good Spirit place,  
 Spirit of Health, and Love, and Power ;  
 Plant in me thy victorious Grace,  
 And Sin shall never enter more.*

## XII.

*Cause me to walk in Christ my Way,  
And I thy Statutes shall fulfil;  
In every Point thy Law obey,  
And perfectly perform thy Will.*

## XIII.

*Hast thou not said, who canst not lie,  
That I thy Law shall keep and do?  
Lord, I believe, tho' Men deny:  
They all are false; but Thou art true.*

## XIV.

*O that I now, from Sin releas'd,  
Thy Word might to the utmost prove!  
Enter into the promis'd Rest,  
The Canaan of thy perfect Love!*

## XV.

*There let me ever, ever dwell;  
Be thou my God, and I will be  
Thy Servant: O set to thy Seal;  
Give me eternal Life in thee.*

## XVI.

*From all remaining Filth within  
Let me in Thee Salvation have:  
From actual, and from inbred Sin,  
My ransom'd Soul persist to save.*

## XVII.

XVII.

*Wash out my old orig'nal Stain :  
Tell me no more, It cannot be,  
Demons or Men! The Lamb was slain,  
His Blood was all pour'd out for me.*

XVIII.

*Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my Heart!  
One Drop of thy all-cleansing Blood  
Shall make my Sinfulness depart,  
And fill me with the Life of God.*

XIX.

*Father, supply my every Need:  
Sustain the Life Thyself hast giv'n;  
Call for the Corn, the living Bread,  
The Manna that comes down from Heav'n.*

XX.

*The gracious Fruits of Righteousness,  
Thy Blessings unexhausted Store,  
In me abundantly increase;  
Nor let me ever hunger more.*

XXI.

*Let me no more in deep Complaint  
" My Leanness, O my Leanness," cry!  
Alone consum'd with pining Want,  
Of all my Father's Children I!*

XXII.

XXII.

*The painful Thirst, the fond Desire  
Thy joyous Presence shall remove,  
While my full Soul doth still require  
Thy whole Eternity of Love.*

XXIII.

*Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,  
I wait to prove thy perfect Will:  
Be mindful of thy gracious Word,  
And stamp me with thy Spirit's Seal.*

XXIV.

*Thy faithful Mercies let me find  
In which thou causest me to trust;  
Give me the meek and lowly Mind,  
And lay my Spirit in the Dust.*

XXV.

*Shew me how foul my Heart hath been  
When all renew'd by Grace I am;  
When thou hast emptied me of Sin,  
Shew me the Fulness of my Shame.*

XXVI:

*Open my Faith's interior Eye,  
Display thy Glory from above;  
And all I am shall sink and die,  
Lost in Astonishment and Love.*

XXVII.

XXVII.

*Confound, o'erpower me with thy Grace!  
I would be by myself abhor'd,  
(All Might, all Majesty, all Praise,  
All Glory be to Christ my Lord!)*

XXVIII.

*Now let me gain Perfection's Height!  
Now let me into Nothing fall!  
Be less than Nothing in thy Sight,  
And feel that Christ is all in all!*

---





A

S E R M O N

O N

2 COR. ii. 11.



VOL. III.

X

2 COR.

## 2 COR. ii. 11.

*We are not ignorant of his Devices.*

1. **T**H E Devices whereby the wise *god* of this *World*, labours to destroy the Children of *GOD*, or at least to torment whom he cannot destroy, to perplex and hinder them in running the Race which is set before them, are numberless as the Stars of Heaven or the Sand upon the Sea-shore. But it is of one of them only that I now propose to speak, (altho' exerted in various Ways) whereby he endeavours to divide the Gospel against itself, and by one Part of it to overthrow the other.

2. The inward Kingdom of Heaven, which is set up in the Heart of all that *repent and believe the Gospel*, is no other than *Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. Every Babe in Christ knows, we are made Partakers of these, the very Hour that we believe in Jesus. But these are only the First-fruits of his Spirit: The Harvest is not yet. Altho' these Blessings are inconceivably great, yet we trust to see greater than these. We trust to *love the Lord our GOD*, not only as we do now, with a weak tho' sincere Affection, but *with all our Heart, with all our Mind, with all our Soul and with all our Strength*. We look for Power to *rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing and in every Thing to give Thanks*; knowing

knowing *this is the Will of GOD concerning us in Christ Jesus.*

3. We expect to be *made perfect in Love*, in that Love which *casts out* all painful *Fear*, and all *Desire*, but that of glorifying him we love, of loving and serving him more and more. We look for such an Increase in the experimental Knowledge and Love of GOD our Saviour, as will enable us, always to *walk in the Light, as he is in the Light.* We believe the whole *Mind* will be in us *which was also in Christ Jesus*: That we shall love every Man so as to be ready to *lay down our Life for his Sake*: So as by this Love to be freed from Anger and Pride, and from every unkind Affection. We expect to be *cleansed from all our Idols, from all Filthiness* whether of *Flesh or Spirit*: to be *saved from all our Uncleanesses*, inward or outward, to be *purified as he is pure.*

4. We trust in his Promise who cannot lie, that the Time will surely come, when in every Word and Work we shall *do his blessed Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven*: When all our Conversation shall be *seasoned with Salt*, all meet to *minister Grace to the Hearers*: When *whether we eat or drink or whatever we do*, it shall be done *to the Glory of GOD*: When all our Words and Deeds shall be *in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, giving *Thanks unto GOD even the Father thro' him.*

5. Now this is the grand Device of Satan, to destroy the first Work of GOD in the Soul, or at least, to hinder its Increase, by our Expectation of that greater Work. It is therefore my present Design, First, To point out the several  
Ways

Ways whereby he endeavours this: And, Secondly, To observe how we may retort these fiery Darts of the wicked One: How we may rise the higher by what he intends for an Occasion of our falling.

I. 1. I am, First, To point out the several Ways whereby Satan, endeavours to destroy the first Work of GOD in the Soul, or at least, to hinder its Increase, by our Expectation of that greater Work. And 1. He endeavours to damp our Joy in the Lord, by the Consideration of our own Vileness, Sinfulness, Unworthiness, added to this, That there *must* be a far greater Change than is yet, or we cannot see the Lord. If we knew we *must* remain as we are, even to the Day of our Death, we might possibly draw a Kind of Comfort, poor as it was, from that Necessity. But as we know, we need not remain in this State, as we are assured, there is a greater Change to come, and that unless Sin be all done away in this Life, we cannot see GOD in Glory: That subtle Adversary often damps the Joy we should otherwise feel in what we have already attained, by a perverse Representation of what we have not attained, and the absolute Necessity of attaining it. So that we cannot rejoice in what we have, because there is more which we have not. We cannot rightly taste the Goodness of GOD, who hath done so great Things for us, because there are so much greater Things, which as yet he hath not done. Likewise the deeper Conviction GOD works in us of our present Unholiness, and the more vehement Desire we feel in our Heart, of the entire

Holiness he hath promised, the more are we tempted to think lightly of the present Gifts of GOD, and to undervalue what we have already received, because of what we have not received.

2. If he can prevail thus far, if he can damp our Joy, he will soon attack our Peace also. He will suggest, “Are you fit to see GOD? He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. How then can you flatter yourself, so as to imagine he holds *you* with Approbation? GOD is holy: You are unholy. What Communion hath Light with Darknes? How is it possible that *you*, unclean as you are, should be in a State of Acceptance with GOD? You see indeed the Mark, the Prize of your high Calling. But do you not see, it is afar off? How can you presume then to think, That all your Sins are already blotted out? How can this be, until you are brought nearer to GOD, until you bear more Resemblance to him?” Thus will he endeavour, not only to shake your Peace, but even to overturn the very Foundation of it: To bring you back by insensible Degrees, to the Point from whence you set out first: Even to seek for Justification by Works, or by your own Righteousness; to make something in *you* the Ground of your Acceptance, or at least necessarily previous to it.

3. Or if we hold fast, *other Foundation can no Man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ; and I am justified freely by GOD's Grace, thro' the Redemption which is in Jesus: Yet he will not cease to urge, “But the Tree is known by its Fruits. And have you the Fruits of Justification? Is that Mind in you which was in Christ Jesus? Are*

Are you *dead unto Sin and alive unto Righteousness*? Are you made conformable to the Death of Christ, and do you know the Power of his Resurrection?" And then, comparing the small Fruits we feel in our Souls, with the Fullness of the Promises, we shall be ready to conclude, Surely GOD hath not said, that my Sins are forgiven me! Surely I have not received the Remission of my Sins; for what Lot have I among them that are sanctified?"

4. More especially in the Time of Sicknes and Pain, he will press this with all his Might. "Is it not the Word of him that cannot lie, without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord? But you are not holy. You know it well; you know Holiness is the full Image of GOD. And how far is this above, out of your Sight? You cannot attain unto it. Therefore all your Labour has been in vain. All these Things you have suffered in vain. You have spent your Strength for nought. You are yet in your Sins and must therefore perish at the last." And thus, if your Eye be not steddily fixt on him who hath born all your Sins, he will bring you again under that *Fear of Death*, whereby you was so long *subject unto Bondage*: And by this Means impair, if not wholly destroy, your Peace as well as Joy in the Lord.

5. But his Masterpiece of Subtilty is still behind. Not content to strike at your Peace and Joy, he will carry his Attempts farther yet: He will level his Assault against your Righteousness also. He will endeavour to shake, yea, if it be possible, to destroy the Holiness you have already received.

received by your very Expectation of receiving more, of attaining all the Image of GOD.

6. The Manner wherein he attempts this, may partly appear from what has been already observed. For, First, By striking at our Joy in the Lord, he strikes likewise at our Holiness: Seeing Joy in the Holy Ghost is a precious Means of promoting every holy Temper; a choice Instrument of GOD whereby he carries on much of his Work in a believing Soul. And it is a considerable Help not only to inward, but also to outward Holiness. It strengthens our Hands to go on in the Work of Faith and in the Labour of Love; manfully to *fight the good Fight of Faith, and to lay hold on eternal Life*. It is peculiarly designed of GOD to be a Ballance both against inward and outward Sufferings: To *lift up the Hands that hang down and confirm the feeble Knees*. Consequently, whatever damps our Joy in the Lord, proportionably obstructs our Holiness. And therefore so far as Satan shakes our Joy, he hinders our Holiness also.

7. The same Effect will ensue, if he can by any Means either destroy or shake our Peace. For the Peace of GOD is another precious Means of advancing the Image of GOD in us. There is scarce a greater Help to Holiness than this, a continual Tranquillity of Spirit, the Evenness of a Mind stayed upon GOD; a calm Repose in the Blood of Jesus. And without this, it is scarce possible to grow in Grace, and in the vital Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For all Fear (unless the tender, filial Fear) freezes and benumbs the Soul. It binds all the Springs of spiritual Life, and stops all Motion of the Heart  
toward

toward GOD. And Doubt, as it were, bemires the Soul, so that it sticks fast in the deep Clay. Therefore in the same Proportion as either of these prevails, our Growth in Holiness is hindered.

8. At the same Time that our wise Adversary endeavours, to make our Conviction of the Necessity of perfect Love, an Occasion of shaking our Peace by Doubts and Fears, he endeavours to weaken, if not destroy our Faith. Indeed these are inseparably connected, so that they must stand or fall together. So long as Faith subsists, we remain in Peace; our Heart stands fast, while it believes in the Lord. But if we let go our Faith, our filial Confidence in a loving pardoning GOD, our Peace is at an End, the very Foundation on which it stood being overthrown. And this is the only Foundation of Holiness as well as of Peace. Consequently whatever strikes at this, strikes at the very Root of all Holiness. For without this Faith, without an abiding Sense, that Christ loved me and gave himself for me, without a continuing Conviction, that GOD for Christ's Sake is merciful to me a Sinner, it is impossible that I should love GOD. *We love him, because he first loved us*; and in Proportion to the Strength and Clearness of our Conviction, that he hath loved us and accepted us in his Son. And unless we love GOD, it is not possible that we should love our Neighbour as ourselves: Nor consequently, that we should have any right Affections, either toward GOD or toward Man. It evidently follows, that whatever weakens our Faith, must in the same Degree obstruct our Holiness. And this is not only the most effectual,  
but



but also the most compendious Way of destroying all Holiness. Seeing it does not affect any one Christian Temper, any single Grace or Fruit of the Spirit, but so far as it succeeds, tears up the very Root of the whole Work of GOD.

9. No Marvel therefore, that the Ruler of the Darkness of this World, should here put forth all his Strength. And so we find by Experience. For it is far easier to conceive than it is to express the unspeakable Violence, wherewith this Temptation is frequently urged on them, who hunger and thirst after Righteousness. When they see in a strong and clear Light, on the one Hand, the desperate Wickedness of their own Hearts, on the other Hand, the unspotted Holiness to which they are called in Christ Jesus: On the one Hand, the Depth of their own Corruption, of their total Alienation from GOD; on the other, the Height of the Glory of GOD, that Image of the Holy One wherein they are to be renewed: There is many Times no Spirit left in them; they cou'd almost cry out, With GOD this is impossible. They are ready to give up both Faith and Hope, to cast away that very Confidence, whereby they are to overcome all Things, and do all Things thro' Christ strengthening them; whereby, *after they have done the Will of GOD, they are to receive the Promise.*

10. And if they *hold fast the Beginning of their Confidence steadfast unto the End*, they shall undoubtedly receive the Promise of GOD, reaching thro' both Time and Eternity. But here is another Snare laid for our Feet. While we earnestly pant for that Part of the Promise which is to be accomplished here, *for the glorious Liberty*

*Liberty of the Children of GOD*, we may be led un-  
 awares, from the Consideration of the Glory  
 which shall hereafter be revealed. Our Eye may  
 be insensibly turned aside from that *Crown which*  
*the righteous Judge hath promised to give at that*  
*Day, to all that love his Appearing* : And we may  
 be drawn away from the View of that incorrup-  
 tible Inheritance which is reserved in Heaven for  
 us. But this also would be a Loss to our Souls,  
 and an Obstruction to our Holiness. For to  
 walk in the continual Sight of our Goal, is a  
 needful Help in our running the Race that is set  
 before us. This it was, the having *respect unto*  
*the Recompence of Reward*, which of old time  
 encouraged *Moses*, rather to *suffer Affliction with*  
*the People of GOD*, than to enjoy the Pleasures of  
*Sin for a Season* : *Esteeming the Reproach of Christ,*  
*greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt*. Nay  
 it is expressly said of a greater than him, That  
*for the Joy that was set before him, he endured the*  
*Cross and despised the Shame, till he sat down at the*  
*right Hand of the Throne of GOD*. Whence we  
 may easily infer, how much more needful for us,  
 is the View of that Joy set before us, that we  
 may endure whatever Cross the Wisdom of  
 GOD lays upon us, and press on thro' Holiness  
 to Glory.

11. But while we are reaching to this, as well  
 as to that glorious Liberty which is preparatory  
 to it, we may be in Danger of falling into ano-  
 ther Snare of the Devil, whereby he labours to  
 intangle the Children of GOD. We may take  
 too much *Thought for to-morrow*, so as to neglect  
 the Improvement of to-day. We may so expect  
 perfect

*perfect Love*, as not to use that, which is already *shed abroad in our Hearts*. There have not been wanting Instances of those, who have greatly suffered hereby. They were so taken up with what they were to receive hereafter, as utterly to neglect what they had already received. In Expectation of having five Talents more, they buried their one Talent in the Earth. At least they did not improve it as they might have done, to the Glory of GOD and the Good of their own Souls.

12. Thus does the subtle Adversary of GOD and Man, endeavour to make void the Counsel, of GOD, by dividing the Gospel against itself, and making one Part of it overthrow the other: While the first Work of GOD in the Soul is destroyed by the Expectation of his perfect Work. We have seen several of the Ways wherein he attempts this, by cutting off, as it were, the Springs of Holiness. But this he likewise does more directly, by making that blessed Hope an Occasion of unholy Tempers.

13. Thus, whenever our Heart is eagerly a-thirst for all the great and precious Promises, when we pant after the Fulness of GOD, as the Hart after the Water-Brook, when our Soul breaketh out in fervent Desire, “Why are his Chariot-Wheels so long a-coming?” He will not neglect the Opportunity, of tempting us to murmur against GOD. He will use all his Wisdom and all his Strength, if haply in an unguarded Hour, we may be influenced to repine at our Lord, for thus delaying his coming. At least, he will labour to excite some Degree  
of

of Fretfulness or Impatience : And perhaps of Envy at those, whom we believe to have already attained the Prize of our high Calling. He well knows, that by giving way to any of these Tempers, we are pulling down the very Thing we would build up. By *thus* following after perfect Holiness, we become more unholy than before. Yea, there is great Danger that our last State should be worse than the First: Like them of whom the Apostle speaks, in those dreadful Words, *It had been better they had never known the Way of Righteousness, than after they had known it, to turn back from the holy Commandment delivered to them.*

14. And from hence he hopes to reap another Advantage, even to bring up an evil Report of the good Way. He is sensible, how few are able to distinguish (and too many are not willing so to do) between the accidental Abuse and the natural Tendency of a Doctrine. These therefore, will he continually blend together, with regard to the Doctrine of Christian Perfection : in order to prejudice the Minds of unwary Men against the glorious Promises of **G O D**. And how frequently, how generally, I had almost said, how universally has he prevailed herein ? For who is there that observes any of these accidental ill Effects of this Doctrine, and does not immediately conclude, This is its natural Tendency ? And does not readily cry out, “ See, these are the Fruits (meaning the natural, necessary Fruits) of such Doctrine ! ” Not so. They are Fruits which may accidentally spring from the Abuse of a great and precious

Truth. But the Abuse of this, or any other Scriptural Doctrine, does by no means destroy its Use. Neither can the Unfaithfulness of Man, perverting his right Way, *make the Promise of GOD of none Effect.* No: Let GOD be true and every Man a Liar. - The Word of the Lord it shall stand. *Faithful is he that hath promised: He also will do it.* Let not us then be *removed from the Hope of the Gospel.* Rather let us observe, which was the second thing proposed, how we may retort these fiery Darts of the wicked one: How we may rise the higher by what he intends for an Occasion of our falling.

II. 1. And, first, Does Satan endeavour to damp your Joy in the Lord, by the Consideration of your Sinfulness, added to this, That without entire, universal *Holiness no Man can see the Lord?* You may cast back this Dart upon his own Head, while thro' the Grace of GOD, the more you feel of your own Vileness, the more you rejoice in confident Hope, that all this shall be done away. - While you hold fast this Hope, every evil Temper you feel, though you hate it with a perfect Hatred, may be a means, not of lessening your humble Joy, but rather of increasing it. "This and this, may you say, shall likewise perish from the Presence of the Lord. Like as the Wax melteth at the Fire, so shall this melt away before his Face." By this means the greater that Change is, which remains to be wrought in your Soul, the more may you triumph in the Lord and rejoice in the GOD of your Salvation: Who hath done so great Things for you, already,

already, and will do so much greater Things than these.

2. Secondly, The more vehemently he assaults your Peace with that Suggestion, “GOD is holy, you are unholy You are immensely distant from that Holiness, without which you cannot see GOD: How then can you be in the Favour of GOD? How can you fancy you are justified?” Take the more earnest heed to hold fast that, *Not by Works of Righteousness which I have done. I am found in him: I am accepted in the Beloved; not having my own Righteousness* (as the Cause either in whole or in part of our Justification before GOD) *but that which is by Faith in Christ, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith.* O bind this about your Neck: write it upon the Table of thy Heart. Wear it as a Bracelet upon thy Arm, as Frontlets between thine Eyes: I am *justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* Value and esteem more and more that precious Truth, *By Grace we are saved through Faith.* Admire more and more the free Grace of GOD, in so loving the World as to give *his only Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting Life.* So shall the Sense of the Sinfulness you feel on the one Hand, and of the Holiness you expect on the other, both contribute to establish your Peace and to make it flow as a River. So shall that Peace flow on with an even Stream, in spite of all those Mountains of Ungodliness, which shall become a Plain in the Day when the Lord cometh, to take full Possession of your Heart. Neither will Sicknes or Pain, or the Approach of

Y 2

Death,

Death, occasion any Doubt or Fear. You know a Day, an Hour, a Moment with GOD is as a thousand Years. He cannot be streightened for Time, wherein to work whatever remains to be done in your Soul. And GOD's Time is always the best Time. Therefore be thou *careful for nothing*. Only *make thy Request known unto him*, and that not without Doubt or Fear, but *Thanksgiving*: As being previously assured, he cannot withhold from thee any Manner of Thing that is good.

3. Thirdly, The more you are tempted to give up your Shield, to cast away your Faith, your Confidence in his Love, so much the more take heed that you hold fast that, whereunto you have attained. So much the more labour to *stir up the Gift of GOD which is in you*. Never let that slip, I have *an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*: And *the Life I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me*. Be this thy Glory and Crown of rejoicing. And see that no one take thy Crown. Hold that fast, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth*. And I now have *Redemption in his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*. Thus, being filled with all Peace and Joy in Believing, press on in the Peace and Joy of Faith to the Renewal of thy whole Soul, in the Image of him that created thee. Mean while cry continually to GOD, that thou mayst see that Prize of thy high Calling, not as Satan represents it, in a horrid dreadful Shape, but in its genuine native Beauty: Not as something that *must* be, or thou wilt

wilt go to Hell, but as what *may* be, to lead thee to Heaven. Look upon it as the most *desirable* Gift, which is in all the Stores of the rich Mercies of GOD. Beholding it in the true Point of Light, thou wilt hunger after it more and more: Thy whole Soul will be athirst for GOD, and for this glorious Conformity to his Likeness. And having received a good Hope of this, and strong Consolation through Grace, thou wilt no more be weary or faint in thy Mind, but wilt follow on till thou attainest.

4. In the same Power of Faith, press on to Glory. Indeed this is the same Prospect still. GOD hath joined from the Beginning Pardon, Holiness, Heaven. And why should Man put them asunder? O beware of this. Let not one Link of the golden Chain be broken. GOD for Christ's Sake hath forgiven me. He is now renewing me in his own Image. Shortly he will make me meet for himself, and take me to stand before his Face. I whom he hath justified thro' the Blood of his Son, being thoroughly sanctified by his Spirit, shall quickly ascend to the *New Jerusalem, the City of the living GOD*. Yet a little while and I shall *come to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*. How soon will these Shadows flee away, and the Day of Eternity dawn upon me! How soon shall I drink of *the River of the Water of Life, going out of the Throne of GOD and of the Lamb?* There all his Servants shall praise him and shall see his Face, and his Name shall be upon their Foreheads. *And no Night shall be there;*  
and



*and they have no need of a Candle or the Light of the Sun. For the Lord GOD enlighteneth them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

5 And if you thus taste of the good Word and the Powers of the World to come, you will not murmur against GOD, because you are not yet meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Instead of repining at your not being wholly delivered, you will praise GOD for thus far delivering you. You will magnify GOD for what he hath done, and take it as an Earnest of what he will do. You will not fret against him, because you are not yet renewed, but bless him because you shall be; and because *now is your Salvation* from all Sin, *nearer than when you first believed.* Instead of uselessly tormenting yourself because the Time is not fully come, you will calmly and quietly wait for it, knowing that *it will come and will not tarry.* You may therefore the more cheerfully endure as yet, the Burden of Sin that still remains in you, because it will not always remain. Yet a little while and it shall be clean gone. Only *tarry thou the Lord's Leisure: be strong, and he shall comfort thy Heart, and put thou thy Trust in the Lord.*

6. And if you see any who appear (so far as Man can judge, but God alone searcheth the Hearts) to be already Partakers of their Hope, already *made perfect in Love:* Far from envying the Grace of GOD in them, let it rejoice and comfort your Heart. Glorify GOD for their Sake. *If one Member is honoured, shall not all the Members rejoice with it?* Instead of Jealousy or evil Surmising concerning them, praise GOD.  
for

far the Consolation. Rejoice in having a fresh Proof of the Faithfulness of GOD in fulfilling all his Promises. And stir yourself up the more, to *apprehend that for which you also are apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

6. In order to this, redeem the Time. Improve the present Moment. Buy up every Opportunity of growing in Grace, or of doing Good. Let not the Thought of receiving more Grace to-morrow, make you negligent of to-day. You have one Talent now. If you expect five more, so much the rather improve that you have. And the more you expect to receive hereafter, the more labour for GOD now. Sufficient for the Day is the Grace thereof. GOD is now pouring his Benefits upon you. Now approve yourself a faithful Steward, of the present Grace of GOD. Whatever may be to morrow, give all Diligence to-day, to *add to your Faith Courage, Temperance, Patience, Brotherly Kindness and the Fear of GOD,* till you attain that pure and perfect Love. Let *these Things be now in you and abound.* Be not now slothful or unfruitful. So shall an Entrance be minister'd *into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

7. Lastly, If in Time past you have abused this blessed Hope of being holy as he is holy, yet do not therefore cast it away. Let the Abuse cease, the Use remain. Use it now to the more abundant Glory of GOD and Profit of your own Soul. In steadfast Faith, in calm Tranquillity of Spirit, in full Assurance of Hope, rejoicing evermore for what GOD hath done, *press ye on un-*  
to

*to Perfection.* Daily growing in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and going on from Strength to Strength, in Resignation, in Patience, in humble Thankfulness for what ye have attained, and for what ye shall, run the Race set before you, *looking unto Jesus*, till thro' perfect Love ye enter into his Glory!

---