
The Law of Moses not of eternal Obligation, and the Reasons of our Saviour's Conformity to it, when he came to remove it.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Univerſity on Circumciſion-day,

January 1. 169⁸.

HEB. VII. 8.

For finding fault with them, he ſaith, behold, the days come (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and the houſe of Judah.

THOUGH God has never left the World without ſuch Discoveries of his Nature and Will, as, when duly attended to, were ſufficient to lead Men to the great and fundamental Duties of Religion; yet it muſt be acknowledg'd, that in all the former Revelations of himſelf, will

SERM. VI. that by his Blessed Son, he was pleas'd to allow Mankind but a very short and imperfect View of his Glories, in comparison of what he gave them afterwards, when that *Fulness of Time was come*. He did in a great measure *before* reserve and conceal the *Beauties* of his Nature and *Holiness*; nor could Mankind by the help of those Notices they receiv'd from Heaven, arrive at so clear an Apprehension of the Deity, or inform themselves in a full Sense of their own Duty and Obligations to him. So that all the former Dispensations, as they were thus gradual, seem'd proportion'd rather to the Weakness and Infirmary of *Human Nature*, than any way equal to the Perfections of the *Divine*.

Gal. 4. 4.

And if we would inquire after the Reason why God with-held himself for so many Ages from a more *familiar* Intercourse with Men, 'twas very probably this; because the World, so sinful and polluted as it then was, could not have born the nearer Approaches of the Deity; and by reason of that Darkness, which had spread it self over the Souls of Men, from the foul Corruption of *Human Nature*, Men were render'd utterly incapable, for the present, of entertaining any greater Light from Heaven than was afforded them; and consequently so very *glaring* a one, as a full Manifestation of God, at once, must have let in upon their Minds, would have been apt rather to have dazled and confounded their Understanding, than to have given them a more perfect Information. So that, barely in compliance with the Weakness of Man's Nature, Almighty God was
fain

fain to suspend the full Influence of his S E R M. VI. Goodness for a while, and to restrain the stronger Beams of Divine Light from breaking out upon the World, till Men were able to bear them better, and till, by gentle and leisurely Steps, he had train'd them up for more Glorious Revelations.

But then, as the Minds of Men began to grow more generous and enlarg'd, to conceive nobler Apprehensions of God's Nature, and to aspire after a nearer Communion with him; so God himself, in his great Goodness, was pleas'd to draw nearer likewise to Men; and, by *removing the Vail*, to encourage and assist their weak Endeavours to know and do his Will, by more liberal and gracious Communications from himself.

This Method of God's proceeding with Mankind in general, we have clearly exemplified to us in that one Instance of the Jewish Nation, who were at first, we know, a People of a *groveling* Apprehension, of *mean* and *gross* Conceptions; and therefore God was pleas'd so far to comply with that their Weakness, for the present, as to give them a Law suited and adapted to their own Temper and *Genius*: A Law, which, beside the Moral Part of it, common to it with the Law of Nature, had nothing of real and natural Excellency in it; consisting of Ritual and Ceremonial Observances, made up of Symbols and sensible Representations, that were apt to strike upon the Senses, rather than to improve the Mind, to please the Fancies of Men, than to perfect their Natures.

But

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But when, by a wise Intermixture of Providences, of Mercy and Severity, towards that People, God had wrought them off from that childish Fondness, and by the preaching of the *Prophets*, and their Comments on the Law of *Moses*, had brought them to more genuine and manly Notions of Religion, he then prepares himself in the next place to disclose to them the wonderful Change he was about to work in the Earth, the great Design he had in hand of giving a *new Law* to the World: A Law, which should be suited to all the Desires and Necessities of Men, and raise and advance their Nature to infinitely greater degrees and measures of Perfection, than what the *Law of Moses* could pretend to.


And this Design of his, God did, in the first and most early Ages of the Church, intimate to his People, by degrees, and more obscurely; but still as the great *Sun of Righteousness* drew nearer to his *rising*, God accordingly more freely open'd this *Counsel of his Will*, till at last he gave the World to understand his Meaning, in the most clear and lively manner. And no where more directly so, than in the Words of my Text, which are here cited by the *Apostle*, from the 31st chapter of the *Prophet Jeremy*; *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.* These Words are here introduc'd, and made use of by the Author of this Epistle, to convince the *Hebrew Converts*, who were all zealous of the Law, of the Necessity there was of the *Abrogation*

gation of that Law, upon the account of its Imperfection to all the Ends of true Righteousness, and Reconciliation with God. He tells them 'twas for that Reason, that God never design'd it should continue always; that he had all along intended to *dissolve* it, and to introduce a more pure and spiritual Religion in the room of it: And that therefore they had no Reason to be so much surpriz'd at this Change, as if some *strange thing* had happened, it being no more, than what their own *Prophets*, and the *Law* it self did foretel should come to pass. For so, says he, was it long since God's own Declaration by his Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.* In discoursing on these Words, I shall endeavour these two things;

First, To shew that the *Old Covenant*, or State of *Jewish Law*, neither was, nor could be intended by *Almighty God*, to stand to all Ages and Generations of the World.

Secondly, To consider the Reasons why our *Saviour Christ*, when he came to *abrogate* the *Ceremonial Law*, and to take off its Obligation, did *himself* notwithstanding conform to the Observance of it.

And *First* I am to shew, that the *old Covenant*, or *Jewish Law*, neither was, nor could ever be intended by *Almighty God*, the Author of it, to stand to all Ages and Generations of the World. To prove this Point in the most direct manner that was possible, and by such Arguments as were sure to be most prevailing with those, to whom he addressed

SERM. VI.  dressed himself, the *Author* of this *Epistle* produces several Passages from the Writings of the *old Testament*, to this purpose, as *what* he knew could never be deny'd by those with whom he disputed, who, being Converts to *Christianity*, from amongst the Jews, were therefore oblig'd to allow, and stand by the Authority of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. And here amongst the rest, there are two Texts of *old Scripture* which the *Apostle* particularly urges in pursuance of this Argument, and whereon he seems to lay the great Stress and Dependance of his reasoning. One of these Places he quotes in the twelfth Chapter of this *Epistle*, from the Prophecy of *Haggai*, where *God* is introduc'd by that *Prophet* speaking thus, *Yet once it is a little while, says God, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;* According to the *Apostle's* Sense of the Matter, (who, we may be sure, very well understood the Application of the *Text*) *God* hereby signified the great Change and Revolution of Affairs, that should shortly succeed in the *Jewish Church*; by these words, *I will shake the heavens and the earth*, denoting the Weakness and Instability of the present Constitution; and that, though it had its Authority from *Heaven* at first, and was deliver'd with the awful Appearances of Glory from thence, and with the more immediate Evidences of *God's* Power and Presence on *Mount Sinai*; yet being but imperfect in itself, and not founded on the natural Reason and Necessity of things, it was not so deeply and firmly laid, but that it might admit a Change

Haggai 2. 6.

Change for the better; *This word, yet once more*, says the Apostle, *signifying the removal of those things that were shaken, as of things that were made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.* SERM. VI.
Heb. 12. 27.

The other Proof of this matter which, I observ'd, the Apostle peculiarly insists on, is the Form, in which the Words of my Text it self are read, thus; *I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel and Judah: Now*, says the Apostle, *in that he saith A new Covenant, he hath made the first Old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.* Heb. 8. 13. The Force of which Reasoning, is founded on the strict and even *Philosophical* Notion of the Word (*Old*) which is, when by the long continuance of its Duration, any thing is become impair'd in its Strength and Beauty, and tends apace to Ruin and Dissolution.

Since then the Authority of *Scripture* appears so very full and express, for the *Discontinuance* of *Moses's* Law, I shall endeavour to prove the *Necessity* of its Abrogation, from the *Reason* and *Nature* of the thing it self: and that, notwithstanding what may be pretended for the Perpetuity of it, either, *first*, upon the account of its being of *Divine* Appointment; or, *secondly*, of those several Expressions in *Scripture*, that seem to import or favour its eternal Obligation.

For, First, As to its being of *Divine* Institution, what reason is there, merely upon this ground, that the Law must necessarily abide for ever? Because, in vertue of God's Authority stamp'd upon it, it oblig'd Men once, must

S E R M. VI. must it of necessity continue to do so always? And cannot that Authority relax it self? Shall we deny *Almighty God* the Privilege of an ordinary *Legislator*, to reverse his own Acts? and must every Dispensation of his Will to Men be on one side commensurate with his own Eternity? We know 'tis the great Business of Wisdom to dispose and order things for the present Necessity, and, more particularly, the Effect of Divine Wisdom to accommodate the Laws it delivers, to the Capacities of Men, and to the several Exigencies of Times and Persons: But why must *God* needs bind up his own Hands, when he gives a Law to Men, or abridge himself of the liberty to recal the *Word* that is once gone out of his Mouth? He enacted a Body of Laws, 'tis true, for the *Jewish Nation*, and gave them such Statutes and Ordinances, as were of a level to the *Nonage* and Infirmary of that People, and by which *they were shut up to the Faith which should afterwards be reveal'd*. But when, in some time, they grew to a more confirm'd and manly Habit, and were able to digest Precepts of a stronger nature, *God* dealt with them then no longer as with *Children*, but expected a more substantial and genuine Obedience, such as was more suitable to his own Nature to receive, and more highly for their Benefit and Interest to return him. So that there is no Objection yet, but that *God* may dispense with his own Laws, if he pleases; and, where the Reason and Necessity of them ceases, he can, and usually does, remit the Obligation. And therefore the Law of *Moses*,

Gal. 3. 23.

ses, tho' God's own Act, yet was liable to S E R M. VI.
 be repeal'd by him, when in his own Wis-
 dom he should see it most expedient.

Nor again, does it appear, in the *Second* place, that those Expressions in Scripture, that seem to favour the eternal Obligation of the *Law*, are in themselves of Force sufficient to conclude for it: As where it is said in *Exodus*, of the *sprinkling* of the *Passover*, Exod. 12. 14. that it should be *an Ordinance for ever*, and the like: Because these Words, as is usually answer'd in this case, must be sometimes understood in a more *confin'd* and *limited* Sense, and not always taken to signify an *endless* and *interminable* Duration. We are to abate so much of the Strictness and Fulness of their *literal* Expression, as the *Matter* and *Subject*, to which they are applied, do require. So that, when we read of some of the legal Ordinances, that they should *abide for ever*, or *to all Generations*, no more is meant, than that they should continue throughout, to the end of that Period to which *God* had before design'd they should, and 'till they had accomplish'd those Ends, to which he had appointed them.

And thus, having endeavour'd in some measure to remove those Suggestions, that might seem to prejudice the Argument upon which I am engag'd, it will be necessary for me to consider, in a more particular manner, the Reasons why in the nature of the thing it self, the *Mosaic* Law could not be intended to continue in force for ever, as that imports all Ages and Generations of Men to come. And the Reasons which I shall mention for this are *Three*.

First,

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First, Because the *Jewish Religion* was too narrow, and confin'd, as to the Extent of it.

Secondly, Because it left a great many Rules of Duties, and those of an highly excellent Nature, unexplai'd and imperfect.

And *Thirdly*, Because the Motives and Sanctions, that *Law* made use of, were not sufficient to oblige Men to Obedience.


And *First*, The *Jewish Religion* was too narrow, and confin'd, as to the Extent of it. It was not indeed intended to be the Religion of the World, of common and necessary Obligation to all Mankind : So far from this, that a great many of its Precepts were design'd on purpose only to distinguish and separate the *Jews* from other Nations, and were peculiarly contriv'd for the Interest and Humours of that People. And tho', 'tis true, *God* did not so set apart the *Jews* to himself, as utterly to *refuse* all other Persons Admittance to his Covenant ; nay, and indeed seem'd to take it *kindly* of any one, that should come, and freely *join himself to the God of Israel* ; yet, considering the mighty Prejudices other Nations were under, and how widely they differ'd from the *Jews*, both as to the Object and Manner of their Worship, it was not very likely *many* Persons should have come over to that *Religion* ; there being especially no standing Order of Men appointed, whose Business it should be to preach and recommend that Religion to the other Parts of the World.

And then again, their being so strictly forbidden *Communion* with Men of other Nations, must needs have been a mighty Hindrance

drance to the Propagation of their Law ; S E R M. VI.
 and *did* indeed almost confine up the Myste-
 ries of *Judaism* within *Jerusalem* and the
Temple.

But now, had God design'd this for the standing Religion of the World, for the full and ultimate Dispensation of his Mind and Will to Men; how much more suitable had it been to those Notions we conceive of the *Divine Goodness*, and more worthy that *general Kindness* he bears to his Creatures, for him to have proclaim'd this Law to the main Bulk and Body of Mankind, than to have thus stified it in one *single Corner* of the Earth! For *every Law* being in its nature design'd for publick Benefit, the more *extensive* it is, and the nearer it comes to be *universal*, so much indeed is it the more excellent in it self. Whereas the *Jews*, whom the Law of *Moses* respected only, were but a very small and inconsiderable Parcel of Men, in comparison, not only of the whole World, but of some particular Nations of it; the *Egyptians* and *Assyrians* vastly exceeded them in Multitudes; and *God* himself professes, that he did not make choice of them above other Nations, in regard of their great Strength or Numbers; for *they were the fewest*, he tells *Deut. 7. 7.* them, *of all People*.


Was *God* then unconcern'd what became of the rest of Mankind, or was he not sufficient to provide for all? Were the Bowels of the *Father of Mercies* ever stinted? Can he be sway'd by any blind Respect of Persons, or acted by false Measures of Affection? Why then did he so highly favour one sin-
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S E R M. VI.  gle People, and that probably none of the best
 neither, when all the other Kingdoms of
 the Earth seem'd to lye despis'd and disre-
 garded by him? *Is he the God of the Jews*
only, is he not of the Gentiles also? Yes, and
of the Gentiles also: Both of them are equal-
 ly his Creatures, the Work of his Hands,
 and therefore equally the Charge and Con-
 cern of his good Providence; and consequent-
 ly had been both equally favour'd with that
 first Revelation of his Will, had that been
 the only Kindness he intended the World.
 But *that Law* being only design'd for a tem-
 porary Institution, and suited to a present
 Convenience, it was very reconcileable
 with God's Goodness, and congruous to his
 Wisdom, to determine it to such a particular
 Portion of the World as he pleas'd: And,
 since he had better things in store for *Jews*
 and *Gentiles* both, it was a matter of greater
indifference to him, to whom he should com-
 mit those first, and more imperfect *Oracles*
 of his Will: And his very denying his Law
 to the *Gentiles* was an Evidence he did not
 design it should continue for ever to the
Jews.

If it should be here said, that tho' God
 might indeed at first confine his Revelations
 to the *Jews*, yet, afterwards, when Mankind
 should be drawn to observe the strange In-
 fluence *that* Religion had upon the Prospe-
 rity of that People, and so entertain a kinder
 Disposition towards it; that *then* probably
 God might have thought fit to have enlarg'd
 the Borders of the *Jewish* Church to all the
 World; and so *Moses* should have become the
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great Prophet of the Nations, and Mount Zion S E R M. VI.
the Joy of the whole Earth: To this it may 
be answer'd, that there were some particular
Constitutions in that Religion, and those not
the least insisted on, which, in the nature of
the thing it self, were utterly inconsistent
with this Enlargement of that Church. As
for instance, that Command of God, that Exod. 23. 17.
*all the Males should appear three times a year
before him in Jerusalem*: But now, could all
the World pay Attendance at the Temple?
or was Jerusalem sufficient to receive all
Nations?

And then, the Priesthood being confin'd to
a single Family in Israel, the greatest part
of the World must have been left desti-
tute of due Means of Instruction: For was
Levi equal to all Mankind? or could the
Loyns of Aaron supply a Ministry for the
World? We see then, that God did not, nor
could design the Religion of the Jews to be
universal, and consequently not perpetual;
for then he had shut the greatest part of the
World for ever out of Covenant with him.

Secondly, the Law of Moses could not be
of perpetual Obligation, because it left a great
many Rules of Duties, and those of a highly
excellent Nature, unexplain'd and imperfect.
It is certain, that when God came down upon Nehem. 9. 13.
Mount Sinai, he did not propose to give a
Law every way equal to the Capacities of
Human Nature, nor to deliver a full and
compleat System of all the Duties that con-
cern Mankind; but he had respect to that
particular Nation of the Jews, and what

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would

SERM. VI. would best comport with the Infirmities of that People. So that the *Jewish* Religion seems to have been rather a *political* one, suited to the Reasons of that State and Nation. For besides that for the most part the Duties recommended by the Law are of a *positive* and *ritual* Nature, and such as concern the outward Service of the Body, more than the Perfection of the Mind; even the *Decalogue* it self, which at first one would take to be a *Breviate* of the *Moral Law*, and therefore hope to find there all the Heads of Duties of that kind, is yet, in this particular respect, very incompleat and defective. For the Duties towards a Man's self, which yet are founded upon as deep Reason as any other, and of a great Influence too upon the Happiness of Mankind, are yet neither expressly mention'd there, nor are they, by easie and immediate Consequence, deducible thence. And where-ever else they are taken notice of throughout the Body of the *Law*, it is so very slightly and coldly, as if it had been besides the Design of *Moses* to stand to consider Matters of that nature.

But then, as for the *higher*, more *refin'd*, and *spiritual* Duties of the *Christian* Institution, such as *Purity* of Heart, *Contempt* of the World, and the like, the *Jews*, most of them, seem'd to have had very faint and imperfect, and some of them very paeverse Notions of these things. We are sure it was grown to be so very bad in our *Saviour's* Days, that those false Guides of the People, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, had taken off the
Necessity

Necessity of all inward Purity, and * did not scruple to tell Men, that if they kept themselves only from the outward and grosser Acts of Sin, they need do no more, but had answer'd the full Intention of the Law. S E R M. VI.

Now though this be really no Prejudice to the Perfection of that Religion, that these ill Men did so grossly *misinterpret* the Design of it, yet considering their own *ill* Hearts and Inclinations, 'tis possible they might take the first occasion of these Errors, by observing, how imperfectly, and unequally, the *Law* inforc'd those greater Duties, in comparison of the *ritual* Parts of that Religion, Matters in themselves of far less Moment and Consequence. So that when our *Saviour* enter'd upon his *Prophetick* Office, he found it necessary to carry the Duty of Man much higher than it was; and though, in doing this, he was pleas'd, for the most part, to take his Hints from *Moses*, and made the *Law* his Foundation to proceed upon; yet he rais'd the Superstructure to a far nobler Pitch than had ever been known in the World before; by explaining the Precepts of the *Moral Law* into a more refin'd and excellent Sense, and laying open the full Obligation of them upon the Consciences of Men: And by those great Improvements he made to the Law of *Moses*, in his admirable *Sermon* on the *Mount*, he sufficiently shew'd how much it needed them.

* Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis, Lib. 1. c. 2. sect. 6. part 4.

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And how then could such an insufficient and defective Institution, as this of *Moses* was, be design'd for an everlasting Continuance, to have been the standing and eternal Rule of Human Nature! From the very End and Reason, why *God* should give a Law at all to Mankind, 'tis not difficult to prove, that *that* Law, whichsoever it should be, that *God* could intend for the perpetual and only one to Men, must have been infinitely more perfect than that of *Moses* was. For why does *God* abridge the Liberty of Men, why does he lay his Commands and Restraints upon them, at any time, but that he may guide them by this means to the Perfection and Happiness of their Natures? Though some indeed of the *Divine* Laws are more fully and directly contriv'd to this End than others, yet all of them do in some measure tend to it. But then, that Law, which *God* would design to be the only Rule of Human Life, and to last for ever, must of necessity have been in its nature suited and adapted to promote this great end of Man's Perfection and Happiness, as much as *God* intends and wills it; for otherwise, if there should have been no other Law given, and yet that which was to be the only and perpetual one should have been insufficient to Man's Happiness, *God* might then have seem'd to have left Mankind destitute of a sufficient Direction to his main and ultimate End, which yet is highly contrary to his *Wisdom* and *Goodness* to suppose he should do. But now *God* desires and intends that Man should be as happy as he can be, as far as the Capacities

ties of his Nature will admit; and therefore his *only* and *eternal Law* must have been as perfect as was possible: Which because the *Jewish Law* was not, as I have endeavoured to prove, it could not therefore be the *only* and final Revelation of God to the World, and for that reason not *perpetual*.

Thirdly, The Motives and Sanctions, which that Law made use of, were not sufficient to oblige Men to Obedience. * That the *old Legal Covenant* proceeded upon Temporal Rewards and Punishments only, as to the express and open Tenor of it, is very plain and clear from that Distinction the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* puts between that former, and this new Evangelical Covenant, where he tells us, that *Christ* was made the Mediator of a better Covenant, establish'd upon better *Promises*. *Heb. 8. 6.* But now if one main ground of Difference between those two Covenants lay in the Nature of these Promises, each was founded on, and it be certain, that the *Gospel Covenant* stands upon the Spiritual Promises of Life and Glory, then 'tis as certain, on the other side, that the old

* I don't say that the Fathers of the Old Testament acted with regard only to Temporal Sanctions, for that were to oppose the Doctrine of one of our Church's Articles, which I believe; but I do, and may safely affirm, that all that the Law it self proposes, is Temporal, and that what good Men acted upon higher Views than of this Life, they did from Tradition, or upon reasonable Presumptions, or some after Revelation, no where plainly discoverable in the Books of Moses. For which I have the Authority of Grotius, Dr. Hammond, and Mr. Mede.

SERM. VI. *Jewish* Covenant did not so; for if it had, how then could the *Apostle*, in reason, have made the different Nature of the Promises, a ground of Distinction between the *Covenants*? And if *both* were establish'd upon the same, how then was one upon † better Promises than the other? 'Tis true indeed, there were some *Mystical* Overtures, some obscure Presumptions of the Rewards of another Life, under the *Old Covenant*, and we know that Men of a forward Piety were influenc'd by them: But after all, this was still over and above to any thing in the *Sanctions* of *Moses*, and more than any Man could then put in his Claim to, in vertue of his Obedience to that Law.

And because the Arguments for Obedience to the Law were drawn only from the Proposals of this Life, that was the Reason they prov'd so very weak and ineffectual: For these Temporal Goods and Evils are by no means the proper holds upon Human Nature; nor have they weight enough upon the Wills of Men to bend them to their Duty, where there is any considerable Difficulty or Advantage to counterpoise. For to render any Law powerful and effective, there must be a considerable Advantage on the side of what it proposes, compar'd with what it obliges a Man to forbear or undergo in compliance with it. And as far as any Law fails in this respect, so much the more does

† For it plainly appears from the *Apostle's* Argument in the Place cited, that the Word better must respect the Nature, and Substance, and not any mere Circumstances of the Promises themselves.

it lose, or abate of its due Force upon the Mind of Man. So that when the Law of *Moses* enjoyn'd Men hard and spiritual Duties, upon the prospect of Worldly Interests only, and denounc'd only Temporal Inconveniences upon the *Neglect* of those Duties; it *fail'd* in one of the main Essentials of a Law, and for that Reason could not prevail to any great purpose upon Mens Minds. For 'tis impossible the Streams should run higher than the Fountain, or that Mens Obedience should rise above the Motives for it. To give one plain *Instance*, for the better illustration of this matter: The inordinate Love of the World was doubtless a Sin under the old Law, as well as under the Gospel; because it was inconsistent with the *Love of God*, which yet certainly the *Jews*; as well as *Christians*, were oblig'd to; it being one of the main Hinges upon which, our *Saviour* tells them and us, all the *Law* and the *Prophets* hang. Mat. 22. 40. Now what Method would *Moses* make use of, to take Men off from this Vice, the irregular Love of this World? Why, by proposing a greater Temporal Interest, that if Men would love *God* more, and the World less, he would then bless them in their *Basket* and *their Store*, in the *Fruit of their Bodies*, and *of their Fields*. Deut. 28. 5. But now, that this could not be a very proper Argument to this purpose, will appear, if we consider, that all the force, this Argument could have upon them, must suppose however a *less degree* of the love of this World as necessary in order to it: For if they could be supposed not to love the

World


SERM. VI. *World* at all, how then could the Proposal of *Temporal* Advantages affect their Minds, or be any Motive to their Obedience? but now, to go about thus to persuade Men off from the intemperate Love of any thing, which is only a greater Love than it should be, by an Argument, that does suppose and require a lesser Love of the same thing, is a little incongruous to Nature, and what *Almighty God* would never have done, but in condescension to the *dulness* and *heaviness* of that People, who were hardly capable of any other, and therefore must have been wrought upon by such kind of Arguments as could any way touch them.


But now, had *God* intended this first and imperfect Law of *Moses* to have stood for ever, and to be of eternal Obligation, it might then have seem'd some Reflection upon his Wisdom, and his Goodness both, that he should not have taken care to guard it with stronger Sanctions. It is possible indeed that *God* may give some Laws to Men, and yet not enforce them so powerfully as might be done; but then these are *only* such, as are of less Consequence to Man's Happiness, and which *God*, it may be, intends to fill up and supply by some after Dispensation: But when he gives a Law to the World once for all, since Sanctions are in the nature of Means to Ends to the Observance of a Law, we may be sure *God* would provide for such a Law as this, proportionably as he intends it shall be kept; and *God* certainly does design his *only* and *eternal Law* to Men should be observ'd; other-

otherwise, why did he give it at all? And S E R M. VI. consequently had the Law of *Moses* been the last Revelation the World was ever to have expected, God would have taken sufficient Security of Mankind for the Observance of it: Which yet we see he did not, but on the contrary, finding fault himself with that first Institution * (and not as our Translation reads it, with them, that is the *Jews*,) he saith, *Behold the days come (saith the Lord,) when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant, that I made with their Fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt: because they continued not in my Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.* Where we see, 'tis the Insufficiency of that first Covenant to engage Men to Obedience, that is made the Reason why God resolv'd upon the abolishing it.

I come now to the *Second* thing proposed, to consider the Reasons, why our *Saviour Christ*, when he came to abrogate the Ceremonial Law, and to take off its Obligation, did himself notwithstanding think fit to conform to the Observance of it. There are some indeed, that seem to be over-scrupulous and tender, how they pronounce our *Lord* to have abrogated any Law of Divine Institution that he found in the World when he came; and that because of his own Words, where he tells us, that

* See Dr. Hammond on the Place.

S E R M. VI. *he came not to destroy the Law, and the Prophets,*
 *but to fulfil them.* Now tho' these Expressi-
 ons of his (*that he came not to destroy the Law*
and the Prophets) might be intended only of
 the Moral Duties of Religion, (as they are
 certainly in another Place, where the *Law*
 and the *Prophets* are made reducible to the
 two great Heads of Religion, the *love of*
God and of our Neighbour) and we are sure,
 that our Saviour did not in any Sense in-
 tend to destroy these things from amongst
 Men, but, on *the quite contrary*, very much
 confirm'd and settled them, by discovering
 the Nature of them more fully, and strength-
 ning their Obligation: Tho', I say, this
 might here be a sufficient Answer to take
 off the force of this Objection, yet this is
 not all; for, if we consider the matter a lit-
 tle more attentively, we shall find, that *Christ*
 may be said to have *abrogated* the *Ceremo-*
nial Law, and, notwithstanding that, these
 Words of his (*that he did not come to destroy*
but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets) may
 hold true even of the *Ceremonial Law* it
 self. For *Christ*, 'tis certain, did not *destroy*
 even the *Law of Ordinances* in one Sense;
 that is, he did not make it null and void
 as to the original Design and Intention of
 it, which was to prefigure himself; all the
 Types and Shadows of that Religion, ha-
 ving had their full Completion by him, and
 meeting in him, as the true *Body and Sub-*
stance from whom, and for whom, they
 were at first projected. But then as to the
 outward Use and Observation of that *Typical*
Law, this every one must own he did re-
 move

move or abolish, and no more than this is S E R M. VI. here intended, when we say he *abrogated*  that *Law*,

And that he did so much as this, is very clear from the design of his own Words to the Woman of Samaria. *Woman, believe me, John 4. 21, 22, the hour is coming when ye shall neither in 23. this mountain, nor yet at Ferusalem, worship the Father: but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* By these Words of his, he plainly signifies, that he would shortly set Men free from the Use and Observance of the Ceremonial Worship, and take away all Distinction between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, upon that account. And though it must be granted, he did not this by any *direct* and *express* Repeal of that Law, yet by setting up a more pure and spiritual Religion in the World, and so evacuating the old One, he did it by *consequence*, as effectually, and to as full Satisfaction of rational Minds about it, as if he should have revoked that Law upon Mount *Sinai*, in as loud *Thunder* as he gave it.

Now though we are sure he came into the World upon a design of abolishing the Law, yet there may be these three Reasons given, why he should think fit himself to comply to the Observance of it.

First, Because that Law was to continue yet in force some time after his coming into the World.

Secondly, That by this Means, his own Compliance, he might have an easier Access

SERM. VI. to the Jews, and fairer Opportunities of gaining upon them, by his Doctrine and Example.

And *Thirdly*, That he might hereby give a perfect Instance of Obedience to his *Father*, in every thing.

And, *First*, Because the ritual Law was to continue in force as long as our Saviour should be upon Earth, therefore it was requisite, he should have submitted to it, as being himself born, and living under its Oeconomy. For though he came into the World a Mediator of that *new Covenant*, by which indeed the *old One* was afterwards superseded, yet it must be consider'd, that this *new Covenant* of his was not to have its full Effect, to this purpose, till after his Death and Crucifixion. For *a Testament is of force, says the Apostle, after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the Testator liveth.* It must here be still granted, that as to the inward salutary Effects of this *new Covenant*, upon the Souls and Spirits of Men, so far it took place immediately upon the *Fall*, and by Vertue of it, the Fathers of the *old Testament* obtain'd Favour in the sight of *God*; *Christ* being even then in some Sense crucified and slain, that is internally, in the Design and Intention of *God the Father*, and in his own Purpose and Election; for he was the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, and, consequently, before ever the Vertue of his Sufferings was applied to Men. And so this does not any way contradict the Assertion of the *Apostle*, when he maintains the Necessity of the *Testator's*

Heb. 9. 17.

Rev. 13. 8.

stator's Death, in order to the inforcing the **S E R M. VI.**
Testament. For, as *Christ's Death* was, be-
 fore his coming into the World, only *intentional*, so were the Effects of it, till then, only Inward and Spiritual. But then, as for any outward and publick Effects of this *new Testament*, such as the changing the *Ecclesiastical Polity* of a Nation, as of the *Jews*, or annulling any divine Law, that was already in the World, such Effects as these it was not to have, till after it was actually confirm'd and sealed by the *Blood of Christ*; for it was then, and not before, that *Christ* Col. 2. 14.
blotted out the hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, nailing it to his cross.

So that, our *Blessed Saviour*, being born under the Condition of Men, and within the obliging Power of the Law, it was necessary he should testifie his Submission and Obedience to it. For it being the Institution of *God his Father*, till he had signified his Pleasure to the contrary, even his own eternal Son was not to be exempted from its Obligation. For *God sent forth his* Gal. 4. 4.
Son made of a Woman made under the Law. He was born indeed in the Subjection, and to the Obedience of human Nature, beside that he *learnt* it, as the *Apostle* tells us, by *what he suffer'd.* When the days were *ful-* Heb. 5. 8.
fill'd, we are told, *his parents brought him to* Luke 2. 27.
Jerusalem to do for him according to the Law. And when being yet a little Child he had taken upon him the *Mosaic Covenant*, by his Circumcision, as he grew up he did perfectly conform his Life and Practice to it. Nor, when he went abroad into the World,
 upon

SERM. VI.



upon his Office, did he ever do any thing to countenance the Breach and Violation of that Law; but rather took all Occasions to commend, and encourage Obedience to it; charging his own Disciples and Followers to observe, and *do what they who sat in Moses seat*, and acted by his Authority, should command them; and strictly enjoyning the *Lep- per* whom he had cleans'd, as if it had been the Condition of his Recovery, to go and shew *himself to the Priest, and to offer those things that Moses commanded for a Testimony*. And when the Malice and Envy of the *Jews* often objected against him as an Enemy to *Moses*, and reproach'd him as a Transgressor of the Law, he as often sufficiently vindicates himself from their Charge, by proving even out of the *Law* it self, that what he did was in such charitable Instances, as in Reason and Equity that Law it self could not be intend- ed to prohibit.

Mat. 23. 2, 3.

Mat. 8. 4.

Again, *Secondly*, *Christ* submitted himself to a Conformity to the Law, that by this Means he might have an easier Access to the *Jews*, and fairer Opportunities of gaining upon them, by his Doctrine and Example. For should he have done otherwise, this had been such a Prejudice against his Person, as would infallibly have block'd up all the ways of Instruction, and have render'd his most importunate Advice to that People utterly vain and ineffectual. We know how they were offended at the Lowness of his *Original*, as they thought it, and stumbled at the Mean- ness of his Appearance, as it was; but how, think we, would they have *scorn'd* and *flout- ed,*

ed, and with what an Indignation would they have rose against him, had he come without the great Seal of the Covenant upon him, his Circumcision! Would they have ever suffer'd, that one, that was *an alien from the commonwealth of Israel*, should set up for an Instructor of Righteousness, and take upon him to teach others, who *had the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law?* Or would they indeed have ever endur'd his Company to that end? For besides that they presum'd themselves forbidden a familiar Converse with Men without the Covenant by the Word of God himself, they were naturally a People of a proud and contemptuous Spirit, forward enough to make Distances, where they should not be; and therefore we may be sure, against a Man, with whom they had a Quarrel upon other Accounts, as they had with our blessed Saviour, they would have been very ready to have made use of the Privilege of separating themselves from him, if they could have found any Pretence from their Law for doing so. Especially considering how ungrateful the Company of so excellent a Person must have been to Men of such ill Designs and Tempers as they were, whose Vices therefore, both by his admirable Example, and divine Discourses, he must have continually reproach'd and upbraided. But now, when they saw he was a Man like themselves, a *Hebrew of the Hebrews, and of the family and stock of Abraham*, this did in some measure reconcile them to his Doctrine, and considerably abate that Aversion they would have otherwise had against his

N Person:


S E R M. VI



Eph. 2. 12.

Rom. 2. 20.

Phil. 3. 5.

SERM. VI.  Person: For being of the same Church and Profession with themselves, they could not but look upon him, at first, to have the same Interests too, unless he should some way or other discover himself to the contrary. And then by being a *Jew*, he was likewise privileg'd to frequent their *Synagogues* and *Temple*, their Places of religious Resort and Concourse, *where the Jews always come*, and so had the Liberty of speaking openly to the World, and, by kind and powerful Insinuations, and an obliging and amiable Behaviour, had the Opportunities of gaining upon the Hearts and Affections of Men, and of bringing over Profelytes and Disciples to his Doctrine. And these Advantages he could not have expected, had he been any otherwise than an *Israelite* himself.

John 18. 20.

Thirdly and *Lastly*, It was requisite our *Blessed Lord* should Conform himself to the *ceremonial Law*, that he might hereby give a perfect Instance of Obedience to his Father, in every thing. For Obedience to the *positive* Precepts of Religion, though it be in Matters of an inferior and indifferent nature in themselves, is yet of a very high Value and Acceptance in the sight of *God*, of almost as great, sometimes, as our Compliance with a moral Duty; nay and perhaps in some Cases of *greater* too; because the Arguments, by which a Man is brought under this sort of Obedience, may have a more near and immediate Respect to *God* himself, than many others. For a Man may be prevail'd upon to observe a natural Duty, suppose upon prudential Reasons, because it may be

be for his Interest or his Health to do so; SERM. VI.
 but he, that resigns himself up to a merely *positive* Precept, a thing no otherwise Good than as commanded, does by this shew, that he rests himself only upon the Divine Authority, and most fully own the Obligation it has upon him.

And from hence, it could not be, but that *God Almighty* must have highly approv'd the Obedience of our *Saviour* to him in this kind of Duties. And accordingly, we may observe, that it was, *once* when he was *fulfilling* this sort of *Righteousness*, at his *Baptism* in the River *Jordan*; 'twas then that *God the Father*, in Testimony of his high Satisfaction in him, pronounc'd that Voice from Heaven upon him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd.* Mat. 3. 15, 17.

And besides what I have said, that *God* might require our *Saviour's* Subjection to him in these Things, as an Evidence of his entire Obedience, there is nothing wherein the admirable *Congruity* of *divine Wisdom* appears, more than in this; in that our *Blessed Saviour*, by his perfect Conformity to the *positive Duties* of Religion, has thereby restor'd human Nature in the same Instance, in which it fell; That as Man's *Trangression* began in the Violation of a *positive Law*, so the *Righteousness* of *Christ* should be made perfect, in a compleat and exact Obedience to *Laws* of the same Nature; that so wherein *sin* first enter'd into the world, therein *righteousness* might much more abound, to the Praise and Glory of *God the Father* by *Jesus Christ* our Lord. Rom. 5. 20.

*The utter Inconsistence, and no Necessity,
of observing the Law of Moses to-
gether with the Profession of Chri-
stianity.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University of OXFORD,
January 1. 17¹⁰.

PHILIP III. 2, 3.

— *Beware of the Concision; For
we are the Circumcision.*

THERE is nothing, about which
the great *Apostle* of the *Gentiles* ap-
pears more concern'd to make
good and assert his Character; than
by his Endeavours to defend and secure those,
that were so immediately his Charge, in the
full Possession of their Rights of *Christianity*,
and to confirm them in that Liberty with
which *Christ* had made them free; he does
this more especially, in Opposition to the
unreasonable

Gal. 5. 1.

unreasonable Claims, and unnecessary Encroachments of the Law of *Moses*, and its Professors, of whom there were many in those early Times, whether out of a sincere, though erroneous Conviction of their Judgment, or to serve some present plausible temporary Designs, as the *Apostle* rather insinuates, who appear'd such strong Zealots, and high Vouchers for the standing Necessity of that *Law*, as that, in their Opinion, Christianity it self, without the joynt Observance of the Law of Ceremonies, could signifie nothing, to the real Benefit and Spiritual Interests of Men's Souls; though the *Apostle* at the same time was convinc'd, upon the best Reason in the World, that it could really have done no good, in Conjunction with it.

For which Reason 'tis, that though he was an *Hebrew* himself, furnish'd with all the Advantages which that Law could give him, and had as high Pretensions to any Privileges from it, as any Man living, both upon the account of his Birth and Education under it, and within all the Conditions that Law requir'd, besides his own exact Conformity to all its Rules in one of the *straitest sects of Aa. 26. 5.* that Religion, yet we find he voluntarily renounces and disclaims all these apparent Advantages of his own, and quite divests himself of all his *legal* Perfections, for the Benefit of his *Christian Disciples*; to prevent their being drawn aside, and inveigled by those fair shews in the Flesh, as he styles it, lest they should be any way prevail'd upon, to the great Prejudice of *Christianity*, to en-

SER M. VII. *W* certain too high a Concept of that *Carnal Righteousness*, which he himself therefore appears so plainly to reject. *I might have confidence, says he, in the flesh; If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh, I more, circumcis'd the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless, but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. He himself, who was it seems so thoroughly and so intimately acquainted with the whole Tenor of the Mosaic Institution, so perfectly skill'd in its whole Design, and that saw, so clearly, through its utmost Weight and Importance, yet he could set no value on it; in Comparison with the infinite Treasures and Advantages of the Christian Faith and Doctrine, he rejects it all. And this he does, so professedly, in order to beat down other Mens vain and false Opinions about the Law, because he knew, that if an Error of this Nature once prevail'd, it must prove one of the greatest Hindrances to the Progress, and in a great Measure disappoint the blessed effects of Christianity. For other Mens Good therefore, and in Comparison of the Christian Religion, he does not stick to speak of the Legal Ordinances, in Terms of Diminution and Disparagement. The whole Mosaic Dispensation, in another place, he styes a State of Bondage; and Circumcision, that boasted*

Phil. 3. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

boasted Seal of the Covenant, he reproaches SERM. VII. in my *Text*, with the lessening title of *Con-*
cision, and puts in a guard and caution upon
 his Disciples against it. *Beware of the Conci-*
sion; For we are the Circumcision.

The whole of my Design upon these Words, and with regard to the *Religious So-*
lemnity of this *Day*, will be taken up in fla-
 ting these *Two Points*.

First, Wherein it was, that the so very great Inconvenience, or Danger of admitting, and joyning the *Jewish Legal Observances* with the Profession of *Christianity* lay, and what was the true Ground and Reason of the Apostle's Caution in my *Text*, *Beware of the Concision*.

Secondly, That there could not be urg'd any real Pretence of Necessity for such an odd Conjunction of the *Law* and *Christianity*, because the utmost Design and End of the *Mosaic Rites* was more than fully answer'd, by the Perfection and Purity of the *Gospel Dispensation*: *For we are the Circumcision*.

First, I shall endeavour to determine wherein it was, that the so very great Inconvenience, or Danger of admitting, and joyning the *Jewish Legal Observances* with the Profession of *Christianity*, lay, and what was the true Ground and Reason of the Apostle's Caution in my *Text*, *Beware of the Concision*. 'Tis certain that *St. Paul* expresses himself in as high Terms, and stands up as vigorously against a Practice of this nature, both in this, and other of his Epistles, as upon any one Point whatever; and seems hardly ever to raise himself more, than in his Controversie with those *False Teachers*, who

SERM. VII. would have super-induc'd *Judaism* upon *Christianity*. More especially in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, wherein he represents himself as jealous of that People's falling off to the Observance of the *Mosaical Rites*, and as much afraid of the Consequences, as if their utmost Safety, and the very Life of *Christianity* had been struck at. Nay, he does expressly warn them to this purpose, more than once, in a very earnest and pathetic manner, that, upon such their compliance with the Law, which they neither had, nor ought to have any Concernment with, he apprehended the certain Ruin of their Faith, the utter Voidance and Forfeiture of all their *Christian Privileges*. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. And again, Christ is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace.

Gal. 5. 2, 4.

And can we suppose that the Spirit of God in the *Apostle* should thus rise up, and protest against a Dispensation, that deriv'd its original Authority from himself, from Heaven; that he should appear so zealously concern'd to cancel what he had before establish'd, if it had not been most highly prejudicial to, or rather quite inconsistent with, his latter more perfect Revelation of the *Gospel*? And yet, upon the first View, it does not appear what was the Reason of this great Exception against the Constitution of *Moses*, nor why it might not very well have continued in consistence with the Religion of our *Saviour*; which yet we are sure it could not, and for what Reasons I shall make it more immediately my Business to enquire. *First*

First then, the great and fundamental Principle of Christianity, that of our Justification by Faith, which is the very Corner Stone in the whole Fabrick of our Religion, and without which it would lose its very Name and Distinction, could never have prevail'd, while Men had been under a Conviction of the necessity of a Legal Obedience: *As many of you as are justified by the Law are fallen from Grace.* Gal. 5. 4. And yet we know that their Justification by the Law was the main end and drift of Mens Obedience to it, and the general Opinion that prevail'd in those days, was, that no less than a perfect Conformity to the Law, or one very near it, could ever procure Men an Acceptance at the Hands of God. The Letter of the Law it self is peremptory and rigorous in this Sense, *he that does these things shall live in them,* and he only; and again, on the threatenng Hand, *cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in this Book of the Law to do them.* Gal. 3. 10. These, we see then, were the severe Demands and Proposals in the Law it self, upon which Mens Expectation of being justified must have at that time depended. But to this it may be here objected, Did not the Law of Moses it self admit of Expiations in case of smaller Faults? Were not *Sin Offerings* and *Trespas Offerings* prescribed even by the direction of God himself, at the hand of Moses? And were not Relaxations granted in several Cases from the extremity of Justice? And how then could that People ever conceive, or entertain Thoughts of being

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being justified by a perfect Obedience, when the Law it self supposes such frequent Lapses and Transgressions would happen by Men, and therefore takes care, we see, beforehand, for a proper Remedy? To this perhaps the Answer is not so very difficult as it may at first appear: For Men might still retain Hopes of being justified by the Law of *Moses*, though they could not perfectly obey, and broke it in many Instances, as long as they fondly imagin'd, that their performance of the Expiation, in case of Delinquency, was an Equivalent with *God* for their first Obedience. And according to this Sense they might mistake the Law as if it were *disjunctive*, after this manner, either Obey, or offer the Sacrifice appointed in case of Error. And 'tis certain that the *Jews* had these Dependencies, and that most of the *Votaries* of that Religion thought the Stain of their Guilt quite clear'd off by the *Blood* of those *Sacrifices*, which they offer'd by the Law, tho' we learn from a more perfect Revelation since, that 'twas impossible it should be so.

'Tis plain then, that the Reason of that high Conceit Men had fram'd, and endeavour'd to maintain, of the *Mosaic* Ordinances, was, for that they vainly presum'd to be *justified* by that their Obedience, and because they did so, were ready to reject whatever Proposals should offer Salvation upon other Terms, as we know they did the *Gospel of Christ* himself upon this very occasion. 'Tis the *Apostle's* own Conclusion of his Argument, in his Epistle to the

Romans,

Romans, *What shall we say then?* that is, as SERM. VII.
 the Result and Consequence of his former Reasonings, why this says he, by way of Answer to himself, *That the Gentiles which follow'd not after Righteousness, that is of the Law, have attain'd to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith: But Israel which follow'd after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attain'd to the Law of Righteousness; wherefore? because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law; for they stumbled at that stumbling Stone: Here was the original Cause of the fatal Lapse of that People, and of their Non-compliance with Christianity, that they would not let go their own imaginary Holiness, nor renounce their Merits of conforming to the Law, upon any Terms that could be offer'd them, tho' of never so great advantage to their Happiness: They thought it no less than a Reproach, and unreasonable to the utmost degree, for them to quit those high Privileges of their Religion, by which they were at present distinguish'd from the rest of the World, and to put themselves only upon a level with the Heathen Nations; which yet we know they must have done, had they once come into the Scheme of Justification by Faith in the Merits of a Redeemer: But this their high Stomach would by no means submit to, and, so far, their Pride, as it uses to prove in other Cases, was the great Occasion of their Fall.*

But now, if *Justification by Works* was the design and aim of their Legal Obedience, as it plainly appears by these so frequent

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 quent declarations of *Scripture* to have been, then 'tis certain, there was no room for the *Gospel* to stand in consort with it; for these two Forms of Religion were directly cross and opposite to each other in the very first Principles of their Constitution, and must have been ever thwarting and justling one another in that which was their main and principal Design. For, by the *Apostle's* Argument, *If the reward be of Grace*, and so it must be, if 'tis by Justification of Faith, then is it no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. For to him that worketh is the Reward not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt; and that was the Presumption of the *Jew* for his Legal Obedience: how it reasonably could be so, I shall not here inquire, but that it was generally so is certain. But now as to the Christian Justification, to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness. Can there be any thing more opposite than these Accounts which a *Jew* and a *Christian* would each severally give of his expectance of *Justification*? And is it then possible a Man should maintain such an high Opinion of the benefits of the *Law*, and at the same time do right to *Christianity* in that great Point of all, which so far distinguishes it from the *Law*? The very reason of Obedience to the *Law*, was an Opinion of *Righteousness* to be had from thence; which Opinion, we see, is directly contradicted by the *Gospel*, for which reason


Rom. 11. 6.

Rom. 4. 4.

Rom. 4. 5.

son these two are inconsistent: And consequently if *Legal* Obedience be super-induc'd upon *Christianity*, it must choke and destroy it in its nearest and most *Vital Principle*; which was the first Reason for the *Apostle's* Caution in my Text, *beware of the Concision*, for he that once submitted to *Circumcision*, which was the principal Rite of *Judaism*, out of an Opinion of its Necessity, was upon the same ground oblig'd to conform himself to the whole Law, and then *St. Paul* will quickly satisfy us what must become of *Christianity*. Behold I Paul say unto you, Gal. 5. 2, 3; that if you be circumcis'd, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every Man that is circumcis'd, that he is a Debter to do the whole Law. The Consequence of which Doctrine the same *Apostle* will tell us in another Place, that if Righteousness be by the Law, and if they which are of the Law be Heirs, Faith is made void, and the Promise made of no effect. Rom. 4. 14.

A Second Reason of Inconsistence between the *Gospel* and the Law was this, viz. that the keeping up a perpetual standing Conformity to the Rites of *Moses* would have prov'd the greatest slur and diminution to the *Sacrifice* of Christ, that could be. Sacrifices and Oblations, we know, were the main Essential Part of the *Ceremonial Law*, and therefore if that Law had stood, those must always have been offer'd; but now that they should always be so, allowing the *Jewish* Constitution to have been at least a wise one, we cannot any way suppose, unless there were some End and Reason of Necessity


 SERM. VII. Necessity for their continuance. But when the great Sacrifice of Christ had been once presented on the Cross, there could then be no longer Reason for any *Legal Sacrifices*, because that one of our *Blessed Saviour* was infinitely more than sufficient, for all the Purposes, for which the rest were all intended; and the whole Virtue and Efficacy which these carried in them, they derived from a secret *Typical Reference* to that of *Christ*. If those Sacrifices then must still have prevail'd in use, and so they must have done, if the Law, which prescrib'd and supported them, had remain'd in its full Force, they must either have had no end or design at all of their continuance, or it must have been *this*, to have supply'd some *Deficiency* or other in the Sacrifice of *Christ*. For since there can be no sufficient Reason assign'd for their first Institution, but that they were intended to aim and point at the great *Expiatory Sacrifice* of the *Lamb of God*, once to be offer'd in the end of the World, 'tis impossible therefore, to imagine any other reasonable Account that can be given for their continuance, unless it were to fill up what should some way or other be wanting in the Sacrifice of the Cross. But the least suspicion of that Nature would be no less than a Blasphemous Reflection on the whole Scheme of our Redemption by the Death of *Christ*. For that the *Blood of the Son of God* should need the concurrence of that of *Bulls and Goats*, to accomplish its great Designs, and to take away the Sins of the World, is an Imagination as black and impious,

Heb. 9. 26.

pious, as it is vain and foolish to the last degree. SERM. VII.

Since then the great Reason given by the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, for the Removal of the *Legal Sacrifices*, was *this*, that the whole design of those Sacrifices was duly answer'd, and their numerous Defects supply'd by the infinite Merit of Christ's Offering, who appear'd only once in the end of the World, to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; to have insisted afterwards on the continuance of those Legal Sacrifices had been the greatest undervaluing and disparagement to His conceivable, and an Argument only of Infidelity in those that should do so, as we are sure it was in the unbelieving *Jew*. And therefore to stand up for the Necessity of the *Ceremonial Law*, after that Christ had once put an end to it by fulfilling the whole design of it in his own Person, is by a just Consequence from the former Supposition a slight and reproach likewise upon the *Blessed Saviour* of the World, and his most perfect Offering. Because, as I have said to this Purpose before, if the Law had remain'd in its former Obligation, Sacrifices, which were the chiefest Part of the Law, must have continued too; because Sacrifices, and the Law of Ceremonies mutually imply, and infer each other, and stand or fall together.

Thirdly, The Law of Ceremonies must have given Place, when *Christianity* was to prevail, because, otherwise, the great design of the *Gospel* upon the *Gentile* World would have been in a great Measure disappointed.

Not

S E R M. VII. Not many of the Heathen Nations would have ever admitted Christianity, if it had come attended with the troublesome Observance of a Law so generally disgusting and offensive to the Sense of Men, who would therefore have rejected or quitted the Proposals and Privileges of the Gospel, to avoid the Odium, and Incumbrance, and Burden of the Law. -So that, we see what mighty Reason the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles* had, to stand up for Christian Liberty, against the Legal Services; For otherwise his own Ministry must have fail'd of that general, and blessed Influence, which he so earnestly desir'd, and we are now assur'd it had in the Course of his preaching amongst the *Gentiles*. How warmly for this reason does he apply to the *Galatians*, who at that time had their Minds tortur'd and entangled with Scruples about the Law, by a sort of false, hypocritical Teachers, who only served their own base private Ends by perverting the *Gospel of Christ*! How does he, upon this occasion, rip up the Law from the very first design of its Institution, and lay open the Weakness and Insufficiency of it, to all the Purposes of true Righteousness, and appeal for the Infinite Trouble, as well as Usefulness of it, to those very Men themselves who contended most for its Necessity! And when he goes on to compare it with the infinite Benefits and Privileges of the *Gospel*, he rejects it, as not worthy to appear in Competition.

Gal. 1. 7.

But why, may it be ask'd, does the *Apostle* thus bestir himself to prevent the Admission of the Ceremonial Law with these
his

his *Gentile Disciples*? Were the *Galatians*, who were Heathens till their Conversion, so fond of the *Law of Moses*? Had they such a strong Affection for it, that nothing less than the *Apostle's* most convincing Arguments, most powerful Entreaties, most affectionate Appeals could divert them from it? If so, this appears to overthrow the main Foundation of the present Argument, and to shew, that the Heathens had no such Aversion to the *Ceremonial Law* as we say they had; and seems to intimate rather, that they would have been glad to have taken in the Law a share with *Christianity*. In answer to this we may consider, that the *Galatians* might very well contend with a great deal of Vehemence, and Earnestness, for a Conformity to the Law, whilst they were under such Scruples or Convictions of Conscience (how false soever) about the Necessity of it to Salvation, though at the same time they had not the least Affection or Inclination towards it, for its own sake, but an Abhorrence rather and an Aversion from the Burden and Inconveniences of it, and would have been glad upon good reason to have been set free from an Opinion of its Obligation. 'Twas the same case with them in all Probability, as we are sure it was with some other *Gentile Converts*, who were once under the same Scruples and Troubles about the *Ceremonial Law*, and its Obligation; who yet, when the *Council of Jerusalem* had determin'd so favourably, and so much for their Ease in this very Point it self, as they receiv'd the decrees are said to rejoyce for the Consolation: they were glad,

SERM. VII.

Acts 15. 28,
29, 30, 31.

SERM. VII. and thought themselves happy that by a Sentence so full of Authority, as that of an Assembly of the *Apostles*, they were resolv'd in a case, which, if it had fallen otherwise, must have entangled their Practice, and harass'd their Lives with a Burden of troublesome and intricate Observances, which those very Men, who originally liv'd under them, and were most oblig'd to comply with them, could never bear themselves. And this had been indeed a sore Temptation to them, it would have gall'd and fretted their Minds under the Profession of Christianity, and one time or other perhaps have inclin'd them to have admitted Thoughts of parting with it, and returning back to their old Superstitions, more easie, and at first appearance, perhaps as reasonable as the *other*. And this might very well be another good Reason for the *Apostle* to warn his Disciples, with so much concern and care, against submitting to such a Law of laborious *Ordinances*; which though, by the pompous Solemnity of them, they might strike with Pleasure at first upon the Fancies of Men, would nevertheless in time, as the Novelty wore off, sit like a heavy Yoke upon their Neck, and dispose them to fling off at once *Christianity* it self together with them: for why not? when both had been entertain'd with an Opinion of equal Necessity.

But now, *Christianity*, as it came alone in its pure and genuine Simplicity, approv'd it self throughly to the general Reason of Men, to all who would but impartially attend to its Pretences; and who by the perverseness and inveterate Prejudice of former wrong Opinions

Opinions had not their Minds blinded, and their Eyes and Ears shut to the powerful Convictions of its Truth and Excellency. And the longer Experience Men would have had of it, still in the Practice and Exercise of those pure and holy Duties it enjoins, they would have been still the better affected towards it, till it had gain'd upon their Mind and Reason, and settled it self in a firm and full Perswasion on their Wills.

Whereas if it had not been a *Religion* so *reasonable* in it self, and so perfectly agreeable to the best Sense and Relish of Mens Minds, notwithstanding all the external Evidence of a *Divine* and *Miraculous* Power, that attended its Delivery, it would never have prevail'd to so very general and noble Effects upon Mankind as we are sure it did. And yet, as I observ'd, this so ready and so general an Admission of the *Gospel* in the *Gen- tile* World would have been extreamly prejudic'd by the attendance of so burdensome a Companion as the Law of *Moses*. Men had Rites and Ceremonies and Religious Ordinances enough of their own before; they had Sacrifices of every kind, and Washings and Lustrations, and other Bodily Exercises in their Religious Worship: But they wanted a Religion, whose Influence should reach their Souls, and contribute to their real Happiness. And this the Law of *Moses* could not do: For take the Ceremonial Law without any Spiritual Design couch'd under it, which we know it had, and as void of any significative relation to the *Evangelical* *O**Economy*, which the

SERM. VII. Heathens knew nothing of; take the Dispensation of *Moses*, merely as to the outward view of it, and we have no Grounds to conclude the *Gentiles* would have ever thought themselves in reason bound to have yielded to its Authority. In general then we may be assur'd, that the more Difficulty there would have been in recommending and enforcing the *Ceremonial Law* upon the Heathen Nations, the stronger Bar and Objection had been still put to the spreading of *Christianity*, upon this Supposition, I mean, that they had stood upon equal Necessity, and that either both together, or neither singly, must have been admitted.

I think, these Reasons against an Union of *Christianity* with *Judaism* may be enough to satisfy us of the Reasonableness of *St. Paul's* Zeal and Contention against the Injunction of the Law of *Moses* upon the Heathen Converts; there are some other Arguments of a more plausible Consideration, and though perhaps not so *convincing*, yet of a highly *persuasive* Influence to the same Purpose; as that the true Spirit and *Genius* of *Christianity* would have been in danger of being quite choak'd and stifled by such a weight of Legal Ordinances; that the Minds of Men would have been so distract-ed between the Necessity of so much *outward* Service, and at the same time *inward* Reformation, that they could have attended neither, in any Degree as they ought, and therefore would have been tempted to neglect both; That the Edge of their Attention might in time have been quite blunted

to Spiritual Objects, by being so much engag'd on sensible Appearances; and that because there is so much Labour of Mind requir'd to fix upon Matters of a pure and Heavenly Nature, Men might, for their own ease, have taken up *at last* with the mere Case and Shell of those Divine Mysteries, and so have rested entirely in the outward Letter of the Law, which we know was the great Miscarriage even of the *Jews* themselves, and for which they are sometimes severely rebuk'd by our *Blessed Saviour*.

These, and some other Reflections of the same Nature, might be pursued, to very good advantage to the Argument that I have already so long insisted on.

But I hasten to the other Particular, which is, to shew, That as a Conjunction of the Law of *Moses* with *Christianity* has been in the former Part of this Discourse represented as entirely inconvenient, and highly dangerous to Religion; so there cannot, *Secondly*, be urg'd with Reason, any Pretence of Necessity for such an odd Conjunction of the *Law* with the *Gospel*, because the utmost Design and End of the *Mosaic Rites* is more than fully answer'd by the Perfection of the *Gospel Dispensation*; which is the *Apostle's* own way of arguing in the Words of the Text, *Beware of the Concision, for we are the Circumcision*; that is, there is now no longer reason to allow the Necessity, or admit the Practice, of the outward Rite of Circumcision in the Flesh, because the proper Use of it is now passed over, and the great Design and End of it accomplish'd; which was to represent

SERM. VII. that Spiritual Purity and Holiness, which we
 ~~~~~ Christians are now actually possess'd of, by  
 the Grace of God, in the Gospel of his Son; *We are the Circumcision*; and then it follows  
 by way of Explication, *who worship God in  
 the Spirit.*

In speaking to this latter Part of my Text,  
 I shall *First* inquire what there is in *Christi-  
 anity* that answers the true Design of the  
*Mosaic Circumcision*, consider'd as one parti-  
 cular single Rite of that Religion.

And, *Secondly*, I shall take the Word *Cir-  
 cumcision* in a more large and extensive Sense,  
 as it is comprehensive of the whole *Legal*  
 \* Rom. 15. 8. *Obedience*, (\* for so 'tis often us'd); and shall  
 Gal. 2. 7. endeavour to shew in general, that the *Go-  
 spel of Christ* has more than satisfied for the  
 Removal of that *Law*, by perfecting and ful-  
 filling that *Righteousness* to all the real and  
 substantial Effects of it, which the Law it  
 self did only represent in Shadows, and at a  
 distance.

And *First*, That there is *that* in *Christiani-  
 ty*, which answers the true Design of the  
*Jewish Circumcision*, considered only as one  
 particular *Rite* of that Religion. Thus ta-  
 ken, it may be explain'd under a threefold  
 Notion;

*First*, As it was in the beginning given to  
 Rom. 4. 11. *Abraham* as a *Seal of the Righteousness of  
 Faith which he had, being yet uncircumcis'd* :

*Secondly*, As 'twas renew'd by *Moses*, and  
 made the Mark of Distinction to the *Jews*  
 from other Nations, the signal Note of God's  
 Propriety in that People, that they were his  
 own *peculiar* :

*Thirdly*,



*Thirdly*, As it was Figurative of that Purity and Separation from Sin, which so near a Relation, as that People stood in towards Almighty God himself, requir'd.

*First*, Let us take a view of *Circumcision*, as it was Instituted to *Abraham*, by God himself, at his entrance into a more close Communion and Covenant with him, in which case it was design'd as a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*. Now this *Seal of Circumcision* had a twofold Reference; From God to *Abraham*, signifying that God did accept, and would reward his Faith and Obedience; Again, from *Abraham* to God, implying his firm Faith and Dependance on him for his Blessing. But now, *Christianity* carries all these Privileges much higher, and draws the *Security* between Heaven and Earth much firmer, and infers a more immediate Communion, and more excellent Covenant between God and Man, than ever was establish'd before. For as to the *Righteousness of Faith*, of which *Circumcision* was the *Seal* to *Abraham*, the Cardinal Doctrine of the Gospel is *Justification*, or *Righteousness* imputed to us by *Faith* in the Mercy of God by *Jesus Christ*. I am not asham'd, says St. Paul, Rom. 1. 16. of the Gospel of Christ, for therein, as the main 17. principal Point, is the *Righteousness of God* reveal'd, from *Faith* to *Faith*, that is, our *Justification* by *Faith* in *Christ* is fully and clearly represented in the Gospel of our Saviour, in order to raise in us a greater degree of *Faith*, and a firmer dependance on his Goodness. And 'twas the Publication of this great Salutory Doctrine of our *Justificati-*

S E R M. VII. *on by Faith in Jesus Christ, that is made the chief Design of his being sent into the World, for we are justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood. So that now we have all the Evidence that God will accept of our Faith, and that we shall receive the End of it, the Salvation of our Souls, that we could possibly desire; in that the Covenant of Reconciliation is now fully confirm'd and ratified to us in the Blood of Christ, as it was to Abraham only in the Blood of Circumcision; for that, we know from the Protestation of Zipporah to Moses, was a sanguinary Rite, and from her passionate Words to him on the account of her Son's Circumcision, surely a bloody Husband art thou to me. So that, we see the Foundation of God, or, as it should be*

Rom. 3. 24, 25.

Exod. 4. 25.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

*render'd, the Covenant of God, standeth sure, having this Seal, with this double Reference, God accepts those that believe; and on the other hand, we are firmly to depend upon him, to believe and hope in him for that Happiness, of which he has given us the highest Assurance in the Blood of his only Son.*

*Secondly, Circumcision may be consider'd, not only as 'twas given to Abraham at first, but as 'twas repeated and enjoyned by Moses, and intended, under that Law, as a Mark of Distinction to the Jews from other Nations; and as a Note of God's Propriety in them, that they were his own peculiar People. And as to this Point, are not Christians infinitely more taken into the Protection of God, and the Embraces of his Favour, who, by the Co-*

*venant*

venant between *God* and them, are separated to his Service, and by the Benefits of it intitled to Privileges above all the People of the Earth? *Ye are a chosen Generation*, says the *Apostle*, speaking to *Christians*, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that you should shew forth the Praises of him who hath call'd you out of Darknes into his marvellous Light. SERM. VII.  
~~~~~  
1 Pet. 2. 9.


The *Spirit* of *God*, which resides in the Hearts of good Men, is that Stamp and Character of Propriety, which *God* has set upon *Christians*, whereby they are known and distinguished to be his: 'Tis by the *Spirit* of *God* that we are seal'd to the Day of Redemption; seal'd, that is mark'd out and reserv'd for everlasting Happiness. *St. Paul* tells us, that if a Man have not the *Spirit* of *Christ*, he is none of his; and we may as well argue reversely, in the affirmative, that he properly belongs to *Christ*, that has the Holy *Spirit* abiding in him. So much Advantage then has the Christian, in vertue of his holy and excellent Religion, above what the *Jew* could ever pretend to, on the account of *Circumcision*, in these two former respects, as it implied the Seal and Token of a Covenant between *God* and the Faithful; or as by it they were divided and distinguished from all other People, and reputed the peculiar Favourites of Heaven. Rom. 8. 9.

And if we look upon *Circumcision* under the third and last Notion, as it was some way figurative of that Purity and Abstraction of Soul from Sin, which so near a Relation, as that People had to *God* himself, requir'd; here likewise


S E R M. VII. likewise we shall find the *Christian Religion* exceeds the *Jewish* to an infinite Advantage. 'Tis one express Part of the first Contract between
 2 Tim. 2. 19. God and every *Christian*, *Let him that names the name of Christ depart from Iniquity*: And the *Apostle St. Peter* inferrs it as a just Consequence from a *Christian's* being so nearly ally'd to God, that he should refrain and keep himself at the greatest distance from all Sin and Impurity; *Which in time past*, says he,
 1 Pet. 2. 11. *were not a People, but are now the People of God*; from whence it follows in the next Verse, *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims abstain from fleshly Lusts which war against the Soul.*

The *Ceremonial Law* was chiefly employ'd in external Sprinklings and Purgations, which, when the *Legal Pollution* was taken off, very often left the Mind and Conscience still defil'd, stooping under the Guilt, and subjected to the Power of Sin. But the *Laws of Christ* regard principally the inward Purity and Integrity of the Heart, and acquit or condemn a Man as to the main, from what passes within himself. The *Gospel* of our *Saviour* severely censures, and restrains the least Irregularity of a Man's Thoughts; checks and controlls the first Risings and original Motions of Sin within his Heart, does not excuse the careless Glance of an Eye, and makes a Man condemn himself for those secret Slips of his own Thoughts, which none can witness against him. *For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edg'd Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the Soul and Spirit, the Joints*
 Heb. 4. 12. *and*

and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart. SER M. VII.



That the particular Rite of Circumcision was intended by *Almighty God* to represent a Purity of this nature, and was therefore imprinted on the Body, as a Token and Memorial of Restraint upon fleshly Lusts, is universally agreed. But how ineffectual this was to curb and confine the Desires of Men within due Bounds, and to tame and subdue their disorderly Inclinations, we may quickly perceive, and as sadly lament, if we look into the Accounts of the *Jewish* Morals: When a Regard to all true Sanctity was almost quite lost amongst that People, and a meere outside Worship thought by the most Learned of their Doctors, to answer the full Intentions of the Law. And we are not so much to wonder at this, when we consider, how utterly weak and ineffectual a mere outward Sign and Representation in the Flesh, as *Circumcision* was, must be to reform the Lives of Men, in comparison of a strict and peremptory Law, such as that of the *Gospel*, impos'd upon the Minds and Spirits of Men, and enjoyn'd under the most powerful and prevailing Sanctions. Taking then all these Arguments together, and setting the Perfection and Excellency of the *Gospel* against the Weakness of outward *Circumcision*, we may now very reasonably ask the *Apostle's* Question in the third Chapter to the *Romans*, *What Advantage then hath the Jew, or what Profit is there of Circumcision?* why, truly none at all, if we balance it with the much greater Perfection and high Privileges of the *Gospel of Christ*, which

SER. M. VII.  which every way, we see, supplies the Defects, and exceeds the Advantages of *Judaism* in this first great distinguishing Article of it, *Circumcision*, so much insisted on in the Body of the *Law* it self, and so much vaunted of by the Professors of it. Which plainly shews us, that *Circumcision* was never truly able to support so great a Weight and Stress as was always laid upon it, nor was ever intended as a lasting Instance of true Righteousness, but only to represent and presignifie to us, what should be so, in the Ages to come, which we our selves so happily enjoy. For

Rom. 2. 28,
29. *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter; which Circumcision we Christians therefore are, who worship God in the Spirit.*

It remains only now that I endeavour to give some Satisfaction to the *last* Enquiry; where, taking *Circumcision* in a larger Sense, not for one particular *Rite* of the *Jewish* Religion, but as it is comprehensive of the whole Legal Obedience together, I am to shew in general how the *Gospel* of *Christ* has more than satisfy'd for the Removal of the *Law*, by compleating *that* Righteousness as to all the real Effects and substantial Purposes of it, which the *Law* of *Moses* could not do, and which it could only represent in faint Shadows and at a distance.

Now in comparing different Religions together, which is the present case, there are three things to be consider'd, from which
we


we are to take a true Estimate of the Preference of one above another. SERM. VII.

First, As one is a greater Trial of Mens Obedience and Subjection to God's Will, than another.

Secondly, As it is more really perfective of Human Nature.

Thirdly, As it is a better Preparative to Mens Happiness. Each of which would bear a longer Discourse than the present Opportunity will allow me; I shall therefore dispatch them all in as few Words as possible, and shew upon what a mighty Disadvantage the *Mosaic* Institution must appear in every one of these, when it comes to stand in competition with *Christianity*.

The *First* measure then, by which we are to rate the Gospel above the Law of *Moses*, is, that it was a more perfect Trial of Mens Obedience and Subjection to the Will of God than the other; because, as the Nature of Man stood then, and still stands corrupted, the Duties it enforces upon the Consciences of Men, are of a more sublime and difficult nature, than those of the *Law*, and therefore, by submitting to them we more effectually renounce our own Wills in Obedience to the Will of *God*. To crucifie a Lust, or mortifie a strong irregular Passion, puts a Man upon greater Pains and Reluctance with himself, than he can be at in passing thro' a long Course and Order of ceremonial Services, whose Execution depends, from without, upon the Strength and Ministry of his bodily Powers. And yet this was all that the Institution of *Moses*, as it was properly

SER M. VII.  perly *ceremonial*, pretended to impose. For we are not here to consider the Moral Duties of that Religion, for these don't properly fall within the compass of *Circumcision*, taken in the most extended Sense of it, and therefore no Man that is a *Christian* will contend for their Abrogation, nor did the *Apostle* ever design so much in his Advice and Caution to his *Disciples* in my Text.

Now there hardly needs any other Argument to prove the great Disproportion there is between the spiritual Duties of *Christianity*, and the carnal Ordinances of the *Law*, in Point of Difficulty, than what we may observe from the general Practice of some part of the World at present. Let us consider only the *Christian* Religion it self, as it stands laden with Superstition in the *Church of Rome*, with a burden of Observances heavier than ever *Judaism* it self enjoin'd, upon the Patience and Practice of its Professors, so that one may venture to say, the *little finger* of *Popery* is *heavier than Moses loyns*; And yet if Men can but be allow'd to retain their Lusts in that Religion, if they can but quietly indulge a darling Vice, and by any means evade the strictness and severity of a Precept of the *Gospel*, however indispensable in its own Nature, what outward Penance will they not submit to, and what Disadvantages either in their Persons, or Fortunes, will they not readily embrace, rather than be at the Expence of reforming a perverse Temper, and checking the violent Stream of corrupt Desires? A crafty Hypocrite will easily compound for his real Duty, with as much
 seeming

seeming external Sanctity as shall be requir'd S E R M. VII. of him, if he can, by the help of it, but contrive to impose upon his own Conscience, and other Mens Opinions of him. And this is enough to satisfie us, if there were no other Argument, that a true thorow Obedience to the Laws of our *Saviour* in crucifying a Man's inordinate Inclinations, and subduing and rectifying a vicious Habit of Soul, requires greater Contention of Mind, and engages a Man in a far more ungrateful Contest with himself, than he is put to, in any external Formalities of religious Worship whatsoever: Because the generality of Men, we see, so willingly accept the *latter*, if they can but be any way excus'd from the Necessity of the *former*. And therefore since those Laws of *Moses*, against which we are now contending, were of the same Rank, and Character with other external Services of Religion, if we understand any thing of the true nature and design of *Christianity*, we must own that a real and hearty Submission to the Laws of *Christ* must carry in it much higher Proofs of our Obedience to God's Will than the most exact Conformity to the Law of Ordinances could possibly have given. But this is not all;

For, *Secondly*, The Religion of our *Saviour* is truly perfective of human Nature, and will, if attended to with the Care and Sincerity that it ought to be, raise and exalt our Minds to the highest Degrees of Purity of which they are capable in the present State. But now the *Law of Moses* could never *make the Conscience* of any Man *that came thereto perfect*,
in

SERM. VII. in another Sense, besides that the *Apostle* chiefly intended by those Expressions; That is, it never truly consider'd the real Interest of his spiritual Estate, never laid before him Precepts that so nearly concern'd his Life, nor presented him with those divine Assistances which should carry him so much above what he is by the State of his depriv'd Nature, as 'tis necessary he should be, if ever he will be perfect and happy.

For *Thirdly*, and to conclude all, *Christianity* is the only Preparative for a Man's highest Happiness, both by way of natural Efficacy, and by *God's* Appointment. It qualifies a Man with those noble Dispositions of Soul, and implants in him those Seeds and Principles of *Divine Life*, by which he rises up at last into a Likeness and Conformity to *God* himself, the most perfect and best of Beings, in the Enjoyment of whom the utmost Stress and Capacity of his Desires will find its perfect Satisfaction and Accomplishment. 'Tis by this he is made *meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the Saints in light*, and by thus *awaking up after the likeness of God* he is sure to be *satisfied with it*.

Besides it is the Declaration and Promise of *God* himself express'd in the *Gospel* of his Son, that every good Christian shall thus be perfectly happy; without which Promise, no natural Perfection, or Improvement of our Souls whatever, could give us that sure Evidence we should be happy, as we could desire. For after all our best Preparations for it, *Eternal Life* is still the *gift of God*, which we could put in no claim to, without his Word, nor receive without his infinite Mercy. And

And could ever the Law of *Moses*, whose SERM. VII. Influence went no further than the Body, and lay in Washings and Sprinklings and other worldly Ordinances, could such a Constitution as that, think we, prepare and qualify a Soul for Heaven? We are sure that *Moses* never did sufficiently discover the Certainty of a future State, so far as to give a very lively Encouragement to the hopes of Men, or much to raise and quicken their Endeavours after it. If any Man, under this *low* Dispensation had better Evidence of these things, as we are sure *some* had, 'twas by a higher Spirit than that of *Moses*, and by a larger View, than ever his Ascent to the top of Mount *Nebo* could have given him. And Deut. 34. 1. the Reason was, because the clear Discovery of an eternal State of Happiness in another World was reserv'd for a more perfect Revelation than that of *Moses* was ever intended to be; it was neither amongst the express Conditions of his Covenant, nor the sure Object of Mens Hopes and Expectations, upon their most exact Compliance with the Terms of it. Heb. 9. 8. For the way within the Vail, into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest; whilst the first Tabernacle was yet standing. But Christ being come an high Priest of Heb. 9. 11. good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, by his own blood he enter'd in once into the Holy place, and made way for us to follow him, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The Grace of God shewn to be not only consistent with the Liberty of Man's Will, but the strongest Obligation to our own Endeavours in our Duty.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University of Oxon at St. Mary's,
Sunday, Sept. 6. 1702.

PHIL. II. 12, 13.

— *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

NEXT to those Controversies, that immediately touch'd the *Christian Faith*, in its nearest and fundamental *Articles*, there were none, that, for several Ages of the Church, gave a more general Disturbance to its Peace, than those warm Disputes, that arose about the Extent of *Divine Grace*, and its Consistence with the *free-*
dom:

dom of Man's Will, in the Business of his Duty. Some Persons there were, of a too forward and mistaken Zeal, who imagin'd there was no other way to secure the Reputation of the *Gospel of Christ*, or to carry the Glory of it higher, but by making Grace to triumph upon the Ruins of Nature, and by supposing the Mind of Man to be purely *passive* and *ineffective* in the Work of his Conversion and Duty. Whilst others in the mean time apprehended, and *that* rightly enough, that by this Method too much was indeed given away from the Perfection of human Nature, and that to explain the Operation of Grace, in a Sense so far as this, was to overthrow the very Design and Nature of Religion; which as it is founded upon Reason, so it supposes some kind of Liberty and Choice in the Subjects capable of it. And had the Men of this Opinion stopp'd here, there had been nothing in their Doctrine, but what had been very reconcilable with the Dictates both of Reason and Religion. But here was their Unhappiness, that having rescued human Liberty from the Cramps and Inconvenience it had suffer'd under the former Doctrine, they seem to have grown wanton in their Victory, and, out of a too fond and partial Conceit of the Powers and Abilities of a deprav'd *Will*, gave too great a *loose* to its *freedom*, and advanc'd it in Opposition to the *Grace of God* it self. Whilst they erroneously maintain'd, that a Man by the mere *inbred original* forces of his own Nature, without the Assistance of any Foreign accidental Supplies of *Divine Grace*, was Self-

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sufficient to all the Purposes of his Duty and Obedience; So far as was necessary to recommend him to *God's* Favour, and give him a Title to eternal Happiness.

These latter *Tenets*, we know, were the Heresie of *Pelagius*, and his Followers, which thus enlarg'd the Liberty of Man beyond all Reason, and against the universal Consent and Declarations of *Holy Writ*: As the former, which bound up the Freedom of the Will within too narrow Restraints, and left it without all Life and Motion, merely passive and receptive of Influences from above, were the mistaken Opinion of some *Christian Fatalists* in the early Ages of the Church, and seem of late to have been reviv'd by *Calvin*, and his Disciples, the great Patrons of *irresistible* Grace.

The *Truth* it self indeed lies in the *middle* between both these Opinions, and was therefore not observ'd of either, because they both ran into the Extreames of Error, a quite contrary way, at an infinite distance from the *Truth*, and from each other. And the *Holy Spirit of God*, which comprehends all the distant Periods and Exigences of the Church within his Knowledge at one view, and foresaw the Mistakes and Disputes of Men, that would arise upon this Point, long before they happen'd, seems by the Ministry of *St. Paul*, to have here *levell'd* a Doctrine directly against *both* these foremention'd Errors; that should be sure to meet with them upon either hand, and which way soever they might turn themselves in succeeding Ages: Whilst *at the same time* it assigns and ascribes the Work of our Salvation to our own Care and Endeavours,

Endeavours, *that* it asserts the Necessity of SERM. VIII. God's Grace and Assistance. And, by so doing, gives a check, at once, both to our Sloth, and our Presumption, by letting us understand that *Something* is, and that *All* is not, within our Power; in these Words, *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.*

There are *Four* things that very naturally offer themselves to be consider'd upon these Words, as either plainly express'd, or directly implied in them, which shall therefore be the Matter of my Discourse upon this Subject.

First then, The Reasonableness of the *Apostle's* Charge to *work out our own Salvation* supposes some kind of *Liberty* in our *Wills*, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours, in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall therefore shew that we have such a *Principle* of *Liberty* within us, and how, since the Original Fall of Man, we came by it.

Secondly, I shall make it my Endeavour to prove, that this *freedom* of our *Wills*, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours are very well consistent and reconcilable with the *Grace of God* co-operating with us, and that our own Industry and the *Divine Grace* do not in the least infringe, but mutually require, and assist each other.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to infer the *Necessity*, and to inforce the *Obligation* to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, from this very Principle, *because* the *Grace of God* works with us, and enables us *to will and do*

SERMON VIII. *of his good Pleasure: And this, according to the Apostle's own way of reasoning in the Text, Work out your own Salvation, For 'tis God that worketh in you. And,*

Fourthly, I shall consider the just Importance of those high Expressions of *fear* and *trembling* under which we are here commanded by the *Apostle* to *work out our own Salvation*, and shall justify the strictness of the Charge he delivers to us upon this Matter.

And, *First,* That the Reasonableness of the *Apostle's* Charge to work out our own Salvation, supposes some kind of *Liberty* in our Wills, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall therefore shew, that we have such a *Principle of Liberty* within us, and how, since the *Original Fall* of Man, we came by it.

Now 'tis certain that we do find such a *Principle of Liberty* within us in general; and our Mind seems to be so infinitely fond and jealous of the Honour and Reputation of it, as very often to vindicate *that*, in opposition to its clearest Convictions of Interest and Duty. The Soul of Man, rather than it will admit a *Chain* upon its Faculties, or lye down under the Reproach and Censure of an injurious Confinement, will venture to break through all Restraints how just soever; so that even the Bonds of Nature or Religion shall no longer hold it, when the Reputation of its *Liberty* appears concern'd; rather than not seem *free* to do *any thing* it will venture to do *Evil*, though it be ruin'd by the Consequences.

Indeed

Indeed this is none of the Privileges of our Freedom, that we are able thus to determine our selves to Evil; but rather the greatest Imperfection of it; in as much as the most perfect *Beings*, even *God himself*, who is the very *Centre* of all Perfection in his own Nature, and the true Standard and Measure of it to the reasonable World, even *God himself* who acts most *freely*, and in the noblest manner, can yet never, by reason of a happy Necessity in his own Nature, turn himself to *Evil*. His Will is invariably determin'd towards Goodness, and in every Design and Act of his, he can project and aim at nothing else. And the Blessed *Angels* themselves, that resemble the Great *Father of Spirits* in their Nature, and transcribe him in their Actions, have, ever since their Confirmation in *Glory*, had their Wills bound up from Evil by a Restraint upon them as fixed and peremptory, as the Eternal Laws of *Destiny* it self. And yet we must not suppose them to be ever the less *free* for all this, and it would be an Injury to their excellent and exalted Nature to conceive them so.

So that 'tis Man alone, as far as we are left at present to apprehend, that has the double Edge of *Liberty* in his Hand, and we have reason to conclude 'tis his Impotency that he has so; and we are sure 'tis his great Unhappiness that he too often pierces and wounds his own Soul with a Misuse of it. But then this sufficiently justifies the Wisdom and Goodness of *Almighty God*, that he made us at first *free* to *Good* as well

SER'M. VIII. as *Evil*, and at the same time put such Principles of Light and Strength within our Nature, so strong a Propensity to our own Happiness, and such a clear and actual Knowledge of the ways that lead to it, as thereby to direct our Choice with Advantage, and to dispose and sway our Wills towards the better Part.


But how much of this Original Liberty remains to the Posterity of *Adam*, through the Ruins of Paradise, or whether the Liberty of Man's Will to Good be entirely forfeited by the Fall, there lies the Question not so very easie to be resolv'd; because we are not so certainly inform'd from what Perfection we are fallen, nor into what degrees of Degeneracy and Corruption we are sunk: *In general*, this I think we may determine safely, that the Powers of our Soul are so exceedingly *bruis'd* and *enfeebled* by the prevarication of our first *Parents*, that our Natural Inclinations run only to Evil, and that, before our New Birth and Regeneration *in Christ* our Saviour, to do good, and thereby to procure the Favour of *God*, we have no Power.

Not that we are to understand this so very strictly, *neither*, as that a Person in the mere State of Nature, and without the Covenant of Grace, cannot do some such Works of Goodness, as are, in their *Substance* and *Matter*, conformable to the Law of *God* and Nature; but that he cannot do them in such *Perfection*, upon such *Principles*, and with such due Circumstances, merely by the strength of his Natural Powers, as shall recommend them

them to *God's* Acceptance and Approbation, in vertue of their own intrinsic worth. For 'tis indeed the *form* of an Action, the Reasons and Motives *upon* which, and the way and manner *in* which 'tis done, that give it its true Distinction, and entitle it either Good or Evil. So that, by the way, we have the greatest reason to stand up, and contend strenuously for the *Doctrine* of our own excellent *Church*, when * it tells us, to this Purpose, that the Actions of *unregenerate* and *natural* Men, however suitable to the Law of Nature. and Reason, as to the matter of them, are yet doubtless sinful in their Nature, and merit the Displeasure of *Almighty God*. So far indeed as they are materially conformable to the Law of God and Reason, so far we are sure they are without the least Degree or Tincture of Sin, nor in that Sense is it the design of our *Church's* Doctrine to intimate they have *any*. But then so far as they are done upon false Principles, and with undue Circumstances, neither for the *sake*, nor in the *Name* of *Christ*, nor for the Honour of God; but suppose out of Natural Temper, or for some Temporal Regard, it may be, of Reputation, or Interest, or the like, or for some other indirect Purpose; so taken, and so qualified, there is no question, but the Actions of *unregenerate*, mere Natural Men, carry a Guilt in them, which justly makes them liable to the *Divine Displeasure*, and have no Title to the Merits of *Christ* to plead for their acceptance.

* Article XIII. Of Works before Justification.

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 And thus far, we are sure that even the good Actions of *Christians* themselves, when done upon an irregular Motive, and with unsuitable Circumstances, take upon them the Nature, and are entitled to the Portion of *sinful* Actions. Thus even our very *Prayers* are turn'd into Sin, when not offer'd up with Faith and Sincerity, and Resolutions of Obedience; the very *Incense* of our *Devotions* stinks in the Presence of *Almighty God*, when Vanity and Hypocrisie hold the *Censer*. And our *Charity* and *Alms* become our Condemnation, when Pride or Vain-glory go before them. So that without any just Reproach to Human Nature, or any too severe Reflection upon the Heathen World, we may and must assent to the *Doctrine* of our *Church*, that *unregenerate* and *natural* Men have no free Will or Liberty to produce good Works, that God is any way oblig'd either to accept or to reward: For this very Reason, because they cannot perform those Works upon such Principles as *God* is pleas'd with, who has render'd our Persons and our Actions *accepted to himself only in his beloved Son*: And all other Principles besides, which 'tis possible for them to proceed upon, we are sure must be irregular, and sinful, because they are not the true ones.

Thus far then it appears, what that *Liberty* is, which a Man Originally has by his Birth, as he is a Man, and which remains to him under all, the disadvantages of a broken and impair'd Nature. Such a Liberty indeed, as, almost, by a fatal tendency, carries him to Evil; under which, all the Pow-
ers

ers of his Mind are bent and crooked, *bow-* SERM. VIII.
ed down with a Spirit of Infirmity, and
 cannot *lift up* themselves to any noble Pur-
 poses of real Goodness. In short, *such a Li-*
 berty as the *Apostle* describes, under which a
 Man is a *Servant of Sin,* and free from *Righte-* Rom. 6. 20.
ousness, hurried on to the *one* by the Stream
 of corrupt Affections and Inclinations, and
 able to make no Progress to the *other,* with-
 out the greatest Reluctancy, and Violence
 done to himself.

But we are bound to thank the infinite
 Mercy of God, that *this* is not the Liberty
 of a *Christian,* though it be of a *Man,* of
 one born and continuing in his primitive
 and unregenerate State. For, by the Privi-
 lege of our New Birth, and by the means of
Baptismal Grace, a Man is now restor'd, if
 not to the whole Birth-right of his *Liberty*
 which he lost in *Adam,* yet to such De-
 grees and Portions of it, as are necessary to
 lay a Foundation in him of that Obedience
 which the *New Covenant* requires. 'Tis the
Washing of Regeneration, that supple- Tit. 3. 5.
 the Stubbornness of his distorted Nature, and
 opens a Passage for new Life and Vigour to
 convey themselves in, through his feeble and
 fainting Soul. 'Tis the *Spirit of God* in *Bap-*
tism, that revives and re-enkindles those
 Sparks and Remainers of Life, which have
 escap'd the Deluge of *Original Corruption,*
 and recovers them once more into a perfect
 Day. 'Tis this, that delivers us from the
Body and Power of Death, and adopts us in-
 to the *Liberty of the Children of God,* and Rom. 8. 21.
 gives us the Victory over Sin *through our Lord* 1 Cor. 15. 57.
 Jesus

SERM. VIII. *Jesus Christ.* And being thus made free by the
 Son of God, we are free indeed; the ancient
 Charter of our Liberty is restor'd, the
 Breaches of our Nature are repair'd, and we
 are in a great measure reinvested with origi-
 nal Perfection.

John 8. 36.

From what has been said then, it ap-
 pears that when we speak of the Freedom
 of Will in a Man consider'd under his *natu-
 ral* and *unregenerate* State, and of his Li-
 berty as a *Christian*, we proceed upon quite
 another Ground, and by very different Mea-
 sures. For, in the former case, the little
 Freedom, that he has, comes to him in the
 right and vertue of his being a Man, of such
 a Rank and Order of *reasonable Beings*, from
 which some degree of Liberty or other seems
 inseparable by the Constitution of Nature it
 self: Whereas, on the other side, the Liber-
 ty in which a *Christian* is instated, though it
 be indeed *Natural*, in this Sense, that it
 does not rise above the Proportion of Human
 Nature, as it first came out of the Hands of
God, and is really no more, consider'd in it
 self, than what Man by Nature was once
 possess'd of in the State of his Integrity;
 yet when we look into the Manner and Me-
 thods by which, in this our lapsed State, we
 recover our Freedom again, we are sure that
 the same perfect Liberty, which was once
 the State of our newly-created Nature, if
 ever it becomes ours again, as I have shewn
 it does in a great measure, 'tis only by an
 Act of *Divine Grace* and Favour. The same
 Liberty we receiv'd *once* by the Laws of
 our Creation, we *now* hold, and must ac-
 knowledge

knowledge we do so, in the Right of our **SERM. VIII.**
Redemption.

So that as we are *Christians*, and are admitted within the Privileges of the *Evangelical* State, we ought indeed never to consider the Liberty of our Wills as separate and independent of all *Grace of God* whatever, since, as we have seen already, the Recovery of our Liberty was purely the Result and Effect of *God's free Grace*, at first, and the formal Strength and Perfection of this Liberty, when recover'd, is nothing else, but the *Grace of God preventing us*. The Reason, why we are so apt to mistake this Freedom, that we thus receive by *Grace*, for a mere *natural* Power and *Ability* in our Souls, seems to be this; that though we are not indeed born with it, yet we receive it in *Baptism*, before we can remember, and by the Mercies of the *Gospel*, and the religious Care of our *Holy Mother the Church*, we cannot assign the Time, backwards, when we had it not. So that our *Christian* Liberty, which is nothing really but the Grace of God preventing us, grows up indeed with us, and accompanies us all along, from the Tenderness of our Childhood, and follows us through all the different Stages of our Life. And thus, because we never found our selves otherwise than free, upon that account 'tis, that we come to misapprehend our Liberty as the Result of our being *Men*, which it is indeed only of our being *Christians*, and to look upon it as a Consequent of our *Natural*, when really 'tis of our *Spiritual Birth*.

But

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But if, when we come to Years of Understanding, we had then the sad Experience of an unregenerate Nature, labouring under the full Load and Surfeit of Original Corruption; Could we but imagine with what vain and ineffectual Struglings, under such a State as this, with what Agonies of Soul, and Contention of Spirit, we should then aspire, in vain, after the Performances of the least part of that *Christian Righteousness*, which we are now enabled to fulfil thro' *Christ that strengthens us*; we should then be quickly convinc'd of the miserable Weakness and Insufficiency of our own Nature, when left to it self, and of our utter Inability of chusing or doing what is good, in the mere Strength and Vertue of our natural Freedom. How earnestly should we then cry out with the *Apostle*, in the Person of an unregenerate Man, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death! from this Bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God!*

Rom. 7. 24.

From hence then we may observe, how infinitely great and glorious are the Gospel-Privileges, and of how unspeakable Importance are the Benefits of *Baptism*; in that our Liberty of Will, which is the great Prerogative of a reasonable Creature, is therein restored and confirmed to us, by a *second Covenant*, which was so entirely lost and forfeited by our prevaricating with the Conditions of the *First*. For all the Liberty, as I have already shewn, that we have now to do good, and to please God, and indeed all that ever any mere Man since *Adam*

dam ever had, must be now no longer consider'd as the Endowment of his Nature, but as the pure Effect of *Divine Grace* and Favour, purchas'd and convey'd to us, in vertue of the *New Testament*, founded in the Merits and Death of our *Blessed Saviour*.

And howsoever God was pleas'd in the first and early Ages of the World to dispense this *Grace of Liberty* to Men, in *what Measures*, and to *whom*, and upon *what Conditions* he saw best; yet now, under the *Evan-gelical OEconomy*, God, has thought fit to restrain and confine the Distribution of it to our *Baptism*, the *Sacrament* of our *Regeneration*. So that speaking indeed *properly*, and considering Men as *Christians*, when we at any time oppose the present *Freedom* of our Will to the *Grace* of God, we do but oppose *Grace* to *Grace*, a *preventing* to an *assisting* *Grace*, one Degree of it to another, a less and more ordinary and standing Measure of it, which is infus'd into every Man at his *New Birth*, and necessary to make him free, to those successive, and more extraordinary Supplies of it afterwards, which a Man comes to receive from *God* upon his right Use and Employment of the former.

I have thus consider'd what the Liberty of a *Christian* is, how it differs from that of an unregenerate Man, and by what Means and Methods, since the original Forfeiture of human *Liberty*, a Man comes to be reinstated in the Possession of it; and that is, by the *Renewal* and *Reparation* of his natural Powers in the *Holy font of Baptism*. That 'tis by
ver-

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Rom. 7. 18,
19, 20, &c.


Rom. 7. 19.

Rom. 8. 1.


Rom. 8. 2.

vertue of this blessed Institution, that a Man is no longer under the miserable Condition, describ'd by the *Apostle*, of a mere carnal Person, bound and hamper'd in the Captivity of Sin, and enslav'd under the Dominion and Tyranny of it; having his Will and Affections stubborn and perverse, and running counter to the clearest Sense and Judgment of his Reason; which, while it allows the Excellency of God's Laws, and acknowledges the Obligation of them, cannot yet prevail upon the inferior Powers for a Conformity and Obedience to them. So that in this case what *a Man would*, that is, what he approves, in his sober Sense and Judgment, that *he does not, but what he hates that he does, having another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin.* But this, as I told you, is not the Condition of *Christians*, neither will it be the Condemnation of *them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; for the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, that is the Power and Energy of our New Birth, and that Principle of Grace, we receive therein, hath given us true Liberty, and made us free from the law of sin and death, from our being Slaves to the one, and for ever liable to the Power of the other.*

What I have further to be consider'd on the present Point, is this, that 'tis in the strength and vertue of this Principle of Life and Liberty received in our *Baptism*, that, without any other Assistance of *Supervenient Grace*, a Man is enabled at any time of his
After-

Life after, to enter upon the Beginnings of, SERM. VIII.
 and move the first Steps towards his own 
 Repentance and Conversion from a sinful State.
 For that so much as this must be allowed after
Baptism to be within a Man's Power, is evident
 from hence, that, upon a contrary Supposi-
 tion, all the Commands, and Exhortations,
 and Expostulations of *Almighty God*, where-
 in he calls upon us to repent, and turn to our
 Duty, would be perfectly groundless and un-
 reasonable: For why should a Man be thus
 summon'd to amend his Life, and be justly
 liable to God's Displeasure for the neglect of
 doing so, if the first Movement, and Prepa-
 ration to such a Design, were not within the
 reach of his Liberty, or if he had no Prin-
 ciple within him whereby he could deter-
 mine his Actions another way?

I would not here be understood to say,
 that the Beginnings and first Principle of a
 Man's Conversion to a religious Obedience
 are, at any time, within the Verge and Com-
 pass of any mere *natural* Powers and Abili-
 ties, that remain to him after his original
 Lapse in *Adam*. For this indeed was the
Heretical Doctrine of the *Semi-Pelagians*, for
 which they have been always justly censur'd
 and condemn'd by the Church of *Christ*:
 who were herein distinguished from the
thorough-pac'd Disciples of *Pelagius*, that they
 would allow only the Beginnings of a Man's
 Repentance to be in his natural Power, with-
 out any Assistance or Prevention of *Divine*
Grace; whereas *Pelagius* himself, and those
 that were his strict Followers, contended
 that both the Beginning and the Comple-
 tion

SERM. VIII.  tion of Repentance were no more than the pure Effect of unassisted Nature. But now, for a Man to assert, that from a Principle of *preventing Grace* laid and hidden in our Nature, at our Regeneration in *Baptism*, we are enabled to move our selves without any other Help some of the first Degrees towards our Amendment, is a Doctrine that does not in the least derogate from the *Grace of God*, because it does not advance the Strength of Nature above its due Proportion, in that it supposes Nature to work only in the Power and Efficacy of *Grace* it self.

Upon this ground then, we are to reject the unreasonable and *unintelligible Cant* of some Mens *Divinity*, when they tell us, that 'tis impossible for a Man to repent 'till his *Day of Grace* is come; that there is a certain time appointed, till when we are to wait for the Incomes of the *Spirit*, without which a Man can do nothing for himself; that there is some *critical Minute* of a Man's Life, wherein *God* makes a very plentiful *Manifestation* of his *Grace* to his *Chosen*, and that then they shall be able and willing to turn to him, and before that 'tis impossible they should. This is the Sum of their Opinion, and, if this Doctrine be true, then 'tis certain, that these Mens *Impenitence*, which is sometimes for the greatest part of their Lives, is not their Fault; and yet, that it should not be so, is beyond any Man's Skill to justify, from any Passage that gives countenance to it throughout the whole *Gospel* of our *Saviour*. For we find there

no such Distinctions of Times or Seasons SERM. VIII. made; but are call'd upon at *all times* to consider, and take care, that we are not cut off in the Course of our Sins; and while we wait for *Light*, for a time of Repentance hereafter, are plung'd in utter Darkness, where there can be no Repentance, and from which there is no Return. And such frequent Advices and Admonitions of this nature, so *pathetically* address'd to Men, at all times without distinction, and upon all occasions, do manifestly suppose, that it is within our own Liberty to enter upon a new Course of Life, when we will, and that it is our great Sin, and will be our Condemnation to neglect it.

Having thus endeavour'd to shew, that we have a Principle of Liberty in our Wills, and what is the Rise and Foundation of it as we are *Christians*, I shall now go on to the next thing propos'd, which was to prove,

Secondly, That this freedom of our Wills, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours, in the matter of our Duty, are very well consistent, and reconcilable with the Grace of God assisting us; and that our own Industry and the *Divine Grace* do not in the least interfere with, but mutually require and assist each other. And this is no more than an immediate Inference and Collection from the Words of the *Apostle*, taken all together, who bids us *work out our own Salvation*, and at the same time tells us that *it is God who worketh in us to will, and to do of his good pleasure.*

By which Discourse of the *Apostle*, the least, we can understand, is this, that how much soever *God* does for us, in preparing us for our *Salvation*, by quickening and exciting our Obedience to his Will, which is the Condition of our being *sav'd*, yet there is something that he still leaves to be done by our selves; and that he does not, by the Efficacy of his Grace upon the Minds of Men, so far *control* their *Freedom*, or necessitate their Obedience, as to render their own Endeavours and Industry superfluous or unnecessary. And this I think may be very clearly made out in the following Method.

First, By comparing the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and the Powers of acting, which we find within us, with what the *Grace of God*, either is, or *may* be reasonably suppos'd to do for us, and with the Methods, in which it ordinarily moves and inclines the Wills of Men.

Secondly, By considering the very Design and Nature of *Religion* it self, which is not either to extinguish or violently to over-rule the Powers and Principles of human Nature, but to improve and assist them in their Operations.

And, *First*, by comparing the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and the Powers of acting that we find within us, with what the *Grace of God* is, or *may* reasonably be suppos'd to do for us; and with the Methods in which it ordinarily moves and inclines the Wills of Men, we may come more clearly to understand the Consistence and Agreement there is between the *divine Grace*, and the
Freedom

Freedom of our own Wills and Actions, in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall consider this with respect both to the *preventing* and *assisting* Grace of God; or, as they are distinguish'd by the *Apostle* himself, in the Text, the *Grace of God which works in us to will,* and *that which works in us to do of his good pleasure.*

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First then, for *preventing* Grace, and its Reconcilableness with our Liberty. Now the proper Office of this *Grace* is this, by removing the Indispositions of our corrupt Nature within us, and by due tempering and managing the Events and Accidents of Life without us, to leave a Man under a greater Readiness and Preparation to entertain his Duty, and thereby to enable him to break, or escape the force of those Temptations, that might otherwise prevail upon his Will. So that we see *preventing* Grace does not indeed work upon the Mind of Man, by a direct and effective Influence, in the way of Argument or Perswasion, it self, but only puts a Man into, and leaves him in such a Condition and Temper, wherein, if it be not his own fault, it is highly probable, the Motives to his Duty that shall be offer'd him will act upon him with their due force and weight, and not fail to bring him over to his Obedience; because by this Means of *Grace preventing* him, those Clogs and Hindrances are removed out of the way, that before oppos'd his compliance with his Duty. Thus far then this kind and degree of Grace does not any way interfere with, or prejudice a Man's Liberty, because it only

Q 3


places

SERM. VII. places and leaves him in such a State of Mind, and under such Circumstances, where he may be able to use his Liberty *well*, if he pleases, and where 'tis something probable he will do so. I shall illustrate this Matter a little farther yet, by this common Instance of human Life. Suppose a Man in Bonds, and under Confinement, who, if he were set free, 'tis very probable that some Reason of his Interest or Pleasure might perswade him to go to such or such a determinate Place. In this case he that shall set this Man free by striking off his Fetters, and by opening the Prison Doors to him, does not any way overrule or determine his Liberty of going thither, whither he was before inclin'd, only, by removing the Bars and Impediments out of his way, he restores him to a Capacity of using his Liberty, as shall please him best. The very same is the case in the Matter before us; The *Grace of God preventing* us removes those Chains and Hindrances of our Sins, in which we were before intangled; and by *allaying* and *softening* the Perverseness of our Wills, and healing the Infirmities and Corruptions within us, by this Means recovers us to a sufficient Degree of *Spiritual* Strength, and Liberty, and puts us under a Capacity of using it: So that, when afterwards Arguments are urg'd upon us to our Duty, from Considerations of Reason, or Religion, they are apt to go deeper upon our Minds, and to have a more quick and vital Influence there, than while there was such a thick *Film of Corruption* about our Hearts, it was possible they should.

And

And as Incouragements to a Man's Obedi- SERM. VIII.
 ence prove the stronger upon this account, 
 so the force of Temptation likewise is in a
 great Measure broken and disarm'd, by the
 very same Means; because the Matter upon
 which such Temptations are apt to work, is by
 this preventing Grace of *God*, thrown out and
 evacuated. But yet after all, we see here;
 that this Grace of Prevention does not by
 any positive act oblige a Man to his Duty, it
 only renders him more fit for it, nor does it
 necessarily restrain him from Sin, it only re-
 moves from him the Temptations and Oc-
 casions of it. And thus *only* restoring a Man
 to his Liberty, and from the Incumbrances
 that lay upon him before, it leaves him en-
 tirely free and indifferent as to the Use and
 Exercise of it in his Practice.

The *Grace* of *Baptism* and *Regeneration* is
 the highest Degree and Measure of this pre-
 venting Grace, and yet that is so far from
 thwarting or justling a Man's Liberty, that,
 as I have already shewn, it is the very *radical*
 and *fundamental* Cause of it, since the *Fall*
 of Man. A Man is not free, till he is *rege-*
nerated, till the decays and ruins of his laps'd
 Nature are recover'd, and some Portions of
 his Original Strength are reinspir'd into him.
 So that 'tis plain, that by the Grace of *Baptism*
 a Man's Liberty is only restor'd to him, but
 not influenc'd, or determin'd for him: And
 brings him to no other Condition, as to the
 Nature of it, though less perfect as to the
 Degree, than *Adam* himself was possess'd of
 in *Paradise*, who by the Law of his Nature
 had the same *kind* of Liberty, which we
 have

SERM. VIII.  have now by Grace : but yet as to the *use* of this *Liberty*, was left perfectly at his own Discretion, otherwise he could not have given sufficient Proof of his Obedience. And, as he was, so are we all, upon this Reparation of our decay'd Nature, by the Grace of God preventing us, once more left at our own *Liberty*, and put into the *Hands* of our own *Counsel*. But, though there lies a stronger *Moral* Obligation from hence upon us, to use this our *Liberty* aright, because we are by the *Grace* of *God* so well enabled to do so ; yet are not our *Wills* sway'd by any *external Physical* Influence upon either hand, and, for ought that yet appears to the contrary, the Determination of our *Liberty* is purely the result of our own Choice and Election.

I am now to consider, in the *second* Place, the *Grace* of *God* assisting us, and whether that be as well consistent with our *Liberty* as the *Former*. By the *Assisting* *Grace* of *God* is to be understood that Influence of the *Holy Spirit* upon the Minds of Men, whereby a *Man's* *Duty* is set before him in such a present and actual *Light*, and inforc'd upon his *Mind* with such *Convictions* of the *Moment* and *Consequence* of it, to his *Happiness*, that it moves and inclines his *Will* towards an *Acceptance* of and a *Compliance* with it. By what secret and invisible *Methods* indeed, the *Spirit* and *Power* of *God* works these things upon the *Souls* of Men, whether by *immediate Impressions* on the *Spirit*, or whether by the *Ministry* and *Mediation* of any *bodily Powers*, is not so necessary here to be determin'd. However that be, we find that
ordinarily.

ordinarily the *Grace* of God prevails upon Men, in the way and course of rational Motives, and by the silent and easie Methods of Persuasion: By making a Man's Duty appear not only reasonable but amiable to him; by furnishing and recommending it with a present Pleasure, and consigning to it an *exceeding weight of future Glory* and Happiness in another World. And in the same Measure and Proportion that this is done, so is that *Grace* it self more or less effectual, if the Mind be equally prepar'd to attend to it. So that when upon these Conditions, and by the Assistance of this *Grace*, a Man chuses and prefers Good to Evil, he does it *freely*, and from a Principle of his own Liberty: Which can no way be suppos'd to suffer Violence, when a Man acts thus upon his own Election, and in consequence of the Principles of his Nature. If it may then appear, that a Man acts at all with freedom in the Affairs of common Life, if he is not determin'd by any Necessity when he chuses a Temporal Interest before a Temporal Evil, or a greater Good in Comparison with a less, which is the same thing; if he be free in these Instances, what Reason is there to suppose him *less* so, when he proceeds upon the same reasonable Grounds in the Matters of his Duty and Religion. All the difference in this Case is, that a Man's own Natural Reason is able sufficiently to discover to him the Importance of his secular Interests and Advantages, and to give them a due Weight and Turn upon his Will; whereas, through the Corruption of Human Nature, and the *Darkness* consequent upon it; it
must

SERM. VIII.

must be the *Illuminating* and the *Assisting Grace* of God, that can make him see the same in Matters of a *Spiritual* Nature, and that belong to his *Eternal State*. But, tho' this be a different *Medium* of Proposal to his Will, it makes, however, no difference in the Nature of his *Election* that follows upon it. So that if a Man be free, when he acts reasonably in other Matters, he is no less so, when he acts in concurrence with the *Assisting Grace* of God. And one would desire no more in this Point, than to put the Issue of a Man's Liberty, when in conjunction with the *Grace* of God *assisting*, upon the same Foot and Bottom, it stands upon, in its natural and ordinary ways of acting.

But there are *two* things besides, that may be consider'd, in the handling of this Subject, that we are sure are within our Power, and which will further serve to shew the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and its Reconcilableness with the *Grace* of God *assisting* us; And they are these that follow:
As,

First, It is undoubtedly in our Power to make use of the direct and primary Means of Grace, such as Prayer.

Secondly, There are some other previous Arts and Dispositions of Mind, indisputably within our Power, which are necessary to render this assisting *Grace* more effectual upon our Minds, such as Attention, Consideration, and cool Reflection with our selves. When I say these are within our *Power*, I mean upon a Supposition of *Baptismal* and *preventing Grace*, and according to the former

mer Notion of Liberty stated upon the ground and supposal of that *Grace*. SERM. VIII.

First then, it is in our Power to make use of *Prayer*, which is a Means of *Grace*, and necessary to the obtaining of it. For *Prayer* is nothing but an affectionate Desire of some good thing from the Hands of *God*, directed by way of Petition to him; and to desire a good thing is the first degree of Motion of our Wills towards it; and the first and early beginnings of our Motion towards Goodness, as *Prayer* it self is, must be supposed, as I have already shewn, to be possible in the mere Strength and Vertue of *God's* preventing *Grace*, which every Person that is *Baptiz'd* is sufficiently endued and furnish'd with.

And then again, *Secondly*, there are some other previous Dispositions of Mind within our Power which are necessary to render the *Grace* of *God* more effectual upon our Minds, such as Attention, serious Consideration, and the preserving our selves in a Temper fit for cool and sober Reflections. 'Tis certainly in a Man's Power to consider the Arguments for his Duty, and to attend to the Consequences of them: For there is nothing more immediately and more confessedly within the Arbitrary Power of the Will than the Attention of the Understanding; and therefore the Command and Government of the Will this way, some have thought to be the only Sphere and proper Exercise of its Liberty. And whilst a Man thus attends to the best of his Power, then is the proper Opportunity that the *Grace*
of

SERM. VIII. *of God usually takes, of insinuating and pressing it self upon the Mind, and proves to have the greatest Prevalence; in the cool of the Day, when Passion is at a low Ebb, and Reason is most calm and apt for Reflection. And hence it is, that the same degree of God's Grace prevails, upon the same Person, at one time more than at another, according to his present Disposition and Temper. The same Arguments, even in the same Light, prove and perswade more effectually at some Hours of a Man's Life, than at others. In as much therefore as 'tis within a Man's Liberty to order and manage his inward Temper and Disposition, so far, by the outward Rule and Exercise of himself, by keeping under his Body, as St. Paul did, and almost, by a Natural Consequence from thence, by preserving his Mind cool and serene, and thereby more fit and qualified for the Spirit and Grace of God to work upon, therein appears one Prerogative of his Liberty, that even the Effects of Divine Grace it self may in a great measure be promoted or disappointed by him.*

There is another Principle yet behind, from which I propos'd to make out our Liberty, and its perfect Consistence with the Grace of God, and that is, *Secondly*, from the very Design and Nature of Religion it self, which is not either to extinguish, or violently to over-rule the Powers and Principles of Human Nature, but to improve and assist them in their Operations. Take the Nature of Man as it came first out of the Hands of God in its pure and uncorrupted State, and

there was nothing more suitable and more SERM. VIII. justly proportion'd to its Faculties, than Religion. It is therefore stil'd by *Solomon* the *Whole of Man*, as if it were his very essential Form, and as if the very Frame and Constitution of his Being were laid out entirely for it, as well as we are sure they are confirm'd and perfected by it. If then Religion carries in it such a consent and suitability, in the Notions, and Practice of it, to the Principles of Human Nature in general, or ever it was stain'd and polluted by Sin; since 'tis certain, a perfect Liberty and Freedom of Will was then the very *Flower* and *Sammit* of that Nature, and the ruling Principle in it, there could not then have been any the *least* repugnance between Religion and Liberty at first; but on the other side an entire and universal Agreement and Conformity to each other. Now the Nature of Religion is still the same, that ever it was, because the *Divine* Nature, which is the Rule and Measure of Religion, admits of no Change or Alteration. And the Nature of Man, though it be very much sunk and declin'd from its original Perfection, is not however chang'd as to its Essence, nor consequently destroy'd as to those substantial Acts and Principles, that flow from thence, and such is the Principle of Liberty in our Souls, being founded *ultimately* in the Reason, and *formally* sealed in the Wills of Men: So far then as Religion and Liberty are both suitable to Nature in general, 'tis certain they must be consistent, because true Nature is never at odds with it self, and

con-

SERM. VIII. contains no Principles within it, that are in the least Destructive of one another. It must be granted indeed, that our Liberty is very much weakned and impair'd by our *Apostacy* from *God*; however, though we have lost the Perfection of it, it does not therefore cease to be *natural*, that is *agreeable* and *requisite* to the Perfection of our Being, any more than the Power of Sight leaves off to be *natural* to Mankind in general, because in some Persons it may be dimm'd and obscur'd by an outward Accident. And since Religion and Liberty are both of them so agreeable to the Perfection of our Being, we may very reasonably conclude from hence, that in whatsoever degree the *Assisting Grace* of *God* intends to *work together* with our Liberty of Will, that both these are perfectly consistent and amicable, and do indeed very much improve and forward, but never in the least destroy or hinder one another in any of their Operations.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, &c.

The Grace of God shewn to be not only consistent with the Liberty of Man's Will, but the strongest Obligation to our own Endeavours in our Duty.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University of Oxon at St. Mary's,
Sunday, April 11. 1703.

PHIL. II. 12, 13.


—Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

IF a Man should take upon him to state the just Extent and Limits of Divine Grace, and pretend to define, exactly, the Measure and Manner of its Operation and Influence, upon the Minds of Men; this, perhaps, might be thought too curious, or too bold and dangerous a Design. An Enquiry of this nature, from the ill Success
it


SERM. IX.



it has met with before, and the Disturbance it has sometimes given to the publick Peace, and the private Consciences of Men, has been look'd upon not so very safe as to admit of a Debate, and as too intricate to receive a Resolution. However this be, yet surely, so far to consider the *Grace* of God, as to clear up, and maintain its Consistence with our Liberty, as we are made of a Reasonable Nature, and capable of determining ourselves upon a Principle of our own Election; and to ground upon the Concurrence and Co-operation of this Grace, the Necessity and Obligation to our own diligent Endeavours in our Duty; This can never be thought an Attempt either vain or useless in its Nature, or any way mischievous in its Consequences. So far from it, that 'tis a Matter, of no less than the greatest Concern and Moment to us, and of a very near and necessary Importance to our Obedience, that we be rightly inform'd of the Proportion there is between our Strength and our Work, between our Ability and our Duty, in what Measures we are to expect Assistance from God, and by what we are to proceed our selves. So as that we may neither, on the one hand, vacate the Design and Intention of *God's Grace*, by an idle Recumbency on it, nor disparage the Necessity of it, on the other, by a vain Presumption and Confidence in our own Strength and Power. Besides, a right Apprehension in this Matter will in a great measure give ease to our Minds, and take off a silent Objection that is apt to rise within our Breasts, as often

as we find the whole Business of our *Sal-*  *vation* assign'd in the *Holy Scriptures* to either of these Principles, separately, whether the *Grace of God*, or our own diligent Endeavours. Men that are Ignorant and without Design, that can neither use nor understand the Terms and Distinctions of the *Schools*, yet in a Matter, that has so Vital a Connection with their Eternal Happiness, are well enough able to object the *Sense* tho' not the Language of *Scholars*, and to argue thus; That if, as the frequent Commands and Exhortations of the *Apostles and Prophets* seem to imply, the great Concern of our Salvation leans altogether upon the Application and Success of our own Industry, then there is no need to own so much dependance upon, and to have such frequent recourse to the *Grace of God assisting us*: Or if all must be ascrib'd to the Power and Energy of that *Grace* within us, why then we may lie still securely, our selves, and, without any Trouble of our own, suffer that *Grace* to have its free Course, and full Effect upon us.

From such secret Reasonings as these, according as the different Tempers, and Complexions of Men, whether *Sanguine* or *Sluggish*, may incline them, so we find them proceed, either to throw up all Concern for Religion, and to look upon it as an inconsistent Scheme, or else to resolve themselves, one way or other, on the wrong side of the Question; either insisting upon the wide and presumptuous Doctrine of *Pelagius*, on the one hand, or taking up with the too narrow


SERM. IX. row and confin'd Opinion of *Calvin* on the
 other.

Now in order to obviate both these Mistakes, a right Sense and Apprehension of the *Apostle's* Injunction and way of Reasoning, in the Words of my *Text*, will be of the most immediate service. Where we find, that both the *Grace of God* and our own Endeavours must strike in together, and are inforc'd and made effectual by each other; and tho' they act *both* in Conjunction, yet they preserve their Influence separate and distinct, without Confusion, and unite and joyn their Activity, without interfering. *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

In a former Discourse upon these Words, and in this Place, I propos'd to consider *four* things, as either plainly expressed, or directly imply'd in them.

First, That the Reasonableness of the *Apostle's* Charge to *work out our own Salvation*, supposes a *Liberty* in our Wills, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours in the Business of our Duty. I went on therefore to shew that we have such a Principle of Liberty within us, and how, since the *Original Fall* of Man, we came by it.

Secondly, I made it my Business to prove, that this freedom of our Wills, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours, are very well consistent, and reconcilable with the *Grace of God* co-operating with us, and that our own *Industry* and the *Divine Grace* do not in the least infringe, but mutually
 require

require and assist each other, and that this SERM. IX.
 is more than a just Inference and Collection 
 from the Words of the *Apostle*, who bids
 us *work out our own Salvation*, and at the
 same time tells us, that it is *God which*
worketh in us to will and to do of his good
pleasure.

My Design was, *Thirdly*, to infer the *Ne-*
cessity, and to enforce the *Obligation* to our
 own Care and Diligence in our Duty, even
 from this very Principle, *because* the *Grace*
 of *God* works in and with us, and enables
 us to *will* and *do* our Duty: And this, ac-
 cording to the *Apostle's* own way of argu-
 ing in the *Text*, *Work out your own Salvati-*
on, for 'tis God which worketh in you.

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, I propos'd to consi-
 der the just Importance of those high Ex-
 pressions of *Fear and Trembling*, under which
 we are here commanded by the *Apostle* to
 work out our own Salvation, and to justify
 the strictness of the Charge, which he de-
 livers to us upon this matter.

And having endeavour'd to account in
 some measure for the two *former* Parts of
 my Proposal, which I need not here repeat,
 I shall now in pursuance of this Subject
 proceed in the

Third Place, To infer the *Necessity*, and to
 enforce the *Obligation* to our Care and Di-
 ligence in our Duty, even from this very
 Principle, *because* the *Grace* of *God* works
 in and with us, and enables us to *will* and *do*
 our Duty. And this according to the *Apostle's*
 own way of arguing in the *Text*, *Work out*

SERM. IX. *your own Salvation, for it is God which work-
eth in you.*

Now this Necessity or Obligation to our own best Endeavours, because the Grace of God works together with us, may be clearly establish'd upon these three Reasons.

First, Because 'tis by the Concurrence of *Divine Grace*, that our own Endeavours, as to our Duty, are render'd more *effectual*, and, consequently, our Obedience is become more highly *reasonable*; in that *God*, by the assistance of his *Holy Spirit*, has taken off the Impossibility, and mightily abated the Difficulty of our Duty, and therefore our Neglect and Disobedience are left without Excuse.

Secondly, 'Twas the very Original Design and End of *God's Grace* to put us upon, and to promote our own Industry, so that, upon our Non-compliance with it, our Guilt is inflam'd, and we are accountable, not only for the neglect and violation of our Duty, but for the greater Sin of defeating and disappointing the *Grace of God* himself.

Thirdly, The continued Supplies of, and necessary Improvements in the *Divine Grace* are suspended upon our own Care and Diligence, and are liable to be withdrawn wholly from us, upon our Default and Misbehaviour.

Now by laying all these Arguments together, in their full and united Force, may be inferr'd the strongest Bond upon us, and Obligation, to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, on the account of *God's* co-operating Grace, that can ordinarily be laid
upon

upon the Nature of Man to any thing. From SERM. IX.
 the *First* of which as our Endeavours are be-
 come more effectual and reasonable, so our
 Neglect will appear more highly inexcusa-
 ble; From the *Second* in a greater degree
Criminal, and from the *Last* to be infinitely
Dangerous.

And, *First*, Because it is by the Concur-
 ence of the *Grace of God*, that our own
 Endeavours are made more *effectual*, they are
 consequently become more highly *reasona-
 ble*, and upon that account we are under the
 stronger Obligation to exert them. For
 though we are not always to measure the
 Strength of an Obligation to our Duty from
 the Reasonableness of the Matter it self en-
 joyn'd, that being founded indeed, and re-
 lying upon the Authority of the *Legislator*,
 and his right of Superiority over us, yet
 when there come in these accidental Ad-
 vantages to the Observation of a Precept,
 that 'tis *easy* and *delightful*, and for our *In-
 terest* to obey it, though, strictly speaking,
 this does not heighten the Obligation of
 the *Law*, yet it may in Reason and Equity
 demand a more ready and chearful Com-
 pliance from the Subject; and does justly
 conclude him under a severer Condemnation
 upon his Non-performance. Not, that I say
 the Authority of a Lawgiver, when he
 commands a thing difficult and grievous to
 be born, is indeed ever the less on that ac-
 count, but that when he requires a thing
 much for our Interest and Happiness, the
 Reasons of our Obedience are the *more* ;
 and all these will be taken into the Ac-

SERM. IX. count, where there comes a Judgment to be pass'd upon our Actions.

God himself we find proceeds by these Measures, in his Judiciary Appeals to that ungrateful People of the Jews, enhancing the Guilt of their Disobedience, and upbraiding them with it, from the easiness and advantageousness of the Laws that he had given them. Thus he expostulates with that People by his Prophet, *I have not caus'd thee to serve with an Offering, or wearied thee with Incense*; that is, he had laid no intolerable, no very difficult Services upon them, none but what a willing and obedient Mind would have thought possible and easie; And from hence follows the greatness and aggravation of their Sin, *but thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities*. And it was but the Sense of Natural Reason what the Servant of peevish Naaman suggested to him, when he was offended at the uncourtly Behaviour of the Prophet. *My Father, says he, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?* That is, the Easiness of the Injunction, and the Advantages that would follow upon it, should in Reason oblige him to a more civil and ready Compliance.

The tendency of this previous Discourse to my present Design, and to the strengthening of my first Proposition, appears in this, that from hence we see what sort and what degree of Obligation arises from the Reasonableness of our Duty; and therefore I shall now

now shew more expressly, that since our own Endeavours in Religion are become more effectual, and upon that Account more reasonable by the Concurrence of *Divine Grace*, we are by Consequence the more firmly oblig'd to exercise them. SERM. IX.

Now the *Reasonableness* of a Duty, in the Sense I at present use that Word, is founded upon two things; *First* the *Comparative Possibility* or in other Terms the greater Easiness of it, and then the higher Encouragements of Success and Advantage that are proposed to the Observance of it. On both these Accounts has the *Grace of God* confirm'd and enlarg'd the Obligation to our own Industry and Endeavours, if what is reasonable can oblige us, notwithstanding that *Grace* it self does so much for us, or rather for this very Reason *because* it does so. For the *Grace of God* renders our own Endeavours effectual these *Two* Ways.

First, As to the Acts of our Obedience themselves, by enabling us to perform them with greater Ease, and by furnishing them with that internal Perfection which is necessary to their Nature.

Secondly, As to the Acceptation of them with *Almighty God*, by securing the great Design and End of all our Obedience, which is to please *God*, and by making them available to our Happiness and *Salvation*.

And, *First*, By enabling us to perform the Acts of our Obedience with Ease, and by furnishing them with that internal Perfection which is necessary to their Nature, the *Divine Grace* has render'd them more highly reasonable,

SERM. IX.



sonable, and given one of the greatest Encouragements in the World to the Exercise of them. For whatsoever the *Authority* of the *Law*, which is the Rule of our Duty and Obedience, may be supposed to be, and upon what severe *Sanctions* soever it may be established, yet if Men were under an Apprehension either of the Impossibility, or extream Difficulty of living in Conformity to it, this would necessarily *break* the *Heart*, and slacken all the *Sinews* of their Resolution. For 'tis the Will of Man that gives the Spring and Activity to his Obedience; and there is nothing lays so great a Check and Damp upon the forwardness of the Will to any thing, as the Suspicion of a very great Difficulty in it; upon which there comes on a *Chill* upon the Appetite, and then all the active Powers of the Soul shrink and languish together; so that whatever removes the Difficulty, does in the same Proportion elicit the Will, and call forth and actuate the Endeavours. And this in the Business of our religious Obedience the *Grace of God* does for us; not indeed, by any Change either in the Nature or the Obligation of the Law, which is the Rule of our Obedience, but by inspiring and invigorating the Soul with new Measures of Life and Resolution to fulfil it; by this Means taking away the Disproportion there was before betwixt a Man's Duty and his Power, betwixt the Weight, and the Arm that was to sway it. And by this Means a Man's Obedience is as properly said to be made easie to him, as it could have been, supposing the Degree or Matter of it had been alter'd, and his Power

and

and Abilities had remain'd the same. For *Easiness* and *Difficulty* are relative Terms, and have an equal Regard to the Strength of the Undertaker, which they have to the Nature of the thing it self, in which he is engag'd; That being easie and practicable to a greater Degree of Strength, which had been extreamly difficult if at all possible to a less; Upon this account therefore the *Grace of God* has render'd our Endeavours more effectual, and from thence more *Obligatory*, because it has made our Obedience more possible and easie.

But then further yet, 'tis the *Grace of God*, which has provided, that we should not only be the better able to perform any part of our Duty as to the Matter and Substance of it, but that we should be qualify'd to do it in such a manner and under such a condition of Mind as we ought, and thereby has furnish'd the outward Acts of our Obedience with that internal Perfection which is necessary to the Nature of them. And this we may easily perceive is a very distinct Consideration from the former; For 'tis possible that two Men may pay an Act of Obedience to the same Law, the external Performance of which may be equally easie to both, and appear to have no Difference; and yet the *Moral Nature* of the Action, in one, may be widely distant from what 'tis in the *other*, and have far greater or less Degrees of Excellency in it, according as it was acted with a more or less deliberate and free Consent of the Will, with a greater or less Uprightness of Intention; or according to several other Circumstances, which form and distinguish the free and volun-



voluntary Actions of Men from one another, at the same time that they agree in the same common Matter, and Manner of outward Operation.

And herein lies the happy Advantage, on which the *Christian* stands, and is distinguish'd from those that are without the *Covenant* and *Privileges* of *Divine Grace*; who are furnish'd with no other Principles of Obedience, nor any other Assistances, than what the mere Law of Nature can supply them with. So that whatever Conformity there may be in the outward Actions both of *Christians* and *Others*, yet as these Actions do not take their Rise from the same Spring and Principles, so neither are they carried on with the same Advantages, nor do they terminate in the same Perfection. For the Obedience of a mere *natural unregenerate* Man arises necessarily from a wrong Principle, because the very Nature of his Condition supposes him ignorant of the only true ones. And he wants a vital Influence to direct and give him a Spirit in the Prosecution, and consequently his most perfect and entire Services must prove lame and insufficient.

And what a deadless and heartless thing must it needs appear in a matter of such infinite Consequence as we must all apprehend Religion to be, in a Business that requires the whole stress of our Souls, and should give so full an Employ to all the Powers within our Nature, in a Work of such unspeakable Importance as this, for a Man to be irresolute and undetermin'd, upon what Reason and Motive he is to begin his Obedience, and where
it

it will bring him at last; whether he moves SERM. IX.
 right in his Progress, and what are the Issues
 after all he may expect! 'Tis like a Man's
 summoning and collecting all his Strength to
 pour it out upon the Wind, when the best
 and utmost Services, he is able to perform
 with all the Zeal and straining of his Heart,
 must determine in Vanity and Dissatisfaction.
 And no Man ever yet, *without the Grace of
 God assisting* and enlightning him could be
 sure it would not prove so with him. For,
 considering the Weakness of our natural Pow-
 ers, how little good we are able to produce
 in our own mere Strength and Virtue, and
 how clogg'd with Infirmities that little is;
 how imperfect the Consent of the Will is to
 it, and how the Affections *start aside* from it
 like a *broken bow*, which every unregenerate
 Man must be sadly conscious of within his own
 Breast, how maim'd and disorder'd must the
 best of all our *Moral Actions* appear, when
 they are thus void of a Principle of *Divine
 Grace*, to form and shape them! And how
 must this necessarily damp and discourage the
 Vigour of a Man's Obedience, when in every
 Duty of Religion he performs, he must dis-
 cover such Features of Deformity in it, as
 must make him quite displeas'd with himself,
 and incline him to distrust the Favour and Ac-
 ceptation of the *Deity* whom he desires to a-
 dore.

But now, by the *Grace of God* inspiring us
 and promoting our Endeavours, these Dis-
 couragements are remov'd, and our Obedi-
 ence goes on chearfully and freely, being well
 resolv'd, that it proceeds upon a true Ground
 and

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and Foundation, in that we are assisted with a greater Strength, and conducted by a wiser Conduct than our own, towards an *expected End*. And thus a sincere and good Man comes to be *satisfy'd from himself*, he perceives a quick and lively Relish from the Acts of his Obedience and Duty; and from those secret Pleasures, that spring up within him, upon his Reflections on his own Life and Conduct, he knows that he does well, and the Clearness of his own Perception that he does so, is a Security to himself, that he is not deceiv'd; because the *Grace of God* not only strengthens, but *enlightens* him, and discovers to him the *Beauty of that Holiness*, and heav'nly Disposition, which it self has wrought upon his Heart. So that howsoever it be the Condition and Consequence of his present State, that some little Stains and Sullies will always accompany his Obedience here below, yet they do not so far cloud and overcast his Mind, but that *Light* enough still continues to *break* out upon his *Heart*, to convince him, that he is pursuing the direct Methods to his Happiness, and to encourage him to go on


Psal. 84, 7. *from Strength to Strength*, from one Degree of Grace to another, 'till the Acts of his Obedience improve by degrees and ripen into Perfection; 'till the Bent of his Will becomes entirely fix'd, and determin'd upon his Duty, and his Affections are hallowed and drawn over to a perfect Compliance with it. And thus the Man comes at last to live and move under the truest and most entire State of Liberty; he *does* nothing, but what he *allows*; and he does it in the most perfect Manner

this

this State of Infirmary will admit of, with the fullest Resolution, and with the greatest Cheerfulness, and Vigour of Prosecution. And because the Concurrence of God's Grace thus far improves and perfects a Man's Endeavours, taking off the Clogs from his Will, removing the Hindrances, and supplying the Defects of a corrupted Nature, on this Account it gives the greatest Encouragement to his own Diligence, and enforces the Obligation to employ it. SERM. IX.

As it does, *Secondly*, by securing the great Design and End of all our religious Endeavours, which is to please *God*, and by making them available to our Happiness and Salvation. And this certainly ought to be one of the strongest Encouragements to our Industry, when we reflect, that a Man is now no longer left under a trembling Uncertainty, about the Success and Issue of his own Actions, but may clearly and plainly discern the Tendency of them to his final Good.

It must have prov'd, even in the most forward Tempers of any of us, a great Abatement of our Vigour and Resolution in our Duty, when, after all the Pains we were put to in struggling against the Inclinations of a deprav'd Nature, and the hard Necessity of subduing them, we should have been left still liable to this suspicious and misgiving Reflection, that all might prove to little Purpose at last, and be quite insignificant to our final Happiness. What Man is there amongst us of such a strong Complexion and Firmness of Soul, that, under such a disadvantageous Apprehension as this, could find in his

SERM. XI.  his Heart to bear up against so great Difficulty, as he must expect to meet with in the course of his Obedience, and not be tempted rather to remit his Endeavours, to fold his Arms about him, and swim down with the Stream of his Inclinations?

And this should make us a little tender, how we condemn the Condition of those that are, or have been left without *the Covenant of Grace*, when we consider, how dim their Prospect was, and how slender the Encouragements that were laid before them: They hoped well from the *Deity* indeed, and had kind Opinions of his Goodness and Mercy, but they found their own Obedience so defective, perform'd with such Reluctance, and cloath'd about with so much Corruption, that they could not tell, whether the Piety of it would be *accepted*, because the Infirmities of it were so *many*. But now, *we* are under the Dispensation of *Grace*, which co-operates with us, and enlivens our Endeavours, and gives them a value in the sight of *God*, and inspires us with a Confidence that they are accepted. For *God* will not now despise our Obedience because it is his own work, but will go on to bless and favour it and reward it. He will *strengthen and confirm whatever good work he has wrought in us, and will accomplish and perform it until the day of Christ*: *Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us*, says the Holy Prophet, *for thou also hast wrought all our works in us*. So that the *Grace of God*, whilst it thus interests and mingles it self with our diligent Endeavours, in the Business of our Duty, does thereby consecrate
the

1 Cor. 1. 8.

Phil. 1. 6.

Isai. 26. 12.

the whole, and consign it over to the Acceptance and Approbation of *Almighty God*; And by consequence it entitles it to a Reward infinitely glorious; than which what greater Encouragement can be given us?

The Relaxations, that were made by the *Gospel* of our *Saviour* to the Rigour of the Moral Law, and its dispensing with and accepting a *sincere* Obedience, in the room of an exact and *perfect* one, prov'd one of the main things that secur'd the Authority of that Law, and reconcil'd and encourag'd Men to the Observance of it; Whereas if it had still continued to have requir'd a perfect Conformity, as a Covenant of Life and Death, and nothing less would have been accepted than a strict and rigorous Obedience, this must have been the Consequence, that when Men had once found it impossible for them to keep the whole Law, in this Sense, they would have grown desperate, and so have flung off all Regard and Reverence for it. Therefore *St. Paul's* Conclusion of his Argument is most highly rational to this purpose, *Do we then make void the Law through Faith?* that is by the *Gospel* Dispensation; *God forbid, yea we establish the Law*; that is, we procure and maintain a Respect and Reverence to it by the Doctrine of the *Gospel*, because we assure Men, that what Obedience they are able to perform to the Law shall be accepted. And as this was an Argument for Obedience in general then, so is the Acceptance of our own Endeavours now, of what we are able to do, in the matter of our Duty, a sufficient Reason to establish

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lish the Necessity, and to prevail for the Use and Application of them. And because, as I have shewn, this Acceptance arises from the *Grace of God*, which helpeth us, and gives a real Worth and Perfection to those Endeavours of ours, therefore upon the Concurrence of that Grace is founded one more very powerful Obligation to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, according to the *Apostle's* own Argument, *Work out your own Salvation; For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

The *Second* general Reason from which I propos'd to infer the Obligation to our own Endeavours for that the *Divine Grace* is ready at hand to go along with us, was this; Because 'twas the Original Design and Intention of that *Grace* to promote our own Industry, to stir up and awaken our Care, and that therefore, upon our Non-compliance with it, our Guilt is inflam'd, and we are accountable, not only for the Neglect and Violation of our Duty, but for the heinous Sin of defeating and disappointing the *Grace of God* it self. The very Reason why *God* was pleas'd to vouchsafe the Charter of his *Grace* to Men was to supply the Defects, to make up and repair the Breaches of a laps'd and ruined Nature; and if so, then we can never suppose he could intend, by the Supplies of his *Grace*, to supersede our own Diligence and Care, and to overbear and extinguish the Principles of Activity within our Souls, because this would be to change our Nature, and not to support the Weakness of it, and to make *Grace*, his latter Gift, establish

blish it self upon the utter ruins of *Reason*, which was his former. But this *God* in his Wisdom has not done, but he justly expects from Men, that so far as Reason is able to direct them, and to influence their Wills by the Proposals of Good, and to excite their Endeavours in the Prosecution of it, that so far we should go in our own Strength, and where we fail and he sees the Labour too much for us, there he is ready by his Grace to come in for our Encouragement and Relief. So that though the *Grace of God* be indeed the Principal, as to any degree of Worthiness or Perfection, which our Obedience carries in it, which it derives only from the Merits of his *Son*; yet in regard to the *Act* and *Endeavour* it self to do our Duty, the assisting *Grace of God* may be consider'd only as an Accessary, or Secondary Help; tho' not in the order of Time, yet in that of Nature; for as much as 'tis dispens'd to us under the Notion and Intention of a Supply; which it could not be, were there not something in us, which had fallen under a defect indeed, but not an utter *Extinction* of its *Being*.

In as much then as the *Grace of God* supplies the Failures and Weakness of our Endeavours, so far it does suppose them necessary, and must in its Operations be attended by them; otherwise we fall *short of the Glory of God*, and frustrate the Grace he affords us of its due Design and Effect upon our Souls; which is a Sin of so grievous a Nature, and so deep a Tincture, that it should make us tremble to consider that we are guilty of it.


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For

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For this is to disappoint the Goodness of God in the highest Instance, in the Condescensions of his Mercy to Men, for their everlasting Happiness: And to reject the greatest Goodness, we know, is a Crime of the most provoking Guilt, and the severest Vengeance awaits it; because it argues a Nature deprav'd, to the last extremity, almost beyond Recovery, and not capable of being wrought upon by any Principle whatsoever, according to the severe Expostulation of St. Paul, *Despiseest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* For this second Reason then, because the Grace of God was intended to second and assist our own Endeavours, are we more powerfully oblig'd to employ them. As we are,

Thirdly, For that the continued Supplies of, and necessary Improvements in the *Grace of God* are suspended upon the Condition of our own Care and Diligence, and are liable to be with-held or remov'd from us, upon our Default and Misbehaviour; For it is not in our Power to *retain the Spirit* of God against his Will, nor to command those Portions of his Grace, which yet are absolutely necessary, to make us obedient, or to render us happy. For how free and unconfi'd soever the first Overtures of the *Grace of God* were; and tho' the most early Distributions of it even prevented our very Apprehension, and therefore could

could not be founded upon any precedent S E R M. IX.
 Merit in us; yet, whether we shall go on to 
 entertain this heavenly Gift or not, God has
 plac'd it within our own Power and Disposal,
 and the *Holy Spirit* attends our Motions and
 Behaviour, by which he is to determine his
 Abode with, or Departure from us. Like
 the *Dove*, in whose Representation he once
 descended, when long neglected or affronted,
 he will retire from an impure and care-
 less Soul to a cleaner and whiter Habitati-
 on. *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, says Jer. 6. 8!*
 God by the Prophet, *lest my soul depart from
 thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not in-
 habited.* And we have God's usual way of
 proceeding declar'd to us by our Blessed Sa-
 viour, that he will take away the *Talent* from Mat. 25. 28, 29
 the *unprofitable servant*, and give it to him
that hath ten talents; and the Reason given
 for this, for *he that hath, that is, hath made
 good Use of what he had, to him shall be given;*
*but from him that hath not, from him shall
 be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*

By what *Degrees* indeed, and by what mea-
 sure of Mens Iniquities, God is thus pro-
 vok'd to withdraw the Communications of
 his Grace from them, he knows best himself,
 who sees with what Malignity every Sin is
 committed against him, and has set the bounds
 to his own Patience, how long his *holy Spi-
 rit shall strive with Mens Corruptions*, and
 bear with their unworthy Behaviour towards
 him. But, if we may guess any thing in this
 Point, we may believe, that in the same Pro-
 portions, in which he does usually dispense his
 Grace to Men, which are according to measures
 suitable to their own Industry, and the de-

degrees of their own Improvement under it, so he does accordingly remove the Aids and Influence of his *Grace and Holy Spirit*, as Men go on to neglect or to despise it.

Not that we have any warrant from Reason or Scripture to determine, that from any Person, once within the *Evangelical Covenant*, God ever so totally removes his *Grace*, as to take away his entire Right and Title to it; we cannot say it ever comes to this, till by a positive Act of *Apostacy*, Men have revers'd and cancell'd their own Title, and renounc'd all the Privileges they were admitted to in *Baptism*. But however this be, yet as to any *actual* Residence of the *Holy Spirit* within our Hearts, and the real Possession of those Graces which are necessary to produce and perfect our Obedience, these 'tis certain a Man may utterly forfeit by his own fault, and be shut up, while he continues a Member of the *visible Church*, under a high Improbability, tho' not an utter Impossibility, of his Repentance.

So far then as our own Care and faithful Endeavours to do the Will of *God* are the Conditions upon which depend the Continuation and Increase of the *Divine Grace*, so far the Necessity of them sufficiently appears; and they need not, one would think, be enforc'd upon a stronger Sanction, than the forfeiture of so infinite a Blessing, which is the Perfection of our Being and the Foundation of our Eternal Bliss. The loss of the chiefest Good ought to be consider'd by us under the Notion of a proportionable Evil; and if so, with what an awful Concern then,

then, and carefulness of Soul, should this inspire us! *Yea, with what fear! yea with what vehement desire, yea with what zeal and fervour and Resolution of Spirit!* that, by our Care and Diligence in our Duty, we Endeavour to approve our selves in the sight of God, that he may be pleas'd to come and abide with us, in the Communications of his Grace, and the Holy Spirit; lest, by our unworthy Behaviour, we displease that Divine Guest within us, and provoke him to withdraw himself from us, and all the Blessings of his Presence with him, his Grace and Comforts from our Souls. Which brings me to the

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 2 Cor. 7. 11.

Fourth and *last* thing propos'd, which is to consider the just Importance of those high Expressions of *Fear and Trembling*, under which we are here commanded by the *Apostle* to *work out our own Salvation*, and to justify the Strictness of the Charge he delivers to us upon this Matter.

Now I shall consider these Words in their fullest and largest Sense, but in as little Compass as I can, and shall endeavour to explain them under a threefold Opposition.

First then, with *Fear and Trembling* in *Opposition* to a State of Security and Presumption.

Secondly, in *Opposition* to a slow and faint Pursuit of our truest End and Happiness.

And *Thirdly*, as they import a serious frame and temper of Soul, in *Opposition* to a light, and roving, and a dissolute Spirit.

And *First* we are here commanded to *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*,


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as these Words may be understood, in *Opposition* to a State of Security and Presumption. For that we ought to have a quick and earnest Concern about our Success in a work of such an infinite and eternal Consequence, as our Duty is, upon which our Life depends, and by which the everlasting State of our Souls must be once determin'd. A Man may very well be said to proceed with fear and trembling, who has a just and deep Sense and Conviction of the weight and difficulty of this work of his *Salvation*; and of the danger of miscarrying in it, arising from that innumerable Variety of Temptations within and without that tends to draw him from it. How can a Man give himself up to an incurious and sinful Ease, who has these Thoughts upon his Spirit! or suffer his Soul to slide into a State of unactive Security, when the Sense of his extreme danger is continually alarming his Apprehension! To presume upon our past Acquisitions, and from thence to rest our selves in a vain and confident Expectation of our Reward, argues, that we neither know our selves, nor consider the Nature of our Condition in this World, which is by no means a State of rest, but of fear, and of *warfare* and of *contention* of Mind; where we are always liable to be taken off from our Guard, and to be mov'd from our firmest Resolutions. And from hence we find, the best and wisest Men have been ever ready to tremble at the Apprehension of the dangerous and slippery State of their Souls, and have sometimes had the Joy and Comfort of their
 present

present Obedience quite overcast, by their anxious Concern and Care about their future Perseverance. For indeed, what Reason has almost the best Man in the World to promise himself securely, that all shall be well with him at last, when his Continuance in doing Good depends upon such an infinite Contingency, upon such a Complication of Accidents, which 'tis beyond the reach and skill of mere human Power and Prudence to control? For a Man therefore to argue from his present State of Goodness in this Life, to the certainty of his future Continuance in it, is utterly *inconsequential*, and may betray him into the worst of Errors: what infinite Reason then have we all to be concern'd and fearful, and while we *think we stand, to take heed lest we fall!*

None of us surely can pretend to higher Attainments in Piety than St. Paul had reason to do; and yet with what Modesty and Caution, with what Reserve, with what Humility and Emptiness of Spirit does he express himself about his present Perfection, and his future Expectations! *Brethren, says Phil. 3. 13. he, I count not my self to have apprehended, and again, if by any means I might attain to Phil. 3. 11. the resurrection of the dead.* So much the less confident ought we to be in our Dependences, as we come infinitely short of the Perfection of this great *Apostle.*

Secondly, I understand these Expressions of *fear and trembling*, in Opposition to a slow and faint Pursuit of *Happiness.* For fear and trembling, we know, are sometimes the Consequence of a strong and vigorous Desire, which by a

SERM. IX.  necessary Dependence, engages our Attention to the Pursuit and Attainment of that Good to which it points. And to this purpose we find Fear and strong Desire brought in together with very good Reason, by the

* Virg. Æn. 5. * *Wise Poet*, in his account of some who contended for the Prize.

————— *exultantiaque haurit*
Corda pavor pulsans, laudumque arrecta Cupido.

It was the present earnest importunate desire of Victory that quicken'd the Pulse of their Blood, and made their very Hearts to tremble at the Motion of it. Now they, that thus strove for Mastery, suffer'd themselves to be so transported, and to fall under such strong Affections to attain a *Corruptible Crown*, but *we strive for an incorruptible*. How then should that infinitely exceeding, that *eternal weight of Glory* that is before us, bear down all our other little Concernments of Life, whether of Business or Pleasure, and engage all our Activity, and draw all our Contemplations and Desires towards it!

There are many things about which indeed we are at present careful, and our Thoughts are divided upon a multiplicity of Designs, that we are driving on, in *this World*; but surely there is but *one thing needful*, and all the Concernments of Time, when laid in the Balance with that, appear less than nothing and Vanity. 'Tis true the real Interests of another World appear to us under a great disadvantage at present, and our Prospect of them is intercepted, and our Desires of them mightily abated, by the *thick Vail of Flesh* we carry about us, and
by

by their suppos'd Remove and Distance from us: So much the more does it concern us then, *often* to retire from the Hurry and Business of the World, and *always* from the Evils and Corruptions of it, and by serious and devout Reflections to give the *Powers of the World to come* a more prevailing Influence upon our Hearts; for so much the nearer we approach in our Contemplations to *God*, who is the Centre of our Bliss, so much the more vigorously shall we be attracted by him. Happy is the Man that knows these things and doesthem; whose main Care and Thoughts are now laid out and employ'd upon those great things in this his present State, which must be his Life and his Happiness for ever!

Thirdly, and to conclude all, Let us work out our own Salvation *with fear and trembling*, as these Words import a serious Frame and Temper of Mind, in opposition to a light, a roving, and a trifling Spirit; than which there is no State of Soul more directly an Enemy to the Life and Power of Religion. For Sensual Mirth and Inconsideration drown and disappoint all serious Reflections in our Souls, and overwhelm the Whispers of Reason, and the gentle Suggestions of God's Holy Spirit in a *wild and clamorous dissonance*. *Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine take away the Heart*, says the Holy Prophet; that is, an excess of Sensual Pleasures vitiates the true Sense and Relish of the Mind, flattens the Perceptions of Goodness, and heightens the Rage of irregular and sinful Desires.

Not that I would be any way understood by this to exclude a true Joy and Chearfulness from

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from the Conversation of good Men. 'Tis certain they have the best Title to rejoyce; and 'tis the greatest disservice to Religion that can be, to represent it as a querulous and mopish thing; when nothing becomes the Face of it more, than the most lively, chearful and pleasant Air. And we are sure God himself dispenses Joy to good Men, as part of their Reward, and as a present Instance of his Favour, *God gives to a man that is good in his sight, Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy*: But 'tis when our rejoycing becomes excessive, either as to the manner or measure, or object of it, when it lightens and scatters our Spirits too much; so far, that we cannot easily recollect them into sober and cool Reflections, and quickly recover to an inward Frame and Temper of Devotion; 'tis then, we may know our Pleasure has been irregular, and culpable, and falls under the Censure of Religion, and is here forbidden by the *Apostle*, when he enjoins us to work out *our Salvation with fear and trembling*. A loose extravagant Mirth best became the Times of Ignorance and

Darkness; they *that are drunk, are drunk in the Night*, but let us *Christians who are of the Day*, who are under clearer Informations of our Duty, and the Rewards of it, let us be *sober and watch unto Prayer*; Let us take care to preserve our Minds under a serious Disposition, and Preparation to our Duty, considering how great a Work we have upon our Hands, and how much depends upon the Success of it, even no less than our eternal Well-being, and the Salvation of our Immortal Souls.

The

Eccles. 2. 26.

1 Thes. 5, 7, 8.

1 Pet. 4. 7.

*The Coming of the Holy Ghost consider'd
as depending on our Blessed Saviour's
Intercession, together with his Office,
as our Comforter, and his perpetual
Residence in the Church of Christ.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
Univerfity on *Whitsunday*,
May 24. 1702.

JOHN XIV. 16.

*And I will pray the Father, and he
shall give you another Comforter,
that he may abide with you for
ever.*

TH E S E Words were spoken by our
Blessed Lord, with a design to re-
move or allay the Concern his Di-
sciples were under at their Appre-
hension of his leaving the World.

That

SERM. X.




That the Reasons of their Trouble upon this Occasion were very numerous, we may well suppose, if we consider that all their Hopes, their Interests, and their Affections were entirely united and center'd in their *Blessed Master*, and supported and encourag'd only by his Presence. And that the Measures of their Grief upon this account were very high and excessive, we are plainly inform'd by *Christ* himself, at the same time that he endeavours to abate them. *Because I have said these things unto you, that is about his going from them, Sorrow hath fill'd your Heart.*

John 16. 6.

'Tis for that Reason, that he applies himself with the utmost Care and Condescension to remove the false Ground and Aggravation of their Sorrow, by letting them understand the true Reason and End of his Departure, and by informing them more thoroughly about the Nature of his Kingdom, and the Glories of it; and by many other admirable Arguments in his last Discourses to them before his Death. Such Arguments, as we are sure must have prov'd the most effectual for their Comfort, because made use of and enforc'd by the *Substantial Wisdom of God* himself, who knows all the turnings and variety of Passions in our Nature, and how to heal and rectifie every Disorder in our Minds.

Amongst the rest of these Arguments, there is one, upon which *Christ* himself appears to lay the greatest Stress, and has the most frequent recourse to; which is the Promise of sending to them the *Holy Ghost*,

as

as what he well knew would be the firmest SERM. X
 Ground and Support of their Peace and Com- 
 fort, if he could once prevail with them to
 admit it. Because *this* was indeed an Argu-
 ment every way proportion'd to their Case;
 and would be sure to meet with every Ob-
 jection against his leaving them, that should
 arise, either from the Love of himself their
Master, or their Fear and Concern about their
 own Interest and Welfare: In that the com-
 ing and continued Presence of this so great
 and *Holy a Person* amongst them would ef-
 fectually prevent the Inconveniencies they
 might have Reason to fear from *his* Absence;
 or however, more than contrervail any Loss
 they could possibly sustain by it. For so our
Saviour himself plainly intimates, that this
 Change of *their Comforter* or *Advocate* would
 be to *their Advantage* as well as *his*. I tell John 16. 7.
you 'tis expedient for you that I go away, for
if I go not away, the Comforter will not come;
but if I go, I will send him. The force of
 which Reasoning leans evidently upon this
 Supposition, that they should find a greater In-
 terest by the Residence of the *Holy Ghost* a-
 mongst them than from *His*.

The *First* Opportunity our *Saviour* takes
 to introduce this Argument, is, in the Words
 of my *Text*, where he seems at the same time
 to sum up and unite the whole Strength of
 it; and where-ever else he comes, in his fol-
 lowing Discourses before his Death, to insist
 on the same Point, as he sometimes does, it
 seems to be only a Repetition of, and an En-
 largement upon *this* his former Promise. I
will pray the Father and he shall give you ano-
ther

SERM. X. *ther Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* From which Words I propose to consider these *three* Things.

First, How far, and for what Reasons the coming of *the Holy Ghost* was suspended upon our *Saviour's* Intercession for it, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you*—

Secondly, What are the Parts of his Office, that this *Holy Person* executes, as he is here spoken of under the Notion of our *Comforter*, or (as the Original Word is known likewise to import) our *Advocate*—*he shall give you another Comforter.*

Thirdly, In what Sense, and after what manner both his Presence and Office are to be continued to his Church throughout all the Periods of it, to the last—*That he may abide with you for ever.*

And, *First*, I shall endeavour to shew how far, and for what Reasons the coming of *the Holy Ghost* was suspended upon our *Saviour's* Intercession.

And here it cannot be deny'd, that the *Good Spirit* of God gave indeed very early, and frequent Evidences of his Presence with the *Holy Fathers*, even before the Law was given upon *Mount Sinai*, and continu'd to do so all along under it, throughout the whole Dispensation of the *Jewiss* Church; not only by mighty Signs and Wonders, that he wrought amongst them, in Pursuance of the great Design, that he was carrying on in the World, and more immediately to establish the Mission of the *Prophets*, and to confirm their Doctrine, but likewise in his internal and secret Operations on the Minds and Spi-
rits



rits of Men, which have been more peculi-
 arly his Business since, and which are in Pro-
 priety termed his Works of *Sanctification*. For
 indeed to what other Principle, without a
 manifest Derogation from the *Grace of God*,
 can we ascribe those admirable Instances of
 a brave, and generous *Faith* and *Piety*, that
 have been made our Examples ever since, and
 which shone out with such a full Lustre and
 Perfection in the Lives of the ancient *Patri-*
archs and Fathers, under, and before the
 Law? The *Faith* and *Sincerity* of *Abraham*,
 the *Simplicity* of *Jacob*, the *Chastity* of *Joseph*, *James* 3. 13.
 the *Meekness of Wisdom* in *Moses*, the fervent
 Zeal and Devotion of *David*, of *Samuel*, and of
 the Prophets, and their Conformity to the
 Will of God in every thing; these surely
 must have proceeded from a deeper Fountain
 than the Waters of *Siloah*, and were founded *Is.* 8. 6.
 upon a Rock higher than that of *Horeb*. Nor
 must we dare assert such Effects as these up-
 on the Hearts and Lives of Men, to have had
 any other Source and Original, than the *Spi-*
rit and *Grace of God* in those ancient Days,
 lest we should seem in a manner to supercede
 that *Holy Spirit* now, and to diminish the Ne-
 cessity of that Grace at present. And yet
 how can we say, this and speak in conformi-
 ty to the *Gospel* of our Saviour, and to the
 general Tenor of his *Apostles* Doctrine? Are
 we not there inform'd, that the *Holy Ghost* was *John* 7. 39.
not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet
glorified? Which lest we should interpret of
 the extraordinary Gifts, and miraculous Ef-
 fects of the Holy Ghost, the Words of our
Saviour immediately before prevent us, and
 shew,

SERM. X. shew, that they must be peculiarly restrain'd to the necessary, and gracious Influences of that *Holy Spirit*, as they are in order to a good Life and Practice. *He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said*, that is, by the way, as the Scripture is wont to express it self, after some such manner, [for there is no such direct Passage any where in the old Testament,] *he that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living Water: This spake he* (says the Evangelist) *of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* So that by the *Holy Spirit* in this Place, must be more especially understood those inward and spiritual Communications of Life, and Peace, and Joy, which should allay and quench the Thirst of Mens Soul after Happiness, and even satiate them with Goodness, as *God* himself in another Place expresses it. And if these were not yet given, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, and if in this and other Places of the Scripture, Faith in Christ is made the Condition of them, and they are said to follow upon his Prayer and Intercession for his Church, whence then can we answer it, in consonance to this Doctrine, that we have seen such manifest and exuberant Fruits of this *Holy Spirit* in the Times before, and under the Mosaical Institution?

To carry the Objection yet further; Is not this made the great *Contradistinction* between the *Law* and *Gospel*, that the Spirit of the former was that of *Bondage*, that is, wherein the *Spirit of God* was indeed narrow and confined, and left Men to labour under the Obligations of the *Ritual* and *Moral Law*, almost
in

in the only Vertue of their natural Strength and Power? And do not the *Apostles* themselves complain of this, as a Burden, that had been too heavy for them and for their *Fathers*? And on the other hand, 'tis the great and distinguishing Privilege, and *Glory* of the *Evangelical* State, that 'tis a *Ministration of the Spirit*: It requires Duties of a spiritual Nature, directs Men to a spiritual Happiness, and amply supplies Mankind with spiritual Assurances: And yet how can this be? and how came this Distinction to be made between the *Gospel*, and the *Law*, upon the Account of those spiritual Privileges of the *Holy Ghost*, which one is suppos'd to have had, and not the other, when we have seen that they were exceeding great, if not equal under both; though not altogether so common, and publick under the one, as the other?

To this I shall return as brief, and as distinct an Answer as I can; allowing indeed that the *Holy Spirit* did very plentifully impart himself, before, and under the Times of *Moses's Law*, in the Communications of his Grace to Men; and perhaps to some extraordinary Persons, in such Degrees, and Measures as were little inferior to the *Gospel* Ages: But then *here* was the great Difference betwixt the *Law* and *Gospel*, as to this Point, that before the Law, and under it, what the *Holy Spirit* did, was purely free, and at his own Motion, without any Obligation that he had pass'd himself under, by vertue of any express Promise in any *Covenant* whatsoever; not excepting that of *Moses*. And from hence it is, that the Graces and Gifts of the *Holy*

SERM. X. *Ghost*, under the *Legal Constitution*, though they were indeed an Happiness exceeding great, to those that enjoy'd them; yet they cannot be said to have been the Privilege of that *Law*, as being neither included in the Conditions of it, nor what any Man could claim in virtue of any Obedience to it. And this is the *true Reason*, why the *Law* is not to take the Denomination of being a *spiritual Constitution* from hence; because, though the Grace and Gifts of the *Holy Spirit* were exceeding great, and manifold under that *Law*, yet they did not in strict Propriety belong to it: They were neither then so regular, nor so frequent as since. The *Holy Spirit* was then, in the largest Sense, what the *Prophet David* entitles him, *a free Spirit*; like the Wind, to which he is resembled by our *Blessed Saviour* in those early Times, *he blew where he listed, and men heard the sound of him*, but could not very well tell whence he came, whither he went, or when he would return: Whereas under the *Gospel OEconomy*, the *Spirit of God* himself is become the great and glorious Condition of the new Covenant, to which the *Blood of Christ* is the Seal; and *God* is now oblig'd, not only by the Goodness, and Benignity of a *Father*, but by the Right and Justice of a *Party covenanting* with Mankind, to give his *Holy Spirit* to them that ask him: To furnish Men with all that Strength and Assistance of his *Grace*, which may answer the Design of his *Sons* coming into the World, and the *Voice* of his *Blood*; which may be sufficient to promote Mens Piety in this Life, and secure their Happiness in the other.

So that in this Sense principally must we S E R M. X. understand, that the *Holy Ghost* was not yet given; or as 'tis in the *Greek*, *ἔτι οὐκ ἦν Πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, *John 7. 39.* the *Holy Ghost* was not yet; that is, he was not yet the proper Right of Men, not to be imparted by vertue of any divine Promise or Engagement, not enacted into a Covenant, 'till *Jesus was glorified*; 'till he had performed the Conditions upon which the full Effects of the *New Testament* were suspended; by reconciling *God* to Men through the Merit of his Sufferings, and then entering into his *Glory* to intercede for them, and for the *Mission* of the *Holy Ghost* to comfort them. Luke 24. 26. Which sending of the *Holy Spirit* I shall yet consider more particularly, for what Reasons it was thus deferr'd, and made to depend upon *Christ's Prayer* and Intercession.

Now by the *Intercession* of *Christ*, taken in the most general and extensive Sense of it, we may understand all those *mediatorial* Acts of the *Son of God*, which carried in them any thing of the Nature of a *Satisfaction*, whereby in any Passage of his Life, he was *reconciling God* to Men in himself, thus making up the Breaches of human Nature; and preparing, and opening a Way for the Favour and Blessing of *Almighty God* to descend upon us: And thus every Instance of his Sufferings, though it had not the express Voice, yet it carry'd in it the Force and Efficacy of a Prayer and Intercession, in that it tended to render *God* more propitious to Men, and more inclinable to shew them Mercy: But what we more usually, and generally understand by the *Intercession* of *Christ*, is either some de-

SERM. K. terminate Prayer, or some immediate Act of his exhibited to his *Father*, whereby he pleads in our behalf the Merits of his own Obedience, and Sufferings, and always prevails to have the Grants of Mercy deposited in his Hands for us.

In this *Sense* it was, that he *here* engages to intercede with his *Father* for the Effusion of his *Holy Spirit* upon the Church, to carry on the Work of Salvation, that himself had so happily begun, and whereof he had laid the Foundation in his own Sufferings: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.* Now that he did this, whilst upon Earth, we do not find from any Prayer of his left behind him, no not that most affectionate Address to *God the Father* in the 17th of *St. John*: Where yet we may see his great Design was to recommend his Church into the more immediate Care, and Protection of his *Holy Father*, to be guided in all things, and conducted by his blessed Influence and Superintendance, through all the Troubles and Hazards of this World, safe to its final State of Glory in the other. We may therefore reasonably *suppose*, nay, we have our Supposition highly countenanced and strengthened from the Authority of the *Scripture* it self, that this part of our *Saviour's* Intercession for the *Holy Ghost* was not to commence, but upon his Entrance in within the *Veil* into the Glory, and Presence of his *Father*. That so thereby a real and immediate Presentment of himself before God, with the Price of our Redemption in himself, in his own sacred Body, that was before offered for us, and in that
Soul

John 17.

John 17. 11.

John 16. 7.

Eph. 4. 8.

Soul that was bruised for our sakes, he might effectuate our Peace with God, and as a Return and Evidence of a perfect Reconciliation, prevail for the pouring out of that Spirit of Holiness upon us from on high; without whose blessed Cooperation and Influence, we could neither continue that our Peace with God, nor ever have a sufficient Assurance that it was ever procured for us. For 'tis by the Love of God, that is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us, that we are assur'd of our Acceptance with him. He is the earnest Seal of our Inheritance, until the Time of the purchas'd Possession come. And 'tis the Spirit of God that witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

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Rom. 5. 5.

Ephes. 1. 14.

Rom. 8. 16.

And thus it pleas'd Almighty God to withhold, and restrain the freer, and more abundant Communications of the Holy Ghost, 'till Christ arriv'd into the Possession of his Glory, (For when he ascended up on high, he then led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men) as it may be suppos'd for these two Reasons more especially.

Ephes. 4. 8.

First, Because the Mission of the Holy Ghost was intended by God his Father, as an Act of the highest Honour that could be done to Christ himself, here below, after his Ascension into Heaven.

Secondly, Because as his Merits were the real and only Ground, and Foundation of so infinite a Blessing to the World, so it was but reasonable, it should pass to Men through his Hands, and according to his more peculiar Request and Application to God for it.

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And, *First*, The coming of the *Holy Ghost* was intended by *God his Father*, as the highest Honour that could be done to *Christ* himself here below, after his Ascension, and therefore it was necessary it should have depended upon his Prayer and Intercession. For though *God his Father* was at all times ready to do him Honour, for that he dwelt always in the Bosom of *Divine Love*, and did ever those things that pleas'd *God*, and made it the great Design of his Life to glorify him here on Earth; yet, whether it were that the Subjection, and Distance of his human Nature requir'd it, or that he, the *first-born* of the Sons of *God*, was herein to set an Example to his Brethren, we find, that even those very Glories; that were due to him as the Rewards of his perfect Righteousness, were yet to be the immediate Returns and Answers of his Prayers. What, one would think, could be of more necessary Consequence, than the Glorification of the *human Nature* from its Union with the *Divine*? which, any longer than it was restrain'd by an infinite and voluntary Power, must have stream'd out upon the *other* with a full Effulgence of Glory; and yet we find, our *Saviour* made even this his Request, and the Subject of his Prayers, which was so near and necessary a Result from his Personality:

John 17. 5.

Father, glorify me---with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was. And further; Though the very Design of his coming into the World was to establish a Church, and though 'twas the Will and Desire of *God his Father* that he should do so; and it

was

was founded upon a Compact between the Persons of the Blessed *Trinity*, that he should be furnish'd with a full Commission, and a sufficient Authority and Means in order to it; yet we find that, at his publick Entrance on his Office, they were his own Prayers that drew down the visible *Uñction* of the *Holy Ghost* upon him, and were the Instruments of his *Inauguration*. For when all the people were baptiz'd, it came to pass that *Jesus* also being baptiz'd, and praying, the heaven was opened---And the *Holy Ghost* descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, as *St. Luke* gives the account of it. Again we are inform'd that before the Election of his *Apostles*, he spent the whole Night in Prayer to God; (as it may very reasonably be presum'd) for a more solemn *Benediction* on him, and Success in the great Design he was going upon, that would be of such an infinite Consequence to his *Church* for ever. And when this *Church* was already founded in the College of the *Apostles*, and had made some further Progress in the World, for a Conclusion and Seal to all, we have that admirable Prayer of his, I mention'd before, for the future Blessing and Protection of it: Every word of it instinct with Life and Spirit, that bears the Resemblance, and Character of the Eternal Love, as well as of the infinite Wisdom of the *Son of God*. From these several Instances it appears, that in the order of *Divine* Things, though our *Saviour's* Honour, and Glory, conferr'd upon him by *God his Father*, were the Right, and might have been the Claim of his Obedience, yet he

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Psal. 20. 7.


Luke 3. 21, 22.

Luke 6. 12, 13.

John 17.

S E R M. X. chose to make them, for Reasons best known to God, and himself, the Matters of his Prayer and Petition. And therefore in Correspondence to this, the Mission of the *Holy Ghost*, since it was to be so great and so peculiar an Honour to Christ himself, as well as his Religion upon Earth, being part of his own Personal Happiness, as well as the Privilege and Interest of his Church, was to proceed upon his more immediate Addresses to his *Father* for it. And that it was indeed such an Honour, as we have here supposed, our *Saviour's* own Words are a sufficient Evidence, *He shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* For indeed the main, and most immediate end of the coming of this Blessed Person was to *glorifie* our *Saviour*, in being a Vindication of his perfect Righteousness, a Conviction of his Acceptance with God, a Result, and Consequence and an Assurance to Men of his Exaltation to the Throne of God: For so indeed St. Peter makes it, *Acts 2. 33. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* And so our Lord himself explains it. *And when he (that is the Holy Ghost) is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and judgment, viz. of their own Sin, and of my Righteousness, and of the Right and Power of judging the World, in which I am invested by my Father.* But then,

Secondly, As *Christ's* Merits were the real and only Ground and Foundation of so infinite

finite a Blessing to the World, so it was but SERM. X.
 reasonable, it should pass to Men through 
 his Hands, and according to his more pecu-
 liar Request, and Application to *God* for it:
 That hereby it might appear to Men, how
 great his Interest with *God* his *Father* was,
 and to whom they must look up, and whom
 acknowledge the Fountain, and Author of
 their Spiritual Life and Blessing: That as
 by his Satisfaction, Mankind had access to
 the *Father*, being introduc'd to the Pardon Rom. 5. 2.
 and Favour of Almighty *God* by *him*; So Eph. 2. 18.
 through his prevailing Intercession might be
 deriv'd the *Holy Ghost*, the Pledge and Ear- Eph. 3. 12.
 nest of that Reconciliation: In as much as
 this was of a very high Necessity, and
 Importance both to the Honour of *Christ*
 himself, and towards the producing and the
 improvement of our Faith and Dependance
 on him: When *God* would have all those
 numerous Blessings, which attend the Com-
 munication and Presence of his *Holy Spirit*, Haggai 2. 7.
 pass under his *Son's* Disposal, and make them
 depend upon his Prayers; thereby turning
 the Desire and Expectation of all Nations
 upon him, as being constituted the Supreme
 Dispenser over the House of *God*. For as
God has made us accepted to himself only in Eph. 1. 6.
the beloved; so is he willing that all the
 Blessings, that descend from *Heaven* upon us,
 should carry a Relation to his *Son*, and bear the
 signiture of his Love and Power upon them.
 It being an Honour due to *Christ*, as appointed
 the great *Mediator* between *Heaven* and
Earth; and besides, a silent Argument, and
 Intimation of the infinite Holiness, Purity
 and Greatness of our *God*, and his distance
 from

SERM. X. from Sinners, that he will not vouchsafe to transact *immediately* with Men, that have so far affronted his Authority; nor appear to favour them, but through him, to whom, having communicated his very Nature, he cannot deny any thing he will request for himself, or us. And then besides, to recommend the Greatness of his Gifts to Men in the Effusion of his *Holy Spirit*, he would have them to be consequent upon the Intercession of his own *Son*; that so the Richness and Worthiness of the Means of the Conveyance might give a peculiar Grace and Ornament to the Blessing it self, raising Mens Estimation of it, and rendring them more concern'd to answer the Design of it in their Lives.

And thus I *have* shewn at large, how far, and for what Reasons, the Mission of the *Holy Ghost* was suspended upon the Prayer, and Intercession of our *Saviour*; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*: And this brings me to consider,

Secondly, What are the Parts of his Office, that this *Holy Person* executes, as he is here spoken of under the Notion of our *Comforter*, or (as the Original Word is known likewise to import) our *Advocate*. For thus our *Saviour* seems here to promise him to his Disciples, with a peculiar Regard and Relation to them, and their Interest; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give You another Comforter*. Not but that the *Holy Ghost* was indeed always, and is still an Advocate for *Christ* himself, as having receiv'd his Commission and Instructions from him, and being employ'd



employ'd to act under him; to promote the Design, and to advance the Reputation of his Religion upon Earth. And this he did in the first Ages of the Church, by confuting and silencing the Objections of the Enemies to *Christianity*, in the powerful demonstrations of the Spirit, and Truth of it; overbearing the Prejudices, and clearing up the Darknes of Mens Minds, and bringing into Subjection every Thought and Design of theirs, *that exalted it self against the knowledge of the* 2 Cor. 10. 5. *Son of God.* And this he continues to do in some measure, and as far as is necessary, ever since, though in a more secret and invisible manner; inforcing upon the Hearts of Men the Arguments he once deliver'd for the Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Faith; taking down and controlling the Carnal Pride within our Nature, and subduing our Minds to an hearty Acknowledgment of, and a Belief in, and a Dependance on, an humble and crucified *Saviour.* And thus the *Holy Spirit* is our *Blessed Saviour's* Advocate, and another Mediator between *Christ* and Men, as *Christ* himself is between Men and *God.* But because my Text seems rather to direct me to speak of the *Holy Ghost* under another Intention than as an Advocate for *Christ*, I shall therefore pass off from this, and go on to consider him under a nearer Relation to our selves, as he is indeed more properly our Comforter and Advocate. Which part of his Office he makes good to us in these *four* following Instances.

First, In that he is the great Promoter, and Inciter of our Piety in general, suggest-
ing

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Vid. Hammond
on Acts 15. 31.

ing Holy Thoughts and Resolutions to our Minds, and inforcing them there with a quick and powerful Energy; and this Sense the *Greek Word* $\pi α ο ρ κ λ η σ$ will bear of an Instigator or Exhorter, and is by the best Expositors known and allowed to have in this very Place.


Secondly, He is our Advocate, in that he is an Assistant or Helper of our Devotions and Prayers more particularly, teaching us both how to pray, and for what, preventing, and seconding our Petitions, with his own prevailing Intercession.

Thirdly, He is our Comforter and Encourager under our own sad Experience of the Weakness of our Corrupt Nature, and under all the Difficulties of our Duty.


And *Fourthly*, He is also our Support and Comfort under the Troubles and Afflictions of the World.

And *First*, He is the great Promoter and Inciter of our Piety, suggesting Holy Thoughts and Resolutions to our Minds, and inforcing them there with a quick and powerful Energy. For because of the Proneness of our deprav'd Nature to the Pleasures and Diversions of a Sensual Life, and (as a Consequence from thence) an Aversion from *God*, and our Duty, we should hardly ever entertain any Thoughts of returning, nor without infinite Difficulty and Reluctance be kept to our Obedience, *but that he that is within us is a Principle stronger than our selves, and the World without us.* And though the Methods, by which he thus applies himself to us, and whereby he acts upon us, be secret and imper-

John 3. 8.

perceptible, hidden even to our own Souls SERM. X.
 upon which they move, and beyond the 
 nearest and closest Scrutiny of our Thoughts;
 yet are they nevertheless real, and effective
 to the greatest and highest Purposes of Grace
 and Nature. Such indeed are the Change
 of a Man's Mind, of his Principles, and of
 his Interests; the alteration of his Sentiments,
 and the introducing a new Turn and Scheme
 in his Affections, and a perfect and entire
 Revolution of him from off a false Bias,
 and Pursuit, to that which is the true and
 last end of his very Life and Being. Such
 as these are the visible and open Effects of
 a secret and invisible Power, which is *strong*,
 however it be *silent*; and though gentle and
 easie, proves nevertheless effectual, and pre-
 vails above all power of Opposition and Con-
 troul. Such indeed is the effectual working
 of the *Holy Ghost* within us, as that of God
 without us, which conducts and superintends
 the Affairs of the Natural and Moral World,
 that, in all the Changes and variety of Mo-
 tions in *either*, has the main and over-ruling
 Sway, and carries every thing to the accom-
 plishment of its own Designs, through all
 the Difficulties that encounter it; and yet
 with that soft and silent Influence, that pas-
 ses by us, and we don't perceive it. *Verily,*
thou art a God that hidest thy self, O God of *Isaiah 45. 15.*
Israel, the Saviour, says the Holy Prophet.
 And Thou, O *Blessed Spirit!* dost all these
 things in Secret upon Man after the Council *Ephes. 1. 11.*
 of thine *own* Will, whilst thou leavest eve-
 ry Man to follow *his*, neither infringing his
 Liberty, nor offering Violence to the Inclinations

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 nations over which thou yet prevailest. For all these things are done of the *Holy Spirit* upon Men, by Movements that are suitable to Human Nature in general, and agreeable to the different Tempers of Men in particular, by his striking in with the Sense and Instincts of our own Souls, and leading us to *God* and our Duty, from a vital and inward Conviction within us; whilst he repeats, and urges upon our Minds the mighty Arguments of Religion, darting in a new Light upon our Thoughts, and discovering to us both the Way we should go in, and the eternal and infinite Moment of those Reasons that move us to it. And thus far he is our *Paraclete* in the first Sense of the Word, as he is a Promoter, and Instigator of our Piety in general.

Secondly, He is our Advocate, in that he is an Assistant and Helper of our Devotions in particular, directing us both how to pray, and for what, preventing, and seconding our Petitions with his own prevailing Intercession. For we indeed know not what we should Pray

Rom. 8. 26. for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be utter'd.

Our Minds are light and roving, our Desires irregular, and our Ignorance is great; and all these together, concur to unhallow our Devotions, or to leave them imperfect, after our utmost Endeavours and Application. So that had we not a powerful Friend within us, that sits upon the *Altar* of our Hearts, and mercifully observes, and clears off the Stains and Sullies of the *Incense* that ascends

from

from thence towards Heaven; all our Importunities would be so clogg'd and intangled with the Pollutions of Earth and Sin, that they could never reach the Presence of the *God* of Glory; or if they did, 'twould be to bring down his Vengeance, rather than to procure his Favour. But now we know we have an *Advocate*, whose Interest is great in the Court of Heaven, and sufficient to recommend to the utmost our lame and imperfect Services, if they are but sincere; in that 'tis the *Holy Spirit* himself who *helpeth* Rom. 8. 26, 27. *our Infirmities; and God, that searcheth the Hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh Intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God.*

He it is that, when Holy Desires begin to fail within us, when the Fire of our Love to *God* and our Duty, (which is one main Ground and Condition of the Acceptance of our Prayers) when this faints and languishes, he then inspires it with his Breath from Heaven, and feeds it with his Blessed *Unction* from *above*, and recovers it into a bright and vigorous Flame. When our Affections tire and sink down, because of their own natural Infirmity, or under the weight and burden of Earthly things, 'tis He that raises and supports them, that quickens, and enlivens them with a Heavenly Sprightliness Rev. 8. 3, 4. and Activity, and makes them ascend on the Wings of a devout and fervent Prayer, on the Wings of *Angels* towards Heaven. Whilst he works within us a deep Sense and Conviction of our Needs, he renders our Prayers earnest, and importunate, and sincere; whilst

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whilst he represents and holds out to us the Bowels of God's Mercy in general, and his Readiness to hear and relieve us, he gives a Spirit of Faith and Confidence to our pious Addresses; and whilst from both these he actually seals to our selves in particular, a lively Security, and Assurance that we are heard and accepted of the God of Heaven, he overflows our Souls with Peace and Comfort, and makes us even anticipate the Happiness God is preparing to reward our present Piety. *Now all these things works that good and blessed Spirit for us, that so we may come boldly, and with sure effect to the Throne of Grace, that we may thence obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Heb. 4. 16.

Thirdly, He is also our Comforter and Encourager under our own sad Experience of the Weakness of our corrupt Nature, and under all the Difficulties of our Duty; in that, we know, he does not take the advantage of our Weakness, nor precipitate our Religion, but leads us on gently as we can bear, and requires no more of us as an indispensable Condition of our *Salvation*, than we can at that time perform: Always considering the Infirmities of our present Nature, the strength of our Temptations, and the high and absolute Perfection of his own Laws; which he leaves still for the Rule of our Duty and Obedience, though he does not insist upon an exact Conformity to them, as a Covenant of Life and Death. And where we fail, and come *short of the Glory of God*; when we are apt to be cast down in our own Thoughts upon a just
sense

sense and view of our own Unworthiness, he there kindly interposes to secure us from Dejection and final Despair, and by a secret Voice behind us bids us hope, and take Courage, and *renew our Strength as an Eagle* for a fresh Attempt upon our Duty.

Isaiah 30. 21.
Psal. 103. 5.

Thus he bears with us all along in the tender Age of our Piety, is pleas'd to interpret our many Slips and Imperfections not as Provocations of his Anger, but as the Objects of his Pity and Compassion. Till we go on *from strength to strength*, and recover into the *liberty of the Sons of God*; into a Liberty from Sin and Death; a Liberty of doing God's Will, and what is best for our selves; and most agreeable to the Dictates of our reasonable Nature; a Liberty under which we are deliver'd from the Slavery of our vile Lusts and Passions; that so miserably hamper and entangle us; and are plac'd under his own immediate Direction, and Influence, that is always guiding us to our true Happiness, *whose Law giveth life, and whose service is perfect freedom*. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, says the Apostle, and thus may we chearfully *run the way of God's Commandments*, when, by the Inhabitation, and Grace and Comforts of his Holy Spirit, *he has set our Hearts at liberty*.


Psal. 84. 7.
Rom. 8. 21.

2 Cor. 3. 17.
Psal. 119. 32.

Fourthly, and Lastly, He is likewise our Support and Comfort under the sorest Troubles and Afflictions of *this World*; chiefly by opening to our Minds that Blessed State of things, that awaits us in *another*; and, in the midst of all the present Clouds and

SERMON X. Darkneſs round about us, impreſſing bright
 and joyous Expectations upon our Spirits,
 and conveying in the *Oil of gladneſs*,
 and diſtilling it upon the Minds of Men,
 through thoſe ſecret, and hidden Conduits
 and Channels, that are known only to him-
 ſelf. For as he perfectly underſtands the
 Frame of Human Nature, and knows exact-
 ly the Make and Temper of the Souls of
 every one of us; ſo can he reach and pierce
 through to our Spirits, at all thoſe *Avenues*
 and Inlets of Pain, and Pleaſure, that him-
 ſelf has made. He knows how to propor-
 tion a Remedy to the moſt retired, and com-
 plicated Diſeaſes of our Nature; and how-
 ever we are intangled, and taken in the *Snare*
 of our own Paſſions, he can let us go free,
 and bring out our *Feet into a large Room*.
 Whiſt he lays an Arreſt upon the violent
 Motions, and Confuſion of our Thoughts,
 and with-holds our *Imagination* from pur-
 ſuing its own Miſery, beyond the Bounds of
 Religion, and Reaſon: Which unruly Fa-
 culty within us, were it once permitted to
 run looſe, it is beyond Conception, what in-
 finite Terrors and Affrightments it muſt cre-
 ate, and how 'twould fill our whole Lives with
 lamentation, and mourning, and woe. But *this*, in
 good Men that have a Title to the Com-
 forts of the *Holy Spirit*, is under the blis-
 ful Direction, and Reſtraints of that *Good*
Spirit, and ſhall always have a fit Proportion
 of Light, and Gladneſs, and Reſreſhment,
 to temper the black Ideas of Miſery and Sor-
 row, and to fan and recreate the Soul in the
Furnace of its affliction.

Were

Were there indeed no other Joy, no other S E R M. X.
Consolations of the *Holy Spirit*, as there are 
 many, (and this truly sincere and pious Men Phil. 2. 1.
 understand very well there are, and rejoice
 and triumph daily in the Experience, and
 Relish of them;) but if there were none
 else; yet how can it be, but that the bare,
 and only Belief and Expectation of a World
 to come, where there shall be such a per-
 fect, and final Deliverance from all the Pains
 and Troubles that we meet with here be-
 low, such a full Instatement in Bliss, in the
 Possession, and Enjoyment of the *Supream*
Good; how, I say, can it otherwise be, but
 that this one Reflection, when set home up-
 on our Thoughts, by the Power and Acti-
 vity of the *Holy Ghost* within us, must be
 abundantly sufficient to lighten the severest
 Burden of our Lives, to make us *raise our* Heb. 12. 12, 13.
heads, to lift up the hands that hang down,
and to strengthen the feeble knees, and to sup-
port all that is weak and insufficient in our
Souls, that it be not turned out of the way!
 For by the Mediation of *Faith*, the good
Spirit of God that dwells in our Hearts, makes
 all the Glories of another World pass before
 our Eyes, whilst it draws back the Veil of
 the Heavenly Tabernacle; and reveals all the
 interior and hidden Beauties of *God's* Presence;
 of the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, and of the Saints
 in Light; to whose blessed *assembly* and *com-* Colos. 1. 12.
munion we our selves are come, and are now Heb. 12. 23.
 reckoned Denizens of that Holy City, have Phil. 3. 20.
 our present *conversation in heaven*, and shall John. 14. 2.
 shortly enter on the Possession of the Glory
 there prepared and ready for us. So that

SERM. X.



* λογίζομαι
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 Rom. 8. 18.

upon a fair and just, stating the Account, we may very well * *reason* with the *Apostle*, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the glory, which shall be revealed in us.*

And such Thoughts and Reflections as these will in some measure bring down Heaven to us upon Earth, and give us a quick and lively Taste of those exceeding Joys to which we are going. For indeed this is a Property of *Faith*, to represent our future Glory, not only as real, but in some measure as present and actual; and this will be abundantly enough to set us far above the World, and all it can offer to tempt us with; above all the Pleasures and Allurements, above all the Sufferings and Evils of it; in that we know, and are perswaded with the *Apostle*, *that the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen (unless by the Eye of Faith alone) are eternal.*


2 Cor. 4. 18.

I come now to the *Third* and last thing proposed, which was to shew in what sense, and after what manner, both the Presence, and Office of the *Holy Ghost*, are to be continued to his Church throughout all the Periods of it, to the last; according to these Words of our *Saviour*; in the Text, — *that he may abide with you for ever.* I am oblig'd to be very short upon this Point, and shall therefore only sum up what might be spoken more largely on it, and shall so conclude.

In the *First* Place then, 'tis certain that the *Holy Spirit* has withdrawn the Miraculous, and open Effects of his Power from
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the *Church of Christ*; because when his Religion was once establish'd in the World, and grown to some Pitch of Strength and Maturity, these things were no longer necessary; being design'd only at first for the Infancy of Christianity, for *Signs and Wonders* Isaiah 8. 18. to the People, in order to draw their Attention, and to engage the Curiosity of Men, to look into that Religion which came recommended with such Power and Authority from on high. But when these Effects were once secur'd, and Religion had taken a deeper Root in the Earth, then *God* left it to be supported, and propagated by more Human Methods, by the Industry and Example of its Professors, and by the Purity and Excellency of its own Doctrine; and in this case, we may speak of Miracles in general, what *St. Paul* pronounces of the Gift of Tongues in particular, that they were intended for signs not to them that believe, but to John 4. 48. *them that believed not*: And therefore they were of Consequence to cease and be done away, when the full End and Design of them was once accomplish'd. 1 Cor. 14. 22.

But then, *Secondly*, Though the *Spirit of God* has remov'd the visible and external Instances of a Miraculous Power out of the *Christian Church*, yet has he not left it destitute of any Gifts, or Graces, that might be necessary for the due Government and Administration of it; in that he still continues himself, to *rule in the congregation of the Saints*, to apply his Commission and Power to his Ministry upon Earth; whom, by secret, and invisible Methods, by inward In-

SERM. X.  stincts, and Propensities, and by over-ruling external Events, he draws and allures to the sacred Function, and separates them as his own Lot and Peculiar for the Work to which he has appointed them; furnishing them with all Assistances necessary, to carry on his great Designs upon the Souls of Men, prospering their Endeavours, ratifying and confirming their Acts, and protecting their Persons, and their Interests, against the malicious Plots, and Contrivances of ill-designing, and irreligious Men.

Thirdly, and to conclude all; As the *Divine Power* of the *Holy Ghost* has already given us, and will ever continue to provide all things necessary to the outward Polity, and Government of his *Church* on Earth, so more especially all those things, that pertain to a *spiritual Life and Godliness*, towards the promoting the inward Piety, and true Temper of *Christ's Religion* in Mens Souls: Nor will the *Spirit of God* ever confine, and straiten himself in the Communication of those Graces, and that *Unction from above*, that shall be requisite to teach Men, and lead them to a Knowledge of their Duty, or enable them to the Practice of it: In this

Respect his ear shall not be heavy, that it will not bear, nor his hand ever shortned that it cannot redeem; redeem us from the Power and Dominion of our Sins, and hear our earnest Prayers to the *Throne of Grace*, for Mercy and Assistance, to fulfil our Obedience, and to do thy Will, O God! that we may enjoy thy Favour:

To whom with our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, SERM. X.
and the holy Spirit, be ascribed both here, and 
throughout all the churches of the saints, all-¹ Cor. 14. 33.
praise, and honour, and glory, and power, and
might, and majesty, and dominion, now and
for evermore. Amen, Amen.

Of Grieving the Holy Spirit.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
Univerſity on *Whitſun-Tueſday,*
May 25. 1708.

E P H E S. IV. 30.

*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,
whereby ye are ſealed to the day of
redemption.*

THERE can be no Point of greater Neceſſity, when we once come to have right Apprehenſions of the Nature of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and are duly convinc'd of his Miſſion, and Operations in the Church of *Chriſt*, than to conſider with what Temper of our Souls we muſt go on to entertain his divine Preſence, ſo as not either to drive him from us, or diſappoint his ſacred Reſidence with us of the gracious Ends to which it was deſign'd. For all the
great

great things which we either believe or can speak concerning *him* are referr'd to our Practice as their proper End, and 'tis there they must all terminate, as in their full and ultimate Resolution: In as much as *God* does not require our Belief and Acknowledgment of this *Mystery* of our Faith, to amuse our Understandings, or to engage us in nice and subtle Speculations, but in order to the better Conduct and Regulation of our Lives.

I have pitch'd upon these Words of the *Apostle*, as containing the most serious and affectionate Application to this Purpose. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.*

By the Appellation of *Holy* applied to the *Spirit of God* in my Text, and other Places of the Scripture, we are not to understand only his *absolute* Holiness, as he is consider'd in his own Nature, but with a peculiar Relation to our selves; as he is likewise effectually *Holy*, a Principle productive of *Holiness* in the Members of his *Church*; the great Spring and Fountain from whence are deriv'd all that Grace and Vertue, by which the Stains of our corrupt Nature are cleans'd, and by which we are endued with those *Divine* Qualities, and that heavenly Disposition of Mind, whereby we come to resemble *God* himself in his Perfections, and are enabled to conform our Actions to his Will.

And when we reflect upon the infinite Benefits the *Holy Spirit* communicates to us of this nature, we shall quickly discern the mighty Reason the *Apostle* had to deliver so very strict and solemn a Charge to the
Ephesians

Ephesians on this Occasion; and the strong Obligation that lies upon us all to consider it well.

Which that we may be the better able to do, I shall in the *First* Place make it my Business to enquire under what Notion, and for what Reasons, the *Holy Spirit of God* is here represented by the *Apostle* as *grieved* at the Sins of Men,

Secondly, I shall consider by what particular Kinds and Degrees of Sin, he is more especially griev'd,

And, *Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to explain the Force, and shew the Propriety of the *Apostle's* Argument against our thus *grieving* him, because we are *sealed by him to the day of Redemption*.

And, *First*, I am to enquire under what Notion, and for what Reasons the *Holy Spirit of God* is here represented by the *Apostle* as griev'd at the Sins of Men. For here, in the very Entrance on this Argument, I am very sensible of a secret Objection that will arise, and meet me. How can God be griev'd? Is there Passion in the *most High*? Is he liable to Change and Alteration? And if not, with what Propriety, or even tolerable Sense of Words, can we apply to the *Holy Spirit* an Affection, and that of Grief too, one of the most troublesome in our Nature, a great Instance of our present Imperfection, and one of the main Instruments of our Misery? Can he be touch'd with our Infirmities? Can there be Weakness in the *Almighty*? or can Grief spring up in the very *Fountain of Joy* it self? To which we must answer, That 'tis sure there

there cannot, according to the general and ordinary Sense of human Passions. And therefore, when the *Holy Scriptures* apply these Expressions to *Almighty God*, we must take care so to qualify the Sense of them, as neither to charge his Nature with Imperfections on the one hand, nor his *Holy Word* with Insincerity on the other.

Which Inconveniences we may easily avoid this way, by resolving with our selves, that though there is not any thing of what we properly call *Passion* in the *Divine Nature*, yet there is something of a Superior and infinitely Transcending kind, namely the most strong and vigorous Resentments of Good or Evil in his Will, which he can no more suspend or interrupt than he can his very Being. For we must take care of the *chilling* Influence of a cold sort of *Philosophy*, which, whilst it pretends to exempt *Almighty God* from human Passions, really deprives him of the proper Perfections of his Nature, and leaves him an indifferent and unactive Being; than which nothing can be a greater Derogation from his Honour.

For these Propensities and Inclinations of *God's Will*, though they are more intense and vigorous in themselves, than can be conceiv'd by human Thought; and answer to the utmost force, and all the Ends of human Passions, yet do they not partake of the *Nature* of our *Passions*, for these two Reasons; *First*, because they are the Motions of God's Will immediately, and can't reside in any sensitive Appetite. (which is the proper Seat of human Passions) in as much as *God's* pure and
simple

SERM. 51. simple Nature admits of no Composition whatsoever, much less of a Material one. And, *Secondly*, because these Motions never fluctuate in the least, never rise or fall, ebb or flow, but are standing and regular, co-eternal with his Nature, and so not liable to the Contingencies of Time, or the variety of outward Accidents.

And so far as Grief is a Disposition *in* God's Will, and a Result of those two original Resentments in the *Divine* Nature, of that *eternal Love* to the Persons of Men, as they are his Creatures, and of that infinite and irreconcilable Abhorrence and Detestation of their Sins, which are the only Hindrance of their Happiness; so far, and in this Sense I apprehend it applicable to the *Holy Spirit of God*, in these words of the *Apostle*.

But then we must take care again to understand this so, as that this Resentment may be without any Diminution or Disturbance to *God's* Happiness; for *that* we know is entirely secure, and founded within himself only; and the Reason why Grief, even in human Passions, is attended with Molestation, if we consider rightly, is not from the very Passion it self, but from a secret Reflection that goes along with it, that what is now the Object of our Sorrow does or may some way or other affect our Well-being. But this we are sure can have no place in *God Almighty*, who is a self-sufficient and infinitely perfect Being.

The *Spirit of God* therefore is in this Sense said to be *grieved* for the Sins of Men, because of his infinite and most tender Love to
our

our Persons, and at the same time his eternal S E R M. XI.
 Hatred and Displeasure at our Sins. And the
 Reasons why this Expression of his being
 griev'd is peculiarly applied to him, are these
 that follow ;

First, Because upon the account of his more immediate Presence with us, and of that Nearness of Relation which he is pleas'd to take upon himself towards us, our Sins are now become more directly odious and offensive to him.

Secondly, Because we now commit them in Contempt of the highest Acts, and utmost Expressions of infinite Love, and cross and disappoint the *Holy Spirit* of God in his last Remedy, whereby he is pleas'd to undertake for our Recovery.

And, *Thirdly*, and as a Result and Consequence from both the former Considerations, Because by thus ungratefully dealing with him we provoke him to withdraw himself from us, and all the Communications of his Goodness with him.

And, *First*, we are said to grieve the *Holy Spirit*, because, upon the account of his more immediate Presence with us, and of the Nearness of that Relation which he is pleas'd to take upon himself towards us, our Sins are now become more highly odious and offensive to him, as being committed more directly under his Eye, and with Circumstances of the greatest Irreverence towards him. He is pleas'd, we know, to look upon *Christians* as his own Propriety, and as peculiarly separated to his Honour from the whole bulk of Mankind : Our *Bodies* are his
Temples ;

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1 Cor. 6. 17.

Temples; and by vertue of our mystical Union with him being joyn'd to the Lord, *We become one Spirit*, as the *Apostle* in the highest and noblest strain of Divine Eloquence expresses himself. By reason of which so very strict an Alliance, every Sin we now commit, besides its original and natural Turpitude, carries in it a fresh and accessory Guilt and Provocation. *Know ye not*, says St. Paul, *that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?* And how are they so? but by the Inhabitation and intimate Presence of this Divine Person within our Hearts.

1 Cor. 6. 19.

And therefore when we set up the *Idols* of our own foolish Lusts and Passions in our Heart, which is properly his Altar, and bow down our selves, and serve those vicious Inclinations, which we ought to sacrifice in Obedience to his Will, this must needs be in the highest Degree grievous and offensive to him, as being indeed the deepest Violation of his Honour. For *what concord is there between the Holy Spirit and Belial?* or *what agreement hath the temple of God with Idols?*


2 Cor. 6. 16.

The *Holy Ghost* indeed has oblig'd himself, by vertue of his being our *Blessed Saviour's Advocate* here on Earth, to come and abide with us, and not entirely to give us up, and leave us to our selves, till he sees we will no longer hear his Reproof, and are desperately lost to all his Counsels. So that we see he has in some Measure confin'd himself to us, and 'tis by that Means become a great deal more in our Power to offend and grieve him, in that he has undertaken not to desert us presently, but for a while to strive with our Ingratitude; and this, if any thing, should

should prove an Argument upon our Iniquity not to offend him, by taking in his worst Enemies, our Sins and Pollutions, into his awful Presence. And if yet we will do so, if we shall treat the *Holy Spirit of God* with such Contempt and Insolence, as to provide no better Company for him than our bestial Inclinations, and vilest Lusts, how much must the Influence, think we, of such a base unworthy Neighbourhood afflict him!

Again, *Secondly*, we grieve the *Holy Spirit of God* by our Sins, because they are now committed in Contempt of the highest and last Expressions of infinite Love; and we thereby cross and disappoint the *Holy Spirit* in his last Remedy, whereby he is pleas'd to undertake for our Recovery. And thus every Sin we are now guilty of is in some measure a *Sin* against the *Holy Ghost*, (though not that peculiar great and *irremissible one*), as being acted in despite of all his powerful Assurances, in defiance of all his Rebukes, and by way of the most ungracious return for infinite Kindness.

For under *Christ* himself, the *Holy Spirit* is now the great Solicitor and *Mediator* with Mankind in *God's* behalf: And though the Malice of all our Sins in the last Result strikes farther, and rebounds upon the blessed *Father* and the *Son*; yet considering that the *Holy Ghost* is the immediate Minister of *God's* Will on Earth, and transacts all the great Affairs in the Church of *Christ*, quickening and enlivening the whole, on this Account, I say, our Sins are now directly aim'd at him, and would seem to cast the greatest Blemish
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SERM. X.  and Reflection on his Honour; as if he were not faithful to this *great House of God*, and did not supply his Servants with that *Sufficiency* of spiritual Assistance, which is necessary to answer the great End and Design of his Mission, and Office of *Mediation* with Mankind.

So that whilst he pours out all the Riches of his Grace and Love upon us, and finds them all unsuccessful, and no other Returns from us but such as we ought to be ashamed to make him, no wonder then if he begin to enter his Complaint against us, in the Language of the *Prophet*, and appeal to all the World for our ungrateful Behaviour: *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard: What could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* These and many more such Expostulations, which we meet with in the Holy Scriptures, are the Expressions of Grief and Concern; such as imply the utmost Unwillingness to deal severely even by those, whom yet by all the wise Methods of his Goodness he could not reform. The *Holy Spirit of God* here represents himself as one who would be glad to spare Sinners, if he could, and therefore we may be sure 'tis grievous to him that by their Sins they will not suffer him.

And for Men thus to disappoint the *Holy Spirit of Love*, for that is his peculiar Title as well as Nature, to make him thus *wait that*
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be may be gracious, and pay Attendance on us, through the tedious Stages of our Folly and Vanity; and to stand by, and be a Witness of our Despight and Disobedience against himself, with the importunate Offers of infinite Kindness in his Hand, is a Practice of that nature, that what Man is there of any Tenderness or Ingenuity in his Soul who can bear the harshness of such an ungrateful Reflection as this? 'Tis an Argument of God's infinite Mercy, that he is pleas'd only to express himself as *griev'd* at such Impiety and Baseness, that his Anger does not *smoke*, and his *Indignation flame* out against such Sinners, and he consume them in a Moment.

But behold, instead of this; *O the height and depth of the patience and long-suffering of God!* because we have given him so many Promises that he should expect better things from us, and he has given us so many powerful Motives and Reasons why he might, after all his Resentments of our Contumelies against him, come out to us under the milder style of Grief only, not to consume us for our treacherous Baseness, but to convince us of it, and to persuade us from it! Who can express the loving kindness of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise! How unsearchable are his Mercies, and his Love past finding out! But let us take care we do not always thus provoke him, and slight his Patience.

'Twas the base proceeding of the Jewish Nation to affront, and grieve him, after innumerable Experiences of his exceeding Mercies towards them, even almost to a degree of Fondness, that made infinite Love at last

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 Isa. 63.

turn into Bitterness and afflict them. As we find the Account described in the *Holy Prophet* in the most affectionate and lively Manner. And the Reason at last given for God's afflicting that People, because after all his infinite Love and Tenderness towards them, they *rebell'd, and vex'd his Holy Spirit, therefore he was turn'd to be their Enemy, and he fought against them.*

And surely, considering the much greater Obligations he has laid upon all *Christians*, whom he has admitted into a State of the highest Privileges, and most glorious Expectations, we may conclude his Resentments of our unworthy Behaviour at last will be in Proportion to the Mercies we have receiv'd from his Hands, and then, we are sure, they must be infinite.


There is no doubt but God observes and hates the Sins of Men, wheresoever they are found, and his *wrath abides on every worker of iniquity*, of what Denomination soever, according to the Measure of his Sins, but 'tis the prophane *Christian*, that *Emphatically grieves his Holy Spirit*, which expresses and implies a strange and peculiar Degree of Baseness in our Sins, as well as the Guilt of common Disobedience; in as much as a Man is said to be provok'd indeed by the evil Turns of his Enemy, and to hate him for them, but he is properly griev'd at the Offences of his Friend. And therefore, besides the common and general Obligations of Duty that lie upon a *Christian*, the very Nearness of Relation that we bear to *Almighty God*, being his Children and Friends, should, one would think, be a most
 powerful

powerful Restraint upon us from Evil, and S E R M. XI
 would be so, if we had any thing of that
 Goodness and Gratitude in our Tempers, that
 we ought to have.

But if Arguments of this nature do not carry Force enough in them to keep us from grieving our best and most intimate Friend and Benefactor, the *Holy Spirit of God*; let us consider, in the *Third* place, what our grieving of him farther implies, which is, that by this ungrateful dealing with him, we provoke him to remove and withdraw himself from us, and all the Communications of his Goodness with him.

Now tho' this seems rather the Result and Consequence of Grief, than any thing of the formal Notion of it; yet because in *Divinity*, and when we speak of *Almighty God*, we are allow'd to give the Name of the internal Disposition to the outward Effect produc'd by it, upon that account the *Holy Spirit of God* is not improperly said to be griev'd, when he deals with Men, in a way suitable to that of their dealing with one another, when under the Force and Influence of that Passion. And we are very well acquainted how the Act of grieving amongst Men is apt to produce Offence, Regret, and Distance: It being one of the first and most general Instincts in our Nature, not to associate and unite it self with what is so very disagreeable.

Now whether 'tis that our Sins do by a sort of natural Efficacy pollute and stain our Souls, and so indispose them for the continued Influences of the *Holy Spirit*, or whether upon our Provocations, he is pleas'd to

SERM. XI.  restrain them by way of a judicial Consequence, I need not here determine. This is certain, we may forfeit and diminish, and even lose this blessed Influx of *Divine Grace* upon our Minds; and 'tis to be hoped that we have all had such a lively Sense, and such Convictions of these heavenly Operations within us, one time or other, as that, when we have been so unhappy as to offend *God* by our Sins, we could easily perceive the Change and Alteration, that follow'd in our Souls in that Dryness, and Desolation, and Barrenness of Spirit, which ensues more especially upon our Commission of Sins of a greater Malignity and Wilfulness.

For the common Pollutions of our Lives, the Sins as they are call'd of *daily Incurfion*, are *such*, as, by the Weakness of our present Nature, 'tis impossible for us wholly to avoid. And therefore the *Holy Spirit of God*, in these cases, is not pleas'd to take the Forfeiture; but notwithstanding the little Films of Corruption which these Sins cast about us, he still continues to stream out upon our Hearts with so vigorous a Light from Heaven, that no bad Influence of this nature can intercept or stifle him, but is daily dissolv'd and dissipated by his vigorous Rays, as an early Cloud and Morning-dew by the heat of the Sun. But then, when our Omissions or Commissions grow *notorious*, when our Neglect of spiritual Improvements runs on; and leaves upon our Mind an Indisposition to our Duty, or when we commit Sins with a high hand, with Degrees of Malice and Defiance to *God's Will and Law*, our guilty

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ty Mind then dares not for some time look towards him. The *Blessed Spirit* goes and returns to his place, he retires and hides himself from us, till we seek him again with Sorrow, and recover the light of his Favour by our Repentance.

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Hosea 5. 15.

And the more frequently we commit Sins of this Nature and Degree of Aggravation, so in Proportion we still weaken the Influences of *God's* Grace and *Spirit* to our selves; and though he may indeed forgive us, for what is past, as he very frequently does, and be reconcil'd, as to the final Issues of our Repentance, yet such frequent Breaches as these will necessarily bring on some Estrangement between him and us at present, and our intercourse can never be so Cordial, when 'tis interrupted by such often repeated Offences. A Man, in like manner, will forgive his Friend a great many Slips and Imprudences, and some wilful Transgressions, but to find him frequently affronting him, in the same or greater Instances, after all the Kindness of Admonition too, must necessarily wear off and abate by degrees the Firmness of his Affection, even to the Person that had once the greatest Interest in his Heart. Because he cannot but conclude, that *such* a one does not any longer either desire, or deserve to maintain a friendly Correspondence with him.

And thus having shewn what is meant by *grieving* the *Holy Spirit*, and for what Reasons he is more peculiarly said to be griev'd by the Sins of Christians; I come now in the *Second* Place to consider, by what particular kinds and degrees of Sins, we may be in a

SERM. XI.

greater measure said to *Grieve* him. And these Sins we may in the general resolve to be *such*, as either at first do wholly defeat or disappoint his holy Influences of their due Force and Energy upon our Hearts; or come afterwards to be in the most downright Opposition to his Light, and *Divine* Assistances. Of the *former* sort I shall mention only, and that will be sufficient, an habitual Inconsideration and Inadvertency of Mind to the sacred Motions and Inspirations of the *Holy Spirit*; and of the *latter*, Sins of Presumption in general, with those particular kinds of them, Sensuality, Malice and Spiritual Pride; against which the *Holy Ghost* declares himself to bear the most irreconcilable Aversion; because *these* are indeed the most destructive of his great work of Sanctification, which, 'tis the Will of God, and his own chief Design to carry on in the World, for the Benefit and Happiness of Mens Souls.

The *First* thing I shall mention, as being more especially grievous to the *Holy Spirit*, is an habitual Inconsideration and Inadvertence of his *holy* Motions within us. There is a certain peculiar Frame and Temper of Soul requir'd, a *Sobriety* of Mind, without which the Spirit of *God* cannot, or will not concur to the Purification of our corrupt Nature: And which 'tis in our own Power, by vertue of his general preventing Grace, to form and prepare within our selves; and he expects we should do so, it being the Ground and Foundation, upon which he is to proceed with in his after-workings. Now, this consists in preserving our Minds in a cool
and

and serious Disposition, in regulating and calming our Affections, and checking the inordinate pursuits of our Passions after the Vanities and Pleasures of this World ; which, that we should do indeed, is of such mighty Consequence to our Improvement in *Holiness*, that if we enquire into the Reasons of Mens Non-proficiency under the most powerful Means of Grace which *God* has given us, we shall find it to be chiefly from *hence*, that Men do not look enough within themselves, they don't observe and watch the Disorders and Imperfections of their own Spirits, nor attend with any care to those Directions and Remedies, that would be continually thrown up upon their Thoughts from this *Fountain of Life* within them, if they were but serious and recollected enough to give them Admittance. Men are generally lost in the Hurry and Distractions of Life, in the Business or Pleasures of it, and seem to think that their *Regeneration*, their new Nature, will spring and grow up within them, with as little Care and Thought of their own, as the first Rudiments of their Bodies were form'd within *the Bowels of their Mother*.

Psal. 71. 6

Whereas there is nothing more certain, than that the *Holy Spirit* of *God* does not ordinarily co-operate to the Reformation of our Nature, but by taking *into* his Concurrence our own Thoughtfulness and careful Attendance to his Operations : Which are generally lost upon us, whilst, in the *Prophet's* Language, we *scatter our ways*, we squander and throw away our Hearts upon Varieties of Folly that affect us, and leave that *one*

Jer. 2. 12.

SERM. XI. *thing needful*, a due Care of our spiritual Improvements, quite neglected.

There is many a Man, that, for the main of his Life, is regular and orderly in his Conversation, and generally observes the Seasons of outward Discipline, of Fasting and Prayer, with some Care; who yet in the Intervals of these Duties gives too great a *Loose* to his Thoughts, and Affections, and Discourse, and seems to adjourn the great Business of his Duty to the next Hour of his Devotion: Whereas they are indeed these Vacancies and Intervals from his immediate Attendance upon his Duty, that are the great and proper Opportunities of Improvement, by observing himself, and comparing the gradual Increases of his spiritual Strength, and by stifling and subduing every irregular Thought and Motion that stirs within his Breast. And if these Persons, whom yet we may and must in Equiry and Charity term good Men, lose so much in their spiritual Estate, for want of better adjusting and ballancing their Accounts; what then must we think of others, who forfeit all, by scarce ever bestowing a serious Thought upon themselves, and their own Conduct in their Lives? Surely there is not any Temper of Mind less a Friend to a Spirit of Religion, than a thoughtless, light and inconsiderate one; that, by the continual Succession and Transport and Hurry of vain Affections, excludes every thing that is serious from an Admission to the Soul, and from leaving those Impressions there, which should influence the Life and outward Actions. So that I could almost venture to
 say

say that a Man were better be guilty of a single Act of wilful Sin, than to lye generally under this Slumber of Spirit, this Supineness, this Lethargy of Soul. Because the Guilt of the former is so very open and importunate, that a Man of any Principles can have no Rest in his Spirit, 'till he is in some hopeful way of Recovery by an After-Repentance. Whereas the latter perceives not its own Danger, and so goes on without Conviction; and in the Consequence quite defeats and frustrates all the blessed Means of Restoration. And if we measure the Grief and Concern of the *Holy Spirit* at the Sins of Men, from the Degrees of his Frustration and Disappointment, we may conclude there is no State of Mind, that he his less pleas'd with, unless it be that of an harden'd, daring, presumptuous Offender;

Which was the *Second* Sort and Degree of Sins, that I am to consider as in the highest manner offensive to the *Holy Spirit of God*.

An inconsiderate inadvertent Mind will not be at the Pains to see the Light, but a bold presumptuous Sinner sees it clearly, and hates it, and tries to put it out. The former offends by his Carelessness, the latter by direct Hatred and Opposition. Such a one is the profess'd Enemy of *God*, comes up to a close Engagement, and, as Holy *Job* expresses it, runs upon his neck, and upon the thick bosses of his buckler. *Job 15. 26.*

And herein lies the heinous Guilt and Aggravation of this sort of Sins above those of Ignorance and Infirmary, that whereas these two suppose a Defect, the one in the Understanding,

SERM. XI.



ing, the other in the Passions: The Sin of Presumption, in the mean time, includes in it all the Malice of Wilfulness and Rebellion; when a Man is not ignorant, and is not surpriz'd, but knowingly and resolutely goes against the express Declarations of God's Word, and the lively, full, and intimate Convictions of his own Mind and Conscience. So that *this*, is the very Measure and Standard of Iniquity, and all other Sins of what kind soever, take their several Distinctions of more, or less guilty from their nearer Approach to, or greater Distance from Sins of this Nature and Denomination. In as much as these imply the greatest Opposition to God's Will, Contempt of his Holiness, and Defiance of his Justice. *Because thou hast despis'd me*, was the black Stile, under which God by the Prophet tax'd the Murder and Adultery of *David*; as having no Character worse than that, by which he could express so foul a Revolt. And for us to contemn, and *do despite* to the Spirit of Grace, which is the true Interpretation of all Sins of this Quality, if any thing can do so, must surely grieve him, not only as to the inward Resentment and Disposition of his Will towards such Sinners, but as to the utmost Consequences of his outward Dealing with them, his retiring from them, and forsaking them, in Proportion to their Guilt.

Other Sins, that have yet some *alloy* in their Nature, and *somewhat* to plead in their Excuse, as Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, do yet in some Measure weaken and diminish
his

his gracious Presence with us, and cast a SERM. XI. Cloud for a while upon the Light of his Favour towards us. But the ill Consequence of these Sins, through God's Mercy, and our own careful Endeavours, may, if they are taken in time, be more easily repaired; in as much as our Will, though under a Bruise, in such a Case, retains yet some Disposition to the Grace of God, as a newly extinguish'd Taper does to Light. But our Acts of presumptuous Sins, more especially if repeated, quite break off the Staff of our spiritual Strength, smother and extinguish the Remains of Life within us for a while, and leave us senseless and groveling in our own Pollutions. And if we recover again, 'tis with Pangs and Convulsions of Mind, and like the Travel of a new Birth, 'till another Nature be form'd within us.

This indeed is the Condition and Consequence of all presumptuous Sins in general. But then these are some particular Sins of this Nature and Distinction, that besides the formal Notion of Presumption, which is common to them with the rest, do yet, by a more direct and malignant Influence of their own, make Havock of our spiritual Estate, as they are presumptuous Sins of such a particular kind and constitution: Such for Instance, as those I mention'd, Sensuality, Malice, and spiritual Pride; which, that they do more especially grieve the *Holy Spirit*, we may be well assur'd, when we only remember that they are the blackest Characters of a carnal Mind, which we know is downright *Enmi-ty*

SERM. XI.



ty with God himself; and because they directly oppose and contradict the *Holy Ghost* in those Graces of Purity, Love, and Humility, which he sets the highest value on himself, and which he most carefully endeavours to promote and advance in Mens Hearts, as the greatest Instances of our *Holiness*, and the main Conditions of our Happiness. But I have not now time to take a more particular View of these, I shall leave the more thorow Consideration of them therefore to your own Thoughts; and shall proceed,

In the *Third* and last Place, to explain the Force, and shew the Propriety of the *Apostle's* Argument against our grieving the *Holy Spirit*, because we are sealed by him to the day of redemption.

By the *day of redemption* may be meant in general the time of our Entrance upon our eternal and unchangeable State of Happiness in another World; whether at our leaving these Bodies, in the Hour of Death, or our resuming them afterwards at the general Resurrection: Though I should rather chuse to understand them in the latter of these Senses, because we find the *Apostle* uses the same Term in another Place, where we are certain he speaks of the *Resurrection* in these Words, waiting for the adoption, to wit the *Redemption of our Bodies*. And 'tis to this *Day of Redemption* that we are consign'd by the seal of the *holy Spirit* these *Three* ways.

Eph. 8. 23.

First, In that by the Efficacy of his Grace we receive his real Stamp and Impress upon our Souls, and are made *Partakers of the divine Nature*, and become meet and qualify'd for the

the


the Enjoyment of *the inheritance of the saints in light*. SERM. XL

Secondly, Because we receive him as a Sign and Mark of God's Propriety in us, that we belong to *Christ*, and as a Condition and Security, by *God's* Appointment, of our future Happiness. ^{2 Pet. 1. 4.}

And, *Thirdly*, We receive him as an *Earnest* and Assurance to our own private Spirits, that we have a Title to eternal Life and Happiness, and shall not fail of it, if we persevere to do his Will; because the *Spirit of God* beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God. ^{Rom. 8. 16.}

These are the most remarkable Uses of a *Seal*, and the chief Relations that it bears; and though, by the help of a good Invention and Fancy, a Man might possibly discover more, yet I believe they would be such only, as are involv'd in those I have already mention'd, or coincident with them. These however, that I have before described, I am sure are clearly express'd in, or plainly deducible from the *Holy Scriptures*, and that shews them to be most pertinent to my present Subject.

And, *First*, We are seal'd by the *Holy Spirit of God*, in that by the Power and Efficacy of his Grace we take a real Stamp and Impress from him upon our Souls, being made *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, and render'd meet and qualified for *the inheritance of the saints in light*. For *this* indeed is the main End of the *Holy Spirit's* dwelling with us, to rectifie the disorderly Motions of our Souls, to heal our inward Distempers, and to restore

SERM. XI.  store that Image of himself upon our Nature, which is so far lost by our *Original* and *actual* Corruptions. And truly unless our Spirits are in some measure thus reform'd, and set right, and deliver'd from under those Pollutions into which we are sunk, 'tis impossible there should be the least Communion between him and us, whatever. For our Similitude to him is the only Ground and Foundation of our *Fellowship* with him; For what *Communion* is there between light and darkness? and if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. So that 'tis only by the Renewal of our Minds that we are made after the *image of him that created us*; and thus by representing him in that Image we are still more susceptible of his Influences, and by means of a friendly and daily Intercourse with him, we are more and more transform'd into his Likeness, till we are *satisfied* with it.

1 John 1. 6.

Col. 3. 10.

Nor is this Representation of his Purity and Holiness in our selves requir'd *only* as an arbitrary Condition of our gracious Correspondence with the *Holy Spirit*; but is absolutely necessary likewise in its Nature, as a State and Temper of Soul really qualifying and disposing us for Spiritual Happiness. For if there should be no Suitableness in Nature and Disposition between *God* and us, how is it possible then, his Happiness should be ours, if ours must consist, as it does, in the Contemplation and Love of his Perfections? So that there does not appear the least Ground of Reason why some Men should question,


as they do, whether *Holiness* of *Life* and *Purity* of *Heart* be necessary not *only* as a stated Condition; but as a natural Qualification for our future Happiness; if we allow only this one Supposition, which surely is a very reasonable one, that a Likeness and Enjoyment must require a Similitude of Nature and Inclination: Which is a Proposition that seems to me so very clear, as not to be capable of any Proof more evident than it self.

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But now, a Conformity of Will and Affections to the Will of *God* is what we mean, when we speak of *Holiness* as it is in Men; and to produce this is the proper End and Design of the sanctifying Influences of the *Holy Spirit*, and therein consists all the Image and Resemblance of him that we are represented as capable of in the Holy Scriptures. For, by his sacred Presence with us, we are not more nearly united to his Nature and Being than we were before, but by vertue of that Presence, we receive from him a more immediate Virtue, and a greater Fulness of heavenly Influences. He communicates to us, and we derive from him, *Grace for Grace*; we take such Characters and Features of Resemblance into our Spirits, as correspond to the original Patterns of *Holiness* and *Perfection* within himself; and thus we are seal'd by him in the first Sense, by way of Preparation and order to the Day of our *Redemption*, the Happiness he designs us in a *future* State.

John 1. 16.

And since we are so, and the new Nature that is wrought within us grows up under the forming Power of his Hands; what do we, when we grieve him by our Sins, but
unravel

SE R M. XI.  unravel and destroy his Work, set him back in his Designs, by breaking down those Piles and Fences which he had been hitherto raising against the Overflowings of our natural Corruption, and so at last entirely defeat him in his gracious Methods and Counsels for our Salvation?

Secondly, We are seal'd by the *Holy Spirit* in order to our Redemption, in that we receive him as a Sign and Mark of *God's* Propriety in us that we belong to *Christ*, and as a Condition and Security, by the *Divine* Appointment of our future Happiness; since *God* is pleas'd to admit none for his Children, but those that have receiv'd the *Spirit of his Son into their Hearts*. And then, we are sure, *if we are not Children, neither can we be heirs, either heirs with God, or joint-heirs with Christ*; which is the strong Reverse of the *Apostle's* Argument in his *Epistle to the Romans*.

Rom. 8. 17.

But now, if the *Spirit of Christ* dwell in us, by that we shall be known hereafter, and distinguish'd from others, as we are at present consign'd over, in the most proper Sense of that *Word*, to our own Redemption. For, as the *Apostle* reasons in the same Chapter, *If the Spirit of him that rais'd up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that rais'd up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Rom. 8. 11.

From hence then it appears that the *Holy Spirit* within us is the Mark and Character which *God* sets upon his Servants, appropriating them to himself. And in whom soever he finds it, when he comes to reckon with

with the World for their Transgressions, he will pass over that Man, and will not suffer the Destroyer to come in and hurt him. I cannot better express this than in the Language of the Prophet *Malachi* to this very Purpose of my Text, where speaking of those that fear'd God's Name, he says, *And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my Jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. In the day when I make up my Jewels, that is, when I set my Seal and Mark of Appropriation, as Dr. Hammond very well observes in his Exposition on the very Words of my Text.*

But now, if the *Holy Spirit* be thus the Seal, the Sign and Security of our *Salvation*, then by grieving and provoking him by our Sins, we break up this *Seal* with our own Hands, we cancel our firmest Security, and, as much as in us lyes, reverse our own Title to *Eternal Life*. And I think nothing more than that either can, or need be said, to convince us of the extream Danger and Evil of such a Practice.

Thirdly, and to conclude all, Besides that the *Holy Spirit* within us is a firm Security and Condition in the Nature of the thing it self, and by God's Appointment of our Title to eternal Life; he is likewise an *Earnest* within our Hearts, and a particular Assurance to our own private Spirits, that we shall not fail of our Salvation, if we go on to please him; because *the Spirit of God bears witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God.*

And this inward Testimony of our *Mind* is very different from that outward one in his

Word, which latter may be eternally true, (that he that has the *Spirit of God* shall live for ever,) and yet many a particular Man may not have that Assurance, and that immediate Application of this general Truth to himself: So that though this private Testimony of our own Mind proceed upon the Ground, and is form'd according to the Direction of *God's Word* without, yet that it shall be lively and effectual to our Comfort, depends upon the secret Operation of his *Spirit within*: Who, by infusing his heavenly Consolations into our Souls, by quick'ning and enlivening our drooping Spirits, and giving us a high and spiritual Gust and Relish of his Promises, raises bright and joyous Resentments within us, and makes a Man almost anticipate the Bliss to which he is going. In this Sense *God* is said by the *Apostle* to the *Corinthians* to have seal'd us, and to have given the earnest of the *Spirit* in our hearts. And that Earnest not only by way of Confirmation of our Title to Happiness, but as an actual Part of the Reward it self at present, the Fullness and Completion of which we expect hereafter.

2 Cor. 1. 22.

A
SERMON

Preach'd first before the

UNIVERSITY, 1708:

And afterwards before the

Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
and the Aldermen of *London*, at
St. Paul's Cathedral,

On *Sunday, November 11, 1711:*

To the Honourable
JAMES BERTIE, Esq;

O F

Stanwel in Middlesex.

One of the Knights of the Shire for
that County.

S I R,

I Presume to inscribe this plain Discourse to your Name, which, by means of a late happy Retirement, for some Weeks, in your Family, I had a nearer Opportunity of preaching before that venerable Audience.

I hope there is no false Divinity, nor any bad Principles in it; I would carefully avoid putting a Slur of that Nature upon a Degree which I owe to your Favour and Bounty; and for which, I am sure, I can never forget to thank you so long as I remember my self.

I would not offer any Paper to your Hands, with Blemishes in it of that sort, which your own true Sense of, and thorow Acquaintance with Religion, would enable you so quickly to spy; and which your hearty Zeal and Love for the Practice of it, and your resolv'd steady Ad-

Epistle Dedicatory.

berence to its Principles and Doctrines would make you so entirely disallow.

I am very sensible, the Character and Principles I have endeavour'd to describe in the following Sermon are as directly contrary to yours as any thing can be; whose personal Accomplishments are so truly Great, and yet join'd with that sincere, unaffected Humility, that every one else, that knows you, seems better acquainted with them than your self. And at the same time they are render'd in the highest degree amiable, by a wonderful Condescension to the Defects and Infirmities of other Men. Your candid, gentle, courteous Treatment of every Man of how low Estate soever has gain'd you the firmest Interest in the Hearts of all; even those Men not excepted, who know themselves to be at the greatest distance from you in Profession and Principles.

And indeed your Abilities of doing good are so many and so unconfin'd, that nothing can exceed them: so much, as your own most generous and ready Inclinations to apply them. No Gentleman, I am verily perswaded, is more ways qualified to benefit others, nor any one more heartily inclin'd to do good, in any single Instance, than your self in all. So very fully and clearly do that true Goodness of Nature, that remarkable Happiness of Temper, that unrestrain'd Beneficence and Generosity of Mind, which so eminently distinguish every one of your Noble Line, shine out in your Person, and express themselves in your whole Conduct and Conversation.

Epistle Dedicatory.

I have now had, for some Years past, a more immediate Opportunity of observing something very like this, to my greatest Pleasure and Satisfaction, in a younger Person, whom you did me the Honour to place and entrust under my Care in the University. I am sure, I can speak this of him, without the Fondness and Partiality of the Tutor, that if a true, just, and graceful Modesty, if a most agreeable Candour, Sweetness, and Evenness of Temper, if good Sense and excellent Parts, if strict Virtue and perfect Regularity of Life and Manners, are Arguments what we may expect from a young Gentleman hereafter, that then you have the best Ground of Reason to hope, that your eldest Son, in his riper Years, will prove no less than a Wise and a Good Man, and not fail to rise up to the Virtues and Character of his Noble Family.

That he may do so, has, I know, Sir, been always your greatest and justest Concern and Care, as well as that of your Excellent Lady; by whose admirable Prudence and Conduct, in the Direction and Management of so numerous a Family, there are no Consequences that can prove so happy, from the most pious Care, the exactest Methods, and greatest Wisdom of Education, which you have not Reason to expect. And in all other Instances, how very far she must contribute to your real Happiness and Comfort of Life is not so very difficult to determine, when we only consider her Nobility of Birth as attended and improv'd by those Perfections and Graces of her Mind, which are the truest Ornaments of her Sex and Quality; which in the

Epistle Dedicatory.

1 Pet. 3. 4. *Accounts of Religion it self, the surest Measure of our Judgment, are of the greatest Price, and will always render her most truly Honourable in the Opinions of Men.*

That you may ever continue to find all Prosperity in this your most worthy Consort, and Family, and in every other Instance, is the most sincere and affectionate Desire, and to have it answer'd will be to the highest Satisfaction of,

Honour'd Sir,

Your most oblig'd, faithful,

and humble Servant,

Stanwell, Decem-
ber 6, 1711.

WILL. TILLY.

*The Nature and Instances of Spiritual
Pride explain'd from our Saviour's
Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.*

A

S E R M O N

O N

LUKE XVIII. 9, 10, 11, 12.


*And he spake this Parable unto certain which
trusted in themselves that they were Righte-
ous, and despised others.*

*Two Men went up to the Temple to pray, the one
a Pharisee, and the other a Publicane.*

*The Pharisee stood and pray'd thus with him-
self, God, I thank thee, that I am not as
other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulter-
ers, or even as this Publicane.*

*I fast twice in the Week, I give Tithes of all
that I possess.*

OUR Blessed Saviour directs this Para-
ble against a Sect of Men, who were
in their Affections the bitterest Ene-
mies to his Person, and in their Opinions and
Persuasions the most fundamentally opposite

SERM. XII.  to his Truth and Doctrine of any that he met with in the World, as bad as he found it. I need not tell you I mean the *Pharisees*, a Generation of Hypocrites, that, under the specious and assuming Pretences of a more refin'd Godliness, did eat out the very Heart of Piety, and dar'd to set by and evacuate the Law of God himself, in the most important Instances of it, to make way for, or to raise the Reputation of their own little unauthoriz'd uncommanded Superstitions.

At the same time, they gave themselves out for the only Men of Sanctity, that understood best the Power of Godliness, and liv'd up to the Strictness and Rigour of it; and as those who were by Consequence the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, in the meanwhile rejected almost all the rest of Mankind, as poor loose carnal Souls, mere moral Men, but one Degree above Heathens, and as intirely unacquainted with those mystical Unions, and secret Correspondencies with the Almighty, which none but themselves, it seems, of so elevated a Piety, were thought worthy to be admitted to.


And no wonder that Men thus swollen, and bloated with so fond a Conceit of themselves, and unreasonable a Contempt of their Neighbours, should act agreeably to these Principles, and betray the Tumours and rottenness of their Hearts, by a suitable Deportment towards their Brethren; and at the same time, by an undecent encroaching Boldness, affront Almighty God himself, whilst they pretended to address him with purer Ordinance

Our

Our Blessed Lord, who by the Penetration of his All-searching Spirit could discover Pride and Hypocrisie, under what demure Pretences soever they might lurk; and who bore a more irreconcilable Hatred to them wherever he found them, tho' sanctified with the most godly Professions and colourable Titles, endeavours to take down this empty swelling Humour of these Men: And to this end, amongst his other Discourses on some of the most momentous Points of our Religion, he presents them with the *Parable* which I have now read before you; the lively Tenor of which, as well as the admirable Justness of it in all the Proportions of Nature, (as indeed of all our Saviour's Discourses of this sort) we cannot too carefully observe. For if we consider this Parable thoroughly, we shall find it carries in it so very plain and clear a Reference to the Purpose it aim'd at, that when a Pharisee sees himself here describ'd as in a Glass, in such odious Colours, and Postures so very different from what he usually gives himself in his own Opinion, if he uses any Application, he must conclude, that how *righteous* soever he may fancy himself to be, he is not much *more excellent than his Neighbour*; and that those, whom he calls the *Sinners of the World*, may be allow'd at least to stand at a little nearer Distance from him, if not upon a better Bottom than himself.

Prov. 12. 26.

Whether the Picture our Saviour here draws of him, may please him or not, we are not so much concern'd, but that it very well resembles him I shall endeavour to prove,
by

SERM. XII.  by illustrating it in the main Strokes and Characters of it : My Design being at present this, to describe this Sin of *Spiritual Pride* (the Sin here so severely tax'd by our *Saviour* in the *Parable*) in the whole Course and Progress of it, and to lay it open in its chief Parts and Branches, those more especially intimated by Christ himself, in the Instance of the Pharisee, and such as 'tis not very unusual for us to meet with in the World at this Day, from *some Men* that too nearly resemble that *proud Sect* in their Principles and Practice. And this, I think, cannot better be done, than by having a very careful Eye to every part of this Man's hateful Behaviour ; for by that means we shall the more easily discover the Deformity of this odious Vice displaying it self in all its Variety of Shapes, which we could not perhaps so well observe any other way, nor bring under so very short and comprehensive a View at once, as by setting this one lively Example before us we are now enabled to do.

The *Evangelist*, we find, gives us in general a short Account of the Nature of this Sin, in the very Character of the Persons on whose Occasion, he tells us, our Saviour deliver'd the Parable, *That they were certain who trusted in themselves, that they were Righteous, and despised others.* So that *Spiritual Pride*, we see, implies these two very lovely Qualities, a vain Conceit of, and a fond Dependence on our own spiritual Perfections and Accomplishments ; and a haughty insolent Contempt of our Neighbour in
Comparison

Comparison with our selves. These are the SERM. XII.
 two great Principles and Ingredients that go
 to make up the Constitution of spiritual
 Pride, and the Temper of the Men of this
 Character; and how very pregnant and com-
 prehensive these two are, and into how ma-
 ny beautiful Limbs they are capable of being
 farther distributed, we shall presently appre-
 hend, when we come more nearly to survey
 this proud *Pharisee's* whole Behaviour to-
 wards God and his poor Neighbour the *Pub-
 licane*, the Persons he had more immediately
 to deal with in the Text.

And here, in the *first* Place, his Deport-
 ment towards Almighty God was criminal,
 in these four following Particulars.

First, In that he sets up and opposes his
 own Mind and Judgment, as to the very
 Matters of his Obedience to God's Word
 and Will, and would needs lay the greatest
 Weight and Stress upon Duties of an infe-
 rior Nature, where God had not laid it; *I
 fast twice in the Week*, says he, *I pay Tithes
 of all that I possess*. And this is the first In-
 stance of his spiritual Pride; the Pride of his
 Judgment, in making his own Opinion the
 main Rule of his Duty.

Secondly, He discovers a vain Dependence
 on his own Strength and Power, as to the
 Performance of his Duty, and plainly appears
 to attribute it to his own Skill and Industry,
 by the mighty Value and Applause which,
 we see, he gives himself for it; and every De-
 gree of *Self-Confidence* in this Case is one cer-
 tain Argument of our Pride.

Thirdly,

SERM. XII.



Thirdly, We may reflect on the fond Complacency and Self-Satisfaction with which this Pharisee here expresses himself, which plainly argues, that he took a false View of his spiritual State, saw himself only on *one* side, and was not truly sensible of the many Defects and Failures of his Life, as he ought to have been.

And then in the *Fourth* Place comes in that familiar arrogant Appeal, that he makes in the Presence of God himself for his Righteousness, which shews us his vain Pretence to Merit; and that he did not rightly acknowledge, as he should have done, *God's Mercy* as the only Ground of Mens *Acceptance* with him.

Mich. 6. 8.

In all these Particulars, how much he offended against that great capital Rule of Duty laid down by the *holy Prophet*, of *walking humbly with his God*, I shall now consider more at large, that by his *Example* we may the more carefully learn to avoid his *Sin*.

And *first*, He betrays the Pride of his Mind, by setting up and opposing his own Opinion and Judgment, as to the very Matters of his Obedience, to God's Word and Will; in that he must needs lay the greatest Weight and Stress upon Duties of an inferior Nature, and less Consequence, where God had not laid it. *I fast twice in a Week*, says he, *I give Tithes of all that I possess*. 'Tis true, he mentions likewise his Observance of some that must be acknowledg'd the greater Commandments and Points of the Law, as that he was not an *Extortioner*, *Unjust*, an *Adulterer*; but these he passes over more slightly rather

rather as Marks of his Distinction from his Neighbours, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are,* than as any great Accomplishments in himself. And in pleading the Perfection and Exactness of his Obedience before God, he insists chiefly, and with a peculiar Emphasis on other Matters, *I fast, I pay Tithes,* and the like.

And as *this* is here represented by our Blessed Saviour to have been the Practice of this conceited Pharisee in particular; so 'twas the known Reproach and distinctive Character of the whole Sect of them in general, to supersede the Law of God, in the most material parts of it, and to advance any little ritual Duty, nay, their own vain Traditions and superstitious Institutions above it; *to reject Mercy and Judgment, and the Love of God,* and to cancel the great Obligations of natural and reveal'd Religion, in order to maintain the Observance of some petty Usage, and to secure the Authority of their own Glosses and Interpretations, how false and frivolous soever.

And 'tis *this* that our Saviour charges them with so often, as the greatest Affront to God and his Law that could be, and what he himself, we may plainly observe, censures with a more quick and sharp Resentment than he usually expresses himself with upon other Matters. Well, says our Lord, *has Esaias* Mark 7. 6, 7. *prophesied of you Hypocrites, as it is written,* 8, 9. *This People honours me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me; howbeit in vain do they worship me, reaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. For laying aside the*

Com-

SER M. XII. *Commandment of God, ye hold the Traditions of Men. And again: Full well ye reject the Commandment of God, that you may hold your own Traditions.*

And what other Principle was at the bottom of this Proceeding, but an intolerable Self-sufficiency and Pride of Spirit? When Men would refuse to submit themselves to God's Judgment and Determination for the Choice of that Worship that would please him best, and would be their own Carvers in Religion; and cull and pick out those Instances as the chief Matter of their Observance, which themselves should best approve of, how different soever from God's own express Dictates in his Word and Law.


And 'tis to the same Leaven of Pride and Hypocrisie in the Hearts of Men, that we must ascribe so much of that Oddness and Singularity in the Business of Religion, that we find in the World at this Day, when some Men are apt to look down upon God's Will and Law as reveal'd in his Word, as but a mean and common Dispensation; and the living up to such, as we call the great Duties of Religion, as Love and Charity, and Brotherly Compliance, and others of that Nature, as but a low and ordinary pitch of Perfection, no more than what every common Christian may arrive at. But as for themselves, they must have a higher *Sett* of Ordinances to distinguish them from their Neighbours about them, some little private *Badges of Sanctity* to make them shine with a peculiar Grace and Character beyond the vulgar sort of Christians.

And


And from hence when Men come to think it beneath them to excel in the common way of Christianity, and to be truly religious in the Course, and according to the Rules by which the Wisdom of God and Christ design'd they should be, 'tis *then* very natural for them to run into little Distinctions and Separations both in Judgment and Practice; and *comparing themselves only amongst themselves*, and judging of Religion by themselves, their own narrow, private, selfish, stingy Opinions, immediately to fancy themselves very nearly arriv'd at Perfection, and to proclaim a distance to the rest of the World in the Language and old Cant of their Forefathers mention'd by the Prophet, *Come not near, I am holier than thou.* Thus *Isa. 65. 5* the *Pharisees*, as the Learned tell us, took their very Name from a Word importing Separation; and we are sure they took care to maintain their Character by their Practice; by fencing themselves in with little Bounds of Partition, with sanctimonious Niceties, and idle scrupulous Observations, even to the perfect suppression and choaking of the very Vitals of Religion, more particularly of Charity, the very Height and *Bond of religious Perfection.* When, in the mean time, what, they in their vain Opinion of themselves falsely conceited to have been a more consummate Holiness, an extraordinary Purity and Abstraction of Mind from the Filth and Pollutions of the World, our Blessed Saviour clearly saw, and prov'd to be nothing else but a hollow Wind of Vanity in them, a contemptuous Insolence and Flatulency of

Z

Soul,

SERM. XII.  Soul, a Temper the most opposite to what his Laws were intended to introduce, of any in the World; which was the true Reason indeed, why he could not himself escape the most ill-natur'd Reproaches, and Censures of this sort of Men, by reason of the wide difference there was in the *Genius* of his Religion from theirs; his of an open, frank, ingenuous Temper, diffusive of Goodness, and communicative of real Benefits to the Souls and Bodies of Men; condescending and reaching to all their Necessities and Infirmities: Theirs, in the mean time, of a confin'd, narrow, contracted Constitution, that did no good to any body, and less, if possible, to those that had it, and made the largest Pretences to it.

Such was indeed the Humour of this proud Sect, and this is the true Account of their spiritual Condition, as to this first Particular of their prevaricating with the true Worship of God, and substituting their own empty Fancies, the Suggestions of their own Vanity in the room of it; and then putting them out upon the World under the Stamp and Colour of Divine Authority. And 'tis really no more than necessary, that we should be well acquainted with the Character of these Men, that when we so often meet so near a resemblance of their Practice amongst us, at this day, we may be upon our guard, and take care not to be impos'd upon by it. For surely *our Saviour* design'd this *Parable* for an Admonition to all Ages of his Church; and though we have not now the Name and outward Distinction of *Pharisee* amongst us, yet we have reason, perhaps as much as ever, to complain

complain of the Temper and Manners of that SERM. XII.
 Sect. To what otherwise can we impute that 
 contemptuous haughty Eye, with which some
 Men look down upon their Brethren, only
 because they will not come in to their parti-
 cular Scheme of Thoughts, nor conclude e-
 very thing to be a necessary Duty of Religion,
 which they think so, or which their Humour,
 or Interest, or Prejudice leads them to ob-
 serve? By which kind of Deportment, under
 a false, but extraordinary Pretence of Holi-
 ness, they violate Charity, the maintenance of
 which, 'tis certain, is of more Consequence,
 and of far greater Estimation in the Judgment
 of God himself, than all the outward ritual
 Services of Worship, tho' commanded by his
 own Authority; and if so, then of how in-
 finitely greater Importance, than all the fine
 Devices which these Men coin for themselves
 in Religion, and by which they would be di-
 stinguish'd! For, if what God himself has
 commanded of a positive Nature holds no pro-
 portion with the Duties of Charity and Mercy,
 and the rest of that order, I am sure no fond
 Observances, of our own chusing, how strict
 soever we may think our selves for them, or
 desire to be thought by others, can ever ex-
 cuse our dispensing with our selves in any of
 the greater Instances and Points of the Law,
 such as Humility, we know, has been always
 thought to have been. And this was the *first*
 Fault, for which the *Pharisee* may be suppos'd
 to have been justly censur'd by our Saviour in
 my Text: As he was,

Secondly, For his vain Dependence on his
 own Strength and Power, as to the Perform-

SERM. XII.



ance of his Duty; and for attributing it to his own Skill and Industry, which he plainly enough appears to do, by the mighty Value and Applause he gives himself for it. For tho' he begins his Prayer with *God, I thank thee,* yet we may observe he speaks it in such a Strain of Boasting and Ostentation, that his seeming Acknowledgments to Almighty God were indeed only a ceremonious Preface to introduce his own Vanity, and he would not really have said so much, if he could, almost in common Decency, have said less. For had he been indeed truly thankful, and deeply sensible of his own Deficiency, and that 'twas purely owing to God's Grace and Mercy, if he were any way better than his Fellows, even as perfect as he thought himself; it would then have been impossible for him to have carried it with such disdain as he did to the poor *Publicane*. And how exalted soever he might otherwise have been in his own Thoughts of himself, he must, upon this only Supposition, have been so far convinc'd of the great Deformity and Unreasonableness of boasting at this rate, as to have forborn it for very shame, more especially in the more immediate Presence of God himself, where we now suppose him. For *who*, says the Apostle, *maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not receiv'd it? *Why dost thou glory?* that is; how indeed can any Man in common Sense, and in his right Mind do so, under the strength and power of such a Conviction as this would be?

1 Cor. 4. 7.

And

And therefore when this vain Man thus confidently holds up his Face, and proclaims his own Virtues, in disparagement to his Neighbour, 'tis a plain Sign, if any thing can be, that he was his own *Idol*, and that he took himself for the great *Author and Finisher* of his own Perfections.

And if the same Spirit of Pride, that acted this *Pharisee*, did not still reign in the Hearts of Men, who put on the same Face, and come to worship God with the same Preface of Humility that he did, there would need no more to be said on this Argument, than just to represent his Misbehaviour. But 'tis the Folly of human Nature to presume upon its own strength, in all Ages; and because it does not so plainly feel the Hand that continually supports it, to conclude there is none. And tho' Men are ashamed to confess so much; and if you put the Question to them, will easily acknowledge to you, that they are altogether insufficient for their own Duty, and that without the Grace of God they can do nothing, and that by consequence all Reliance on themselves is fond and impious; yet, when we come more closely to look into their Practice, they betray there a Vanity of this nature, which they will not own in Words. For to hear a Man frequently *vaunting*, and bearing himself above the rest about him, for his great Exactness of Life, and his heroick Performances in Piety; with *himself* almost always in his *Mouth*, and despising and condemning others in comparison with himself, is a sufficient ground for us to conclude, without a breach of Charity, that the vain Man rests


SERM. XII. upon his own Bottom; and whatever he may say, does not really think himself much oblig'd to the Grace of God for what he takes himself to be: If he did, it would make him more silent and humble, and sensible of himself, and then, we are sure, a better Man than now he is.

And can any thing be more absurd and unreasonable, or more plainly discover the wicked Vanity of our Nature, than for a Man, that, God knows, is weak to the last degree of Impotence, and that cannot stand alone a moment, for him to rest thus upon himself as his own Support and Stay? Is he not in so much more danger of falling, for being thus giddy? 'Tis a sure sign, when a Man's Head is so far turn'd, as to set up thus for himself, for an Independency on God's Grace and Assistance, that *balting* will speedily overtake him, and that a sudden Fall attends him, to his Disgrace as well as his Conviction. For howsoever a Man may impose upon himself by so unreasonable a Conceit of his own spiritual Abilities, yet God sees and judges otherwise of him, and will push him down from this Pinnacle of his Vain-glory to his Ruin. He has declar'd what he himself will do in this Case, and we know what Men are forward enough to do, to *resist a proud Man*, and to rejoice in his Confusion.

For another Instance of spiritual Pride, we may reflect, *Thirdly*, on the fond Complacency and Self-satisfaction with which this *Pbarisee* here expresses himself; which plainly argues that he took a false View of himself, and his own spiritual State; that he saw himself
only

only on one side, and was by no means truly sensible, as he ought to have been, of the many miserable Defects and Failures of his Life. One would hardly think it possible for a Man, that enquires at all into himself, quite to overlook his own Flaws and Blemishes, and those both of his Nature and Practice: they are so very notorious, that he may almost as soon forget himself to be a Man. And yet we are sufficiently assur'd by this one instance of the *Pharisee*, that a Man *exalted* with a very high Sense of his spiritual Attainments may do so, one, or both of these two ways; *First*, in that a Man's Eyes may really be so dazled with gazing perpetually on the Characters of his own imaginary Holiness, that he cannot indeed discover his own Faults; or *Secondly*, tho' he does see them, and own them to be Sins in other Men, yet he will not acknowledge them to be such in himself; and so he easily passes over the great Irregularities of his own Life and Practice, on this vain Presumption, that he is so much the Favourite of the Almighty, that *God will see no Sin* in him, or at least forgive him as easily as he forgives himself. And this, we are sure, is not more, nor worse, than what has been the outrageous Enthusiasm of some Hereticks of old, and Schismatics of our latter Ages.

Which of these two Reasons really blinded the *Pharisee* in my Text, that he had no true sense of his Sins, I shall not here stand exactly to determine; very probably a mixture of both; however, we are sure, the Effect and Consequence was the same. Whereas we find on the contrary, that the truest Char-

SERM. XII.  *Order of a sincere Piety, accepted with God, and approv'd by Men, has always been this, that it was humble.* And indeed without that single Virtue of Humility, whose Savour and Relish must season the whole Frame and Body of our Religion, supposing it possible, that a Man could be furnish'd with all the Graces in Heaven and Earth, if he had *Faith* that he could remove Mountains, and *Hope* as firmly fix'd as the Foundations of the Earth, and *Charity* as diffusive as the Air and Ocean, yet we are sure all his Religion would be vain, and himself deceiv'd, and after all left at too great a distance from God Almighty for him ever to be happy. For *God knows the proud afar off*, that Temper of Soul is utterly inconsistent with any near Union or Communion with him.

Psal. 138. 6.

And certainly, if any thing can make us truly humble, a thorow sight and sense of our Sins would not fail to do so. But if we will not open our Eyes to behold them, if we cannot bear to have the gay Scene of our own Perfections, of our own framing, damp'd and sullied by the melancholy view of our Infirmities, lest some disturbance by this means should be given to our imaginary Happiness, what Remedy is there? We may go on to please our selves in our Error; but God knows we are deluded all this while, and we shall be convinc'd too late, to our infinite Surprize and Disappointment, that we have been so.

There is nothing perhaps of a worse and more dangerous Influence upon our spiritual State, than for a Man to be ever *dwelling* on his

his

his own *Perfections*, to be always calculating SERM. XII.
the degrees, and taking the *height* of his *Graces*
 and *Virtues*, without sometimes turning to the
darker side of his Account, and casting up
 the *Balance* of his *Sins* and *Failures*. And yet
 this was the very Fault, and Character, and
 Condition of the *Pharisee*, whom I have so
 often introduc'd already, and who is a never-
 failing Example to illustrate any Point or In-
 stance of spiritual Pride. Who, when he
 addresses himself to the great God, the righ-
 teous Judge of the whole Earth, Does he
 make the least humble mention or confession
 of his Sins? Does he in the least appeal to
 the Mercy of God? or acknowledge his own
 need of and dependence on it? Does he pro-
 strate himself in the Presence of infinite Ho-
 liness and Majesty? or bow down his Soul
 before the Almighty in acknowledgment of
 his infinite Excellency, and his own Vileness
 and Deformity? *No*: but he stands upon his
 Justification, and insists upon his Integrity
 with God; and seems to draw a *Bill* upon the
 Justice of Heaven, to answer his Demands for
 his great Services: At the same time despising
 the *prophane* World about him, and more par-
 ticularly the humble *Publicane*, that had the
 Honour to stand so near *his Sanctity*, as a Per-
 son of a mean Character in respect of himself;
 as one that was yet under the *low Dispensation*,
 and detain'd *in the Porch of Repentance*, and
 very far from being arriv'd at the *illuminative*
 way of *Union* and *Acquaintance* with the Al-
 mighty, that none but himself, in his Opi-
 nion, and a few more, his own *exalted* Order
 were. In short, the whole *Demeanour* of this
Pharisee,

SERM. XII. *Pharisee*, as to this great Point in hand, appears so very irregular, and so wholly unformable to the Condition and Circumstances of a sinful Creature, as he was, and as indeed every Man is; that *surely* 'tis a great deal safer for a Man to have no sense at all of his spiritual Attainments, and so to want even comfortable Reflections on them, than to appear thus elated with a gay Opinion of his own Holiness as this Man did, and under no truer sense of his Infirmities: As a natural Consequence to which ill Temper of Mind in him, he comes, in the

Fourth and last place, with a *familiar, arrogant Appeal* to God himself for his Righteousness, which shews us his vain Pretence to Merit, and that he was very far from acknowledging, as he should have done, God's Mercy to be the only ground of Men's Acceptance with him.

If a Man were really in a State of Innocence, and as perfect in his Nature as God design'd, and made him; yet a just Distance, and awful Reverence, in the Presence of the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, might very well become him as a Creature, out of a deep Sense and Acknowledgment of a *Being* so far above him, and of Perfections infinite and inconceivable, between which, and his own, there is no Proportion.

But to see not only a Man, but a wretched Sinner, stand upon Terms with the God of Purity, and with a prophane and rude Insolence to break in upon that Holiness and Majesty, which is so far retir'd above the ways
of

of Men, and so infinitely farther yet remote **SERM. XII.**
 and *separate from Sinners*, and that too, with
 a false and groundless Claim to the Divine Fa-
 vour, is such a Shock to the Apprehension
 of a wise and humble Man, that nothing can
 be more; and argues the Person guilty of it,
 to the utmost degree, ignorant of God's Na-
 ture and his own.

And yet of such a levelling Nature is Pride
 to all that is above it, that even the *first Man*
 himself, in the *Robe* of his original *Innocence*,
 would never have dar'd to approach the *Holy*
Presence with so little Address and Prepara-
 tion, or have made his Suit at the Throne of
 infinite Majesty in Terms of such height and
 confidence, as this haughty Sinner does. He
 stood and pray'd thus with himself, *God, I*
thank thee, and so on. No Acknowledgments,
 we see, of God's supereminent Glory in these
 Words, nor of his own Dependence on his
 Mercy; he rather seems to challenge the Ju-
 stice of Heaven for his perfect Righteousness,
 and the Rewards of it. And by so doing flurs
 and disparages that one *beloved* Attribute of
 God, which is the only ground of Hopes and
 Refuge for a Sinner, and provokes another,
 his Justice, to his own Confusion. And how
 far this Practice of the insolent *Pharisee* has
 been imitated by the wild *Hereticks* of old,
 and the more *illuminated Sectaries* of the later
 Ages; for the former I appeal to the Histories
 of the Primitive Church, and for the latter,
 only to the fam'd Eloquence of a neighbour-
 ing Country, and to the blind enthusiastick
 Effusions, and familiar Rants of some even
 amongst our own People.

Scotch Presby-
 terian Elo-
 quence.

And

And thus far I have endeavour'd to represent the great Irregularity and Unsuitableness of the *Pharisee's* Behaviour towards Almighty God; I shall now consider him, in the *second* and *last place*, with respect to other Men, and more particularly his more immediate Neighbour, and Companion, the humble *Publicane*.

And here we are likewise to bring in our Charge against him upon a threefold Account.

First, In that he appears well pleas'd, and seems to rejoice, and take his own Satisfaction in the Sins and Infirmities of other Men.

Secondly, He compares his own Perfections with their Faults, which is a very unreasonable, and unrighteous way of Proceeding.

And from thence he comes in the *Third Place* thus foolishly to despise others, and so vainly and arrogantly to applaud himself.

And *First*, He appears well pleas'd, and seems to rejoice, and take his own Satisfaction in the Sins and Infirmities of other Men. Which is indeed but a natural Consequence of Pride, where-ever 'tis found, or upon whatsoever Subject 'tis engag'd. For since a proud Man cannot bear an Equal, his very Principles oblige him to *sink* others as far as he can below himself, and then his Happiness must lie in seeing them so.

But spiritual Pride is the more intolerable in this Point than any other, because the Sins and Errors of other Men are so far in Reason and Charity from being Matter of our Joy and Triumph, that if we have the last
 Regard

Regard either to the Good of Men, or the Glory of God, they must necessarily prove the greatest Occasions of our Concern and Trouble. When we see Men lose and undo themselves in that which is their last and truest Interest, when they disgrace their Reason, and disparage their Nature, and run themselves upon inevitable Ruin; he, that can take delight in such a dismal View as this, and hug himself in his own Security and Advantage over them, is so far from being a good Man, whatever he may pretend to be, that he has not the first Principles, nor common Tenderness of human Nature within him. And yet we see this was the very Temper and Carriage of this *proud Pharisee*, and indeed is still of all those that agree in Character and Principles with him. *God, I thank thee*, says he, *that I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publicane*; as much as to say, I thank God that other Men are more wicked and greater Sinners than my self; and can any thing be more intolerable? How very different is this Temper and Behaviour from that of the Royal Psalmist, *Rivers of waters run down mine Eyes*, says he, *because they keep not thy Law*. Psal. 119. 139.


If there be no Religion without *Charity*, and if *Charity* can never in the least consist with this *Pharisaical Humour*, as 'tis certain it cannot, why then a spiritually proud Man is the farthest from being truly religious of any Man in the World, because he is at the greatest Remove from *Charity*, in that, which is the chiefest Property of it, laid down by
the

SERM. XII. the Apostle himself; *that it rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.* It does not insult and triumph upon seeing Wickedness and Error thrive and prosper in the World, in order to have it self more conspicuous, but tis pleas'd to behold the Success of Religion and Truth, and glad to find others more eminent in Perfection than it self.

But now spiritual Pride feeds it self upon the *Corruptions* of Men, and indulges its own Satisfaction at the Expence of another's Happiness, and is never better pleas'd than when other Men have the least Reason to be so. So that if it were possible a Man of this Humour would appropriate God Almighty, and engross Heaven to himself, since he cannot be so happy, but when singular and alone in his Enjoyments. And even the *Communion of the Saints in Light* would be but a Diminution of his Bliss; which is one of the surest Arguments that can be, that he is, to the last Degree, unqualify'd for that heavenly State, and without Amendment shall be for ever excluded from it.

Another very excellent Quality in this Man, which shews us his *Wisdom*, as well as his *Worth*, is,

Secondly, This, that he makes it his Business to compare himself, and his own Perfections, with other Mens Faults and Misbehaviour; which is a very unequal, and unrighteous way of Proceeding. And by this means he cannot fail to answer his own Desires, and to stretch and exalt himself beyond all Proportion of his just Size and Merit,

rit, and to sink and depress his Neighbour as SERM. XII.
 low as he could wish. But, in God's Name, 
 where is the Equity of this way of Dealing?
 If thou must needs compare thy self with
 thy Neighbour, let thy Comparison be form'd
 upon the *square* with him, and set his Cha-
 racter by thy own, with all his *Lights* as well
 as *Shades* about him. Hast *thou* great Vir-
 tues in thee? so has *he*; though perhaps of a
 little *different*, yet not of a less *excellent* Na-
 ture than thine own. And if *he* has Faults
 and Blemishes in him, so hast *thou*; and it
 may be not the *less*, because thou think-
 est so. Thou perhaps art strict, and devout,
 and retir'd, and abstracted in the Course of
 thy Life, and takest care only of thy self: He
 is more open, and free, and cheerful, em-
 ploy'd chiefly in doing good to others, and
 engag'd in the Hurry and Business of an ac-
 tive Life; which though it be less satisfacto-
 ry to himself, it may be, is not less accepta-
 ble to God, and is much more beneficial to
 Men. Thou perhaps art abstinent, and de-
 niest thy self the Pleasures of Life, which thou
 mightest lawfully enjoy: He *in* the mean
 time is temperate, and takes the Liberty
 which God and Nature allow him within
 due Bounds, and with a thankful Heart.
 Thou art *devout*, he is more *charitable*:
 Thou art more *mortified*, he is less *censo-
 rious*.

If we would always take this Method of
 adjusting the Difference there is between us
 and our Neighbour; this would keep down
 the unnatural Risings of our Pride against
 him, and we should begin to see that another
 Man

SERMON XII. Man may have something really valuable in him, as well as our selves. But if we are resolv'd to see no Good in our Neighbour, and are not content unless our *Light* and *Perfections* shine only upon his *Darkness*, 'tis no Wonder they appear much larger to us, than really they are, and that we are utterly incapable of ever coming to a truer Sense of our Condition. The Consequence of which must necessarily be, what was here the Practice of the Pharisee, that we shall come, in the

Third and *Last* Place, most foolishly to *despise* others, and vainly and arrogantly to *applaud* our selves: Which was the very Sum and finishing Stroak of his Character, and will be the very Completion of our Pride and Folly.

But I have made so many Reflections already on this Branch of my Subject, in the several Parts of my former Discourse, that to insist upon it here, would be only to trouble you and my self with needless Repetitions. Besides, the whole Progress of the Parable it self is so very full and express, and lively to this Purpose, that nothing can be like it. I shall recommend a due Perusal of that therefore to your Care, and hope it will prove effectual, and prevail with us all to endeavour after the contrary *Grace* to Pride, the lovely Virtue of Humility, and in the Language of the holy Apostle, that we be indeed *clothed with Humility*; it being the Habit that certainly becomes us best, as we are sinful Men, and as we are Christians.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

Now

Now to the High and Lofty One that inhabits Eternity, and that dwells in the high and holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and a humble Spirit; to our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, the great Master and Pattern of Humility; together with the Blessed Spirit, be all Glory and Praise, and Honour ascribed by Men and Angels, now and for evermore. Amen.

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