A PARAPHRASE AND COMMENT UPON THE Epistles and Gospels, Appointed to be Used in the Church of ENGLAND ON ALL SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS Throughout the Year. Designed to Excite Devotion, and promote the Knowledge and Practice of Sincere Piety and Virtue.

VOL. II.

Beginning with the First Sunday, after Epiphany.

By GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D. Late Dean of Canterbury.

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A Para-
A PARAPHRASE and COMMENT
Upon all the Epistles and Gospels,
Used throughout the Year.

VOL. II.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the Prayers of thy People which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfill the same through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. xii. 1.

I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service.

PAR A PH R ASE.

1. Since then the Goodness of God is so exceeding great, as the former part of this Epistle hath shewed (in making all Men capable of Salvation by the Righteousness of Faith, delivering us from the Rigour and Bondage of the Law, and admitting Gentiles, as well as Jews, to be Partakers of the Gospel-Covenant) let me conjure you, by this Goodness, to offer and dedicate to God, your Persons, a living (instead of the formerly dead) Sacrifice, a pure, and holy, (as those were without blemish) and acceptable (for its own sake, which those were not.) For This will be an Oblation of rational, as those were of brute and irrational Creatures; and proceeds upon rational Motives.
2. The manner of doing this, must be by renouncing the sinful Affections and Customs of the Men of this World; and being changed into new Men, by pure and spiritual Affections; that so ye may discern, and delight in, and practice those Precepts of substantial and complete Holiness, enjoined by the Gospel. And in order hereunto,

3. I (by virtue of that Authority reposed in me, as the Apostle of Christ) do admonish each of you, not to set too high a Value upon himself, nor to despise others; but to be content with that Part and Station, which the Providence of God, and the Gifts vouchsafed him, have allotted to his Share.

4. For, as it is in the Natural, so is it likewise in the Mystical Body.

5. There the Members are many, but united under one Head, and mutually related to each other: Here again, the Persons are many, but all united in Christ. And, though some be higher and some lower, some more and some less active and honourable; yet still this Difference of Place and Office does not hinder the mutual Relation that there is, and the mutual Help and Usefulness that there ought to be, even between those, that are most distant, in either of the respects abovementioned.

COMMENT.

The Church, when appointing this Portion of Scripture, treads exactly in the Steps of the Blessed Apostle, that wrote it. He, in the foregoing Chapters, had vindicated, explained, and given due Honour to, the Wisdom and the Mercies of God, manifested in the glorious Privileges and universal Extent of the Gospel Dispensation. He now proceeds to shew, what the Effect of these Considerations ought to be, upon the Minds and Lives, of all who have embraced it. The Church, in like manner, from celebrating the Goodness of that God, in the Conversion
Conversion of, and Manifestation of his Son and his Truth to, the Gentiles; makes it her next Care, to press the same practical Doctrine, and to insinuate the absolute Necessity of walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called. I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, &c.

That the abounding of Holiness, and Virtue, and every good Word and Work in us, ought to be the Fruit of our clearer Knowledge; and, that the Mercies of God, exhibited to Christians are, a Motive, not only proper and natural, but sufficiently strong for that purpose, hath, I hope, been, plainly and largely enough, demonstrated in a late Discourse. The Chapter now before us, is designed to specify the particular good Qualities, they are expected to produce. Which the Apostle hath here so artfully illustrated, that it may very well be looked upon as a perfect, though so short, a Body of Christian Morality. The explaining and urging these several Duties, as they deserve, is an Attempt at present impracticable, and by no means consistent with the Bounds, that ought to be set to Meditations of this kind. But in regard St. Paul reminds us of One Consideration, from whence an Obligation follows to every one (I think) of the Virtues here enjoined: I will make it my endeavour so to insist upon That, as at least to answer the end, though I do not industriously treat of every Part, of the Chapter.

This method I the rather choose, because, in other parts of the New Testament, we find the same Argument so frequently and solemnly insisted on, as to prove the Weight of it. And that done, upon such Occasions, and to such Purposes, as seem abundantly to justify the Consequences, I am about to draw from it. This will appear to any, who shall diligently compare this Twelfth to the Romans, with that of the
first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the
fourth to the Ephesians. Which Passages
I shall, as I find occasion, call in to my
Assistance, for the better illustrating and enforcing
that which I am now taking in hand.

The Foundation then of my Discourses, upon the
Epistles for This, and the Two following Sundays,
shall be laid in those Words at the fourth and fifth
Verses: For as we have many Members in one Body, and
all Members have not the same Office; so we, being ma-
ny, are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one
of another. That these Words have a Retrospect to,
and are a Reason for, the Duties that went before; is
plain by the Connexion of the fourth with the third
Verse, and the Division of the Epistle of the Day,
which they close up. That they are manifestly the
Ground of those that follow, is clear from the Begin-
ning of the sixth Verse; and may be yet more so,
from the Reason of the Thing.

Now the Improvement I design to make of this Pas-
fage, will fall under the two following Heads.
First, The Nature of this Union, and mutual Re-
lation declared here.
Secondly, The Obligations arising from thence, up-
on the Parties so united and related.

First, The Nature of this Union, and mutual
Relation declared here, will be best discerned, by the
several Passages of Scripture, making mention of it.
The principal whereof, besides that we are now treat-
ing of, are these that follow: As the Bo-
dy is one, and batb many Members, and
all the Members of that one Body, being ma-
ny, are one Body; so also is Christ: for by one Spirit we
are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gen-
tiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made
to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is
not one Member, but many. Now ye are
the Body of Christ, and Members, in particular. The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many, are one Bread and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread. God hath put all things under his (Christ’s) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. That the Gentiles should be Fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and Partakers of his Promise in Christ, by the Gospel. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. That we may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase in the Body unto the edifying of itself in Love; for we are Members one of another. The Head of every Man is Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the Body. For we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones. So again, He is the Head of the Body, the Church: from whose Doctrine and Unity they, who depart, are said not to hold the Head, from which all the Body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

I have chosen to set these several Texts in one view, by reason of the mutual Illustration they give to each other. And, that from all, thus taken and compared together, the Inferences may more easilie be drawn, which are necessary for establishing the Point now in hand.

A 3
In particular, What sort of Union this we are speaking of is, What are the Grounds or Bands of it, and How the Metaphor is answered, by the mutual relation between the several Parts, concerned in the Similitude.

1. As First, No doubt at all can be made, but that This, above all other Allusions, was intended to figure the near, the inseparable, the entire Concern and Interest we have, in our Blessed Lord, and in one another. When called Fellow-Soldiers, we are represented, as so many engaged in the same common Cause, and lifted to serve under the same Leader: When Fellow-Servants, as belonging to the same Family: When Sons, as descended from one Father: When Heirs, as partaking in the Rights and Claims of the same elder Brother: But, when Members of the same Body, this is the closest of all the rest: For it scarce leaves us the liberty, which all the rest do, of considering our selves, any longer as distinct Persons. It presents us with an Image, of every one thus cemented being a part of Christ, and every Christian a part of our own selves; as if He without Us, and We without Them, must want that perfection of Being, which the nature of a Body requires.

2. Secondly, It is very manifest from hence, that this Union is peculiar to Christians. From hence it is, that we find the Church so often mentioned as Christ’s Body. Consequently, as They who are not of the Church, are not of the Body: so what Methods soever those be, which have been instituted, as Instruments and Means for grafting Men into, or signifying their continuance and common Rights in, the Congregation of Christians; The same make them Members of, and the Denial, or the Want of the same, exclude them from any part in, this Body.

3. Hence it comes to pass, Thirdly, that in the Passages above cited, we find such express Mention, not
not only of the same Principles of Religion, the same Laws, the same Privileges of Grace, the same Hopes of Glory: But of the same Sacraments too. For These are necessary Attestations of our confessing, and submitting to the Former, and Instruments, entitling us to a reasonable Expectance of the Latter. Nothing indeed less than this, can be the meaning of those Texts, One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism. By one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; and, We being many are one Bread, and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread. So vain and presumptuous is the De- lusion of Thoese, who, because they call Christ Lord, and profess to believe the Doctrine he hath taught, arrogate to themselves the Name and Privileges of Chris- tians, without that initiating Sacrament of Baptism, which he hath ordained, as the Instrument of making them Members of his Visible Body. So profane, so pernicious, is the Neglect of that other confirming Sacrament, the Blessed Supper of our Lord; ordained by him likewise for their Strength and Nourishment, and necessary to preserve them true Members of his In- visible Body.

4. For it is fit we be put in mind, Fourthly, that it is one thing to have the Appearance and external Privileges, and another to discharge the part, and attain all the Benefits, of this Union. As the Apostle says, in a like case, all are not Israel that are of Israel; so our Saviour supposes, that many who call him Lord, will not do the things which be commands.

Now Matters are in some proportion with this My- stical, as with our Natural Body. An Arm or a Leg may be stupefied with a Palsy, or a Lethargy; an Eye may be out, or an Ear deaf; and these still keep their Place, though not their Use, in the Body. And thus
thus a number of careless, or prophane, or hypocritical Professors, shall retain the Name, and fill up the room of Members, by virtue of those outward Signs and Sacraments, which placed them in the Body of Christ; while yet they want that inward Holiness, which those Sacraments are Emblems of, and Engagements to; and which alone can render them of a piece with the Head, and wherein not only the Health, but the very Life, of the Body, and of each Member of it, consists. Now because this Holiness depends chiefly upon the Disposition of the Mind; and consequently may be sometimes greater than appears, and at other times may, by a false and pompous shew, be made to appear where it really is not: Hence it must needs follow, that many may, and ought to enjoy the Privileges, and the common Estimation of Members, who strictly are not such. Because the Persons, intrusted with the Power of admitting into, and cutting off from this Body, may be imposed upon by such Diffimulation, and can proceed upon outward Appearances only. But then it follows too, That since the Lord knoweth them that are his; these presumptive Members shall certainly be disowned by, as in truth they are not united to, Him. Hence so many press'd Exhortations to Men, acknowledged for Saints, and Brethren, and Members, to walk worthy of those Titles; to be in Truth, what they are in Profession, and Shew, and general Repute. Hence that very substantial Distinction of the Visible, and Invisible, Members and Body of Christ, and the Difference of those Qualifications necessary for each. A Distinction founded in the nature of things; Which cannot be otherwise, while this Body upon Earth is composed of, and govern'd by, Men, capable of deceiving, and of being deceived. While this Field must be content to hold Tares with the Wheat, till that Harvest, and those Reapers
pers come, which are appointed to make the final separation.

5. From hence it is evident, Fifthly, that a very considerable Difference is to be made, between the several Instances of Union, mentioned, and recommended in Scripture. Some of these are absolutely necessary to the Being, Others enjoined, as expedient to the Growth, and Well-being, of this Body. Of the Former sort are, Submitting to the same Lord, Agreeing in the Fundamentals of the same Faith, and, as a mark of this Submission and Agreement, Administration of the same Sacraments. Of the Latter, that Holiness of Life, that Exemplarines of Practice, that mutual Charity and Concord, that Peaceableness and Order, that Consent in Discipline, that ready Compliance in all lawful Matters, which, though not Essential, shall yet (by the Constitution of particular Churches, and the Judgment of Persons, thought proper to give Rules in such Cases,) be enjoined, as proper for Decency and Edification. And this Authority, being derived from our Lord upon his Apostles, and from Them upon their Successors, in the Government of this Society so incorporated; the Contempt of It is a Contempt of Him: A Breach of that Union, which every Christian is bound to preserve, under all the Penalty, those Declarations of our Master can be supposed to involve every wilful Violater of it in; As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you: and, He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

6. But that part of this Union, which we are in a more especial manner concerned to observe, is, Sixthly, that between All these Members and Christ: Whom we find, in the Texts above cited, to be represented as their common Head. And this resemblance is made good, with Allusion to our Natural Body, as he took upon
upon him our human Nature, and so became one with us, and Head oer us, in a sense different from that, in which he is said to be the Head over the Angels, or any other Creature. It is yet more especially made good, in regard of that Order and Preeminence, that Perfection and Power of influencing, that Care of directing, that Right of Governing, that constant Protection of, and perpetual Presence with, the several Parts of this Mystical Body; which answer to the Dignity and Excellence, the Communications and continual Distributions, the Command, the Contri- vance, and intimate Conjunction of the Head, in the Frame of our Natural. These are Particulars, which require the greater Attention, by reason of that Usefulness they are of, towards making Men sensible, what Duties this Relation obliges to. And therefore it may be convenient to take notice, what Care the Holy Ghost hath bestowed, to explain and illustrate them to us in Scripture.

I. As First. Our Saviour is very fitly termed our Head, as that implies Dignity of Station, Superiority of Place, and Preeminence over the rest of the Body. How great Honour we think due to This, above any other part of our Natural Composition, no one needs be told. How deservedly we think so, is very obvious to any, who at all consider the Nobleness of its Contencture, the Richness of its Treasures, and the Variety of its Operations. Infomuch, that all our highest Faculties are seated here; All the Senses exercised, and all but One, (the meanest of the number) exercised here alone. Upon which, and many other Accounts, it seems to claim the Situation Nature gives it, a Preference before, and Presidence over, the whole Body.

Such, and much more wonderful, are the Perfections of our Mystical Head; Resplendent and glorious above all imagination; so exquisite, that the utmost Hap
Happiness, in reserve for the best and most beloved of his Members, is, to be wrought up to such Resemblance of him, as the infinite Distance between God and Man will admit. And in this respect the Apostle seems to have intended that noble Description of his Excellencies; when calling him the Image of the Invisible God, the First-born of every Creature, the Head of the Body, the Church; the Beginning, and the First-born from the Dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence: because it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fullness dwell.

2. This Union between Christ and the Church is justified, Secondly, by the saving Influences, and perpetual Communications, derived down upon the Body. The Head, in our Natural Frame, is the Store-house, the Workhouse, in which are formed every moment, and laid up for use, those animal Spirits, that maintain Life, and Motion, and Sense. And the constant regular Distribution of these is so necessary, that if the Passages to any Part happen to be intercepted, that Part becomes presently useless and dead. And, if those Stores run low, there follow immediately Faintings and Swoonings, A State of Inactivity for the time; and without seasonable Recruits, the Death of the Man.

In like manner, with regard to the Principles of our Spiritual Life, Christ is (if I may so speak) the common Magazine of all our Powers. The Head, says St. Paul, from which all the Body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. The plain importance whereof is thus much; That, as the natural Body owes its Growth and Vigor, to the continual Supplies of Spirits from the Head; and as the Ligatures of Arteries and Veins, Muscles and Joints, are so many Pipes, laid each in proper Position,
tion, to convey these into the Limbs, for Strength and Motion, and mutual Ease and Help, and for diffusing of Nourishment throughout the whole Mass of Flesh and Blood, according to the Capacity of each Vessel and Part: So the Church's Health and Increase proceed from the kindly Influences, which Christ is pleased to shed down upon it; and the Piety and Charity of Christians are vital Operations, corresponding to, and naturally resulting from, such Influences duly received. Hence S. John,

John i. 16. Of his Fulness have we all received Grace:

Phil. iv. 13. and S. Paul, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. And, how entirely our Living or Dying, in a Religious Sense, depends upon such Communications, or the withdrawing of them; our Blessed Lord himself hath fully acquainted us, in another figurative Illustration, exactly parallel to the Point we are now upon. As the Branch, says he, cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing. What can possibly be a more express Proof of the mutual Union, the constant Communication between Christ and his Church, and consequently the exceeding fitness of this Similitude, proceeding from our Natural, to his Mystical, Body? Thus do the Life, and Health, and Strength, and Sense, and Motion of a Christian, as Such, require his benign Influences; as absolutely needful for their Support and respective Functions. Thus are all these, as certainly interrupted, as effectually destroyed, upon the Obstruction or with-holding of those Influences; as the Man acts and moves, when his Spirits are liberally and regularly dispensed; but falls into a Palsy or an Apoplexy, faints away and dies, when their Course
Course is intercepted and disturbed, or their Stock spent and quite drawn off.

3. The Analogy between Christ's Mystical, and Our Natural Body, holds, with regard to his Right of directing and governing. The Business of the Head is to Advise and Command; This is the Seat of the Soul, and the several Faculties of the other Parts are determined by its Appointment. Such is the Authority of our Lord too, manifest, as from sundry other Texts, so particularly from that to the Ephesians: The Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the Wives be to their own Husbands in every thing. But of the Significance of the Figure in this respect, no Enlargement can be needful; Since it is so universally acknowledged, that no Scheme of Speech is either more familiarly used, or more perfectly understood, than that, whereby supreme Governors, in any kind, are stiled the Heads of them, who submit to their respective Jurisdictions.

4. Once more. The Metaphor is answered by his Care for, Protection of, and inseparable Conjunction with, his Members. For such is the Case of our Natural Head. It contrives for, consults the Safety of, and lives with, the Body. And such is the case of our Mystical Head, who is therefore term'd the Saviour of the Body, the Nourisher and Cherisher of the Church. Hence Saul, who persecuted the Church, is accused of persecuting Him; hence we are said to be made alive in Christ; hence that most comfortable Declaration to his Disciples, Because I live, ye shall live also; and that other to his Father, The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them, and

Eph. v. 23, 30.

Acts ix. 4.

1 Cor. xv. 22.

John xiv. 19.
thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: In a word, As the Sufferings and the Benefits, the Safety and the Dangers, in Our Persons, are common to Head and Trunk both; and, as the severing of these two infer the Death of the whole: So our Lord permits us to believe all our Interests and all our Calamities, all our Comforts and all our Sorrows, His: To promise our selves Immortality and Glory, because He is already possessed of Both; not only in his own, but in the right of every actual and true Member of his; And to look upon Him, and his Bliss, as in some sense imperfect, without the Participation of that Church, which is his Body; his Fulness, and consequently not to be parted from him, that filleth all in all.

The Sum is this. The Allusion now before us is designed to insinuate the closest Union to Christ, and to One another, that can be. The Latter, by calling us one Body, the Former, by calling us one Body in Him. Thus we are made, by the Profession of One Faith, by partaking of One Spirit, by the Regeneration of One Baptism, and by submitting to One Lord. All These are necessary, to the very Being of this Body, and giving Men any place in it: But, to the well-being of it, a great deal more is necessary: viz. The discharging those Duties, which that Lord commands, which that Baptism engages for, which that Spirit is ready to assist them in, which that Faith expects, as agreeable Fruits of its Principles. As many as fail in this, are but outwardly and imperfectly, but They, who do the part and office of Members, are spiritually, actually, and sanguinely united, in the Body of the Saints, to Christ their common Head. Deservedly stiled our Head, for his excellent Dignity above, for his constant and liberal Influences upon, for his commanding Power over, and for his tender Care of, and Presence with,
the Members of this Body. Such is our Union, Such our mutual Relation: most endearing, most honourable, most happy, provided we be careful to improve upon, and fulfil the Purposes of it. In order whereunto it is, that I propose, under my

II. Second Head, To consider the Obligations arising from hence, upon the Parties thus united and related. In this Consideration my Thoughts must be guided, by the Particulars, which St. Paul hath laid before me. And because these are set down in great variety, and promiscuous manner; for the containing what I have to say within due Bounds, and treating of the Subjects more distinctly, it may be convenient.

First, To observe the general Topicks of Virtue, to which the Precepts are reducible; and then to treat of those, not in all their Latitude of Obligation, but only so far forth, as this Union, now in hand, is a proper Argument, for recommending them to, or binding them upon us.

Now the Portion of this Chapter, at present directed to employ your Meditations, mentions Three. These I shall endeavour, first of all to explain; and then to shew, how our being Members in the Body of Christ enforces the Practice of them. Both, as clearly, and as briefly, as I can.

1. The First of these is Mortification of our Sensual Appetites, with which St. Paul begins his Exhortation, when beseeching these Romans by the Mercies of God, to present their Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which, (says he) is your reasonable Service. Advice, in substance the same, with that to the Ephesians, on a like occasion, I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; and to the Colossians, after declaring our Union with Christ, Mortify therefore your Members which are on the Earth. The Equi-
ty whereof he had urged upon the Romans, in the former part of this Epistle, As ye have yielded your Members Servants to Uncleanness, and to Iniquity, unto Iniquity: even so now yield your Members Servants to Righteousness, unto Holiness. But, though these places be in Substance the same, yet is there a particular Energy in the Expressions here before us, which deserves to be taken notice of.

The Apostle had been demonstrating the Excellence of the Evangelical, above the Legal Institution; And, with Allusion to the way of Worship used in That, he advises Christians to present a Sacrifice too: but this consisting, not of the Bodies of Beasts, but their own Bodies. The thing therefore offered here is still alive. And yet there is somewhat in the matter, that bears some resemblance and proportion to the slaying of Victims heretofore. Because, by subduing our vicious Inclinations, which are the Incentives to Impurity and all manner of Wickedness, the body of Sin, (as we find it very frequently and emphatically called) is destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin. By thus cleansing our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, we answer the spiritual Intent of that Law, which incapacitated all Beasts for the use of the Altar, wherein any Blemish or Defect was discovered. We render this living a holy Sacrifice, qualified for the Acceptance of God. And therefore so, because, as the Reason of the thing demands it from us, so the Value of the Obligation is greatly enhanced, by being that of a Rational Creature, consecrated and devoted entirely to his Service. The Consequence whereof is, that our Persons, thus separated from common and profane Uses, cannot, without the Guilt of Sacrilege, be afterwards employed in the Gratification of our own Lusts.

Nor
Nor must we look upon that any longer in our own Disposal, the whole Right whereof hath been solemnly transferred, from our selves to God.

Now this, in effect, hath been already done, by every Christian, from the moment of his being made such, in A Sacrament, by which Baptism we all renounce the carnal Desires of the Flesh, so that we will not follow nor be led by them. A Sacrament, representing to us our Profession, which is to imitate the Example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that, as He died and rose again for Us, so We, who are Baptized into the Belief of that Death and Resurrection, should die from Sin, and rise again unto Righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt Affections, and daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godliness of living. This Act of Religion is repeated and confirmed, by Every one, as oft as he receives that other Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. For there again we offer and present unto God our Selves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto him. In the mean while, though this Dedication convey over the whole of our Persons, yet was it proper and sufficient for the Apostle, to mention the Offering of our Bodies. Because our Bodies are the Instruments of committing those Sins, from which it was intended to debar us: Because the seeking and Gratification of bodily Pleasures is the End, which the Appetites, pushing on to those Sins, propose to themselves: And therefore, as the Persons indulging them are very significantly said to "sin against their own Body," so the keeping this Body in Subjection to the reasonable Mind, and employing it in the Exercises of Religion and severe Virtue, (by all that Abstinence, and other Hardships and Self-denials, necessary for this purpose,) is offering not It alone, but our Whole Selves to God. For
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(as I said) in It the whole Cause, and End, and Instrument, of our Corruptions is included; and not to serve the Body, is, in effect, and certain Consequence, not to serve Sin. So that, when this Servant of Sin is itself sanctified, and devoted a Servant to Righteousness; the very Principle of Moral Actions is changed, the Dominion of Death spiritual subverted, the Matter, upon which Temptations work, withdrawn, and, by making our Body as well as Spirit God's, the Fruit is his Glory and our own Holiness, in both Spirit and Body: which leads me to the second thing enjoined;

2. Newness of Heart and Life. For that's the Substance of the next Verse, and be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God. Counsel necessary to the perfecting that Virtue, which the Last Particular begins. And both together, of a like importance with that to the Ephesians, That ye put off, concerning the former Conversation, the Old-man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the New-man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

By the former Conversation in the one, and Conformity to this World in the other, of these Texts, is not forbidden all sort of Compliance with the lawful and innocent Customs in use, (as if it were a Duty in Christians to distinguish themselves, by a Dress or Demeanour fantastical and singular) but only the not suffering our selves to give into the false Judgments, or the prevailing Fashions, of the Men of the World: So far as any of these, either are themselves sinful, or may to us become, the probable occasion of any thing that is so. In short, with the Men, who have no view beyond, no Principle of governing their Actions beside, the Profits,
fits, or Honours, or Pleasures of this World, we must not consent in Opinion, we must not join in Practice; No prospect of Interest, No influence of Example and common Vogue must by as us, No, not the natural Bent of our own mind. But, having entirely offered up our selves to God, there is no taking back part, and dividing the Oblation between Him, and Mammon. The virtue of that new Turn, given to our Thoughts and Affections, and that different Judgment of things, wrought in our Hearts by the Grace of God, and our own pious Endeavours, will, and must, make us quite another sort of Men. Creatures, as much new and changed, as the Condition of a reasonable Mind can admit; and such, as, for the future, allow no rule of Action, no Measure of Good and Evil, of Wisdom and Folly, but the Gospel: Which was intended to compleat our Holiness, and recommend us effectually to the Favour and Love of God.

3. The Third thing we are concerned with, as enjoined in this Day’s Epistle, is Humility. For This is the Virtue S. Paul aims at, when saying to every man, not to think of himself more bigly than be ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of Faith. These Words are by some supposed, a Caution against Curiosity in matters of Religion, and affecting to be wise in unprofitable parts of Knowledge. But it seems more agreeable to the Apostle’s purpose, to understand that Vanity, and Over-valuing of a Man’s self, which are so very apt to grow upon us, when we feel our selves superior to others, in any sort of commendable Quality. Such were exceeding remarkable in many of the Primitive Church, who were distinguished by extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit. And, because those Gifts were differently distributed, both as to kind, and to degree; the Fault and Folly of preferring those of one kind above the rest, or being immoderately exalted upon
upon higher, and contemning those who had received lower Measures of the same kind, is here condemned, and forbidden.

This I conceive to be the meaning of the Three foregoing Verses, and These the Virtues press'd upon us in them. It remains only, that I shew, how they are enforced, by this Consideration of our being united as one Body in Christ. To which purpose a very few Words may suffice.

That the First of them is so, which consists in mortifying the sensual and carnal Appetites, and consecrating our Bodies to the Service of God, I need no other Proof, than this Apostle's own Authority. Observe, how he endeavours to create in the Corinthians, a particular Abhorrence of unclean Lusts. Know ye not, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

Says he, that your Bodies are the Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid. And farther yet, to make them sensible, that this Argument ought to take place, not only against the gross Acts of Impurity, but even all Pollution of the Thoughts and Desires; He proceeds, Ver. 16, 17. What? Know ye not that He which is joined to an Harlot is one Body? But, He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. You see, by the very manner of the Apostle, how exceeding contrary to, how utterly unbecoming our Character, any sinful Indulgence in carnal Pleasures is. So manifestly thus, That he does not descend to a cool and formal Argument, but turns the matter off with Scorn and Detestation; and represents it so absurd and monstrous, that a Man must be perfectly stupid, not to perceive the horrid Vileness, and Incongruity of it.

And sure, if we go to the Reason of the thing, this single Reflection ought to have great weight with us. For, if the Moralists of old could discern the Reasonableness of restraining, denying, despising, those vicious
Vicious Gratifications, which degrade Us and our Nature; How much more just is a Christian's Abstinence and Disdain, who cannot debase himself alone, but at the same time commits an Indignity upon Christ? Surely He ought to treat his own Person, as a Member belonging to that Head: to respect a Body which is the Temple of the Holy Ghost: not to prostitute a thing so sacred and venerable, to the Filthiness of Brutes; nor invade the Property of that God, to whom he hath the Honour, by so manifold a Title, to belong.

2. The Second, of a New Heart and Life, is no less evident a Consequence of this Union. For, since we know that Christ abideth in Us, and We in Him, by the Spirit he hath given us; since his Spirit is here distinguished from a worldly Spirit, his Kingdom from the Kingdoms of this World; it follows, that to retain the One of these, is to declare we have nothing to do with the Other; and, that, to make the One our Aim and End, is to abandon the Other. As Christ then is our Head, with regard to his directive Power; we must see to the keeping that Correspondence, which appears in Nature. The ready Consent of every Faculty to execute, what the Head contrives and appoints; The nimble Sallies of our Animal Spirits, that fly, we know not how, as swift as Thought, through every Nerve, and instantly move the most distant Limbs of our Bodies; These are lively Emblems of that ready and cheerful Conformity, which should be paid this mystical Head, in every instance of his Will, signified to us, whether by Precept, or his own Example. Hence we are told of every Thought being brought to the obedience of Christ. That so in this, as in our ordinary Composition, no such thing as Rebellion may be known. For, if at any time the Dictates of the Soul be not obeyed, this comes to pass through Weakness and Indisposition. Sometimes for want of Power,
Power, but never for want of Will. But, not to have the like mind in Us, that was in Christ Jesus, is to suppose two Spirits, and two contrary Wills: Which quite destroys the Notion of one and the same Body. And therefore All, who would maintain this Union, must make His Will Theirs; and have no Opinions, no Affections, no Delights of their own; but in all things be transformed into, and (as the Scripture expresseth it) put on Christ.

3. Of the Third, which is Humility, there can remain no doubt, since this Allusion of a Body is urged by the Apostle, as an express Reason for it. But, of this, more hereafter.

The short is. As the Principles of natural Vigour, and Motion, and Sensation, are dispensed from the Head, as from a common Fond, through these Bodies of Flesh: So are the Graces of the Spirit, from Christ. But with this difference, that His Distributions are not mechanical, but voluntary, and entirely free. These therefore are derived down, in such quality and proportion, as his Wisdom sees fit, for the common Exigencies and Benefit. They are not the Effect of Ours, but the Overflowings of His, Goodness. And therefore our part is, to dispose our selves, for giving them a meek and thankful Reception, to improve under them, to admire and adore the Kindness of the Giver: But often to beat down those unseasonable and dangerous Self-complacencies, (which any partial and distinguishing Bounty in our Favour is so ready to blow up,) with a Who hath made thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou hast not received? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? And especially, It will become us to remember with great Seriouleness, that the Issue, upon which every Christian's Fate will turn at last, is not the Quantity of what he receives, but the Use, or the Neglect of it, the
the Answering or Defeating the Purposes, for which it was bestowed. This leads to another Inference, drawn from this Comparison, which will come under Consideration the next Lord's Day.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke ii. 41.

NOW his Parents went to Jerusalem every Year at the Feast of the Passover.

42. And when he was twelve Years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the Custom of the Feast.

three solemn Feasts every Year, of which the Passover was one. See Exod. xxiii. 15, 17. Levit. xxiii. Deut. xvi. Upon which occasion the Females (though not expressed) were not excluded, but frequently attended also; And their Children, when capable of understanding the Intent of those Festivals, were bound to it.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his Mother knew not of it.

43. This Solemnity lasted seven days, at the expiration whereof Joseph and Mary began their Journey back to Nazareth.

44. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a days Journey; and they sought him among their Kinfolk and among their Acquain-
tance.

44. Not hearing of him upon the Enquiry made, (Ver. 44.) the second day they went back.

45. And when they found him not, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking him.

45. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them Quo-
sions.

46. The Third day, (computed from their setting out homeward) they found him in that part of the Temple, where the Learned in the Law us'd to teach, and expound publicly. With whom he conferred, to the Admiration of all People present.
48. This was a sight very surprizing to them; and his Mother, out of the vehemence of her Affection; expostulated with him about what had passed.

49. To whom his Answer was, That a Son was no where so properly as in his Father’s House, nor so fitly employed, as about his Father’s Affairs.

50. The meaning of this Answer they did not perfectly comprehend.

51. Hereupon he bore them Company home, and submitted to their Authority, like common Sons. But none of these things passed without the particular observation and remembrance of his Mother.

52. Mean while Jesus grew in his Mind to maturity of Judgment, as well as in his Body to the full proportion of a Man, by gradual and visible accessions of Both, like other Youths: And behaved himself so, as to engage the general Love and Approbation of all sorts of People.

Comment.

THE Gospel for this Day deserves our very particular Consideration, because containing all the Account, thought fit by the Holy Ghost to be given us, of our Blessed Saviour’s Life, from his Infancy, to his Baptism, and the Entrance upon his Prophetick Office. A little compass of Words for so long a tract of time; and chiefly confined to one single Occasion. But That is such, as furnishes a great deal of matter for useful Reflection and Practice. And to these purposes it should be our endeavour to improve it, with regard to the following Instances particularly.

1. The Forty-first and Forty-second Verses take notice, how religiously Joseph and Mary observed the Passover; that the distance of their dwelling did not hinder
hinder their resorting to Jerusalem yearly, for the Celebration of it; that in this Mary joined too, though not obliged to it, by the Letter of the Law: and that, when Jesus arrived at the Age of Twelve Years, he was taken thither with them. What Obligations they lay under for their own Attendance, the Texts, referred to in the Paraphrase, shew. The carrying up of Jesus seems to have had more immediate respect to those Ordinances, which required all Israelites to instruct their Children diligently in the Knowledge of the Law: And especially, in the Reasons, for which the Passover, and the rest of their great Solemnities, were instituted.

Now the Virgin and Joseph, by their punctual Compliance, in both these Cases, have set an excellent Example to Parents, of all Ages and Places. An Example, which, grounded on the express Command of God, should make them sensible of how great importance it is, That They, who govern Families, be conscientious in frequenting God's publick Worship themselves: That they go before their Children, and, by their own Behaviour, encourage them to follow, in the ways of Piety and Virtue; That they season their tender Years with early Notions of Good and Evil, let them in to a right understanding of Religion, by such Methods, and in such Degrees, as the Greenness of that Age is capable of. Particularly, (which comes nearest to the Case before us) to turn all their Childish Curiosity to profit, by explaining to them the Occasion of the Christian Festivals; begetting in them an early Reverence for the glorious Mysteries, and a becoming Value for the invaluable Benefits, of our Redemption. In short, that they would, from the very first, make them their Companions in the Service of God; and imprint, upon this soft Wax, such strong and lasting Characters of his Majesty
Majesty and Goodness, such an habitual Awe and Love of Him and his Commands, as may serve for a Foundation, to build a wise and holy Life upon. Such as may preserve their riper years, from the Contagion of Irreligion and Vice, direct their Choice, and secure their Perseverance, by Habits of Goodness, and exemplary Improvements in Religious Prudence, still aspiring nearer Perfection, to the End of their days.

2. The Three following Verses take notice of Jesus staying behind, and the anxious Concern of his Parents, upon that occasion. The Greatness of This Some have imputed to a fear of his falling into ill hands; who, by destroying him, might defeat the Expectation of the glorious things, God sent him into the World to accomplish. But I conceive it much more reasonable, to ascribe that Concern to the natural Tenderness of a Mother, and the Frights and Confusions, which the missing a beloved Child, in whose Company they above all things delighted, uses to produce, upon so unexpected an Accident. And the Duty I would recommend from hence is, Kindness and Affection to our Children, A quick and tender Sense of their Sufferings and Dangers, And a very solicitous Care for their Safety and Happiness.

I know not well, what may at first be thought, of my pretending so solemnly to excite a Disposition which Nature seems to have provided effectually for already, by planting it, even in the fiercest and wildest of Beasts. It hath indeed done this, and in such manner, that those very Brutes are a Reproach to many Men; Who behave themselves, as if Reason were given to harden their Hearts, and render them but so much less gentle and sensible. For it is really prodigious to see, how Some, even who profess themselves Christians, can lay aside all Bowels, and forget every thing of Care and Compassion for their own Flesh. Such Indifference, such Stupidity, nay such remorseless Cruelties,
Cruelties, such Blows, such Revilings, such bitter Curses, are too often to be heard and seen, betwixt the nearest Relations, as would even tempt us to suspect the power of Reason and Religion, for working us into softer and better Tempers: had not Christ and his Apostles foretold, that in the last days some should so obstinately stand it out against the force of Both, as to hate and betray their own Offspring, to become cold in love, and absolutely void of natural affection.

But, when foretelling this, they signify a withal, that the abounding of Iniquity is the Cause of it; and, to shew, that those are the very Dregs of Time, they give the Coming of such things to pass, for a Mark of the worst, as well as the last Days. Since then such unnatural Things are practicable however, and plainly possible at least; it cannot misbecome Me to press a Duty, which, though Nature hath universally implanted a Disposition to, yet the Corruption of Human Nature hath the Scandal of being too often proof against. And indeed I the rather chuse to recommend this Tenderness for our Children, so remarkable and eminent in God and Good Men; because a due observance of this particular will exceedingly contribute to the Success of the former. It will quicken our Concern for their best and most valuable Part; It will make our Care of their Souls more earnest and vigorous, and it will prepare the way for its being better accepted too. For the first Step to Persuasion, is, to possess Men with an Opinion, that we heartily love them. And a Command is half obeyed, when once the Party is thoroughly convinced, that what we require, is not for the sake of exercising a Despotick Power, or from a Delight to lay heavy Burthens; but from a Sense of its being necessary to their Happiness, and because we zealously desire their Good.
Good. Now, considering, how much more this World affects the Generality of People, than that which is to come; the Parent, who does not first approve himself tender of his Children's Body, and its present Comforts, and Conveniences, will never be able to get himself believed, when professing the kindest Resentments, and most impatient Wishes, for the Safety and Happiness of their Souls.

3. But to proceed. If the Trouble of these Parents was great for the Absence of so dear a Child, their Joy must needs be doubled by meeting him again; not only safe, but engaged in an Employment so very promising, so very becoming, so much above his Years. For the Forty-sixth Verse says, They found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them Questions. And this, 'tis probable, he might do, not merely out of Curiosity, but to acquit himself of a Duty, expected from all, who attained to a certain Age, among the Jews. For They, who have taken pains in examining Their Institutions and Customs, observe this commendable one to have obtained among the rest: That their Youth were brought before some Masters of the Synagogue, to render an Account of their Proficiency in Religion, and from thenceforth to be answerable for their own Sins: That this was a Ceremony, performed with strict Examination, with devout Prayers, and solemn Benedictions.

All which, as it very nearly resembles, so may it seem to have ministered some ground to, the Christian Rite of Confirmation. Wherein, after having answered to the first and most necessary Rudiments of Faith and Practice, our young People, in presence of the Fathers of the Church, and with the Blessing of God by these implored upon their future Endeavours, do take
take the Charge of their Baptifmal Vow upon themselves; as being presumed sufficiently instructed, to be responsible for their own Duty, the remaining part of their Lives. A very Learned Man supposes our Lord to have staid behind for this purpose. Which, though Others were not usually called upon to do till Thirteen, yet He might do it at Twelve Years old. The particular Season then in use being accommodated to the Capacities and Attainments of Children in general, but not forbidding those of extraordinary Qualifications to do it earlier, when competently prepared, and of a Genius, which (to speak in the Jews own Phrase) did run before the Command.

4. However this be (for I am content to leave it as a probable Conjecture only) yet thus much is certain; That He, in those Conferences, behaved himself, not only to the Satisfaction, but the Wonder of the whole Assembly. For all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. We are not however to imagine all the fulness of his Divine Knowledge displayed upon this Occasion, but such a brightness of Parts and Apprehension, as spoke an uncommon Pregnancy, and left them still free to suppose him no more than Man, though, for his Age, a wonderful one. So much the Dispensation undertaken by him required, in the whole course whereof nothing was permitted, that might justly call the Truth of his Human Nature in question. For this reason the Evangelist prudently adds, at the close of the Chapter, that be increased in Wisdom, as well as Stature. Mind and Body both received additional Improvements, though some of those Additions were imparted in larger Proportions than usual. The Endowments of each exerted themselves, in measures and actions suitable to the several Stages of his Life. And even the Divine Nature, though always present, seems to have communicated
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municated its Powers to the Human, by distinct and gradual Illuminations. Accordingly all publick Manifestation of it to the World seems to have been industriously declined, till ripeness of Years and Judgment had carried him up to the Perfections of a Man, and the Execution of his Ministry called for such Evidence to assist him. So little Reason have we to suppose, that He, who condescended to be like us in Body, should think it below him to be so too, in that other no less Essential, but much more noble part of us, our Soul; without which it was impossible for him to be Man. So little, to conceive of the Divine Essence, as supplying the place and offices of our intellectual Faculties. For all that is Divine, is infinite, and nothing Infinite can admit of Enlargement: He therefore that increased in Wisdom, must needs be Man, with regard to the Seat of Wisdom in Man, which is a finite reasoning Mind.

5. Once more. S. Luke thought it requisite to acquaint us, at the Fifty-first Verse, that Jesus accompanied his Parents back to their own home, that he dwelt with them at Nazareth, and was subject to them. How his time was spent in this Retreat, we can have no Certainty. Whether he wrought with Joseph at the Carpenter's Trade, (as some of the Antients have delivered their Opinion,) is not material to enquire. Thus much we are satisfied of, and that is enough for our purpose, that, whether his Life were a Life of Labour or not, it was a Life of Modesty and Meekness, and exemplary Obedience.

And what a Pattern hath this set our Children, of Humility, and Submission, and Reverence to their Parents? How indispensible does it represent their Duty, how inexcusable their Stubbornness and Contempt; when He, who was God as well as Man, thought it became him still to be govern'd, and, in all his Deportment, was full of Respect to Them, whose

Son
Son though he was in One capacity, yet was he their Father, their Lord, their King, their Creator, in Another? Sure no Child, after this, should dare to disregard a Father, or a Mother; though their Persons be never so despicable, or their Circumstances never so deplorable. Sure none can suffer himself to despise them, for Infirmities of Body, Decays of Age, or Meanness of Condition. None, who considers our Saviour as his Example, can. For, What Defects of Nature, what Difference of Fortunes, can set any One so far beneath any Other, as these Persons were really below the blessed Jesus? God, and Man! The Distance is infinite, and leaves no place for Comparisons. How sacred is the Obligation, which Blood and Nature have tied, when even the Name and Character alone is venerable, though the Relation be wanting? For such our Lord hath proved it, by that Observance paid, not to Her only, of whose Substance he was made Flesh; but likewise to Him, who was no otherwise his Father, than by Reputation and common acceptance: Entitled to this Honour, only as the Husband of Mary, and by a Mistake of the World, who were not let in to the mysterious Secret of a Virgin made a Mother.

Most wisely, in the meanwhile, did the Holy Ghost insert this Passage, into the History of our meek Redeemer's Life, as a singular Ornament and Grace to it: An early but remarkable Instance of his marvellous Condescension, and such a motive to profound Reverence, and humble Duty, as, for force and impression, might exceed ten thousand laboured Arguments.

Consider This, all You, whom the Pride or the Giddiness of Youth, the Heat or the Perverseness of your Spirits, the Sprightliness of your Wit, or the Success of your Industry, hath made refractory, or haughty: And consider withal, how you will be able to stand before this Judge, at the last Day. Your Judge himself
some Directions restrained to Private Families.

The Subject now before us, is the Behaviour of a Son to a Natural Parent, the best and meekest Son, to the best and most excellent Mother. To this I shall therefore keep close, by framing such Advice, as concerns the Demeanour, and mutual Regards, proper for Parents and Children; and, in some proportion of Masters and Servants, toward each other. Advice, which all, I think, who diligently attend to it, must needs confess manifestly to result from this Portion of Scripture, and from That which hath already been spoken upon it.

1. And First of all. If God ought to be pleased and served in the first place, and the Discharge of our Duty to Him be the thing we are principally accountable for: Then are all Parents and Masters hereby plainly condemned, who refuse to allow the Persons under their care, all necessary Means, and reasonable Leisure, for the exercise of, and improvement in, the Business of Religion. How much Leisure is reasonable, and what Means are necessary, it is not possible for Me, or any other Teacher, to determine in the general. Because, after all that is or can be said, the different Circumstances of each Party concern'd, will continue to be the true Measure of them. But thus much I may say, with Confidence and great Safety, that, as God hath been wonderfully indulgent to Us, with respect to the Necesstities of this Life in particular; As he hath made even the Works of our Lawful Calling, when pursued with Honest Industry and a regular Concern, a Branch of the Christian's Duty, and highly acceptable to Him: So We, in Gratitude, should imitate this Goodness, spare him as much Time as fairly we can, and be as liberal in the Returns of our Service, as ever the Cafe will bear. Thus much, to be sure, we are absolutely bound to, not to let even the most busie Em-
pployment swallow up all our Thoughts and Pains: Not to involve our selves to such a degree, in the Affairs of the Present, as to forget that we have any, that we have our main Interest to be secured in the Next, World.

And, as this is an Obligation incumbent upon every Man, for his own Particular, so is it no less for Theirs, of whose Behaviour and Education he hath the charge. The rather in truth, because the Giddiness and Inconsideration of Youth have need of a powerful Restraint from without; and, to make the Fear and Service of God their Choice, it is necessary, (ordinarily speaking) that they be first fixed in them, by the Authority of their Governors. It is therefore by no means enough, that Such be permitted to employ some Hours in holy Duties, when they are found inclining to it themselves; but, for the most part, it is highly requisite, that they be often called upon, spurred forward, and obliged, to draw near to God, even when their own Dispositions would not, if let alone, bring them to him. By these means they will be taken off from Idleness, weaned to the Pleasures and Vanities of the World, acquire by degrees a Habit of Thinking and Serioufness, be taught not only to remember, but to love, their Creator in the Days of their Youth, delight in his Goodness, and esteem his Service, as in reality it is, perfect Freedom. These Methods I may venture to prescribe, as usually necessary. And most Parents and Masters of Families feel occasion, I doubt, more than enough for them. But, where we have the happiness to meet with early and forward Desires to be holy and good, where our Children and Servants even go before our care in the Way of Godliness; to check these, is not only wicked, but perfectly barbarous. Here then it will be prudent to temper such Zeal with Knowledge, to direct their Judgments, by shewing, how all the Parts of Religion agree together, how
far God allows the Concerns of this mortal Life, to intermingle with those of Eternity, and, that he expects, a Provision for our Bodies and Families should come in for some share of our Time and Pains. When they are brought to a right Sense of these Matters; then, to deny them competent Opportunities for praying, and reading, and coming to Church, and preparing for the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the like, is a most ungodly betraying of our Trust. And as oft as our own very urgent Business is not neglected upon these Accounts, the Words of our Lord here ought to be accepted for a sufficient Justification, 

How is it that ye sought me? Wilt ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

2. Secondly. I cannot but think it proper, upon this occasion, to counsel Parents in the Next place, that they would be exceeding cautious in disposing of their Children, as to the Professions and Trades, that must settle them in the World. The Consideration, which commonly determines the Choice in this particular, is, what Calling will be likely to prove most thriving and gainful. But, though such Views may be allowed their due weight, when seconded by others, and not liable to any just Objection; yet ought they by no means to be insifted on, as the Only, no not as the Principal, Considerations. For, have we forgotten so utterly what the Wifest of Men observes, and what Experience never fails to confirm, that Better is a little the Righteous hath, than great riches of the ungodly? Better, as it is enjoyed with more Comfort and Content, without Clamour from abroad, without Reproaches from within; as it is likelier to engage the Blessing and Providence of God, to grow greater, to wear longer. But, all these Advantages apart, do we not call our selves Christians? Wou'd we not, by that Name, be understood to believe a Future State, and an Immortal Soul? Should
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... not then, above all things else, be solicitous for the Eternal Welfare of our Children? And, can it become us to engage them, for Term of Life, in such Practices, as, for a little Pomp and Plenty here, will render them for ever miserable hereafter? When St. Paul orders Servants to obey in the Lord, he means, that they should observe their Masters, so far as Their Directions agree with Christ's. And when he exhorts the Brethren, all to abide in their Calling with God: He intends, that their Temporal Interests should be reconcile with, should indeed be subservient to, their future everlasting one.

The Duty we owe our Neighbour, is, in our excellent Catechism said, among many other things, to confest in this, that we learn and labour truly to get our own living, and to do our Duty in that State of Life to which it shall please God to call us. Our Living must be got, but got truly, that is, justly and honestly. We must answer the State of Life, to which God calls us; but God calls no Man to a State and Trade of Sin. And therefore, when a Calling engages any Man in Acts of Sin, or in provoking other People to Sin; When it drives him upon Methods of Falseness and Deceit, of Lewdness, or any manner of dissolute Conversation; When the Profits propounded from it are not to be attained, so long as Innocency and a clear Conscience are preserv'd; Those Gains are the Wages of Iniquity, the Price of Heaven and of Souls; That Calling is certainly unlawful, and no Advantages, no not all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, can render it fit for a prudent Man to chuse. If, as the Last Particular declared, the most commendable Professions and Practices may not go away with the Whole of us, but a great deal ought to be reserved for the Uses of God, and a better Life: How unreasonable, how unnatural, how barbarous a Wickedness must it needs be, to bind our Children out to the Devi...
vil? And yet this in effect is done, when we train them up in such ways of getting Wealth, as lead directly to Hell; and, that they may wear purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously, for a few days, expose them almost to the Certainty, the Likelihood at least, of crying in vain for many Ages, for a drop of water to cool their Tongues, when they shall be tormented in that flame.

Farther yet. I cannot, in this Case, think it sufficient, that our Children be not trained up in a direct necessity of Sinning, but that, as much as in us lies, they be set at a distance, from all probable Occasions, and Allurements to it: That we consider the Infirmities of human Nature, and the frequency and strength of Temptations to do Evil. Hence it will follow, that such Professions, as manifestly lay Men open to danger, Where we have Instances of many, if not most People miscarrying, Where good Principles are apt to be unsettled, and hopeful Beginners generally harden and turn profligate; that all such, I say, are much too hazardous, for them to be trusted with. A good and tender, a wise and religious, Father will not venture a Child in Methods of living, not only where he must, but where it is odds he may, and where very few do not, make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience.

In short, we ought to bear in mind continually, that our Treasure is laid up in Heaven, that our continuing City is not here, but we seek one to come: that Virtue and Piety are the only expedient, for bringing us to, and settling us in, that blissful Place; that, consequent-ly every Man's grand Affair is so to pass through things Temporal, that be finally lost not the things Eternal: All our Cares therefore, all our Prospects, should be governed by that One. All our Concerns so ordered, all the Fortunes and Post's of our Children so laid out; that they may not neglect the more valuable Advantages of their Souls; but so contrive to manage the Business
Busines of the World, as at the same time faithfully to dispatch the Busines of Their Father and Our Fa-
ther, Their God and Our God.

One Word now of Advice to Children, and Servants, and all that are in a State of Subjection; and then I have done.

Now here I desire all such very soberly to consider, from what Hand Parents, of every Sort, derive their Authority: even from God Above. Their Obedience then to These, in all lawful and honest Commands, is Obedience to God. It is an Act of Religion, and therefore to be performed, not only with Diligence and Fidelity, but also with Zeal and Cheerfulness. They do their great Father's and Master's Busines, and purchase to themselves a sure Reward in Heaven, while their Labours deserve the Approbation of their Supe-
riors upon Earth. So very merciful is God, in accept-
ing Men's lawful Industry; so well pleased with their Care, in any Busines they are intrusted with; that he places it to account, as an Instance of their Faithful-
ness and Duty to himself.

'Tis true, if their Parents or Masters impose any Terms, which they ought not to comply with; they must obey God, whatever be the Consequence. But yet even then, when they must disobey or displease their Governors, this is to be done, upon plain and sure Grounds, and always with Modesty and Meek-
ness, and good Manners. The Reasons of their Re-
fulal, their own just Vindication, their real Concern, for all such unhappy Occasions, are to be represented, in the softest, the humblest, the most respectful Ex-
postulations, that can possibly be thought of. Their

Liberty must never be used for a Cloak of Ma-
lificiousness and Obstinance, but as becomes the

Servants of God. And, because His Servants, therefore they are not in a Condition to do any thing, which they know the Great and Common Master of all Mankind

C 4
kind disallows. I say, which they know he disallows; for, in order to preserve their Innocence, they should be very industrious to get their Judgments inform'd aright; left otherwise they be insnared with frivolous and unnecessary Scruples, pretend Points of Conscience where there is no room for them, and decline that Obedience ignorantly, which they ought to pay, and to understand the Limits of it better. In order hereunto, they will do well, most earnestly to beg the Directions and Assistance of God's enlightning Spirit; for, though all have need enough, yet they who are young, and in Circumstances of Subjection, unexperienced generally, unlearned too often, these are more especially concerned, to come to God, in the Language of the Collect for this Day, begging, that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfill the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

A

Lmighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in Heaven and Earth: Mercifully hear the Suplications of thy People, and grant us thy Peace all the Days of our Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Epistle.

Paraphrase.

Rom. xii. 6.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us; Whether Prophecy, let us prophesie according to the proportion of Faith.

7. Or Ministry, let us wait on our ministring; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8. Or be that exhorteth, on exhortation; be that giveth,
giveth, let him do it with simplicity; be that ruled, with diligence; be that foremost, Mercy, with cheerfulness.

to consider the Abil-

ties God hath given

him, and the Post he

hath called him to in

the Church: And, without envying them that have more, and are placed above

him, or deifying them that have less, and are below him, make it his business
to discharge his own part diligently and conscientiously, and rest contentedly in

that.

9. Let love be without Diffimulation. Abhor that

which is evil, cleave to that which is good.

9. Let your Love to

every Fellow-member

be, not in pretence and

outward show only, but heartily and sincerely. But let Virtue and Duty be the mea-

sure and ground of it. And do not only avoid, but hate and detest all Wicked-

ness, and let no consideration ever reconcile you to it: Do not only practice, but
delight and persevere in Goodness, and let nothing be able to draw you off

from it.

10. Be kindly affectioned one toward another in bro-

therly love; in honour preferring one another.

10. Consider your

selves as Brethren, and

let your Tenderness and

good Offices be as becomes such: pay all due Regards to one another, which

either the different Stations or Virtues of Men require; and let your Humility be

seen in acknowledging the good Qualities of your Brethren, and respecting them

above your own.

11. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, ser-

vicing the Lord.

11. Let your Dil-

gence and Zeal in your

Duty be such, as be-

comes Men who are doing God service, and (as Times and Circumstances will al-

cow) can never do too much for such a Master.

12. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, con-

tinuing in prayer.

12. When Afflictions

or Persecutions are up-

on you, let the hope of

a Reward keep you cheerful: Endure what God sends with Contentedness and Resolution; and persevere in your Requests for his Grace and

Mercy, though you should not, for some time, obtain what you ask.

13. Distributing to the necessity of Saints: given to

hospitality.

and be very forward and eager in entertaining Strangers, who

are forced to flee from their own home for Religion.

14. Blesst them that persecute you, blesst and curse not.

14. Pray for your

Persecutors, and let not

their bitterest Malice provoke you to any return of angry Imprecations.

15. Rejoyce with them that rejoice, and weep with

them that weep.

15. Be so affectionate-

ly concerned for all

Christians, as both to

have, and shew, a fellow-feeling and tender resentment of all the good or

evil that happens to them, especially that of their Souls.

16. Be
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16. Live in perfect Amity and Concord. Mind not high things, but condescend to Men of low estate. Power to do good, think no Person too mean to do it to, nor any honest Method beneath you to do it by.

COMMENT.

The last Day's Epistle declared to us the Closeness of that Union, which Christians ought to look upon themselves knit together by; when called so often one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another. In the explaining whereof having spent part of my Discourse, I closed with some of those Obligations, which that Consideration brings us under, and which are contained in the beginning of the Chapter. The Scripture, now in hand, consists of a great many. Which, for Method's sake, we may conveniently reduce to the following

- * Ver. 6, 7, 8. Heads. 1. * Contentedness in our Station. 2. † Diligence in our proper Business. 3. Mutual Love || and Respect. 4. * A tender Concern for the prosperous and adverse Fortunes of our Fellow-Christians. 5. † Unity in Matters of Religion: And 6. || Constancy and Meekness under Persecutions and Wrongs.

Each of these I shall consider, as briefly as I can: remembering, that my Method, propounded before, does not undertake to treat of any Duties we meet with in this Chapter, according to their own due Extent, but purely, and so far forth, as they are Consequences of that Union, and mutual Relation, intended by this Figure of a Body.

1. I begin with Contentedness in our respective Stations. The Arguments for which are comprised in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Verses, and prosecuted more at large in the xiith Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corin-
Corinthians. By comparing these two Places, it seems very probable, that the Gifts, more directly aimed at by the Apostle, are those extraordinary Assurances of the Holy Ghost, vouchsafed to Christians in the Infancy of the Church, as at that time necessary Evidences of the Truth, and fitted for the more successful Propagation of the Gospel. Yet are not those Arguments, either in the Apostle’s Design, or in the Nature of the thing, so confined to those Extraordinary Gifts, as not, with great force and clearness of Reason, to extend to all Ages and Conditions of Christianity, when left to the Ordinary Methods of Grace, by which it now subsists.

For, First, we are put in mind, (as was observed before under the Head of Humility) that all these Endowments, by which any one Man excels any other Man, are Gifts. Instances of Favour, which none of Them who enjoy, could lay any manner of Claim to, or, by any Industry of their own, acquire to themselves. Consequently, the Meanest in common Esteem are the Effect of Bounty. And they all agree in this, that they come from the same Hand, and are so many Streams of Grace, issuing from one common Source of undeserved and overflowing Mercy. The thing Men receive is in Substance the same; for tho’ there be diversities of gifts, yet the same Spirit is given in all: And though there be diversities of Operations, yet is it the same God which worketh all in all. A God, who is tied to no Proportions; who need not give at all except he please, and therefore works freely, both in the Act, and in the Measure, of his Distributions. For all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Now the plain Inference from hence is, that, where every Man hath more than his due, there none can have a right to murmur or complain;
plain: And, where all have the Honour of receiving from God, none can in reason think himself disgraced, upon the account of any Inequality in the Degree of what he so receives. It is enough, that every one partakes in that One best Gift, and is considered by that One best Giver.

2. But, Secondly, Such Inequality is not only not unjust, but it is likewise prudent, and proceeds upon equitable Considerations. For every man (says this Apostle elsewhere) hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 'Tis true, the Occasion of these Last Words differs from the Subject we are now upon; but they certainly contain this general Truth; that That is a Man's proper Gift, which he is qualified to use, and to improve. Let each Man therefore but remember that He hath his Gift of God, whose Wisdom adjusts all things with the greatest Exactness; God, whose Providence disposes every Man's Fortune and Post in the World, as well as dispenses their several Abilities; God, who especially consults the Beauty and Convenience of the Whole, and is not directed by such narrow and partial Views, as Ignorance or Interest are apt to sway Us by; and he will find it reasonable to believe, that every Man is placed in such a Sphere, as, all things considered, it is best for that Man at that time to be in. And that He, who made him and posted him there, did so, because he best knew what he was cut out for; that, if the Fault be not his own, he may be serviceable in This Station; and if he be not useful in This, 'tis highly probable, he would prove less so, in any Other. All this St. Paul, without any overstraining the Allusion, seems to insinuate, not only in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Verses now in hand, but also in his Discourse to the Corinthians; when comparing the different Orders and Offices in this Mystical, to the different Members...
Members and their respective Functions, in the Natural Body. The Formation of these Last is adapted to the Uses Nature designed them for; the Qualifications of the Former are likewise, in proportion, suited to the Condition God hath set them in. And this is certainly a very powerful Motive to Contentedness, that, whatever Place we hold in the Body of Christ, He, who set us there, knew very well why he did so; that, however we may think our selves capable of filling a higher, better than those already in it; yet, if the Experiment were made, 'tis probable it would be made to loss. So much the more probable, as we are more disposed to think loftily of our selves, and meanly of those above us; as we are forward in usurping, or bitter in detracting from, and envying, the Honours of Their Post; and dissatisfied with, and given to disdain, and to be ashamed of, the Meaneness of our own.

3. Farther yet. This Inequality of Gifts and Stations is not only Just, because free; not only Prudent, because accommodated to the Parties concerned; but it is also absolutely Necessary. The Beauty of the Body cannot be displayed, the Exigencies of the Body cannot be supplied, nay the very Being of the Body cannot be preserved, without it. All these require Variety. The Beauty, as consisting in Symmetry of Parts; The Exigencies, as served by several Offices, to be performed by Instruments differently disposed; The Being, as including, in the very Idea of a Body, Order and Distinction, and, without these, no longer a Composition, fitted for Life and Motion and Sense, but a rude Mass of useless undigested Matter, a Lump of Inactivity and Confusion. So says the Apostle of the Body Natural, The Body is not one Member, but many. If the Foot shall say, because I am not the Hand, I am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body? And 1 Co 13:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.
if the Ear shall say, because I am not the Eye, I am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body? If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the Hearing? If the whole were Hearing, where were the Smelling? But now hath God set the Members, every one in the Body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one Member, where were the Body? But now are they many Members, yet but one Body. The Application of all which Similitude himself hath made in the latter end of that Chapter: Now ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healing, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? and so on. To the same purpose, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. The Sum whereof is this. The Necessities of Mankind thus united are of several kinds; These cannot be served, without a proportionable number of Organs, formed and placed differently; The difference of that Form and Place depends upon the Uses assigned to each; All the Parts, thus formed and placed, make up one regular Fabrick; Every One of these is useful and necessary, in its proper Position, the least and lowest can no more be spared than the noblest and highest; The exalting of One, above its due situation and proportion, would produce a defect and deformity, no less than the debasing or diminishing of another; Every One is therefore of equal value, when considered as a Member, and All compound the same Body. Consequently, this difference of Gifts and Stations ought to breed no Discontent, but quite the contrary; Because, without this difference of Parts, there could not be the
the Union of a Body; and without such Union there could not be that mutual Relation, that reciprocal Necessity and Usefulness, that equal Value and Regard, which now there is, from every one to every other Christian. For every other Christian is to be considered, as a part of and Fellow-member with, himself, separated from whom, it is impossible for the Body to subsist, in that Capacity.

What then is the Result of all this, but that, since All cannot have the same Place, nor execute the same Office in the Church and the World; Each should rest satisfied with the Disposal of his wise Head, and cheerfully take up with that use he is framed for? That the Eye should be content with Seeing, and the Ear with Hearing; The Hand with Working, and the Foot with Walking; The Unlearned with receiving Instruction, and the Learned with the Labour of giving it; The Inferiors with Obedience, and the Poor with Industry; The Lawyer with the Bar; the Divine with his Ministry; the Tradesman with his Shop, and the Husbandman with his Tillage. For, when these go out of their own Way, and Invade the Business proper to each other; the Union of the Body is broken, and nothing but Disorder and Mischief can possibly come of it. This pragmational and envious Spirit, this Ambition and Emulation, is, in truth, the Cause of all that Confusion, which either the Church, or the State, is at any time endanger’d by.

And therefore S. Paul hath wisely joined those two Exhortations together, that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business. This is what he presses here; that we would consider our own Gifts, and the Characters we are appointed to, that we would keep to, and contain our selves within, the Bounds these have set us. That we would not take upon us to be wiser, than He that made us, and posted us in this Rank; but, as we are elsewhere direc-
2 Cor. vii. 17.

As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and therein abide with God. One thing however I must interpose, for the better understanding of that Text last mentioned. It is, that neither must the Apostle, by commanding Men to abide in their respective Callings, nor would I, by urging the Duty of Contentedness, as I do, be understood to condemn all Change of a Man's Post or Employment, as unlawful. For such Change, in Some Cases, may be useful and adviseable, and in Others even absolutely necessary. If therefore the Providence of God call us away to another Station, Obedience to that Call is no Argument of our former Discontent. And this the Providence of God may be fairly supposed to do, as oft as Necessity forces, or Authority commands, or manifest Advantage to the Publick persuades, or many lawful and weighty Circumstances, (fit to balance a discreet and conscientious Man,) concur to represent such an Alteration, not only lawful, but highly to be chosen, and commended. But, where Levity and Littleness of Spirit, Ambition, or Greedines of Gain, Envy at others, or Uneasiness with one's own private Condition, are at the bottom of such a Change, and the true Motives inducing it; there, to be sure, the Man is blameable, and the Duty of his Membership violated and forgotten. For, where all cannot have a Place high and honourable, eminent and publick, none should scorn those of a lower and laborious Degree; but do his Business gladly there while in it, as well as gladly embrace Ease and Promotion, when Opportunities offer for them. S. Paul hath left us clear enough in this Case, Art thou called being a Servant? care not for it: i.e. Let not that trouble thee, perform thy Part honestly and contentedly. But if thou may'st be made free, use it rather. Yet still use it with this Temper and Remembrance, that, though
Liberty be a more commodious, yet Service was as truly a Christian State; and thou shalt be esteemed and rewarded, according to thy Care of that Trust and Function, in which thy present Situation in the Body hath engaged thee. And this leads me to the

2. Second Duty instanced in, Diligence in our particular Place and Calling. This is what the Apostle would have us understand, by walking in, by being faithful to, and in the Scripture now before us, by waiting on, our respective Offices, by not being slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. This is the Inference, drawn from every Man's having received some proper Gift. For, as he argues elsewhere, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. This is the Design of our Blessed Saviour, in his Parable of the Talents: Where the reward of each Servant is proportioned to his Improvements, and He, who hid his Talent in a Napkin, is condemned to utter darkness, for being slothful and unprofitable. This is the plain Consequence of our Fellow-membership in one Body; By referring us to Nature, which, in so vast a variety of Parts, hath not formed any One merely for Shew, but all for Use: And all too, for such uses, as do contribute, not only to their own single Benefit, (considered abstractedly, and either in opposition to, or apart from the rest) but, some way or other, to the Common Good of the Whole. Whatever fails in this Point, is not a part, but an Excrecence, and a Burden; a Wen that loads, or a Canker, that gnaws and eats away the Body. The Effect of which is not Beauty, or Health, or Strength, but a Deformity and a Nuance, a Weakness and Diseas.

Thus also the Body of Christ, he tells us, is increased and edified, by that which every
joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. No Man performs the Duty of a Christian, who sits with his Arms a-cross, and hath nothing to shew, for the Time and the Abilities afforded him. The difference of Degrees, and Fortunes in the World, do indeed allow, nay they require, different sorts of Employments: But no Man's Life, in any the most exalted or plentiful Condition, was ever intended to be idle, and wholly unemployed. To eat, and drink, and sleep, and purely to amuse and recreate our selves, are Refreshments, designed to recruit our Spirits, and fit us for new Business; but are not themselves, nor can they be, the proper Business of any Man living. And, as in our natural Composition, there never is, or can be, one moment's entire Rest; so in our Spiritual and Politick one, the lying still of any Member is at once a Mischief to it self, and to all about it. And therefore, whatever is, or may be reasonably, expected from us; Whatever are the Duties, which our Education, and Endowments, and manner of Life, have fitted us for, or confined us to; The industrious discharge of These is a Service done to God, An Obedience due to our Common Head, A Care owing to our Selves, and to those that have immediate Dependence upon us, An instance not meerly of Charity, but even of strict Justice to our Brethren; Who, being One with us, have a right to demand, and are defrauded and really injured, when they do not actually reap some Advantage from us.

These Reflections may suffice, I hope, to make us sensible, both, that we ought to be employed, and after what manner it becomes us to be so. To say, we must not live like Drones, upon spoil and prey, and sucking out the fruit of other Men's Sweat and Strength, is to say no more, than this Apostle did, when directing the Thessalonians, that if any would not work, neither should be eat. And I can-
I cannot forbear remarking by the by, that St. Paul, when calling such, disorderly walkers, and busie-bodies, points at Qualities, that are certain Companions of Idlenes. For the Mind cannot be absolutely out of Employment. Vice, and dissolute Principles, treat close upon the heels of Sloth: And, as from not doing good we quickly slide into doing ill; So from not having some business of our own to entertain us, we naturally fall into that which no way concerns us; To prying, and meddling, and tattling, and censuring, and flandering, and mischief-making. So certain is it, that, even in our Personal Capacity, Business is a good Refuge, and saves us out of harms way. So evident, that in our Publick, it is unavoidably necessary, because there is no middle State, between helping Society, and hurting it. And the phlegmatick sluggish parts, which add nothing to the Beauty and Strength, are no better than the Excrement and Filth first, and then the Sores and Scabs, of this Body.

To say, that no Man ought to sustain himself by vicious Practices, by Lewdnes, or Fraud, or Oppression, or Discord, or any thing that is of ill Fame, or pernicious Consequence, is no more, than Civil Communities generally agree in. And some States have had the Wisdom to provide against these, by calling all Persons, liable to suspicion, strictly to account for the Methods, by which They, and their Families were supported.

But the Laws of the Christian Society say a great deal more. They forbid us to do ill; They forbid us to do nothing; They forbid us to be busie about that which in effect is nothing; To squander away our Time in Impertinences; To take pains, that are not like to turn to any account. They enjoin us to make a just Estimate of our Gifts; To remember the Author, the Dignity, the End of them, and not to trifle away Means and Opportunities, fitted for pro-
ducng the nobleſt Effects: To behave our selves worthy our Character, as becomes Reasonable Creatures, and enlightened Christians: Characters utterly defaced, in those that make any fort of Wickedness their Business; Greatly Disparaged, by Them, who stoop so low, as to lay themselves out upon mean and little Designs: Never answered, except by such Callings, and such Industry about them, as may tend to our own Benefit and Salvation: Nor then neither, except our Management, and the Matters in which it is employed, do in such manner consult our Own, as, at the same time, and together with it, to advance the Publick, Good.

Thus much is apparently included in this Allusion of a Body: Whose every Limb and Vesse, though ready to discharge the Office peculiar to it, yet not one of them does it with any separate view of Delight or Interest of its own. The Eye does not see, nor the Ear hear, nor the Stomach receive and digest Food, nor the Hands act, nor the Feet travel, for themselves: But each consents to minister to the Other's occasions, and all conspire together, to preserve and promote the Welfare and Comfort of the Whole.

And this, I think, sufficiently intimates, not only what unweary'd diligence is required in filling our own Post, and performing our own Part; But, that no Man is at liberty to chuse Such a Post or Part, for the employment of his Life, from whence it is likely any Evil may, from whence it is not probable indeed that a great deal of Good will, come. No private Profit of our own is singly a lawful Inducement for such a Choice. To justifie us in this matter, it is necessary, that the Methods we live by be blameless, and fair, and honest. Such as we need never be ashamed to own, and distinguish our selves by; Such as, in the natural Course and tendency of things, may contribute to the increase of our own Virtue, the Glory
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Glory of God, and the Advantage of our Brethren. For he that in these things serveth Christ, He only is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

3. The Third Particular taken notice of, as recommended here, and grounded upon the Similitude of a Body, is Mutual Love and Respect. Let Love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one toward another in brotherly love. And again; In honour preferring one another; Be of the same mind one towards another; Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

In the former of these, our Love, the Apostle requires Two Qualifications, The Sincerity, and the Fervency of it. Both plainly resulting from the Consideration of our Neighbours making up one Whole, and being integral parts with our selves. Every Man naturally bears such a regard to every part of his own Body, as admits no Hypocrisy, or false appearance of the Affection he really hath not. And this distinguishes true Christian Charity, from all those formal Pretences, and affected Civilities, from all those interested and designing, those counterfeit and treacherous Professions of Kindness, which the Friendships of this World so generally consist of; when in truth there is little or nothing but Self, at the bottom all the while. It is not therefore in this case enough, that we serve and do acts of Friendship to Others, unless we do them for Their sakes, that receive them. Nay, it is not enough, that we love them with a common and general sort of affection, though this be undissembled; unless this be done with that warmth and fervour, which Nature inspires for those Relations, that are very near and dear to us. For such is every Christian, a Child of the same Father, a Member of the same Body.
The Latter, that of Respect, is opposite to the contemptuous Coldness, and disdainful Treatment, which the Opinion of our own Advantages, and the Defects of our Brethren, are so frequently the cause of, towards the Persons, who, upon these accounts, seem so far our Inferiors, as not to be worthy our regard. And this the Apostle, much to the same effect indeed as here, but in Terms more expressive of the Comparison I am now upon, hath urged in his Epistle to the Corinthians. The Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of Thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of You. Nay, much more those Members of the Body which seem to be feeble, are necessary. And those Members of the Body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no Scorn in the Body, but that the Members should have the same care one for another.

This Care of God and Nature, to set every Part above our Scorn, is here propounded, as a Pattern to model our Behaviour upon, and a reason sufficient, why no Man should be despised. The short of it is, That, what those we think most despicable, want in One way, is made up to them in Another; and, where the Gracefulness falls short, there the Conveniency and Usefulness excels. Thus the most necessary Operations of Life are performed, partly by Vessels hid from common view; partly by such, as when seen, make no beautiful figure; partly by some, which general Custom, and natural Modesty, labour to conceal. Just thus the meanest of Mankind are of most general, most indispensible Use. The Leisure of the Learned, the Luxury of the Rich, the glittering Pomp,
Pomps of the Great, What would become of them all, if the Illiterate, the Poor, the lowest in degree and common account, should stop their Hands? If the Plough, and the Mill, and the Wheel, and the Manufacture stood still; If the laborious Pains of them, who seem cut out for nothing above that constant Drudgery, should cease, nay should but intermit for a very small Season? Is not that Pride then most unreasonable; that vilifies and tramples upon those Faces, to the Sweat of which its Support, its very Subsistence, is owing? that minister to our Plenty, and put the very Bread into our Mouths? 'Tis most extravagant upon a Civil Consideration; 'Tis much more so, upon a Religious and Spiritual one. For, in this regard too, we have reason to think it a mercy, that the Poor we have always with us. That Their Wants make room for Our Charity, and provide us bags that wax not old, a treasure in Heaven that faileth not, a safe Repository, where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth. That their mean Birth and Figure in the World give occasion to that Humility, which hath the promise of a higher Elevation, and conforms us to the Image of our Head, who, for Our much more despicable Sakes, humbled and even emptied himself. But, which is more, This seemingly Vile Wretch is one Body with thy self, as nearly related to Christ, as closely compacted into Him; and, if in that lowest capacity he executes his Office, he may one day be the Object of thy Envy, whom now, neglecting Thine, thou thinkest so far beneath thy Value, as not to hold him worth thy Pity.

This is directly the Case, as represented by St. Paul. Let us next see the Behaviour of the Body Natural, and from thence we may learn, what at least should be the Resentments, and Behaviour, of the Body Mystical. Now he observes, that here we are follicitous
to provide what additional Ornaments we can, and to make amends for the Defects of Nature, by the Supplies of Art. A Care, that Nature seems to have inspired, as a Token of Gratitude, for the Service those Parts do us; A necessary decency, in covering and defending what ought not to be exposed, and yet can least be dispensed with. And all agree in esteeming the neglect of this Decency and Care, a Symptom of a profligate and abandon'd Mind. Ought We not then, in the Body of Christ, that Head which assigns our respective Stations and Fortunes; ought we not, to treat those, whom a few Circumstantial have placed a little, but a little, below us, with all possible Humanity and Respect? Can it become us to insult their Infirmities of Mind or Body, to make their Meaness of Birth, or Parts, or Profession, matter of Jest and barbarous Triumph? No, we should learn, from that Care, that Cost, that Pain we are so often content with, to hide any bodily Deformity, how much we should make it our business to cherish, to assist their Weakness, to shield many of their Follies and Faults from Shame and Reproach. We should esteem the Assistances given to them a Debt; and our selves obliged, by all manner of courteous Department and kind Condescensions, to repair and supply those Comforts and Honours They want; and which, did not They want, We could not enjoy. Thus we should balance one Convenience with another; and labour so far to bring all to a level, that not any Christian may have reason to think himself neglected or despised; but all be treated, as becomes Men, who are all needful and helpful, all too needing help; all serviceable, though not in the same kind, and all sensible that they are, and ought to be, so. This, rightly weighed, would produce that Honour, that civil Preference, that one Mind, that same Care, pressed by the Apostle. For, where our Occasions and our
our Supplies, our Uses and Defects are reciprocal, though all ground of Distinction be not, yet any mischief that can come from a too rigorous insisting upon it is, taken away. And one would think, no Man need be advised, to live friendly, and comfortably, and respectfully, with those, without whom he cannot live at all.

4. The Fourth thing here enjoined is a Tender Concern for the prosperous and adverse Fortunes of our Fellow-Christians. *Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, Ver. 15. And this we likewise find urged from the same Topick all along insisted on; *Whether one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.* 1 Cor. xii. 26. And again, *Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them which suffer Adversity, as being your selves also in the Body.* Recollect a little, how impossible it is, for any part of us to endure Pain, or Sickness, or Hunger, or Cold alone. How quick the Communication, how sharp the Anguish, how general the Disorder, how great the Anxiety, how diligent the Care to asswage or to relieve any Indisposition, or Smart, of the least and most distant Member. And again, Upon any Return of Health and Ease, how sudden, how sensible, how mighty is the Joy? Upon any accession of Beauty, or Ornament, how gay the Spirits, how cheerful the Countenance, how pleasing the innocent Pride of it? And let these instruct us, what Right, what Obligations we have, to take part in the good or ill Events of our Brethren, to think no Man’s Joys or Griefs entirely his own: To suspect our selves, whether we be really alive in that Body; when such a narrow Selfishness hath hardned us, as shuts out all tender Impressions; When cold, benummed, and quite forsaken of that reciprocal Sense, which
which the different Fortunes of our Fellow-members ought to create. Let these convince us too, that such Concern must not content it self with private and inward Refentments only, but be express'd by active and vigorous, ready and continual Assitances. That, as one part of the Body submits, to be wounded, or blistered, or scarifi'd, or to Nauseatings, or Gripings; to discharge the Humours settled in Another, and set the Whole at ease; So should we, be far from grudging any supportable degree of expence or trouble, for the Benefit of the Distressed and Injured; and esteem every Member's Sufferings a Calamity to the Body in common. Consequently, That we do not weep with the Afflicted as we ought, except we dry up their Tears, by labouring to relieve those Afflictions, from whence they flow. We do not rejoice with the Prosperous as we ought, without ceasing to envy, and desiring to add to, their Happines. Our Diligence, in both kinds, must go to the very utmost of our Powers. They, who have Opportunities, must distribute to the Necessities of Saints, and be given to Hospitality. Nay, they must even court and hunt after such Opportunities, seek them with an eager Zeal, and think themselves to have obtained a Prize worth all their pains, when they have the good fortune to find them. They who cannot do thus, must at least wish they could, and never want the Disposition, when they have not the Ability. And, since our Prayers are confined within no bounds, These must stretch themselves all the World over. For, in regard Christ hath dispersed his Church over the face of the whole Earth, the distance of Place makes no difference in the degree of Relation. They are still Members, and the same Body with our selves; And We must love, and be touch'd with a sensible Regard, must intercede with, and give Thanks to our common Head, for them.
5. Fifthly, In regard this Union is Divine and Spiritual, instituted to promote the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Souls; it should be our earnest and constant Study, to promote, and come up, as near as may be, to a perfect Unity in Religion. Now the only way, 'tis plain, for uniting Souls, is by an Agreement and Consent of their several Faculties. Thus Men are united in their Understandings, when they believe and acknowledge the same Holy Truths, and abide by the same Principles. In their Wills and Affections; when they pursue the same Ends, express the same Desires, and bear the same Love to that which is good, and to one another. This, added to the former, makes up what the Apostle calls, *Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* From these Two should follow an uniform Behaviour and Consent of Action, termed by the same Apostle, *Walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing.* When we jointly advance, the same common Interests. When, as becomes a Body animated by one Spirit, we all attend, without Distraction, to the Furtherance of Piety and Peace, to the Salvation of Souls, to the adorning our Profession, by undissembled Goodness, and a wise well-govern'd Zeal: When we, with one Mouth, as well as one Mind, glorify God, and, like Strings tuned to the same Sound, make that Worship harmonious and uniform, which is established to express this Union, and is so admirably contrived for Edification and Decency. Well were it, if these Engagements were duly laid to heart, by those busy Factors for the Devil, who employ their Wits and Pens, in poysoning the easy and unstable, with profane, lewd, or heretical Principles; Well, if they would remember them too, who for Interest, or Prejudice, or Peevishness, break the Order, and depart from the Communion of a set-
The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Gospel.

John ii. 1.

A ND the third day there was a Marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there.

1. Three days after Jesus came into those Parts (see Chap. i. 43.) there was a Feast for a Marriage, probably of some of his Mother's Relations, where she was present.

2. They therefore in- And both Jesus was called, and his Disciples, to vited Him, and those the Marriage.
Disciples who attended him.

3. And
3. And when they wanted wine, the Mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine. 

3. Upon their Provision of Wine falling short, his Mother desired him to supply them.

4. Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come. 

4. Jesus replied, That this was not a matter proper for her Authori-

ty to interpose in; and, that Miracles were not to be wrought for gratifying the Request of Friends, but had their proper seasons, of which he was the best Judge.

5. His Mother said unto the Servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it. 

5. His Mother, (who seems not to have taken this for an absolute De-
nial, but as an Intimation rather, that he would refer himself till it was proper) bad those that attended, be sure to observe any Orders he should give them.

6. And there were set there six Water-pots of Stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three Firkins apiece. 

6. Now there stood six large Vessels, the use whereof was to hold Water, that might be always at hand to serve for the several sorts of Washings, which the Law obliged the Jews frequently to repeat.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the Water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. 

7. Jesus said unto them, Fill the Water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim.

8. And thereunto, Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of the Feast. And they bare it. 

8. And he said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of the Feast. And they bore it.

9. When the Ruler of the Feast had tasted the Water that was made Wine, and knew not whence it was, but the Servants which drew the Water knew; the Governor of the Feast called the Bridegroom, 

9. When the Ruler of the Feast had tasted the Water that was made Wine, and knew not whence it was, but the Servants which drew the Water knew; the Governor of the Feast called the Bridegroom.

10. And saith unto him, Every man in the beginning doth set forth good Wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good Wine until now. 

10. And he said unto him, Every man in the beginning doth set forth good Wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good Wine until now.

11. This beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his Disciples believed on him. 

11. This was the first Instance Jesus gave of his Divine Power, which had its intended Effect, by confirming the Faith of those Disciples, whom the first Chapter relates to have lately come to him.

Comment.

THE Miracle here related, being the first that offers, as well in the History of our Blessed Saviour's
viour's Life, as in the course of this Work: I conceive it may be of some use, to premise somewhat concerning Miracles in general. Which I shall do, in the plainest and most instructive manner, that I can.

1. Now the First thing I observe on this occasion, is, That, upon all extraordinary and new Discoveries of God's Will to Mankind, recorded in Scripture, it appears to have been his constant Usage to strengthen their Authority by Miracles. The Power of working. These was usually imparted to the Persons, whom he thought fit to employ as Instruments, for publishing those Discoveries to the World. In proof of this there is no need to labour: The whole Historical Part of the Old, and New, Testament bear clear and ample Testimony to it. For, from the very first Call of Abraham, out of a Country, over-run with Idolatry and blind Superstition, down to the latest Memorials of St. Paul and the other Apostles, the Narrative of two thousand years Transactions abounds with Instances of this kind, so very numerous, that it were an Undertaking almost as endless, as it is superfluous, but barely to repeat them. Let it suffice then to remark, upon this occasion; that the End such wondrous Operations were designed to serve, is not merely the Manifestation of God's Almighty Power, but, generally speaking, the employing that Power so, as thereby to give Evidence to some important Truth, to establish the Authority of some eminent Teacher, to convince them who did not yet believe, or to confirm such as were still weak and wavering. They, who will be at the Pains to consider, and compare the Facts, and their several Circumstances, may quickly satisfy themselves, that this was their general Intent; and will easily discern one, or more of these Purposes, to have been the Motives, even where they were not the Effects, of them. They ought indeed to have been both. And we may justly think it matter of wonder, that
they should at any time fail of their intended Success; when that hath been considered, which I desire may be observed in the

2. Second Place. That there are few things, wherein Mankind seem to be more agreed, than in the Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Miracles, as an authentic and indisputable Testimony, that the Persons, entrusted with such Power, were employed by God. This Sense of the thing appears, from the Confession and Practice, not of such only, upon whom the Acknowledgment of the true God, and the Prejudices of Education, might be pretended to have Influence; but of Heathens and Idolaters too. Thus Pharaoh's Magicians confess the Miracles of Moses and Aaron, to be the Finger of God. Thus, in the Controversy between Elijah and the Priests of Baal, it was without any difficulty accepted, as a fair Proposal; that He, who answered by Fire from Heaven, should be unanimously served and worshipped: and accordingly upon that Prophet's Sacrifice being consumed, the Cause was immediately yielded. For all the People, when they saw it, fell on their Faces, and said, The Lord be is the God, the Lord be is the God. Thus Elijah desires, Naaman the Syrian might be sent to Him, that his miraculous Recovery from his Leprosy might make him know, there was a God in Israel. And this effect it had; as appears by his solemn Declaration, that he would thenceforth offer neither Burnt-offering nor Sacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord. Thus again Nebuchadnezzar, and after him Darius, was so affected, with the wonderful Deliverances of the three Children, and Daniel; as presently to reverse their impious Decrees, to put to Death the Advisers of their Punishment, to advance these peculiar Favourites of Heaven to the highest Trusts, and to enjoin the Worship of the only

Exod. viii. 19.
1 Kings xiv. 24, 31. 39.
2 Kings v. 8, 17.
Dan. iii. & iv.
ly true God, by a most solemn Ordinance, to take
place throughout their whole Dominions. Can we,
after all this, think it strange, that, in a Country
so much better informed, so much more accustomed
to Events of this kind, a Learned Ruler of the Jews
should in these terms accost our Blessed Lord, Rabbi,
we know, that thou art a Teacher come
from God; for no Man can do these Mirac-
cles that thou doest, except God be with him? Or, that a
mean Man, who had been born blind, should take the
Confidence to confront a whole Assembly of Pharisees,
with this Argument, Since the world be-
gan was it not beard, that any Man open-
ed the Eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were
not of God, he could do nothing? Or, that a Confult of
wicked Rulers should assign this, as a politick Reason
for conspiring the Death of Jesus; This Man doth ma-
y Miracles; If we let him thus alone, all
Men will believe on him? Or lastly, that
our Blessed Saviour himself should put the Credit of
his Doctrine upon this short Issue; If I do not the Works
of my Father, believe Me not; But if I do,
though ye believe not Me, believe the Works;
that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me,
and I in Him?

I forbear sundry other Passages to the same effect:
presuming, that these suffice to make it plain, how
received a Testimony this of Miracles was, and what
Success it hath used to meet with, in all Ages and Parts
of the World. The Obstinacy of Some that have
stood out against it, proves it indeed to have been
not a compulsive or invincible Argument; for no-	hing can be so to Reasonable Agents. But the Suffi-
ciency of it hath been abundantly seen, as upon other
Occasions, so especially in the Entertainment it pre-
pared for the Gospel, with All, whose Minds were
not before block’d up, by those two ordinary im-
pregnable
pregnable Barrier, Wilful Ignorance; and Worldly Interest.

To what we find in Scripture, concerning the easy and favourable Reception of True Miracles, our own Reason may add a Second Argument, from the Contri-

ance and Forgery of false ones. For every Counter-

feit supposes something, not only of Reality, but of Excellence too, which it hopes to gain the Opinion of, by such artful Dissimulation. Thus Hypocrisy in Religion speaks a confess'd Goodness in Piety and Virtue; and a plausible Lye, the Estimate of Truth. And, as there would be no false Jewels, or false Money, if true Stones and Standard had not both been, and been high in value too: So, had no Miracles been ever wrought; Or had they not been, in the nature of the thing, fitted to succeed in the Purposes they were wrought for; It could neither have entred into any Man's head to pretend to them; nor could such Pretences have turn'd to any account. The frequent Impostures of this kind therefore, which some think to take Advantage from, against Miracles in general, seem rather to conclude the quite contrary way. And instead of inferring, Because many have been false, there were never any true: It carries a much better face of reason to say, if there had not been many confessedly True, it can hardly, if at all, be conceived so much as possible, that there should ever have been One False; Less yet, that any single Man should have been deluded by it.

This seems to be the case of Miracles, as to the End, and the Fact; I only add in the Third place, That the Nature of These is such, as renders them the most proper and convincing Evidences that can be, of the thing they are meant to prove: A Commission, I mean from Almighty God, to the Worker of them, and to the Truth of what he shall declare to us in His Name. And in this point, I hope, the Three fol-

E
ollowing Considerations may be admitted, for sufficient Satisfaction.

1. First, That by Miracles are properly understood such Events, as exceed the Power of Nature and ordinary Means, and which the Agent could never effect, by any Skill or Strength of his own. There are many Accidents unusual and strange; Many Compositions and Productions in Nature prodigious and monstrous; These happen very seldom, and for that reason surprize us very much, when they do. But, because the result of some secret Powers, and the uncommon coincidence of Causes, make them at least possible to be accounted for, that way; they are not, in strict speaking, Miraculous, though Strange, and full of Wonder. The ground of which Distinction lies in this; that settled Rules, and natural Causes, cannot be marks of a Presence, and Power, immediately divine. The Notions of God and his Providence do all confirm that Remark of the Psalmist, He commanded and all things were created: He hath established them for ever and ever; be hath given them a Law, which shall not be broken. So that these regular Appointments in Nature are under the same Conditions with all other Laws; which cannot be superseded by any Authority less than that, from whence they derived their Sanction at first. When any Subject then receives an Operation, of which it is not naturally capable; Or, which though it be capable of, yet this is by such Means, as are not naturally fitted to produce it; These Operations are miraculous. Nor need it here to give us any great trouble, that the Wisest of Men cannot exactly determine, how far the Powers of Nature may go. Because in these Matters it is enough, that there are many Cases, to which the plainest Man alive may be as sure, as he can be of any thing, that they cannot possibly go. And therefore, when dead Carcases are re-
stored to Life; when Diseases, inveterate and incurable, are recovered; When natural Defects are supplied, by a Touch, or a Word, or at a Distance, and in an Instant, without any Application or Medicine; No doubt can remain, whether a Principle above Nature do not bring these marvellous things to pass. And, since Men are a part of the Creation thus limited and restrained by Natural Laws and Powers; if They shall at any time over-rule and transcend these; What can we think, but that this is by the extraordinary assistance of the Common Creator and Lord; who reserves to himself that incommunicable Character of Sovereignty, by which his stated Methods are set aside? This then proves the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, the Prophets, and Apostles, and other holy Men, to be the Works of God, in and by Them; that they were Instances far out of the reach of Human Strength or Wisdom; and beside, above, or contrary to, the established Rules of Natural Causes, and ordinary Providence.

2. Secondly, The constant Apprehensions, which both Reason and Revelation hath given us of God, forbid us to imagine, that he will employ his Power to deceive his Creatures. Of all the divine Perfections, none shine brighter, or are more amiable in our Eyes, than Truth and Goodness. The Former cannot attest to a Lye, nor the Latter seduce Men into dangerous and destructive Mistakes. To these we are beholden for our Certainty in things of common use; and that, though Men differ sometimes about the report of their Senses, in matters of Speculation; yet all the World agrees in it, so far as is necessary, for the support and convenience of Human Life. And, if so good care be taken, in cases common, and of less importance; much more secure of it may we be, where God immediately interposes, and where a right or wrong Judgment is sure to prove
prove of the last consequence to us. For, What Idea can we have of a Cruelty more monstrous, more per-
fidious, than to leave Men bewildred and lost in their Eternal Concerns? Men, that have proceeded with all possible Prudence and Caution, that have suspend ed their Belief till a Miracle took off the Scruple? To suspect, I say, that Almighty God is capable of employing Infinite Power, and disturbing the course of Nature, with a design to mislead and delude such wary, and honest, and teachable Men, is to destroy and subvert his Attributes, and leave our selves no No-
tion at all of such a Being. Nay, for Him to per-
mit the same Evidences to be produced for Errors, as for Truth, is in effect to cancel his own Credentials, and make Miracles of no significance at all. Thus much may serve to justify Men in embracing that Do-
ctrine, which comes confirmed by Miracles; that these are extraordinary Demonstrations of God's Power: and, that God, as Being perfectly True and Good, could not set his Seal to a forged Instrument, nor will he suffer it to be so nicely counterfeited, as should lead wary and well-intending Men into Deceit and Damna-
tion. For this were to set Truth and Error upon the same foot, by allowing both to produce the same Evidence, the same Signatures of His Direction and Approbation, in their own behalf; and consequently, to perplex the most important matters, and introduce Scepticism and eternal Confusion.

3. Thirdly, Miracles have this peculiar Advantage, that they come home to the Mind presently, and put Men upon Consideration more powerfully, than any other Motive whatsoever. The comparing things, and the weight of the Reasons produced for them toge ther, is a work, that all People are not fitted for. And even They, who think themselves most so, have yet often been imposed upon, by false Colours, and those deceitful Arts of Arguing, which Men of Skill make
make use of, to cast a Mist before the plainest Truths, and to give the greatest Falshoods an air of Probability. But at the best, this is a Work of long and cool Thought, an Improvement, acquired by very slow degrees. A Miracle, on the other hand, pierces quite through the Soul, strikes all our Faculties at once, and, by offering it self to our bodily Senses, becomes an Argument for the meanest Capacities to judge of. It is not lost in idle Astonishment, and unprofitable Gazing, but carries the Beholders to a speedy Enquiry, and so surprises and instructs together.

Men immediately recollect, that this must be the Hand of God; from whence it is, that we find him stiled not only He that doth, but He who alone doth, great Wonders: and therefore Christ does most emphatically stile these the Works of his Father. They know that so wise a Ruler does not use to go out of the common way, nor break in upon his own Laws, except upon weighty Occasions. They are agreed, that the general reason of his doing so is the giving Credit to some Messenger and Message sent by him. Hence the Sareptan Widow, upon receiving her Son brought to life again by Elijah, presently breaks out into that natural Inference, Now by this I know that thou art a Man of God, and that the Word of God in thy Mouth is Truth. Hence the Multitudes, upon our Lord's dispossessing an unclean Devil, cry out, What thing is this? What new Doctrine is this? for with Authority he commandeth even the unclean Spirits, and they do obey him. Then they feel themselves excited to Attention and Reverence, and look for other collateral Motives of Persuasion. But 'tis the Miracle, that first turns the Scale, and fixes the Mind at large from Infidelity or Suspence.
This shews the Force of Miracles, to rouze Men out of their unthinking Indifference to holy things, and to determine their Judgments, when they apply themselves to think in good earnest. And it shews the Necessity of them also to plant new Articles of Faith. Because no Man is bound to receive any Revelation as God's, from those Publishers, who are not able to produce His Attestation of it. So good reason had the Jews to require Miracles of our Lord; So good had He, upon all Occasions, to appeal to them: So inexcusable was their Perverseness, when refusing an Assent to his Doctrine, which he so frequently, so rightfully challenged, upon this account.

Let this suffice to be spoken of Miracles in general; The Usefulness, the End of them, the Sense of Mankind concerning them, the Acceptation and Effect they found with impartial and considering People; and Their natural Tendency to dispose Men for Consideration and Conviction. I now proceed to the Particular Miracle, set before us in the Gospel for this Day. Wherein the following Circumstances more especially call for our Observation.

1. First, The not working it till after some Delay.  
2. Secondly, The prudent Manner of doing it. And  
3. Thirdly, The Efficacy of it, when done.

1. First, The not working it till after some Delay. To take this matter right, it is requisite to observe, that the Virgin, in some pain, as it should seem, for the Trouble her Friends would be under, for an Entertainment too short for their Company, acquaints Jesus with their want of Wine. To this he replies, in Terms so seemingly rough, that Interpreters have been at some trouble about their Meaning. Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come. The Complaint implied a desire of Help from him in this Exigence; But, in cases, where a Heavenly Father's Honour
Honour is to be the governing Principle, an earthly Mother's Authority is quite suspended. And though He, who made all Times, could not be under Subjection to any, nor restrained in his Power, at one Hour more than another; yet there was an Order to be observed, which would give a Gracefulness and Efficacy to all his Works. And Miracles were not to be wrought at all Adventures, for gratifying the Curiosity of Staniders-by, or the Importunity of Friends and Relations; but had their proper Seasons, of which his own Divine Wisdom could best Judge, and was not to be directed in. This seems the most probable Sense of these Words. In which, as we must not suspect any thing of disrespect or indecent heat; so neither can we discover a positive Denial. For the next thing his Mother does, (after receiving that Re- buke, due for interposing, farther than her Character could bear her out) is to order the Servants, that whatsoever Jesus should say to them, they should be careful to do it. Here then we have Two things to enquire into, Why our Lord deferred this Miracle at all, and, Why, that seeming Refusal notwithstanding, he did it afterwards.

1. His deferring it at first was highly prudent, to prevent all Suspicion of Ostentation and Vanity. For, though, in the following part of his Ministry, we find him often complying with Peoples first Requests, yet his Circumstances then, and now, were very different. When his Fame had been spread abroad throughout all the Regions round about, and every Tongue set forth his noble Acts; it better became him, as occasions offered, readily to exert his Power. But at present he was not known to the World; His Disciples were but few, and fresh Comers, and even his most intimate Acquaintance had not yet any due Apprehensions concerning him. Now he,
He, that made the Glory of God and the Good of Souls his aim, was obliged to set out warily, and stop, as much as might be, the Mouth of Prejudice and Cavil. And nothing could go farther toward fixing him a general Reputation, than Modesty. To put himself forward of his own accord, or to yield to a Mother's first Motions, might look like an Eagerness to catch at Admiration and Applause, to fall in with an intemperate Zeal for advancing his own Honour, and a shewing what he could do, rather than discerning what was fit to do. And therefore in this the Humility and Wisdom of the Blessed Jesus appeared, that he tempered his Goodness with Discretion, drew back upon the Instance of his dearest Relation, and stood upon the Reserve, for a more convenient Opportunity.

2. For answer that Request he did afterwards, and that with very good reason too. Some, from the Propriety of the Greek Expression, have supposed his Mother to speak, before the Wine was out, and when it grew so low, that she plainly saw there would not be enough. Now the Custom of our Saviour's Miracles is, to come in to Mens Succour, when human Helps are either past and ineffectual, or not to be had at all. The necessity therefore of that Supernatural Supply intended them, was fit to be felt and manifest; in order to recommend the Benefit it self, and to give the manner of their attaining it, a power of making the deeper Impression upon their Minds.

Nor is it unreasonable to imagine, that Affection, and Respect, and an Inclination to repair the Concern of a lately reproved Mother, might work upon the Sweetness of his Temper. Let's so still, to say, that the Vindication of, his own Honour demanded this Miracle from him. For, when the Servants had been charged with Obedience to his Directions, Matters
ters were gone too far to retreat, without incurring the Reproach of Weakness, and disappointing the Expectations, that had been raised of him. This Reason suits very well with that of his declining it before. For, having guarded against all Imputation of Forwardness and Vain-glory, it was then prudent to justify his Power. The failing in which might have proved of as ill Consequence, as the attempting it sooner, without a pressing Necessity. In this we can only offer a probable Account. The Next thing furnishes furer Grounds to go upon, I mean,

2. The prudent manner of working this Miracle, apparent in the Care our Lord took, so to order all the Circumstances of it, that there could remain no doubt, concerning the Reality of so wonderful a Change.

And this appears, First, from the Persons chosen to assist in it. For, though the same Almighty Power, which every Year turns Water into Wine, by the impregnating Warmth of the Sun, concocting the Juices of the Earth, and the Sap of the Trees that produce it, could have done so by this, in a moment of time, without any Helper: Though he could with the same ease have created Wine out of nothing, and filled the empty Vessels with a Word of his Mouth; Yet was he pleased to use the Ministry of Others, the Servants of the House, and such as could not be thought in any Confederacy with him. These poured the Water in with their own Hands; These therefore were so many unexceptionable Witnesses, that what themselves knew to be common Water, was quickly after, by the same Hands, drawn out generous Wine.

2. The same prudent care appears, Secondly, in the Vessels singled out for that purpose. Which, the Sixth Verse tells us, were Six Water-pots of Stone, after the man-
manner of purifying the Jews. A Remark of great
Weight and Significance, in this Affair.
For the Jews, being commanded frequent
Washings, to take off those Legal Pollu-
lutions, which there was no avoiding in
their daily Conversation; and they be-
ing nice in these Washings, even to a
Superstition; Every Man took care to
provide himself with large Vessels, that he might ne-
ever want Water at home, for any the most sudden E-
mergency. Now this being designed for a Holy Use,
it was reckoned a Sin and heinous Profanation, to put
any thing but Water, into those Vessels. So that here
was no room for suspecting any thing of Wine, in
those Pots of Stone before.

3. It appeared, Thirdly, in ordering those Servants
to hear to the Governor of the Feast. For
such a one it was the Custom of those
Countries to have. A Person of Sobriety and Gravity,
whose business it was, to see the Entertainment ma-
naged by his Directions; and to keep all, even the
Guests themselves, within the Rules of Decency. His
Judgment and Palate therefore is referred to, as more
accurate, and less vitiated. These Circumstances all
conspired to advance the Credit of the Miracle. And
they are all agreeable with the general Method of our
Lord; who does not, upon these occasions, aim at
Pomp and Shew, but Proof and Attestation; and la-
bours not to astonish Men, except in order to persua-
ding and convincing them. Thus he did, and thus it
became him to do, who honoured not himself, but the
Father that sent him; and sought not his own Praise,
but the Good and Salvation of those, to whom he
was sent.

4. Once more. I observe the Excel-
ence of this Miracle, from the Quantit-
ty, and the Goodness, of the Wine. Of
the
the Former the Sixth Verse, of the Latter the Ninth and Tenth give us a particular account. So that, you see, as all other Considerations concur to recommend this Wonder; the Plenty, the Perfection of it, and the Bounty of the Worker, do so likewise. Even of that God, whose Power is never stinted; at whose Dispositional all Creatures are, and who, with the but opening of his Hand, satisfies the desire of every living thing. 

Psalm cxlv. 16.

III. The Efficacy of this Miracle comes, in the last place, to be considered. Of which S. John says, that in this beginning of Miracles Jesus manifested for his glory, and his Disciples believed on him. The importance whereof may probably be best understood, by taking notice of a particular Signification, put by the Jews upon the Word Glory. Whereby they intended the visible Marks of God's special Presence with, and Residence among them, in the Tabernacle first, and afterwards the Temple. Hence their Ark is called the Ark of the Testimony, the Dwelling or Tabernacle of God. And when that Ark fell into the Enemies hand, the name of a Child designed to intimate so sad a Calamity, is I-chabod: The Glory is not: because, says the Text, the Ark of God was taken. Hence David begging to be restored to the place of publick Worship, the Temple at Jerusalem, expresses that Happiness, by seeing God's Glory; and St. Paul says, that over the Tables of the Covenant were the Cherubims of Glory shadowing the Mercy-seat.

1 Samuel iv. 27.

Psalm lxiii. 2.

Hebrews ix. 4.

But the same Apostle calls all those things a Figure, and a Shadow of Christ. Whose Incarnation S. John is therefore thought to describe with a peculiar Elegance, when saying, that the Word was made Flesh, and set up his Tabernacle among us, resided in our Nature, and

John i. 14.
made a humane Body his Veil; In all which Phrases there is a Correspondence, and Allusion to that Veil in the Temple, which separated the visible Tokens of God's Presence from common Sight. Then he goes on, And we beheld his Glory, a Divine Presence, not like that under the Law, of Rigor and figurative Importance, but such as brought Grace instead of Severity, and Truth instead of Shadows. The word Glory then, applied to Christ, denotes the same God to have exhibited himself to us in this Person, who formerly exhibited himself to the Jews in their Temple. And, by manifesting forth this Glory, we are to understand, that Christ did something, which plainly proved his Power to be Divine; and argued the actual Presence of God with, and in, his humane Body.

And, Who indeed less than God could have the Creatures of this lower World so absolutely at his Disposal, as to make them start from their fix'd Laws of Being, and change their Natures and Qualities in an instant? He only could repeal these Laws, who made them. He only could alter their Forms, who at first appointed them. And when this was done, without invoking the Aid of any Higher Power, it was an evidence of no Higher Power to have recourse to. It shewed the Authority, by which he did it, to be supreme, as well as the Creatures such Authority was exercised upon, to be entirely his own.

I only add a few Practical Reflections, and will be brief in each of them.

1. The First: our Church hath drawn for me, in one of her excellent Offices; It is the Honour due to a Married State. Had this been unbecoming the Purity of his most sanctified Disciples, would our most Holy Master, think you, have graced such a Solemnity with his own Presence? Would that Pattern, that Fountain of all Purity, have chosen a polluted Ordinance, for the Occasion of his first Miracle, Nay,
Nay, which is more, Would the Holy Ghost have represented the Union between Him and his Church, by that Union between Man and Wife? I urge not here the Conjecture, because but a Conjecture, that this Feast was for the Marriage of that very Disciple, whom Jesus loved: But I ought not to forbear, and will leave you to apply, that Character given by St. Paul, who, without limitation to Persons of any Quality, declares, that Forbidding to Marry is one mark of Seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.  

Secondly, Let me, after the Example of many, who have treated of this Passage, exhort all, who enter into that State, to imitate these Persons of Cana in Galilee, by inviting Jesus to the Marriage. My meaning I cannot better express, than in the words of the same Office, that we ought not to undertake so considerable an alteration of our Circumstances, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy the carnal appetite; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Which I take to be of that Consequence to the Happiness of Mankind, that scarce any thing can be more. And certainly no body ought to wonder at the Coldness, the Indifference, nay it were well if I could stop there, but I must say too, the Variance and Divisions, the scandalous Separations, and yet the more scandalous Cohabitations, of the nearest Relations; By which so many Families are undone in their Fortunes, dishonoured in their Blood, tainted with Diseases, corrupted in their Education, ruined by dometick Patterns of Vice. These, I say, are Consequences which no wise Man can think strange, where so many Matches are made, in which the true Ends of them are never consulted. Where Wisdom, and Virtue, and Religion, and Agreeablenes of Humour, and Modesty of Behaviour are wholly over-look'd; and the Beauty and Fortune are
are the only Inducements: This indeed may be to call
Mammon, or Venus, but it is perfectly to shut out Chrift
and his Disciples, from the Marriage.

Thirdly, I hope it will not, because I know it
ought not, be thought unbecoming my Profession, to
say, that this Passage shews, how little ground there
is, for that stiff and precise Temper, which condemns
all outward Expressions of Mirth, by publick and so-
lemn Entertainments. Our Lord's Example hath
justified such Meetings of Friends in more
Instances besides this; and indeed his
Life throughout is a Pattern of Social
Virtues. And, provided the Mirth be in-
ocent, the Conversation inoffensive, the
Enjoyment of God's good Creatures moderate; I think
no considering Man can deny, but that they are ca-
 capable of serving many good purposes; and it is plain
too, that they do not bring us under any necessity of
Sin. So that, if any spiritual Inconvenience follow,
the blame is not due to the Things, but to the Abuse of
them. And this is no more, than every thing else is
liable to, as well as these.

Lastly, Let us intreat our merciful Saviour, That
he would repeat this Miracle over again, in every one
of our Hearts. That he would take compassion on
our Frailties, which render us dead and insipid, weak
and unstable as Water: and that he would endue us
with a generous and a strong, even with his own hea-
venly Spirit. That we may get above that Flatness
and Coldness, too common in holy Duties; and serve
him with Sprightliness and Vigour. He, who an-
swered at last the Request of his Mother, will most
graciously suffer himself to be vanquished by our Im-
portunities. And oh! that We, by the help of his
Grace, may be able to draw out such good Wine, as
the great Governor of the Feast will condescend to
accept: Even of that Feast, where He himself is the
Bride-
Bridegroom, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Fit and prepare us all, Dearest Redeemer, to sit down with thee at thy Table, in thy Kingdom; and then consummate thy Nuptials, and our Happines. Yea come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

A Mighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our Infirmities, and in all our Dangers and Necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle.

Rom. xii. 16.

16. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Wisdom blow you up into disdain of others, or dispose you to use them ill.

17. Recompence to no man evil for evil, Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Nay, if others use you so, do not return it in the same kind. In the mean while do nothing unbecoming your Character, nothing that may offend, or give any body any occasion of using you so.

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

Live in Love and Peace with every body. And if some be so unreasonableness, that after all you can do, they will not live so with you; be sure that the ground of this Division do not begin on your part: and when begun, use all your Endeavours to heal up the Breach again.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not your selues, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

But I beg of you, by all the tender affection I bear you, take not the matter into your own Hands by private Revenge, but leave that to God, and wait his leisure to do you right: for you know, the Scripture says, this belongs to Him, and you must not usurp what he hath referred to himself.

20. There-
20. But repay wrongs with kindness, and relieve the necessities of them that hate you: for this will either melt down your Enemy into Repentance for his faults, to add to his Punishment, if, after such meekness and charity, he still remain obdurate.

21. Never give any Man that Advantage over you, that his doing a base or unjust thing should prevail with You to do the like. But maintain your Virtue, and get the glory of softening and vanquishing his ill, by your good, nature.

COMMENT.

After those Duties, which we are obliged to perform toward our Common Head, as mystical Members of Christ’s Body; After those, which more immediately concern our Selves, with regard to the Station and Office, appointed us to hold in that Body; After those, to which our Brethren have a right, who seem sensible of the near Relation between us, and desirous to discharge their part; The Apostle now proceeds to direct our Behaviour toward such, as either are not of that Body, or carry themselves to us, as if they were not. So that the whole of what remains to be said upon this Chapter, may not unfairly be reduced to that General Topick of Virtue, mentioned only in my last, but referred to this Discourse, for the Consideration due to it. That, I mean, of Meekness, and Constancy under Persecutions and Wrongs. In which the Scripture before us gives me a fair occasion to observe, First, The Methods proper for preventing such Injuries; and Secondly, The Deportment, which becomes Christians, when they have the unhappiness of suffering under them.

I begin with explaining the Methods, proper for preventing our falling under such Injuries and Tryals.

1. The
1. The first of these is a moderate opinion of our selves, and our abilities, expressed by not being wise in our own conceits. Wisdom is a perfection, peculiar to reasonable creatures. Which, though all men are far from declaring their persuasion of, by a becoming diligence for attaining it; yet every man thus far declares it, as, upon no occasion, to think his honour more sensibly wounded, than by reproaches for want of it. And as no fancied excellence is apt to blow us up so much, as those, which raise the opinion of our own understanding; so it may be truly said, that no one quality disposes us, either to do, or to resent any wrongs, comparably to that of entertaining lofty conceits of our sufficiency. For all anger proceeds upon a notion of contempt, and the sting of provocation lies in the thought of our being treated, not only unjustly, but unworthily; that we are slighted and undervalued, and looked upon, as little, and of no consideration, by them who take the liberty of using us ill. This reflection chiefly pushes us on to revenge, that we may make them, to their cost, know what we are, and how much we can do, to vindicate our selves, and annoy them. From hence it follows, that resentments will naturally hold proportion, with that esteem men have of themselves; and suppose they deserve from others. Hence Solomon calls it proud wrath, and the person that dealeth in it, proud and haughty scorner. Daily experience proving, that the better and greater themselves, and the less other people, are in their eyes, the more jealous of affronts, the more peevish and perverse, the more contentious and fierce men generally are: more disposed to pick quarrels, where there is no occasion; and more implacable and averse to reconciliation; where there hath been any real occasion given. And, if this be so, as we plainly find and feel
it is, then it must needs follow too, that, the more favourable Thoughts we entertain of our Brethren, and the less partial we are to our Selves, the nearer to a Level we come; And so shall be less apt, either to provoke, or to be transported beyond due Bounds, when We shall, at any time, happen to be provoked, by Injuries and Indignities. Now to this Level no Consideration can be better fitted to reduce us, than That so very often urged already, of our being, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Wise or Ignorant, till all one Body together in Christ, and every one Members one of another.

2. The Next Expedient offered for this purpose, is to provide things honest in the sight of all men. By which we are to look upon our selves obliged, not only to all those Duties, which the Laws of God or Man have bound upon us; but to all that Prudence and Decency in our Conduct, that may secure to us the Character of Discretion, as well as of Virtue. For there are infinite Occurrences in a Man's Life, wherein all that is lawful may be far from edifying or being expedient: Many Liberties no where forbidden, which yet are better not taken: Many Actions no where expressly commanded, which yet are very fit to be done. And again, when we do these, or abtain from those, the very Manner and Circumstances of the Thing may prove of great moment, either for adorning or recommending, or for tarnishing the Lustre, and taking off from the Beauty and Acceptableness, of such Restraints or Actions. This opens a spacious Field for the exercice of our Wisdom and Caution, and the End it hath principally in view, is Reputation and general Esteem. The seeking whereof, by all fair means, is a Respect due to our Brethren: Who ought to be satisfied, that we pay a just Deference to their Judgment, and are exceedingly desirous to stand well with them.
them. And it is certainly a doing great right to our selves, by gaining Credit and Authority; Which, as it enables us to be more successful in doing good, so will it prove one of the best Guards against suffering Evil. 'Tis so, by cutting off occasion from them that would be glad to find it; and by drawing down a general Censure and Detestation of our Enemies, by providing us with Favours and Friends; and by hindering Others from countenancing and abetting the unreasonable Attempts of them, who use us ill, where no occasion can be found for their doing so.

This is the true ground of those Exhortations, so frequent in these Epistles, that the Converts to the Faith would be careful to walk in Wisdom toward them that are without; to have their Conversation honest among the Gentiles; to give none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God; to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and a great many more to the same purpose. All these are inculcated for this plain reason more immediately; that the Mouths of Gainsayers might be stopp'd, the Hands of their Adveraries tied up, and the Inoffensiveness, as well as Innocency of their Lives be their Security, against the Malice and Cruelty of those persecuting Ages. For, though many wicked People do really act against all Sense and Reason; yet none are so abandoned, and lost to Shame, as not to desire to have it thought, they do otherwife. And therefore it is observable, that the Primitive Persecutions were constantly introduced by Calumnies; with an Intent, that ill Impressions upon Peoples Minds might prepare the way, and reconcile them, to the Barbarities they were about to see inflicted. And accordingly, the Champions of this Religion were always more solicitous to guard against the Slanders, than the Swords, of Persecutors.
As knowing very well, that to wipe away these effectually, was the most ready and effectual Course of sheathing, or at least of blunting the Edge of the Other.

And surely, the Reflection upon our Union in Christ is, or ought to be, a very prevailing Motive, to that Care and Circumspection, which hath so direct an Influence upon the Safety of the Body, and the Honour of the Head. A Care, which advances the Credit of that Religion, whereby we are thus knit together; strikes Gainfayers dumb, and is so necessary to preserve even our Good from being evil spoken of.

3. The Third Thing here enjoined, as a probable Method for prevention of Outrage and Injuries, we have at the 18th Verse; If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. St. Peter indeed asks that Question, Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? And he had reason; for none, but such as are monstrously brutish, will. But yet, since such Monsters there are to be found in the World, (too many of those, whom our Apostle elsewhere mentions under the Character of unreasonable wicked men) the cautious manner of expressing this Duty was no more than needful. For Peace with all the World, though a most desirable Blessing, may yet be bought too dear; and therefore we are not left free to seek it, upon any Terms, not consistent with the rest of our Duty. When Stedfastness to the Faith we ought to profess, when Zeal for the Truth and Glory of God, when Constancy and Courage in Virtue, are made Grounds of a Difference; and nothing less than our foregoing these, will be accepted, for an accommodation of it; in such like Cases Peace becomes impossible. All we have left to do then, is to convince the World, that we are not
the Aggressors; that we neither begun the Quarrel
nor have a desire to continue it; that, whatever can
be reconciled with our higher Obligations, we are
ready to do; willing to depart from our Own Right,
though we cannot give up God's; always disposed to
be reconciled, and to forgive the Wrongs, for which
we never gave any Caufe or Provocation. This is as
much as in us lieth, and This they who decline, are no
longer true Subjects of the Prince of Peace, no Dis-
ciples of that Master, who at his Death bequeathed
Peace to us, as the most valuable Legacy he could
leave; no living Members of that Head, who vouch-
safed to become our Peace-offering; no longer actual
Parts of one another, when they rend the Body, dif-
quiet and devour their Fellow-members; in short,
when they do not endeavour to procure and preserve,
as they are taught to pray for, Peace al-
ways by all means. And thus I am, almost
insensibly, brought within the compafs of my Second
Head, wherein I proposed to consider,

II. The Deportment becoming Christians, when
they shall at any time happen to suffer, under Persecu-
tions and Wrongs of any kind.

The First Rule for which purpose I shall offer from
those Words, Recompence to no man evil
for evil. The Words indeed, if taken in
their utmost Extent, will include the Whole, said here
upon this occasion. But I chuse to treat of them, as
a Rule distinct from the rest; because I find some of
the best Interpreters applying them to a lower De-
gree of Meekness and Charity, than those that fol-
low after; and confining them to a Sense, that de-
notes, not so much the doing Evil, as the forbear-
ing to do Good, after the Example of another. If
any one (fay they) having been wanting to You
in Offices of Kindness, which you have very well
deserved, and had all the reason in the World
to
to expect from him; but not that Refusal or Neglect in Him, provoke You to the like Refusal and Omission; but be sure to do Your Part, even to Them, who have not done Theirs to You.' Be the Reasonableness of thus understanding the Words before us as it will; yet to be sure the Rule itself is reasonable, and a very necessary one, to have Men put in mind of. For, how many may we meet with every Day, who disclaim all Thoughts of Malice and Revenge, and say, they would not, for the World, do their Enemies the least hurt; while at the same time they hold themselves privileged, and abundantly dispensed with, from doing them any sort of good? Whereas, in truth, whatever it be of kindness or respect, or any manner of courtesy, that others may justly claim, upon the account of Neighbourhood, or Relation, or their Condition and Quality in the World, or any Obligation, not directly founded upon Gratitude, or particular Friendship, or intimate Acquaintance, or the like; The denying this, upon any Offence or Omission of theirs, I apprehend to be a breach of Christian Charity, and of the Rule before us. The reason is, because such Omissions or Offence can dissolve no Obligations, besides those, that result from the doing what was omitted, or not doing what offended; But they cannot, in the reason of the Thing, have influence upon those, that belong to Men in other Capacities; and would have done so, whether any familiar Intercourse, or Acts of Friendship, had pafs'd between us or not. And this may possibly be one reason for the place these Words have, in the Chapter. Such continuance of Our kindness and regards to Them, who have disappointed our Expectations of Theirs, being what the Wise and the Good cannot but value Us, and the Principle we are moved to do it by, very greatly for. So that the Connexion here is justifiable enough, when after Recompensing to no man
man evil for evil, we are immediately call'd upon, to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

2. The Second Rule is that, of not avenging our selves, but rather giving place unto wrath. By which is meant, that we should by no means take the Cause into our own Hands, and pretend to right our selves, by repaying Injuries and Affronts, with the same, or greater. For which indeed it were an easy matter to produce several Reasons unanswerable, would we but submit to consider them, as becomes Men and Christians: They are, Resentment and Passion, and Partiality, and Phantastical Notions of false Honour, which suggest the direct contrary to this Command; and would almost persuade Men, that they even do well to be angry, and take Revenge, and have recourse to Violence, and the private Sword. Against these vicious Motives I may the better content my self to set the few Arguments now before us, because to Men of Christian Principles They will suffice; and to Them who are not so, None ever will. In the mean while, for the setting these in a more convenient and distinct view, I shall first observe, how high the Duty is carried, and then the Arguments made use of to enforce it.

3. The Next Pitch therefore of Virtue in this Point, I must carry you back for to the 14th Verse, Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not. These are, in signification the same, with those Words of our Blessed Lord himself, Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Supposing then, that even the hottest of our Passions should not flame out so fierce, as to devour all our Humanity, nor make us satisfied with being the Executioners of Vengeance in our own Persons; yet is not this enough. Not to revenge or punish may prove our Good-Nature; but somewhat more is necessary to prove our Christianity. We must not so much as
with that Calamity to come from any other Hand, which we decline inflicting with our own. We must not imprecate upon an Enemy the Wrath of God, for the gratifying a private Renfement. We must not take any pleasure in the Judgments that befall him, without our wishing; nay, we must wish well to, and intercede with God for him. And, to put the Sincerity of such Wishes past a doubt, we must our selves contribute our Assistance, toward his Comfort under, and Relief from, any Distresses, that shall overtake him.

4. For that's the last Rule at the 20th Verse: If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if be thirst, give him drink. The partaking of the same Nature, and the fame Passions, being liable to the same Wants, and feeling the same Uneasinesses from them, induce an Engagement of a Date without our very Being; One, that begun with it, and cannot be dissolved, but with it too. Since then our Enemy, though an ill or a perverse Man, is still a Man; no Act of His, which does not make him cease to be so, can make that Obligation cease, which is founded in his being such. And therefore this Duty, as rare as the practice of it is, hath yet its ground-work laid in natural Equity; and we never fail in the performance of it, without violence done to that self-evident Rule, of doing to others, whatsoever we would they should do to us. Nay, by proportion, we are bound to succour him in any imminent Danger or Extremity, as well as in those of Hunger and Thirst, specified here. To succour him, I say, where our Assistance may be of Service to keep him from perishing; And, even with violence done to our own most angry and most just Renfements, to let him see, that it is not possible to deserve so ill at our Hands; that the heavy Hand of God upon his Person, or his Fortunes, should be matter of Triumph or barbarous Joy to us. I only add, in Confirmation of what
what was even now said, that the Passage I am upon, is not the Apostle’s originally; but cited by him out of the Old Testament, and consequently, a Branch of that Moral Law, to which the Jews were able to discern the fitness of complying. The greater still must the Reproach needs be, upon those Christians, that shall stand out against it; whose Religion is intended, and excellently fitted, to soften their Hearts, and enlarge their Bowels; and, in all Instances of Humanity and Goodness, of Compassion and Mercy, far to exceed the Righteousness of those that went before them.

St. Paul was very sensible, with what Difficulty these Commands were like to be received, which had a Passion to encounter, as importunate and vehement, as any that Human Nature hath put into our Breasts. And therefore he takes care, not only to introduce and sweeten them, with that affectionate Compellation, Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, &c. but likewise to back and strengthen them, with very powerful Arguments. The Force whereof is the Last Thing to be considered upon this Occasion.

The First of These relates to Almighty God, The Second to our Enemies, The Last to our Selves. To Each I shall speak something very briefly.

That more immediately concerning Almighty God, we have in those Words, It is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Ver. 19.

Here we are put in mind, that God is the Judge and Governor of the World; that none of the Wrongs done to us, escape his Observation; that He hath referred to himself the Prerogative of calling to account, and making the Injurious smart for them; that He will not be wanting in this Part of His Justice and Power; that He hath appointed Methods, proper for the exercise of both those Attributes; and
and that, for Us to go out of those Methods, by taking the Matter into our own Hands, and carving out to our selves such Satisfaction, as Rage and angry Resentments suggest, is to usurp upon Him; and a presuming to do that, which no private Man upon Earth hath Commission to do.

Now the Methods provided by God for this End, are, Either the Interposition of Laws and Governors, Or else the Dispositions of his own Providence, by which the Fortunes and Events of Men are all ordered and disposed. From the Former we are allowed to seek for convenient Redress, where the Case is of weight to bear us out; Where the Consequence affects the Publick Good and Safety, Where the Impunity of the Offender would render his Wickedness insolent and insupportable. As often as any of these is the Case, we are permitted, and upon some of these accounts we are even obliged, to see, that Mens Injustice be chastised, and made an Example of, for the restraint of their own Sins, and for the prevention of the like in others. But here we must be very careful, that the Principle we go upon, be right; that the End we propose from such Proceedings, be our own fit and necessary Reparation, not the gratification of our fretted Spleen; that our Desire of such Punishment be determined, to the Amendment of the Transgressor, the common Security, the Honour of Justice, and Preservation of Order; not to the Detriment or Shame, the Vexation or Mischief of the Sufferer, but only so far forth, as these may contribute to such commendable Purposes.

The Latter, that of God's immediate Providence, is a Remedy for us to depend upon, where the ordinary one of Human Laws and Punishments have either made no provision, or such, as cannot conveniently be had. But this dependance must be limited, by the Conditions just now mentioned. It must not be
be such, as takes actual satisfaction, in contemplating and promising to our selves, the Judgments of God, or the Miseries of our Brethren, considered abstrac
tedly as such. Rather indeed this Argument should cen
ter in a Confidence of our own Safety, and certain Pro
tection from Above. For nothing can yield more substan
tial Comfort, to them who endure wrongfully, than that their being content so to do, and to wait His Time and good Pleasure, rather than to seek for Relief irregularly, is a committing of their Cause to God; a making it from thenceforth His Cause; and, that the doing such meek and patient Sufferers reason, is an Act of Justice done to himself.

The Second Argument, brought here against Re
venge, and even for Acts of Kindness to our Enemy, when his Calamities have reduced him to the need of them, is contained in these Words, For in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of fire upon his head.

A Phrase of doubtful Import, and capable of Two Significations. Both supported by great Authorities, Both very apposite to the Design of the Place. The One, That, by our Courteous and Charity we are much more likely to reduce them that hate, and have dealt ill by us, to a Sense of their Fault; and by our Kind
ness melt them down effectually into deep Remorse, sincere Repentance, and suitable Returns for so gene
rous a Compassion. There are, it is to be hoped, but few Instances, of Tempers so inflexibly obstinate and perverse, as not to be won by Gentleness unmo
ded, and Pity undeserved; as not to feel, and im
prove upon, the Reproaches, of a Behaviour so unlike their own, when preserved by those very Persons, whose Harm and Destruction themselves had wished and laboured. Whereas, repaying Affront with Affront, and Force with Force, serves only to inflame angry Minds the more, to sharpen the Contention, and perpetuate the Quarrel. And thus Some under
stand,
stand, by giving place unto wrath, the withdrawing out of the way, and leaving our Enemy to be angry alone; forbearing to heap new occasions of heightning the Difference, and so constraining his Passion to cool and go out, for want of fresh Fuel to keep the Fire in. But when, to that Quietness and Composure of Spirit, we add the nobler and more heroick Virtues of Love and Mercy; when we seasonably relieve the Extrêmes and Afflictions, which, measuring others by himself, he had reason to expect, we should have insulted over, and rejoiced in. This, like the Fire used by some Artificers in preparing of Metals, cannot fail to make the hardest Heart give, and relent. And thus our Meekness and Charity recommend themselves, by the very same Considerations, that run Men upon Fury and Revenge. The Design common to both is, to get the better of your Enemy; The Difference between them this; That Violence is not only sinful, but generally unsuccessful; but Sweetness and Humanity are both innocent, nay highly virtuous; and also so well fitted for this end, that, in the nature of the thing, one can scarce conceive it more than barely possible, that it should ever be disappointed.

But, in regard this Text is brought hither from the Old Testament, and therefore most reasonably interpreted, by the Idioms in common Use there; and, in regard Coals of fire are generally made use of, to denote some very severe Effects of God's Wrath, upon the Person on whom they fall; therefore Many have supposed That to be the proper Importance of this place also; and the Wrath to be given place to, that of God, to whom we should refer the Punishment of them that injure us. Thus St. Chrysostom particularly, though seeming chiefly to favour the former Construction, does yet incline to think, this might be an artful Conde-

In loc. Tom. 5. Grat. 46.
scension to Mens Infirmitities. So making the Apostle in effect to say; Better it were, that you should utterly lay all Thoughts and Desires of Revenge aside; but, since that is a Perfection of Virtue, not to be expected from All; know, that even th'ose Desires are more likely to be satisfied this way, than the other. For, the less you meddle in your own Quarrel, the more God will assert your Right. And if your Kindness does not bring an Enemy over, his Crime is the more inexcusable, and his Punishment will be aggravated in proportion. So that, did angry Men consider at all, they would forbear avenging themselves, as the proper Course of exposing their Enemy to a sharper and more mighty Revenger, than it is possible for Them, or any other Creature, to be.

But, Can it then consist with the Design of the Apostle, or with the Temper of Christianity, to do Acts of Charity with a Spightful Intent, and, under the Mask of Kindness, to work the greatest Mischief? Were not the Cruelty of letting an Enemy starve in his Extremity, more desirable to Him, more fair and ingenuous in itself, than such a treacherous Relief? And can it become Them, who are commanded to love those that hate them, to contrive, or so much as to comfort themselves with the prospect of, their more certain Ruin? By no means most assuredly. We must lament, and pray, and strive against this Consequence. We must not delight in, we must not, without Horror and serious Concern, think upon, that Indignation, which our bitterest Adversaries treasure up to themselves, by their hardness and impenitent Heart. Their Eternal Sufferings cannot, upon any Terms, be matter of just Satisfaction; nor their Temporal, in any other respect, than that of tending to their Humiliation, and effectual Reformation; to the change of their Minds and Methods, and preventing their blacker Guilt, and forer Punishment hereafter. And with these Limitations
tions it is, that we are to understand the Judgments of God called down upon their Enemies, by David, and other holy Men. With these, I say, Where they speak of their own particular Case; And not with a Spirit of Prophecy. For then they speak of themselves and their Adversaries, in a far different Capacity, as Types of Christ, and of his Persecutors. In a word, we must do all we can, by Forbearance, Long-suffering, and Gentleness, to reclaim and reconcile our Enemies. But if they still continue so implacable, that Their Prosperity and our Safety can no longer stand together, we then are permitted to wish, and endeavour, and to bless God for, those Sufferings, which their Perverseness hath rendered the only means, for Our Security and Preservation. And thus the giving place to our Great Defender's Wrath, may become a Duty, truly meek and Christian. Thus the Coals of Fire, (of which their Rancour is the proper Cause, our Charity, our Patience, but the accidental Occasion, of Heaping upon their Heads,) may be a very innocent Subject of Consolation, and Joy to us.

3. The Third Motive, urged here against Retaliation of Injuries, hath a more direct Reference to our Selves, and is included in those last Words of the Chapter, Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. When Men contend in mutual Affronts and Ill-turns to one another, the thing Each aims at, is to come off Conqueror at last. But in such Cases Both are disappointed, because in truth Both are subdued. For there is One Point, which every Man is strictly obliged to be jealous of; and while this is maintained, his Honour cannot suffer. For, What is Honour, truly understood, but a Greatness of Mind, which icorns to descend to an ill and a base thing? So long then, as our Virtue continues unblemished, and Conscience cannot reproach us; we are always superior in the Combat. But, when Reas on and Religion give ground, and Passion gets the upper-
upper-hand of these; our Impotency betrays it self, and we are beaten from the Post, which it was our Duty, upon no Terms, to give up. It is not the Voice of the Christian only, but of all Philosophy in general, that true Nobleness of Spirit is better seen, in despising, than in returning Injuries; in a constant Tranquillity of Temper, than in Rage and Resentment. And the modern Men of Honour, with their false Notions, would, by the best and wifef of the Ancients, have been exploded and disdained, as the weakest, most despicable, and poor-spirited of Wretches. So much more necessary a Consideration it is, what may be fit for Us to do, than what may be just for Others to suffer. So much indeed a greater Vexation it is to any Enemy, to rob him of the pleafure of disturbing us; to shew how much we flight, and are above, his impotent Ma-lice; than to give our Selves, and Him, the trouble, of paying him never fo home in his own kind. So much more likely, to put an end to his fruitlefs Attempts of making us uneasy; which is the Sense of overcoming Evil with Good. For no Man loves to run his Head against a Wall, or be always labouring in vain. But especially, so much more to our own Security and Ad-\n\n
tantage, who are sure to continue impregnable, while we retain our Temper and our Virtue; while we keep the Reins of Paffion in our own Hand, and insure to our selves an Almighty Protector, not only to take our Part at present, but, which is better still, to re-\n\n
ward and crown us for striving lawfully, even when suffering wrongfully.

And shall I need to say now, that all these Duties follow naturally upon our Union into One Body in Christ? Where is the Tenderness, the mutual Amity, the Care and Pity, due to those Parts, whose Weak-\n\n
ness hinders the discharge of their respective Offices, between Men, who call themselves Members, but con-tradict that Profession, by spighting, and grieving, and tearing,
rearing, and devouring one another? Where the Correspondence with; where the Obedience to, that Head, who hath commanded us to love our Enemies, who was continually doing good to his Enemies, and so far from being taken off by those Provocations they did, by all that their most enraged Malice could, give him, that at last he willingly died for his Enemies; who now stands at the Right-hand of God, interceding for his Enemies; whose merciful Providence sustains his Enemies; and who is ready to receive, and embrace, and save his Enemies to the uttermost; who courts them, and offers Reconciliation, notwithstanding the great, the daily, the numberless Offences. repeated boldly, presumptuously, maliciously, against him? This is our Pattern. And if we do not follow it, he will not be to any saving purposes, our Head. This is his Spirit, which they who have not, are not of his Body; and They, who are not of that Body here, do hope in vain to be reckoned of it hereafter. Of such Importance is it, that we lay this Relation to Heart very attentively, and give all Diligence to answer the several Engagements it brings us into. To which End, that my Discourses upon this Subject may in some measure conduce, I shew the whole up with a Prayer, taught us by our excellent Church, and very pertinent to the matter we have in hand:

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole Body of the Church is governed and sanctified, Receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer before thee for all Estates of Men in thy Holy Church, that every Member of the same, in his Vocation and Ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Gospel.

Matth. viii. 1.

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

Paraphrase:

1. At his decent from the Mount, which was called the Mount of Olives, he retailed with his Apostles, and where he had just preached his Divine Sermon, as he was going to a neighboring city, (Capernaum probably,) a leper met him in the field adjoining to the city, (where we are told there was an infirmary for persons thus diseased,) it not being lawful for them to be within the cities.

2. And behold there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a Centurion, beseeching him,

6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8. And Jesus Luke vii. 9, hearing a good character of the Man, (whose piety and charity were eminent,) readily condescended to this request, and was now actually moving toward the Centurion's house.
8, 9. Hereupon a second Message was sent, declaring, that he thought himself in no degree worthy the honour of seeing Jesus in his House, nor indeed of approaching his Person with this Request; upon which account, he had interposed the good Offices of his Friends; Nor did he conceive his Prcence to be needful; for if His Orders, who was but a subaltern Officer, are punctually observed even in his absence: much more (he was abundantly satisfied) would any Command be effectual in this matter, which Jesus should please to issue out, to whom he believed none superior in Power, and that all Nature was absolutely at his Disposal.

10. This was an instance so very surprising to a Stranger, that Jesus commended it, as far superior to any he yet had met with, in the native Jews. Not only so, but from hence he took occasion also to foretell, how many of the Gentiles would hereafter follow this noble Example: For great numbers of Them, by their Obedience to the Gospel, would attain to and inherit the spiritual Blessings and Promises, made to the holy Patriarchs. But their own natural Issue, the Jews, who were at present the only visible Church of God, should be most miserable through their own Perverseness.

13. After which Jesus declared, that the effect of this man’s Faith should be as conspicuous, as the Virtue of it. Which Saying took place so speedily, that the Persons sent from the Centurion, did, at their Return back to his House, find the Servant perfectly well, whom but just before they had left in so desperate a Condition.

10. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said, Verily; I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, as not in Israel.

11. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13. And Jesus said unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee. And his Servant was healed in the self-same hour.
COMMENT.

THE Gospel for this Day presents to our Observation two Cures, wrought by our Blessed Saviour. Both Speedy, both Miraculous, both upon Distempers past the common Help of Medicine, both vouchsafed to Persons recommended to his Favour, by very extraordinary qualifications, of a steadfast Faith in, and profound Reverence for him. The Subjects are too copious to be treated of distinctly, and therefore I shall satisfy my self, with insisting on the Former. In which, we shall do well to consider,

I. The Nature of the Disease.

II. The Manner of the Patient's Address for a Cure.

III. The Success he found from this Address.

But, in regard great part of bodily Infirmities carry some Analogy to the Miseries of our Souls, and our Blessed Saviour's Cures of the One are excellently contrived, for the Benefit and Improvement of the Other; I design, in the Contemplation of the Mercy before us, to look on the Leper in my Text, as an Emblem of our selves. I will therefore shew, as I go along, What our Disease is, How we should imitate Him in seeking, and By what means we do obtain, a Recovery of Our spiritual Leprosy.

1. First then. Concerning the Disease it self, these following Circumstances are remarkable. That a Leprosy is said, to proceed, from a general Corruption of the Blood and Juices, to render the Person tainted with it extremely loathsome and deformed, to be (in those Countries especially) of all Distempers the most spreading in the Body, and most Contagious to others. These are Qualities inseparable from the nature of the Disease. But, if look'd upon with regard to the N...
tions of the Jews, and their Law about it, thus it was, of all others, the most scandalous, and the most detestable. It separated the Sick from all Civil, as well as Religious, Communion; It distinguished him by all the outward Significations of Sorrow and Shame; It was generally look’d on, as a Plague inflicted by God, for some enormous Crime, (of which Scripture furnishes several Examples.) It was thought so far above the power of Art, that the very attempt to cure it by Medicine, was esteemed an impious Presumption. It was dreaded as the highest of all Legal Pollutions, and required great variety of Lustrations, before the Patient could be restored to the Privileges of a Jew. There must be Washings of his Body and Cloaths, Sprinklings of Blood, Burnt, and Meat, and Sin-Offerings. Accordingly, the Deliverance from it is generally express’d, in Terms, that import not so properly Recovery, as Purification. Thus the Leper here lays not, Lord, thou canst make me Whole, but thou canst make me Clean: and upon granting his Petition, it is not said his Leprosy was healed, but that it was Cleaned.

Of this Cleanliness the Priests were to make Declaration. In order hereunto, several Marks were appointed for the Direction of their Judgment: One of which is so very remarkable, that I shall consider it particularly by and by. Mean while let it suffice to say, that a large account of this whole matter is contained, in the Ordinances concerning it, at the Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Chapters of Leviticus.

Now, what Leprosy was then to the Body, the same, in proportion, and at all times, is heinous and wilful Sin to the Soul. It results from depraved Humours, a tainted Will, and inflamed Passions: It is noisome and odious in the sight of God and Man: express’d
express'd for this reason by Wounds, and Brises, and putrefying Sores. It is rise and catching, swelling from less to greater, and, by a fatal fruitfulness, multiplying from One to Many; wafting the Conscience, eating away the sound Part, and shedding its Venom, upon as many as come within the reach of its Infection. Insomuch, that the subtilest Poyson, the most pestilential Vapour, does not insinuate it self more speedily, more mortally, than This. Hence every man is warned to keep his distance, and not tempt a danger by too free and familiar approaches: not only to refuse his Consent, when Sinners entice him; but not to stand in their way, not to sit in the seat of the Scornful, not to keep Company with vain persons, nor have any fellowship with the deceitful. To consider, as the Apostle says, That every Word of Theirs eats like a Canker, loosens our Principles, dissipates our good Intentions, enters and embolds us in Vice; That Pitch may as well be touched without defiling, and Fire taken into a Garment without burning; as Men of evil Example be frequented and delighted in, without contracting Soil and Damage from them. So applicable is that of Solomon to every one of profligate Conversation, Their house is the way to hell, and leads down to the Chambers of Death. Let not then your Heart decline to their ways, and go not astray in their paths. For many strong men have been slain by this means, and who so cometh near them shall not be innocent.

So near is the Resemblance between the Leprosy of the Outward, and that of the Inner-Man, with regard to its Nature and its Consequences. Each a noisome, a mortal, and a contagious Disease. Some Likeness there is too between the Christian, and the Jewish
without detriment to the Strength and Soundness of the Patient; Or, that this Spreading proves no great Malignity ever to have been in such a Disease at all. For, as Rivers, when penn'd up in a narrow Course, are deep and strong, and eat away their Banks, to force a Channel which they did not find; but when enlarged, they glide away in shallow Streams: So this Disease, say They, when rank and fierce, enters deep, gnaws away the kindly Flesh, seizes the Vitals, and penetrates the very Bones and Marrow; but, when of a more favourable and gentle kind, it diffuses and loses it self; is rather a Scurf, than a formed Leprosy: And, though some Defacing, yet escapes the Censure and Shame of the Law.

Now this Account, to Me, appears not unfrivly to figure the Condition of Mankind, in relation to Sins of Infirmitv, and Sins of Presumption. The Former we are full of, and the Frailty of Human Nature exposes us to frequent Commissions of them. The Latter, though but Few, though but One; yet, if of a grievous kind, does yet contribute more to the Sickness and Danger of the Soul, to the Hardening of the Conscience, to the Scandalizing our Brethren, to the Reproach of our Religion, than the daily, hourly Failings, in point of strict Duty, consequent upon the Weakness of corrupt Nature. These do not destroy the Peace of our Minds; they are pitiable and excusable; incident to Good People; and, provided we lament, and pray, and strive the best we can, against them, they do not cut us off from Christ. But the Other give deep and deadly Wounds, because they argue a Mind violently bent, and a profligate Sense in the Person indulging them. In One Case, the Righteous falls seven times a day, and yet rises at last; but, in the Other, the deliberately Wicked falls infamously. The reason is, Because the Former is surprized,
surprised, and would stand better if he could; But the Latter might stand, and will not. He sees the Precipice, and knows the Danger, and casts himself down headlong, and will not be withheld from his own Destruction. So that, though Both have their Spots, yet the One is the Spot of Children, and the Other of Lepers. Concerning which having already spoken so largely, I think it time to proceed to my

II. Second Head. Under which I proposed to consider, The Manner of this Leper’s Address to Christ for a Cure; and, in agreement to, and pursuance of, that Pattern, how it will become Us to apply for the Forgiveness of Our Sins.

Now, in the Descriptions given of this matter, we find Firſt, manifest Tokens of the Man’s Concern for his present Misery, and earnest Desires to be releafeed from it; expressed by coming to meet Jesus and beseeching him, Mark i. 40. Luke v. 12. Secondly, Great Reverence, in that he is said here to have Worshipp’d him; and, in the parallel places, to have done That in a manner the most obsequious and lowly; for they tell us, he did it by kneeling down: nay, and not content with that, he added Proſtration too; for St. Luke relates, that he fell on his face before him. We may discover, Thirdly, a firm and undoubted Persuasion of Christ’s Ability to grant his Request; consequently, that he thought his Power Divine, and that too a Power, of which he had the free Exercise and Disposal. This Assurance is declared in terms the most significant that can be. He says not, if thou wilt pray to God on my behalf, he will hear thee, and cleanse me; but, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. The Difficulty that appeared to Him, was not, Whether Christ had so great a Power as this came to; but, Whether he would condescend to exert it upon His account: and therefore
fore, in great Humility, which is the Fourth Qualification remarkable in this Address, he recommends the matter to his Consideration; as being satisfied, that he was Master of his own Favours, and best knew when to grant, and when to refuse. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Thus, not pressing his Petition with an indecent and clamorous Importunity, but referring himself entirely to His Wisdom and Goodness, to determine what should become of It, and Him.

In proportion to the several Parts of this Example, it is necessary,

1. **First,** That Forgiveness should be a Blessing of our own Seeking, and that it be sought in a very affectionate and importunate manner too. We are not to imagine, God will thrust this Favour upon us. He hath already shewed himself gracious and condescending, even to Astonishment, in ordaining such Methods for our Redemption; in providing himself a Lamb, the Son of his Love, who takes away the Sin of the world, by the sacrifice of his own Blood. He hath brought Salvation home to our doors, published a Gospel of Reconciliation and Peace, used all Inducements and Indearments, possible for a Rational Creature to be acted upon by, to reclaim, to woe, to win us, to gain our Acceptance of our own Happiness. And all the part left Us, is, to be prevailed upon to accept. But then we must accept, as becomes such a Gift; with great Thankfulness, and godly Zeal. The Condition is, Ask, and ye shall have; and, pray, remember, this is a Condition, propounded not only to Creatures, but Criminals. Criminals, convict not only by the Laws, which Interest, as well as Duty, bound them to obey; but by the sad Reproaches of their own guilty Consciences.

If this then be the Case of You, and Me, and every Man breathing; Let us turn our Eyes upon the wretched
wretched Malefactors, on whom Verdict and Sentence are passing, and see what Nature, and Love of Life, prompt Them to do. Look upon their Tears, listen to their piercing Cries and Groans, observe their bend-ed Knees and wringing Hands, their doleful Accents and Obtestations; And let us learn from These, at once to beg, and how to beg, a Pardon. Imitate, at least, Their Sorrows, and their Supplications; Be not full-en and impenetrable, but remember, thou haft a Judge armed with Thunder, to deal with. Consider, Thy Offences are more and greater, the Sentence due to Thee more dreadful, the Punishment more insupportable; The Chain of thy Sins, wherewith thou art tyed and bound, a heavier Load, than any Irons of an earthly Malefactor. Let not then Nature out-do Reason and Grace. Let not a short perishing Life excite stronger Passions, than a future and eternal one. Let not the Pains of a Moment, and the Scandal of a Gibbet, be deprecated with more moving Concern, than the Torments of Hell, and everlasting Shame and Contempt. A Deliverance from These deserves all thy Application; If These be not averted, Thou art undone for ever; They hang over thy Head, and cannot be averted but by Prayer; by coming with this Leper, and worshipping, and beseeching. O kiss the Son therefore, left he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way: Ye have already kindled his wrath, O serve and approach him with Reverence. Which is the

2. Second Qualification, taken notice of in this Address to our Blessed Lord, and expressed by this Person’s worshipping, kneeling down, and falling on his face, before Christ. Now these are bodily Actions, meant for so many Significations of a mind full of respect. And, in truth, such outward Testimonies of Zeal are so far from needing to be proved lawful,

Matth. viii. 17
Mark i. 40.
ful, that they, in a manner, prove themselves necessary. For, it is so natural with the Body, to conform it self to the present Posture of the Soul, when the Impressions there are all as vigorous and lively; that every Part does, as it were mechanically, conspire to speak the Resentments within. The Tongue by Speech, the Countenance by its Air and Form, and every Limb by Gestures, suited to its Capacity and the present Occasion. So that They, who cry down, or are manifestly void of, such outward Signs of Devotion, stand in need of all our Charity, to believe that their Spirits are so sensibly, so powerfully, affected within, as they would have us think them. We can discern the same Impressions of Joy and Grief, and Love and Fear, in common Cases, upon Them, as upon our Selves, or other People. Why should they then remain, to all Appearance, unmoved and stupid, in Occasions of infinitely higher Concern to them? Why should not Grace, and the so much boasted Spirit, provoke the same Demonstrations of an inward Affection, that Nature plainly does? This, sure, is very hard to conceive. And harder yet it is to say, why those Bodies, which share in the Redemption, should not come in for a share of the Devotions, that seek it. Away, my Brethren, away with such senseless Irreverence! How can you expect, God will grant a Blessing, for which you shew no manner of Sollicitude? Would you behave your selves so unconcernedly, before an Earthly Judge? If therefore no Marks of Respect or Passion would be esteemed too much for such a Tribunal; do, I beseech you, as our admirable Liturgy exhorts you every Day to do, and as the Leper here sets you a Pattern, **O come and worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

3. As little Question can there be made, **Thirdly,** whether we be not obliged to copy after this Example,
ple, in a firm Assurance of Christ's Ability to heal us, and saying from the Heart, Lord, thou canst make me clean. Which, so far as relates to the matter now in Hand, is relying entirely upon his meritorious Sufferings; acknowledging, that he hath made ample Satisfaction to the Divine Justice on our behalf; and believing the Efficacy of his Sacrifice, to as many as shall put themselves under the Conditions, appointed for being purged and absolved by it. For this Trust is the proper Foundation of all our Prayers. He, that confesses himself a Sinner, does, in that very Act, proclaim his Misery, disfavor all Desert, all that can incline God to love or favour him, for his own sake. He stands condemned out of his own Mouth, as one, to whom the Extremity of Vengeance is justly due; and declares, that, if Salvation be attained, this must be owing to some other Hand. And, since God hath given no other name in heaven, or earth, by which man must be saved, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; He, who reposes not his Confidence in Him alone, can have no reasonable Encouragement, to ask, or expect Remission of Sins.

4. But, in regard we have been taught by the first Elements of our Religion, that the Sacraments are ordained by Christ himself, as means generally necessary to Salvation; and, that One necessary Predisposition to the worthy partaking of these Sacraments, is a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ; there may perhaps seem some ground for questioning, whether we ought, whether it be allowed us indeed, to imitate this Leper's Petition, in the Last Thing observed, or express our Selves in terms so full of Doubt and Diffidence, as Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. My Meaning is, whether the Faith in God's Mercy, required from us, do not imply a full Assurance, not only that he can, but that he most certainly will, hear, and forgive, and cleanse us.

Now,
Christians, though he be, without Occasion for such a Check from within, such an Opinion of his own Unworthines? Which of us can look back, I do not say upon his Faults, (those are a black and ghaftly fight indeed) but even upon his Acts of Devotion, and Penitence, and Turning to God, without a secret Shame, and sensible Regret? How many sad Relapses into Sin, How many feeble Resolutions, How many broken Sacramental Vows, does even this best, and most comfortable, Prospect of our Lives presently alarm us with? And how are we secure, that those of this, or any other Day, shall be more firm, and more successful, than the Past? And if so, How can we forbid them, who so oft have been deceived in themselves, still to go on, in fearing and suspecting themselves? In truth, How can we answer it, should we forbear exhorting, and conjuring them so to do? For such a holy Jealousy may awaken their Care, and the Remembrance of their former Failings will render them more watchful over their own treacherous Hearts; more prudent in the midst of Snares and Temptations, more strictly conscientious to strengthen, to recollect, to charge themselves home with their Promises of better Obedience, for the time to come? Especially, a becoming Diffidence in their own very poor Performances will most effectually conduce to their Humiliation, and clip the Wings of that Security and Spiritual Pride, which, of all other Vices, most obstructs our Improvement in Virtue, and our Acceptance with God. For the Humble are his De-light; and These will never think their Piety disparaged, by praying, in the modest Words and Meaning of this bashful Leper, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

III. And those that pray with the same Disposition, he not only can, but will make clean. For my Third and last Head consists of the Success this Petitioner found,
found, and the Methods of his Recovery, in those Words, Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will be thou clean. And immediately his Leprosy was cleansed. From whence I only beg you to observe, the Readiness of our Dear Redeemer to shew Mercy, The Efficacy of such fervent Prayers to procure it, The Suddenness, and the Perfection, of the Cure. And as easy, as powerful, as speedy, will Our Spiritual Recoveries be; provided we prepare our Hearts, and be equally fitted for that Mercy, which only waits a Disposition in Us, proper to receive it. Once more, I cannot but take notice of our Blessed Lord’s marvellous and most amazing Condescension. He, though able to have healed with speaking the Word only, yet disdained not to touch the poor polluted Wretch. Even so, scorn not our polluted Hearts, O meek and gracious Saviour, but touch them in much Mercy and Power, though deformed with the Leprosy of Sin, and defiled with long and manifold Uncleaness. Put forth, not thy Hand only, but the renewing Graces of thy Holy Spirit. Oh enter into us, dwell with us, and reign in and over us, that we may also live, and reign with, Thee for ever! And since, till that blessed time come, we must be content to continue liable to many Weaknesses, and great Temptations; Hear, we beseech thee, the Petition proper to this Day, That thou wouldst deal with Us, as with this happy Leper, by Mercifully looking upon our Infirmities, and, in all our Dangers and Necessities, stretching forth thy right hand to help and defend us, O Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

Matth. viii. 24, 25.
Psal. xiv. 17, 18.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great Dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our Nature we cannot always stand upright. Grant to us such Strength and Protection, as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Epistle.

Rom. xiii. 1.

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God. The Powers that be are ordained of God.

2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

1 Pet. ii. 13. quite contrary, teaches them all to acknowledge the Authority of such to be derived from God. Consequently, whoever shall resist this Power, resists God the Author and Appointer of it; and must expect severely to be punished for such Impiety; if not by course of Law, and the Governor so disobeyed; yet by some method which God will find for the revenging such Offences, to his own Ordinance.

3. For the Design of all Government is to restrain Vice, and to encourage and Support Virtue. So that Men, who behave themselves orderly and well, have no ill to dread, but very beneficial Consequences to expect, from the Institution and Exercise of it.

4. For the Magistrate is appointed by God for thy Security and Defence; so that, if thou suffer any harm by him, this is (generally) thy own fault; when thou, by breach of Duty, provokest him to use that Power which God, who hath put Life and Death into his Hands, gave him, for the necessary Correction and exemplary Punishment, of wicked and disorderly Men.

5. This proves Men under an Engagement

5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.
to Submission, not purely from a Principle of Self-preservation, to escape the
Civil Sword; but to avoid Sin and Guilt, in obedience to that God whose Com-
mision he hath, and in gratitude for the Benefits, that such a Constitution pro-
cures to them.

6. For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God's Ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

And a very reasonable one it is, since they are the Officers of God, who hath a
right to all we have, and make the Protection and Ease of their Subjects, who
pay it, the whole care and benefit of their Lives.

7. Render therefore unto all their Dues; Tribute to whom Tribute is due; Custom to whom Custom; Fear to
whom Fear; Honour to whom Honour.

Comment.

From the several Duties obliging all Christians in
their Personal Capacity, (which are contained in
the Twelfth of this Epistle, and have been spoken to
at large, upon the Three Sundays next before) S. Paul
does here proceed to such as are Political, and oblige
us, as Members of a Civil Body. A Subject, no less
necessary than the Former, and particularly so, at the
time of his writing to these Romans. As will easily be
made appear, by taking a very short view of the Church's
Circumstances, at that Juncture.

It had been, for some time, an Opinion too preva-
ient, among the Jews, that They, as the peculiar
People of God, could not be bound in Conscience to
obey any foreign Jurisdiction, exercised by Heathens
and Idolaters: such as the Romans, their then Con-
querrors, were. The greater part of the Persons, as
yet gained over to the Faith of the Gospel, were such
as had been trained up in the Jewish Persuasion.
Men, who still retained so profound a Veneration for
their former Principles, that the Apostles found
great difficulty, in bringing them off clear from such
Notions,
Notions, inconsistent with their new Profession; as the business of Faith and Worship was most immediately concerned in. This made the Danger but too manifest, that they should likewise retain such other Notions, relating to Civil Government; as the Body of Men, they had lately left, entertained and avowed. It does not, that I know of, appear from any History, that the Christians, truly Orthodox, gave occasion for any Jealousy in this respect. But plain it is however, that the Persecutors and Opposers of the Gospel, looking perhaps upon Christians as a Spawn of the Jews, were willing to fix the same odious Characters upon Them; and pretended at least, as a Colour for their Severity and Malice, constantly to think them Enemies of the State.

It is easy to see, how ill an Influence such an Opinion, if entertained and let alone, must needs have, upon the Religion of Christ, and all that should profess it. The Benefits of Society and Civil Rights are so many, and so valuable; and do so entirely depend upon good Government and Order, and peaceable Submission to those in publick Stations; that Men will naturally be very jealous of, very averse to, any Set of People or Principles, which shall attempt to break in upon Advantages so sensible and dear, as these may claim to be, to all Mankind. The generality even of Subjects would abhor a Doctrine, that should sow the Seeds of Discord and Confusion. But it is never to be conceived, how any one Prince or Ruler, should have been reconciled to the Faith, upon the Foot it then stood; Had it propagated, justified, or in any degree countenanced, Sedition and Licentiousness; by undertaking to set Men free from their Civil Obligations, and dissolve the Power and Authority, which Governors were otherwise allowed to have upon their People, when not Christians. And therefore, in all the ancient Apologies for our Religion, we find the Authors particu-
particularly careful to wipe off this Calumny; to prove the Gospel, as it really is, the greatest Security to all Temporal Jurisdiction; the surest Promoter, and best Preserver, of Publick Order and Quiet; the strongest Support of Kings, and the most effectual Restraint upon Subjects. Few Arguments were urged more frequently; Few, we have reason to believe, contributed more successfully to recommend this Religion to the general good acceptance of the World, than the manifest tendency it had to the Safety and Welfare of Mankind; the particular Instructions it gave; the weighty Obligations and Motives it enforced them with; and the unparallel'd Examples it every day produced; for containing all sorts of Men within the bounds of their proper Station and Duty, for rendering them useful and serviceable to Society and Government, for a zealous and active Obedience to their Superiors in all lawful Instances, and for meek and patient Suffering, under even unjust Oppressions; rather than they would become Instruments of disturbing the Peace of the Publick, or that of their own Consciences.

The Credit these Principles and Practices would bring to Christianity, The Check they would be to the Malice of its Persecutors, And the Mischiefs and Obstructions, which factious and turbulent Spirits must needs have derived upon it, may reasonably be thought a main Motive to St. Peter also, for insisting on this Duty. In the Second of his First Epistle, he first enjoyns such a Behaviour in general, as may secure Christians a good esteem with Heathens, and convince them, that all the ill Reports concerning the Men of this Persuasion, are utter Calumny and malicious Falsehood. Then, as the best Expedient for this Purpose, he proceeds upon Submission to Supreme and Subordinate Magistrates; enforcing this, as a singular Instance

H 3


Ver. 14, 15. 

Instance of well-doing; most agreeable to the Will of God, most effectual for stopping the Mouths, and rectifying the Mistakes of such, as did not, or would not, truly understand the Nature and Extent of Christian Liberty. And thus he at last descends, to specify the several Duties incumbent upon Men, according to the difference of their respective Capacities, and mutual Relations to each other.

But St. Paul, in the Portion of Scripture now in hand, treats of this matter more at large, and after another manner. He declares the Nature of the Duty enjoined, the Universality of its Obligation, the Reasons upon which that Obligation is founded, the Danger of refusing to comply with it, the Equity of making it good, the particular Instances wherein it ought to be express'd. And all these he declares to be not meerly Matters of secular Convenience, or Christian Prudence; but a part of Religion, and such as directly bind the Conscience. This is the Substance of the Doctrine, recommended to our Consideration at present. Of which I shall endeavour to give you a just Sense, by treating of it, in as plain and practical a Method as I am able: Branching out the Sum, of what the Apostle seems to have intended we should collect from his Discourse here, into the following Particulars.

1. First. By the Higher Powers, it is certain are meant such Authority, and such Persons vested with it, as are Civil and Secular. For the Third Verse explains this by Rulers, and the Fourth by the Character of bearing the Sword, being a revenger to execute wrath; that is, having a right to inflict Temporal Punishments, such as extend even to Death itself, where the Offence provoking them, is Capital. And the Sixth and Seventh Verse describe them, as Persons, to whom Tribute and Custom are, and ought to be
be paid. Now all these are Prerogatives, peculiar to the Civil, and such as belong to no Other Power; nor to any invested with That, except the Chief Governor. But because this Chief cannot satisfy the Ends of Government alone, it is necessary he should call in the Assistance of other Eyes and Hands, and appoint Them to act under him. These, in Their proper Spheres, are His Representatives; and all Their Legal Proceedings are His; His virtually; His originally. Consequently, we do not discharge our Part to Him, except we pay, to all commissioned under Him, a Subjection, proportion’d to that Extent and Degree of Honour, and Authority, which he hath thought fit to derive upon them. This is evident to any, who at all consider the Reason of the Thing. But, if it were not, St. Peter hath taken care to determine the Case. For He hath prevented all necessity of arguing upon the Point, by commanding in express Terms, that we Submit to every Ordinance of Man, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by Him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well: and all this, he says, is to be done for the Lord’s sake. The Meaning whereof we shall best understand, by considering, what St. Paul hath urged more fully in the Passage at present before us. Which is,

2. Secondly, That all Power and Authority whatsoever, is originally in, and from God, and communicated by Him to such Persons, and in such Proportions, as He sees requisite, for the Order and good Government of this his own World. Accordingly the Apostle does, upon this ground, raiſe his Argument, for enforcing Subjection to the Higher Powers; by putting Men in mind, whose Sword they bear, and whence their Jurisdiction is derived. For, says he,
there is no Power but of God, and the Powers that be, are ordained of God.

Authority and Distinction are, in their own Nature, so necessary to Sociable Creatures; that it does not seem possible to conceive, how Mankind could have subsisted without them: even supposing the state of Innocence to have continued. But, as God, the universal Cause, hath, in virtue of his being so, an indisputable Dominion over all that proceed from Him: So we may reasonably infer some Right of Government, inseparable from the Relation and Character of a Parent, as made by God the next and subordinate Cause, of the Children, who descend from Him. Such a Superiority in Private Families is so far from the Effect of Sin, or any Punishment of it, that we have a Pattern of it, even in the Persons of the Blessed Trinity themselves. But indeed, when we extend our Thoughts to Persons, whom these Engagements of Blood and Descent cannot reach, the Case is altered. For then, how fondly ever some People may talk, or think, of a Dominion, or a Slavery, founded in Nature; it should be very hard, methinks, to convince Men, upon Principles of Reason; that, as to their Politick Capacities, they are not by Nature free: harder yet, to advance such Notions among Christians, who are taught by Revelation, where to lay this whole Matter. For the Scriptures are sufficiently express, Who He is, that makes one Man to differ from, to be higher and better than another: and, that Every one in his own Case may, to any sort of Superior, (whether by Nature or by positive Institution) alledge those words of our Saviour to Pilate, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.

For hence it follows undeniably, that no Governor, or Parent, of what kind soever, can either have any Power originally inherent in himself, or that he can draw it from any other Source, God therefore,
as he is a God of Decency and Order, and not of Anarchy and Confusion; hath taken all due care for the placing Men in higher and lower Stations, in such Distances from, and such Influences over each other, as may best conduce to their mutual Safety and Quiet. 

'Tis true, these Præ-eminences are what some are now born to, but still their Title is from above. For the Laws of Nature, and of Nations, the Civil Constitutions of each Country, and the voluntary Compacts of particular Persons, are but so many Sanctions of Almighty God. They are inspired, or confirmed, or allowed, by Him. Government is indeed called the Ordinance of Man, in regard it is exercised by, and contrived for the Benefit, and limited or directed by the Laws, of Men. But still the Right, which Government conveys, is God's; and the different Forms of Government are but so many different Methods of adjusting the Measures, and transferring the Administration of it, to particular Uses, and Persons.

This then shews us the true state of all Temporal Jurisdiction, that it is not, cannot be Universal and Absolute; but must be limited, and depending, and subordinate only. For which reason it is, that the Scripture, when directing the Duties of the several Sorts of Superiors to Inferiors, constantly remembers to mention their proper Characters, so as to add withal an Advertisement, to whom they stand accountable, for the Administration and regular Discharge of them. The Civil Parent, is for this reason stiled The Minister of God to Men for their Good. The Natural advised, that it is a Duty incumbent upon Him, to bring up his Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that his Authority over his own Flesh, is entrust ed with him, for this very purpose. The Masters are commanded to treat their Servants with Justice, and Equity,
Equity, and great Moderation; as considering, that They have also a Master in Heaven. So that the Post assigned to every one of these is, upon the Matter, much the same with that of the Centurion in the Gospel; who describes himself to be a Man under Authority, having at the same time Soldiers under Him; and so owing and paying a like Obedience to his Superior Officer; which he, by virtue of his Commission, required from others of a lower Rank. An Obedience, to which They could not be engaged, nor He make demand of, but only so far forth, as he had been empowered by the Giver of his Commission: An Obedience due to him, in quality of a Centurion, as an Officer set over private Soldiers; set so by One, who had Power of Him and Them; whose higher Elevation gave Him the same Right to command the Centurions, that They had to command any Common Centinel: Or rather, to speak more strictly and properly, One, who alone could, alone did, command Both: Only with this difference, that the Officer was commanded more immediately by the Prince or General himself, as Kings are by Almighty God; the Soldiers by a Deputy, as the People by the Means and Mediation of their Princes: But still, principally and ultimately by God, whose Vicegerents Princes are, as the Magistrates, commissioned by Them, are Theirs.

3. From hence we shall be able to satisfy our selves, in the Third Place, how the Performance of our Duty to the Civil Magistrate becomes an Act of Religion. The true Case is, that God hath enjoyed it, who alone hath Power over the Consciences of Men; and therefore our Obedience in this respect can be due, primarily and properly, to none but Him, and to Others, purely upon His account. It is the Father and Ruler of Spirits alone, that can lay Obligations upon the Souls of Men. So says St. James
James expressly, There is one Law-giver, that is, One exclusive of all others, who is able to save and to destroy. For, since that Authority is manifestly defective, which only prescribes Rules for Obedience, but cannot enforce those Rules, by executing and inflicting Punishments on the Disobedient, and bestowing Rewards and Encouragements for Fidelity and Submission; the Apostle wisely added his Reason, in those last Words, Who is able to save and to destroy. So that the Argument in effect stands thus; No Power but God's can punish or reward the Souls of Men, therefore no Authority but God's can bind the Souls of Men. And This indeed we find to have been our Saviour's own Argument too, when preparing his Disciples for Sufferings and Persecutions: I will forwarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear not them which kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear Him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell.

Men may be subject for wrath, (as St. Paul expresseth it) that is, upon prudent and politic Considerations, to Preserve their Liberties, Estates, and Lives; and for avoiding those temporal Inconveniences, which They, who have long Hands and long Swords, might otherwise bring upon them. But no other Reason can render it necessary to be subject for Conscience sake, and upon a Principle of Duty; except this single one, premised by the Apostle here, as the ground of that Necessity; that our Governors are the Ministers of God. That is to say, He intrusted and invested them, The Authority they exercise is His, His Honour is concerned to take Vengeance on them, who shall presume to insult it, The Defiers of Them do despise Him that sent them; and therefore they that resist, because in resifting the Power,
The Fourth Sunday

Power, they resist the Ordinances of God, do receive to themselves damnation.

In like manner the same Apostle commands Servants to do the will of God from the heart, not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but as those that serve the Lord Christ. He prescribes the Honour and Obseravice due from Children, because this is right and pleasing to the Lord. And are not these again plain Intimations, that the foundation of all Power is one and the same, that every Obligation to Superiors is a knot of God's tying, and that the Bonds of Nature, as well as those of Civil Society, voluntary Contract, or personal Consent, are the Works of his Hands, and receive the whole of their strength, and binding virtue from being so?

4. Fourthly, This lets us in to a just and true Notion of that Duty required on Our parts, stiled by St. Peter, submitting our selves to every Ordinance of Man; and by St. Paul here, being subject unto the higher Powers. Expressions, both of them, cautious and prudent; and such, as both suppose a possibility of some Injunctions, which we may not actually obey; and direct our Behaviour, in such cases of difficulty.

For, if all Power be God's, and whatever portion of it any Mortal enjoys, be derived from, and held under Him; If no Capacity in the World, though never so high, never so sacred, can be any thing more, than a Deputation from Heaven; If the Consciences of Men be the peculiar Dominion of the Father of Spirits, a Jurisdiction incommunicable, which no Man may, no Man can invade; It necessarily follows, that Governors of every kind are bound to impose such Commands only, as are agreeable to the Will of Their and Our Common Father, and Master, and Lord. They may not abuse their Power to the Prejudice of Him whose it is; and who committed it to them in the
the quality of a Trust, for which they are highly accountable. But if they do; then those, who are under their Direction, must look to their first and highest Engagement; and no pretence of complying with the Orders of their immediate Superiors, will bear them out, in Actions manifestly displeasing to their Great General Governor. 'Tis certain, that not only no positive Evil must be committed, but no necessary Duty must be left undone, for any Human respects whatsoever: That Daniel was no less concern'd, not to neglect God, by omitting his constant Address to Him, than the Three Children not to deny God, by committing Idolatry against him. And that all things else must give way in such Cases; because of what Importance foever other Observances may seem, still Religion is the first and main Point. This must be guarded, at the hazard of all other Interests and Expectances; Which, though never so just, while consistent with our Duty towards God; yet they lose all their weight and value, and the pursuits of them, instead of Duties, or Engagements, do forthwith commence Crimes, and shares to our Consciences, without it.

But, even where actual Obedience is unlawful, Subjection will continue necessary. For this the Scripture gives us many express Precepts. And for this, not only the History contained there, but that of all Christian Antiquity, furnish great numbers of Examples. Men, who have immortaliz'd the Honour of their own Memory, and the Christian Cause, by enduring grief for Conscience towards God, suffering wrongfully. The very remembrance what those Powers were, at the time when this and St. Peter's Epistle were written, is a forcible Argument in the Case. For if to a Nero such Deference were required, how can, Tyrannical Abuse of Power, cruel and unjust Persecution, or Difference in Religion, how can any or all these alone be sufficient, to absolve Subjects from their
ance, no Command of Man, can either make it begin, or cease to be so. The proper Sphere of the Civil Power does therefore lie between these two Extremes. A Middle fort, neither good nor evil, necessary or unlawful, before the Law; and afterwards necessary, only because commanded; unlawful, only because forbidden. For, though the thing itself, abstracting from the Command, be; yet Obedience to any Command, not sinful, never was, never can be, a matter of Indifference.

Nor is the force of this Obligation weakened, when things of this sort are enjoined in the practice of Religion. Because the difference of the Object, about which they are employed, does not make any difference in the Nature of the Things themselves. And therefore, to require, that we shew, where God hath commanded these things, is an unreasonable Demand; because, to justify the Magistrate’s Authority, it ought to suffice, that they are no where forbidden. Religion indeed is God’s peculiar, and all, that is essential to it, must come from Him: But, for the Circumstances, which regard only the Exercise and Beauty of it, these God hath left to be ordered, as may best conduce to Decency and Convenience. These may vary in several places at one and the same time, or in the same place at different times. And this shews, how far distant they are from Institutions strictly divine; that they are still of an indifferent Temper, enjoined, altered, removed at pleasure, and as Prudence shall direct. These therefore come within the Verge of the Magistrate, by the same reason that all other Indifferent things do: and, even when enforced by a Law, are not thereby intended to be thought binding for their own sakes; but only on the account of those general Rules, which call for our Obedience to these, as well as any other Ordinances of our Governors, for the Lord’s sake.
Nor will that Apology of a scrupulous Conscience, so common with weak People, avail much in this Case. For a Scruple implies want of Evidence, clear enough to determine the Mind, to either side of the Question. Now, in a state of so much uncertainty, 'tis certainly safer, to take that side of the particular Matter in dispute, which is supported by a plain Command of Obedience in general, and tends to preserve Unity, and Peace, and Order, and Reverence for Authority; than to be carried aside by the unsettledness of our own Mind, to endanger our Souls by the guilt of refusing an Obedience, which we only doubt may be unlawful; and, by our Example, to scandalize our Brethren, foment Divisions and Disorder in Church or State, and bring our Superiors and the Laws into Contempt.

6. I observe from hence, Sixthly, the Extent of this Obligation, that it is Universal, Let every Soul be subject. Which plainly shews, That no Quality, or Order of Men can possibly be exempted from it. That our Blessed Lord condescended to these Submissions; is manifest, from his paying Tribute, from his Discourses with Pilate, from the Meekness wherewith he suffered, from his Rebupe to Peter in the Garden, and from the whole course of his Deportment, throughout the last Tragical Scene of his Life. That the Apostles never permitted their Courage and Zeal to transport them to any degree of Insolence, or Opposition to the Civil Powers; appears from their patient and quiet enduring Imprisonments, Scourgings, and all manner of Cruelty and Injustice, inflicted for discharging the Duties of their Post, with which, they declared, no Human Authority could dispense. That the Primitive Christians esteemed it Their Duty, and their Glory, to reverence the Ordinance of God, even in Heathen Emperors, to sacrifice their Lives in the Service of a persecuting State, and without resistance to be most injuriously and barbarously treated by their Governors,
all the Apologies of the Ancients testify. And, that
the coming in of the World to the Church did not
abridge the Right of Christion Princes, or procure an
Immunity to any of their Subjects, we need no other
Evidence, than that of a most Holy Prelate, and most
renowned Expositor, who, after that accession, hath
upon this very Passage delivered his Sense to this effect.

Chryfoft.

To shew, that these Commands extend to all
Men, to Priests and Monks, and not to the
Laity, or Men of Secular Employments only, he begins
with these Words, Let every Soul be subject unto the Higher
Powers: Though thou be an Apostle, or an Evangelist,
or a Prophet, or of whatsoever Character else thou art.
For this Subjection does not take off from the Dignity of
thy Religious Capacity. So little did those better Ages
form any Imagination of setting up Two-Supreme
Lords; the One in Spirituals, and the Other in Temporals; so much less of the Temporal Jurisdiction of
any Bishop, Paramount to all Powers, in order to
Spirituals: So far were the then Clergy from with-
drawing their Allegiance, in claiming an Independence
upon the Civil Governor: So ignorant of any Privi-
lege which their Function brought, other than that
of out-shining their Flocks, as in others, so these
(than which none are more truly Christion) Virtues,
of a most inviolable Loyalty, affectionate Obedience,
and profound Reverence, to the Princes set over them
by God.

7. Lastly, The Passage now under consideration, rep-
resents to us the Equity of this Subjection, from the
Benefits, which Government brings and secures to
Mankind. To this in general it is, that we owe the
Support and Countenance of Virtue, the Chastisement
and Suppression of Vice, the Preservation of our just
Rights, the Establishment and Security of Property
and Order. And They, who, for private Ends, are for-
ward to disturb and invade such Property and Order,
would
would be an over-match for the Peaceable and Conscientious; were they not restrained by the Fears of present Punishments, and terrified by necessary Examples of Justice upon Evil-doers. And, if it happen, as sometimes it will, that, in the Exercise of such Power, Hardships should fall upon particular Persons; yet for the bearing such with Patience, it is a proper Argument to submit, that the very Abuse of Power is not attended with Consequences, in any degree so destructive, so mischievous and dreadful, as the Subversion, and total Dissolution, of that Power. For this unhinges the whole Frame at once, and diffuses the Calamity, it pretends to redress. Our Governors, though next in Elevation to God, do not cease to be Men; They continue still liable to Passions and Resentments, like those of common Men; and to Mistakes and crafty Insinuations, as much more than common Men, as their Sphere of Business is larger, and reduces them to a greater necessity, of seeing and hearing with other Eyes and Ears. All which should prevail for greater allowances, and more candid Constructions of their Management, to be made by those, who do not discern the Difficulties they are under. For private Men cannot, from the narrow View of One small part, form a reasonable Judgment, what Methods are practicable and proper for the Good of the whole Body.

In short, The Publick is their constant Care. To this they sacrifice their Time, their Ease, their Thoughts; and therefore the Supporting their Dignity ought to be a Publick Expence. He that defrauds Them, does in truth wrong himself; and the Head can no more suffer alone in the Political, than it can in the Natural, Body. So that even Interest, and Self-Love, and Ingenuity, and Gratitude, do all conspire to persuade Fidelity and Subjection; and God in this, as in other Religious Duties, hath only enjoined us to do that

in
in Obedience to Him, which, were it commanded, is most beneficial to our selves.

For I cannot but assure myself, that, were St. Paul's Doctrine here, and these Observations upon it duly attended to, they would be an excellent Rule of Behaviour, and of infinite Importance to the Welfare of all the World, both for this, and the next Life. They would prevent all sinful Compliances on the one hand, and all peevish Obstinacies on the other. They would effectually dispose us, to revere all just Authority, and conform to every innocent Ordinance of our Superiors; and they would render us bold as Lions, in refusing, whatever tends to the Dishonour of God, and the defiling our own Consciences.

They would likewise teach Governors Equity and Moderation, Piety and Prudence; would inspire a most affectionate Tenderness, for the Safety and Quiet of the Souls under their Charge; and the strictest Circumspection, not to exceed the Bounds and Intent of their Commission; Constant Endeavours, that all their Injunctions be profitable and Good, promoting Edification and Godliness; not arbitrary, and rigorous, and ensnaring. In short, These Reflections would make them Fathers of their People indeed, and Children of the Most High, in the best and noblest Sense: Ornaments and Honours to the Authority they bear, and Images so lively of Him, who trusts it to them; So benign, so beneficial, that their Subjects would Then say of Them, as they of Lycaonia said of the Apostles, The Gods are come down to us in the likeness of Men.

The
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Gospel.

Matth. viii. 23.

23. And when he was entered into the ship, his disciples followed him.

Paraphrase.

23. Jesus Mark iv, (after having done the Miracles before related in Capernaum) was disposed, towards the Evening, to go into the Country, that lies on another part of the Lake of Gene-
saret: And, finding some Vessels lie ready for his purpose, He and his Disciples went on board one of them: the rest of the Ships bearing him Company in the Voyage.

24. And behold! there arose a great tempest in the sea: insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep.

24. Pre-

Mark iv. 57, 58. launched 23.

25. Hereupon his Disciples ran to him, and awoke him, and said: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

25, 26. And be faith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

26. And they said unto him, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

27. Which sudden change, and the cause of it, when they of his own and the other Ship's company understood, they were astonished at his Power, and concluded, that he must needs be a very extraordinary Person, who by this Miracle plainly made it appear, that the Winds and the Seas were absolutely at his own disposal.

28. And when he was come unto the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with Devils, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

28. Upon Mark v. his landing Luke viii. 26, 27. in the Country, in Gerasenes that part adjacent to Gadar a, two Men possessed with Devils met him, (One of them having an unclean Spirit, and himself a Gadarene, so very fierce, that no Chains or Fetters could bind him, but he was night and day naked among the Tombs, crying and cutting himself with Stones) this Man,
Man, or the Spirit in him, upon Jesus demanding his Name, said it was Legion, because many Devils had entred into him.

29. These Men met Jesus, and the Spirits (in that fierce one) desired him not to punish them before their time, (nor to send them out of that Country, or into the Deep.)

30. But (since they had been commanded to come out of the Man) to permit them to enter into a herd of Swine, which (to the number of two thousand) were feeding at some distance (in the Mountains near the Sea.)

31. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the swine.

32. Jesus, having shewed his Mercy in a miraculous Restraint of their Power over Men, suffered them to use it upon the Swine, (by which the force, the possession, and the number of these Devils, and consequently his Power over them was rendered more unquestionable; and the Owners of those Creatures punished, for the contempt of the Jewish Law,) whereupon the whole herd freight ran down a Precipice, and were choked in the Water.

33. The Keepers hereupon made haste to give notice of this whole matter, in all neighbouring Places.

34. This News brought a vast Concurrence of People together, (who found the fierce posses'd Man, sitting clothed, and in his perfect Senses, at Jesus Feet, and were fully informed by those that had been Eye-witnesses of the whole Transaction, how sudden and wonderful a Change had been wrought,) and (partly from a dread of his Power, partly from Grief for the loss they had sustained by the Swine) they entreated Jesus, not to make any longer stay among them.

COMMENT.
COMMENT.

In treating of this Day's Gospel, I must again content myself, with speaking of the Former only, of Two Miracles, which it offers to our Consideration. In This our Blessed Lord asserted his Authority, not over the Minds of Men only, but over Subjects in appearance much less likely to be at its disposal; The Winds and the Seas. Of which we have here a very amazing and particular Account, from the 23d to the 27th Verse of the Chapter inclusively.

An Account, capable of very good Improvement, from these Three Things (if diligently observed) in it.

I. First, The Danger here described.

II. Secondly, The Behaviour of our Lord's Disciples under it: And,

III. Thirdly, The Deliverance from it.

1. First. In order to a just Apprehension of the Danger, the following Circumstances should be attended to. That, presently upon their launching forth, there arose a Tempest in the Sea, and this so furious, that the Ship was even covered with the Waves: That all this happened, notwithstanding Christ himself was present; and that, as a farther Aggravation of their Terror and Danger, he was asleep too, when it thus threatened their immediate Destruction.

Now, from these several Circumstances laid together, I have a fair occasion for making some Reflections upon the Providence of Almighty God, with regard to the Difficulties and Afflictions, in which Good Men in general so often find themselves involved. For those Disciples may be very reasonably look'd upon, as at that time the Church Representative, and the Hazard They were in, as a Figure of those
those Extremities, to which any of Christ's faithful Followers shall, in any after Ages, be reduced. The Reasonableness whereof I must now consider, not in its utmost latitude, but so far only, as the case in hand suggests matter for it.

1. First then. I take it from hence to be very evident, that no Man, though never so holy, never so acceptable and dear to God, hath reason to promise himself uninterrupted Peace or Prosperity. Nay nor shall even those Actions of his Life, which best express a steady and zealous regard to his Duty, be always a Security from Trouble and Hazard. Could a dependence like this be justified in any Man, our Lord's constant Companions seem to have had the fairest Title to it. And yet, if from the several Relations of this Miracle, we may be allowed to form Conjectures; though other Vessels were engaged in the same Voyage, the Storm seems to have born more hard upon none, than that, in which a God incarnate, and his Disciples, were embarked. Thus his Divine Wisdom saw fit to permit it then, and thus he often does now. And, to take off all vain Imaginations, of Good Men being perfectly exempted from Dangers and Calamities, he did, in much Humility, condescend to be himself tost and driven about, by the Force and Fury of that Tempest. So justly may the Best of his Disciples, in all the stormy Cares, and raging Billows of a fickle and boisterous World, apply to their own Circumstances, the Warning elsewhere left to the first Planters of the Christian Faith:

The Servant is not greater than his Lord.
If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

John xv. 20.

Christ promises, 'tis true, to be with his Church always, even to the end of the world. And he is actually and properly present, with every faithful Christian, in every innocent and virtuous
tuous Action. He is yet in a more peculiar manner so, in the discharge of those Duties, which have a more eminent and immediate tendency, to the Advancement of Religion and his own Glory. Not present now indeed, as when conversing in the days of his Flesh upon Earth; yet so, as ministers an equal assurance of his Readiness and Power, to help and to protect us. But still Experience proves, that both the Church in general, and good People in particular, have laboured under fore Tryals, and suffered many hard things. Nor were such Hardships only on the account of private Faults or Failings, where some Offence might be given; Nor merely in matters of indifferent temper, where perverse Minds are apt to take Offence, even when none was given; But in their best and most praiseworthy Actions; nay, not only in them, but for them too. Their very Virtues have sometimes been so far from a Defence, as to expose and render them a Prey. And Matters have come to such extremity, that in the noise of the Waves, and the overflowing of Ungodliness, Mens Persons and their Fortunes have been swallowed up in a Storm, for no other reason, but their constant refusal to make Shipwreck of Faith and of a good Conscience.

For all this we can easily account; so far as the Malice of the Devil, and the Instruments of it, wicked Men, are concerned. It is but natural to suppose, that these should unite, and bend their utmost Endeavours, against Persons of Integrity and Piety. But, in regard there is a God, who sees and over-rules all things; a God, who hath declared himself and his Honour interested in the Cause of righteous and excellent Men; How comes it to pass, that He does not espouse such more visibly, and interpose more powerfully; that He does not controul and defeat their Enemies, and make them know, to their Cost, that all their Spight is impotent, and their Devices vain? And
And yet this is not done: The Oppressions and In- 
sults of base and barbarous Wretches are often not 
prevented: And the Good are not only assaulted from 
that Quarter, but sometimes from Sorrows and Dan-
gers, that speak a more immediate Hand of God. 
Such was the Tempest in the Text; Such are many 
Troubles and Disasters in Human Life; And, as in 
That Christ was asleep, so in These, God seems to take 
little or no notice, of his Suffering Servants. For the 
reconciling all which, with a Just and Holy, a Wise 
and Watchful Providence, I beg it may be considered 
in the 

II. Second Place; That, though the Best Men, and 
the Best Actions, are not secured from Sufferings and 
Dangers; yet are those Sufferings and Dangers always 
directed to the Good of the Parties concerned; and 
ordained by Providence, for wise Reasons, and excel-

tent Purposes. Of These Many may be unknown to 
Us; and of Those that are, or may be known, Some 
are without the compass of my present Design. For 
this reaches no farther, than to our Adversities, in 
proportion to the Case of the Disciples here: and con-
sequently, to such Reasons and Ends alone, as suit with 
these, whereby we may reasonably gather our Blessed 
Lord induced, to suffer the Coming of this Distress 
upon Them.

1. One of these Reasons seems to have been the 
Bringing them to a modest and humble Opinion of 
themselves. Mention is frequently made of their 
falling in this Point: And their exceeding Forwardness, to give themselves the Preference, not on-
ly above the rest of the World, but also before one 
another. Now the Honour of retaining to, and an 
immediate Friendship and Acquaintance with their Di-
vine Master, The partaking in his Privacies, and be-
ing there let into the Mysteries of the Kingdom of 
Heaven, were Privileges, exceeding valuable in them-
selves;
Vol. II. *after the Epiphany.*

...selves; likely to draw upon them the Respects of Others, and not less so, to beget in Themselves pleasing Imaginations of somewhat more than ordinary, that should dispose our Lord thus to distinguish, and as it were cut out them, from the rest of Mankind. Now, what could be more proper to refute these Notions, and prevent their mischievous Consequences; than putting those supposed Excellencies to the Touch, and convincing them, by such an Experiment, how little they were removed above common Men, how far from answering the glorious Idea, which they had formed of their mighty Proficiency, and, yet untried, Virtue?

Thus we have reason to believe good Men in general dealt with, whose Prosperity is but too prone to turn God's Blessings into Poyson; and taint the Virtue they have, with fond and lofty Conceits of their own Merit. And it is, no doubt, an Instance of the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence, to shew such to themselves: To instruct them by Sufferings and Dangers; and seemingly to neglect and forsake them for a while; that they may feel their own Weakness, when the Enemy attacks them. Such sensible Proofs soon teach them, that, how great forever they may represent themselves to themselves, and whatever imaginary Fights and Triumphs they may act over in their own Fancies, yet in truth that Strength, which *saints in the Day of Adversity,* is but, can be but small; and That, which resists and conquers in such a Day, is not their own, but His, whose Grace enables them to stand, and gets it self Glory of their Infirmities and Temptations. Which leads me to,

2. A second Reason for Christ's permitting the Difficulty upon his Disciples; Even, that they might hereby attain to just Apprehensions of his Power and Goodness, and higher degrees of Faith and Trust in Him.
Him. No Body need be told, how quick a Sense we have, where our own Persons or Interests are touched; and what deep Impressions those Dangers and Deliverances make, which, when our Brethren only are concerned, are entertained but coldly. Thus the present Terror and Distress would not fail to affect the Disciples more tenderly, and to have a more vigorous and lasting Influence; than our Lord's Cleansing Lepers, giving Sight to the Blind, healing the Sick at a distance, raising the Dead with a Word, or any the most amazing Instances upon Others, of which they were only Spectators.

And so we may say in general, that Afflictions are of use even to Good Men, for refreshing their Memories, rousing their Thoughts, and settling Affiance in the Almighty. For, though such Persons apply themselves, more than Common Men do, to weigh the several Dispensations of Providence, and make some Profit of whatever is remarkable in the Fortunes of Others; Yet even thus Good Men will still be Men; and, while they are so, they will not be able to consider such Events, with equal Warmth and Affection, as when the like shall happen to themselves.

And, as this Expedient is of Advantage to us; from the difference of Concern for other People, in comparison of our Selves; so is it likewise, with regard to each Man's private Affairs, considered singly and apart. For it is very visible, that nothing, which does not make some great Change in Our Affairs, affects us strongly, or sticks long by us. The same good Providence contrives our Preservation from, and our Escapes out of, Danger. But, notwithstanding, nothing is more evident, than that constant Health and Safety do by no means move our Spirits, and awaken our Sense and Praise of the Divine Goodness, like a Recovery from Sickness just despaired of, or a Rescue from some common and imminent Ruin. They,
They, who judge rightly, will discern the hand of God in both: But Few attend to this in ordinary Cases; and They, who do carry their Thoughts so far, feel their Passions more powerfully wrought upon to acknowledge, and be thankful for it, in the One Case, than the Other. So that it is good for us, even in this respect, to be sometimes in trouble; for, did we not feel Smart and Danger, we should never know the Pleasure of Ease, and Deliverance. And it may be said with great truth, that much of the Sweets of Life would be lost, were there no mixture of Bitter and Disgusteful, to heighten their Relish, and recommend them to us.

3. Thirdly, The Providence of God might intend, by the Danger in my Text, as it certainly does by the Tryals of other Good People, to exercise these Disciples, and train them up to a Constancy and Perfection in Virtue. These were the Persons, upon whom the weight of establishing the Gospel was to lie. This they were to effect, in despight of Indignities and Reproaches, Malice and unrelenting Barbarity, Oppositions on every side, and Persecutions in every place. Fit then it was, to inure these Champions betimes; to shew them Death in its most frightful Form; and at the same time make them sensible, that he who could quiet the Rage of the Seas, could not want Power to subdue the Madness of the People.

Every Good Man, it must be allowed, is not designed for such vast and hazardous Undertakings; but every Man hath a Post appointed him by God, and the Character of a Christian to maintain. And Few arrive to any uncommon Excellencies in this Station, except Such, as make their way up to them, through Sufferings. Hence 'tis, we commonly call Afflictions Tryals, because they are the Test of a Man's Virtue, and discover what he really is. These are the very
very proof, which the Devil desired to bring Job's Integrity to. They have effects, in some measure, like high Winds, and Thunder in the Air; or like the Fermentation of Humours in Bodies: for, as Health and Wholsomeness could not be preserved without these, so is the Soul confirmed by some Returns of violent Agitation, that awaken and exert its Powers, in Sufferings and Difficulties. And what degree of these is necessary, the great Physician of Souls best knows; and therefore our Care must be, to submit to His Prescriptions. Thus much, however, we may see plainly; that, the more familiar these things are made to us, the more will that Terror and Surprize wear off, which disables our first Encounters, from all that Steadiness and Decency, that becomes us. And how subject to such Consternations, very Good Men are, may be gathered from my Second General Head.

II. The Behaviour of these Disciples under their present Danger. The 25th Verse tells us, they came to Jesus and awoke him; and herein, no doubt, they are our Examples. They teach us, whither to flee in the Necessity of our Affairs, and the Anguish of our Souls; that Christ is a sure Refuge, our only Support, when Humane Remedies fail; and if be be asleep, that is, if we be not answered at the first Call, not to give over, or grow weary of Praying; but to exalt our Voices, and double our Importunity, till we receive such Help in Time of need, as his infinite Wisdom sees expedient for us. Thus far, I say, the Disciples did their own Duty, and have directed Us in Ours. But somewhat else, 'tis evident, there was, wherein they failed, and for which they are reproved at the 26th Verse. He faith unto them, Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little Faith? or, as another Evangelist expresses it, How is it that ye have no Faith? Mark iv. 40. and St. Luke, Where is your Faith.

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By this it appears, that, in a Season of Peril and great Tribulation, it is not enough, that we betake our selves to no unlawful means for Escape; or that we do not rest entirely upon Human Helps; no, nor yet that we come freight to God, and earnestly apply to Him for relief. All this the Disciples did, and yet they were guilty of Something so blameable, that, notwithstanding the imminent Hazard of all their Lives, our Lord, according to the account here, saw it reasonable to rebuke Them first, and then the Sea. Now it must needs be of great Importance, rightly to understand, wherein this particular Defect lay; that, as their Excellencies provoke our Imitation, so their Failings may be so many seasonable Preventions to us. And from the several Hands compared together, who have delivered an Account of this matter, it is beyond dispute, that their Fear was charged upon them, as an Argument of their wanting Faith.

But doth Faith require, that a Man become blind and insensible? Or was it reasonable to imagine, when the Winds roared, the Seas raged, the Vessel was sinking, Death pouring in upon them with every Wave, and their Master asleep; He, in whom alone any Hope could be left, to their thinking, deaf and unconcern'd all the while: Can it, I say, be conceived, that Men, in these distressed Circumstances, should feel no Terror, betray no Disorder? To reproach them for Passions so interwoven with, Weaknesses so inseparable from, our common Constitution and Frame, is, in effect, to reproach them for being Men. And, whatever wicked People may suggest, or ignorant People suppose, we may be very confident, that no Command in the Gospel, no Disposition or Duty expected from us, was ever designed to destroy, but all tend to exalt and perfect, Human Nature.

Fear,
Fear, then, in general, could not be their fault, but some Quality with which their Fear was then attended. In the discovering whereof, the two other Evangelists will assist us. St. Luke relates the Manner of their Application to our Lord in these words, Master, Master, we perish: St. Mark in these, Master, carest thou not that we perish? In agreement with them St. Matthew must be understood: and then, Lord save us, we perish, is an Exclamation full of Horror, Confusion, and Despair, in Men, that gave up all for lost and gone. And this, no doubt, was the Disciples Weakness, and want of Faith, that they suffered the sense of the present Danger to drive them to Despondency: They suspected either the Goodness, or the Power of Christ, to help in this Extremity; and seem'd to say, Either that their Safety was no part of his Concern, and he cared not if they were lost; Or else, that this was a Difficulty too mighty for him, notwithstanding those many former Miracles, which ought to have persuaded the contrary. And thus the Language of their fainting Hearts bore some resemblance to that Reproach at his Crucifixion, He saved others, himself be cannot save.

The Improvement then, which it behoves Us to make of this Example, is that of condemning, lamenting, and setting our selves resolutely to struggle with, those Dejections and Misgivings of Mind, which Calamities and Fears are apt to cast us into. We should see and consider our Dangers and our Wants, but so, as to quicken our Zeal, and take Sanctuary in God, and still to believe him a sure Sanctuary, even when Human Helps prove broken Reeds to us. We must not then limit his Hand, or measure it by the weak Arm of Flesh, but rest assured, that his Power is always invincible, and his Wisdom and Mercy incomprehensible. We must seek him by Prayer, and qual-
lify our selves for his Favour, by a holy Importunity, and a strong Faith. In short, this One, this most important Truth must be ever fixed upon our Minds; That, let our Enemies be never so many, or never so mighty; our Adversities never so grievous, our Dangers never so formidable; still nothing can either bind the Hands, or bound the Love, of God. But he always can, and always will, deliver and do, as he knows to be most for the benefit of them that serve him faithfully. An eminent Instance whereof my

III. Third and Last Head gives us; The Deliverance, I mean, of the Disciples, related in these words, *Then be a ris and rebuked the Winds and the Sea, and there was a great Calm.* Upon which I shall very briefly make Two Remarks; One of the Tenderness and Compassion, Another of the Extent and Perfection, of the Assistance we may depend upon, from the Goodness of our God and only Saviour.

1. His Compassion, First, is observable, in condescending to the Requests of these Disciples, though not recommended by all the Perfection it ought to have had. The Philosophers heretofore, in their Distinctions of Fear, allowed a sort of it, which it was no Disparagement to a Man of Virtue and Courage to be affected with. And our Blessed Lord, who made us, and who vouchsafed, in his own Person, to feel the Infirmities of Flesh and Blood; does, upon all occasions, shew himself tender and gentle to them, and willing to cherish the first Seeds and Beginnings of a Faith, yet feeble in us. This is evident in fact, that the Men, who, in their cooler Thoughts, have the justest Notions of God and his Providence, do nevertheless, in some Extremities, find their Understandings disturbed, their Thoughts confounded, and Reason and Religion for a while justled aside. In such Cases, it is our Duty to check

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the Disorders, that we cannot absolutely prevent; to call up, as soon as may be, the Powers of Consideration and Faith, and lay fast hold on that Hope, which is deservedly styled the Anchor of tost’d and tempest-beaten Souls. And, provided this be done, our Frailties and Surprises shall never be charged to our account. They will, on the contrary, not fail to move Pity, and shew us the Truth and Faithfulness of God, by opening the way to a glorious and happy Deliverance, from the Temptations we lie under.

2. And for this Hope my Second Remark furnishes Ground sufficient: For, our Saviour rebuked the Winds and the Seas, and even those deaf and merciless Elements heard and obeyed his Voice. The like effectual Change shall always follow, when God gives the Word; No Danger, no Opposition can stand before it. The fiercer and more dreadful these are, the more only they contribute to the rendring his Power sensible, and his Goodness signal, in that compleat Deliverance, that succeeding Calm, which at once will refresh us after, and reward us for, our past Fears and Troubles. So great reason hath every Christian to support himself with those words of the Holy Psalmist, What though the Earth be moved, and the Hills carried into the midst of the Sea: Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same? God is in the midst of us, therefore shall we not be removed; God shall help us, and our Enemies shall melt away. The Lord is our Light, and our Salvation, whom then shall we fear? The Lord is the Strength of our Life, of what then should we be afraid?

To conclude in a word. This Gospel sets before us a lively Emblem of God’s dealing with his Servants; and a plain Intimation, both what those Servants are to expect from Him, and what they are to do, to justify their Dependance upon him. Violent Shakings
kings and strong Convulsions are incident to the Fortunes, not of Private Men only, but of Communities and Kingdoms. This is the Lot of the Best, of the Greatest, of the Church, of the whole World. God hath no where engaged to keep off Assaults and Temptations. He thinks it encouragement enough, to sustain us under, to succour us in, and at his own due Time, to deliver us out of, our Dangers and Distresses. When therefore these attack us, either in our Personal, or our Publick Capacity; our Business must be, To seek his Protection by earnest and constant Prayer; and thus to silence all those wicked Distrusts, which frail Nature, the Prevalence of sensual Affections, and the Extremity of Afflictions, are too apt to betray us into: To remember, that though our Selves are weak, yet our Redeemer is mighty: That the stormy Wind, which cannot rise but at his word, shall, when he pleases to command, be immediately laid by it again: That He is disposed to look upon our Sufferings and Infirmities with a very tender Eye: and, provided we be not wanting to our Duty, he will accept that most pious and most necessary Prayer, which our Church, in allusion to the Passage now before us, hath taught us to put up this day.

Let us therefore to the Throne of Grace, in an humble sense of being set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our Nature we cannot always stand upright: and may He grant us such Strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

Matth. xii. 25, 38.

O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and House hold in thy true Religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly Grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle.

Coloss. iii. 12.

P U T therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, meekness, long-suffering.

12. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

13. Especially let the love of your Brethren, founded on the love of God, and of his love to you, be your constant Principle and Practice, for this will make you perfect in all manner of good Works; and in any Difference, let the Peace God requires of you be the Umpire to compose it; remembering how he hath united you into one Body, his Church, which is a Mercy, that calls for your greatest thanks.

14. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17. And in all your Actions and Words, whether those of solemn Worship, or others, address your selves to God, and expect his Acceptance by Jesus Christ; for he is the only Person, by whom our Prayers and Praise must be offered to his Father under the Gospel, as all Mercies are derived down to us through him, for which we pray to, or praise God.

Comment.
THE Duties (a) urged in this Epistle at the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Verses, The Obligations we all have to them, as Christians, The (b) high Commendation of Charity, the common Source and Sum of them all; And the Reasonableness (c) of forbearing and forgiving, after Christ's Example, have had their places of being considered already.

My purpose, at present, is, to fix on the Subject of the 16th Verse, which Interpreters have generally agreed to understand, of those Ejaculations and pious Lauds, which Christians heretofore were so famous for, as, even by Heathens (d) and Enemies, to have special notice taken, how constant and considerable a part of Divine Worship they made. These, (as is probable, not only from this and another parallel Text to the Ephesians, but a Passage very remarkable in the First to the Corinthians,) were such Effusions of Praise, as the Holy Ghost (among other extraordinary Gifts, reasonable and necessary for those early days of the Gospel) infused into Souls, transported with Zeal, and Gratitude, and Love. But, in regard those Gifts have long since ceased, and we are left to stated Methods; in regard we have still some such Helps to our Devotion, as, we may be very confident, did originally (though in an Age far distant from our own) proceed from the same Divine Spirit; I hope it will not be judged improper, because 'tis our own fault if it be unprofitable, for me, at this time, to set before you the Excellence and Usefulness of the Book of Psalms. The rather, because they are a constant Portion of our K3
Publick Service; and seem, by the Wisdom of our Church, to be recommended, with a distinguishing Concern, to our Study and Remembrance, by being so much oftner read in our Assemblies, than any other part of God's holy Word.

I shall not stay to insist (though somewhat might be said to good purpose on that Subject) upon the Advantage this Collection hath, by being of Poetical Composition. It shall suffice to observe, that this is designed, as all other Poetry is, or ought to be, for Instruction and Delight. My business shall be to shew, how well the Psalms acquit themselves of both these Offices. And consequently, how wise a choice They make, who pitch upon these, for a constant Companion, both of their more retired Thoughts, and of their more publick Exercises of Devotion.

1. And First, For the Instructing Part, They, who at all attend to the Matter here treated of, cannot but see the Justice of those Ancients, who recommend this Book, as the Marrow and Epitome of Divine Knowledge, the Treasury and Storehouse of Piety and Prayer.

The ground of true Religion is laid in right and worthy Apprehensions of God, of his Providence, his Justice, his Power, and his Mercy. But where shall we better furnished with, whence may we hope for more lively Representations of, these so necessary Truths? How becomingly do the xixth, the xxxiiid, the civth, and cxlviiiid Psalms, besides sundry other incidental Passages, declare the Efficacy of that Almighty Word, which did but speak, and all things were made, commanded only, and forthwith they stood fast? The Beauty and Order of the Creatures, the wise Uses assigned to each of them, the Eternal Bounds which they cannot pass, The Glory of the Heavens, The Riches of the Earth and Seas, The wondrous and profitable Variety that fill them, And the perpetual necessary dependance of all these, upon the kindly Influence and
and prolific Goodness of the First Cause, cannot be suggested, in Ideas more lofty, in Terms more suitable to the Dignity of the Subject, than that Spirit, which made, and governs them all, hath here infused into the Holy Author.

The Effects of Divine Providence in general, That Light of God's Countenance, which shines, with a peculiar Lustre, upon the Person and the Posterity of the Good man; Those Guards of Angels, that pitch their Tents round about his House, and chase away the Powers of Darkness from their beloved Charge; That distinguishing Care, which saves the Souls of such from death, and feeds them in the time of dearth, that keeps all their bones so, that not one of them is broken, shelters them under his wings, and secures them under his feathers, and, even then, when thousands fall beside them, and ten thousands at their right hand, forbids any Plague from coming nigh Their Persons or their Dwellings; are admirably describ'd in the xxxiiid, xxxivth, and xcist Psalms. And The Observations made there are back'd with so many Instances and Experiments, in other Places, relating to David's own Case; that, in speaking his own Sense and Soul, he fills every faithful Christian with holy Confidence and great Tranquillity, when Dangers and Calamities make their boldest Approaches.

The direful Vengeance, that awaits the Ungodly, That Fire and Brimstone, that Storm and Tempest, which shall be their portion to drink. Their Confusions, and Horrors, and unavoidable Destruction, are painted in such ghastly Colours, at the xith, xviiith, xxxviith, lxxixth, and cxith Psalms; as will, if any thing will, strike a damp into the Wicked, chill all their Blood, quell their proud Wrath, and almost force them to reflect, though most unwillingly, that there is verily a God that judgeth in the earth. A God, that will not forget the poor helpless Man, nor suffer the patient abiding of
the meek to perish for ever; But will put the mightiest and the boldest Sinners of them all in fear, and make them know themselves to be but Men.

These are Evidences of a God and Providence, which all, who believe such things, would naturally expect. But there is One Thought, more peculiarly David's own; for he helps us against the Difficulties too, which have staggered so many in this Belief. His xxxviii, lxxiii, and xcii Psalms, do, with wonderful dexterity, unfold the Mystery of Good men being destitute, afflicted, tormented, while the Evil and Oppressors live at their Ease, full of Health, and Plenty, and Power. These assure us, That the End of the perfect and upright Man is sure to be peace at the last; That the Righteous and their seed are never utterly forsaken; That this short imaginary Happiness of the Wicked is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot, a Blaze, soon kindled, and soon out again: That it is a Subject to exercise our Patience, but by no means fit to provoke our Envy; That, the longer they are spared, the higher the Arm is lifted, and the heavier at last the Blow will fall: for when all the workers of wickedness do flourish, and look gay and green as the grass, 'tis only to reserve them for the fiery oven, and, that they may be destroyed for ever. In a word, Though other Considerations may stop short, yet if we will bear David company into the house of God, that is, apply our selves to Revealed Truths; we shall understand the end of these men, that the high places where they stand are slippery, that they suddenly and surprizingly consume, perish, and come to a fearful end, and that their Glories, and even the remembrance and very Image of them, vanish like a dream, when one awakea out of sleep. Thus these promiscuous Dispenasions are fitted for excellent Improvements. They will convince Men of the Folly of Sin, even in its most pompous and alluring Circumstances; and
and of the Vanity of the World, even in its most charming dress. They shew, how little those things must needs be worth, which God permits those, whom he least loves, to plentifully to enjoy. They teach us, where to fix our Hopes and our Affections; that we ought to have none in Heaven itself but Him, much less any thing upon earth, that we desire in comparison of him: and, that our great Endeavour and most earnest Wisdom should be, to be guided by his Counsel, and after that to be received with Glory; that so, when not only all the World without and its false Comforts forsake us, but when even a part of our own selves, this Body, shall, as very shortly it must, decay and die, and moulder into dust, when our flesh and our heart fail; God may then, then especially, be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.

Where, again, can we see the Gracefulness of Virtue set off to better Advantage, where the Deformity of Vice more justly exposed? The Equity of God's Laws, Their happy Influences on all that submit to them, The Wisdom, the Comforts, the Delights of Religion, are so admirably characterized in the sixteenth, sixteenth particularly, and in several other Psalms; that we may truly say, As no Subject is so noble, so none ever had better reason done it than this. Nor does all end in a mere Commendation, but useful and seasonable Instructions are frequently intermixed, with regard to particular Occasions and Exigencies. Nothing, that can adorn or accomplish a Good Man, is omitted; No Sin almost, but hath its Temptations and Snares detected. And we may promise our selves much the same Security and present Remedy from these holy Writings, that Saul felt from their Author. For, we no sooner betake our selves to the Divine Applications of this wise Charmer, than the Powers of Hell are bound up and subdued, and the Evil Spirit finds it self unable to stand before them.

Far-
Farther yet. Here are laid the Foundations of Christianity, so very perspicuous, that no Book in the Old Testament is so often referred to, throughout the whole Course of the New. The most Eminent Mysteries of our Faith, the Sufferings and Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Blessed Lord, the Malice of the stubborn Jews, the Treachery of Judas, the Success of the Gospel, the Calling of the Gentiles, the Kingdom of Antichrist, foretold, in Terms clear and peremptory enough, to condemn all the Gainsaying, and Unbelievers. So that nothing could be better accommodated for informing our Judgments, in all necessary Points of Faith and Practice. And, if we next proceed to the other Use I mentioned, it will appear, that they are no less fitted to delight and entertain our Affections, than they are proved already, to enlighten our Understandings.

The Delight I mean, is a truly rational and Innocent Delight. Such, as consists in moving the Passions sweetly, by tender Thoughts and proper Expressions, that strike in with the virtuous Inclinations of the Mind, assist and improve Nature, suit the several Exigencies of Human Life, and the different Affections they of necessity raise in us.

And upon this Subject, Where shall I begin, where make an end? For, what Fortune, what Circumstance is it, to which the use of these Heavenly Meditations does not accommodate itself?

Do the Riches and Glories of the World exalt our Spirits, and make our Breasts overflow with Joy? Here are the noblest Raptures of Praise and Thanksgiving; Such as at once express our Satisfaction, and direct our Views to the Bountiful Hand that gave it. Do these Gayeties (as God knows they are but too apt to do) swell our Minds with carnal Pride, and a false Security, with vain Imaginations of our own sufficiency, a haughty Contempt of those to whom Provi-
Providence hath dealt them less liberally, and a wicked Forgetfulness of our great Benefactor? Here are most seazonable Remonstrances of the Falshood and Fickleness of all Worldly Advantages, the Frailty of our Nature, and the Shortness of our own Continuance. That Man is as Grass, and his most flourishing Estate, like a Flower of the Field, which as soon as the Wind goeth over it, is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. That his Days are but the length of a Span, and, in that narrow compass, he walks in a shadow, disquieting himself to little or no purpose, and beaping up Riches, which he cannot tell who shall gather. For thus much only is certain in the case, that though One's Substance be increased, and the glory of his House never so much exalted, yet he can carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him.

Do Adversities or Injuries of any sort press us hard, Want or Disgrace, the Treachery of false Friends, or the Malice of profess'd Enemies, the Mischiefs of open Violence, or the secret Stabs of slanderous and envenom'd Tongues? We are provided here with suitable Applications; Directed in Poverty to that watchful Care, that takes us up, and cherish us, when even our Father and Mother forsake us: Set upon that Rock, which cannot be shook by any overflowings of Ungodliness; refer'd to that Judge of Hearts, who knows our Innocence, and who, when Men hate us without a cause, and lay to our charge things that we know not; will awake, and stand up to avenge our quarrel, and not suffer our Enemies to triumph over us ungodly.

Are we intangled in the toils of Satan, and assaulted by violent Temptations to Sin? If, through our Frailty, or our Folly, we have provoked the Majesty of
of Heaven, to withdraw the cheering Light of his
Countenance; In all Attacks and Combats with the
Adversary of Souls, in all the bitter Anguish of Re-
morse, in all the anxious Concern to recover that lo-
ving Kindness, which is better than Life itself; we are
supplied with the best Advice, the tenderest Reflections,
the most prevailing Methods of Endearment, the most
zealous and most successful Example to this purpose.
And sure it was an act of Mercy to the whole World,
that God permitted David to fall so grievously, and
be punished so severely; since this not only teaches us,
that the Best Men may fail, and do not stand out of
the reach of Danger and Temptation; but makes both
his Sin and his Sufferings, his Prayers and his Tears,
an everlasting Monument and Pattern, to all succeeding Ages.

In a word, (for I must force my self to contract this
Point) Whether the Precepts, or the Promises of God,
his Exhortations or his Threatnings; Whether Praises
or Prayers employ us: There is no Exigence of our
Souls, no Condition of Person or Fortune, no Mercy
we can desire, none that we would return Thanks for;
No posture of Affairs, in the Church, or in the State,
of our Friends, or of our Enemies, but these Psalms
would regulate our Behaviour under them, and suggest
seasonable Supplications for them. Of so wondrous
happy a Composition are the Divine Poems; So in-
structive, so pleasurable; So entertaining while they
teach, so improving while they delight; So ready, so
effectual a Cure to those Pains and Passions, which they
charm and asswage.

Of these Excellencies the good and wise Men, that
have gone before us, declared a due Sense, by constant-
ly commending this Book as an excellent Subject for
private Meditation, and by allowing it a more than or-
dinary share in the publick Devotions of the Church.
Concerning both these Uses I will add somewhat, and
so conclude.
1. And *First*, For Private Meditation. The Care taken in this respect was formerly so great, that the moost, and the meanest, had a considerable part, and the Men of better Capacity, seem to have had the whole of it perfectly by Heart. St. Chrysostom describes the Labourer at his Work, the good Woman at her Household Affairs, nay, even the young Children, mixing such pious Ejaculations, in the Intervals of their Business and Diversions. And happy were it sure, if the Memories of all People were so profitably stored, and the vacant spaces of their time so virtuously filled up. For it is the Mind's peculiar Excellence, that, as its Thoughts are never weary, so neither can they be absolutely idle. Here then (instead of those polluted Images, which nurse up Vice, and poyson their Sobriety, and Crashity) Men might make a Virtue of Necessity; and, in the midst of a laborious Care to provide for themselves and Family, might deceive their Time and Toil, by making sweet Musick to God, might thus repair that want of Leisure-hours, and more composed Devotions, which Business will not suffer them to have. But that indeed, which should most powerfully recommend such a Practice, is, that this is doing the Work of Heaven, while upon Earth. For a great part of what we know, concerning that place of Bliss, and its glorious Inhabitants, is, that they live in perfect Harmony and Love, perpetually singing Praise before the Throne of God. And sure, if there be any Sense of, any Pantings after, that happy State; we cannot but delight in joyning with that Blessed Choir, by raising our Hearts as high, and labouring to get such fore-tastes of their Joys, as our present Distance, and the frailties of mortal Flesh and Blood, will now admit us to do.

2. But then indeed do we approach nearest to those blissful Regions, when with united Hearts and Voices,
Voices, we publickly set forth the Praise of our Almighty Creator, and most Merciful Redeemer. And therefore these Psalms have born always a very considerable part in the Divine Worship, both of the Jewish, and the Christian, Church. That several of them were composed expressly for the Service of the Tabernacle and the Temple, is plain. And as well our Saviour himself, as the State of his Church under the Gospel, have so great an Interest in them, that these Prayers, and Praises, and Complaints, continue very applicable to the Godly of all Ages. And, that Men might, in Our manner of serving God, the better imitate that Consent of Saints and Angels above; that no Tongue might lie idle, but all join in so necessary, so acceptable a Work; the People, in Present, as well as Primitive, Congregations, have been allowed their share too. This is done, either by Comfort, where Musick was customary, or by repeating the Verses by turns, where that advantage could not conveniently be had. All which, and going over the whole Book of Psalms in the Course of every Month, help to stir up a godly Zeal, to imprint and fasten these things in the Memories of Men. Thus their Devotions Abroad furnish proper Matter for those at Home, and enrich their Mind with a Treasure of pious Remarks and Reflections, to be drawn out for such uses, as each Person's Temper disposes him to, or his private Circumstances shall best direct.

But it must never be expected, that the most innocent or most beneficial Institutions should escape all Censure and Scruple. The Malice of Some, and the Weakness of Others, call every thing into Question. For the Conviction therefore of them, who seek occasion of Blame, where there is none; and for the Satisfaction of those, who would be glad to find, that in reality there is none; I will just mention some of the principal Objections, against our use of these Psalms,
in the daily Publick Service; and leave some short
Hints with you, by way of Answer, which may vin-
dicate the Church's Practice in this Matter.

1. Now the First Objection I shall mention, pre-
tends the Psalms to have been composed, upon occa-
sions, peculiar to the Times and Circumstances of their
respective Authors. Therefore, it is said, they are whol-
ly impertinent, and unfit for the use of other Ages and
Persons. This is far from being the case, with a great
number of them however: For very many are equally
fit, and edifying, for all Places and Seasons. And even
for the Rest, which it may seem most to concern: The
Defence is obvious, from those Intimations already gi-
gen, that Christ and his Church are so often referred
to, so clearly predicted there; Which renders them of
general Concernment to all Christians. And sure such
an incommunicable Property cannot belong to David,
in those Psalms whereof himself was the Author; since
our Blessed Lord hath so often used, and interpreted,
and his Apostles argued from many Passages spoken,
as in David's own Person. For the truth and force
whereof I appeal to our Saviour's own Words upon
the Cross, and St. Peter and St. Paul's

Matt. xxvii. 46.
Psal. xxii. 1.
Luke xxiii. 46.
Psal. xxxi. 5.
xiii. 35, 36, 37.

Discourses on his Resurrection; the one
in Jerusalem, the other at Antioch; But
Both address'd to People versed in these
Scriptures, and not to be imposed upon by
false Applications.

2. It hath been a Second Exception, that, however
a private Use of them may, where every Man's Di-
cretion will guide him, to that which is proper for
his own purpose; yet a publick Use of these, and all
these Psalms, as they offer themselves promiscuously,
never can be convenient: Because, supposing all to
joyn, the afflicted give Thanks, the prosperous Mourn,
and the easy Complain. Now the Answer to this is
very easy. For Men, then met, are looked on as one

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Body,
Body, and as having a common concern in all the Providences of God, not only that are now, but that ever were, to his Servants and People. But waving this. Is not the Mercy of God over every one of his Works? And hath not the most distressed Creature breathing received more, than he deserves, or hath been sufficiently thankful for? Are not our very Sufferings for excellent Ends, and may not the Calamities of our Outward greatly promote the Happiness of our Inward Man? Do not even these then demand our Thanks? Thanks for being afflicted no sooner, no heavier; Thanks for the Comforts our Afflictions have still left us; nay, Thanks for being afflicted here, with a design to prevent our being tormented hereafter? And therefore Praise cannot be uncomely in any Mouth, or at any time. Then for the Prosperous, if he hath no Infelicities (but who is there so perfectly happy as to have none?) of his Own to deplore; yet, is he not bound to remember and lament those of his Brethren, to express a Sympathy for his Fellow-members of Christ's Mystical Body, and to reckon himself a Sufferer in them, and with them? And once more, will not the Recollection of Adversities which Others, especially which Good Men endure, naturally excite in us great Gratitude, for that Tenderness and Long-suffering of God, which hath preserved, and laid so much less upon Us, who have (tis probable) deserved to endure so very much more.

3. A Third Cavil hath been taken from the Curses and Imprecations to be met with there, as not agreeable to Christian Charity, and the Temper of Him who hath commanded us, to love them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. Be it allowed, that higher Degrees of Charity and Meekness are now required, than under the Law; and that some things, excusable in the Jews, or in David,
David, are not a Pattern, nor so much as pardonable, for Christians. Yet ought it to be considered, (1.) That no temporal Judgments are final, but capable of becoming Blessings, in order to a future State: And therefore, to People incorrigible by gentler means, as it may be Mercy in God to inflict such; so it may be no breach of Charity in Us, to pray that he would deal with them in such manner, as may effectually reclaim them from their Wickedness, and prevent their farther hardening in Sin, and their everlasting Damnation. (2.) That it is always lawful (with due resignation to God’s Will) to ask our own Safety and Deliverance from Trouble; and, if matters are brought to such pass, that these cannot be compassed any other way, we may, in order to it, pray for the Humbling and Confusion of our Enemies. (3.) That David is to be looked upon in the quality, both of a Prophet, and an eminent Type of Christ; and thus His Enemies and God’s are inseparable, and the same. Thus those forms of Imprecation, as they stand in our Translation, are rather Predictions of the Vengeance God resolved to take, on the Blasphemers and Persecutors of our Lord and his Gospel; and so ought to be read with thankful Acknowledgments of that Power, and Goodness, and Truth, which appeared in their respective Accomplishments, whereby he so wonderfully vindicated his own Cause. And (Lastly) we may consider both David’s Enemies and Christ’s, as Figures of our Spiritual Enemies, the Prince and Powers of Darkness. And sure we need be under no scruple or restraint, against the Tempter and his hellish Accomplices, who so earnestly labour our eternal Ruin. Some, or All of these Reasons may, I hope, suffice to satisfy Men in the use of these Psalms, and, that it is not the Composer’s fault, but their own, if they feel from hence provocations to such a frame of Mind, as is in any degree inconsistent with the
the Duties of Forgiveness and truly Christian Charity.

4. Once more, Some object, That, not having attained to David's Piety, they dare not make his Professions, of having weaned their Souls, and kept them low, of praising God seven times a day, studying his Law all the day long, loving his Commandments above Gold and precious Stones, or thousands of Gold and Silver, and the like. Now these Men ought to consider, that, in such Passages, David is our Pattern; and expresseth Perfections, necessary for us to be put in mind of; Such as we all should aspire after, and be ashamed and very sorry, if we have not yet attained to.

In a Word, Let us make it our great Aim, both in publick, and in private, to repeat David's Words, with David's Affection; to tune our Souls to his Harp, and enter into his Spiritual Joys, and Griefs. For, as we have no right to his Comforts, without his Repentance; so neither do we make Melody to the Lord, unless we make it in our Hearts. It is the Hand, that touches the Instrument, not the Instrument itself, that recommends the Composition. And we must have Pure Hearts, Abstractive Spirits, Heavenly Desires, and Inflamed Devotions; if we hope to make good Comfort with Saints upon Earth, or to have a Place in the Glorified Choir of Heaven.
The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Gospel.

St. Matth. xiii. 24. (According to our Lord’s Interpretation of the Parable, v. 37, &c.)

24. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man, which sowed good Seed in his Field.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

24. The State of the Gospel, and of them that live under it in the present World, is this.

Christ propagates in all Parts of the Earth a Doctrine of Truth and Purity: The Fruits whereof are Men of See Ver. 37, 38. sound Principles, and holy Lives.

25. But when Men slept, his Enemy came and sowed Tares among the Wheat, and went his way.

vanantage from the Negligence of some, and the Infirmities of the Best Men) corrupts this Doctrine, and obstructs the Success of it, by introducing false and pernicious Principles; the Product whereof are Hereticks and Schismatists, and Men of wicked and scandalous Lives.

25. But the Devil, a constant Enemy to all Goodness, (taking ad-

26. But when the Blade was sprung up, and brought forth Fruit, then appeared the Tares also.

26. This was carried on so subtilely and secretly, as not pre-

27. So the Servants of the Householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good Seed in thy Field? From whence then hath it Tares? Strines of the Gospel, plainly discern the difference between them, and know that They, whatever they pretend, do not follow the Instructions of Christ, but of the Devil.

27. For Good Men, by comparing the Tenets and Practices of these Men with the Doc-

28. He said unto them, An Enemy hath done this. The Servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go, and gather them up?

28. Mean while, how zealous forever their concern may be to remedy this Mischief; it is not the Will of God, that it should be done by utterly exterminating such wicked Men, and sending them out of the World, in Methods of Blood, and barbarous Executions.

29. But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them.

29. This God disallows, both because the Inconveniences of such a Proceeding would prove greater to the Good, than any, which the suffering Evil Men to continue amongst them at present can produce.

L 2

30. And
30. And, because the Punishment of Such is reserved for the end of the World. At which time God will command his Angels, to separate the Evil and the Good, when both shall be brought to Judgment. And then the wicked shall be cast into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Thus shall they be punished for all the Mischief done, and the Scandal given by them, in this World. Then shall the Righteous also shine forth, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. Thus shall they be rewarded for that Patience, and Meekness, and Constancy, which the evil Principles, and evil Deeds of those Wicked are permitted to exercise, with many hard Trials, in the present Condition of things.

**COMMENT.**

Our Blessed Saviour had, in a former Parable of the Sower, signified the different Successes of his Word, proportioned to the different Dispositions of his Hearers. This concerned the Seed-time, the very Act of Planting and Propagating the Gospel. But here He, in another Parable, denotes a Disadvantage, to which even the best Seed, and the best Soil, would be liable, after it was sown, from Tares being sown upon it. Of which Figure, in regard Himself hath condescended to be his own Interpreter; all we have left to do on this occasion, is to observe the Substance and main Scope of the Parable, which plainly amounts to thus much.

That it is the Pleasure of God, to suffer a Mixture of Bad with Good Men, during the State of his Church, in the present World. That, notwithstanding the many Inconveniences, which may and do arise from such a Mixture; He doth not think fit, either by Judgments from his own Hand immediately, or by Authorizing Men to be the Ministers of his Vengeance upon one another, utterly to extirpate all Corruption of Doctrine and Manners. That there are very wise and good Reasons for this Forbearance; partic-
particularly, that it is grounded, partly upon such, as regard the Good Men, with whom these Wicked are mix'd; and partly upon such, as concern those Wicked themselves.

Now my design is, First, To consider the Reasons of this Proceeding, so far as the Parable hath directed us to them: And then, to conclude with such Inferences, as this Subject will naturally suggest to us.

1. I begin with the Reasons for continuing a Mixture of Bad Men; during the present state of Christ's Church in this World. And of these, with the former sort; such as have respect to the Good Men, with whom those Bad are mixt. For, that their Benefit is consulted by such Forbearance, is manifest from the Eighth and Nine and Twentieth Verses. Where, upon the Servants proffering their Pains, to go and gather up these Tares; the Master of the Field is represented, disallowing the Forwardness of their Zeal, as over-officious, highly unseasonable, and of very dangerous Consequence. He said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them. And, that this Prohibition is of Service to good Men, will, I conceive, sufficiently appear, from the three following Considerations.

1. First. Look upon the matter, as propounded in this Parable, where the Servants were offered for the Instruments of rooting out these Tares; and the Danger of good Men perishing, together with the Wicked, soon manifests itself. Let us suppose the most favour-able Circumstances, that such a Dispensation can possibly bear. Allow these Purgers of the Field to have no other Views, but the Honour of God, the Peace and Security of the Church, the undisturbed Exercise and Advancement of Piety and Virtue: Admit this Zeal of theirs to be, not only untainted with Secular Interest and Ambition, but perfectly void of Rashness and Heat; tempered with all imaginable Discre-
tion, proceeding with the most scrupulous Caution, executing Vengeance upon no single Person, without the best Information Mankind are capable of: Yet even in such a Case (and such a Case, however possible in Supposition, I doubt was never true in Fact) the Wheat cannot be safe; because such Gatherers are never able to make a perfect Distinction between the Tares and It. That is, They cannot know exactly, who are truly Good, and who Bad Men. And the Reason is, because That, wherein the Essential Difference between these two sorts consists, lies deeper than any Human Eye can penetrate, even in the Heart, the Will, and the Intentions.

If then the Tares they endeavour to root out, be Heresie and corrupt Doctrine; Men can enter no farther into the Merits of this Cause, than Outward Profession will guide them. They may know, who lifts himself of such a Party, or espouses such an Opinion: But they cannot discover, who embraces the Truth out of Temporal Interest, and who out of a sincere Conviction of the Mind: Who refuses it from a Spirit of Obstinacy, and Who from Want of Capacity, or better Instruction. And yet the Honest Mistaken Man is, in a Judgment of Equity, pitiable at least: and the dissembled temporizing Orthodox, of very small account in God’s Esteem.

Put Case again, this Tare be Vice and Immorality, Men can see, and animadvert upon, the openly dissolute and scandalous. But, can they pursue the demure and secret Sinners, through all the intricate Mazes of their Hypocrisie? Can they unlock their Closets, draw the Curtains of their polluted Beds, or descry the Filthines of their Thoughts? Can they distinguish the Vain-glorious from the Sincere, or separate between the gaudy Outside of a laboured Formality, and the native Lustre of an inward Purity? Both these Men may affect the Eye alike; and yet One is
a white sepulchre, full of rottenness, and dead men's bones; the Other a living Temple of the Holy Ghost. The One hath the Power of Godliness, the Other only the Form; and, for want of the Power, is as errand a Tare, as if he had not even the Form. But still that Tare may be mistaken for good Corn, and so may this good Corn be sometimes too for Tares. So that an absolute Separation is not possible to be made, and consequently neither safe to be trusted with, nor fit to be attempted, by Men. No. This must be referred to that God, who alone can discern between Reality and Disguise. For They who are not able to do so, can never gather up all the Tares. To that God, who sees and makes allowance for Mens particular Circumstances; the Unaffectedness of their Ignorance; the Violence of their Temptations; the Suddenness of their Surprises; the Uprightness of their Intentions; the Simplicity of their Hearts; their want of Opportunities to know, or to do, better. All these no Man can understand perfectly, and therefore no Man can make just abatements for them. And, without such abatements, the Security of many honest and good People cannot be effectually provided for. For, upon any other Terms, there is no Remedy, but they, who go about to gather out the Tares, will root up also a great deal of Wheat with them.

2. Secondly, To this Difficulty, on the part of the Gatherers, may be added another, no less insuperable one, from the Posture and Condition of these Tares themselves; whose Roots are so intangled with those of the good Corn, that there is no disengaging them; no drawing out the One, without tearing up the Other, at the same time. My meaning is, That the Affairs of Men, in this Life, are so intricate and perplexed, and the Interests of the Good and Bad so nicely mingled, so mutually interwoven; that it is absolutely impossible, according to the present and ordi-
nary Circumstances of the Case, for any alteration to happen to the Fortunes of the One, which shall not very sensibly affect the Other also. The same Titles in Law, the same Advantages in Trade, the same Hazards of Person, are shared between them. The same Vessel at Sea, the same Family on Land, the same Shop in the City, contains both. So that it is not possible, according to any Human Consideration, for Storms, or Fire, or Pestilence, or any other common Calamity, to sever between them.

Not only so; but even in those Disasters, that are more Particular and Personal, the Wicked will have some Partners, or Relations, or Friends, who must suffer in them, or with them, or for them. Nay, they will suffer so much the more sensibly, as themselves are better Men; because such are proportionably more tender and compassionate. For Virtue, above all things, softens our Hearts, and fills them with kind and merciful Sentiments. Religion is the highest Improvement of Humanity and Good-nature; and none, who is a Christian indeed, can see the Sufferings, even of Them, who deserve most to suffer, without Impression or Concern. So great a Mercy is it to the Righteous, that the Wicked are spared at present. Because it saves them a multitude of Tragical and Afflicting Spectacles, which, if God should take swift Vengeance upon Sinners, would render Life a most uncomfortable thing, and turn the World into a Scene of Grief and Horror, of Misery and Blood.

From hence we see, how impossible it is, for even that Providence, which can distinguish exactly between the Good and the Bad, to punish the Bad without the Good; except we suppose a Change to be made, in the Condition of all Human Affairs, and in the very Nature of Goodness itself. For, as the mutual Relations and Concerns of Mankind are ordered,
ordered, the Evil cannot suffer without involving the Good, and drawing These into a part of the Punishment, by suffering together with them. And, as the Temper of Religion now stands, the Good will at least be touched with a feeling of their Miseries, and so must needs suffer, and be afflicted, for them.

3. But Thirdly, Could the Tares be entirely gathered up without Danger and Detriment to the Corn, in either of the forementioned Respects; yet it is the part of a provident Householder to let them stand; because, by so doing, the Price and Goodness of the Wheat is raised. Which is as much as to say, That a Mixture of Bad Men ministers many occasions of Virtue to the Good, and gives them great Advantages of exerting Themselves, without such a Mixture never to be had. It is therefore, upon this account also, an Eminent Instance of the Divine Wisdom and Kindness both, still to continue such a Mixture. The Deformity of some Vices, the folly and unprofitableness of Others, the vanity of Lust and Sensual Pleasures, the Treachery and Disappointment of all worldly Expectations, would be but coldly reprented in Words, if we had not living Examples, to furnish undeniable Demonstration of these things: Sad Monuments daily before our Eyes, to bring the truth of the matter home to our very Senses. But when all this is done, we are then powerfully excited to decline our selves, what we cannot but pity, or despise, or detest in others. The severer Dispensations of Justice upon the Wicked, in the Natural, the Moral, the Providential, Consequences of a profligate Conversation, though exercised but sparingly at present, and neither upon all that deserve them, nor in all the Extremity, that some may conceive reasonable; are yet frequent and sharp enough, to daunt the Daring, to settle the Wavering, to raise the Satisfactions of a resolved
resolved Good Man, and to convince as many as con-
ider them, that God thinks himself concerned to take
notice of Men's Actions: and that, at some time, and
in some way or other, such as himself sees most expe-
dient, he will not fail to execute a visible Vengeance
upon every one, who hardens his Face, and walks in
defiance to Him and His Laws.

It is confess'd indeed, These are they that turn the
World upside down; the Instruments of all the Mischief
and Confusion we see and lament in it. But then it
must be confess'd withal, that, were it not for that
Rage and Villany, that Deceit and Disorder of theirs,
some Vertues would be absolutely lost, and others
could not but be very much eclipsed. Were there no
Sons of Treachery and Malice, no violent Oppressors,
no Injurious or Slanderers; What would become of
those noble Graces, which vindicate the Innocent, and
deliver the Poor from Him that is too strong for him?
Where should the recompensing evil to no man; Where
the Blessing them that, without any cause, curse and
rail at us; Where the forgiving of Wrongs, and loving
of Enemies, find a place? So then, as is commonly
observed in Circulation of Trade, that, were there
no Prodigals, little Encouragement would be left for
the Frugal and Industrious: In like manner, it may be
said in Morality too, that every Virtue is more pow-
werfully excited, and more successfully promoted, by
some opposite Vice.

But especially, to name One Instance more only,
Christian Patience and Fortitude are a plain Evi-
dence of this Point. For it is to the Refractory and
Perverse, the Barbarous and Bloody, that the brightest
Crowns in Heaven are in some measure owing. Had
not those Tares been suffered, not only to stand
with, but even to top it over, and shed their Venom
upon, the Wheat; the Truth could never have tri-
umphed in her noble Army of Martyrs. Nay, which is
is the highest we can possibly go. The Redemption of Mankind by the Death of the Blessed Jesus, and that most perfect Pattern of all Goodness, is a Consequence of this Mixture. For, how could a Person so excellent have been treated so ignominiously, how that inimitable Meekness have shone so gloriously, had not God permitted the Treachery of an Apostle to betray Him, the Subornation of Pharisees to testify falsely against Him, the Cowardice of a Time-serving Judge to condemn Him, and the unrelenting Cruelty of an inflamed Rabble to crucify Him? Nothing more can be needful to shew, of what Importance it is, that God should think fit to forbear very Bad Men: Or how much Virtue is beholden to Vice, for its Lustre and Force: Since even the Cruelty and Malice of them who with it worst, awaken its Powers, render the Examples of it more illustrious; and so, in Fact and in Event, exalt and beautify, while their Intention and Endeavour is, to darken and suppress, it.

Thus much may suffice to be spoken, of the Reasons for God’s permitting a Mixture of Tares in this Common-field of the World, so far as the Safety and Advantage of the Wheat is consulted by such Forbearance; That is, The Benefit of those Good Men, among whom the Wicked have Dealings; and Conversation. I now proceed to a Second sort of Reasons, such as relate to the Wicked themselves.

And of These my Subject leads me to Two, than which no more are necessary to be mentioned. Because the One illustrates the Goodness, the Other, the Justice of God, in this Dispensation.

1. First, The Goodness of God is very manifest, in that, by this method, Sinners have longer Time allowed them, to recollect and to reform in. For it is an Observation of considerable weight in the present Argument, that the Case of this Mystical, differs greatly from That of the Natural, Growth. There, what-
whatsoever is once a vicious and unprofitable Seed, can never change its Quality; but Here, these Tares may, by the Grace of God, and their own better Consideration, ennable their kind, and, after standing long among the Wheat, at last become Wheat themselves. That this is an effect intended by all delays of Punishment, St. Peter plainly declares; when rendring this Account of our Lord’s deferring to come to Judgment, The Lord (saies he) is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And, that this is the Improvement proper to be made of all such Delays; is no less evident from St. Paul; who, in his Epistle to the Romans, rebukes the Jews, for despising the riches of God’s goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering, and represents their not knowing, that is, not considering that the goodness of God leads men to repentance, as a mark of their hardness and impenitent heart.

The longer such People are spared, the more leisure and opportunities they have for Amendment. The Examples of Others, the various Disposals of Providence, the signal Mercies and Severities of it, are so many fresh Arguments, continually offering themselves, and stirring up new Thoughts and serious Reflections. And every Judgment, that stops short of utter extirpation, is an awakening Call; an Expedient for cherishing the Principles of a spiritual Life. The lopping off luxuriant Branches, and cutting the Stock down low, as well as digging about and dunging the Tree, are methods of Pruning and Cultivating. But plucking up by the Roots, and casting into the fire, cannot become a Master of the Vineyard, till all other Experiments have been made use of to no purpose. And, since it would ill agree with the
Character of a Wise and Good, as well as a Just and Holy God, to give his Creatures over to Destruction, before they have proved themselves absolutely incurable; What ground can We find for Complaint, that He allows the very worst, and most profligate, such abundant Proofs of his Tenderness; that, if they perish at last, it may appear to all the World, this comes to pass, not because He wanted any Inclination to pity and to spare them; but purely from the obstinate Abuse of repeated Means and Mercies, and because They could never be prevailed upon, to spare and to pity themselves? And this illustrates the Goodness of God.

2. The Second Reason, which vindicates his Justice, is, that God hath appointed a Season, in all respects proper, and hath referred to himself the work, of separating these Tares from the Wheat; Which therefore need not, must not be anticipated. This is the purport of the Thirteenth Verse, Let both grow together until the Harvest: and in the time of Harvest, I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my barn. The true Import of which Passage, without all Controversy, is this, That God hath fixed a Day, in which he will judge the World: a Day, whose Proceedings shall make a Distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked; a perfect Distinction, and such as the Condition of this World cannot admit: That the Punishment of the Damned, intimated by binding and burning the Tares, will be irreversible, and extreme; such as can leave the Good no room for envying, or grudging, the now-boasted Prosperity of the Ungodly: That the Distribution of final Rewards and Punishments is therefore a Royalty peculiar to God, which he lets no other into; That the Time of that Distribution is in a future State; That such a Time will, in the course of things, as
certainly come, as in Nature a Harvest follows a Seed-time; And that the Reason, why it is not yet come, is, because matters are not yet ripe for it. So that, upon the whole, So long as Forbearance can be any way of service, either to the Persons on whom it is immediately exercised, or to any others by their Influence or Example; so long it is continued. But, when these Uses cease, and Mercy hath done its part; then Vengeance shall succeed. The good Corn shall be parted from the Refuse, and Each assigned to a place worthy of it. The One laid up, as a valuable Treasure, in the Granary of this heavenly Householder; the Other cast out, as a Nuisance, no longer to be endured, and burnt in Indignation, as unquenchable, as the Fire into which it is cast. All which considered; Men have reason to be contented with God's own Methods, and his own Time; and should not throw out rash Censures of Providence, nor desire to hasten a Justice, that will take care to do it self-right. And this shall be done effectually, in its proper Season; to the entire Satisfaction of every good Man, and the Eternal Confusion of all obstinate and incorrigible Sinners.

I come now, in the Last Place, to conclude with a few of those many Inferences, which the Subject in hand very naturally suggests to us.

1. And First, From what went before, concerning this mixture of Tares with the Wheat, it is exceeding evident, that the Viciousness of Mens Lives can be no sufficient ground, for separating from their Communion. This then condemns that popular declaiming, which draws away weak Minds, and pretends to justify the breaking off from a found establishment Church, because (say They, who ought not to say it) the Lives of them, who abide by its Worship and Discipline, are evil. Were it our purpose to retribute the Field is spacious enough. But Truths of this kind are really of no weight. We are not, nor
nor ought any Man to be so weak, as not to see, that, what our Saviour declares shall never be prevented in this World, what he represents as the Case of the Christian Church in general, can never be a Justification, for disavowing, and disturbing any National Church of Christians in particular. Let them, before they presume to go away, prove, that our Doctrines give countenance to, that we do not declare against, lament, and condemn, any Practices, that reflect upon our Profession. Let them next, if they can, instance in any Religious Persuasion, in any Age, which the Lives of none of its Professors did ever cast a Blemish upon. But, till they can do so, let them think a little, how unwarily They act, who presume to lay the Ground of a Separation, in an Argument, which, if worth any thing, and pursed through all its Consequences, must as effectually dispose the Men that use it, to renounce the Christian, nay even that too which is commonly called Natural, Religion itself.

2. Secondly, It follows likewise from hence, that the Best Men are not to expect so discriminating a Providence, as, when the Wicked suffer, should always screen Them from suffering too. For God hath put this World into a regular Course of Causes and Effects. He hath knit Men together in great and less Societies. The Cement of this Union is secured by mutual Alliances, promiscuous Dealings, and united Interests. All this, no doubt, is for their mighty Benefit. But then they must take the Bad with the Good. For, the same Reasons will cause the Inconveniences, as well as the Advantages, of People thus combined, to be of vast Extent, and speedy Communication. They must be so, except we suppose the stated Order of Nature to be broken in upon, at every turn; which it cannot become a Wise Governor to do. Nor is there any occasion he should do it, in
in favour of every Good man. It is enough, that this be done sometimes, upon very extraordinary Emergencies; And that, when This is not done, God makes such Men amends, for what they suffer, by being in ill Company. The Former hath been often, the Latter most certainly will be, done. But one great Work of the last Day of Account would be superseded, if Holy Persons should endure nothing here, for which they are to expect a Recompence hereafter.

3. Thirdly, As the Justice of Providence is not obliged to prevent the Evil of Suffering in Good Men, so neither is the Holiness of Providence obliged to prevent the Evil of Sin in Bad men. It is enough that (as the Son of Sirach expresses it) God hath left Man in the hand of his own Counsell; that he does not compel any one to do ill, nay, that he is ready to assist them in doing well. And that, when they will do what they ought not, in despight of the Checks of natural Conscience, the Light of Reason and Religion, and the importunate Solicitations of the Holy Spirit; he then gets himself Glory of their Disobedience, defeats the Malice of their Purposes, and brings that Good out of Evil, which the Actors never intended. And This he hath been shewn to do, by making Vice self subservient to Virtue, and by rendering the most unjust and barbarous Persecutions, fruitful in Patterns of Heroick Piety, and the brightest Crowns of Righteousness.

4. Fourthly, As little can it be inferr’d from hence, that this Prohibition to gather out the Tares, makes it unlawful for the Christian Magistrate to punish heinous Malefactors with Death. For they are not punished thus, as Offenders, purely against God and Religion, but against the State, and the Laws of the Country, to which they belong. Now this is a Privilege and a Right common to all Civil Societies, to give fresh Sanction to the Laws of God, to pres-
serve their own Properties and Constitutions, and to inflict what Penalties are necessary, upon such as boldly invade them. And therefore He, who suffers capitally in such Cases, remains as liable to the Judgment of God, for the Transgression of the Divine Law; as if the Laws of Men had never taken cognisance of him at all.

5. Lastly, Hence it will be no hard matter to discern, what is our own Duty in the Case before us. Namely, that, in regard the Tares are sown, will come up, and must stand; Our Business should be, to keep from being corrupted, by a mixture, which we cannot altogether avoid. It is Our part to provide and execute wholesome Laws, which may put some convenient Check at least to this pernicious Growth: To endeavour the infusing into these Weeds a more generous Nature, and the bringing Men off from their evil Courses, by good Advice, and pious Examples. Particularly, we shall do well to imitate the kind Compassion of this heavenly Householder, and, by all soft and gentle Means, all courteous and engaging Behaviour, to win such over to a better Sense. Above all, Let us not fret at his Forbearance, or be envious at Evil-doers, but wait his good Pleasure for unravelling the Secrets of his own mysterious Providence: In full Assurance, that a Day is coming, when all Mankind shall see abundant reason to join in that Celestial Song of Moses and the Lamb: 

Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy Ways, O King of Saints.

Rev. xiv. 3.
that, though already possessed of this Relation, we
are, as yet, so far from attaining to the Possession,
as not to have just Notions and a perfect Under-
standing, of the full Extent of it, or all the Advan-
tages it entitles us to. Beloved, now are
we the Sons of God: and it doth not yet ap-
pear what we shall be. But, though the whole of this
do not appear, yet a part does. And that so much,
as may suffice for the purposes, which the Love that
bestowed it upon us, intended it at present to serve.
Enough to excite us to, and encourage us in, a vigo-
rous Pursuit of those Virtues and Graces, which may
become the Character of Persons so honourably di-
finguished here, and render them meet to be Partakers
of the Glories reserved for them hereafter. But we
know, that when He shall appear, we shall
be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And
every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even
as he is pure.

To this Passage my present Thoughts shall be con-
fined: and the Use I design to make of it, is Three-
fold.

1. First, I will endeavour to make you sensible, that
the not having a distinct View, and adequate Under-
standing, of the Happiness provided for Good Men in
the World to come, is no reasonable Objection against
those Hopes, and that Dependance upon it, which the
Scripture propounds, as a most powerful Motive to a
Holy Life.

2. Secondly, I shall consider that Part of this Happi-
ness, which we already do know; described by being
like to Christ, at his appearance, and seeing
him as he is.

3. Thirdly, I shall shew, that the Belief and Expe-
cration of this Happiness is, in the very Nature of
the thing, a proper and strong Inducement to Piety
and
and Virtue. For, Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

I begin with the First. That the not having a distinct View, and adequate Understanding of the Happiness, provided for Good Men in the World to come, is no reasonable Objection against those Hopes, and that Dependance upon it, which the Scripture propounds to us, as a most powerful Motive to a Holy Life. That no such full and distinct View can at present be had, is confess'd by St. John, in the Passage now before us; who makes no difficulty to declare, that though we be already the Sons of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be. In agreement whereunto, St. Paul describes our walking in this World to be by Faith, not by Sight. And at the very instant that he calls upon us, to make the things eternal our End and Aim, he says, that these are things not seen. In the mean while, the things thus hidden from us, are not left destitute of their proper Evidence, for such he asserts Faith to be. A Principle, fitted for Operations so powerful, that Persons walking by it may, even in Death it self, be confident, and with great willingness put off this Body; in the strength of that assured Expectation, which they are possess'd with, of another and better State to succeed, when they shall be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.

These Two or Three Texts, singled out from a great many of like Importance, but especially the Examples of Holy Men, set down in the Eleventh to the Hebrews, may suffice to shew, what Effects have actually been produced in Others, and are still expected in Us, from our Notices of a Future Happiness, however at present imperfect and obscure. My De-
sign is, in this Particular, to prove, that such Effects are very reasonable, by observing somewhat, very briefly, concerning the Causes of such Obscurity; The Nature of that Principle, to which those Effects are ascribed; and Its Sufficiency for that purpose, notwithstanding the Darkness of the matter propounded to it.

1. The Causes of this Obscurity proceed, partly from the Condition of the things themselves, and partly from that of our own Nature. For, in regard the Cleanness of any Object depends upon a just proportion and agreement with the Faculty, by which it is to be perceived; where that Object is either very remote, or very disproportionate, the Perception must needs be dark and confused. Now such is the Case of this Happiness we are treating of. It stands at a mighty distance, and cannot be attained in the Life we now lead. It requires many Alterations to be made in our Persons, in order to qualify us for the Enjoyment of it. It does not manifest itself to us, by any Light of its own; nor is it to be discovered, by such Collections or Inferences, as Reason and our natural Powers are wont to make, concerning Matters near at hand, familiar with, and commensurate to them. It is the free Gift of God, the Product of his Will, and Bounty to his own Creatures; and therefore the Ingredients, of which it consists, as well as the Conditions, upon which it shall be bestowed, being entirely at his own disposal, can only be learnt by such Declarations, as He in mercy hath been pleased to afford, for our Support and Encouragement. Some Presages and Expectations of a future Happiness after Death have indeed been entertained, by the best and wisest Men of all Ages. But, for a firm Persuasion and certain Account of this matter we are beholden to Jesus Christ. He is therefore most truly said to have \textit{brought life and}
and immortality to light through the Gospel. They who undertake to determine or explain this matter, farther than this Light guides them, have no firm ground to go upon, but talk altogether in the dark. And yet it is necessary to observe, that, even the Declarations made by the Gospel itself, are not, in all Points, suited to the Nature of the thing, but expressed in terms full of Condescension. They are indifferently accommodated to the Capacities of Men, dwelling in Bodies of Flesh, conversing with gross and material Objects, and moved by sensible Impressions. In short, God speaks to us about these matters, in such Language, as we may understand, rather than in such, as is intended, to describe things, strictly as they are. Yet so, as at once to work upon our Affections and Desires, and to prevent our resting so far upon these Representations, as from thence to form low and carnal Apprehensions of a Blessing, which stoops to us under such Ideas, only because we are not perfect, and abstracted enough, to receive it under better.

This is the ground of all those Metaphors and Parables, which figure out to us the Joys of the Blessed, by eating and drinking at Christ's Table, by sumptuous Banquets, by Marriage Feasts, by fertile Pastures, beautiful Dwellings, magnificent Cities, whose Sun never sets, and whose Light is sevenfold; by Thrones, and all the Ensigns of Honour and Majesty, peculiar to Princes upon Earth. And yet we are sufficiently forewarned against taking those Passages in their most obvious and literal meaning, when told, that the Children of the Resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither hunger nor thirst; and consequently, that there will be an end of all such gratifications of Sense, when both the Necessities that require them, and the Appetites that pursue and recommend them to us, shall be no more.

Luke xx. 35.
Rev. vii. 16.
In the meanwhile, though it were an Indignity to the Bliss prepared for the Saints in Heaven, by conceiving of it just as these and some other like Passages found, to sink it down so low, as the Pleasures coveted by, and confined to, the means of our Faculties: Yet is there a very good use to be made of them. For we from hence are taught to conclude, that all the Satisfaction, which can possibly result from the greatest Plenty, the highest Honour, the most exquisite Beauty, and every rational and truly manly Pleasure; As much, and more than the most Sensual can enjoy, or imagine, or wish for, will be not only equalled, but vastly exceeded, in the Happiness of the next World. The very great Variety of Comparisons and Allusions, made choice of to this purpose, intimates, that there is no sort of Joy, which can then be worthy of us, not any that we shall be capable of in that State, which will not then be indulged us in its utmost Perfection; but all that we can love, or like, delight and take comfort in, shall be present with us, and possess'd by us, for evermore.

We esteem it no Reflection at all, either upon the Truth, or upon the Excellence, of those Arts, and Sciences, and wise Designs, which Men value most, and are best served and improved by, that Children, and People of the meanest Capacities, are not in a Condition of making themselves Marters of them; but that, in order to their being so, Ripeness of Years, and Judgment, much Thought, long Exercise, and painful Study, are necessary Preparations. Thus neither is it any Diminution, but indeed a just and very high Commendation, of the Bliss and Glory reserved for the next World, that they are not fully and clearly to be known, in a State, where the wisest of Mankind must, in regard of these matters, be content to think, and speak, and understand as Children; where They that know most, know but in part, and they that imagine they
they see clearest, see only through a Glass darkly. Were these things less Excellent, we should be better able to discern, and to describe them: but then, in proportion as they came more within our Comprehension, they would in their own Nature be less worthy of our Love. For God hath set Bounds to the Faculties of our Mind, as well as to the Organs of our Sight; and, in both Cases, made some Objects, of which we have no just and adequate Perception. Now this comes to pass, not from the Smallness, but the exceeding Greatness, not from the Darkness, but the too strong and dazzling Light, of the thing we would be glad to see. We must therefore look upon the things not seen, as the more desirable, upon that very consideration. It is with These, as with God himself; Their Glory is not to be approached by any Man; not by any in the present Condition, and while we carry those Defects about us, which the Wisdom of Him that made us, hath thought fit for Souls incumbered with Flesh and Blood. We must wait with Patience for that happy Change, which shall clear and take off the Darkness of our Glass; bring us nearer, and acquaint us intimately well with those Glories, which to have brought down to our Capacity, in the prospect here, had been to abate our Happiness, in the Enjoyment hereafter. And we have reason to be content with that little of them in comparison, which may be seen at present; Since they, who murmur for want of more, do in effect repine at being Men; than which nothing can be more impious. They find fault, that God designs to make them happier than they can ask or think, than which nothing can be more ungrateful and absurd. Especially, if the little we do or may know, be so wisely suited to our Circumstances, that nothing needful, either to our Duty, or our Interest, is wanting. And, that such is the Case in this matter, I shall briefly endeavour to make plain, by considering,
and Value of that Happiness. It being with this, as
with the Nature of God himself, that the Perfection
and Excellence of the thing is chiefly represented in
negative Terms; because, as hath been often said al-
ready, the positive Description of so noble a Bliss is
at present too exalted a Subject for our Understand-
ings. These, employing themselves upon things suit-
able to a State of Frailty and Mortality, and being
acted upon by Impressions of Sense, are forced to
judge of, and do most easily apprehend, those Privi-
leges, by Comparisons. Thus the Importunity of our
Wants is so pressing, and the Labour and Anxiety for
supplying them so perpetual a Burthen, that it could
not but be a proper Method of recommending Heaven,
by saying, that the Blessed Above do nei-
ther hunger nor thirst any more. The Cal-
amities that embitter our Lives are so various, the
Passions that disorder and disquiet our Minds, so tu-
multuous and violent, that a Deliverance from these
is a Mercy most sensible to Men, who groan under
such burthen and slavery; and therefore it may well
make us in love with those Regions of Tranquillity,
that there Tears shall be wiped away from all
eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow, nor
crying, neither shall there be any more pain; because the
former things are passed away. The Possessions of this
World are so slippery a Tenure, and our own Conti-
uance in it so short, and so uncertain; that it must
needs affect us, to consider, how great a difference to
our Advantage there is, in a Crown incor-
ruptible; a Treasure and Inheritance that
fadeth not away: Bags that wax not old:
True Riches, which the Rust corrupteth not,
and the Thief cannot approach: A Joy that
no man taketh from us; a continuing City,
everlasting Habitations; and when the earth-
ly House of this Tabernacle, the Body, shall
be
be dissolved, a Building of God; a House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. A new and better Cloathing for our Souls, which out-wears Time it self, and, swallows up Mortality in Life.

Now, when the Condition of glorified Saints is in this manner represented to us; we are not from hence by any means to suppose, that the utmost of their Happiness consists in a mere State of Ease and Indolence. But, because the Dangers and the Miseries, the Fears and Frailties, the Sorrows and Sufferings, of this present Life are, in a greater or less degree, the Lot and Burthen common to all Mankind; an entire Deliverance from, and standing clear out of the reach of these, is a Description, that comes nearest home to the Feeling of every Man, and such as his own Circumstances, when considered, teach him to make a true Estimate of. By these alone we are secure of a State after Death, infinitely to be preferr'd before that, of which we are apt to be now so inordinately fond. But the Scripture does not rest here. It mentions, as I have formerly observed, many Ingredients of that Bliss hereafter. But none more comprehensive, none more desirable, than That, which I have propounded for the Subject of my

II. Second Head; And which is expressed by the Apostle in these Words, We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. In speaking to which, I shall very briefly enquire, 1. What is meant by Seeing God as he is. 2. How this gives us an Assurance of being like him: And 3. Wherein that Likeness, so far as at present we know of it, may be supposed to consist.

1. That the Seeing of God implies very great Bliss, no doubt can be made by any, who recollect, that Good Men are
its Luster. Hereby we are taught to expect a full Degree of Evidence, that will exclude all manner of
doubt or dissatisfaction; as the highest Certainty is
that, which comes from seeing with our own Eyes.
Hereby the most transporting Joy that can be, as now
those Objects move and affect us more, which are per-
ceived by Sight, than by any other Sense. Hereby,
in a Word, all the Advantage that our Nature, when
most exalted, can have, to capacitate it for larger
Happiness, and all the Happiness we can enjoy, when
fitted up for Enjoyment, to gratify and fill all those
Capacities. And, if the Men on Earth do, by long
Time and Travel, from the imperfect Discovery of
some beloved Truth, feel a Satisfaction, to which all
the Pleasures of the most indulgent Epicure are as no-
th ing: What can we think must be the Joy, the
Gaiety, the Triumphs, of those Souls, who see, in
God, the Truth and Excellencies of all Things, as in
their common Source and Centre? who behold the
fair Beauty of the Lord, continually seeing all that is
lovely, and loving all they see, and possessing all they
love; and being wrought themselves into the most
intimate Union with, the most desirable Resemblance
of the adorable Perfections of Him, who is thus, in
Himself, and to Them, All in All? For that’s the next
Thing I promised to enquire into, the Consequence
of, or at least the Happiness concomitant with, this
Vision of God, implied in those Words of St. John,
before us, We know that we shall be like him, for we
shall see him as he is.

The meaning of these may either be, that there
is a necessity of our being made like God, in order
to our attaining to such a sight of him in the next
Life, as hath already been explained: Or else, That
the being admitted to such a Sight of God, will have
this certain Effect, of drawing us to a nearer resem-
blance of Him, than it is possible for us, at present,
to come up to. Concerning each of these I shall speak very briefly.

First, We may depend upon being like God hereafter, because he hath promised such a Sight of Himself to us, as that Likeness is a necessary Preparation for. The Wiseman hath observed most truly, that the corruptible Body presses upon the Soul, and this earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind, distracted with many Thoughts. The Knowledge Men arrive to in this Condition, does, for the greatest part, depend upon sensible Images; and we find it exceeding hard, to abstrack our Thoughts from Matter, as to discourse, with any Accuracy, of things, which are not thus represented to our Minds. Hence, as I took notice, it comes to pass, that these things are chiefly known to us by Negatives; separating from our Idea of them some of those Imperfections, which we find and feel in others of a grosser Substance; and aiming at some tolerable Perception of them, by Figures and Resemblances, borrowed from such as are most familiar to us. To give us therefore a Capacity of knowing God, our Minds must be put into another Frame, our Faculties exalted, and the Objects we contemplate imparted to us, after a way different from what they now are. This we have ground to infer, from the Condition of our Souls at present, that they hereafter will see and understand after another manner, though we cannot determine precisely, what particular manner that shall be.

And, as it is with the Knowledge of these things, so we may rationally conclude it to be, with regard to the Relish of, and Satisfaction from them. To heighten this, it is requisite that those Difficulties and laborious Methods, those very slow and painful advances be removed, which now are such Checks to our Studies of this kind, and render them so dry and discouraging, to the greater part of Mankind. And
And this no doubt will be done, by the putting off that Flesh and Blood, which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: By that Change, which shall be wrought in our Persons and our Tempers, by being set at large from those Necessities and Appetites, Fails and Passions, which now incumber and cramp up the Mind. A Freedom from these cannot but render the Thoughts of Spiritual objects more easy and more agreeable, give another taste and turn to our Souls, refine our Delights and Desires, as well as our Ideas. And, since our likeness to God did at first consist in an intelligent and free Spirit; the more this is improved, and the less it is clogged with the Body, the more nearly we resemble Him. And, the nearer we resemble Him, the more we shall be qualified to know, and to love Him. And thus it may be affirmed, that the Seeing God as be is, infers our being like him, as an indispensibale Predisposition; such as all they, who have not arrived to, are under a natural Disability of so seeing Him. They are in the Circumstances of dim Eyes, and fully’d Glasses; the Former must be cleared and strengthened before they can sustain, the Latter cleansed and polished before they can take in, the Rays of so bright and beautiful an Object.

2. The Other, and I think, more commonly received, Sense of the Words now under Consideration is, That the Seeing God as He is will produce in Us a likeness to the Perfections we see. The Foundation of all Goodness is laid in right Apprehensions of God. For Mankind seem to have been all along pretty well agreed in this Point, That to be like God is both our Duty, and our Happiness. But then the different Notions Men have of God, have led them into different ways of Endeavouring after that Likeness. And, representing God to themselves otherwise than He is, they consequentially framed themselves upon diffe-
different Models, and have invented false, and sometimes most extravagant and impious, Schemes of Religion. This was the Case of Heathens herefore, who, the better to countenance their own Lewdness and Excesses, imposed upon Themselves and the Word, with a Pretence of voluptuous, drunken, and lascivious Deities. This is too much the Case of Christians too, who indeed acknowledge nothing in God, but what is truly excellent and good, and adore him, as the Source and Sum of all Excellence: Yet, according to the difference of their Complexion, or Customs, they attend so much more to, and often prefer one Excellence so far above another; as that hereby is produced a great Diversity, both in Opinion and Practice. His Justice, his Power, his Mercy, his Holiness, are all confess'd Perfections. Yet, because the due Temperament of these is not duly understood, as one or other of them happens to be uppermost in our Thoughts, and more strongly to affect us, occasions are taken for such Notions of God, as set those Attributes at variance, and do not only shew God, as He is not, but dispose us to conform our selves to that mistaken Idea we have of him. Were the Sanguine and the Gay, the Liberal and Open, and the Phlegmatick and Melancholick, the Man of Rigour and Preciseness, the Fatalist and the Morose, to be examined thoroughly; I make little doubt, but their Notions of Almighty God would be found at as wide a distance from each other, as we may plainly see, their Humours and Deportment to be. And all this probably from the self-same Cause, of Seeing God as He is not, and judging of that imitation He requires, by false Systems of their own.

Again. Nothing can be more evident, than that the Will of Man, though free in the choice of this or that particular Object, is yet, in the general, deter-

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mined to the Choice of Good. And, when the thing chosen is not really such, it is, because the Man was cheated with a false Appearance of Good. But this is our Misery, that we often mistake Evil for Good, or else prefer a less before a greater Good. So that, all our Vices and Moral Defects are owing to want of Knowledge or Consideration, of Care, or of Integrity, in judging of our true Happiness, and the means proper to attain it. But now, in the next Life, all Things will be set in their true Light, all the Bribery and By- as of Sense and Flesh will then be taken away, and we shall not only be enabled to understand, but inclined to approve and choose, that which is best. We shall then, without any dividing our Affections, discern God to be our Chief, our only Good; and a Conformity to his imitable Excellencies, to be our perfect Happiness. In short, we shall then do that, which we here wish for in vain, see Virtue in all its Charms. Of which, as an Eminent Philosopher* hath well observed, could we behold the full Lustre and Beauty, it would, even in this frail and corrupt State, engage our Hearts so powerfully, as scarce to leave a possibility of deviating from it. And how noble, how wonderful, may we well imagine, will the Improvement be, of Minds thus fixt upon one only amiable Object, always contemplating with Joy unspeakable, always admiring and loving, always copying after and approaching to, the sum of all Perfection; And, to use in this Sense the Words of St. Paul, with open Face beholding, as in a glafs, the Glory of the Lord, and changed into the same Image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord: A Glory constantly shining upon, and communicating itself to them. Thus much may suffice to shew, what certain Connexion there is between our seeing God as He is, and our being like Him: And it leads us very naturally too to the

3. Third
3. Third Enquiry proposed under this Head, Wherein that Likeness to God will consist. Now the Scriptures, from whence alone we can safely take our Measures in this Matter, have, among other things relating to it, acquainted us, that our Bodies, when they die, shall be quickened again; that they are, as Seed cast into the Ground, to come up with vast Improvement, and very different from the Condition they lay down in, That they are sown in Corruption, but raised in Incorruption; sown in Dishonour, but raised in Glory; sown in Weakness, but raised in Power; sown Natural Bodies, but raised Spiritual Bodies. That Flesh and Blood, as now it is, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: And therefore, to qualify us for that Inheritance, This Corruption must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality. And how this mighty Alteration shall be effectuated, we are likewise informed. For the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming from Heaven, shall in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last trump, change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working, whereby be is able to subdue all things to himself. Thus we shall be like to Christ, as Man, in the utmost Perfection this part is capable of. And, in the same respect we shall be like him as God too, so far, as the being set above all the Incumbrances and Defects of these Bodies, we now carry about us, can make us like him. No Wants or Infirmities, no Importunity of Appetite, no Unevenness of Passion, no Hunger or Thirst, no Weariness or Sleep, no Pain or Sorrow, no Feebleness or Decay, no Sickness or Old-age, no Dying any more: But Beauty for ashes, and Joy for mourning, even the Joy of our Lord. A Joy, that we are very significantly said to enter into,
because it is too vast to enter into us: A Joy, that
could not be perfect, if it were not immortal; and a
Crown, therefore to be valued infinitely above any
other, because incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.

But, as God himself is a Spirit, so the most desirable
part of our likeness to him will be that of our
Souls. And these will be like him, in clear and un-
erringly, in full and comprehensive Knowledge, in see-
ing face to face, in knowing even as we are

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Ps. xvii. 15.

Ephes. v. 27.

Phil. iv. 7.

Coloss. iii. 15.

Rom. xiv. 17.

known. In perfect Holiness; For there
shall we behold God's face in righteousness,
there we shall not have spot, or wrinkle, or
any such thing, but be unstained and
without blemish. There every Temptation and Oc-
casion of Sin shall cease, no Devil to seduce us, no
Vanities or Pomp of the World to allure us, no
warring of the Spirit against the Flesh, and
the Flesh against the Spirit. But a Peace,
that passeth all Understanding, even the
Peace of God ruling in our Hearts, with-
out Controul. Like him, in fervent and
unbounded Charity, the Love of God, and of our Bre-
thren; Without any other Object to divert the For-
mer; Without any Emulation, or Envy, or Grudg-
ing, to give check to the Latter. There all shall be
of one Heart, and of one Soul, and nothing shall be
seen, or heard, or felt, but Righteousnes,
and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Such
is the Likeness, which we know, shall belong to us,
The Enlargement of our Understandings, the Recti-
tude of our Wills, the Purity and Harmony of our Affec-
tions. A State so perfect, so very like to God, as no other
ever was, or can be; not even that of Man in his primitive
Innocence. For then it was indeed possible for Man not
to sin, but in this it shall not be so much as possible for
him to sin. But, tho' we cannot be so happy here, yet
Some approaches toward it we may, and must, and,
if we believe and expect it in good earnest, we certainly shall make, even now. For that is my

III. Third and Last Head, That the knowing we shall be like God, and see him as he is, cannot, in the very nature of the thing, but be a proper and very powerful inducement to Piety and Virtue. Every one, says St. John, that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure. The purifying himself as he is pure, is to be understood, like those Commands of being holy as God is holy, and perfect, and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and perfect. All which are intended, not of an Equality, but of a Likeness only; and That, such a Likeness, as our present Condition will admit. Not of a State altogether sinless; but such degrees of Goodness as may be attained to, such as imports an Allowance for necessary Frailties and inseparable Defects, and a gracious acceptance of sincere Endeavours, instead of absolute Perfection.

Such is the Purity mentioned here, as a natural Consequence of this glorious Hope. For, every one that hath this Hope in him, can have it no otherwise, than upon the Terms, which the Promises of God have thought fit to limit it by. Since therefore the Seeing God is a Blessing peculiar to the pure in heart; Since it is declared, that without Holiness no man shall see the Lord; that the Unrighteous, Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, Thieves, Drunkards, Covetous, Revilers, Extortioners, shall none of them inherit the Kingdom of God; 'Tis plain, that this Purity and Holiness here are indispensible Conditions of obtaining Happiness hereafter; and They, who indulge themselves in any such Abominations, deceive their own Souls with false expectations, and do not properly hope, but impudently presume.
The Truth is, God in his Wisdom hath so ordered the Matter, so admirably contrived our Nature and our Duty, that Virtue and Happiness are one and the same, differing but in the Circumstances and several Prospects, we consider and view them under. The Good begin their Heaven upon Earth, and finish there what was imperfect here. The more they mortify and master their sensual Appetites, purge off their Corruptions, raise their Affections up to things Above, improve their Minds by the study of Religion, acquaint themselves with God by frequent Prayer and heavenly Meditation, wean themselves from, and get above the World; the more they are spiritualized, and, as the Apostle expresseth it, made meet to be partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in light. They have rendered the Joys of the next Life more familiar to their Thoughts, have already learn’d to taste, and are in a better Disposition to enjoy, the full Delight they shall bring. As He, who is already vers’d in the Language, and Laws, and Customs, of a Country, is better fitted to converse in, and improve the Pleasures and Advantages of it, than any raw and unexperienced Person, who goes to settle there, without such previous Skill or Preparation. And therefore Those Men may at least be judged to have qualified themselves for higher Degrees of Bliss and Glory, who have, even before they came thither, already had their Hearts, their Treasure, and their Conversation in Heaven.

I know, some Men think those Arguments liable to Objection, which undertake to prove, that, were a wicked Man received into Heaven, he could not think himself happy, where every thing would be found so opposite to his Temper and Sense of Happiness. Now this is an Assertion, founded on that general Maxim, That all Pleasure results from the Agreeableness of the Object, and its being suited to the Faculty or Palate of
of the Party enjoying it. And, have we any Warrant to pronounce this here a Case exempted from so general a Rule? They who argue thus, allow, with the Objectors, that Heaven must be perfect Happiness to all who inhabit there. The Objectors, I hope, allow too, that none but good Men can inhabit there. And it should be remembred, that they who put the Case, are sensible, they suppose a Condition impossible in Fact. The Design of this Argument therefore is only to shew, that the Day of Recompence will find us, exactly as Death left us: that if we have not killed the Man of Sin, Death will not do it for us: And, that there is so exact a Congruity between our Duty and our Reward, that they do not differ in Nature and Kind, but in Degree, and greater and less Perfection. Consequently, that the labouring to be like God here, is the only Expedient we know, for being like him hereafter.

I will not deny, but some, who have led ill Lives, may, upon their Repentance at last, be suddenly received to Mercy; Nor will I venture to say, such is uncovenanted Mercy. But, when even this is done, there must be a Change of Affections, (the very Notion of Repentance implies thus much;) And certainly no Man, who considers this matter with Seriousness, will venture his All upon it. The Hazards are so many, the Uncertainty so great, the Encouragements so slender, the Examples for it so few, and when closely examined, so short of the Point; that I should think that Man much more ingenuous and of a piece, that lives ill, and absolutely disfavors any Thoughts of a Life to come; than He is, who professes to entertain such a Hope, and yet leaves himself nothing, but one such desperate push for it. To conclude all, (for I have been carried to an unusual length) Nothing can ever be more absurd, than the Principles of a Christian and the Life of a Pagan; than
than to call our selves the Sons of God, and all the
while be Servants to the Devil; to hope for Christ's
coming again, and to do the Works he came before
on purpose to destroy; to hope to be like God here-
after, and to make our selves as unlike him as may
be, in the mean while. To pretend we wait and pant
for that Likeness, as the compleat Felicity of Human
Nature, and wilfully to obstruct our own Happines,
in such Measures of it, as may be compass'd here,
and are the only rational Evidences of desiring the
fulness of it hereafter. These things can never stand
together, never approve us to the Judgment of God
or Man. No. Let us remember the End and Tem-
per of the Christian Faith, the Design of our great
and precious Promises, and the Purpose of our Blef-
sed Lord's causing himself and his Gospel to shine up-
on us. Let our Thoughts, our Words, our every A-
ction shew, we have duly considered that memorable
Text of St. Paul, so nearly allied to the Offices of this
Day: The Grace of God, that bringeth Sal-
vation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching
us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should
live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing
of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who
gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all
impiuity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous
of good works.

The only Application I shall make of this Discourse,
is earnestly to conjure every Christian, that he would
very seriously, very frequently, meditate upon these
things. For, the more he does so, the more fami-
lar they will be to him; the Belief of them more
firm and lively, and the Value of them better under-
stood. All which, how necessary, and how useful it
is, will easily appear by this One Observation; That
no Man ever yet did an evil thing, knowingly and deli-
deliberately, but with a Proposal of some Good from it. Now the imposing upon Men with false Opinions, and false Estimates, of the Ends they propound to themselves, is the very Foundation of all the Wickedness in the World. And consequently, the most effectual course to prevent, or give a check to Wickedness, is the setting Men right in their Judgments of the good and evil Consequences, of good and bad Actions. Were this Persuasion firmly rooted in their Hearts; were it, as it ought to be, always uppermost in their Thoughts, that a Future State certainly awaits us, that the Glories and Bliss of that State, even by what we do or may know of them already, are infinitely to be preferr'd before All this World can give us; and, that there are besides many and great Pleasures, yet hidden from our Eyes, unutterable, unconceivable, both for their Worth and Number: Can it be supposed, that Men, who in earnest believe, and actually remember, and duly weigh these things, could ever be seduced so easily, as we find they are, into Practices, which the Scripture declares the Enjoyments of these Blessings was never intended for? No, 'tis impossible. Men must lay aside all pretence to Reason, if they can act at this rate. The Fact is far otherwise. God promises future and unseen Advantages, as Motives to Virtue; The Devil baits with such as are present and sensible indeed, but in no degree so valuable, as Allurements to sin. Now these Latter could never prevail above the Former, were it not, that Men under Temptation are wanting to themselves, either in the Vigour of their Faith, or in the Justness of their Computation, or in urging upon their Conscience the Necessity of the Condition. That is, they do not sufficiently think, and convince themselves of such a State, but, being out of sight, it is out of mind too. And for the Benefit of these I designed my First Head. Or else
else they do not reckon the Happiness of the next World, to be so incomparably above all, that they are flattered with in this: Which Error the Second Head may help to correct. For this would rectify Mens Notions, and shew, that to see God as he is, and to be like him, are not such dry and tasteless things, as they so commonly happen to be thought, and, because not better understood, are so often put, not only, in competition with, but put behind, the Pleasures of Sin and Sense. Or, lastly, they delude themselves with groundless Imaginations, that, notwithstanding their Sins, they may come to Heaven at last; and for the disabusing such, my Third Head was necessary. So excellent a Preservative hath S. John here furnished against Temptation, so impenetrable a Shield, able to repel all the fiery Darts of the Wicked; would we but weigh, and remember, and by continually dwelling upon it, render that present to our Minds, which cannot yet be so, to our Sight and Experience. In a Word, the more our Thoughts are employed upon Heaven, and the deeper they plunge into the vast Ocean of Eternity; the more we shall answer our Character of God's Children, the nearer we shall approach to him here, by purifying our selves in the Strength of this Hope, even as he is pure: and the more certain we are to be like him hereafter, in his glorious Kingdom. Which He, of his infinite Mercy, grant we may, for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.
The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The G O S P E L.

Matt. xxiv. 23.

23. Then if any man shall say, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not.

24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect.

25. Behold I have told you before.

and expected. And these will prevail, by the help of such lying Wonders, as God, for the Sins of Men, will permit to be done by them: So that many shall be deceived, and none but the steadfast Christians be able to hold out against them. But to fortify such it is, that I give this timely Warning of these Men, and their Impostsures.

26. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth. Behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.

27. For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

28. For wheresoeuer the Carcase is, there will the Eagles be gathered together.

on the Jews, shall be sudden, swift, and terrible, as a Flash of Lightning. And the Jews, who are sentenced to Death, shall in every Quarter be destroyed, as if the Roman Armies, whose Ensign is the Eagle, had the quality of that Bird, so fagacious and greedy of prey, that dead Bodies, even at vast distance, cannot escape them.

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken.

30. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds, with Power and great Glory.

31. And be shall send his Angels with a great sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.

C O M M E N T.
COMMENT.

THE Substance of this Scripture is, in effect, the same with that already treated of, in the Gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent. There is therefore no occasion for enlarging any farther, either in the Description, or the Proof, of a General Judgment. The Terrors of that Day are set forth here by St. Matthew, in Terms of near affinity with those in St. Luke. And, that such Predictions, even in their literal and most dreadful signification, shall then be strictly verified, St. Peter acquaints us, when declaring, that the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent beat; the Earth also, and all the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up. In all which, to prevent our taking shelter in any Metaphors, or imaginary Hyperboles, he draws this Inference in the words next following. Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness? Looking for, and basing to, the coming of the day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent beat.

My Discourse upon the Epistle for this Day having carried me beyond the usual Bounds; All I design here, is to make some farther Improvement of the Subject in hand, by a few practical Considerations, which the time would not permit me to mention, when handling it before.

1. And First, We shall do well, upon this occasion, to observe the great Wisdom and Goodness of our Blessed Master, in the manner made Choice of for foretelling his last Coming. For, by drawing the Terrors of it so black, he hath taken the most probable
bable course, to awaken Mens Consciences, and to put them upon shaking off spiritual Security and Sloth. And, from the Representations given of it, As a thing, certain in itself, and uncertain in the time; he hath cut off all wicked Excuses, for unthinking Negligence, and dangerous Delays. Had those tremendous Circumstances been omitted, the Impressions upon our Minds must in all reason have proved less powerful. And, had its distance been punctually determined, Men would have been apt to bear but very cold regard, to an Event, which, though never so sure, yet, they had the Comfort to know, was still removed a very great way from them. But nothing can be strong enough to scatter this Spiritual Lethargy, and quicken us into serious Piety, and effectual Preparation for a Judgment, upon the issue whereof our All must turn at last, and we be fixed in Woe or Bliss by it; If the Certainty, the Horror, and Suddenness, of such a Judgment will not. Sure we know it is, and Terrible beyond all Imagination; and very nigh at hand it may be, for ought we do, or can know. Nay, far off, we are certain, it cannot be, as it regards our own Death. Our Condition, in this respect, will in nothing differ from that Posture of Soul, in which the Great Day of Account will find us. What manner of Persons then ought We to be indeed? how Holy, how Circumspect? We, who call our selves Christians, and profess, as such, most firmly to believe this coming of our Lord, as a Fundamental Article of our most holy Religion? St. Paul allidges, in the Jews behalf, that had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. And yet if, that Ignorance of Theirs notwithstanding, God poured out his Indignation upon that People, in Circumstances so dismal, that the Ears of all that hear it tingle, and the very reading their Story, even at this Distance, chills and curdles
curdles all our Blood; Of how much forer Punishment shall we be thought worthy, who have so severe an Example before our Eyes, and yet take no Warning by it? We, who profess to worship, and be Servants to Jesus, and yet in Works dishonour and do despight to him: We, who acknowledge his Glories, and call him the Son of God, but, as much as in us lies, crucify and again expose him to Contempt? Is not this to call down upon our own Heads the utmost Torments, that Day can inflict? Is it not to Treasure up to our selves Wrath against the Season of Wrath, and to render that Gospel, given to preserve, and fit us for Heaven, an Occasion of our so much jufter Damnation, and of sinking us so much deeper into Hell? All the abused Means of Grace, all the neglected Opportunities of Amendment, even these Admonitions will fly in our Faces, and upbraid the Obdurate and Improvident. And They, who have had all done, that could be done to them, may well call upon the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them; when they shall sink under the Load of a double Sentence, and be condemned, not only out of God's, but out of their Own Mouths.

2. Secondly, Hence we may learn, how mean an Opinion is due to this World, and the Things of it. It hath been well observed by Philosophers, that no Object of short continuance, and subject to Corruption, can possibly be worthy the Desires of a reasonable and immortal Soul. No Argument is therefore more capable of inspiring true Nobleness of Mind, than those Christian Revelations, which so positively threaten the utter Destruction of this whole material Frame. When, not this drostiy Earth alone, but even those purer Celestial Bodies, the Source of Light and Comfort to wretched Mortals, shall undergo the general Conflagration; Does not this argue,
argue, that what Excellencies soever we may fancy in them, yet He who gave them Being, and can be under no Mistakes concerning them, fees nothing there so valuable, as should incline him to spare them from Ruin and Dissolution.

But, besides that unalterable Decree, which hath doomed these things to cease in themselves, there is another no less unavoidable, which brings them under a necessity of ceasing to Us. For, How continually do we feel them perish in the using? How often slip through our Fingers, and leave us, at once bereaved of a Possession, we fondly thought fixed and certain, and astonish’d which way we came to be so? Supposing them, yet farther, to escape the common Methods of deceiving us in that point too; Yet, how short is Our stay with Them, if They were never so firmly disposed to stay with Us? Death, ’tis beyond all doubt, must make an entire Separation. And This is in such swift, such constant Motion towards us, that every one hath so much less behind to enjoy the World in, as I have now been employing time to prepare him for the leaving it.

And Who that is wise, would place his Affections and Happiness, in That which must forfake him one day, which may do it this very day; In That, which every Moment cuts off a part from, Which often makes it self Wings, and flies away from Him, and which he himself is flying from, as fast as Time can carry him; flying from it, at the very instant, that he pursues and caresles, and settles his Heart upon it? How vain are such fugitive Objects, in comparison of a certain and enduring Substance? How miserably infa-tuated those unthinking Creatures, who allow such Trifles, such empty Bubbles, to over-balance a Treas-

fure in Heaven, a Crown incorruptible, and that fadeth not away for ever? Oh that Men were wise, that they would understand this, that they would consider their latter end!

O

3. Thirdly,
3. Thirdly, From the Two foregoing Reflections, 'tis easy to discern the Reasonableness of those Virtues, which are usually thought so extremely hard of Digestion, Liberal Charity to the Poor, and Suffering for a good Conscience, when God calls us to it. The abridging our Selves even of Superfluous Expences and Pleasures, but more of the common Comforts and Supplies of Human Life, and especially the Giving up All, even that Life it self, for the sake of Religion, are, by the Carnal, the Vain, the Worldly-minded, (that is, in truth, by much the greater part of Mankind) look'd upon as most extravagant Instances of Zeal, and, to speak tenderly, a pious Madness. But, what Absurdity ever Flesh and Sense may apprehend in This, the Gospel sets the matter in a quite different Light; and all the Hardship that assults us in it, is merely from a Forgetfulness of our Condition in the Present World, and of our Prospects and Hopes in the Next.

1. Suppose, as to the Former of these Cases, the same Command laid upon Each of us, as on the Rich Young-man in the Gospel; Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven. This may, at first, sound like a hard Saying. But, if we will sit down, and weigh it nicely, what in truth does it amount to, more than this, that we should do, what every considering Man would desire, and esteem himself happy in a fit Opportunity, to do? To make a Virtue of Necessity, and part with that by Choice, which we must otherwise part with by Constraint: That we would freely give back to Christ, what He first gave Us; what is not in our Power always to keep, and for which, if this be done, he will give somewhat in exchange, better, and not liable ever to be taken away. Were these Earthly Possessions absolutely at our own Will, the Joys of Heaven should infinitely outweigh them. But, when the
the Question is not, Whether we will hold them fast, but, in what manner we will quit them. Whether a Fire, or a Tempest, Deceit or Violence, shall wrest them from us; Or whether we will convert them to generous and holy Uses. Whether a profuse Heir shall squander them away in Riot and Luxury, and Folly; Or, Whether we will profit our Selves of them, by feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, Members of our Common Head. To dispute this, is to question, whether Good or Evil, Loss or Improvement, ought to be chosen. For this is a sort of noble Avarice, thus to put Money out to Interest, and, with the perishing Dross of this World, to purchase an everlasting Settlement in the Next.

2. Nor is the Case very different with regard to Suffering for Religion. For, here too the whole turns upon This, Whether we will dedicate to God a Life exposed to Accidents innumerable, and perpetual Decay; and so, by a Free-will Offering make that parting with the World a Martyrdom, which must be a Death however; Or, whether we chose to prolong a Life, which every Moment may put an end to, at the Expense of a polluted Conscience, and everlasting Pains. Whether we will die like Christians, and enter upon certain Happiness to Day; Or whether we will run the Hazard of being unspeakably and externally miserable, by taking up with a bare Possibility, (for 'tis but a Possibility) of living till to morrow.

But, God be thank'd, this, in Our Age, is seldom the Case. And therefore I have a farther Design in vindicating the Equity of Commands, which oblige, even when Matters are come to an Extremity. It is to put you in mind, how justly those Men are condemn'd to Misery hereafter, who refuse to be happy, upon much easier Terms. For, If it were Wisdom even to leave all and follow Christ; how sense-less,
less, how ungrateful is it, not to allow him part of our Abundance, and give to Piety, what, if with-held, would only minister unto Vanity and Sin? If even Dying for Him, who hath already died for Us, cannot in strictest Reason be declined; How wretched, how wilful must their Condemnation be, who will not be persuaded to live to Him; and devote their Bodies and Souls a holy Sacrifice, acceptable, and zealous in good Works?

Let us, my Brethren, consider the glorious Hope, that is set before us, of being like him; and seeing him as he is: and let this effectually prevail with us to purify our selves even as he is pure. As knowing very well, that such a resemblance to him in this present World, is the only possible way of attaining to be made like him, when he shall appear, in his eternal and glorious Kingdom: where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever one God World without end. Amen.

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The Sunday called Septuagesima; Or, the Third Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

O Lord, we beseech thee favourably to hear the Prayers of thy People, that We, who are justly punished for our Offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy Goodness; for the Glory of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, World without end. Amen.

The Epistle.

Paraphrase.

24. The Zeal I urge upon you, and express in my own Practice, is no more, than what the Corinthians have frequent Instances of, upon much Tenderer Encouragements. For in the Mystician Games, celebrated with you, all the Racers observe

1 Cor. ix. 24.

Now ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.
observe the Rules prescribed them, and exert their utmost Vigor, though of all these but One gets what All aim at. Let these Men be your Pattern, and do you run your Christian Race, with an Eagernefs that strives to be foremost, and would not be outdone by any engaged in the same Course.

25. And every man that strives for the {w|w|w|w}astery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible.

Discipline, debar themselves many Liberties, and undergo great and long Hardships, to prepare them for the Combat. And if they are content to do and suffer so much for a Garland of Boughs, that quickly withers; ought we to decline some Abridgments and Self-denials who expect to be rewarded with a Crown that fadeth not away?

26. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

keep my Goal in view, like those Grecian Runners. my Arms in the Air, and act imaginary Conflicts:

27. But I keep under my Body and bring it into subje-

fication, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away.

saries; this Body of mine, its Appetites and Passions; and subdue them by Mortification and strict Discipline. Left otherwise I, who (like the Herald in those Games,) proclaim the Terms and the Rewards to Others, should at length, through Sloth or irregular Behaviour, lose all, and have the Prize given at last against my self.

COMMENT.

THE better to discern our Apostle's true Scope in the Passage now before us, we shall do well to begin our Meditations upon it, with observing the Occasion which introduced this Argument, and the Propriety of those Allusions, wherein the Force of it consists.

1. For the Occasion, First, This seems to have been given, by these Corinthians having consulted St. Paul about some Points of Christian Liberty. In these, he sets himself to resolve and direct them, from the beginning of the Seventh Chapter. Among Others, That of eating Meats Sacrificed to Idols is
the most celebrated Case. Of this Practice, however innocent, when considered abstractedly, he advises a Restraint. Not from a Principle of Duty, and private Conscience, as a thing necessary in itself, or hurtful to Persons rightly apprised of the Matter; but upon Considerations of Prudence and Charity, and so far affecting the Conscience of Christians united in one Body. That they are obliged to forbear, whatsoever is apt to wound and offend their weak Brethren. The better to reconcile these Corinthians to such Acts of Self-denial, as they might think too rigorous to be imposed, with regard to things confessedly lawful in their own Nature; He backs his former Arguments, by mentioning, in this Chapter, several Condescensions, which he in strictness was not bound, but yet content to make, for the greater Credit and Recommendation of his Doctrine, and for the Sake of such Advantages and Rewards, as he knew to be an abundant Compensation, for all he could do or suffer, in so glorious a Cause. This drew him on to another Topick, which would strengthen the Force of His Example, by their Own. And, from the Instances they daily saw, of Men among themselves, submitting to a great deal more, where the Benefits they aimed at from thence were in no degree so valuable, to incite their Zeal, and persuade them to think nothing too much, when the Salvation of their own, and their Fellow-Christian's Soul, was the Recompence promised and aspired after.

2. To render his Representation of this Matter, as moving and lively as might be, the Apostle choses to express himself, in Terms exceeding proper for the Persons, to whom he wrote. It was with Them, among other Parts of Greece, that those Games, so renowned in Story, were celebrated. No Honour was more eagerly coveted, than that of excelling in these publick
publick Exercises. One of these was Racing, Another compounded of Wrestling and Cuffing. In order to both these, a long Preparation of set Diet, Abstinence from some Pleasures, and several Hardships were prescribed and undergone. And, in the Course and Combat it self, much Sweat and Toil, many Hazards, sharp Conflicts, and sore Wounds and Bruises, were to be expected. And yet all these were submitted to, with incredible Alacrity and Resolution. But for what? For an empty Name, for a Crown of Leaves; A Prize that was withering and worthless; A Prize contended for by Many, but to be won by One; and yet courted as industriously, as painfully, as if Each could, nay the more so, because All, it was known, could not, obtain it. But still Each flattered himself, that he should be the single happy Man, to whom the Glory of the Field should be adjudged.

Since therefore it was a thing so common, so creditable, among the People of Corinth, to exert themselves so vigorously, upon so very poor, so very uncertain Prospects; why should they decline the like Diligence and Zeal, where the Prize they aim at is so much nobler and surer? Why think it hard to obey the Rules, and contain themselves within the Limits, mark’d out for their Christian Course? Why not follow the Pattern of their great Apostle, by keeping the Goal in view, by striving with all their Might to be foremost in this Spiritual Race; by fighting, like Him, in very good earnest, and, with some Violence, bringing and keeping under an Adversary, as dangerous and difficult to be subdued, as any they could possibly encounter, in the Ipsilian Games? Even that Body, those Sensual Appetites and Passions, which St. Paul Ver. 27. himself found it needful to treat so roughly; left the Master of the Exercise, and judge of the Prize,
should at last reject him as unworthy to be crowned, for any undue Indulgencies to his own Inclinations, or for Irregularities or Sloth, in a Matter of such vast importance.

My Endeavour, upon this Occasion, must be to quicken Men in the Pursuit of their Heavenly Reward. And that (1.) by enforcing the Apostle's Argument, which represents the Excellency of it: And (2.) by recommending the Methods he both practised and prescribed, for the obtaining of it. Under each of which Heads, I shall follow the Pattern and Comparison here before us; and, from the very great Industry employed about Matters of less moment, endeavour to expose the Folly and Absurdity, of being careless and indifferent, in those of infinitely greater.

The Motives taken from the Apostle's Discourse here may be two: The Value of the Crown, and the Possibility of obtaining it. And a little Reflection upon Each, might suffice for the answering his Purpose; did Men but bring along with them a Disposition, to let any Arguments, in this Cause, have their full Force upon them.

(1.) The Comparison here lies between One Crown and another: Both looked upon, as an ample Recompense, for the pains taken to obtain them. But with this difference, that, in reality, the Value of the One is imaginary, and depends upon common Estimation only; That of the Other is intrinsic and substantial. And yet this is commonly rated as much lower, as the former is higher, than it deserves to be. And that, as upon other Accounts, so particularly, because admitting, (in compliance with the mistaken Notions of the World) that Each is a Good; yet, when taken at the very best, it is evident, the One can be but a short and lasting Good,
Good. The One a Corruptible, the Other an Incorruptible Crown.

Of the Former, the corruptible Sort, are plainly all those Advantages of the present World, for which Man-kind so eagerly contend. They areickle and fugitive; Not only allayed by infinite Abatements, which check our Delights, and disturb our Enjoyment; while we continue in Possession of them; Not only exposed to infinite Accidents, which seldom suffer that Possession to be quiet, and are perpetually conspiring to deprive us of them: But, like those Garlands alluded to by St. Paul, which wither of themselves. They are, in their own Nature, fading, and such as it is not possible, for the utmost Art and Care, to preserve.

To spend Time in proving this, by descending to Particulars, is needless, when Experience and Common Sense have done it to our Hands. For, I appeal to any Man alive, whether this be not the Case of all those most envied Privileges and Conveniences, wherein Men are at so much trouble, to excel one another. The Honour and Applause, acquired by the noblest and most hazardous Achievements, is like that of the Olympick Games, the Subject of Discourse and Admiration for a while; but eclipsed by the next fortunate Gainer of the Prize, and shortly after neglected and forgotten. They, who sacrifice all to Pleasure, feel, that this is lost by indulging. To render it exquisite is the ready way to shorten it; and every Excess naturally destroys, and turns it into Pain. And lastly, The wise Man hath most emphatically said of Riches, That they make themselves Wings and fly away; since used, they cannot be without diminishing; and, if not used, they are just good for nothing.

These are the Prizes, for which we see so much Clutter and Struggle in the World. These Men think all the Expence and Hardships of long Instruction, and
and severe Education in Youth; All the Toil and Danger of a ripe and vigorous Age; Laborious Days and Restless Nights; Compassings of Sea and Land; The Caprices of Courts; The Fatigues of Camps; The Trial of every Element and Climate; In a Word, Ease, and Safety, and Health, and Peace of Mind, and Life, and too often Conscience and Soul it self, wisely sacrificed to, and laid out upon, Things, which have indeed their Comforts and Conveniences, when sought and used in due Place and Proportion; but, when pursued and loved inordinately, they destroy the very Purposes they should serve. They are therefore most improper to be made the Chief Aim and End of Living, and altogether unworthy even a small Part of that, which the generality of People are content to do and suffer for them.

And yet I will venture to say, on this Occasion, It were still more tolerable, if only the Things already mentioned, engaged our Affections and Endeavours to so violent a Degree. But, to the still greater Reproach of Mankind, the Folly extends farther. And frequent Instances are to be found, where no Pains, or Time, or Cost, or Danger is grudged, for Things perfectly frivolous, manifestly superfluous. To enflame a Passion fitter to be check'd and subdued; Or to carry on a Humour, as unaccountable and extravagant, as the Trouble we are at to soothe it; Or to gratify a Curiosity as fruitless, as it was hard to be contented. So abolute a Dominion do even the most trifling Objects gain over us; when we let our Appetites loose upon the World, and are governed, in the Estimates we make of them, not by Judgment, but by Inclination.

(2.) Still there is one Discouragement behind, which, added to the Rest, shou'd, it might reasonably be imagined, damp the Vehemence of these Pursuits.
suits. 'Tis not the Difficulty only, but the great Uncertainty, of compassing the Prize they aim at. For thus the numberless Disappointments of our Expectations demonstrate, that it is. And thus our own Reason will tell us it must needs be; Where the Advantage aimed at, hath many Seekers; Where there is not enough in the Thing sought to satisfy All; Where, of those Pretenders, the Gain of One must be the Loss of Another: And consequently, Where every Candidate finds it necessary for his Interest, to out-strip, or otherwise hinder, every other Body from making good Their Point, in order to securing and carrying his Own.

Such is the Condition even of the Best of those Things, which we can suppose the Corruptible Crown, in this Scripture, capable of being applied to. The Riches, the Honours, and the Pleasures of this Life, The Happiness and Rewards of Another, manifestly intended by the Incorruptible Crown, are what some of my former Discourses have rendred needless to endeavour, and their inconceivable Excellence make it impossible to give, a full or worthy Representation of. Let it suffice therefore at present to observe, that the Apostle sets These in direct opposition to, and that they are, in every Particular already touched upon, just the Reverse of, the Other. A Crown indeed; As that denotes the highest Honour, the greatest Affluence, the firmest Security: The only Crown, whose Splendor does not deceive with false Ideas; as having no weight of Cares to make it burthensom, no Dangers to allay its Glory, but all bright, and massive, and stable.

This Crown, besides its own Value, is the more worth our striving for, because not, like all others, peculiar to some One, exclusive of the rest, who contend for, and aspire after it; but capable of being attained by every One that seeks it; sufficient to an-
fwer, nay infinitely to exceed, the largest Wishes and Expectations of them all; and so far from lessening the Fruition to our selves, by having Partners in the Bliss; that, as no single Person's Endeavours shall suffer Disappointment, who seeks it regularly; so the more zealously each labours to promote the Happiness of his Brethren, the more effectually he establishes, and the larger Addition he thereby makes to, his Own. This, again, is a Happiness, not only exquisite in Degree, and in its Nature pure, and satisfactory, and truly excellent; but, for its Duration everlasting, always growing, always fresh; liable to no interruption, no abatement, no decay; a Joy that no Man can, a Joy that God, who gives it, never will, take from us.

Supposing therefore, that the Enjoyments of this World really had, (as alas! they are very far from having,) all that we fondly fancy to be in them; yet even so, 'tis plain, This ought to have the Preference in our Esteem and Endeavours. And it is not easy to think of a more powerful Incitement, to quicken our Pursuits after Heavenly Things, than the putting us in mind, how we usually behave our selves, when we have earthly Advantages in view. For, What excuse can be found for that Folly, which overlooks and slight a Treasure certainly attainable, real, and perfect, and ever enduring; and lays out the whole of our Time and Pains, upon Shadows and Bubbles, Things in comparison empty and imaginary, often fought in vain, deceitful when found, not worth our keeping when we have them, and not possible to be kept long, though we would never so fain?

Would Men but allow themselves to think at all, and to act as becomes their Character; they must needs be made sensible, what difference there is, between these two Objects of their Desires and Labours. Such
Such Men, I mean, as St. Paul was heretofore, and I ought to presume my self now, treating with; Christians, who steadfastly believe the Gospel, and therefore can be under no reasonable Doubt, concerning either the Certainty, or the Excellency, of the Prize, which God hath prepared for them that love, and seek it, in the manner he hath directed. And what that manner is, we shall find no great difficulty to learn, if we will but attend to the Methods the Apostle here prescribes, and declares himself to have practised, upon this Occasion. Which therefore I proposed, for my Second Head of Discourse.

Now, First, By comparing the Christian's Duty to a Race, the Apostle, no doubt, intended to insinuate, what Vigour first; what Regularity next; what Perseverance lastly, is expected from us. The Crown here aimed at, is like those of the Olympick Games in this respect, that it is bestowed in the quality of a Reward. A Distinction to them, who have signalized themselves, by performing the known Conditions of obtaining it. And a Reward too, that supposes all who seek it, to understand it a Compensation sufficient, for all the Toil and Hardships such Conditions are known to engage them in. In this Persuasion is founded the Encouragement to our undertaking the Course. A Persuasion, which would naturally banish Indifference and Carelessness, by the glorious Prospect of the End we have in view; and represents all Sloth, as certain to be, not only unsuccessful, but extremely foolish and scandalous. And, in regard the Prize is given by the Master of the Race; this shews us the Equity of our submitting to His Terms, the necessity of running in the Way He hath chalked out for us, and not making to our selves Paths of our own devising. For here too, it is not the Swiftness of the Motion alone, but keeping to the true Ground, that must make us Winners at last. Once
Once more. This Resemblance teaches us the Obligation we are under, to hold on our Course with Resolution; since nothing less than coming up to the Goal can crown our Endeavours; and He that gives out, or is beaten off, at the Last Heat, loses the Benefit of all his Labours and Successes in the Former, as effectually, as if he had never put in for the Prize at all.

1. How happy would it be for us, if the Importance of this Metaphor were considered, as it ought to be? Men would not then (in the Prophet Isaiah's Expression) spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfies not. They would not make Religion a thing by the by, and allow it so few, so very few, even of their leisure Hours; so many fewer, than they give, even to the Diversions and Impertinences of the World. They would not suffer the Pains and Expence they are content to be at, upon the Occasions, nay upon the Vanities of Life, so greatly to exceed those poor droppings, which are so hardly extorted, from an overgrown Treasure, to Works of Piety and Charity. In a Word, They would not appear so extremely solicitous about Trifles, so prudent Managers in Affairs of little Consequence; and so wretchedly cold and careless, stupid and unthinking, in their Main, their External, their Only Concern. For, did they reflect at all, their own Example would reproach them into better Sense. Their very Pleasures would awaken a remembrance of their Duty; and every Race expose the Absurdity, of exerting all their Powers to win a poor desppicable Prize; and of sitting still with their Hands folded, when engaged in a Course, whose End and Prize is an immortal Crown of Glory.

2. Well were it likewise, if Men attended to this Figure, so as to convince themselves, that it is the Master's
Mastres's and Judge's part to prescribe, and the Runner's to submit and comply with, the Rules of the Race. For, from want of such Reflection it is, no doubt, that the Face of the Christian World is so deformed with pernicious Errors, wild Enthusiasms, and frivolous Superstitions: That the Religion of so many is compounded of monstrous Absurdities; suited to each Person's Complexion, or Passion, or Humour, or Interest: that Scripture is distorted and racked, to make it speak the Sense of private Spirits, or of differing Parties: and, that the Belief and Practice of so many, (who falsely pretend to be framed upon one common Model, while they indeed are at as wide a distance, as the Fancies they spring out of, or the Conveniences they serve) are no longer the Gospel of Jesus Christ; but the Dictates of daring Wretches, who presume to pervert it. Such Men, for the sincere Milk of the Word, obtrude the Poison of false Glosses; and do not build up the Temple of the Lord, but erect new Schemes, and set them upon sandy Foundations of their own.

3. But especially, Well it were, if a remembrance of our Life being a Race, would encourage the Stedfastness and Perseverance, even of those, who have in good measure escaped the Pollutions of the World, detected the cunning craftiness of Them who lie in wait to deceive, and have begun to run well. For, how Many of Them, who set out most commendably, do feel, (how few indeed do not feel) their Zeal by degrees languish and grow cold; and, and though hot at hand, yet quickly abate of their Speed, in this Spiritual Race? There is therefore great occasion for keeping up our Resolution and Vigour, by remembering, that nothing less than running the whole Course can entitle us to the Prize. Great need, often to take our selves aside, and see what Progress we have made, and whereabouts we are; what length of
of the Field there is still before us, and how short a time is left us to compass it in. This is an Enquiry, very fit to be frequently and diligently made, especially at each of our Approaches to the Blessed Table; at all solemn Seasons of Humiliation and Repentance: (and consequently very proper to be recommended now, as a good Introduction to the Lent-Fast) That so, upon every fresh Examination, the State of our Souls may be distinctly known; And that, when this is rightly understood, such Knowledge may produce its due Effect. That, if we have, (as alas! Who hath not?) stood still, or loitered, or lost Ground, we may quicken our Pace, and fetch it up, before it be too late: Or, if we find our selves moving forward, that the nearer we approach, the more we may exert our Strength: and not by rough Ways, dead Hearts, and feeble Knees, by fainting, and growing weary in well-doing, not only lose our Crown, but have the Calamity of that Loss doubled to us, by disappointing all our past Hopes and Toil, and missing the Prize, to our Shame and Eternal Confusion; when we were just in sight, and might, by bearing up but a little longer, certainly have secured the Bliss and Honour of it. Of so useful, so necessary Consequence, is this Allusion to us; And of so much concern, to consider every Christian in this Life, as one engaged in a Race; To reflect, what Value each of us runs for, and how he ought to acquit himself, in the glorious Undertaking.

2. The other Allusion of St. Paul, in this Scripture, to the Wrestling and Cuffing in the Games celebrated among these Corinthians, resemble the Christian’s Duty to a Fight. And this is likewise a Direction in several Instances, particularly in these that follow.

(i.) This
(1.) This is a farther Incitement to our Zeal, as it represents to us the Opposition, we are like to meet with, in our great Affair. The former Similitude supposes every Competitor for the Prize obliged to make the best of his way; but the Present intimates a danger, not only of being out-stripp’d by the more vigorous Endeavours of Others, but of encountering great Difficulties and Obstructions in our Own. And therefore it calls upon us to prepare for a Combat. The Nature whereof when we rightly understand, it will plainly appear to be such, as we can neither decline, nor behave our selves negligenty in, without suffering the utmost Damage and Dishonour.

For (2.) This Combat is here resembled to those of the Olympick Games, where Men contended, not out of hatred, or with an intent to destroy, but for a Prize, and with design to master, their Adversary. That Adversary, in the Case before us, is by St. Paul, Verse 27. said to be the Body. That is, the Sensual and Carnal Appetites; which are ever putting us upon endeavouring after, placing our Affections upon, and esteeming our chief Happiness to consist in, the Gratifications of Sense, and Enjoyments of the present World. This is reputed an Adversary, because it wars against our Spiritual Part, diverts our Pursuit of purer and more lasting Joys, renders us careless of our main Concern, that future State, where alone complete Happiness is to be had. And, the more we indulge the Suggestions of this Part, the farther we swerve from the Principles of Reason and Religion. Yet still this is a Part of us. God hath implanted those Desires in our Nature for excellent Purposes; He continues them there for a constant Exercise of our Virtue; And therefore, though the Body be an Adversary, yet it is not such a one, as must be hated or slain, but only kept under and brought into subjection. These Passions and Affections then it is not the
the business of Religion utterly to root out; but only, by prudent Restraints, and proper Acts of Self-denial, to govern, and reduce, and contain within due Measures: that so They, upon all Occasions, may obey, and the nobler Faculties of our Mind may rule, and set bounds to them.

(3.) That these Self-denials may not be misunderstood, as Commands tyrannical and unreasonably severe, we shall do well, once more to cast our Eye upon the Allusion, made use of by the Apostle. He at Verse 25. compares them to the Temperance, prescribed and practised, by way of preparation for the Olympick Games. The Observance whereof contributed to Mens Activity and Vigour, and more successful Performance, in the parts they undertook, and desired to signalize themselves by. This is directly Our Case. God does not tie us up with Arbitrary Laws, to unnatural Cruelties, that should make Life a Burden; but commands us to maintain such a Conflict, as the Condition of Human Nature hath made unavoidable. He would have us subdue such Desires, and deny our selves such Gratifications only, as, when freely indulged, are prejudicial, and obstruct the great End, and true Happiness, of Human Nature. Such as are below the Dignity, and disturb the Operations, and enervate the noblest Powers, of a reasonable Mind; and therefore ought to be curbed by us, as Men. But especially, such as are inconsistent with the strict Sobriety and Purity, with the generous Charity, and heavenly Mindedness of Christians. Who, as such, should, in their whole Behaviour, keep up the distinction between a perishing Body and an immortal Soul; and reckon all below, but Dross and Dung in comparison; no farther worth their care, than as it may be serviceable to them in obtaining, but not by any means fit to come in competition with, or suffered to divert them from, or hinder them
them in their Endeavours after, their incorruptible Crown of Glory.

Since then the Reward we have in view, is so excellent; if the Terms of attaining it were yet much more difficult, we could not be just to our own Interest, should we refuse to comply with them. But then, since those very Terms are for our Interest; how inexcusable are those wretched Men, who will not submit to the Methods of being as happy, as they can be here, in order to being infinitely happy hereafter? The Combat I have been treating of every Man is called to. And every Man, if the fault be not his own, may prove victorious in it. That Passage before us of One obtaining the Prize, is not intended by St. Paul to lessen our Hopes, but to encourage our Labours. It is meant to teach us, that the utmost we are able to do is little enough, that the Benefit we aim at will recompense all our Pains, and, that each Person, upon that account, should exert himself as vigorously, and be as careful not be outdone by any other, as if only the One best in the whole Number could win the Prize, that All are striving for. Let us then (and God grant we may) put forth our whole Strength, fix our Minds upon this Crown, and be continually pressing forward to it. Let us not suffer our Thoughts to be dissipated by Impertinence or Vanity; by any of the Follies or the Trifles, which, upon pretence of entertaining, would loosen them, and break their Force in this most necessary, as well as most important Affair. For we are not so much as at liberty to engage in, or to stand clear of, this Race and Combat. Were the Choice left to Us, yet not to come in were to be undone. But that was happily made for us long ago. We set out in this Course, and were lifted in this Service at our Baptism, and cannot retract without Desertion and Apostacy. The greater Reason is there, why, having
having gone so far already, we should by all means disengage our selves from the weight of our sensual and corrupt Affections. Mortifying them by the Abstinence, and other Holy Severities, proper for that Season of Humiliation and Fasting, to which this Portion of Scripture is so wisely propounded, by our Admirable Church, as a seasonable Preparation. And, lastly, Let not any of Us presume to think those Remedies a Dispensation below us, to which St. Paul himself did not disdain to have recourse. For if He, who was caught up into the Third Heaven, favoured with extraordinary Visions and Revelations, above the Power of Human Tongue to utter, entrusted with the Conversation of so many Nations, and indefatigably laborious in that Ministry; If He, notwithstanding all these Virtues and Advantages, found it necessary to keep under his Body, and bring it into subjection; If he saw reason to fear, that otherwise He, after having preached to others, should himself be a Cast-away; what Care can be too great for Us, whose Attainments and Zeal are so much less? How can we answer it to God, or to our own Souls, if we so far forget our own Sinfulness and Frailty; as not readily to submit to every Method of forwarding us in the Race that is set before us, and make not a diligent and thankful use, of every advantage and defence, in this War of the Spirit against the Flesh? For sure we ought to esteem it a most happy thing, if, by all possible means, we can at last arrive to that unspeakable Blessing, of having our whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be in that great Day mercifully delivered by His Goodness. Which he of his infinite Mercy grant we may; To whom be Glory and Honour, for ever and ever.

1 Thess. v.
23.

Collect for the Day.
Septuagesima; or the Third Sunday before Lent.

The Gospel.

St. Matth. xx.

1. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place.

4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.

5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and said unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

8. So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his Steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9. And when they came, that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny.

11. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house.

12. Say—
12. Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13. But be answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong, didst thou not agree with me for a penny?

14, 15. Thou hast had thy Bargain, and so no reason to complain. Thou oughtest not to trouble thy self how I deal with Others. Nor am I bound to give thee an account, who dost very ill to envy the good Fortune of thy Brethren, and think much at my Bounty to them.

14. Take that thine is, and go thy way, I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?

16. Thus it shall be in the Gospel Benefits too; Because the Number of them, to whom the Advantages and Opportunities of Salvation are offered, is great; but that of the Men, who answer and make the best of them, is, in comparison of the former, very small.

COMMENT.

Many wise Reasons (particularly that of insinuating necessary but unwelcome Truths, in a manner as inoffensive as might be) moved our Blessed Lord, to speak so much in Parables. But, to help our Understandings in the studied Ambiguity of such Figurative Speeches, he frequently applies, or concludes them, with some Figurative Sentence, which may serve as a Key to their Meaning and main Design. Thus it is here, The first shall be last, and the last first, is an Aphorism at the end of the Chapter foregoing, intended to be illustrated by this Parable. And it is here repeated again, Ver. 16. in the Clofe, with an express direction, how to interpret the Passages leading to it; So the last shall be first, and the first last.

In order therefore to know, what Cases and Doctrines are referred to by this Allusion, it may be of some use, to consider the places, where this Sentence occurs,
occurs, and the Occasions; upon which it is introduced. The rather, because being but few, they will neither employ us long, nor endanger any Confusion in the Application.

In the xiiiith of St. Luke, verse 30. It follows a Prediction, concerning the Exclusion of the Jews for their Obst inacy, and the vast and happy Confluence of the Gentiles into Christ's Church. That they, whose Ancestors were Patriarchs and Prophets, should be shut out from their Glories; and Strangers, from every Quarter, admitted to partake with those Good Men, in Honour and Bliss. But then the 24th and 25th Verses make it plain, that this Exclusion of the Jews was not an Act or Decree, purely Arbitrary, but inflicted as a Punishment for their Wilfulness and Pride; and because they did not think it worth their Pains, to enter in at the Strait Gate, now made the only Inlet to the Regions of the Blessed. On the other hand, the Promotion of the Gentiles is, in that and other Scriptures, mentioned, as the Consequence of their eager and indefatigable Zeal. A Zeal, express'd by coming from far, by pressing into the kingdom of Heaven, by being violent, and taking it by force. Now in this regard, the Jews, who were first, (superior in Privileges, and earlier in the Tenders of Happiness) came to be last; failed, and fell short of it. And the Gentiles, who were last, in Opportunities and common Esteem, became first in Success. They were forwarder in their Duty, and greedily embraced those Benefits, which the Other despised and suffered to go beside them, when every thing seemed to favour their Pretensions, and promise a certain Possession.

In the Nineteenth of this Gospel, the Tenth of St. Mark (parallel to it) and the Close of the Parable now before us;
The Words seem not so much to concern Those, who absolutely lost what they seem'd in better Condition to attain; and Others, who, from a State in appearance desperate, became Happy. As to state the Comparison between Persons, who all of them obtain a Recompence, though it be awarded to Each in different and very surprising Measures. Thus the Labourers here all received Wages; Some indeed more, some less, than was expected. But, which was strange, They, whose Fatigue had been longer, were paid no more than Others, whose Time had been shortest. Now, since the Person, whose Image that Householder bears, is Judge of all the Earth, and cannot but do right; Since he is infinitely above all unaccountable Likings and partial Fondness, (as is evident from His so frequent and solemn Declarations, That he is no Respeeter of Persons) we have leave at least, nay, I take it, we ought, to conclude, that some very wise and just Considerations moved him to proceed thus, with these several sorts of Workmen. Reasons perfectly well understood by their Master himself, tho' their Fellow-Labourers either did not comprehend, or would not attend to them. And so, in this second Sense, Not with regard to being miserable, or being happy; but in regard of a Happiness greater or less than was expected, and in proportion to the time of working being more or less; There are many that are first which shall be last, and the last which shall be first.

From these Passages thus compared, we have, I think, sufficient warrant to apply this Parable, First, To the Case of all Mankind; Or else, Secondly, To that of the Jews and Gentiles in general; Or, Thirdly, To that of private Christians in particular. I shall state each as briefly as I can, and then conclude with some proper Observations from them.
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1. Take it in its first and most comprehensive Sense, and thus it intimates, That God was never in any Age wanting to Mankind, that He (as hath * been formerly observed ) did frequently renew his Call, and enlarge the Discoveries of his Will and their Duty, by such Dispensations, as answer to the several Hours here. But that the Gospel is his Last Call; and after this nothing is to be looked for, but the bringing Men to account, how they have acquitted themselves, under their respective Circumstances.

Next, Let us view that of the Jews and Gentiles in general. To the Jews God was pleased to make the first express Discoveries of his Will by a written Law. Their Nation alone, in the Ages before the Gospel, were blessed with a Revealed Religion. And, at the first Publication of the Gospel, our Lord confined his own Presence and Ministry to this People and Country. So did his Apostles and Disciples, by his Direction, during his Abode upon Earth, and for some time after his Ascension into Heaven. The several Steps taken in this Affair, during that Interval, may be thought answerable to the repeated Invitations of the Morning, the Third, the Sixth, and the Ninth Hours. At last, which answers to the Eleventh, this Benefit was extended to the Gentiles. They readily accepted it, and by so doing, became Partakers of the same Grace and precious Promises, with those, who had all along been brought up under the Legal, and from that removed sooner under the Evangelical, Dispensation. This gave great Offence to those earlier Converts. They thought themselves ill dealt with, and their Services not sufficiently considered, when Men, from Darkness and Idolary, were at once translated into the same marvellous Light; and all that distinction of Favour taken away, which had been
been the boasted Prerogative of their Race for so many Generations, and kept up at the Expence of a Law very rigorous and burthensome. All this in Fact appears from Holy Writ. So that there is scarce any Circumstance in the Parable, to which their Condition and Behaviour did not suit: and it must be confessed, that no Interpretation comes so strictly and literally home to it, as This.

But then we may be allowed, from the Occasion of this Parable, set down at large in the Chapter last before, to apply it to particular Christians too, in some, or in almost all, of the following Respects.

The Apostles left all and followed Christ; The Primitive Christians gave in their Names to his Doctrine, and continued steadfast in it, at the certain Peril of their Liberties, their Friendships, their Fortunes, nay their Lives. And yet, in any after Ages of Christianity, They who live and die, though quietly and peaceably, in the sincere Profession of this Religion, are promised the Kingdom of Heaven, as a Reward for their Faith and Obedience.

So again, Some have the Happiness of a pious Education, and carry on their early Virtue, through the several Stages of Life. Others, who either wanted that Advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the same Excess of Riot with the unthinking part of the World. And yet if These, though late, see their Follies, and Effectually forsake them, and become new Men; the Promise of God standeth sure, That at


what time forever the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

Thus, once more, Some are continued to a good old Age, and by variety of Trials, and a long course of Obedience, bring Glory to God. Others Hearts are good, and equally disposed to do so; but, being taken
taken short, and snatched out of the World betimes, they are denied Opportunities for it. And Both shall come to Heaven. The mention of which case, if it seem foreign to the Matter in hand, desire it may be remembred, that as the Aphorism (Many that are first, &c.) is thought to have been proverbial among the Jews; So have they Another expressly to this purpose, That He, who lives well, and is cut off in the midst of his Days, (continues but half the Time set out for the Age of Man) shall be equally rewarded with Him, who lives seventy Years, or the utmost Term allotted for Man's Life.

Against these Cases it may be objected, That some Passages in the Parable, particularly that of the murmuring Labourers, cannot agree with our expounding it of the Rewards, and therefore we must restrain it to the Knowledge, and first Admision to the Privileges, of the Gospel. To this it may suffice to reply, That, to justify the Application of a Parable, it suffices, that the main design be kept close to: That many Passages are inserted for Ornament and Illustration only: That This, in particular, may mean a Reward so surprizingly great, as among Men would provoke the Envy of others: And, that the Connexion between this and the Nineteenth Chapter seems to import some other meaning, besides that of bringing the Gentile Converts upon the same level with the Jewish. These things I shall have occasion hereafter more fully to explain.

Having thus done with propounding the several Cases, to which the Scripture before us may be accommodated; it only remains, that I raise from it such useful Observations, as may answer the Design of our excellent Church, in recommending it to our Thoughts at this time.

And
And, First, We are, upon this Occasion more especially, obliged to take notice of the Kindness of this Householder, in calling these Labourers. And that, not once only, but again and again; entertaining all that came, and very bountifully rewarding all he entertained, though the Time some of them were employed, had been but very short. All this does our heavenly Householder too. He appoints and calls us to our Duty, he frequently repeats that Call, and does not cast us off at our first Refusal. Nay, he does more than any Master upon Earth can do; for he prepares our Hearts to hearken to his Calls, he strengthens and assists us in the Duty we are called to. He rewards us according to our good Dispositions, and graciously considers what Opportunities we had, and what use we would have made of more, if we had had more. It is by Him, that we begin, go on, and persevere as we ought. And, when he calls us to receive our Wages, he pays us for the Work, which without Him, we could never have done. A Work, which cannot deserve, but yet which is a necessary Condition of, our Reward. And herein are manifested the Freedom of his Grace, and the Greatness of his Bounty; Not in bringing Men to Heaven without good Works, but in doing it for such Works, as himself impowers them to discharge.

Secondly, We shall do well to observe, how the Command here runs, Go ye into the Vineyard, that is, to labour there. And, as in a Vineyard there is great variety of Employment, so is it here likewise. Now a Man then, and then only, labours as he ought; when he diligently and conscientiously discharges the Duties of his own Station. When he considers the Post, and the several Relations; Providence hath placed him in; and, whether He be Magistrate or Private Subject, Priest or Parishioner, Parent or Child, Master or Servant, Rich or Poor, Trader or Labouring-Man, studies
studies the Part belonging to him, takes care to an-
swer all just Expectations from his Character, and ho-
nestly follows his particular Busines and Calling. This
then is truly and properly to work in God's
Vineyard, to do our Duty, to Him, and to our
Neighbour. The State of a Christian consequently is
not a State of Idleness and Ease. This State is that
Vineyard, which we are already entred into. We were
so at our Baptism, and it is too late to think of retract-
ing, unless we resolve to give up all our Hopes, and
are content to forfeit all our Pretensions to our Wa-
ges. If therefore we have been careless, and have loft
Time, this must be made up, by doubling our Dili-
gence. And it is probable, this was the Motive, that
induced the Householder, to make his latter Labourers
equal in Pay; that they had plied their Busines harder,
and made themselves equal in dispatch, with those
who were hired early. This, it is evident, was the
Case of the Gentiles, who came up to the Jews in ev-
ery Instance of Faith and Obedience. This was St.
Paul's, who, though called the laft of them, yet la-
boured more abundantly than all the Apostles. And it is
often the Case of Late Penitents, whose fene of their
former Miscarriages and Neglects is apt to inflame their
Zeal, and to put them upon making Reparation, by
more exalted Acts of Piety and Virtue. And this is
most agreeable to that Character, so frequently given
of our great Master, that he rewards every man accordin
g to his work.

Thirdly, The Instance of the Murmuring Labourers
should teach us Humility and Charity. Not to be
puffed up with a vain Opinion of our own Deserts,
not to undervalue those of our Brethren: To receive
our Recompence thankfully, as the Full that does, as
More indeed than strictly can, belong to us: And to
rejoice in the Happiness of Others, as no diminution,
but an increase rather, to our own. And therefore
we should be so far from presuming to grudge, or call our Master to account for, his Liberality to our Fellow-labourers; that it should be rather matter of the highest Satisfaction, to see those recovered out of the Snare of the Devil, who used to be taken captive by him at his Will. For it is the Effect of God’s Mercy, that We our selves were admitted to so profitable an Agreement, how early soever we came in. And when our selves have what we covenanted for; As it is no wrong, so neither ought it to provoke our Indignation, that Others are bountifully dealt with. For, even supposing Them to receive over-measure, this hurts not, and therefore should not grieve, any, who receive their full measure.

4. Fourthly, Let us be sure to make a right use of the Encouragement given here, to these Labourers at the Eleventh hour. Which must be done, not by rendering it an Argument for Presumption, to soothe us up in Impenitence or Sloth; as if God were bound to receive us; at what Time, and upon what Terms, we please. This is extremely to pervert the Text; which tells us indeed, That Call was the last: But it does not tell us, That they, who refused his former Calls, were called again and again. If this be done, ’tis Grace and Favour, not Justice and Debt. But We, who live under the Ministry of the Gospel, have his Calls daily sounding in our Ears; and, if we continue obstinately deaf, cannot be sure, that our last Call is not already over. The true Benefit then arising from hence, is, to all such, as have had the Unhappiness to lie long in Sin and Ignorance; That God will accept and reward them, though they come late into the Vineyard, provided they then apply themselves heartily to their Master’s Business, and work faithfully, to the uttermost of their power. He makes gracious Allowances for Hindrances and Infirmities; but then he expects, that We should be
be sensible of them too; that we should lament, and strive against them, and do the best we can. Let us remember, that the longer it is before we begin, the less Day we have to work in; and therefore make the more haste to be ready for the Evening, which draws on apace, when an Account of what we have done shall be taken, and our Wages awarded accordingly.

This is the true Intent of the Parable, in that part of it. So well does the Gospel fall in with the Epistle of this Day; and both together so very well agree, to fit us for the approaching time of Mortification, designed to awaken the Sluggish, to quicken the Loitering, and set forward every Labourer in this Spiritual Vineyard. And oh! that we all may receive Instruction from hence, and be wise; understand our Advantages, and the Goodness of our Master; consider our Latter-end, the Approach of that Night, which must end in Day Eternal; the Happiness of that Approach to all diligent and faithful Labourers, but the Terror and dismal Consequences of it to every slothful and unprofitable Servant. To say all in a Word, Let us work the works of him that sent us into this Vineyard, while it is day, before that time come, wherein no man can work!
The Sunday called Sexagesima; Or, The Second Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

O Lord God, who seest that we put not our Trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant, that by thy Power we may be defended against all Adversity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle.

2 Cor. xi. 19.

Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

20. And what I am about to trouble you with, is plainly a great deal less than your falseness. Teachers put upon you, whose enslaving you to the Jewish Law again, whose insatiable Avarice and making a prey of you, whose Insolence and Tyranny, and contumelious Usage to the most intolerable degree, you can patiently away with.

21. And yet what have they to value themselves upon, that I have not?

22. In all the Privileges of Birth and Descent, I am equal.

23. In the relation to, and Service of Christ, (excuse the liberty I take in speaking of myself) I am superior to them: My Sufferings for the Gospel prove me so.

24. I have been five times scourged by the Jews, to the utmost degree of rigor ever used by them. See Deut. xxv. 3.


26. See Acts xx. 3.

27. Three was I beaten with rods, once was I smitten, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

28. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in peril by the beasts, in perils in the city,
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27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness;

28. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.

28. And the perpetual Concern I am under for the Churches planted by me; as it is a constant, so it is a very heavy Article.

29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?

30. If I needs must glory, I will glory of the things which concern my Infirmities.

30. Among all these no Person is afflicted but I sympathize with him; none discouraged in his Duty, or in danger of falling off from his Principles, but I even burn with zeal to reduce and settle him.

31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Comment.

This Portion of Scripture is the more remarkable, because it presents us with a great Apostle, engaged in an Act very unusual, and (generally speaking) very unbecoming that Character: I mean, the Commendation of himself. It is therefore highly necessary, in order to understand, and be able to account for, such Proceeding, that we consider very carefully, First, The Occasion, Secondly, The Manner of it. After which, I shall draw some Reflections from the whole.

1. The Occasion, it is plain, was the Corruptions brought into the Church of Corinth, by some false Teachers, who, (like those of the same Stamp in every Age and Church) had insinuated themselves into the Affections of the People; As by other Arts
of Subtlety and Deceit; so more especially, by extolling their own Ability and Merit, and by disparaging Reflections upon their regular Pastor. The People it seems were there (as they usually are) credulous, and easy enough to be caught with this guile. They readily drank in the Prejudices against St. Paul; and were grown so immoderately fond of their new Teachers; that, at the same time they thought the just and gentle Authority of an Apostle a Yoke too heavy; the utmost Vanity and Insolence, the most insatiable Pillaging and Avarice, the most imperious Tyranny, and contumelious Treatment went down very contentedly, from the hands of those idolized Intruders. Had this Partiality had no farther consequence, than the lessening St. Paul's private Profit or Reputation; he would not have thought it worth while, to vindicate his Honour so solicitously. But, foreseeing that so undeserved a Preference of the Men would certainly bring on a liking of their Errors, and so endanger the Souls of as many as should adhere to them; Charity to his Brethren called for Justice to Himself. Therefore, for the sake of those deluded Wretches, and to do right to the Truth, he found it necessary to assert his Due, to provoke those bold Detractors to a Comparison. By this method he took the Advantage of letting them see, at once, how much He, how little They, were able to produce, in proof of the Authority challenged on either side. An Authority, which He was legally invested with, and exercised with Lenity and Temper; but which They by Dint of Arrogance took to themselves, and abused to the vilest Purposes of Calumny and Faction.

Such was the Occasion, such the End, of our Apostle appearing here, in a Figure so unlike that he commonly makes in his Writings. Which, though they be so reasonable, and so urgent, he yet manages so, as to clear his Humility of all Suspicions, that the most captious Adversary could cast upon it. As may appear from my
2. Second Particular. The Manner of this Proceeding. In which we ought to observe,

1. The many Apologies for, or seeming Condemnations of, himself, in giving way so far to the Provocation of those, who spoke or thought dishonourably of him. Of this kind are those Expressions; I speak foolishly, Ver. 21. I speak as a fool, Ver. 23. If I must needs glory, Ver. 30. It is not expedient for me doubtsless to glory, Chap. xii. 1. I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me, xii. 11. with the rest to the same purpose. So cautiously does the Apostle behave himself, in a Point, which he rightly understood to be so nice. For, as the expatiating upon our selves without any necessity is, of all Faults in Conversation, the most nauseous and offensive: so the being extremely tender and officious, even in our own Indignation, is seldom free from Vanity. This is the Case of all Mankind, but especially the Ministers of Christ; Who must expect a share in Calumnies and Contradictions, and ought to be armed with Patience to endure them, above the proportion of common Men. When therefore these have Influence upon their personal Advantages only; it is generally better to leave the clearing of their Innocence, to Time, and the Evidence of a good Conversation. But when they reflect upon their Character, and, by poisoning the People with ill Impressions, tend to obstruct the Efficacy of their Labours; the Cause becomes publick, their Charge is concerned, and a becoming Sollicitude to set all right, in such Circumstances, is no longer Zeal for their Own, but Charity for the Safety and Good of other Men. And yet, even in these Circumstances, St. Paul's Example teaches us, how careful we ought to be, in warding off all the Spightful Constructions apt to be made, of the most necessary and the most modest Publication of our own Conduct and Deservings.

Q. 2

2. Some
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2. Some farther Instructions of this kind may be gathered, from the Subject, which St. Paul chooseth here to enlarge upon. Not the Greatness of his Miracles, Not the Power of his Eloquence and Arguments, Not the Success of his Labours, the Number of the Converts he had won, or of the Churches he had planted; (tho' no Man could with greater right have allledged these.) But only the Toils and Hardships, the Persecutions and Afflictions, which the Discharge of his Ministry had engaged him in. These were such Privileges, as his Adversaries neither had, nor desired to have to boast of. They, as the 20th Verse intimates, had other things in view. The Gain of private Contributions, the Command of the Purses, and an absolute Dominion over the Persons of their Hearers. The Grounds, upon which they exalted themselves, were all taken from worldly Advantages, and in that respect St. Paul is content to declare himself their Equal. The Regards He declares himself their superior in, are such, as They were well enough satisfied to give him Preference in. Such as Stripes and Imprisonments, Shipwrecks and Deaths, hard and perilous Journeys, Cold, and Hunger, and Thirst. These it was so far from Vanity to glory in, that the Apostle found it requisite to subjoynt his being honoured with extraordinary Visions and Revelations, to prevent so great a degree, so constant a succession, of Sufferings, from being turned into an argument of God's Displeasure, against one so incessantly exercised with them. And yet these Afflictions were really the properest, and most worthy matter of glorying, to the Apostle. The properest, because it was perfectly free from Vanity or Self-seeking, (for His were not Sufferings, either industriously courted, or magnified to be made a Gain of) And the most worthy, because, to all, who duly considered them, they were Proofs of large measures of Grace supporting him under them;
of unparallel'd Sincerity and Zeal, disposing him so cheerfully to persevere in encountering them; and of the Truth of that Doctrine, which, by the Ministry of one so ill treated, could yet gain so much ground, and triumph over them.

The Profit fit for Us to make of the Passage thus explained, is as follows.

1. The Description given here of false Teachers should be a Warning to all Christians against listening to them: And a Seasonable Admonition to suspect and beware of Such, as make it their business to infuse into Men Jealousies and evil Surmises against their lawful Pastors. A Method, than which there cannot be a surer Sign, that They, who have recourse to it, do therefore draw off our People, because thereout they suck no small Advantage. For These Corinthians are far from the only Instance, of the People being even devoured by Seducers, and finding the Little-fingers of such, thicker than the Loins of regular Apostles. And if it should, as sometimes it may, happen, that Such may have Sufferings and Hardships to allege for their Ministry; yet even then care must be taken to look into the ground of those Sufferings: whether these also be not a profitable Bargain for this World; and a Persecution so called, but in truth a setting their Quiet to sale at the highest Market. In a word, None, who urge St. Paul's Argument rightly, will suffer for Builders against the Laws of Men, in cases, where those are not manifestly against the Laws of God.

2. The Instance now before us shews, how far we ought to be, from reckoning what we endure for God's Cause (when it is really God's Cause) matter of Sorrow or Shame to us. St. Paul was, in comparison to the rest of the Apostles, a Labourer called in the Eleventh hour. And he thought, as he taught the Philippians to esteem it, a particular Grace, that it was given him, not only to believe in Jesus, but to j
for his Name. The Fervency of his Charity and Zeal made up what was wanting in point of time. And We (especially those among us, that are Ministers of the Gospel) never make a more just Computation of our Services; than when we reckon them, by the Hardships and Self-denials we are content to undergo, for the good of our own Souls, or those of our Christian Brethren.

3. Thirdly, When St. Paul, to all his other Sufferings, adds the Care of all the Churches, and the zealous Compassion over them that failed, or were afflicted in them; This shews the Abundance of His, and instructs us what ought to be the measure of Our, Charity. We are not to neglect, or think our selves excused from a tender Concern for, the Afflictions or Dangers of our Brethren, upon the account of any Sufferings of our own. Be our other Circumstances what they will, yet still we are Members of Christ's Body; And while that Relation continues, all the Duties resulting from it, must do so too. So indispensable and perpetual a Duty is Charity, for the Souls of others especially; So far indeed are those Hardships, which lie outward and open to the view of others, from being the most sensible part of what Good Men endure.

4. Lastly, The Methods used for exercising St. Paul's Patience and Virtue, teach us plainly, that the way, in which God would be served by Christians, but especially by his Ministers, is that of Constancy, and indefatigable Diligence, and diffusive Charity. That Ease, and Idleness, and Luxury, and effeminate Declining of Trouble for the Publick Good, are by no means agreeable to a Disciple of Jesus his Character. And thus the Apostle, as in the Last, so again in This Lord's-Day Service, does, by his own Example, encourage and prepare us, for the Discipline of the Season drawing on. One great Design whereof is,
to break the Softness of a Nature, too indulgent to Flesh and Blood, and to inure us to endure Hardship like good Soldiers of Jesus Christ. In which Warfare, the less we spare our own Persons; the more we may depend upon His Protection and Support in the Conflict, and the brighter Trophies we shall raise to His Glory, the Honour of Religion, and the unspeakable Advantage of our Souls and Bodies both, in that Day of Triumph and Joy: Which God grant us all a part in, for our dear Redeemer's sake. Amen.

Sexagesima Sunday.

The Gospel.

S. Luke viii. 4.

4. When much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every City, he spake by a parable:

A Ship, and left them on the Shore, and sat down and taught them out of the Ship, by this following, and several other Parables, Matt. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Mark iv. 1, 2.

5. A fewers went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the Air devoured it.

6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

The Weather grew hot, the Sun scorched it up, by reason the Soil was not deep enough to preserve it at the Root, Matt. xiii. 5, 6. Mark iv. 5, 6.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold. And when he had said these things he cried, He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

xiii. 3. Mark iv. 8. This is a Parable, that highly deserves your Attention.

9. And
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9. And his Disciples asked him, saying, What might this Parable be?

10. As a Reward of your diligence and desire to be informed, these shall be explained to You; but the rest shall be left in the dark, and have their voluntary punished with judicial ignorance. See Matth. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Mark iv. 11, 12.

11. Now the Parable is this: The Seed is the Word of God.

12. Those by the way side, are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.


15. But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

By Constancy in suffering, and Perseverance in doing well. And though all who behave themselves thus do not produce the same Quantity of Fruit, yet are they all good Ground. Compare Matth. xiii. 23. Mark iv. 20.

Comment.

Scarce any Passage, in the whole Course of the Year, is more worthy our serious Consideration, than that, which our Excellent Church hath wisely appointed to be read, for the Gospel of this Day. That Heathens and Jews, profess'd Infidels and Enemies to Christianity, that They, who want Opportunities of knowing their Duty, and would gladly use them if they
they could; that Others, who live within the Pale of Christ’s Flock, and have opportunities, but will not use them when they may; that these several sorts of People, I say, should continue unfruitful, is nothing strange. But that Many, who have them, and do use them, nay, and use them gladly too; that They, who come to the publick Assemblies for Religious Worship, as God’s People cometh, and sit before his Prophets as God’s People sitteth, and attend to the Preacher with Eagerness and a sensible Delight; that These, after all, should prove barren and unprofitable, is Matter to be sure of great Grief, and must be allowed to carry somewhat of Difficulty, and of Wonder in it. And yet that so it is; that the Ministers of Christ often sow where they never reap, but lose the desired Effect of their Pious Intentions and most Zealous Endeavours; our Blessed Saviour acquaints us in this Scripture, and our own daily Experience does but too visibly confirm the Truth of it. So that it concerns every Christian, diligently to examine into the Causes of such lamentable Disappointments. Which, that we may know, and effectually prevent, our Lord hath laid them down at large, in the Parable and Application now before us. Of which in order to make the best profit we can, it will be proper to observe the following Particulars.

1. First, That this Parable was spoken before a mixt and numerous Auditory, When much People were gathered together, and were come to him out of every City. The other Evangelists inform us, That Jesus had no sooner left his Retirement, but the Multitudes, who had flocked in from the adjacent Towns, pursuèd him down to the Seaside; that at this very time he taught them out of a Ship; that, scarce content to allow him leisure for the common Refreshments of Nature, they pursuèd him still;
still; and, when he put to Sea, procured other Vessels, for attending him in his Voyage. Circumstances, all these, of great Significance and Use. Since these so forward, so insatiable Learners, were not in all Points what they ought to have been: Since even to Men, who express then a Zeal so eager, as is scarce any where to be met with now, this Lecture of profiting by what they heard, was nevertheless highly seasonable and necessary. So far were They at that time from having done all that became them; So vain an Imagination is it at any time, for Christians to suppose, that frequenting the Church, and being diligent to hear God's Word, will save their Souls at last; without producing afterwards the suitable Fruits of Piety and Virtue, in their Minds and Conversations.

(2.) 'Tis fit we take good Notice, in the Next Place, how great a Loss this Parable describes: Which, out of Four parts cast into the Ground, tells us but of One, that turn'd to account. No better did Matters go in our Saviour's Time, and with the Hearers of Him, who spoke as never man spoke. Yet would not They, who confess'd thus much, and could never convince him of Sin, or of Error, be either persuaded by the Power of his Eloquence, or won over by the Perfection of his Example. And, though the miscarrying of Three Parts in Four, may seem an astonishing Proportion under Any Circumstances; there is but too just Reason to fear, that, as the Frailties and Infirmities of our Preachers now are infinite, and will not allow any Comparison between the Best of Them, and their Great, their Divine Master: So the Numbers of those that fail under their Ministry, are infinite also; and the truly faithful Hearers, but few, but very few, and far below the Proportion in this Parable.

3. This
3. This however, Thirdly, is not the Sower's fault. His Business is only to scatter the Grain, in due Season, and with a liberal Hand. Now that Seed, according to our Lord's own Method of explaining himself, is the Word of God; and He that soweth it is the Son of Man. This Master of the Field went out to sow, came down from the Throne of his Glory, and, at the fulness of Time, conversed with Mankind in Flesh, accommodated himself to their Capacities and Wants, that no possible Means might be wanting, to render his Gospel acceptable and effectual. This Word he hath scattered upon all Countries and Kingdoms; first by the extraordinary Influences of his Spirit and Power; then by the Establishment of a perpetual Succession and Order of Ministers, and the faithful Records of his most Holy Religion. If they, who are now made Sowers of this Word, should be so unhappy, as to mistake it through Ignorance; Or so perverse, as to corrupt it through Malice and Design; Or so profligate, as to disgrace it by scandalously wicked Lives; Yet still our Bibles are our own. These give it us pure and plain, and command us not to judge our Brethren, or live by Their Patterns; but to approve our selves to God, by governing our Actions according to His Laws. The Sins or the Weakness of others, in which we take no part, shall never be imputed to us. Had the Errors, or the Vices of our Pastors been any real and natural Cause of the Inefficacy of the Word, any, which might endanger the Hearers Salvation by receiving Instruction from Men of polluted Lips, it would not surely have been omitted here. For the very Design of this Parable is to put Men upon their Guard, by giving all necessary Intimations, whence that Barrenness proceeds in their Hearts, which brings their Souls into any manner of Hazard. Since then
then the Seed is certainly good in its kind; and since all due Methods have been taken for the distribution of it; if He, who bath sown plentifully, reap but very sparingly, the Blame cast upon the Sower, can be no better than Mistake or mere Pretence. And, if we will be just, we must acknowledge His Bounty and his Care, and are to seek for the fault somewhere else.

4. Now, Fourthly, This is farther of very great moment, that, although there be many Accidents, as Floods, or Drought, or Frosts, or Blasts, which frequently spoil the Corn, after it is in the Ground; Yet none are taxed with unfruitfulness in this Parable, except such only, as are Defects peculiar to the Ground itself. Thus, in proportion, many Things there are, not at our own disposal, which must contribute to our Spiritual Growth, and yet no mention is made of them in this Parable. Very wisely, this. For, had such been insisted on, we might have had some reason to conclude, that Men sometimes discharge Their part, but God does not bless them with Increase: That he denies them necessary Grace; and so curses and condemns them to Barrenness, by checking those Improvements, which They are well disposed and labour hard to make, but cannot with their utmost Pains effect it. But now, as the Case is represented to us, the Ground alone is accused in the Figure; And consequently the Heart of Man, which answers to that Ground, in the Application. And it is but a fond Abuse, that Men are guilty of to themselves, when they look abroad for some frivolous Excuse, to which the Scriptures give not the least Colour; when they would shift off their own unprofitableness upon the Ministers of the Gospel; or, which is yet more impious, upon the partial and too sparing Communications of God himself. Whereas it is the plain Intention of our Blessed Master, and the true Scope of this whole Passage, to charge the un-
unsuccessful Preaching of God's Word, wholly and solely upon the Defects and Indispositions of them that hear it.

5. Nay, which is more, and brings the Matter home, I beg it may be considered, in the Fifth place, that those very Defects and Indispositions seem to be only such, as are owing entirely to Ill-husbandry and Neglect of the Tillers themselves. Suffering Path-ways to be made over their ground, and their Lands and Furrows to be trodden down. Not gathering out the Stones, and rooting up the Briars and Thorns: These are ascribed for the Causes of this Barrenness, and not any Leanness, or Natural Poverty, in the Soil itself. Accordingly we find that Ground commended for Good, whose Product is answerable to the Quality of its Soil. For the Other Gospels express that Goodness, by bringing forth fruit, some an hundred, some sixty, and some thirty fold.

The plain meaning whereof is, That, where God hath endowed Men with greater Abilities, he expects a greater Increase; and where he hath dealt them more sparingly, he is very well satisfied with less. But though he does not, in this sense, gather where he hath not strewed, nor reap where he hath not sown; yet he always expects an Harvest agreeable to what he hath sown. The Man therefore, who brings forth thirty-fold, and was not in a Condition of doing more, is Good Ground; But He, who brings Thirty only, when he was in a Capacity of bringing Sixty or an hundred-fold, must never hope to be esteemed Good Ground. As God then requires an Account of our Abilities and Opportunities: so he makes gracious Allowances for our Weakness and Want of them. He does not regard the Quantity, so much as the Disposition; but allows mean Attainments to consist very well with bringing forth Fruit: Such, and so much, as he
he kindly accepts, and is exceedingly well pleased with. He imputes Barrenness to no Man, but upon such Defects, as are not of Nature's, but of his own making. The honest and good Heart is what he requires, and what we are principally concerned to look After. He hath promised expressly, upon this very Occasion, that our becoming fruitful shall in great measure depend upon our selves: that They, who do their own Endeavours faithfully, shall be by his Grace strengthened to do more. And he declares, that They who neglect their own Improvement, shall fall from Bad to Worse, lose their own Powers, and forfeit His Assistance. Take heed (says he) therefore bow ye bear, for whosoever bath, not, from him shall be taken away, even that, which be seemeth to have.

6. The Last and Principal Thing, that calls for our Attention, is the different Character of the Good and Bad Ground, which, by comparing them together, will be found to consist in the Three following Particulars.

1. They that are signified by the Good Ground keep the Word, and thus are opposed to those by the Way-side, who immediately lost it.

2. They on the Good Ground keep it in an honest and good heart, and in this are contrary to them among Thorns, with whom the Cares, and Riches, and Pleasures of this Life choke the Word, so that they bring no Fruit to perfection.

3. They on the Good Ground bring forth Fruit with patience, and herein differ from the Stony Ground, which represents them, who receive the Word with joy, but have no Root; who for a while believe, and in time of Temptation fall away.

1. The First Qualification then observable in the Good Ground is, that the Persons signified by it keep the Word:
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Word: and thus are opposed to the failing of them by the Way-side. These, (as the Applications of this Parable, when compared together, acquaint us) do not understand, or consider the Word, but Satan cometh immediately, and taketh it away out of their Hearts. Which last Words in the Exposition answer to those in the Figure, that the Seed was trodden down, and the Fowls of the Air came and devoured it.

Hereby no doubt are meant the Careless and Unthinking Hearers. Such as frequent Religious Assemblies, to save their Credit, or comply with Custom; to gratify a Curiosity, or perhaps to expose and start new Cavils out of what we hear; but without any care to answer the true Purposes of Hearing. And therefore, they either attend not, or recollect not, or apply not to their own Conscience and Condition. But, like the common Way, have their Hearts open to every fresh Comer, and suffer the next trifling or wicked Imagination to take place, and utterly to deface the former Impressions.

Such vain Thoughts, I conceive, are intended by the Fowls of the Air in the Parable. For it is not by any visible or violent means, but by suggesting idle Fancies, and dissipating better and more serious Considerations, that Satan catches away the good Seed. And we greatly mistake the matter, if we suppose, that Religious Truths convey themselves to our Understandings, or influence our Affections, in a manner different from others. It is by serious Application of Thought, careful Remembrance, and frequent Reflection, that we must fasten these Things also upon us. And God, who gave us reasoning Faculties, expects they should be employed in matters of this nature, at least as much as in any other. Where the Sower hath cast in the Grain, his business, a; a Sower,
Sower, is at an end: But the covering up and cherishing what we have received, must be every man's own work.

That then, which we are principally concern'd for in this regard, is, To come to God's publick Worship, and all other Reading and Hearing of his blessed Word, with due Reverence and earnest Attention. To consider These as the means, ordinarily necessary, for bringing us to himself; Consequently, that this Word was never designed purely for our Entertainment or Diversion, to be nicely distinguishing'd, learnedly disputed, eloquently enlarged upon, but to influence all our Powers, and put forth into Action: That it is therefore called Seed, because the first and common Principle, whence all our Virtue springs: That the End of it therefore is never answer'd, but by bringing forth Fruit, and that Fruit is no other, than a good Conversation. These are Considerations, which every Man should be possess'd with perpetually, but especially at all Seasons of Devotion and publick Instruction. And, if We were so, these would check all our loose Wandring, awaken all our Faculties, fix what we hear in our hearts, and so effectually convince us of the vast Importance of the Duty we are about; that we could scarce continue to be Men, and not get above the negligent and fickle Disposition of those Hearers by the wayside.

2. The Next Qualification I took notice of, is, that the Persons represented by the good ground, keep the word in an honest and good heart. This seems more particularly opposite to them, which fell among Thorns; of whom it is observed, that the Cares of the World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Pleasures of this life choke the Word, so that they bring no fruit to perfection. These are supposed to have made a better Pro-
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Progress than the Former; to hear, and perhaps to consider and apply very seriously. But when they come to Action, the Business and Diversions, the Interests and Intanglements of the World interfere, and will not let them be good Christians. Thus they do, and thus they will do, wherever these Briars are suffered to get a Head. For which reason our Lord, very appositely to this present Subject, takes particular notice of the Deceitfulness of Riches. For Deceitful they are, not only as they cheat Men in the Happiness and Satisfaction they fondly expect from them; but upon a yet more fatal Account, as they perpetually push them on to fresh Pursuits, daily kindle new and more vehement Desires, and defeat their repeated Resolutions, of ridding their hands of all Incumbrances, and seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness. And thus they egg Men on to old Age, and the approach of Death; till they learn too late, at their last Hour, that it is to no manner of purpose, that we hope to compound the Matter between God and Mammon; but that He, who will leave to the one, must of necessity despise and forfake the other.

What must be done to cure this unhappy Disposition? The properest Method I can advise, is to attend to the Advantage, and the Necessity, of being truly Religious; To over-balance the Allurements of this present World, by the prospect of an Eternal Glory to come; To convince our selves throughly, how very childish and silly a Bargain a Man would make, though we should suppose him able to do that, which no Man ever will be able to do, that is, though he would gain the whole World, if at the same time he must lose his own Soul; and that there is not, cannot be, any valuable Compensation given in exchange for the Soul. This Sense would bring Men to receive the Word impartially and fairly, without any Mixture of
Prejudice or Passion; This would render us diligent in our Callings, but without Distraction; careful for our Families, but without Anxiety; inflexible to sinful, and moderate in our most lawful Pleasures and Enjoyments. And in such a clear and free Disposition of Soul, which is ready to submit to the Whole of Religion; which closes with its Duty, though it be unpalatable, and counter to the Affections of a sensual and worldly Mind; not cleaving to One Commandment, because it may be reconciled with our present Profit or Delight; and taking Diftaste at another, because it checks us in, or debars us from them; in this candid, open, dispassionate Temper of Mind, I take the Honest and good Heart, mentioned here, principally to consist.

3. The Last Difference observable here, is, that the Persons resembled by the Good Ground bring forth Fruit with Patience, whereas they on the Stony Ground receive the Word indeed with Joy, but have no Root, and therefore though for a while they believe, yet in time of Temptation they fall away. These Men we may suppose to be Proof against common Cares and Accidents; But if some unforeseen Difficulty, or trying Affliction assault them, those undermine the unfaithful Foundation quite, and wash the Building off from its sandy Bottom. The Mark then of an Honest and Good Heart, in this respect, is Patience. A firm and steady Piety, (like that of St. Paul in the Epistle for this Day) not to be shaken with Hardships and Sufferings for the Truth. And, though the giving Ground in such Cases be what we are apt rather to pity than condemn, because it looks like the Effect of Human Infirmity; yet our Saviour here makes those Yieldings an Argument, that such Men have no Root; that is, they were not well principled at the bottom. And indeed the Similitude in this Parable proves this evidently. For the same Heat of the
the Sun, which scorches and burns up the Corn that wanteth depth of Earth, does but cherish and ripen the good Corn. And thus it is with Afflictions: They do not make Men unsincere, but find them so, and discover them to be so. The Fire separates the Dross from the Gold, but it makes no part Dross, which was not Dross before. Adversities are therefore called Tryals, because they bring our Integrity to the Touch. They shew, whether we serve God for present Profit and Convenience, or for his own sake, and from a well-grounded Persuasion of their Duty. Hence it is clear, we must not satisfy our selves with hearing, and considering, and applying; but must compose our Minds with quiet and contented Submission to the good Providence of God, and esteem it our Joy and Crown, when we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ and Righteousness’ sake. If Christianity required the Conviction of our Judgment only, all who will be content to think and understand impartially, must be good Christians. But, because the Gospel is intended to rule in our Hearts, and to give Law to all our Passions, and all our Interests; therefore it is, that so great Quantities of this Spiritual Seed are sown in vain. And since no Man answers the End of that Seed, who refuses in Practice, what he allows in Speculation, by letting go his Hopes of Bliss in another World, for the declining any Miseries that can be endured in this World; therefore the Virtue, which faints in the Day of Trial, however prosperous and promising it may appear, is allowed no better a Character, than that of Grain cast upon Stony Ground.

There is another Sense of the Word Patience, fit to be taken notice of, as it signifies Perseverance, and a contented Waiting for the appointed Weeks of Harvest. Thus the Hearers of this kind will not envy Them, who put forth apace and
and spend themselves too fast; but be content with
Conflicts, though they be sharp and long; and to get
some Ground upon their Lusts, though it be won not
by Inches. To this purpose we may interpret our
Blessed Lord, when comparing the Kingdom of God to Corn that cometh up, one
knows not how. Its Growth is often not discernible by
Others, sometimes not by our Selves; yet live and
grow it does. And, if our Pride and Impatience, or
some other ill Quality check it not, it will in due time
produce wholesome and kindly, which is much rather
to be chosen, than forward and undigested, Fruit. We
must not therefore be discouraged, if we cannot be
and do, what we desire and strive for. Grace, as
well as Nature, works gradually, and must be left to
its own Methods. And that is true of the Soil of our
Hearts, which our Lord hath observed, to a pur-
pose not very distant from this I am upon, that the
Earth bringeth forth Fruit of herself, first
the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full
Corn in the Ear.

There needs no more to shew, what Temper is
required to bring forth Fruit, and how it comes to
pass, that this is so seldom done: That the Seed
and the Sower are blameless, and all the Defects in
the Ground it self. The Gospel sets both our Duty,
and our Danger, before our Eyes. These it is the
Minister's part to urge. He must apply himself with
all his Might, to perswade, to convince, to awaken,
as occasion serves. But all this our Master did in the
utmost Perfection, and yet even He often sowed
without any Fruit. And, the Truth is, What can
We do? We can recommend Religion to Mens Con-
sideration, and we ought to do it as powerfully as
may be. But, after all we have said, or can say, it
will lie in their own Breasts, whether they will con-
sider or no. And they who do not, are Hearers by
the
the Way-side. We may tell our People, how loose the World should sit about them; that a Good Life should be their main Concern; that they must learn and practice their Duty, all Prejudice and Interest apart: But it is not in Our Power to disintangle their Hearts, and root out their Prejudices; and till this be done, they are Seed among Thorns. So, lastly, We can excite to Patience, but we cannot inspire it; and They who faint and fall off, are Stony Ground. Consequently, when the Preacher hath done all he can do, and all he ought to do; still the Efficacy and Success of his Instructions will depend upon the Hearers themselves. Inadvertency and Worldly-mindedness, and Impatience, are Obstructions of every One's making; and therefore they must be of every One's removing too. And, where they are not taken out of the way, our Barrenness, and the whole Guilt of it, can rest no where, but upon our selves.

I have not forgotten to observe before, how much of this depends upon the Divine Assistance; and upon what Conditions we may be sure of That, to strengthen and to prosper our Endeavours. Let us but add to these our hearty Prayers, and the Work will certainly be done; And therefore, That it may please thee to give all thy people increase of Grace, to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure Affection, and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!
The Sunday called Quinquagesima; Or, the Next Sunday before Lent.

The Collect,

Lord, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which whoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thy only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Epistle,

1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind, Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up.

5. Doth not think away good Office unfit to be condemned (so Cbryst.) does not confine its Endeavours to its own private Good; does not give way to violence of Passion; mediates no mischief to (or suspecteth no ill of) others: Takes no Satisfactions in the Faults, but the greatest imaginable, in the Virtues and commendable Qualities, of others.

6. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

7. Doth not behave it self unreasonably, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth.

8. Charity never faileth; But whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9. For
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9. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 9. For the utmost we know, even when thus enlightened, is very imperfect, and short of that which we shall know hereafter.

10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

10. And therefore when that Imperfection and those Occasions, to which these Assurances of the Spirit are vouchsafed, shall be at an end, there is an end of them too. So that they are plainly temporary, and never meant, as Charity is, to continue always.

11. When I was a child, I spake as a child; I understood as a child; I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known.

12. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known.

13. And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.

13. Nay, even Faith and Hope, tho' excellent Virtues, are not yet equal to Charity. The present State indeed requires and exercises all the three; but, in the future State, the two former will be superseded by Vision and Enjoyment, and Charity only will then remain.

COMMENTS.

THE Epistle for this Day is, in substance, nothing else but a Commendation of Charity: consisting, Partly in a Preference given to it above other Gifts and Graces; and Partly in a Description of it, by such Effects and Properties, as demonstrate the Excellency and Usefulness of the Virtue itself. Concerning the First of these I am not at liberty to treat. This being the proper Time for making good a former Promise, of explaining the Nature of Charity, and wherein it truly consists. Reserving therefore the Preeminence of this Grace above the rest, to be shewn at an Occasion already laid out for that purpose; I choose to confine my Thoughts at present to those Marks and Qualities mentioned in this Chapter, which may give us a just Notion of the thing, and consequently enable us to form a right Judgment, whether our Souls be of that Frame and
Temper, so necessary to our Salvation and Acceptance with God, that the highest Attainments without it, shall, we are told here, profit us nothing.

It hath been observed heretofore, that Charity, properly so called, is that Affection of the Mind, whereby we love God for his own sake, and our Neighbour for God’s sake. That this is the Principle, which distinguishes it from such a Love, as either the tenderness of Nature, or nearness of Blood, or Friendship and Acquaintance, or Convenience and Interest, are apt to dispose us to. And, how essential this Principle is, the Apostle here informs us, when supposing, that a Man may give even all his goods to feed the poor, without any true Christian-love to his Brethren; and his body to be burned, without any true Love of God. If then the most specious Instances in either fort, such as Martyrdom, and Devoting a Man’s whole Substance to the Relief of them that want, are no necessary Proofs of this Virtue; It follows, that the Grace, here so highly recommended, does not consist in any outward Acts, but in the inward Disposition of the Heart; And, that those Acts are no farther of any value, than as they proceed from, and are sanctified by, this Disposition.

It was therefore fit for St. Paul, after having hinted, that the Connexion, between those Instances, which seem to be the most perfect in their kind, and that Grace they so nearly resemble, is not so close and necessary, as will warrant us from the Former, certainly to infer the Latter; It was fit, to assign some Characters, which may prevent any dangerous Mistakes, in judging of this Matter. So that, where these are found, we may be confident the Face of Religious which such Behaviour carries is Genuine; and where these are not, how pompous soever the Appearance
pearance be, we may assure our selves, it is but counterfeit.

This is the use to be made of those Properties specified at the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Verses. Not so much for the judging other People, and the State of Their Souls, (which doth not much concern us, except so far, as we may help and direct their Endeavours to judge and understand themselves) as for the preventing any false Confidences, and setting us right in the Notions of our Own. And, to this purpose, I shall make it my Business to explain these Qualities, in such a manner, as the Limits, expedient for this Discourse, will allow; far from such, as so noble and profitable a Subject deserves.

The First of these is, that Charity suffereth long. By which is meant, that They, who have this Virtue, are not apt quickly, and upon slight Occasions, to conceive a displeasure, much less to meditate Revenge against those who behave themselves ill toward them. They consider, how subject to Failings Mankind are, how easily betrayed by Infirmity, and Surprise, and Passion, to Things that mis-become them: They make just Allowances for Inadvertencies and Indiscretions, and suppress their Resentments for the Wrongs that are manifest, so long as they continue to be tolerable. And herein they differ from the Jealous and Captious, the Peevish and Hasty; who either fancy themselves injured or affronted, when nothing like it was done or intended; Or take Fire at every little Provocation or Neglect.

2. The Charitable Person is kind. He is so far from rendering evil for evil, that he labours to overcome evil with good. His Temper and Conversation are sweet and obliging; As he is slow in taking just Offence, so he is sure never to give any. His constant Aim and Endeavour is to be as beneficial as possibly he can. Quite contrary to that devilish and malicious Disposition,
sition, too visible and common in the World; which is continually employed in Mischief; disturbing the Quiet, and obstructing the Advantage of its Neigh-
bours; and rendering Men, whom Nature and Religi-
on intended for mutual Helps and Comforts, continual Plagues and Torments, to each Other.

3. Charity envies not. A Perfection still higher than the former. For Many, who with-hold their Hands from doing harm, can yet be well enough pleased with seeing it done; especially to those, for whom they have no Affection. But He, that is truly Charitable, takes a real Satisfaction in the Happines
of Others. If God vouchsafes them larger Measures of Knowledge, or Virtue, or Riches, or Credit, or Honour; In a Word, of any Blessing, Temporal or Spiritual: He grudges it not, murmurs not at it, is perfectly contented with the Preference this gives fuch above himself, and feels a fresh Delight, in ob-
serving the Glory of the Giver advanced, and the Ends of the Gift answered. This is his Desire, this his Joy, whoever they be, who are chosen for the In-
struments of bringing it about, and how much soever his own Endowments, and Reputation, shall happen to be eclipsed, by Their brighter Lustre.

4. As Charity regulates our Affection towards O-
thers, so does it likewise moderate that to our Selves. And therefore the next Quality, by which it is di-
stinguished, is that of not Vaunting. The Word is, in the Original, obscure and ambiguous, but seems here chiefly to denote Sedateness and Prudence, Meek-
ness and Modesty: Not being rash and forward, and assuming; Not exercising our selves in Matters too high for us, as David expressis it, (Psal. cxxxii.) nor thrust-
ing into Business, above our Capacity and proper Sphere. By this we preserve Order and publick Peace, and contentedly keep within the Bounds of that Stati-
on, which the Providence of God hath called us to.
Private Men are satisfied with Obeying, and Those who have no lawful Authority, with Learning; The One does not aspire to Government in the State, nor the Other usurp the Office of Teachers in the Church: For, where these Things are inordinately arrogated, the Persons guilty of it, betray a Spirit manifestly defective in this Divine Virtue; by aiming at Posts, which they are by no means qualified for, and so introducing Mischief and Confusion.

5. Nor does Charity only restrain Men from pretending to Talents they have not, but prevents their being exalted even with those they have. It teaches them to consider these, as they are, Gifts and Graces. If these are Spiritual, and such as Religion is immediately concerned in, I have taken another Occasion to shew, that they minister very great Ground for Humility and Thankfulness, and all imaginable Care to answer the Purposes they are intrusted with us for; but not the least, for Vanity and Self-conceit. If they be those of Person, or of Fortune, we have yet less reason to be proud of them. Because the Value and Consequence of these to us is not near so much, the Freedom of the Gift is the same, and the Dangers and Temptations attending them, are more. So great an Abuse it is of Blessings of every sort, to be higb-minded upon their account: So right a Use of them to fear, left, by our Negligence and Mis-employment, they prove at last to have been bestowed in vain.

It may perhaps be enquired, how Pride and a High Conceit of our own Merit or Abilities, which seem to determine in our selves, and to hurt no Body else, come to have any influence upon the Duty of Charity, which manifestly regards some other Person. The Reasons are but too evident, whether we apply them to the Love of God, or that of our Neighbour. It must be opposite to Charity in the former Sense, as it
it lessens His Goodness in our Eyes, by the very same Proportions that it raises our Own. For, the more we attribute to our own Strength or Desert, the more we plainly take off from the largeness of his Mercy, and consequently from our Obligations to love and serve him, in return for that Mercy. And Pride can never consist with Charity in the latter Sense, because high and great are in Truth relative Terms, and imply a Comparison with something else: So that it is not possible for a Man to represent himself thus, without representing his Brethren at the same time little and low. The consequence whereof must needs be, failure in the Affection first, and then in all the outward Marks of it, which are, but he who proceeds upon a false Computation does not reckon to be, their due. And here we perceive, how just the Apostle's Method is, and how suitable to the Nature and Order of Things, when he goes on to instance, as the next Character of Charity,

6. That it does not behave itself unseemly. It brings Men off from that Haughtiness and Scorn in Conversation, which is so nauseous and offensive, and so certain an effect of their being too full of themselves. For in this, as in all other Cases, a Man's Deportment will be governed by the reigning part of his Mind; and, where that is the Passion of vicious Self-love, no other Person must expect fair Quarter. Quite otherwise the Virtue, we are contemplating. It renders Men engaging and acceptable; chuses much rather to forego or overlook a great deal, than to insist upon what it might in rigour require; It exceeds all the Polishings of the World; because what They direct for Decency and Appearance, This practices sincerely. It is courteous without Affectation, condescending without Interest or Design, and, (according to St. Chrysostom's Interpretation of the Word) it thinks no good Office, though never so mean, below
low or mis-becoming it; but reckons, whatever In-
convenience such kind Humiliations may occasion,
amply compensated by the Benefit, which accrues to
Others from them: Imitating herein that most perfect
Pattern of Charity, the Blessed Son of God, who
vouchsafed to wash his Disciples Feet. Nay, who for
the common Advantage of Mankind, did not disdain
Poverty and Affliction, Reproach and publick Infamy,
though They, for whom he stoop’d so low, had de-
served no Consideration, except that of Divine Justice
and Vengeance at his Hands.

7. Nor can we wonder, that Charity should be so
liberal of its Services, so little nice in submitting to
them, (without those Distinctions, by which Men are
apt to be discouraged from promoting the Advantage
of their meaner Brethren) when informed, that an-
other of her Characters is, not to seek her own. A
Form of Speech made use of by St. Paul, to denote,
not that necessary Care and Concern for our private
Benefit, which Religion allows and requires, and
which Nature persuades in the first place: But such
an inordinate pursuit of this, as narrows the Object
of our Desires and Endeavours, and confines them to
our Selves, exclusive of all Others. Thus he exhorts
(Chap. x. 24.) Let no man seek his own, but every man
another’s wealth. Thus he propounds his own Practice
as their Pattern, In not seeking his own profit, but the pro-
fit of many, (Chap. x. 33.) And thus he complains,
That all fought their own, not the things which are Jesus
Christ’s, (Phil. ii. 21.) The Disposition then, which
he clears Charity of, in this place, is that vicious and
selfish one, which looks no farther than its personal
Interest; which never considers one as a Member of
Society, but stands perfectly single; and is so far
from placing or seeking its Private in the Common
Good, that it would stick at no Methods of purchas-
ing the Former, at the Expence and certain Loses of
the
the Latter. The contrary Virtue, implied and recommended by this Character, is such a generous and public Spirit, as expects and endeavours our own, in the General, Good: That largeness of Heart, which is sensibly affected for Human Nature, wishes the Ease and Prosperity of all Mankind, never separates it self from the Body by abstracted Views, but considers each Member as a Part of our Selves; Contributest its utmost to serve and profit the Whole; And esteems the Glory of God, and the greater Gain of our Brethren, an ample Reward of our own Labours and Sufferings, and esteems some Loss and Inconvenience, not only tolerable, but even eligible, upon so beneficial an Account.

8. Charity is not easily provoked, so our Translation reading, hath represented this, in meaning much the same with the first Quality of suffering long. But the Word thus rendred, does not so properly import the suddenness, as the sharpness, of a Passion. And the thing intended here seems to be, that this Grace keeps the Mind calm and smooth; corrects that Heat, which either the Natural Constitution, or the Greatness of a Provocation, kindles in our Breasts; and, even when our Anger is most just, prevents its flaming out with that Rage and Fury, so common in Men, who are not under this Guard. Nor is it hard to discern a very Natural Connexion, between this and those good Fruits, last taken notice of. For, as nothing does so expose us to the Influits of Passion, as Pride, and Partiality to one's own Interest; so are true Humility and Generosity in no one Instance more conspicuous, than in that of curbing and subduing the wild Beast within us. It is this, that must preserve the Decency of Men, and the Moderation of Christians, towards them, who may have deserved the highest of our Retentions, by teaching us, that we are not however released from the Duty of remembering, that They too still are Men, and carry,' (though perhaps very unworthy)
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thily) the Title of Christians. And consequently that in both respects they have still a right, to be treated as Fellow-Members with our selves.

9. Charity thinketh no evil: Does not harbour malicious and revengeful Thoughts, (say some) as many are seen to do, who dissemble their Passion, but are full of lurking Mischief, and only wait an Opportunity of making those pay dear, who have disoblige or injured them. And thus the Greek Word here is often used, for putting any Fault to account, in opposition to discharge and forgiveness. Or, (as Others) it keep a Man from suspecting, and thinking the worst of, Others and their Actions. Of the good they do, it allows all just Commendation, and is ready to acknowledge it. But, as it never charges any with doing amiss, except upon undeniable Evidence: so when they plainly appear to have done so, it makes all possible allowances in their Favour, and is as ready to excuse or extenuate it.

10. The Next of not rejoicing in Iniquity, but rejoicing in the Truth, is likewise capable of different Constructions. If by Iniquity or Injustice we understand the Evil others do, the Charitable Man hath so utter an Abhorrence of Wickedness; so high an Honour for God, who is disobeyed and affronted; so tender a Regard for the Souls of his Brethren, whose eternal Salvation is brought into apparent Hazard, and their Consciences wounded, by it; that no Consideration can be equivalent to thos;e, or make their Sin occasion of Joy to him. On the other hand, the truest Satisfaction he takes, is in the increase and advancement of Piety and Virtue, the manifestation of God's Glory, the Propagation and Flourishing of Religion, and those Promises and Prospects of his Neighbours being for ever happy, which the pleasing Observation of their good Life sets before him.
If by Iniquity be taken the Evil of Suffering, thus the Charitable Man hath Compassion for all, but Delight in none. But, if applied (as in the Old Testament it is often, and as its Opposition seems to warrant, if not to direct here) to Falshoods or Lies: thus it declares the Persons here described, to take no pleasure in false Reports, and malicious Insinuations, which tend to defame or disparage our Neighbour. (A Pleasure as common as it is barbarous.) But, when such Suggestions have got Ground, and shed their Venom, to be heartily glad of hearing the injured Sufferers Innocence vindicated, and his Good Name rescued from all the Scandal, which Malice or Mistake had blackened him with.

11. And, since no Man industriously contributes to Events that are disagreeable to him; a necessary Consequence of the former Quality, is that of Bearing all Things. The putting up many Things, which cannot be called to account, without loss of our Neighbours Credit; and concealing those very Faults we certainly know, even Multitudes of them. So far is Charity from exposing Mens Failings to the World, or thinking it self at liberty to make them the Subject of publick Discourse, the Jest or the Diversion of all Companies, even for Matters too foul to be excused, and too notorious to be denied.

12. This, God knows, is a degree of Reserve and Tenderness too rarely to be met with; and therefore, to keep clear of Blame, by being too easily persuaded to think ill of those, who suffer by them who have it not; Charity believes all Things, that is, it inclines to credit all that can be said, in favour of them, that are ill spoken of, so far as any reasonable grounds for such Belief offer. For, as this cannot be meant of a forwardness to believe to our Brother’s Prejudice; so neither are we to imagine, that Charity bereaves Men of Judgment and Common Sense, by disposing us to believe,
believe, to our Brother’s Advantage, things, which, though we could with true, yet are found, upon en-
quiry, to be supported by no probability or colour of Truth.

13. And yet, when Things are come to this mise-
table pass, it hopeth all Things. Tho’ Men are plainly discovered to have been as bad, as Report (and Report is seldom short on the Reflecting part) hath represen-
ted them, the Charitable Man does not give them over.
He does not despair of, he wishes and heartily prays for, and by all proper Methods labours to bring about, their Amendment. Far from that supercilious and severe Disdain, which presently delivers up such for lost, pronounces them Reprobates, and forgets the
Powers and the Condescensions of that Divine Grace, which, in wonderful Mercy, snatches those out of the
Snare of the Tempter, who have long been taken Captive
by him at his Will.

14. Lastly, Though many Attempts of this kind have been fruitless, and a world of good Offices been paid with very ill Returns; still Charity continues un- wearied, and can away with Injuries and Delays griev-
ous to be born, in hopes, that God will at last open
the Eyes of the very worst, and give them Repentance
to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. And this I
conceive intended, when St. Paul describes it, as end-
during all Things. By all Things, (in this, as well as
in the former Instances) meaning, not simply all, but
all such, as are agreeable to the Measures and End of
Charity. For there are Times and Circumstances,
which render the covering, or the suffering Men’s
Faults, an injury to Themselves, or to Others, or to
Both. And therefore these are Terms to be restrin-
ted, according to the Exigencies of the Case; And so
to be apply’d to the Benefit of the Party concerned,
as not to interfere with his own greater, or the pub-
llick Good.

§

Some
us, O Lord, and whatever thou deniest us, deny us not this One thing needful for us, for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

The Sunday called Quinquagesima; Or, the Next Sunday before Lent.

The Gospel.

Paraphrase.

11, 32, 33. * In the way from the Village, whither our Lord had retired from that Malice and Rage, which the Miracle of raising Lazarus had so highly provoked; and presently before his triumphant Entry into the City. Compare John xi. 53, 54. Matthew xx. 17.

31. Then Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Bebold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again.

34. And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

35, 36, 37. Not far from Jericho, a famous blind Man, (probably the Son of Timaeus) who is spoken of here singly; though another, (but of Note) seems to have been healed with him. Compare Mark x. 46. Matthew xx. 29.

38. * Thou the Messiah, whose Character is foretold as a Giver of Sight to the Blind, Isaiah xxxv. 5.

39. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David have mercy upon me.

40. And
And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near him, he asked him.

Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee.

Thy faith hath rendered thee a proper Object of this Mercy.

And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

COMMENT.

What could be more to the purpose of our present Devotions, than for the Church to put us now in mind of our Dear Redeemer’s Sufferings and Death? The Epistle for the Day hath described and recommended to us the Grace of Charity: The Gospel sets before our Eyes the noblest and most perfect Pattern of it. The Fast draws on, in which our sinful Souls are to be humbled before God; It is in virtue of this Death alone, that we can hope for Pardon. Those Humiliations are to help every Disciple of Jesus, to die to the World; and in Conformity to his Death it is, that we stand obliged to Crucify our Affections and Lusts. Our great Example kept his Death constantly in view; and They, who imitate him, as they ought, will live in perpetual Prospect of, and Preparation for, their own. Upon so many Accounts is this a proper Subject for our present Meditations. And, in regard the History and Circumstances of our Lord’s Passion are referred to a farther Occasion, the Warning given his Disciples of it, is chosen as more seasonable at this Time. Some Improvement whereof I hope may be made, by employing our Thoughts,

I. First, Upon the Occasions, chosen by our Lord, to foretell his approaching Sufferings and Resurrection.
II. Secondly, Upon the different manner, in which this was done. But,

III. Thirdly, and principally, Upon the Reasons, which seem to have moved him to it.

I. I begin with the particular Times and Occasions, chosen by our Blessed Lord, to forewarn the Disciples of his approaching Sufferings and Resurrection.

1. The first Intimation of this kind, taken notice of by the Evangelists, was in the Coasts of Casarea Philippi. When Peter, to our Lord's Question, What the rest of the World, and They, thought of him, reply'd; Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. This glorious Testimony when Jesus had commended, as a Truth inspired from Heaven, and charged them to keep that a Secret for some time; He began from that time forth, says St. Matthew, to shew unto his Disciples, how that he must suffer many things; and so on.

2. The next we meet with, follows immediately after his Transfiguration in the Mount: where three Apostles, the select Companions of his Privacies, were admitted Eyewitnesses of his Majesty, and heard a voice out of the excellent glory, proclaiming him the beloved Son of God. Descending from thence, he gave a fresh proof of his Divine Power, by disproving the miserable Lunatick which his Disciples, who were left behind, had found themselves unable to do. And then he proceeds to put them, a Second time, in mind of what should shortly happen to him.

3. The Third warning is this now before us, and it is the last, before the Evening, in which he was actually betray'd. Of which the Remark principally to be made is, That it appears most probably (from the Parallel Texts in the Paraphrase) to have been given, between the time of raising Lazarus from the dead,
dead, and that of his triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

II. The different manner of our Lord’s imparting this astonishing Truth, comes next to be consider’d. Which, by comparing the several Passages, seems to be done gently, and by degrees. At first in general Terms, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and be slain, and be raised the third day. The Second warning comes enforced with this solemn Preface, Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. This third descends to a more particular Description of that Tragical Scene, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit upon; and that they should scourge him, and put him to death (a death inflicted by Theirs, not by the Jewish Law) and the third day he should rise again. So that, in proportion as these things drew nearer, more full and distinct Discoveries were made of them.

III. I now proceed to the third and most material Consideration; The Reasons, which seem to have moved our Lord, thus to impart these things to his Disciples.

1. One great Inducement, no question, was, to arm his Disciples against the Calamities coming upon them. For the shepherd to be smitten, and the sheep to be scattered, was a distress deplorable at best; and would ask all their Strength and Preparation to support it. But much less difficulties, when they rush upon us unawares, supply in suddenness, what they want in weight, and bear down our Reason, by surprizing it. This is the Condition of Human Nature, and of Adversity in general. And, how great ever the Consternation of these Disciples was, upon their Master’s Passion; it must, in all likelihood, have seiz’d them more violently.
lently, and have sat longer and heavier upon their Spirits, had the thing been altogether new and unheard of. Accordingly we find this notice had some, though not all the Operation one might have expected. They seem at the time to have been stunn'd with the Blow, but by degrees they began to recollect, and, upon Christ’s Resurrection, the remembrance of his Warnings was awakend, and the true import of them understood. He therefore, who knew and felt our Infirmities, shewed this Compassion to them; As sensible, that a Calamity unforeseen is neither so resolutely supported, nor so quickly recovered; as one, whose advances toward us we have fair warning of, and time to make somewhat of provision against.

2. Another probable Reason for these Intimations may be, the correcting the Mistakes of his Disciples, concerning that Splendor and Kingly Power, in which they expected the Messiah to appear. The manner of St. Peter’s entertaining our Lord’s first Prediction of this kind discovers, that they thought such Sufferings a contradiction to his Character. And the Times, which I have already observed to have been singled out for this mortifying News, seem to say, that it was then most necessary and seasonable to be acquainted with it, when some more than ordinary Testimony of his Divine Excellencies had put them under temptation, to think such a Death impossible. Thus he thought fit to obviate every occasion, which might give countenance to those Errors in this matter, which had before prepossessed his Disciples.

3. These Warnings were of singular use toward removing the Scandal of the Cross. As upon these following accounts especially.

1. In regard they proved our Lord’s Death to be voluntary. The Disciples, in planting the Gospel, found no Prejudice run stronger against them, than
that of a Saviour and Lord confess’d to die ignominiously, in the quality of the vilest Slave, and most detestable Malefactor. And indeed, that a Life of so much Power should end in so much seeming Weakness and Desertion: That He, to whom Angels were said to pay Homage, and whose Commission God himself had published in Thunder: He, who had check’d Diseases with a Word, and forced Death to deliver back his Prey, should be bound, and scourged, and crucified himself; might well be thought a most amazing Turn, and an Eclipse upon the Glory of his former Miracles. It had certainly been so, supposing those Indignities and Sufferings to be a constraint upon him. But now that Difficulty vanishes. These Warnings prove his Power the same still; That his Enemies had no advantage over him, but by his own permission; That he distinctly knew and chose all this. So asserting at once his Power, and his Love, in making good that Declaration to the Jews, No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. 

2. The Scandal of the Cross is hereby removed, as these things are declared to have been exactly agreeable to the ancient and most authentick Prophecies concerning the Messiah. Hence our Lord so often appeals thither. So here, all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. And, the Son of man goeth as it is written of him. And a world more to the same purpose. The frequency whereof, and the mighty Stress laid upon them, in this present Case particularly, make it not amiss to try, if I can in few Words explain, how the Authority of Prophecies comes to be so very venerable, upon this account.

In order hereunto let it be remember’d, that the Redemption of Mankind was an Act of God’s Free Grace. The whole Design, and Contrivance of it was
was entirely His. The Sacrifice of his Son, though not actually offer'd till these last Days, was yet available for former Ages. To Them he therefore gave such prospects of it, as he saw fit and sufficient for Their Circumstances. These Discoveries had a double use. They laid the Foundations of Faith in Christ to come: and when accomplish'd, they were the Signatures and Distinctions of Christ already come. The accomplishments of things thus foretold was therefore necessary, because God had pledg'd his Truth for them, and had suspended Salvation upon the Belief in Him as the Messiah, whom such Events should mark out to them. But then that necessity depended on another, which was the Original Scheme of this wonderful Work, formed in the Divine Mind. As these things came to pass then, because they had been thus foretold; so were they likewise thus foretold, because the wise purpose of God had determin'd, that they should thus come to pass.

The whole then rests at last in the immutable Counsel of God alone. And if so, what ground is left for taking offence at the Cross of Christ? Hence, probably, our Saviour enlarges upon all the infamous Circumstances of his Passion, that, how accountable forever in themselves, or how unworthy of Him, we might judge them; yet One above, whose Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, and whose Hands cannot be tied up, or prescribed to, might be shewn to have other Notions of them, and that every one of these Indignities were of Service to his Design.

Since then he did, for our sakes, and of his own mere Goodness, engage in a Design so beneficial, shall We presume to call him to account, and not acquiesce in his Methods of effecting it? We, forsooth, very pertly take upon us, to set up Standards of Justice, and Mercy, and Honour: and pretend to bring our Maker to the Rules and Ideas, thus crudely formed,
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of Prudence, and Equity, and a due Decorum. Vain Men! We attempt we know not what. The Mystery of Man redeemed is a depth too vast for poor Mortals to fathom. But, could we comprehend the Reasons of the divine Mind; such Beauty and Gracefulness would shine forth in every part, as must needs cast us into St. Paul's Rapture, O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Goodness of God! As it is: While we are able to see so little, and that little so imperfectly; it will much better become the Condition of Creatures, especially of ransomed Sinners, thankfully to receive the Mercy, and humbly to adore the Wisdom of God; than, by the most detestably impious, nay most absurd and ignorant presumption, to arraign the Proceedings of a Being confessedly infinite in all Perfections; and undertake to amend the measures, fixed by him before the World was. So little reason have we to blush at, so much to glory in, the Cross of Christ.

3. These Warnings contributed greatly to removing the scandal of that Cross, by foretelling at the same time our Lord’s Resurrection. The Jews flatter’d themselves with a Messiah, who should make his entrance among them in Pomp and Magnificence, full of Spoils and Conquests. Our Jesus was a victorious Messiah: Not such indeed as they expected, but wherein he differed, his Achievements and Glories were singular and more conspicuous. For never was there such a defeat given, never thought of before, as when Death was overcome by dying, disarmed by one that seem’d its Prey and Prisoner, and all the Powers of Hell shaken and subdued by their own, as they thought prosperous, Stratagems. They, who attend to this impartially, must needs allow, and may in some degree discern, that the All-wise God consulted the Honour of his Son, by a new, ’tis acknowledged, but certainly a most successful Method. For, had he been
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Jesus Suffering, he had also in Proportion been a less glorious and triumphant Saviour.

Lastly, These things were signified to the Disciples, and not the common Crowd of Followers, because in Their Hands was deposited the Treasure of his Gospel. It was Their Trust and Office, to testify what they had seen and heard, and particularly to vindicate his Memory, as to the manner and willingness of his Death. That this was not a thing of Compulsion but Choice; that none of these Events surpriz'd or confounded him: but that he knew them all, saw every step they moved toward him, and met them with the utmost Sedateness and Constancy of Mind, notwithstanding all the Reluctancies of Human Nature. To this effect is that Charge given these Persons after his Resurrection:

Luke xxiv. 44. 48.

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. And ye are witnesses of these things.

The Sum of all is this. Whether we reflect upon the danger these Disciples were in, of being oppress'd with an Affliction so sensible, as the Death of their Master, and the Inults and Malice of His and their Enemies; this Warning was exceeding seasonable and kind, to prepare them for, and sustain them under, so heavy a burden. Or, whether we regard the Epidemick Error, concerning the Messiah's first Appearance and Kingdom; these were contriv'd to rectify their Mistakes about this matter. Or, whether we consider the Scandal taken at a Crucified Lord; it was fit to shew, that his Death was voluntary, and so a demonstration of infinite Goodness and Love: fit, to signify, by its agreement with the Prophecies, that this Design, and all the Strokes of it, were order'd by a wiser Head than Ours, even the Counsel and Appointment of God himself: fit, to represent the shame of our Lord's Crucifixion.
Cifxion abundantly recompensed by the Glories of his Resurrection: fit lastly, to take all possible care of those, to whom so weighty a Truth was committed, and upon whose Testimony the success of the Christian Religion would in great measure depend.

The same Warning may bring considerable benefit to every Christian; careful to improve it, as he ought, and may do. If he use it, as an occasion to silence all impious Cavils and Scruples, raised by his own Curiosity, or suggested by the Prophaneness of Others, to the disparagement of the Christian Institution. If he learn hence to value, to admire, this most wise and glorious Dispensation: and to adore the Condescension and Goodness of a suffering Saviour, who was content to undergo so much, for Wretches so unworthy. If the Sight and Sense of His Indignities and Wrongs, dispose us to Patience and Meekness under our own. And, if the Consideration of all the Insolence and Barbarity, all the Shame and Pain our Jesus underwent, stir us up to an holy Indignation and Revenge upon our Sins, the Cause, that he was thus exposed, affronted, misused; The Traytors, that, with such exquisite Torture, scourged, and nailed, and crucified the Body, and with Anguish unconceivable pierced the afflicted Soul of the Son of God. If this, I say, provoke our Zeal, without Remorse, to execute the Duties of the approaching Season: that is, by Abstinence and Mortification, and true Repentance, to subdue and kill the Old Man, and utterly to abolish the whole Body of Sin. Thus shall we now be Partakers of his Death: Thus shall we also be Partakers of his Resurrection. Amen.
The First Day of Lent, commonly called, Ash-Wednesday.

The Collect.

A mighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Epistle.

Joel ii. 12.

12. God still invites you to return to him, but then this must be done with sincere Repentance, with all the marks of Sorrow for your Sins, Abstinence, and Tears, and bewailings of your Wickedness can give.

13. But rest not in those outward Testimonies, it is the grief of your Hearts that God requires. For which ye have this encouragement, that He is ready to do good, tender and affectionate, not easily provoked; and when he is so, capable of being appeased, and prevailed upon not to execute the vengeance he hath threatened.

14. Perhaps it may not yet be too late, but he may still be entreated, not to destroy utterly, but mitigate at least our Punishment.

15. In order hereunto, let your Humiliations be solemn and publick, like those in the Day of Atonement. (Numbers x. Leviticus xvi. 1.)

16. Gather the people: sanctify the congregation: assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

17. Let
Ash-Wednesday; Or, The First Day of Lent.

The Gospel.

St. Matth vi. 16.  

16. _When ye fast, be not as hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast._ Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.

_Sins, forbear thy Ornaments, usual upon common Days._

18. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy father which is in secret: and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

19. Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

20. But

Paraphrase:

16. Let not your fastings be formal and vain-glorious, like those dispensers, who upon such occasions, either cover their Faces with a Veil, or by Melancholy Looks and Gestures, draw the observation of others. These Fasters have no further remuneration to expect.

17. Do not thou therefore, when humbling thyself thus for thy Sins, forbear thy Ornaments, usual upon common Days.

18. Not at all solicitous, whether Men take notice of thy Fast or not; but careful to commend thyself to God, who is privy to thy most retired Devotions, and shall make thy Reward publick for those good actions, which thou hast kept secret.

19. Let it not be thy business to heap up Treasures in this World, for all such are liable to decay, and may be taken from thee.

20. But
20. But by Acts of Mercy and Piety, (at the Times of Fasting especially) lay up Treasures in Heaven, which can neither be spoiled, nor perish, nor be taken from thee.

21. This is necessary to draw off thy Affections from this World.

For wherever that is which thou valuest most, there thy Desires and Mind will likewise center; In earthly Things, if these, upon heavenly, if these, be the Treasure thou afterest, and preferrest in thy Choice.

**COMMENT.**

**T**his is the Day, that enters us into that Season of Devotion and Humiliation, so solemnly observed, in the former and purer Ages of the Christian Church. A Season of more than ordinary Instruction heretofore, for informing new Converts in the Principles of Religion; that so they might come thoroughly qualified at Easter, to enter into Covenant with God by Baptism. A Season of Penance and strict Discipline; for putting Them to publick Shame, whose open and notorious Breaches of that Covenant had given publick Scandal. And a Season of Recollection and Repentance to All; Who, though they had not reflected such Dishonour upon their Holy Profession, yet, by examining the State of their own Souls, would find occasion more than enough, for the Austerities usual at this Time: to humble themselves for their Sins, to subdue the Flesh and its Appetites, to crucify themselves to the World and its Pleasures, to abstract and exalt their Affections, and thus, in a Spiritual Sense, to die and rise again with their Saviour and Lord. The commemorating whose Death and Resurrection, this Season, and such religious Observance of it, were very reasonably esteem'd a fit Preparation for, and Introduction to.
The Coming in of the World into the Faith, and the charitable Care of admitting to Baptism Children of Believers early, and of administering that Sacrament at all Times of the Year without distinction, have superseded the first of these Uses, in proportion as the Number of the Adult, who want it, and whose actual Sins require actual Repentance, is diminished. That this End of the Lent-Fast is not now answered, is our Happiness: that the Second is not, is our unspeakable Misfortune. Our Church, in the Service of this Day, calls upon us to lament the Loss, and to wish the Restitution, of that wholesome Discipline, which partly the Abuses of some later Ages, and partly the Degeneracy of the present, have rendered ineffectual and impracticable. But the Third Use I mentioned will always continue; For this we shall ever have Need, ever Opportunity. The Chastising our selves is always in our power; and ought to be in practice so much more, as the decay of publick and judicial Chastisement hath left us more in our own Hands. And a due preparation for the Lord's Supper at Easter calls for the same previous Care, in great measure, which that for Baptism did heretofore. Thus we in some degree may make our Profit of this Holy Season, to all the Purposes above-mentioned. And, had not a very punctual Observation of it been still expected from us, the Church would not have chosen these Scriptures now to employ us. Both which I thought expedient to treat upon at once; that so I may from thence be able, in One View, to set out the several Ingredients of a thorough and solemn Repentance, together with the Reasons for, and Usefulness of, Each of them.

Now Those, as is manifest from the Scriptures appointed for the Epistle and Gospel for the Day, are First, Sincerity. Secondly, Sorrow for our past Faults. Thirdly, Abstinence. Fourthly, Earnest Prayer. Fifthly, Almi-
Amsfgiving. And, Sixthly, As a Qualification common
to, and necessary to recommend all the rest. That
every one of these be free from Ostentation and Vain-
glory. Upon Each of which my Design is to treat,
as First to explain the Nature of the Duty, and Then
to shew our Obligation to it.

1. I begin with Sincerity, implied more especially in
those Two Commands, Turn ye even unto me, faith the
Lord, with all your heart, and Rent your heart, and
not your garments, and turn unto the Lord
your God. That Renting of the Gar-
ment was a Ceremony customary with the
Jews, to express their Grief, either for
some great Calamity that had befallen
them, or for some heavy Judgment which
they at that time were in dread of, is
evident from a great many Texts in Scrip-
ture. Nor does it appear from any
one Text, I know of, that God hath ever disappro-
ved of our expressing Grief upon Religious accounts,
by the same outward Testimonies, as are used in com-
mon Cases. But this indeed he absolutely disallows:
that Men, upon such Occasions, should put on a shew
and face of Grief, where it is not; or should rest in
the Sign, as if that alone were sufficient, without re-
gard to the thing it was intended to signify. This is
the Prophet's, this our Saviour's Meaning; that God
is not to be imposed upon with Pomp and Forms:
That the rending of the Heart is what he expects;
and, that a Garment rent, where That is not, can
be of no account with him. That there are some Cir-
cumstances, when the outward Guise of Sorrow may
be dispensed with, nay may be wisely, and much bet-
ter let alone. So that the Inward Sorrow is not always
of less, is sometimes of more value, because the out-
ward Signs of it are wanting. But the Outward is
never of any value at all, where the Inward is want-
ing.
ing. And to this purpose it is, that we are to interpret that Phrase of *Renting the heart, and not the garments*; not to forbid the latter, but (according to the propriety of the Hebrew Language) to prefer the former. So much to prefer it, that, if one must be undone, the former is of so great consequence; and that, provided this be done effectually, it matters not, comparatively speaking, whether the latter be done or not.

Thus *Turning to the Lord with all our heart* is set to denote a serious and unfeigned Repentance; such a thorough and total Change of Desires and Affections, as the Scripture calls a *new Heart, a new Spirit*, and that which renders the Person, in whom it is found, a *new Creature*. When we do not only leave off to commit, but even to love Sin; when we find an inward Complacency in God and Goodness; and perform our Duty with Appetite and Delight. Without this we may have the *Form*, but not the *Power of Godliness*. Nor could such Conversion be lasting. For nothing is so, that does not proceed from Inclination and Principle. Nature will soon return, and break loose from its Constraint. And therefore, till that Nature be corrected, till the Heart itself be changed; no change of Actions and Behaviour, however artfully put on for a while, can ever avail to the Ends of this Command, or deserve the Name of Repentance.

Again, as these outward Appearances alone can be of no Service to our Selves, so neither can they possibly be pleasing to Almighty God. They cannot please him for this very reason; because they are unprofitable to our Selves, and ineffectual for compassing the very End he aims at, which is no other, than our Change and Amendment. But there are other Considerations, which must render them highly displeas-
fing and abominable in his Sight. For all Diffimula-
tion whatsoever is, in its own Nature, so odious and
vile; that nothing could prevail for the practice of it
upon any account, except the hope of going undisco-
vered. We allow our Selves too great Liberties of
this kind, in common intercourse with one another;
and make an ill use of the Certainty we have, that
Men cannot enter into our Thoughts, and consequent-
ly may be deceived, by Management and Ceremony,
fair Carriage, and large Professions. But, if at any
time this Mask be pluck’d off or seen through, no Af-
front is more highly, or more justly refented; no
Body more detested or despised, than the Flatterer or
fawning Hypocrite. The Reason is, because this
does not only betray Falsehood and Baseness in his own
Temper, but it is a plain Reproach to the Person he
labours to put upon, argues a mean Opinion of his
Judgment, and that he was believed weak and despi-
cable enough, to be abused and deceived without dis-
cerning it.

Now, if the Case stands thus in all Transactions be-
tween Man and Man; If We can so ill bear any Ad-
\vantage to be taken of the Frailties and Infirmities,
we are sensible, belonging to us; How impious and
insufferable a Mockery must that be, which thinks any
double dealing can pass upon God, who hath them
not? How do they bring him down to our poor Le-
vel, rob him of his noblest Perfections, forget those
Characters given of himself, that he is a Searcher of
hearts, a discerner of secrets, that there is
not a word in our tongues, but he knows it
altogether, nor a thought in our breasts, but he un-
derstands it afar off? How dare any Man entertain a
Thought of trifling with such a God? A God, who
hath declared himself jealous of his Honour, in this
point particularly? For, therefore is the Ungodly
threatened with utter Destruction, for taking God’s
covenant
covenant into his mouth, when at the same time be hated to be reformed, cast bis words behind him, and, because not speedily punished for such Hypocrisy, concluded God to be such a one as him-self. Therefore are the People of Judah given over to an amazing Destruction, such as the Wisdom of their wife Counsellors should not be able to prevent; because, though they honoured God with their lips, and drew near to him with their mouth, yet their heart was all the while far from him. This rendred all their Worship vain, and all their Endeavours of Escape fruitless, that they sought to hide their counsel from the Lord, and wrought in the dark, and said, Who feed us, and who knoweth us? There were no end of exposmg the Absurdity, the Weakness, the Danger; of dissembling with God, or imagining, that the cunningest Disguise can shelter the most lurking Corruption from his all-piercing Eye. Let Davip suffice to convince us of the Folly, and our Saviour, to shew us the Consequence of it: The One reminding Men, that He, who made them, must needs have perfect Knowledge of them; The Other, by forewarn-ing us, that where the portion of Hypocrites is, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These things are so exceeding manifest, both from express Declarations of Scripture, and from the Reason of the thing; that one would stand amazed at the Commonness of a Crime so heinous, a Delusion so senseless. And yet how generally it hath prevailed in the World, the Examples of many among the Heathen, of the Pharisees among the Jews, and of Multitudes among Christians in every Age, and Place, are too melancholy, and too sensible, an Evidence. This must be attributed to the cunning Craftiness of Designing Men; contriving, for private Advantage, to cheat the Souls under their Care, with false Notions.
of Religion; and to the Folly of People, favouring this Deceit, by giving into such Schemes, as flatter their favourite Vices; and submitting to some Austerities as meritorious, which, how mortifying and rigorous soever they appear, are yet in truth less grievous to Flesh and Blood, than a thorough Change of Affections and Manners. A just Indignation against these Corruptions hath driven many into a contrary Extreme; and tempted them to reject all those outward Marks of Repentance, so wretchedly abused by ignorant or ill intending Men, as not only needless, but superstitious. Whereas indeed These still continue necessary; and, when not made to supply the place of, but to express and promote, Conversion of Heart, continue to oblige us. Such are the Particulars that follow here; Without a Change of the Mind and Actions, nothing, worse than nothing; but with it, decent in Themselves, profitable to Us, and acceptable to Almighty God. And therefore, having enlarged thus far, to secure the First and main Point, Our Sincerity; I proceed to consider the Rest, which the Portions of Scripture now in hand enjoin; and which this Day, and the Season ushered in by it, do more especially call for, in order to our more effectual Repentance.

2. The next Thing then to be spoken of is Sorrow for our past Faults. A Christian must consider the Concerns of his Soul very partially, or very slightly, not to see, and be fully convinced, that provoking God's Displeasure, risquing the Loss of Heaven, and lying liable to the Damnation of Hell, are Calamities to be dreaded and lamented, infinitely above any, that the Crosses or Disappointments of this World can ever expose us to. The more, because in One Case we are often purely passive, but whatever befalls us in the Other, we bring upon our Selves; and if we deal righteously, must at once lament, and condemn, the Sufferer. Let Men
Men but think at all of this Matter, and they will find no need for my labouring to persuade them, that they ought to be Sorry for their Sins. But in regard every Sort of Sorrow may not be proper or effectual, I shall endeavour to say somewhat, that may be useful upon this account. Concerning the Motives, the Degree, and the End of, that Sorrow commanded here: So far as the Scripture, I am treating of, furnishes occasion and hints for it.

I. As to the Motive, First; The Connexion may seem a little strange, that so Solemn an Exhortation to sweeping, and mourning, and rending the heart, should be inforced with this Argument, That God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Would not one have expected the Prophet, at this time, to have represented God by those other Characters elsewhere given of him; A great God, a mighty, and a terrible, that will by no means clear the guilty; whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings? Should not this rather have been pressed upon them, Turn ye unto the Lord your God, for, if a man will not turn, he will whet his sword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready: He prepareth the instruments of death: He repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them; He will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face? Such a Method of reasoning had no doubt been very agreeable to the Temper of hardened Sinners, to awaken them out of their Security, and admonish them, whom they have to deal with. But yet the manner of the Prophet's proceeding was certainly most Seasonable at that, and may easily be proved very instructive and useful at Any time, upon These two accounts.
1. Because being Sorry for our Sins implies and presupposes a Sense of the Heinousness of our Sins. Men never mistake this Matter more unhappily, than when they imagine Sorrow to be, either the finishing, or the first, Act of Repentance. In order to come to it regularly, we must examine into, and get some tolerable Knowledge of, the Number, the Quality, the several aggravating Circumstances, of our Faults; the Majesty of the Person offended by them, the Justice of his Anger, the dismal Consequences of it to our Selves, the Vileness of the Facts that have provoked it. All which, when duly weighed, will be such an Humiliation, as might rather tempt us to despair of Pardon, than leave any ground for Security or Presumption. And therefore, to Persons thus affected, all possible Assurances of God's Mercy, and Readiness to forgive, are the Balm fit to be poured into those Spiritual Wounds. The Jews, addressed to by Joel, had felt some, and lived in fear of more and greater, Judgments. His business therefore was to encourage, rather than to terrify; to represent their Case as not quite desperate, and God, though incensed, yet not implacable. The Condition of all Sorrowing Penitents is thus far the same, that they need Restoratives and Supports; they have already sufficient feeling of their Disease; they mourn and languish under it; and do not want violent means to rouze them into a Sense of their Danger, but gentle Applications, to raise and comfort their Spirits, and shew their State not past all Hope and Remedy.

2. This of the Prophet is a proper Motive of Sorrow, because fixing it upon a Principle, the most likely to render our Conversion sincere and durable. To grieve merely for fear of Punishment, is what the most carnal and worldly Mind is capable of. Almost every common Malefactor does thus much, when the Scourge
Scourge or the Gibbet comes in sight. But, that the Villany of the Fact, and Concern for Justice, have no part in that Sorrow, the frequent Examples of Wretches, spared in the very Article of Death, and continuing still incorrigible, too plainly demonstrate. And I know not to what else should we impute the many fruitless Remorses, and broken Vows of Affliction and Sick-beds; than that, proceeding purely from the smart of the Rod, and designig to get quit of present Fear and Pain; the Cause no sooner ceases, but the Effects of their Sorrow vanish with it. Such Sorrow proves, we love our Selves, not that we love God. But he, that turns with his whole heart, must love God; And love God he cannot, without a Persuasion of his Goodness; Goodness in his own Nature, Goodness to Him in particular. These Attributes then are so many Charms to attract our Hearts. The greater Sense we have of Them, the more we shall loath our selves, for having dealt so disingenuously and unworthily heretofore. The better we think of Him, and the worse of our Selves, upon this occasion, the less apt we shall be to relapse. For, though Repentance often begin with Fear, yet it seems hardly possible to conceive, how it should be perfected, and perseverance, without Love.

Thus much for the Motives. Next for the Degree of the Sorrow, we are upon; described here by Weeping, and Mourning, and Renting the Heart. These plainly teach us, that it ought to be very great. And indeed, if at all suitable to the Cause that provokes it, how is it possible to be otherwise? But then we must be careful to distinguish, between the Sorrow it self, and the outward Significations. For our Passions, upon Religious, as well as other Occasions, will have their Natural Course, and work differently upon Men, as their Tempers and Complexions differ. Some are so very tender, that the least Concern
cern will melt them into Floods; Some again so hard and tough, that the heaviest Calamities cannot extort one Tear. Some find their Grief sudden and violent, but soon overcome and forget it; Others bleed inwardly, feed upon their Misery, and lie under long and heavy Oppressions. So vast a difference there is sometimes, between what Men feel, and what they express. And by consequence, so liable are we to Mistakes, when judging, either of Sorrow by its Appearances, or of the Effects afterward by the present Suffering, could even that Suffering be perfectly understood. These Considerations I would recommend to those, who give themselves disquiet, because they cannot, like David, wash their Bed in the Night, and water their Couch with Tears. That, from the Examples of such mourning Penitents, they may do their utmost to be seriously and sadly sensible of their Misery and Folly; That, if this Sense affect them in the manner, usual with that of other great Troubles and Adversities, though it come not up to the Standard of some eminent Patterns in Scripture, it is what they may very well be satisfied with. But especially, that they should remember, how deceitful Marks all these are, to pronounce one's State by; and that neither any visible Testimonies, nor any inward Extremities and Anguish of Heart, are valuable upon their own Accounts. For the Degree, though never so great, is then; and never but then sufficient, when it answers the Purposes expected from thence; so that, the main Thing to be attended to, in this Matter, is,

3. The End of such Sorrow. For which we need go no farther than that Text of St. Paul, Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of. Sorrow then is not Repentance, but produces it. Consequently, like all other Means and Instruments, it is not used, or to be valued
ed for its own sake, but for the sake of that which comes of it. Joy and Grief are the two great Springs of Human Actions. In proportion as we feel each of these arising, our Desire or our Aversion is excited to the thing that causes it. In regard therefore, that Sin corrupts us by its treacherous Delights, and by thus bribing the Sensual, draws over the Rational Part into compliance: We cannot more effectually cut off those Attacks, to which we are too much inclined to yield; than by so ordering Affairs, that those very Transgressions, whose Bait is Pleasure, shall be found by our own Experience, when rightly understood, to carry so much Pain and such terrible Stings about them, that the Honey in the Mouth must be acknowledged too dear, too foolish a Bargain, when we are sure to be afterwards upbraided, by so great a Quantity of Gall in the Stomach. Since then our Afflictions for having offended God, like all others, will, should, more than any else, be very grievous to us; It is fit we balance the Pleasure of the Sin, with a Sorrow, that may make us feel the Folly of being seduced by it. And, in regard no Man cares to create his own torment; it follows, that, the more painful Wickedness is, the less danger there will be of relapsing into it. But still it is not the Anguish, but the Healing, of the Heart, that these Wounds and cuttings of it are directed to. Deep let them be, because they must go to the bottom of the Sore, and fetch out the Corruption in order to a Cure; But if the Cure be wrought, the End is obtained, be the piercing and the pain more or less. To be plain, the most inconstantable Grief, if it change not the Man, in his Affections, and Purposes, and Actions, is altogether useless; and that which hath less of Smart, may be of happy effect. For, to be sure, He, and He only, is sorry for Sin as he ought, who is so sorry, as to sin no more.

III. What
III. What hath been said upon the Last Particular, is in many respects applicable to the following. That of Abstinence, or Fasting. Another Help to, and Instrument of Repentance: and only so far of any Consideration with God and wise Men, as it contributes to spiritual and holy Purposes.

Now by this is not meant, merely a Change in the kind of our Meats, or in the usual time of taking them, not a quitting gross for delicious, though less nourishing, which is but a more refined Luxury. But it is a denying our selves in the Quantity and Quality of our Refreshments: Departing from the usual Comforts, and Hours of receiving them, in such manner, as may be a real Punishment and Humiliation to the Body, and its Appetites; and answer to the true import of those Phrases in Scripture, which call it an afflicting, an humbling, a chastening of the Soul, which join it with Sackcloth, and Ashes, and Earth on the Head, and every the most significant Testimony of bitterness and dejection of Spirit.

The Practice of this Duty comes recommended to us, by the Examples of Prophets, and Apostles, and our Blessed Saviour himself; of Jews, and Christians, nay, of the very Heathens. So great an Appearance there is, of this being a branch even of Natural Religion. The greater reason have we to enquire what are the Reasons and Uses of it. The principal whereof it shall suffice to touch upon, in the following Particulars.

1. It is a very Natural Expression of Sorrow. Nothing is more common, than for Persons in Grief to neglect themselves, to find no Relish in, and lose all Appetite to, the usual Refreshments and Comforts of Life. Hence this kind of Humiliation hath always been thought proper, for Times and Circumstances of Melan-
Melancholy and Distress. And therefore, if the last Ingredient of Repentance be in us to any becoming degree; this will be so far from needing a fresh Injunction, that it will almost necessarily attend, and prevent our Choice, by following it of course.

2. It is no doubt a very fit Exercise of Revenge, and Holy Indignation against ourselves; when, by voluntary deprivations of our usual Sustenance, we acknowledge ourselves unworthy, not only of those spiritual Mercies and special Favours, peculiar to God's faithful and elect; but even of that daily bread, and those ordinary Blessings, which he vouchsafes to distribute so liberally, to all Mankind in common.

3. It is of considerable advantage, by assisting us against our Lusts, and bringing the Sensual under the Government of the Rational part of the Mind. It hath been observed heretofore, that our Bodies are the Instruments, and the Gratification of their Appetites the End, of all the Sins we commit; and that these act in constant opposition, to the Dictates of sober Reason and Religion. Upon which account our safety from Temptations in a great measure depends, upon bringing these under, and keeping them in Subjection. But now the Cafe of Good and Evil Habits is thus far the same, that Both are acquired and strengthened by renewed Acts of their own kind: Both, broken and lost by frequent Acts of a contrary kind. As therefore Pleasure enslaves us by often indulging; so there is no way to break and free our selves from those Chains, but often denying it. And altho' abstaining now and then from a Meal may seem, and indeed is, no great matter in itself; yet it is very great in its Consequences. For Custom in all Cafes hath more force than Men are generally aware. By mastering our desires in less Instances, we establish our Dominion, and insensibly get ground upon them, in greater
greater and more difficult Trials. And, in no one Instance more than this, which does not only try us in a very sensible part; but draws away that Fewel to our Vices, which Ease, and Luxury, and Fullness of Bread minister. Thus we at once strengthen our Selves and weaken our Enemy: vanquish and kill our hurtful, our carnal and worldly Affections, and dispose our Minds more freely, more cheerfully, to those that are pure, and heavenly, and for our true Happiness. In which view ’tis, that we are taught in the Collect for next Sunday, to pray for Grace to use such Abstinence, that, our Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey our Lord’s Godly Motions, in Righteousness and true Holiness.

4. Once more. Fasting is a very suitable Companion of, and mighty Help to Prayer. It carries off the Dregs of undigested Fumes, lightens the weight of that Clog, which the Body is to the Soul; and generally renders us active, and nimble, and vigorous, in our Flights Heavenward. Hence we so often find these two joined in Scripture. Hence it was made a part of Devotion, upon all extraordinary occasions, and a preparation for all important Undertakings, where the Blessing of God was to be implored, his Honour more especially to be advanced, and his People edified. Moses at receiving the Law, Elias at his being admitted to a nearer approach to God, Nay, our Blessed Lord after his Baptism vouchsafed to enter upon his Prophetick Office, with a Fast of forty Days. And whatever may be said of the Rest, our Lord must probably have condescended to it, for its agreeableness to a State of solemn Devotion. He had no Failings to lament, no Sins to chastise himself for, no corrupt or rebellious Lufts to subdue; but, tho’ in these Respects he could not, yet did he not disdain, in the quality of a Suppliant to his Father, to fast, as our Pattern.
Can any Man now, after all this, retain a doubt, whether Fasting be still a Duty? Can we suppose our Lord would here direct the manner of doing that, which is not necessary to be done at all? The mention of which Direction puts me in Mind to observe, that the Scripture takes notice of Private, and of Publick Fasts. The One of our Own, the Other of our Governor’s appointment. Those Humiliations for Personal, These for National Calamities and Guilt. Of the Publick the Prophet Joel speaks in the Epistle; Of the Private our Saviour, in the Gospel, for this Day. Hence is the seeming Difference reconciled, between the Solemnity and Pomp required by the Prophet, and the Secrecy enjoined by our Lord. In the Publick we are to be Spurs and Examples to Others, and therefore our Zeal here, if sincere, will be solemn. For the Private, matters are here transacted between God and our own Consciences. And when our whole concern should be to recommend our selves to Him, from whom nothing can be concealed; to affect Pomp and Solemnity then, is to confess we have some indirect Views, and proclaims our Zeal to be tricking and unf sincere. In a Word, By the publick we are prescrib’d to; so that the testifying our Obedience by visible Acts there, is no more than our Duty. By the Private we prescribe to our selves; and should take heed here of gratifying that most dangerous of all Temptations, the Pharisaical Vanity of voluntary Mortification, and uncommon Merit.

IV. The Fourth Qualification, requisite to Repentance, is Prayer. Concerning which, intending to treat more at large very shortly, I at present only say, that it is fit this Application to the Divine Majesty be attended with all that Humility, which a due Sense of our own Vileness and Unworthiness can inspire; With all that Reverence, which the awful Remem-
Remembrance of so Holy, and Just, and Great a God can beget; With all the Earnestness, which our own Wants, and the Importance of the Blessings we ask, require; With all the humble Confidence, which Faith in the Son of God's Love, content to be made a Sacrifice of expiation for the Sins we confess and implore the Pardon of, is a reasonable Encouragement to. With Hearts thus disposed, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, rehearse the black Catalogue of our Faults and Follies, acknowledge all our Wretchedness, shew our Lord all our Trouble, implore the Comforts of his Forgiving, and the Supplies of his afflicting Grace, to heal our Spiritual Sickness, to invigorate and confirm all our good Purposes and Resolutions, to take away our Heart of Stone, and to put into us an heart of Flesh, to infuse new Thoughts, and Desires, and Affections, and to enable us so to persevere in this Change of Life, that our growth in Goodness here may be hereafter consummated in Glory. These are the Petitions proper for Penitents, who have reason to be very importunate for those Helps, without which they can do nothing; and for that Mercy and Remission, without which it were happy for them, if they could cease to be, and fall back to, nothing.

V. A Fifth thing requisite on these Occasions is, Almsgiving. By this we shew our Love to our God and Saviour, who hath declared, that the Poor are his Receivers, and that our kind Offices, and liberal Contributions to Their Relief, shall all be placed to account, as done to Himself. By this we wean our Affections from the World, and learn to master those Enjoyments of it, which, if not got above, prove the most fatal Snares to us. By this we perform that, which is the very Life and Soul of a Sinner's Conversion, despise the Creature, and devote our selves to God. This is the thing, which
God rejects the most solemn Humiliation of the Jews, for being defective in. This is the Testimony, our Lord requires of our Sincerity in Fasting: and for that purpose 'tis thus connected with it, in the Gospel now before us. This is the Proof where Men have their Hearts, according as the discharge, or the neglect of it, discover the place, in which they lay up their Treasure; This, lastly, the Design of our wise and excellent Church, in reading so many Lectures of Charity, on the Preparatory Sundays, and this Day; to instruct us, that, without this Virtue, the Season they introduce, and the strictest Austerities and Devotions of it, are frivolous and vain.

VI. The only Particular now remaining to be spoken to is, that every one of those already mentioned, be free from Oftentation and Vain-glory. The reason of this Condition depends upon a Maxim, often intimated before: which is, That, as the Sinner's Corruption is all resolved at last into loving the Creature more than God; so the Conversion of a Sinner, called upon this account the Turning of his Heart, consists in being brought to such a Change, as makes him love God above any, above all the Creatures. Now, to contrive for pomp and shew, those Acts of Piety and Worship, which, by the Nature of them, immediately refer to, and ought to terminate in God; shews, that there is still a Partner (and every Partner is in this case a Rival) in our Affections. This taints all the Goodness of the seemingly best Actions: and is a Temptation, threatening the greater danger, because none but good Actions can minister occasion to it. Thus are we liable to be undone, not only by our Faults and Fraillties; but, if they be not nicely guarded, and wisely manag'd, even by our Virtues. These naturally draw the Observation first, and then the Praise, of Men. If we are content to let these come of their own accord,
accord, we may take very innocent Satisfaction in them. But the misfortune is, that what we like and love, we are apt to court out of time, and covet out of measure. This is a Frailty, rooted in our Nature. And for that reason, I take it, our Blessed Lord does chuse to expose the Folly of Vain-glory; by shewing, that the Men of this Principle destroy their own Pretensions, and, that the very Point they drive at, would be more effectually carried the contrary way. You desire this Rigour and severe Piety may be publickly known, and therefore you unseasonably proclaim it your self: The best that can come of this is, to let a very few about you into the knowledge of it. But keep this to your self, and be content to stay a little longer, and then it shall be published to, and applauded by, a whole World. Thus would Concealment now, answer your End much better, than Ostentation. But that’s not all. From whom do you conceal it? You cannot from Him, who is chiefly concerned to know it. It is from Such only, as have no part in, nor Power to reward you for it. Thus for the sake of Them, who cannot, you discharge him, who could, and otherwise would, but is not now obliged to, recompense those good Deeds, which so plainly appear not to have been done for His sake. So the Reward you might have had, is lost; and the consideration you propos’d to your self in lieu of it, is incomparably less, than you would have had in the same kind, added to that Reward. This is the Substance of our Saviour’s Argument, a necessary caution to us all, at any time, at this time more particularly.

The Pious Severities whereof the God of all Mercy grant us Grace to attend upon, with a Sincerity so unblameable, A Sorrow so godly, An Abstinence so mortifying, A Devotion so fervent, A Charity so bountiful, and A Zeal so unaffected; that, having thus
thus attained to new and contrite Hearts, we may worthily lament our Sins, acknowledge our wretchedness, and receive of Him perfect Remission and Forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The First Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights: Give us Grace to use such Abstinence, that our Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly Motions in Righteousness and true Holiness, to thy Honour and Glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, World without end. Amen.

The Epistle.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

1. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.

2. For be sure, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of Salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation.

3. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.

4. But in all things approving our selves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses:

5. In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in watchings, in fasting.

Paraphrase.

1. Since therefore God hath vouchsafed to admit us, the Apistles and Ministers of the Gospel, into a part of this great Work, reconciling mankind to Him by Christ. (See Chap. v. 19, 20.) We, in discharge of that weighty Trust, most earnestly intreat you to make a right Use and Profit of this Favour of God toward you.

2. By that Passage in Isaiah (Chap. xlix. 8.,) you may perceive, that God hath particular Times of saving and helping. This, when the Gospel is imparted to you, is your Time, which ye are concerned not to let slip.

3. To this we contribute, not by our Doctrine only, but Example too, demeaning our selves so, as to give no just Prejudice against our Persons, or our Function.

4. But answering our Character, both by what we do, and by what we suffer in the Exercise of it.

5. By
The First Sunday

6. By Chastity, by Knowledge of the Mysteries of God (or, as some, by prudent Carriage) by bearing with those that do amiss, by gentle and engaging and courteous Behaviour to all, by the miraculous Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit.

7. By preaching the Gospel pure and uncorrupted; By the Success and Efficacy given by God to that Preaching; By arming our selves against all the Temptations both of Prosperity and Adversity.

8. Not moved from our Duty by the different Treatment we meet with; not exalted when others speak well, nor discouraged when they speak ill of us. Some call us Impostors, but we are true Men;

9. Some despise us as obscure, others know and value us; We seem at the point of Death every day, but still God preserves us. Our Persecutions exercise, but they do not destroy us.

10. Our Circumstances are thought very bad, and yet the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the spiritual Comforts we feel, give us perpetual Joy: We are reckoned poor, and yet we communicate to Multitudes, who are in want of the true Riches; and while we seem to have nothing, (by the Contentedness of our Mind, and the Favour, and Promises of God, which we know are sure to us) we stand possessed of all that is good and desirable.

Comment.

St. Paul had, in the Close of the Fifth Chapter, magnified the Mercy of God by Jesus Christ, in appointing Him, as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind: In thus reconciling to himself those Offenders and Rebels, who, but for this Condescension, must have perished everlastingly, in and for that Enmity they had sinn’d themselves into; And in sending the Ministers of his Gospel, as so many Ambassadors, commissioned in his Name to offer
offer them Terms, to treat with, to importune them that they would come in, and accept Friendship with their injured Lord, and Happiness to their, otherwise inevitably ruined, Selves.

At the beginning of this Sixth Chapter, (the Epistle for the Day,) he gives an account, after what manner He and his Fellow-labourers behaved themselves in the Execution of this so important, so honourable Office. He, in Their Character, hath left every Minister of Christ a Model, on which to frame his Own: Hath admonished Us, (who have likewise the honour of being Workers together with God) how pressing and diligent we ought to be in Doctrine and Exhortation, how blameless and Exemplary in our Lives. A proper portion of Scripture, at the approach of our Ember-Fast, and worthy the most attentive Consideration of All, who have been already, or are now about to be, or shall at any time hereafter be, sent forth upon the same Embassy.

But, reflecting, that the main Design of this Treatise is not to teach Them, who are called and qualified to teach Others; I content myself with this short Hint to my Brethren of the same Holy Function; and fix upon a Subject of larger Extent and Concern, contained in the First and Second Verses. In the former whereof the Apostle gives his Corinthians a very earnest Exhortation; In the latter, a Reason enforcing it. These Two Particulars, and the Application of them, shall make the Matter of my present Discourse.

I. The Substance of the Exhortation is, That they would not receive the Grace of God in vain.

1. Grace, in the general Notion of it, denotes Favour and Kindness, such as does not only argue a Disposition to do good to the Person, on whom it is bestowed; but such as is bestowed freely, and without any Obligation. In this respect it differs

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Gen. xxxii. 15. 
Esther ii. 17. 
Rom. v. 17. 
Heb. ii. 9.
fers from Debt, or Reward, adequate, and strictly so called. And, in this sense, the Grace of God imports that Affection and Good-Will, which he bears to Men, and all those Benefits proceeding thence, which he is either under no Engagement to give, or which the very engaging himself to give was of his own mere Motion, and a free Act of Mercy.

2. The Grace of God, in a more restrained Sense, is frequently set to signify the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So styled, because the Terms and Privileges of that Salvation tendered by it, are the effect of his infinite and undeserved Goodness; The Knowledge and Publication of it is imparted, to whom, at what time, and in what measure he pleases; And the Blessings and Rewards of it, when so imparted, (though to such indeed covenanted Mercies, if they perform Their part) yet are still so vastly disproportionate in value to their best Services, as to deserve the Name, not of Wages, but of a Gift.

Again, 3. The Grace of God does sometimes signify a certain inward Working of his Spirit, in, and with the Minds of Men; Which, by suggesting, and disposing them to comply with reasonable Arguments and good Motions, renders the outward Ministry of the Word, and other Means instituted for our Salvation, persuasive and successful. This is represented, as the Principle of Goodness and Spiritual Life. By this the Saints are what they are; This quickens those that were once dead in trespasses and Sins; By this God works in us that which is acceptable in his sight, even to will and to do of his good pleasure; And by growing in this we persevere in well-doing, and are kept from falling from our own steadfastness. Thus our being, and living, and moving, in a Spiritual Sense and Capacity, our begin
ning, our proceeding, our finishing as we ought, all are owing to that Grace and Spirit of God in our Souls. This, with regard to its Powers and Operations there, answers to that enlivening and invigorating Principle, that animates our Bodies. From whence it is easy to discern the Necessity of this Grace, and that the largest Measures of the Thing, in either of the Two Sentences foregoing, cannot suffice for our Salvation, but must wait for this third, to complete and crown them with Success.

By thus explaining, how the Grace of God may be understood, it is easily discerned, how that Grace is received in vain, according to all these Acceptations of it.

1. Take it for Favour and Kindness in general: And thus it is received in vain, when we do not entertain our Blessings with Thankfulness, nor use them with Prudence, nor improve them to those Purposes, they were intended to serve. For the Goodness of God, in every sort and instance, leadeth to Repentance. In the Nature of the Thing, and the Design of the Giver, it is a powerful Motive to Amendment of Life. This, being the only Method we are capable of expressing our Gratitude by, if not produced, the Purpose of the Gift is defeated. And That is understood to be in vain, which disappoints our reasonable Expectations, and does not compass the End, it was done for.

2. Take this Grace then for the Gospel of Christ, and thus it is received in vain, when the Persons, to whom it is preached, do not live according to it. This indeed is that Grace of God that bringeth Salvation: But how? It follows there, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, &c. It is the only Dispensation, whereby we can be saved. But neither can we be saved by
by it, without coming within the Conditions and Qualifications, on which its glorious Promises are suspend-
ed. To those Hypocritical Professors, who are Chris-
tians in Word and in Name, but not in Deed and in
Truth; who profane Christ's Name, and
prostitute his Word, by not departing
from iniquity; It reveals the wrath of God
from Heaven: And declares the more
Stripes due to that wicked Servant, who knew his Mas-
ter's will, and did it not, for that very reason, because
he knew it. And, if any thing may be truly said to
have been received in vain; sure that must needs be so,
for which the Condition of the Receiver is not only
never the better, but a great deal worse, than if he
had not received it at all.

3. Once more. We receive the Grace of God, in
the Last importance of the Word, in vain; When we
do not attend to, and comply with, the Suggestions
and good Motions, which, I have observed before, the
Spirit of God works in our Minds. For, if we would
think and speak rationally concerning this matter,
God must be conceived to deal with us on these occa-
sions, in a manner agreeable to those Faculties he
hath given us. Now the whole of our Duty consists
in a right knowledge first, and then in the Choice, of
Good, and refusal of Evil. Consequently, the assist-
ances of Grace are necessary, both for the informing
our Judgment, and for inclining our Will. With
regard to the Former, God is said to
teach us, to open our Eyes, to enlighten our
Understandings, to fill and enrich us with
Knowledge, and the like. With regard
to the Latter, he is said to renew in us a
right Spirit, to incline our Hearts, to order
our Steps, to turn away our Eyes from Va-
osity, to lead us into the way of Righteousness, to make
us go in the paths of his Commandments; and to do many

other
other things of like Importance. But all these seem to be done, by suggesting such Ideas, as give us new light; and by propounding such Arguments, as persuade our better Choice, provided we attend to them, and will be determined; nay even in disposing but not compelling us to attend to, and be determined by, their true Weight and Force. We are sure, 'tis done in such a way, as requires our own concurrence, to render it effectual. Hence God is said to make men a new heart, and they are commanded to make it themselves: He is said to work in us to will and do of his good pleasure; and that very working of His is used as an Inducement, for Us to work out our own Salvation. When we thus do our part, the End is answered. For St. Paul gives this as a Proof, that the Grace of God was not bestowed upon him in vain, that be laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles. And consequently, as oft as God affords us Spiritual Succours, and we neglect to improve them; when his Spirit leads, but we refuse to follow; then is it, that we do, in this signification also, receive the Grace of God in vain.

We see by this time the plain meaning of the Exhortation, and are thereby capable of judging when we comply with it. The Reason brought to persuade such compliance comes next to be considered. For be faith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, Ver. 2. and in the day of Salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of Salvation.

The Words in Isaiah, from whom they are cited, are spoken to Christ, in the Person of God the Father; and accommodated here to his Members of the Church in Corinth. In which there is no manner of violence, because the whole stress of the Application lies in those two Words, the time accepted, and the day of
Salvation. And the Argument drawn from hence is, that when the Grace of God is offered, we must be very diligent to lay hold on, and improve it. And, because God hath certain Seasons and Periods, which we cannot promise our Selves the return of at Pleasure: therefore it concerns us to make the best of the present Opportunity, which we may know to be such a Season; but cannot know whether it will be the last, that God ever intends to afford us.

This Argument implies Two Things. The Danger of slipping the present Opportunities of Grace and Salvation; and the Certainty of Succeeding, if we lay hold on them.

1. The Former of these is what we could not but be sensible of; did we but reflect at all, That this Life is the utmost Period of the Day of Grace; That the continuance of this Life is the most uncertain thing in the World; And that we cannot be sure, God will extend to us the Opportunities of Grace, so long as Life does continue.

1. I need not, I hope, enlarge upon the First, that this Life is the utmost Period of the Day of Grace; after St. Paul hath so expressly said, that the matter, we are to be judged upon at the last Day, are the things done in our Bodies. And so our own Reason will tell us too. For look about through the whole Scheme of the Christian Religion, and you shall find no one Virtue or Vice, commanded or forbidden there, the Exercise whereof is not Suited to the present State. For notwithstanding the Perfection of Some Virtues be reserved for a future and better Life; yet the Beginnings even of These are enjoined us here; and do suppose a Soul united to a Body, in the first Practice and Progress of them. Faith, and Hope, and Trust in God, are recommended by an adherence to Objects unseen, and such as the Body keeps us at a distance from. Love of God, Contempt of the World, Heavenly-Mindedness, Subduing our Appetites and
and Passions, suppose us present with the Creatures
and the Passions we get above, which we can be in this
Life only. Infidelity and Debauchery, Injuring our
Neighbour; Dishonouring our Selves by beastly Lusts,
giving Scandal to others by a wicked Life, and the
like, are things confined to our present State. No
State is capable of them, where the Soul lives and acts
separately. And, since after its Separation by Death,
we are not to expect any return to the Body, till the
last Trump shall raise that to Judgment; it follows,
that this will be a Day not of Action but of Recompence;
that the Recompence will proceed upon what
was done, before these two parted; and consequently,
our Condition, we must enter then upon for all Eternity,
will depend upon, and be agreeable to, the Condition
they left each other in, at their parting. They,
who die in the favour of God, shall receive their Bodies
again, to enter upon Bliss and Glory: They who
died out of it, have the Sentence of Misery already
begun to be executed upon them; and can have no fresh
Tryal, no future Opportunity, of bettering their Condition,
either in, or after, the Grave.

2. And is it not manifest, that we can none of us
know, how soon this may be our own Condition? Do
we not see careless Sinners daily snatched away in the
Vigor of their Age, not live out half their Days,
which by the Course of Nature they promised them-
selves; and do not the number of such far exceed the
Instances of Grey Hairs, and those Funerals, which
come by gentle and leisurely decays? Why should we
then fool our Selves, by fond and groundless Expecta-
tions of a Life, which the very next Moment may take
from us? Why presunfe upon a quiet and firm possession
of that, which we have no manner of Security for;
of that which is often cut off without any warning;
that hangs by a Thread so slender, so easily snapped in
two, that no Accident how slight soever, has not suffi-
cient
cient weight to break it: that lastly, which when once broken, can never be pieced again? Surely, did Men remember (and is it not strange they can forget) their own Mortality; they would not venture upon one Minute’s delay, in a matter of such mighty Consequence; when every Minute may be their last, and when the last Minute of their living is sure to be the last of working out their Salvation.

3. But there is yet a greater danger behind. For we cannot be sure, that our power of working will extend so far, as the time for it. God often takes his Holy Spirit from Men, and suffers them to live, only for filling up the measure of their Iniquities. This is a sad effect of his Justice, that, after many Tryals to persuade them, he ceases to strive with those who will not be persuaded. Without his Grace they cannot repent and amend, and that Grace he in anger sometimes withdraws; abandons them to the Tempter, leaves them under a Disability, but such, as is the effect of their Pervereness. They would not use Grace to prevent their Sins, and therefore they are denied the Grace to repent of them. They hated to be reformed, while they might, and now the very Power of being reformed is taken from them. This shews the sad and comfortless Condition of such Sinners, but it shews withal the righteousness of God, in all that is brought upon them. For he hath no where obliged himself to contend always with those, who resist and defeat his kind Intentions of doing them good. Nay, he declares he will not. For thus Solomon introduces him, admonishing wicked People how he designs to deal with them. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. Then shall They call upon Me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall
shall not find me. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

And what can awaken stupid Sinners, if this warning will not, that, besides the danger of being cut short in the midst of their wild Career, they hazard the shortening their own Day of Grace? That, by setting their Hearts to act, in despight of the Methods made use of to reduce them, they may shut the Door so hard against themselves, that their most importunate knocking afterwards shall not prevail for the opening it again? What, on the other hand, can justify the Equity of God’s proceedings with vile incorrigible Wretches, if this do not clear it from all Exception, that his Spirit is ever at hand, to guide and counsel, to assist and strengthen all, who will accept of his Protection, hearken to his Voice, and be directed by him? That every one, who perishes for want of Mercy, is his own Murderer, and Lost, because he refused his own Mercy? That, in all Requests for Pardon, and the Divine Aids to do better, God never stops his Ears to our Cries, never refuses to be intreated, till we have first been obstinately Deaf to his Checks and Calls, and resolve not to be persuaded? This is the plain Importance, not of that Passage of Solomon only, but of sundry others in Scripture, upon the like occasion. So that the Prophet’s complaint against Israel, is equally true of every hardned Sinner, who receives the Grace of God in vain, Thou, even Thou hast destroyed thyself.

2. In farther Confirmation of which Truth I urge, lastly, The Certainty of our Succeeding, if we in earnest lay hold on the present Opportunities of Grace. A Certainty, implied by the Apostle in these words, Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation. Of this we cannot in reason ask any fuller Evidence, than the very Kindness of putting those Opportunities into our Hands. God owes them not to us,
us, but is entirely Master of his own Favours; He hath no Motive to it, but Mercy and Love to most unworthy Creatures. And, that he should, by these Advantages, mean to mock those, who are forward to embrace, and earnestly desirous to improve by them, is somewhat too unsincere, too barbarous, for a Being perfectly Holy and True, Just and Good, to be imagined capable of. Accordingly we may observe, that, as oft as God threatens to cast off a People; as a leading step to that Misery, and an Omen what they are to expect, he threatens the removing their Candlestick, a Famine of the Word, and a fatal withdrawing those Means of Grace, which had been so long offered to no purpose and effect, except that of Abuse and Scorn. Somewhat like this indeed seems to be done with private Persons, when, to compleat their Wickedness and Misery, he suffers them at last to fall under that faddest of all Temptations, turning their Backs upon his Sacraments, forsaking his Church, casting his Word behind them, and treating things that are Sacred with Contempt. How should the Disease of such be other than desperate, who thus despise and declare against their Remedy? But till it come to this, there are certainly Hopes. And, while we are content to use, and put our selves in the way of Means, though these have long been try'd with poor Success; yet it is a Sign, that as We have not given these, so neither hath God yet given Us, absolutely over. Not yet, I say; But there is danger, and great cause to fear he will; and our continuing to use them without Fruit, is a provocation to it. Let me then, with the Apostle here, beseech you, that you look to it in time; that you do not lose this precious Gift by receiving it in vain; that you apply your selves to your Business, while there is yet an Eleventh Hour left; That you make good Profit of this Holy Season in particular; looking upon it as a Pledge of the Divine Love, and a loud repeated Call,
Call, to consider, and know, in this your day, the things that belong to your eternal Peace, before they be hidden from your Eyes. Let us from this instant, humble our Souls before the Face of our offended God; subdue our corrupt Affections by all proper Severities and voluntary Restraints; remember the Consequences of every fresh Opportunity to become better; the just Condemnation of Grace received in vain; and especially pray most earnestly, as our Best of Churches directs, that from hardness of heart, and contempt of his word and commandment, our Good Lord will deliver us. Amen.

The First Sunday in Lent.

The Gospel.

St. Matth. iv. 1.  

1. 

And whan he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred.

The Scripture hath declared (Deut. viii. 3.) that God hath other ways of sustaining his Servants, besides that of common Food.

2. 

And when the Tempter came unto him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

1. Jesus, presently after his Baptism, by an impulse of the Holy Ghost of which he was full (See Luke iv. 1.) went up from Jordan into the Wilderness, where he was alone with the wild Beasts, (See Mark i. 13.) that there he might be tempted of the Devil.

2. There he, by a miraculous Power, did neither eat nor drink forty Days and Nights; but then he felt the Necessities and Appetites of his Human Nature return upon him.

3. Of these the Devil taking an Advantage, challeng'd him to prove himself the Son of God by turning Stones into Bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

4. Jesus answered, that there was no occasion for such a Miracle to satisfy his Hunger, since the Scripture hath declared (Deut. viii. 3.) that God hath other ways of sustaining his Servants, besides that of common Food.

5. And

5. Then the Devil takes him up into the holy City, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple.

5. Then the Devil conveys him to Jerusalem, sets him on the Battlement of the Temple there.
And would have persuaded him to prove himself the Son of God by throwing himself down, urging a Passage of Scripture, (Psalms xc.) which promised him Protection and Safety.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8. Again the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

8. Once more, the Devil moves him to an exceeding high Mountain, represents all the Splendor and Glory of the World to him, and proffers that as a Reward, if he would fall down and worship him. Pretending that he was in possession, and had power to dispose of it all.

10. This offer Jesus rejected with Indignation, commanded the Devil away, and proved from another Scripture, (Deut. vi. 13.) that Worship was due to God alone.

11. Then the Devil, baffled in all his Attempts, left him for that time, (see Luke iv. 13.) and the Holy Angels came, attended upon him, and supplied him with Necessaries.

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Comment.

It is not without excellent good reason, that, among many other Arguments to quicken us into the Duties of this Holy Time, (the Abstinence and Severities whereof are one continued Fight against Temptations) the Example of our Blessed Saviour should this Day be propounded to our Consideration.

The several Circumstances of this Encounter with the Prince of Darkness are full of Instruction and Encouragement. The Ends for which, The Time when, The Place where, The Manner how he was tempted;
The Method taken for repelling those Attempts upon his Virtue; and the Comforts that followed thereupon: All conspire to teach us the Nature of, to put us upon our guard against, to animate and support us under, those Tryals, which daily, hourly exercise us. It must needs therefore be of mighty Consequence, for every Man to reflect upon, and attain to a right understanding of these things.

I begin with the Ends, for which our Blessed Lord suffered himself to be Tempted, and of Them these Three that follow, seem chiefly to deserve our notice.

First, One great Design of our Lord's Temptation seems to have been, the Encouragement of all good Christians, under the like Circumstances. This is the Account given of it by St. Paul, In that be himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. This is the Captain of our Salvation, who came to fight our Battles; and fit it was, that he should first engage, and try the utmost Strength of the Enemy of Souls. But as he fought, so did he conquer likewise, not for himself, but for those, whose Duty it is to fight under him. And what can be more effectual to animate such, in all their Spiritual Encounters, than the Contemplation of their victorious Leader? This gives them a sensible Proof, that their Adversary, fierce and subtle, great and powerful though he be, is not invincible; that a Man, of like natural Passions and Infirmities with themselves, hath vanquished him to their hand, and that they march against a Foe, already routed shamefully, and forced to quit the Field.

I am sensible, it may be objected against this Argument, That our Saviour's Case and Ours are far from being the same: That He indeed had the true Human Nature, and all those Frailties, which are the necessary Appendages and Incumbrances of it: But then,
that Human was inseparably united to his own Divine Nature. This must render it Impregnable, and, by the same reason, render the Conquests gained by a Person, who was God as well as Man, very unfit to be drawn into Consequence, by Them, who are but Men, weak and sinful Men: not guarded by that Armour, which in Him was impenetrable.

To this it may be answered, That, although our Lord's Divinity did indeed set him far above the utmost Opposition of any created Power; yet did not that Divinity exert it self upon all Occasions, but suspended its Operations, and was withdrawn, as God saw fit. That thus it ceased to act at the time of our Lord's Passion, seems very evident; not only from the History of his Sufferings and Death, but even from his own Words, when telling them, that came to apprehend him in the Garden; When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me, but this is your Hour, and the power of darkness. And, as these Checks, and voluntary Suspensions of his Divine Glory and Strength, were thought expedient, after numberless and undeniable manifestations of them to the World: So there is no appearance of those Perfections manifesting themselves at all, till he entered upon the publick Exercise of his Prophetick Office. This hath been generally thought the Issue of our Lord's Temptation in particular. In which his Divine Perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage; He is to be considered abstractedly, as a Man, though much more perfect, than any other Man. And then the Inference arising from hence is properly this: that, though his being God and Man both made it impossible for him to Sin, when he was tempted; Yet, in regard he was attack'd as Man only, this Example shews, that it is possible for us not to Sin, when We are tempted.
But then the Consideration of his Divine Nature is a mighty Support under our Difficulties, because it assureth us of his Ability to relieve us; by supplying our Weaknesses and our Wants, by pouring in those Recruits of Grace and Supernatural Strength from above, which none but God can give; and without which we are not in a Condition to stand our Ground, or make Head against the very slightest Assa ults of that Foe, which labours our Destruction. And thus the Contemplation of our Blessed Lord is doubly useful to us. For, as Man, his Example proves a Victory over Temptation possible to be attained; and, as God, his Almighty Power is our Security for those Spiritual Assi stances, upon the seasonable Accessions whereof that Possibility, in the present State of things, does entirely depend.

Secondly, Another excellent Design, for which our Saviour was tempted, is, hereby to convince us of his Compassion and Readiness to help us. This also is the Apostle’s Inference, We have not an High-pri est, that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. By partaking of our Nature, he hath also taken part in all the innocent Affections of it. Among which This is One, to be moved with more than ordinary Tenderness, and apply our selves with greater Zeal to succour our Brethren, where Their Calamities are the same, or very near to those, which We have, in our own Persons, formerly felt the weight of. This presently awakens the Remembrances of our past Sorrows, makes us feel them as fresh in Theirs, and endeavour their Relief with a degree of Compassion, which they, who never had any Experience, how needful and how welcome it was in the like Circumstances, seldom are sensible, scarce indeed capable of. Now it is Our unspeakable Advantage, not only, that our Lord is of the same
fame Constitution and Disposition, by virtue of his Humane Nature; but that the utmost we do or can endure, cannot exceed, cannot come up to the Hardships, he condescended to suffer in that Nature. So that, as the Former Particular proved his Ability, This proves his Disposition and Forwardness, to help us. And upon this it is, that the Apostle grounds that Confidence, with which he ought to be addressed to in all our Straits and Exigencies. For so it follows there: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.

Heb. iv. 16.

Thirdly, Another very useful Design, served by our Lord's being tempted, is that of instructing us, that not any, even the best and most exalted degree of Virtue, sets Men above Temptation. 'Tis true, What Jesus suffered of this kind was an Instance of Choice and voluntary Condescension; but so was his taking that Human Nature, which alone could render him capable of suffering it. With Us the Matter is far otherwise. As we are altogether passive in receiving this Nature; so must we be content with the Difficulties, to which the Condition of it exposes us of course. And such, to be sure, are Temptations (as will appear more fully by and by.) And with These too we have reason to be very well contented, because, tho' they be occasions of Vice, yet are they also Exercises of Virtue; and, as they may become instrumental to our Punishment and Misery, so may they, to our Happiness and Reward. Hence that of St. James, My brethren count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; And therefore just matter of Joy, because, as he goes on, these are Trials of our Faith, and such repeated Trials contribute to our Perfection. When we find the Christian's Life so often compared to a Warfare, we have fair warning, what we must expect. Frequent Action, and continual Dan-
were ordered some place very remote from the Conversation of Men, as most proper for that purpose, and added Fasting to that Solitude. Thus did Moses twice, at his receiving the Tables of the Law; Thus did Elias; And that the Jews might have no Pretence to think His Authority, on this account, inferior to either of Theirs, thus, you see here, did our Saviour Christ. The Usefulness of Retirement, when we would set our selves apart to the Business of Religion, is confirmed by every Man's Experience, who makes the Tryal. By withdrawing from the World, we shut out infinite Distractions, are better qualified to collect our Thoughts, and fix them upon God and another State.

But still the same Inference meets us again, which was spoken to under the Last Head; That even here we ought not to flatter our selves, with an Imagination of absolute Safety. In such Circumstances the Tempter assaulted our Blessed Master; In such we shall often find him attacking Us. Our Closets, and our Fasting-Days, do indeed separate us from the Snares of Business and Company; and let us into a nearer Communication with Him, whom our Soul loveth. They help to raise our Devotion, and to keep up our Virtue: The Former would quickly languish, and the Latter remit of its Vigor, if These were unfrequented. But yet we find our selves close pursued even hither. The Zeal we labourat, or kindle by these Retreats, is cooled by wandering Thoughts in the very Act of Prayer; and the Activity we design, rebated by many Interruptions. One plain Account whereof is certainly this. That our Enemy makes his Approaches toward Us, with less Formality, and therefore with more Success, than He did, or could do against the Holy Jesus. Him he seems to have encountered in some visible Shape, the Purity and Innocence of the Person concerned, One in whom, as our Lord himself expresses,
presses it, *He bad nothing*, drove him to that Necessity. But upon Us he steals unseen. The Corruption of our Nature gives great Hold to fasten on; Our Passions and Affections, Our Ignorance and Infirmities, and all the necessary Consequences of Our Original Weakness and Depravation, we cannot run away from. And, because we carry these about us every where, he never can want fit Place or Opportunity for Temptation. For These are in truth the Matter he works upon, and our own Thoughts, and Desires, are the Instruments he works by. As will appear more fully, if we consider,

IV. Fourthly, The manner how our Saviour was tempted. In the First Attempt the Devil takes occasion from his Hunger, to persuade Him to work a Miracle for the satisfying it. In the Second, he puts Him upon an unnecessary Experiment of God’s preserving Providence, and such a Proof of being his Son, as the confenting would argue a Distrust of the Evidence already given of it. And this he colours over, with a Text of Scripture, pretended to countenance his Proposal. In the Third, he entices him to an unlawful Act; with Promise of worldly Honours and Advantages. In all Three he forms his Attack upon those Natural Appetites and Affections, which God hath put into Mankind; and which, it is evident from this Example, are never (strictly speaking) the Causes, but only the Accidental Occasions of Sin. And not Occasions neither, except we abuse, and apply them irregularly.

It is impossible for any Man living, to describe all the subtle Acts of this Lier-in-wait to deceive. But, from the Instance now at hand, we may discover in general, That he strikes in with Mens Wants and Necessities; with their different Tempers and Circumstances in the World; with their governing Passions and darling Objects: That from These, he labours to
authority so sacred, with Reason so enforcing, that
They, who are capable of arguing justly, are here
provided with Topicks of invincible Strength; and
They, who want that Skill and Address, if they bring
but an honest Mind hither, will be able to defend
themselves, and baffle all the Sophistry of the Adver-
sary, with a bare Thus it is written, and, The Lord hath
spoken.

Hence it is easy to perceive, of what absolute Ne-
cessity, of what mighty Importance it cannot but be,
to all sorts of People, to be very converfant in the
Book of God; to read, to study, to understand right-
ly the practical Parts of it especially. In These there is
no great Difficulty, to them who apply themselves
with a good Principle, and a sincere Desire to learn,
and to obey. For our Bountiful God hath, in his
Revelation, dealt with the Souls, as, in his Creatures,
he hath done with the Bodies, of Men. That, which
is most necessary for Health and Sustenance, is most
common, and plain, and ready at hand. With this
then let us fill our Memories, and lay in a Stock to be
drawn out, as Occasions call for it. But let it not rest
in our Memories alone, but rule in our Hearts, and
influence our Affections, and be the measure of all our
Actions. Thus it must do, to preserve us in the Day
of Combat. Without this we fight naked; but thus
armed we are always under guard, and shall prevent a
world of Surprises, which those thoughtlefs unpro-
vided Creatures are over-powered by, who have their
Weapons to seek, when they have immediate occasion
to use them. More particularly yet. Let every Man
diligently enquire into his own Circumstances; The
Sin that doth most easily beset him, the Passion he finds
hardest to be conquered, the Temptations, to which
his Condition or Business most expose him; the Infir-
mities and Frailties peculiar to his Age, or Temper,
or Complexion; and be sure to lose no Time for lay-
ing in a Fund, (as out of so rich a Treasure he quickly may) proper for these Exigencies; that none of these may any sooner start up, but some Scripture, well digested, may come up with it, and effectually bring it under again. This would be to imitate our Master's Wisdom in a Point, of Advantage greater than anything else can, but our own Experience and almost incredible Successes would soon, make us duly sensible of.

VI. Let us now, in the Last Place, cast our Eye upon the Comforts, that followed our Lord's Temptation; express'd at the Eleventh Verse; Then the Devil left them, and behold Angels came and ministered unto him. This we are told, shall not fail to be Our Case too: That, if we resist the Devil, he will flee from us; and if we draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to us. He will, by those ministering Spirits, which are sent forth to minister unto them who shall be Heirs of Salvation, protect and guard us from future Dangers. He will relieve those Wants, by a better and more effectual Way, for the Supply whereof we would not submit to any unlawful Courses; reward our better Choice with the inexpressibly sweet Satisfactions of a good Conscience; a Peace and Joy, which the World and all its Pleasures cannot give, which all its Afflictions cannot take away; And at last, through these Triumphs begun upon Earth, will conduct us to that yet more perfect Blessedness, which shall abundantly recompense our Toils and Sufferings, and crown our Constancy, with Glory immortal in Heaven.

I add but this Word more, That the Account of our Lord's Abstinence and Retirement, when about to enter upon the Exercise of his Prophetick Office, is very seasonable at this Time, when that Fast approaches, which this Church hath thought fit to appoint, for the more effectual Imploiring his Assistance,
we deal with in Civil Contracts. But this is a Matter, plainly foreign to the rest of the Apostle’s Discourse in this Place, which is wholly employ’d upon the Sins of Uncleanliness; And therefore, if the Words can reasonably bear a Sense agreeable to that Subject, this is a Direction so to understand them.

Now, besides that the Word, which we render go beyond, hath in its Etymology, an Affinity and Relation to that very Act, by which unclean Desires are gratified; It is farther observable, that the Other, translated Defraud, hath been likewise applied to such Gratifications of that kind, as are irregular and unreasonable. The Word imports in general, aiming at more than ones share, and is made the Character of the Covetous, who, from such Greediness, sticks at no Injustice to enrich himself. Hence, by an easy figure, it is transferr’d to the Carnal Man, who, to satisfy his Lust, without regard to what is lawful and allowed him, invades his Neighbour’s Bed, or else lets himself loose to such Vices, as are quite beside the Course of Nature. And thus the best Expositors have made this part, consistent with the rest of the Apostle’s Caution against Uncleanliness, by applying the Sixth Verse, Some to the Sin of Adultery, Others to that of Sodomy. In both which the Offender does more, take more than belongs to him, to compass his Desires. And, for that Expression, in any Matter, ’tis observable, that the Word any is not in the Original; so that, by reading, as literally we may, in the matter, this Construction is still more confirm’d. That being a modest Intimation, by a general Term, of Actions, that cannot with decency be particularly nam’d.

For the same reason, it must not be expected, that I should enlarge upon the several ways, by which the Sin of Uncleanliness pollutes. There is danger, even in descending to the Niceties of this Vice, lest Inclinations, so strong by Nature, should take an advantage never
never intended them, and learn to refine upon Vice, from the very Ideas raised in the Mind, by those, who only design these for their Instruction and Amendment. It shall suffice me therefore, upon this occasion, to remark, that the Sanctification, required by the Apostle, is a Virtue, extending to Mind and Body both: That all Gratifications of our fleshly Desires, out of the way of lawful Matrimony, whether committed upon and with Others, or even our own Persons, are unlawful Acts: That the Chastity imply'd in a single State, requires a total Abstinence from them all: And that of a married Life is not at large from all Restraints, but expects such Moderation and Temper, as may preserve the Ends of Matrimony; continue it, what it was intended for, a holy and an honourable State; a Remedy, not an Incentive: That, not only actual Commissions, but obscene Language, lascivious Looks, impure Thoughts indulged, immodest Behaviour, pampering and luxurious Diet to inflame our selves, industrious Endeavours to kindle those Fires, and attract first the Eyes, then the Desires, of Others, all coquetry and affectation in Dress, or Deportment, which have a tendency that way; these too come within the Compa's of Uncleanliness. And, though they miss of the Effect, are rendered guilty by the Intention.

The less capable this Subject is of being conveniently treated by Our Teachers, the more exact and curious it becomes private Persons to be, in the Examination of their own Consciences concerning it. Especially, since the Apostle hath used such pressling Motives, in the Scripture now before us, by saying, that our Sanctification is the Commandment of the Lord Jesus, and the Will of God; that the contrary Affections are the Scandal of the Gentiles, who know not God; that Christians are called, not unto uncleanliness, but unto holiness;
holiness; and that any of these, who behave themselves unsuitably to that Call, draw down Vengeance upon their own Head, and despite God and the Holy Spirit be bath given us. The sum of all which Passages may be reduced to this, That Sins of Uncleanliness, in particular, are a high provocation to Almighty God, that they forfeit the Privilege, and defeat the Ends of, and derive the greatest Scandal and Dishonour upon, our Christian Profession.

1. How high and grievous a Provocation these are to Almighty God, is evident, from the many severe Threatenings, denounced against them in the New Testament.

These declare, that without Holiness no man shall see the Lord; that this is a Blessing referred for the pure in heart; that neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor the Effeminate, nor the abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God: That because of these things his wrath cometh upon the children of disobedience; that such God will destroy, and that, by reason of these vile Affections, God suffered the very Heathen, who indulged them, to quench their Natural Light; and gave them up to the most infamous, and unmanly, and absurd Lusts and Wickednesses.

2. Among the Privileges of Christianity, none are more valuable, none more essential to our Salvation, than those of our Union with our Mystical Head Christ Jesus, and the Presence and perpetual assistance of that blessed Spirit, whereby this Union is effected and preserved. But, by the Inordinacy of these Lusts, we separate our selves from Christ, we take the Members of Him, our Bodies, and make them Members of Harlots. Those Bodies, which are consecrated to his Use and Service, and are become living Temples of the Lord, by his Holy Spirit inhabiting there, we thus proflane, and sacrilegiously
legiously alienate to vile and polluted Uses. Thus we at once dishonour the Deity, and the Body, in which, as in the Tabernacle of old, he chose to make his gracious Residence. This is probably conceiv'd to be St. Paul's meaning, at the 8th Verse here. The contemptuous Treatment, and horrible Indignity such People are guilty of, to that Spirit, bestowed upon every Christian, at his Baptism. So that, as these Vices have the peculiar aggravation of being Sins against our own Bodies, they are likewise attended with that other, of despising, affronting, and driving away that Blessed Spirit and his Grace, which, being a Spirit of Discipline and Purity, will not abide in those filthy Dwellings, where such Unrighteousness comes in, and takes Possession. A very weighty Consideration, to deter us from such Wickedness, as, by prostituting our own Persons, prostitutes the Honour of God at the same time; and runs so manifest a risque of abandoning us to the most profligate and pernicious Courses, and delivering up our Souls to the uncontrouled Malice and Tyranny of the Devil.

3. The Ends of our Christian Profession are manifestly defeated by these Lufts and Practices. For so much is imply'd, Verse 7. God hath not called us unto Uncleanliness, but unto Holiness. The main design of Religion is, as I have already had occasion to observe, to make us like God. If therefore the Gentiles, who knew not God, gave themselves up to work all uncleanness with Greediness, the wonder is not so great, the Crime not near so great; because owing to those false, and corrupt, and extravagant Notions of the Divine Nature, which, by such Ignorance, had obtained in the World. For, how should they frame themselves aright, who never understood the Model they were to frame by? But the Christian Faith gives us just and true Notions of God, and of our Selves. By teach-
ing us, that he is a Spirit, perfect and pure, removed far above all those Passions, which, by being joyned to mortal and material Bodies, we feel Our Spirits subject to. That this Conjunction sets us, as it were, upon the Confines of the Spiritual and Material World; and produces a perpetual Conflict, between the Affection proper to a Rational Soul, in which we resemble God; and those of a Sensitive, in which the Brutes seem to carry some resemblance of Us. Consequently, the more we give way to Sensuality; the lower we sink our Selves, and remove at a still greater distance from God. And, the only Course we can take, to raise and get nearer to Him, is by trampling down, and keeping under, those Desires and Passions, which the Condition of the Flesh, we carry about with us, kindles and cherishes: to exalt and refine our Souls, by fixing them upon Objects, that are suitable to the Immortality of their Nature, and approach to the Perfections of Him, whose Image and Character they bear. In the compassing this End, we are favoured and forwarded, not only by that more perfect Understanding of God and his Excellencies, which the Gospel helps us to, not only by that better Sense of the Dignity of our own Nature, which the Doctrines of it inspire; but also by that prospect of our true and perfect Happiness, the Discovery and the Assurance of those pure and Spiritual Joys, in a State, for which we were created; and to which we must aspire, by such dispositions, even in this Life, as may make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. How necessary a preparation for that Bliss such a temper and turn of Mind must needs be, hath been formerly said. And I need not add, that, if such be our Case, the End of Christianity must be utterly lost and defeated, by the Vice I am treating of. It being manifest to daily Observation and
and common Sense, that the Lusts of Uncleanliness indulged do, perhaps above any other Sin, estrange the Heart from God, create a distemper of every thing that is Holy and Good, darken the Understanding, vitiate the Will, debase the Spirit, waste the Conscience, quench the Motions of Grace, produce first a Neglect, then a Contempt of Religion, destroy and deface all Principles even of Justice, and Honour, and natural Modesty and Decency, make Men submit to the basest Arts, for compassing their filthy Purposes; harden them in Impudence and Beastliness, enervate the Mind, consume the Body; In a Word, they unman the One Sex, lay the Glory of the Other in Common, and make such Monsters of Both; that not only Revelation, but natural Reason, condemns and acknowledges the deformity of these Sins: By covering them with Shame, and ascribing to them that most rightful Denomination of Vile and Dishonourable Lusts.

This is but a small part of what might be said, against a Corruption, the Indulgence whereof is so far from consisting with the Character of Christians, that it scarce leaves us Men: So far from any likeness to the Great and Holy God, that the most obscene and detestable Brutes are our Copy. My Subject leads me not so directly to mention the Diseases of Body, the Ruin of Estates, the Confusion of Families, the indelible Stain and Reproach, which God in his just Judgment inflicts, and hath indeed made Natural Consequences, upon Uncleanliness. Well were it, if not only these, but the many Publick and National Evils, drawn down upon whole Communities, were seriously laid to Heart on this occasion. All little enough for the Age we are fallen into, when so many great Examples have given Countenance to this Vice, as, if it were possible, almost to erase those Impressions
23. But be answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away, for she crieth after us.

24. He reply'd, that the Benefit of his Miracles and Doctrine was a Privilege at present intended for Jesus only; not for Gentiles, such as this Woman was. (See Mark vii. 26. and Margin there.)

25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me.

26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the Children's bread, and cast it to dogs.

27. And she said, Truth Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her Daughter was made whole from that very hour.

**Comment.**

That Prayer is a Duty more especially to be attended upon at this Season, the very Nature of it infers. The joining it so often with Fasting in Scripture, the Helps it hath been proved to receive from such Abstinence, and the necessity of applying to God, for some Graces out of our own Power, puts it beyond a Doubt. Such in particular, I have said, is that Purity, so earnestly recommended in the Epistle for the Day. But, in regard it does not always happen, that our Petitions are granted so soon, either as we make them, or as we expect a return to them: Nothing could be more proper and methodical, than, for the Church on this occasion, to encourage our Importunity, and Continuance in Prayer. Nothing could more encourage this, than so successful an Instance of it, as the Miracle related in the Gospel now before us, when considered in all its parts, will appear plainly to contain.
An afflicted Mother here implores Christ's Help, with all the tender Concern, becoming that Relation; with all the Vehemence, that we can suppose her excited to, by a Calamity so terrible, as a Daughter grievously vexed with a Devil. Her Cries are silently passed over, though so loud and troublesome, that our Lord's Disciples, either in compassion to the sadness of her Case, or desirous to be eas'd of so clamorous an Importunity, turn Advocates for her. The Answer they received was very discouraging, and seem'd to imply a Resolution, not to grant a Favour, which was irregular, and beside both the Methods, and the Design, of his present Mission. This notwithstanding, she pursues her Request. But, instead of any Signs of relenting, is answered with a Proverb, upbraiding her Unworthiness, seemingly chiding her Presumption in conceiving any Hopes of it; and indeed carrying such an appearance of hard-heartedness and scorn, as one would rather have expected out of the Mouth of a haughty Pharisee, than from the meek and merciful Jesus. Still she desists not, is content to be reckoned as a Dog, in comparison of the Jews, who had the Honour of being treated as Children. But from hence she forms an Argument, to put in for a Dog's Portion at least. One Miracle in Her behalf, bearing but the Proportion of a Dog's share, to the numberless Mercies of that kind, wrought for and among the Jews: The Crumbs that fall, compared to Their full Table. And then our Lord at last does, not only gratify that Application, which before he in appearance disallowed, but even commend, and do it signal Honour. For it was in appearance only, that he disallowed it before, and those Repulses were all for the Petitioner's Advantage. This is the Substance of the Scripture in hand, describing a Managery very usual with Almighty God, who is often thought to hide his Face from us,
succeed at all, will suffice, either to discourage the making of new, or to discontinue our old. Addressee of this kind.

Now, whence is all this, but from the Eagerness of our Desires, and the Value we fondly hold those Advantages in, which we so industriously court, so obstinately pursue? And, whence that Hastiness and Impatience, that Weariness and Fainting, that sitting down in Despair, and quickly concluding our Petitions rejected and unprofitable, so usual in our Applications to Almighty God; but from a Disesteem of the Mercies we sue for, want of a due Sense of their Consequence, of their Necessity, to us, and thereupon an Indifference, whether they come or no? But especially, Why this false, this blameable Modesty in One Case, Why that indefatigable Confidence in the Other; where the Persons address’d to are of Dispositions so very different? Why that never giving over to hope and to beg, where we are frequently deceived, and forced Dependencies are troublesome? And why this desisting so quickly, with One, who never did or can deceive us; with One, to whom our Trust is always pleasing, and our Importunity it self serves more effectually to recommend us?

That thus it is with Men, our own Experience, that thus with God, the Scriptures already produc’d on this occasion, may abundantly convince us. And the difference, so remarkable between them, may without any great Difficulty be accounted for. In God, we know, there is no end of Goodness, no end of Power; In Men, both these are shut up within very narrow bounds. To press Them is therefore shocking, because this is, by a side Wind, to upbraid them, either with want of Ability, or of Sincerity, or of Inclination to do good. And these are Qualities, which every one is desirous either to have, or at least to be thought to have. So that, whatever implicitly denies,
dedies, or, by natural Constru\tion, calls these into question, carries with it a Reproach, not easy to be born. But God, who is Power, and Truth, and Love it self is above all such Reflections. Our Necessities cannot exhaust him, and therefore our Requests for the supply of them cannot offend him. He that made us, needs not be changed, by any Arguments we can use, to draw his Kindness and Affection to us: And therefore his very Withholdings and Delays are kindly meant. And the continuing to ask is a Demonstration of our being satisfied, that they are so. For letting alone any farther Application is a natural consequence of taking our former Usage ill. But repeating the same with Confidence argues a Spirit easy and resign'd, confesses his Goodness, and our own Unworthinesse; clears us of any unbecoming Resentments, and speaks us contented to wait his good leisure, for the satisfying our most earnest and important Desires, and even, as we may think, most reasonable Expectations. For such without question they are, if granted at last. Which makes it necessary therefore to consider, in the

II. Second place, What account may be given of God's delaying to answer those Prayers, which he never intended absolutely to deny. Now this may be done,

1. With a design to increase our Virtue, to render it more conspicuous, and so to prove us more fit for, and worthy of, the Blessings we apply to him for. Thus it was plainly in the Subject of this Day's Gospel. Had the Canaanitish Woman been gratified upon her first Suit: She had not made so noble a Figure in the History of our Saviour's Miracles. And the easiness of obtaining a Favour, to which, as a Stranger to Israel, She had no manner of Claim, had been Matter of Offence to the Jews. But the frequent Repulses She so bravely sustained, took off all ground
ground of Exception, justified our Lord in going out of his common Method, and made this Greek a Pattern even to Christians of all future Ages. In like manner, does our heavenly Father deal with his Children upon all occasions. He tries those Tempers by suspending his Mercies, which Indulgence, and Readiness to give, are apt to spoil. He makes us feel our dependance, and trains us up to Patience and Resignation, to Trust and Constancy. For indeed we are not fit to receive, till perfectly satisfied, that He is the properest Judge, when, as well as how, and what, to give; and that, in all these regards, he proceeds upon Reasons, not only wise in themselves, but beneficial to Us.

2. These Delays are very useful, in order to keep up the Value of the Good things we ask. Of which, though that very Act of asking testify some Esteem, yet will this naturally rise, by continuing longer without them. In these Bodies we live so much by Sense, that nothing affects us strongly, which does not make some considerable change in our Condition: Nor are we moved by Objects from without, according as they are in themselves, but according as We apprehend of them. So that it is not only the Want, but the feeling we have of that Want more especially, that recommends the Blessing of a Supply to us. Hence, without doubt, it is, that we resent in so very different a manner, the Mercy of a constant State of Health, and that of Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickness; Ease, and Safety, and uninterrupted Prosperity on one Hand; and Deliverance from exquisite Pain, imminent Destruction, or some very afflicting Calamity, on the other. No Man in his Reason will say, that the former are not better and more desirable in themselves: and yet every Man must allow, that the latter are more welcome, and Matter of greater Joy, to Us. Insomuch, that even the Sweets
Sweets of Life would soon grow flat, insipid, and nauseous; were it not for a mixture of Sharp and Bitter, that quicken, and raise the Taste of them to us. This Observation, applied to the Benefits we ask at God's Hands, shews his Delays in granting, to be for our Advantage. Because, the longer we need them, the more sensible we are that we need them; and the more comfort we take in them, when we have them. Nor is this all; But even our Expectations are placed to Account; provided we behave our selves in them as we ought. For he hath condescended to call himself the Good-Man's Debtor: Prov. xix. 17.

And he is the only Debtor, who loves to be perpetually called upon for Payment; who rewards Impertinence with larger Interest. And this is our Case, that we do not only relish what he gives the better for staying, but the longer we wait, the more bountifully he gives at last.

What other Reasons soever have usually been, or may be allledged on this Occasion, will, if I mistake not, be easily reducible to these Two. And therefore I only add a few Cautions, necessary to be taken along with us, and so Conclude.

Now First, When I affirm the Delays we have been considering, to tend to our Good, I desire it may be understood of our Spiritual Good: The Advancement of our Virtue here, and the Addition to our Reward hereafter. Which are indeed so properly the Good of a Man, and of a Christian, that nothing else deserves that Title, excepting so far forth, as it is some way Subservient to, and helps to promote, these great Ends.

Secondly, The requiring this Impertinence in Prayer must not be so interpreted, as if God could take any delight in it, for its own sake, but he values it for the Effects it produces in Us. He is not like those haughty Eastern Monarchs, who take a Pride to see a num-
a number of poor depending Creatures ly prostrate at their Foot. He is not to be conquered by many, or cajoled by fair Words: But he will have us Pray, and persevere in it, purely for our own Benefit. He hath made it a Condition of obtaining our Request, because it will certainly bring our Minds to such a frame, as Religion is designed to make them of. For Prayer hath a vast Influence upon the Dispositions and Actions of Men. We cannot be frequent and serious in it, without becoming better. And we cannot leave it off, or grow cold or formal in it, without degenerating and growing worse, in the general Course of our Lives. Nor is it any Change, which our Prayers make in God, but the Change they make in our selves, which is the Cause of our Success. For he is unchangeably determined to grant, or not to grant, according as Men do, or do not, perform the Conditions he hath fixed for granting. All therefore depends upon Our Qualifications, and Fitness to receive that, which he is always ready to give, when we are duly qualified. And nothing hath so direct a tendency to render us proper Objects of his Mercy, (that is, truly good Men) as frequent and fervent Prayer.

Lastly, It is necessary we consider the true Use and End of such Prayer. It is to beg of God, that he will do for us, that which we cannot do for our selves; but then this supposes, that we should do all that we can for our selves, and depend upon Him for the rest. A Man, who, for the purpose, asks of God his daily Bread, without using his own Industry to get it, by such lawful Methods, as Providence hath put into his Hands; does not make the right use of Prayer. And He, that begs not to be led into Temptation, without watching and striving, and shunning the occasions of Sin; does not so properly worship God, as mock him. Let Us do Our parts
parts, and then we are fit to ask, that God would, and
may be very confident that he will, do His. But,
since our own Endeavours are made a Condition of
Success in this Affair, to ask new Graces, without
improving those we have already, is vain and im-
pious. We acknowledge indeed, in the Collect for
this Day, that we are not able of our selves to help or
keep our selves: but this is no ground for our presu-
ming, that God will help or keep Them, who take no
care at all to do what they are enabled, though They
are not able to do the whole, that is necessary for
this purpose. For He that made us without our
concerence, will not save us without it. And we
must work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling,
if we would be heard in those Prayers, which entreat
Him to work in us both to will, and to do of his good
pleasure.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the
hearty Desires of thy humble Servants, and
stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to
be our defence against all our Enemies, through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle.

Ephes. v. i.

1. Since then God
hath been so good to
you (See Chap. iv. 32.)

2. Let your Love too
be like that of Christ's
to us, who was content
to become a Sacrifice,
by which God was atoned for our faults.

2. But
3. But for unclean and inordinate Lusts, be so far from practising, as to abhor the very mention of them, for so, as Christians, you ought to do.

4. The like Caution you should use with regard to scurrilous and obscene talk, a thing by no means agreeable to your Character. But let your Mirth be expressed in Thanksgiving, or (as St. Jerome) in grateful and becoming Discourse.

5. For this ye know, that no murderer, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

6. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7. Do not therefore share in the guilt of such Men, by giving them any Approbation or Countenance, much less by committing the same Sins.

8. For, consider, how your Circumstances are changed from a State of Ignorance, to one of clear Knowledge, in Jesus and his Gospel; and let your Practice be such as becomes this Knowledge.

9. (For all manner of Goodness, &c. are the Effects, which the Grace of the Holy Spirit is expected to produce in your Minds and Conversations.)

10. Thus it is, that you must study and shew your knowledge and good liking of, that which our Lord hath declared he likes.

11. And have nothing to do with the Wickedness of the ignorant Heathen, but use all fitting means of putting it to shame.

12. For indeed the very Mysteries of their Religion are so vile, as not to be told without offence to modest Ears.

13. But the Light of the Gospel discovers and exposes them; for this is the nature and business of Light, to detect the things which Darkness would conceal.

14. Where-
14. Therefore be saved, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

14. So that to this good effect may not unprofitably be applied those Passages of the Prophet (Isai. xxvi. 19. ix. 1.) which describe the Coming and Kingdom of Christ, as means of raising Men from Death, rousing them from Sleep, and bringing them out of a thick Night of Error, and Ignorance, and Vice, into the bright Shines of Knowledge and Virtue.

**COMMENT.**

THE Chapter next before had concluded with an Exhortation to Meekness, and Charity, and Pardon of Injuries; enforced with a Motive, taken from the Remembrance of God's Goodness in forgiving us. This Argument will offer itself to our Consideration *hereafter.* The Obligation we lie under to imitate such Goodness, is, in the beginning of this Chapter, farther urged, from the Relation, which already is, and consequent on the Resemblance there ought to be, between God and Us, considered in the Capacity of Father and Children. The force of that Consideration hath been formerly treated of. To Another, which back it here, I shall speak very briefly, and then proceed to some other Particulars, intended to make the principal Subject of my present Discourse.

Not content then with the single Example of God the Father's Love in forgiving, the Apostle proposes for our Pattern, that also of God the Son, in offering himself a Sacrifice, thereby to purchase this Forgiveness for us. And what were We, that so marvellous an Instance of Kindness and Condescension should be exhibited in our Favour? And what was He, that He should vouchsafe that Favour? We Creatures, Sinners, Enemies, Rebels; He our Creator, our Lawgiver, our Benefactor, our Lord. We consequentially had all the Worthinesse, He all the Provocation, that habitual Disobedience, and Ingratitude, and Ob-
finity could create. If then this Person, so far Superior, so justly incensed, did not only remit, but, at the Expence of infinite Afflictions and Sufferings, of Agonies, and Blood, and Life itself, expiate the very Sins, by which himself was injured: How can We insist upon rigorous Terms of Satisfaction, with those, between whom and our Selves there can be nothing like to, either the Distance and Dignity of the Party offended, or the number and quality of the Offences committed? But especially, In regard this Divine Person Submitted to be Sacrificed, not for You, or Me, or a Few only, but for all Mankind; and, by so doing, is become their common Saviour, does not disdain to call them all Brethren, is Their Mystical Head, and They his Members, provided They accept the Terms of this Saving Union; How can We pursue with our angry Resentments, those who are now parts of Him; and who, for His Sake, if not for their own, have a right to all our Charity? He died not only as our Ransom, but as our Example;

3 John iii. 16. and 'tis St. John's Inference, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for Us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And, if the Obligation run so high; if even that, which Nature hath made dearest to us all, must not be thought too costly a Proof of our Kindness, when a proper Occasion shall demand it of us; Let Them reflect, what account they can give of themselves, and whether that be Christian Charity, which refuses to Sacrifice a Passion, which grudges a very little Cost, or Pains, or Condescension, to the Ease and Benefit of an Offending, or a Needy Brother. Nay, let them think, how, at the last great Day, they shall be able to hear the Upbraidings of a Judge, who hath declared, he places to his own Account all Acts of Mercy and Kindness to these Brethren; and yet could obtain no manner of Requital, from such indefensible
sensible Wretches, for his own unexampled Bounty. So much, indeed a great deal more, there is in that short Exhortation, _Walk in love, as Christ_ ver. 2.

also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling Saviour.

The remainder of this day's Epistle is, in the general Design and Substance, much the same with That, read last Sunday. The Vices he would correct or prevent, the same. The Arguments to deter Men from them, the same. So that my Reader may, if his Memory stand in need, be there refreshed, as to the nature of the Crimes. And for the Contradiction and Scandal they are to our Christian Profession, not only That, but the several Discourses, here referred to, have prevented me in the main Argument of the Scripture now in hand. Mean while the Dangers and the Temptations in This Particular Case are so exceeding great, that our Church hath thought _Precept upon Precept_ little enough: and so to press the Matter upon our Consciences, as to discharge the Office of a careful and tender Mother, by guarding all her Children against the very Approaches of the Enemy. To which purpose I take those Rules for Conversation to be of singular use, which may be drawn from the 4th and 11th Verses here, somewhat to each whereof I shall set my self to say at this time.

After having, at the 3d Verse, utterly exterminated _Fornication_ and _all uncleanness in Practice_, the Apostles proceeds, at the 4th to pass the same _Sentence upon Filthiness_, and _foolish Talking_, and _Jesting_, as things also disagreeable to the Character of Christians. A Caution highly reasonable and necessary, upon the following Accounts.
1. If we consider the use of Speech in general. A Prerogative peculiar to Mankind, and fitted for the Benefit and Comfort of a Creature formed for Society. By this we transmit to others, with great Ease and Freedom and Exactness, the Thoughts of our own Mind; and become capable of diffusing the Riches of that Knowledge in a Moment, the gathering whereof may have cost us the Pains and Study of many Years. And to such Purposes no doubt it was, that the Giver of this Faculty design'd it should be employed; the setting forth his Honour; (for which reason some suppose David to have given to the Tongue the Titles of his Glory, and the best Member that he had) The Instruction of our Brethren, and promoting their Virtue. Hence St. Paul, in the 4th of this Epistle, requires, that all our Conversation should be edifying; at least not corrupt, but the innocent Entertainment of those, with whom we converse; that so the Power granted us of making other People wiser and better, may not be so far perverted, as to render them the worse. For this were such a Reproach and Affront to our Maker, such vile Ingratitude to our bountiful Benefactor, as a Learned Jew not unfitly compares to that Difingenuity of the Israelites heretofore; Who, forgetting whence, and why, it came into their Hands, profaned that Gold and Silver, which the Blessing of the true God had multiplied, by melting it down into Images, and devoting it to the Service and Worship of Baal.

2. The reasonableness of this Caution will farther appear to us, if we reflect at all upon the Mischiefs, that follow upon the abuse of Speech. I speak not now of those, which the Sin of it draws upon the Guilty Person himself, but of such, as fall upon Them, with whom we keep company. And These, indeed
indeed are infinite. For with the same ease are both
good and evil Notions conveyed, but by no means
both with the same Efficacy and Success. To fix the
Good, and form our Acquaintance into our Virtues
and commendable Dispositions, asks Labour, and
Skill, and a world of Management and Address: Be-
cause we have a natural Corruption to work against,
and many Prejudices to dislodge, before we can get
access to them. But the Evil find us disposed and
ready to their hand; Our Hearts are open, our Af-
flections meet them half way; and all Impressions are
quickly made, and hardly defaced, which flatter Ap-
petite, strike in with Inclination, and promote the
Gratifications of Flesh and Sense. Experience daily
shews, how much easier it is to debauch a Man, and
unsettle all his right Principles; than it is, to reform
him, and clear him of those, that are corrupt. The
Former may be effected by Sport and Diversion, The
Latter is Business, and requires much Application.
In order to This, he must think and be serious; For
That, it suffices that he do not think at all. The Sal-
lies of a smart but undisciplin'd Wit serve to laugh
Men out of their Sobriety and Religion. Nay even
an uncommon Expression, that makes up in Confi-
dence and Surprize, what it wants in Wit, is often
able to expose the best and most Sacred, and to re-
commend the worst and vilest things; to wound a
Neighbour's Reputation mortally, or to diminish the
Reverence due to God himself. So dangerous are all
Affectations of this kind, to ingratiate our selves to
our Company, at the expence of Piety, or Justice,
Sober Sense, or Good Manners. Of so pernicious In-
fluence those Liberties, which are apt to stick by
Them, that hear and see them taken; to draw them
first to Liking, and then to Imitation. And there-
fore, to all, who retain any Belief and Apprehension
of a Future Judgment, so dreadful must appear the
Consequence of enflaming our own Account, by the Addition of those Sins in others, which such Conver-
sation hath inspired, or encouraged. For, by thus making Our Manners Theirs, we have in proportion transferred Their Guilt, and made That to become Ours.

3. But, Third'y, This Guilt and Danger hath some Circumstances of Aggravation, peculiar to the Case now under debate. St. Paul, who, in other Instances, advices to stand our Ground against Temptations, and fight it out manfully, hath counsell'd his Son Timothy to flee from youthful Lusts. The reason for prescribing so different a Method, seems to be, that the Enemy, in this Attack, is favoured by so strong a party within, that the safest Course is to save our selves, not by a formal Repulse, but by giving him a Diversion. Hence Solitude, and even Religious Retirements, have sometimes been found a less powerful Defence, than Business and Company. But then that Company must not be such, as shall repeat and double our difficulty, by strengthening the Poison, instead of proving our Antidote. And indeed that Company must be very ill chosen, which does so. Nature seems to have left us sufficient directions in this Matter; and, by confining some necessary Actions, to places of Secrecy and darkness, to say, that every thing relating to them should be kept up close in Silence. The Learned Rabbi, quoted just now, makes it an Intimation, how hateful an Obscenity is to God, that in the Language taught his own People, there are no Words expressing, either those parts, or the Uses served by them, which Modesty labours to conceal from common Sight, but all these things are signified by figurative and transferr'd Senses, of Words, that literally have a Sound perfectly inoffensive. And not He only, but the Heathen Orator, hath expos'd the humoursome Coarseness of some Phi-

losophers,
philosophers, who took upon them to vindicate the pro-
miscuous use of all Words, and confined Turpitude
and Indecency to Things and Actions only. He re-
resents them, in this regard, as contrary to Nature;
Neglecters and Afronters of the civilized
part of Mankind; Scoffers at Distinctions, which are of infinite use to preserve
Modesty and Decency in the World; and not to be
overturned by a Sophism so weak, as that of nothing
being unfit for one to relate, that is not unfit to do. He
urges, that the unfitness of some Actions depends up-
on the Manner, not the Fact; and These, which pri-
vacy acquires from Blame, the publication of may be
exceeding blameable. A Notion not possible to have
obtained so universally, if it had not been founded in
Nature, and the obvious reason of Things. Which,
in respect to our Pre-eminence above Brutes, and be-
cause our Excellence consists in the Operations of the
Rational Mind, hath led us to consult the Dignity of
our Species, by industriously concealing those Pleasures
and Appetites, common to Us with Them; and there-
fore Matter of Shame, to Creatures who have, tho'
none to such who have not, Faculties, and Enjoyments,
nobler than Those of Sense. This were good Rea-
soning, if the Matter needed it. But indeed the Blushes,
provoked upon such Occasions, infer a natural Aver-
sion; prevent our arguing upon the Point, and seem
to confess, that some Violence must be committed up-
on our Original Constitution, before a Man can either
allow such Licentiousness in his Own Discourse, or en-
ure it in Another’s.

And, Can there be a greater Reproach upon us,
than, that We should not discern, by the brightest
Revelation, what a Heathen did, by the mere light
of Reason? That he should judge so nicely the De-
corum proper for the Character of a Man, and We so
little regard what becomes that of a Christian? Sure-
ly
by our Precepts of the strictest Chastity, which oblige even to purity of Thought: Our Example of a Master and Saviour, who, though he disdained not to take our Flesh, yet took it not after the ordinary manner: Our Discoveries of a future and immortal State, where even the most innocent Appetites of this kind shall cease; ought to convince the Subjects to such Laws, the Servants of such a Lord, and the Heirs of such an Eternity, that the strictest Rules of Modesty should be their Measure. And, that Their Words and Actions should all carry such an Air of Innocence and Gravity; as may not only keep them from giving Offence, but procure to Them, and their Profession, Respect and Veneration from all, with whom they converse.

The Force of what hath been said upon this Subject, I suppose will without great difficulty be allowed me, by all Persons of Morality and tolerable Understanding, so far as those two Words Filthiness and Foolish talking are concerned; which may seem to denote such coarse Ribaldry, and barefaced Lewdness, as few are capable of hearing patiently. But for the Third of jesting, there may be some Doubt. The rather, because This is so requisite, to season our Conversation with Mirth. For Facetiousness is placed by the Philosopher in the rank of Virtues; as a commendable Medium, between Moroseness and Rusticity in One Extreme, and Insipid or Ill-manner’d Scurviness and Abusiveness in the Other. For clearing this Objection Two things should be observ’d. The One, relating to the more restrained, the Other to the more extensive and general, Sense of the Word.

1. Now, First, The Word, I take it, in the Passage we are upon, carries a particular and restrained Sense, such, as the Company we find it in, sufficiently determines. And thus it makes no difference from the former,
former, as to the Substance of the Things spoken, but purely as to the Manner of speaking them. And then, I think it very evident, that This is at least as much to be declined, as either of the Other. At least, I say: For our Discourse is Criminal, not according to the Sound, Words strike upon the Ear, but according to the Images they awaken in our Minds. When therefore the Matter and Design is Obscene; the more artful the Disguise is, the more mischief it does. It insinuates Lasciviousness with more Confidence and Security, fixes upon the Memory by the Uncommonness of its Wit, engages the Fancy by being dress'd up cleaner in Ambiguities, and puts us off our Guard, by ceasing to give manifest Offence. The Harm then is greater, and the Corruption more successful, when the Poison is gilded over. And much better it were, that those things could not be spoken without displeasing us, which hurt not, when they do not please; and are in truth not fit ever to be spoken at all.

2. But, Secondly, Take this Word jesting in its general Importance, and thus it may be, and often is, so order'd, as to be by no means unlawful, or any way unbecoming a Christian. For Religion does not change us from being Men. We have still the same natural Weaknesses, are still as unable to bear continual Labour, either of Mind or Body: And therefore we have still the same need to unbend the one, and recreate the other. And, What Method so effectual, what Pleasure so truly Manly, can we take on these Occasions, as the harmless Mirth of an ingenious Conversation, and the Salt of a facetious Wit, to refresh and quicken us? To suppose Men oblig'd always to be upon the Serious and Dismal, were to charge Christianity with the hardship, of bereaving them of one of the most valuable Comforts of Life. To admit Laughter ones self, or to provoke it in our Brethren, is not
below the Character of the Gravest. And Men may very innocently be as facetious as they please, provided the Subject they choose be fit, the Design harmless, the Time seasonable, the Measure moderate; that they remember Jestings may be good Diversion, but cannot be good Business; and that nothing is truly Wit, or ought to please, which would entertain us, to the prejudice of God or our Neighbour, of Religion or Justice, of Modesty or Good-manners.

I have now done with this part of my Discourse, after entreating my Reader, seriously to consider the Matter of it; to beware, that in these Respects he offend not with his Tongue; and earnestly to implore the assistance of Divine Grace, for avoiding the horrible Guilt of cherishing in himself, or raising in others, such Ideas and Desires, as require our utmost care to subdue and lay them to sleep: and for adorning the Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, by such communication, as may minister Profit to the Hearers. To which End, Let it please thee, O Lord, to set a Watch before all our mouths, and keep the door of our lips.

II. The Other Head, I proposed to treat of, is That Duty, enjoined by the Apostle at the 11th Verse, Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. By having no fellowship with such Works I presume a great deal more to be meant, than not living in the Habit, or under the Power of them, nay, or even than not complying with the Temptations to, and not committing them in our own Persons. Something, which may declare our dislike an abhorrence of them, and probably all, that the following particulars contain.

1. The keeping aloof off from, and, as much as the Condition of our Affairs will permit, shunning the Conversation and intimate Acquaintance of, scandalously wicked Men. This indeed, considering how quick the Infection spreads, is advisable for the security
curity of our own Virtue. And in that regard it hath been urged heretofore. The End I now mention it for, is the discountenancing of Vice, shaming Men into better Manners, and making them sensible, that the giving open Scandal by a profligate Life is an Injury and Affront to good Men, which every one is concerned to resent. We do not by any means answer the intent of outward Respects, and particular Endearments, if we do not make them Distinctions of Virtue and Vice. Nor do we sufficiently arm our Brethren against the malignant Influence of a Bad Example, except we let Them see our Value for Virtue, and our Aversion to Vice; by the choice of our Friendships, and the delights of our Intimacies being confined to Good Men: and by never entering into the like close Amities with Bad Men, farther than Relation, or Gratitude, or some temporal warrantable Consideration, or a Prospect of doing such Persons Service, in order to their Amendment, shall induce us. None of these, rightly understood, break in upon this Rule. For the Rest are Acts of Necessity, not Choice: The Last indeed is chosen, but chosen, as an Act of Charity and Duty.

2. Therefore Another Instance of having no fellowship with works of Darkness, is, When the Persons of Ill Men cannot, or ought not to be declined, yet that we then be sure to order Matters so, that it may plainly appear, their Wickedness hath no part of our Favour and Approbation; and that They themselves, if this were removed, would be yet more dear and valuable in our Esteem. Complacency in other People’s Faults is always a Crime. And in Some Cases it may happen to draw a greater Guilt upon the Delighter in, than upon the Committer of, them. As, to instance in the Subject we have just been considering; Sins of Uncleanliness are the Effect of natural Propen-
sions, and very strong Passions. The stronger guard,
tis sure, we are bound to set against them. But still
here may be the Suddenness, or the Violence, of a
Temptation, though not resisted as it should have
been. But now, when a Person entertains Others
with his Lewdness, and when those Others think
themselves entertained by it; This is all done in cold
Blood. This argues a wretched Depravation of the
Will, a Man more loft to Modesty and Chastity, and
a more habitual Impurity, than a single Act of a higher
Degree. And it seems very reasonable to believe, that
many Sinners, in common account more infamous,
shall find it much more tolerable at the Day of Judg-
ment, than those obscene and filthy Wretches, whose
Tongues and Ears are defiled, if their Bodies be not.
These Persons are not one whit the less impure, be-
cause, did they abstain upon a Principle, (call it Re-
ligion, Honour, What you will) the same is of equal
force, to breed a disgust to all open breaches upon De-
cency and Modesty. That they proceed no farther,
may be from fear of Shame, or Disease, or the like:
And for this Restraint they have their Reward. But
that they go so far, is a plain Evidence of a Conscience
greatly misinformed, or greatly defiled. For the de-
lighting in another's Sin is so far from rendring it
none to us; that St. Paul puts this last, as the highest
aggravation of the Heathen World's Abominations,
Rom. i. 32.
Who knowing the judgment of God, (that
they who commit such things are worthy of
death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that
do them.

Mean while this Dislike of other People's Wicked-
ness, though common to all who are truly good,
must be content with such Expressions, and outward
Indications, as are proper and practicable. Where
Circumstances will bear it, Reproof, Friendly Ad-
monition, or Authoritative Rebukes, are highly ex-
pedient.
pedient. Where they will not, we must have re-
course to a forbidding Look, a Silence marking Sor-
row or Displeasure, withdrawing from the Company,
or some such Testimony of being ill at ease, as a Wife
and Good Man will find always at hand, and chuse, as
a Pious but discreet Zeal shall direct.

3. But Thirdly, There is one sort of Reproof, which
no conjuncture of Circumstances can put out of our
power, and it seems to have been That, which this
Apostle had chiefly in view, The disclaiming all Fel-
lowsip with the Works of Darkness, by the Light of a good
Example. For, it is here, as with those Metaphors
made use of to denote them, that a Bad Example is
never so effectually exposed, nor the Deformity and
Odiousness of it so manifestly detected, as when set in
Opposition to, and illustrated by, a Good one. Now
this Reproof, as it is a Duty indispensible in the Per-
son giving, so is it unexceptionable, and can create no
Refentment, in the Persons on whom it falls. The
less, because it is not particularly directed to This
or That Man, but general, and intended for all that
need it. The less still, because impossible to pro-
ceed from Envy, or Malice, or Peevishness, and a
desire to find fault; as other Reproofs may, often
do, and, when they do not, are at least accused of
doing so, the better to elude the force, and defeat
the intended effect of them. But This is not only a
Rebuke, but a Guide, and an Encouragement, to all
that observe it. It shews them the Way, goes before
them in it, proves the possibility of Obedience, and
beats Men off from all those fond Pretences of Duties
difficult or impracticable, from whence they seek
Protection for their Hypocrify, or their Sloth. It
proves the Person's Sincerity, and thus recommends
him to Imitation; and, where there is an opportuni-
ty for arguing, it persuades and convinces, above
all the Rhetorick in the World. That can but de-
scribe.
scribe, and help the Imagination to some abstracted Ideas of Virtue; This shews the Life, and by reducing those Ideas into Practice, appeals to Sense, and Observation, and Experience, for the Excellence, the Beauty, the Usefulness, and upon all Accounts the Loveliness of Religion.

4. Particularly in the Fourth place, as the most undeniable Evidence, that the Good Man hath no fellowship with the works of darkness, he will think himself concerned to abstain very carefully, not only from every thing that is positively and directly sinful, but from all appearances of, and approaches to, Evil. The want of this Caution ruins multitudes of unwary Souls. Many there are indeed who make a Conscience of breaking a plain and peremptory Law; but, as if they were under the Government of some Arbitrary and Tyrannical Lord, they appear upon all occasions extremely nice, and jealous of their Liberty, and seem to be more solicitous for nothing, than to prevent Encroachments. Hence we find so many dismal Consequences, whose first beginning owed itself to the abuse of things in themselves indifferent. Hence St. Chrysostom, with equal Piety and Wisdom, from those words in the 4th of this Epistle, Let no corrupt Communication come out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, &c. expostulates thus: "That Evil is very great, which is reputed none at all. For what we count no Evils, we are apt to overlook; when thus despised, they quickly grow upon us; and so continue growing, till they become incurable. And again, upon this Chapter, This is the Artifice of the Devil, to persuade Men to disregard things indifferent. For even such ought not to be despised, since we know, that from this very cause many enormous and great Evils have grown; and from Foolish Talking Men rise to Fornication and Adultery, &c. In short, it shews a Mind but ill disposed,
disposed, when a Man is curious and inquisitive about the Bounds of Christian Liberty; and, upon every occasion, for going to the very End of his Line. A Course exceeding hazardous, and such as gives the Tempter great Advantage. For, when we are perpetually upon the Confines, he easily gains Opportunities of luring us into his own Territories, and of deceiving us by the shortness of the distance. This at least shews a secret Affection for Evil. And the very deliberating to a nicety, how far we may venture, is faulty; Because it argues our Wishes, that we might still go farther. The truly Pious Man, on the other hand, finds no occasion for Scruples of this kind. He resolves to be safe, and to go upon sure grounds. He never tampers with his Conscience, nor runs the risque of a Disputable Cafe. Where Duties are commanded in the general, without a measure set, he chuses rather to exceed, than to stop short: As in the frequency of Prayer, the Quantity of his Alms, and the like. And where Refreshments, or Recreation, or Pleasures, (or any other thing, which is the proper Object of Temperance and Prudence) are allowed, but the Circumstances and degrees are left to his own Discretion; he always takes less than he might justify. This plainly shews the Man devoted to God and his Duty. This acquires him from any fellowship with the works of darkness, which the Doubters, and the nice Ballancers of Christian Liberty, cannot be cleared of. Because, were there not a sensual and selfish Principle at bottom, which would fain compound the matter between God and Mammon, Religion and Appetite, Darkness and Light; such Evasions and Distinctions had never been heard of, as were invented, and are applied, (’tis to be feared) not to teach Men, how Much they should do, but how Little would serve the turn; not how affectionately they should love God, but how well they may love Pleasure with Impunity. In a Word,
Word, an Honest Heart is the best Casuist; and will preserve us from Danger and Disquiet, better than all the Schoolmen, and critical Distinguishers in the World. Those may help to resolve a Doubt, but this will not venture, where there is a Doubt; and it is Wisdom, as great as all Their Volumes contain, not to come in the way of needing any of them.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

The Gospel.


But some of them said, be casteth out devils, through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.

Paraphrase.

16. Others disputing these Evidences of his Messiahship, required him to shew some Sign from Heaven, alluding possibly to the Prophecy of Daniel vii. 13. To these he replies, ver. 29. To the former Objection he answers here. (The whole whereof being explained particularly in the Comment, I forbear any farther Paraphrase.)

17. But be knowing their thoughts, said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say, that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.

22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusteth, and divideth his Spoils.

23. He that is not with me is against me, and he that gateth not with me, scattereth:

24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself,
self, and they enter in, and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou boastst of.

28. But he said, yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

Comment.

Of what unhappy Power private Interests and Prejudices are in Matters of Religion, and how great a bar they put to Mens coming to the knowledge and belief of the Truth, we cannot have a clearer Proof, than from the Instance set before us, in the Portion of Scripture appointed to be read this day. Jesus is here said to have disposed of a dumb Spirit; and the Operation was so amazing and so effectual, that the Devil immediately quitted his hold, the Tongue that he had tied up before was presently loosed, the dumb spake, and the people wondered.

This Wonder indeed was the natural consequence of so sudden and mighty a Cure. For the Diseases of this kind were always looked upon with Horror and Despair, and acknowledged to exceed all the force of common Remedies and Human Helps. And when they saw a Recovery perfected without any tedious Methods of Application, only by virtue of one commanding Word; a Word too absolute for the Strength of Hell to withstand; This would necessarily carry them to admire, not only the thing, but also the Person by whom it was done.

Of this the Scribes and Pharisees were well aware, who had degenerated so far into Ambition and Covetousness, as now to use their Authority over the People, no longer for Their Benefit, but their Own. The Advantage they sucked from their falling to them was no small one: And, provided this could but be continued and secured, it was no great concern to Them, what became of the Consciences under their direction. The
Reputation of our Saviour's Miracles press'd them hard. And great danger there was, that the Multitude should be drawn off, and join themselves to this new Master, of whose Commission they beheld so many, and such convincing, Testimonies every Day. Some Stratagem was necessary, to check this growing Prophet, and ruin him in the Esteem of the People; for things were now brought to that desperate pass, that both their Credits could not stand together. What then was to be done in this Case? For, that indeed a notable Miracle had at this very time been wrought by him, was manifest to all them that were present, and they could not deny it. The Powers of Nature were evidently outdone, and somewhere else they must lay it. But, if they could insinuate, that there was a Secret in all this, which, tho' the credulous and easy vulgar could not discover, yet themselves, who were wiser, and examined things more nicely, saw clearly into: That might prevail with Men to proceed more warily, and at least to suspend their Belief for some time.

To this purpose they agree with the Crowd, in the Confeffion of a supernatural and invisible Power, concerned in these Matters; but, at the same time crafily warn them not to be too rash, and easily impos'd upon. For, that the Devil, who is the Great Deceiver of Mankind, might very probably play booty, and enable our Lord to cast out Devils, only the more effectually to ensnare and betray Men. Thus they hardned themselves and their Hearers, by a most obstinate and perverse Calumny, by attributing what they could not deny to be above the Power of Nature and Art, to the Concurrence of the Devil. Rather chusing to make it pass for the Work of Hell, so to countenance their own wicked Infidelity, and to discourage the Belief of Others; than to confess the Spirit of God, even where his Power and Goodness appeared most eminently visible, and, where nothing could
could have hindered them from seeing it, but a settled Resolution, not to see, and not to be persuaded.

Upon men so violently bent against the Truth, there was little hope of any Good to be done. But however, when so malicious and black an Aspersión was cast upon our Saviour, it was necessary to refute it. This was a Right, he owed to himself, and to the Divine Spirit, by which he wrought. It was also an Act of Compassion, due to those better meaning People, whose Easiness might have been possesed by that impudent Cavil of their Spiritual Guides. Upon these accounts our Lord condescends to reason the Case with them; and, by four most undeniable Arguments, shews, that what they objected, could never be. That it was impossible, any Man of common Sense, or even They themselves, should imagine it true. And, because these Arguments make up the greatest part of this Gospel, I will touch them lightly, that you may read and hear what the Church hath recommended to your Meditation, with a better Understanding; and may discern the Absurdity of calling into question the Divinity of our Saviour's Miracles. Which is indeed so very material a Point, that the greatest Evidence of the Christian Religion stands upon this Bottom; And, if those Miracles could be proved either False, or Diabolical; the very Foundations would be torn up, and we should never be able to Support our Cause without them.

The first of those Arguments proceeds upon common Experience, and the known Mischiefs and Disorders, which follow upon Divisions: In regard all Societies, the less, as well as the greater, owe their Subsistence and Preservation to Amity and Concord, and can never maintain themselves, except by an united Strength. Whenever therefore any thing happens to break and divide them, Destruction presently follows. Of this the Devil is so sensible, that he makes it his business
perpetually to Sow the Seeds of Discord and Discontent, 
Animosities and Jealousies among Men. He knows, 
that this is to play Parties against One Another; And, 
that the End of it will be the dash'ing, and breaking One 
Another to pieces. But He, who so well understands 
the Consequence of such Separated Interests in Other 
Cases, and uses them with so much Artifice to Our 
Ruin, cannot be Supposed, to be so far forfaken of all 
Policy and common Prudence, as to employ this dan-
gerous Weapon against himself. Nor can the Nature 
of the thing be so changed, as to produce a quite con-
trary Effect in the Kingdom of Darkness, from what 
it does in all other States. Nay as it produces, even 
in private Families, where the Difference might seem 
more easy to be compos'd, or over-powered. And 
therefore, since we see daily, that every Kingdom di-
vided against it self is brought to destruc'tion, and that a 
house divided against a house falleth; it were most ab-
surd to suppose, that our Saviour should cast out De-
vils through Beelzebub. Because, at this rate, Satan 
would be divided against himself; and the effect of this 
would be, that his Kingdom could no longer stand. This 
is the Importance of what we find urged, at the 17th 
and 18th Ver'ses of this Chapter.

The Two following Ver'ses proceed to a Second Ar-
gument, in which the Persons of these Objectors them-
selves were more immediately concerned. It was a 
very common thing among the Jews, to make use of 
the Name of the God of Abraha'm in Exorcisms. And, 
ther' they made this the Occasion of a great many Su-
perstitious Practises, yet God was pleased many times 
to give Success, to such Solemn Invocations of his 
Name. By this Presence of his Power he saw fit to 
signalize and distinguish his own People, who wor-
shipped the one true God only; from the rest of the 
World, who still continued in Ignorance and Idolatry. 
Now these Operations of a Divine Spirit the Scrib'es 
and
and Pharisees were very fond and proud of; because they thought a great deal of Honour devolved upon their Religion from hence, and consequently upon themselves, who were the very Oracles, and Teachers of it to the People. And upon this Account, our Saviour mentions the Spirits, that were frequently dispossessed by their own Disciples; to shew their most unreasonable Malice against himself; and the Wickedness of that Partiality they were transported with. For they ascribed the very same Operations to the Devil, when done by Christ; which they freely acknowledged to be the wonderful Work of God; and boasted of, and valued themselves upon them as such, when their own Prophets and Children were made the Instruments and Ministers of them. If therefore the Fruit be the Same in both cases, it is manifest, that the Tree producing it must be the Same too. And, if that be owned, and admired for a good Tree in one case; Nothing but Frowardness, and Envy, and the incorrigible Obstinate of the very Devil himself, can call it a Thorn or a Thistle, when the Grapes and the Figs gathered from it are still the Same. If then I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom (says he) do your Sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your Judges. But if I with the Finger of God cast out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.

Thirdly, The Devil is that Wolf, who cometh not, but to catch, and to tear, and to destroy. He seizeth upon Men as his Prey, and he is so greedy of that Prey, as never to let it go again, till they be forced out of his Hands. So that, whenever any wicked Spirit is dispossessed; This comes to pass, not for want of employing any Subtilty or Strength that he hath; but from having his Force overpowered, and his Cunning defeated, by a Being wiser, and mightier than himself. And Such a Being is none but God only. So that, where-ever dumb and deaf Spirits are cast out, this is an unde-
undeniable Evidence of a Superior, that is of a Divine, Power. All which our Lord hath very elegantly argued at the one and two and twentieth Verses, under the Similitude of a Man, standing upon his own defence, and guarding the Wealth under his Custody. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his Goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his Spoils.

Lastly, Since to People of such perverse Dispositions, nothing, though never so improbable in it self, will seem unfit to be objected; if any of them should yet entertain an Imagination so extravagant and wild, as that This might still be done, by some Collusion and private Consent; And that, how opposite soever our Saviour's Miracles might appear to the World, yet there was underhand a very good agreement between Him and this Prince of Darkness, and secretly they understood one another well enough: Therefore to all the rest he adds a Fourth Argument, containing the direct Contrariety of their Ends, and Interests, and the utter Impossibility of ever reconciling them. Where Men combine together to impose upon the World, they only chuse different Means, but unite together in the same Design. And this is, as Robbers take several Roads for a Blind, but meet at last in one Place. But now, between Christ and Beelzebub there can be no such Contrivance, or Accommodation. Their Ends, as well as the Methods that lead to them, are the most distant that can be; the most destructive of one another, of any that ever were. Here is a rooted and fix'd Enmity. The One cannot be safe, except in the ruin of the Other; And the Quarrel is so high, that every body must be in one of the Parties. No Favour, no countenancing of the One, nay no Indifference or Neutrality is possible, and consistent with Friendship to the Other. So says the 23d Verse expressly. He
that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

To these Reasons, in his own Vindication, our Lord subjoins a Parabolical Description of the woful Estate of those Impenitent Jews, who were but the worse for all the Means of Grace vouchsafed them; and made no other use of the Miracles and Doctrine of our Saviour, than to add proportionably to their own Misery and Condemnation. While the Devil was driven out of Others, he got faster and stronger hold of Them; and therefore, as their Sin and Obstinacy was greater now than ever: So the Calamity and Mischief consequent to it, would be more dismal and dreadful, than any that had ever befallen that Nation before. As the Leprosy of Naaman clave to Gebazi, so these wicked Spirits, so soon as they were dislodged in one place, betook themselves to another. The Pharisees were a convenient retreat for them; In their Hearts they found all things to their Wish, as if they had been Lodgings prepared, and put into that posture, on purpose to entertain them.

These Arguments of our Blessed Saviour were so full, and so convincing; and the Judgment he passed upon those obstinate Wretches, so just and so moving; that, though we are not told of any great Impression upon Them; yet one of the Standers by, who heard them without prejudice, and considered the weight and power of what had been said, felt her self so lively affected, as immediately to cry out with Rapture and Admiration, Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

This is a Natural way of extolling any ones Excellency, by proclaiming the Happines of their Parents. For Parents know no greater Felicity, that Heaven can give in this World, than wise and virtuous Children. And sure no Instance of this kind was ever comparable to that of the Mother of our Lord. All Gene-
Generations might well call her Blessed, who was honoured with a Birth so wonderful, so much above the rate of common Mothers. What Praise, what Admiration, what Reverence, that is fit to be given to the most Excellent of Creatures, can be thought in reason too much for Her, whom an Angel was sent to, to acquaint Her with such a Conception, as Nature never did, or can know; for Her, who was impregnated with the pure, the incorruptible, the Almighty Operation of a Divine Spirit; for Her, whose Womb God himself did not abhor. The Best and most deservedly Conspicuous among the Sons of Men have yet this Allay, that they are born of polluted Principles, and formed of perishing and corruptible Matter; such as is subject to a world of Weakness and Frailty, and must, in a little while, fall back again into that Dust from whence it was first taken. And yet, where we see a great and generous Mind, that struggles bravely with the World, and distinguishes it self from the rest of Mankind, and gets above the common Vices and Temptations of Human Nature; We cannot forbear admiring it; We overlook that Allay of Infirmity, with which even the best of Mortals are debased, and envy that Honour, which such Persons reflect back upon their Ancestors. So acknowledged a Truth, and so natural a one it is, that a Wife Son is the Glory of his Father, and the just Joy and Pride of her that have him. So effectually does the Comfort of Good Children turn Sorrow into Triumph, and make a happy Mother not only forget, but even bless and rejoice in, that Travail and Pain, which is all well recompensed with true Knowledge and exemplary Goodness. And the Honour of bringing into the World a Useful and Excellent Person, and of being instrumental in adding to the number of glorified Saints, is a Joy which all acknowledge; but Parents only can know, and feel the real Charms, and sweet Complacencies of it.

But
But alas! What is all this, in comparison of the Virgin’s Happiness? For She alone had this incommunicable Privilege, of having a Son of perfect and unblemish’d Virtue, a Son of untainted and Immortal Nature; One absolutely above the Reach of Death and Hell; One, who died, only that he might conquer Death, and lead into Captivity that Tyrant of Darkness; One, over whose Body Worms and Putrefaction had no power. She lived to see the Flesh he took of Her, burst asunder the Bands and brazen Bars of the Grave; She beheld him rise in Triumph, and saw Her own Substance exalted to the Right Hand of the Throne of God, deck’d with Light as with a Garment, and cloathed with Incomprehensible Majesty and Honour. And therefore Blessed indeed was the Womb that bare this Wonderful, this Divine Child, yea blessed for ever, and, in that respect, blessed above all Women, shall this Mother be.

But yet, when we have said all we can or all we may upon this Occasion; still St. Augustin’s Remark will hold good, that this nearness of Relation to Christ had done Mary no Service, if she had not born him in her Heart to better purpose, than she did in her Body. And therefore her Blessedness is more owing to her receiving the Faith of Christ in her Heart, than it was to the conceiving his Flesh, as her Son. If then we would be Happy, our Lord hath shewed us a more effectual, and a more excellent way: He denies not the Blessedness, which the Zeal of this Woman pronounces; But, allowing, That to be as great, as it was possible for Her to imagine it, yet, if compared with that of Obedience to God’s Commands, he informs us, that even This was but little and low. For the Reply he made extenuates the One, when put into the Balance with the Other, He said, Yea, rather blessed are they, that bear the word of God and keep it.
By hearing the Word of God, no doubt, is meant all that Reverence and Attention of Mind, all that Teachable Temper and Good Disposition of the Will, which prepares and inclines Men to receive it effectually. And, by keeping this Word, the continuing in what we have heard, and making it the Rule and Standard of all our Conversation. The believing all those mysterious Truths, and the observing and profiting under those most Holy Precepts, which our Saviour hath taught us in his Gospel. And this our Saviour declares to be a Happy State indeed. A Privilege, above any the Prerogatives of this present World, in which one Man excels another. For sure, if any temporal Advantage might stand in Competition with This, that of being honoured with the Conception and Birth of the Son of God, must needs have been it. No Honour, no Greatness can ever be so singular, so miraculous, so immortal, and therefore none so desirable, as This. And yet even this is outdone by that Spiritual Regeneration, whereby Christ is conceived in our Hearts, and born and brought to Light, in the Pious, and Just, and Charitable, Actions, of a Holy Life.

The necessary Time that I have spent, in explaining the foregoing parts of this Passage, hath not left me at liberty to enlarge upon this Subject, as otherwise I might have done. Nor is it very material that I should. For Two or Three plain Arguments will suffice, to persuade us of this Truth. And, if we will but attend duly to These, it will quickly appear, that our Saviour hath calculated things very justly, and pass'd a true Estimate upon both those Blessednesses; when he does not disown the Greatness of the One, and yet gives so manifest a Preference to the Other. For,

First, Every Happiness is the more valuable, as it is capable of being made more General. The valuing our
felves upon having somewhat which Others have not, argues a great defect in that very thing we have; and shews, that, what we esteem good, is not so, except in Opinion and Comparison only. This is the Case of Riches, and Honours, and the Rest of our Worldly Advantages. These would cease to be remarkable, and sink very low in our Esteem; if all Mankind were partakers of them, in the same Degree with our selves. And this, I say, shews, that there can be nothing, or very little of true Excellence, in that Object, which recommends it self, not so much from our own Plenty, as from Other Peoples Penury and Want. For, whatever is real Happiness, hath a sort of Sufficiency in it self; and cannot depend upon such mean and ill-natur'd Considerations, as the Defects, or the Misfortunes of our Brethren. These are proper Subjects for our Pity and Compassion, but cannot be warrantable grounds of Pride and Triumph to any truly Good Man. Now the being the Mother of our Blessed Saviour, is what all One Sex are absolutely debarr'd from; and what all the Other Sex but One, are utterly incapable of too. And it would argue God a very strange, and partial, nay a very Cruel Being, if he should have created so many Millions of Men and Women, and yet have provided so slenderly for them, that Only One Person, among that infinite number, should be able to attain the greatest Honour and Happiness, that Human Nature could ever aspire to. But Virtue and Religious Wisdom lie open, and in common to all. Every Man, with the ordinary Assiustances of Grace, and his own faithful Endeavours, may get this Blessing into his possession. And no Man is the less Wise, or the less Holy, for Another's being so; but finds an Addition to his own Happiness, and a sensible Joy, in that of Others. The more diffusive this is, the greater it is; And, if it were Universal, it would be greater still. Which shews, that this is an Happiness rooted
rooted in the nature of the thing, not precarious and depending upon Fancy and meer Notion; that this is an Extensive Good, fit for a Bountiful God to propose, and worthy of a Reasonable Man to pursue.

Secondly, No other Happiness is properly Our own. We neither give, nor can continue, any thing else to our selves; but This is strictly Ours, and a Joy that no Man taketh from us. The Virtue of a Child, or of a Parent, is Ours only by Reflection; and That, but a very weak and distant one too. The praise of it is not due to our Selves, but to Him; And they are His Excellencies, not Ours, that we please our selves with. The Image indeed comes back to us, and we take a pleasing view of it, as of our Faces in a Glass; But neither the Light, nor the Substance, that makes the Image, are in the Glass itself. This is only the Instrument of reflecting it back again, and contributes nothing to the Beauty of the Face. Thus all, that we can pretend to, is, that Providence hath been kind in making us some way Instrumental, towards the shewing such Goodness to the World. But still we must remember, that this Goodness is not ours, but Anothers. The Enjoyments of the present Life are the Gifts of Fortune; And when we have them, they lie at the Mercy of every capricious Turn of Fortune, to snatch them from us again. We did not bestow them upon our selves, and we cannot preserve them one Moment, but by the permission of the Donor. But Virtue and Religion are properly Ours. These are not our Fate but our Choice; the Work of our own Minds, and the Treasures of our own getting. No Circumstances, tho' never so fortunate, can put them into our possession; none tho' never so miserable, have the power to deprive us of them. We need only be kind to our selves, and we shall certainly have them; And we must conspire against our selves, if ever we lose them. And sure that Happiness deserves to
to be valued above all others, which is left at our own disposal. So easy to be attained, that nothing can hinder or disappoint us in the pursuit; and so durable and certain, that nothing can impoverish us, or cut off our enjoyment of it.

Thirdly and Lastly, The bearing and keeping of God's Word must needs be the greatest Blessedness, because this, as St. Paul expresses it, hath the promises both of this Life, and that which is to come. As well may we expect Brightness without Light, or Heat without Fire, as Felicity without Virtue. It is not in the Nature of the Thing, it is not in the wise Ordinance and Appointment of God. In the present Life, be that beareth Christ's sayings, and doth them, is called the house built upon a Rock. Because this is the only thing, that can keep such a one from being the Sport of Fortune, and secure his Happiness against all the spight and uncertainty of a dangerous and unstable World. The Winds may blow, and the Waves beat and roar, but they only break themselves; and will never be able to move, or wash him off from his firm Foundation. And, for the Next World, all our hopes turn upon this and such like gracious Declarations, be that beareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall never come into. Condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. That the blessed Virgin is honourable among the Saints above, the Christian Church hath always thought it reasonable to believe. But the cause of all this Honour, by all who have thought wisely of the matter, is not imputed to the bearing of our Saviour, in which she was purely passive; so much as in that Innocence and Piety, which was her own Act, and rendered her meet to be chosen for the Mother of God.

All I shall add, upon this Occasion, is a serious Exhortation, That Men would learn from hence, where
their Happiness lies, and pursue it accordingly: That they would consider the Honours due to Virtue and Goodness, and secure these to themselves. How should we despise the mean and trifling Advantages of this present World, in comparison of this only true and valuable one? Or, if we will still be fond of Greatness, and Wealth, and Places of Authority, let us not suffer our Eyes to be dazzled with a false and empty shew, but covet that, which is substantial Honour. And, where this is to be had, the wise Son of Sirach hath instructed us, Among Brethren be that is chief is honourable, so are they that fear the Lord, in his Eyes. Whether a man be rich, noble, or poor, their glory is the fear of the Lord. Great-men, and Judges, and Potentates, shall be honoured, yet is there none of them greater than he that feareth the Lord. If we will still admire a noble Descent, and value our selves upon great Families, and being Allied to Royal Blood; let us at least improve this Vanity, by turning our Eyes another way, and take care to contrast the closest Relation to the King of Kings. For the Lord of Lords, and the supreme Prince of Heaven and Earth hath said it, that whosoever does the will of his Father, the same is his Brother, and Sister, and Mother. O incomprehensible Honour of Faith and Obedience! O Blessed Consanguinity! To be born of God, and to bear and bring forth the Lord Jesus in our Hearts: To express his Image in every Thought, and Word, and Action; and, to be our selves conformed to him, partakers of his Holiness, and his Crown. For the being thus his Brethren, and Children of God, is no empty Honour, no swelling sounding Name, but gives a sure Title to his Royalties and Possessions too. For if Sons, then are we heirs, heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ: Inheritors of a Kingdom, a Kingdom not like the perishing ones, that do dazzle our Eyes here upon Earth, but One unpeckably happy and full of Glory, that fadeth not away for ever in the Heavens.
The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that We who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Epistle.

Galat. iv. 21.

21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not bear the Law itself?

22. For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

23. But be, who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but be of the free-woman was by promise.

24. Which things are an Allegory: For these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which giveth to bondage, which is Agar.

25. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26. But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.

27. For it is written; Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children, than she which hath an husband.

28. Now Numbers of whose children Isaiab foreseeing, calleth upon her, notwithstanding her former barrennes, to rejoice in a Family, larger than others, who bore sooner, could boast of.
28. We therefore of the Christian Church were figured by Isaac, and owe our spiritual Birth to the Promise and Free Grace of God.

29. Nor are the Jews wanting to carry on the Allegory; but resemble the Disposition and Behaviour of Ishmael, in vexing the Christians, as he did Isaac.

30. And at the last Their Fate shall be his too, to be cast out from that Inheritance they would arrogate to their own Works: While we, who depend on the Promise of God, and expect to be justified by the Evangelical Covenant, not the Legal, shall be the only Heirs.

31. You see then, how these things belong to us; and consequently, how far we Christians are from any Obligation to that Law of Moses, which would destroy our free Condition, and disparage the Title our Birth gives us.

**Comment.**

The principal Design of this Epistle to the Galatians was to root out some false Notions, infused into them by their new Teachers, concerning the Necessity of still adhering to the Law of Moses. In Confutation whereof, he first insifts on several Topicks, with regard to the Nature and proper Use of that Law, and the Conditions and Privileges of the Gospel, as being far preferable to, and now inconsistent with the Observation, of it. Then he goes on, in this Portion of Scripture, to propound one Argument more, One drawn from the Writings of Moses himself; And therefore such, as ought to weigh with Them, whose intemperate and unseasonable Zeal for the Law, delivered by Him, proved them to hold his Authority in the highest Veneration.

The Strife laid on this Argument is apparently so great, as to call for a more particular Explanation, than a Paraphrase can be supposed to allow it. My present
present Endeavour shall therefore be, First, To enlarge a little upon some of the most material Passages relating to this Matter, and Then to deduce some few Inferences, agreeable to the Subject.

1. Now the Apostle here, by grounding his Argument upon a Point of History, seems plainly to imply, that, in some Facts related by Moses, the Jews ought not to rest in the Letter and Narration only. For that God intended the things then done, to be Figures of Others, which should be done hereafter; and, under the Rehearsal of some memorable Events read there, couched a mystical and very important Meaning. In some particularly, wherein Abraham was concerned, his Posterity, both carnal and spiritual, had an Interest; and might be let in to the Reasons and manner of God’s Proceedings with Them, by observing how he had dealt heretofore with Him, their renowned Father, and Common Representative.

2. To this purpose the Apostle takes notice of Two Sons born to that Patriarch, as Emblems of the Law and the Gospel; And, by some Circumstances relating to Them, applied to these Two Covenants, he forms his Reasoning, and confutes the vain Pretences of the Mosaic Institution being still obligatory, and the Gospel Terms being, either inferior to it, or insufficient for Salvation without it.

The First of these Circumstances is the different Condition of their respective Mothers. The One a Bond-woman, the Other a Free-woman: From whence follows the like Difference in their Children. For, since it was a known Maxim in Law, that the Children can have no Quality descending to them; but such as the Parent had, that bore them; and all that were born of Servants in the Family, the Master had, by such Birth, the same Title to, and Dominion over, as he had to their Parents by Contract: It follows, that the Son of this Bond-woman must be no better than a Servant. On
the other hand, the Free-woman, being the Master's Wife, and Mistress of the Family, Her Son must, in Conformity, be born in a State of Liberty; Such as gives him a Title to the Prerogatives of the First-born, and the Inheritance of his Father's Fortunes, exclusive of all Sons, (tho' born before in Time) begotten of any other Woman. The Bond-man born must be content with the Treatment, the Wages, the Provisions suitable to his Station; The Heir may depend upon all the Tenderness, the Affection, the liberal Education, the free Access, the encouraging Prospects and Reversions, due to the Quality and Succession he is born to.

3. These Mothers, in the Application, the Apostle hath acquainted us, are the Two Covenants, that is, the Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their Children consequent are the Persons living under those Covenants. The Bond-woman's, Those under the Law; the Free-woman's, We under the Gospel. How fitly so compared, will appear; by attending to the Characters given here of Each.

The Law is represented by Agar, a Mother of Servants only. This was given in Mount Sinai in Arabia, this answered to the Jerusalem that then was, and this gendereth to Bondage.

Whether the Name of that Mountain (in the Arabian Language called Hagar) were any part of the Apostle's Meaning in this Allusion or not: there is a great deal to justify it upon other Accounts. It is not without good Reason, that, after the sending to Bondage, the Apostle takes particular notice, that Sinai, represented by such a Mother, is a Mountain in Arabia. A Place inhabited by the Posterity of Agar, but withal, a Place at some distance from the Land promised to Abraham and his Seed; and, by the very Situation of it, intimating, that the Law issued, and the Covenant struck there, could not indent for the Blessings of Heavenly Canaan. As a Bond-woman then could not produce Free-
Free-children and Heirs, who her self was not free (in the literal Sense of this History) So neither (in the Mystery and typical Sense) could the Law, given without the Borders of Canaan have any Influence on, or convey a Title to, the Inheritance of Heaven; because Arabia, in which that Law was given, was not, and Canaan alone was, the Figure and Type of Heaven.

Again, this Agar answers to Jerusalem, that then was, and was in Bondage with her Children. The Descendants of Hagar in Arabia were then under the Roman Yoke; so were the Jews in Judea. The Hagarens too observed Circumcision, as a federal Rite; so did the Jews. In both Respects the Resemblance holds. And, if we chuse to understand him in the Latter, no wonder the Apostle charges it with Bondage. Since this is the very Yoke, which, through this whole Epistle, he exhorts his Disciples to break; and affirms, as a most valuable Instance of Christian Liberty, the Happiness of being exempted from it.

On the Other hand, Sarah the Free-woman is the Gospel-Covenant, and answers to Jerusalem above. A Covenant that came down from Heaven, and intimated God's good-liking, by its Promulgation, notonly from the Promised Land, but from the Place in that Land, which God delighted most in, confined his solemn Worship to, kept his peculiar Residence at, and placed his Name and all the Emblems of his Mercy there. The Persons under this Covenant are as Isaac, and his Favourite Posterity. They succeed into all the Privileges of their Mother, and to the Inheritance of their Father. A Mother, like her Type, fruitful in numerous Descendants from her, tho' it were late, e'er she began to bear; And, notwithstanding the Law was a Dispensation antecedent to the Gospel, (as Abraham had Ishmael several Years before Isaac) yet the Proselytes to the Gospel are many more, than ever those to the Law had been. (As Isaac's Seed was more mighty than Ishmael's.)
The Prerogatives of this Latter Issue excel those of the First; as Ishmael's Eldership gave him no Precedence, and by the Works of the Law no Flesh is justified, but all are saved by Virtue of this Second Covenant; as Isaac's Seed alone, but none of Ishmael's, inherited the Promised Land of Canaan.

Thus stands the Allegory, with regard to the First Branch of it, which distinguishes the Two Sons of Abraham, according to the different Condition of their respective Mothers. Before I proceed to the Second, it will be expedient to interpose a few Observations, for the more effectual clearing and confirming some of the Differences already mentioned, between the Covenants and Persons, of which St. Paul declares those Mothers, and their Children, to have stood for Figures.

1. We shall do well, upon this Occasion, to observe, wherein that Servitude properly consisted, which the Apostle charges the Law of Moses with keeping Men under. Or, in other Words, how that dispensation dealt with Men, in the Quality of Servants.

Now that Charge is made good, by the Nature of the Services it enjoined; a Burthen of Ceremonies, in themselves of no value; A Number of Purifications, which reached no farther than the cleansing of the Body; A Prohibition of gross and outwards Acts of Sin, which prevented the Scandal, but not the Guilt. As we employ our Servants in the drudgery and meanest Offices about the House; And provided our Business be dispatched, are not solicitous, from what Principle and Disposition our Commands are executed. It is again made good, by the Nature of the Rewards and Punishments, chosen for enforcing Obedience to that Law. A Land flowing with Milk and Honey, Victory over Enemies, Health to their Bodies, Increase to their Families, Prosperity in their Fortunes, to compensate the Trouble of their Compliance with this Law. Captivity and Exile, Scarcity and Barren-
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Barrenness, Adversity and Anguish, Crosses and Disappointments, to avenge their Violation and Contempt of it. Blessings and Curses, temporal and present All; of little value (in comparison) to Men, who carry immortal Souls about them; and answering to those slender Considerations we treat with Servants for; A little Wages paid down in Hand; A tolerable Subsistance from Hand to Mouth; but nothing of a Settlement: Corrections, that follow immediately upon the Fault, and a Discipline suitable to the Sordidness of Their Temper, which looks no farther, than present Smart, and present Profit. It is made good especially, by that Terror and perpetual Consternation of Mind, necessarily consequent upon a Law, Rigorous in exacting Works, without administering Ability to perform them; Sufficient to inform Men of their Guilt, but not providing Remedies against it; Threatening Death to Transgressions, (as the Condition of corrupt Nature then stood) not to be avoided, and not giving any comfortable Prospect of a Deliverance: As Slaves are contained in their Duty, by the Scourge held over them, or made to labour in sight of the Gibbet. Upon all which Accounts it is, that St. Paul most emphatically expresses the Advantage of being freed from such a Law, by saying, that we have not, in this new Covenant, received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear.

The Gospel, quite contrary, treats us as Free-men and Sons. It implofeth upon us nothing unfit for Men of generous Descent and liberal Education. It requires perfect and substantial Holinesse. Virtues of intrinsic Worth, answerable to the Dignity of Human Nature, such as adorn, exalt, and perfect it: Rests not in the outward Act, but carries these Virtues into our most secret Parts; Enjoins Purity of Heart, Uprightness of Intention; secures our Innocence, by tearing up Wickedness by the Roots; Makes us of a Piece throughout, and

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scts us above the little trickish Arts of Diffimulation and Constraint. These Virtues it enforces with the noblest Rewards; An Eternity of Joys; Joys worthy of, and agreeable to, an intelligent and immortal Spirit; The Pleasures of Knowledge, and Goodness, and Love; the Knowledge and Love of God, and every desirable Object: A Recompence worth our waiting for, worth all we can do or endure to obtain it, because the Recompence of Sons; Not our Hire but our Portion; A glorious Inheritance, an everlasting Settlement. And, Lastly, It inspires such tender and filial Affection, such a becoming Sense of Gratitude, such assured Hope of being accepted in the Beloved, and considered when we do well; such firm Persuasion of Pardon, and kind Allowances, when we fail, and do amiss; such Dependence upon Grace and Strength seconding our Endeavours to do better; as fill and support us with inward Complacencies, sweeten all our Duty, take off the Edge of all our Sufferings, and render the so reasonable Service of so good a Father, Freedom, perfect Freedom.

Secondly, It is necessary, for a right understanding the Apostle, to be rightly informed in what respect the Law of Moses and the Gospel are said to be Two Covenants. Strictly speaking, as the Church of God, so likewise the Covenant of God with that Church, hath, ever since the Fall of our first Parents, been One and the Same. The Terms whereof, on God's part, are, Forgiveness of Sins, restoring Mankind to Holiness and Immortality, for the sake of his Son, and a View of His Sacrifice and Death for them: On Man's part, Belief in that Son, Dependance upon that Sacrifice, Repentance for past Offences, and sincere Obedience for the future. Thus did this (truly called the Second) Covenant, repair the Breaches of that First, which promised Immortality to unsinning Obedience: Made with Adam in the time of his Innocence, but broken by Him, and impossible to be discharged by any Other Man; since
since all, descending from Him, (after His Crime) partake in His Frailty and Corruption.

The Foundation then of all the Comfort resulting from this Covenant, is the Redemption of the World by the Death of Christ. The Promises made to Abraham and the Patriarch, were confirmed in Christ; The Spirit speaking by the Prophets was the Spirit of Christ; Nay, even before the Flood, it was Christ, that preached to the old World, while the Ark was preparing in the days of Noah. In this respect principally it seems to be, that the Author to the Hebrews titles him Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and forever. So that these Covenants (the Law, and the Gospel) are not Two, with respect to the Substance and principal Intent of them; but only in regard of the different Administration, and the Terms upon which it pleased God, at certain Periods, to apply and confer that General Promise of Salvation. The Promises of the Gospel indeed, and the Covenant of it, are declared better than That of the Law; as they are propounded with greater Clearness, confirmed with stronger Evidence, and are in part already accomplished. For this hath brought that Life and Immortality to light, of which Mankind before had but dark and doubtful Expectations. This hath taught us express Terms, what the Law taught in Shadows and Types; with an Obscurity, under which carnal Minds (who, because they best like, are not disposed to look beyond, the Temporal) seldom discerned the Spiritual and Heavenly Blessings to be understood. It changes the Object of our Faith, from a Messiah to come, to one already come. But still the Messiah is the Salvation, still the Joys of Heaven the Reward, still Virtue, and Piety, and Faith, the Conditions of attaining it: Whether the simpler Worship of the Patriarchs, or the Rites of the Mosaic Law, or the Faith and Sacraments of the Gospel
Gospel disburdened of those Rites, were the Method, which Almighty God, in his Wisdome, saw fit, each in their proper Season, to prescribe, as a necessary Qualification for them at that time. The short is this: That, altho' for wise Reasons, God hath changed the Instances, in which he would be served, as to the outward Testimonies of our Belief in, and Love and Reverence for him: and, in this Sense, the Law and the Gospel are Two Covenants: Yet that Faith, and Love, and Reverence, were always indispensable Duties of Religion on our part of the Covenant: As the Remission of Sins by Jesus Christ, and a Blessed Immortality, always continued the same on His part. And thus the Law and Gospel, which, as to their difference in Modes and Circumstances, were perfectly distinct; Yet, in Effect, and as to the Essentials of Obedience and moral Virtue, the Reward aimed at, and the Ground of their Hopes, were One and the Same Covenant.

3. The Last Particular, duly attended to, will help us rightly to interpret those many disparaging and seemingly hard, Reflections, cast upon the Law by St. Paul, in the Management of his Controversy against Them, who still stood peremptory for the Necessity of observing it. Now these are not meant of the Moral Law, which wasa Branch of Natural, and still remains part of the Christian, Religion: Nor of the Ceremonial Law, so far as any of the Rites enjoined there, were understood to typify, and to be accepted for the Relation they bore to, Christ; For in this Sense that Law too belonged to the Gospel. But they are all intended of that Ritual Law, as altogether separate from, and independent on the Gospel. In this Sense the Jews took it, who deny'd altogether, and persecuted, the Faith of Jesus. So allowing Salvation to be owing, in no degree to Him, but altogether to the Law. In this the Judaizing Christians took it also, who allowed Faith in Jesus Christ to be a partial Cause of Salvation, but not sufficient and
and effectual, without the Works of the Law. Both these Errors this Apostle opposes; By proving Jesus Christ, against the Jews, and Jesus Christ alone against the Judaizing Christians, to be the Author and efficient Cause, and Repentance and Faith in him the conditional Cause, of our Salvation. He shews, that the Law thus taken, was not capable of justifying the Observers of it at any time; but that at this time it added to their Guilt. The Former, because all its Efficacy depended upon a Representation of Christ to come; The Latter, because the continuing to observe it as necessary, was a constructive Denial, at least a Disparagement, of Christ already come. And thus it is (when set in Contradistinction from, and Opposition to, the Gospel and Faith,) and not otherwise, that the Law and Works are exposed, not only, as not justifying, but even killing those, who repose their Confidence in them.

II. The Other remarkable Circumstance, which offers itself to our Consideration, concerning the Two Sons of Abraham, relates to the manner of their Birth, and is contained in those Words, Ver. 23. But He, who was of the Bond-woman, was born after the Flesh; but He, of the Free-woman, was by Promise. In the Production of Ishmael there was only the same common Providence, which concurs with, and gives Success to, Natural Causes, in ordinary Generations. A Mother in the Vigor of her Age, and a Father not yet absolutely decayed, required no more. But in that of Isaac every thing was miraculous. For a Mother dead, to all these Purposes, and (to use this Apostle’s Expression elsewhere) a Father as good as dead, to become fruitful, was an Effect altogether above, and out of the Power of Nature. This argued an immediate Operation of Omnipotence; and it is urged as a noble Instance of Faith, to believe the Promise of God. And Isaac is therefore called the Child of Promise, because foretold as the chosen Seed, and
and given in a manner so wonderful, that nothing less than the Power and Truth of God could have justified the Hopes of him, in Persons so disabled.

Thus, in Proportion, They, whom these Sons represent, do likewise differ from each Other. Such as depend upon the Law, like him born by Natural Means, expected Pardon of their Sins, and the Salvation of their Souls, by Works of their own Performance. But We, who, as Isaac was, are the Children of Promise, ascribe these Blessings to a higher Hand, acknowledge our own Impotence and Deadness, and thankfully adore the Truth, the Power, the Goodness of God, who, not by works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy in Jesus Christ, hath saved us; by Methods astonishing and supernatural; by the Death of his own beloved Son, by the renewing of his own blessed Spirit, and by Faith in the Merits of Another.

And, as in the Manner, so in the Privileges of this Birth, the Resemblance holds between Isaac and the Christian Church. The Jews, like Ishmael, were rejected, as St. Paul observes, because they fought Righteousness by the Works of the Law; The Christians attain to it, and to all the Prerogatives of this Inheritance, because seeking them by Faith. Now Faith is the very Principle, by which in all Ages Men were acceptable to God; as the Author to the Hebrews proves at large, by Instances of the most renowned Worthies, both before and under the Law. An Argument, that the Gospel hath not introduced any new Condition of Salvation in general; but that, as the Virtue of our Lord's Sacrifice had a retrospect, so Faith was the Instrument of applying this Sacrifice, to the Persons, who lived before the actual Oblation of it, made upon the Cross.

So good Reason had St. Paul to dissuade his Galatians from returning to the Observation of the Law; This being, in effect, to exchange Freedom for Bondage, to put
put off the Character of Sons, and degrade themselves, into Servants, to quit a certain and indisputable Title to, and take up an empty Pretence, which never did, never can qualify any Man for, the Inheritance.

Thus much for the Allegory before us, and the Argument built upon it. I just mention an Inference or Two, naturally arising from this Discourse.

1. *First* then, The Manner of St. Paul's arguing here, from an Allegory fix'd upon an Historical Passage of the Old Testament, can be no Rule to Us, for using such Liberties of allegorizing Scripture at Pleasure. I have, upon Another Occasion, offered some Reasons, which to me make it probable, that the Jews were not insensible of God's Design, to order many memorable Events in the Fortunes of some of their Ancestors, so as to become typical of things, afterwards to be accomplished upon the Christian Church. Whether they had any Traditions, directing them in what Cases this was done, and consequently, which of those Events might be, upon Principles of their own, fairly argued from, is Matter of Dispute. But be that as it will, the Apostle here had the same Divine Spirit to secure him from any Error in the Interpretation, which those First Pen-men had to direct them in the Narration. And the Demonstration he gave of that Spirit, renders His Authority in the One Case, equal to that of Moses in the Other. But this is by no means Our Condition; and therefore it becomes Us to proceed with more Modesty and Restraint. Where the Analogy of Faith is preserved, a prudent Use of this Kind is allowable, in the way of Exhortation, or moral Reflection. But, in the way of Argument, for establishing any Point of Doctrine, it is requisite we keep close to the plain and natural Sense of the Text; and, not wantonly sport it, in ambiguous Niceties, and affected Allusions.

2. From
2. From the difference illustrated here, between the Legal and Evangelical Covenant, it were seasonable to exhort Men, that they would consider the Dignity and Privilege of their high Calling; and serve God upon Principles, and with a Disposition of Mind, worthy of the near and honourable Relation they bear to him. But in this I am prevented by a former Discourse.

3. And therefore, I only add, Lastly, That we must take good heed not to pervert the Arguments, urged by St. Paul against the Works of the Law, to the Prejudice or Disparagement of Good Works in general. The Former are only such Works, as made up the Ceremonial Law; and those are abolished by the Death of Christ, and the Promulgation of his Gospel. The Latter neither begun with, nor expired with that Law, but are Moral Duties of eternal Obligation. To say, we are not justified by the Works of either sort, but by Faith only, implies, that God forgives our past Sins, and admits us into Covenant, without any such previous Considerations. But to say, that Men may be saved without Good Works, infers, that they are not bound to do any such, after their Admission into that Covenant. And this contradicts the whole Strain, and evacuates all the Precepts, of the Gospel. So wide a distance is there between Justification in St. Paul's Sense; and Salvation, or that final Justification, which is peculiar to the Day of Judgment.

Let us therefore, as this Apostle elsew here advises, learn to maintain Good Works, and to adorn our Profession by them. For this is to answer the Character of our Son-ship; to be Followers of our Father, which is in Heaven; and to promote the true End of this Holy Season. But let all this be done with profound Humility, and many mortifying Remembrances of our own Frailties; and, even in our best Estate, and most exalted Devotions, let us approach
proach the Throne of Grace, with a Modesty of which our Church, in the Collect for this Day, hath set us a Pattern: Beseeking of God, that We who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of his Grace may mercifully be relieved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The G O S P E L.

St. John vi. 1.  

Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

Disciples by Ship over the Sea, and went to a Distant Place belonging to the City of Bethsaida, that they might get a little rest from the Crowds. (See Mark vi. 31. Luke ix. 10.)

1. But the People followed him on Foot, round about by Land, some to hear him, and others to be healed by him. (Luke ix. 11.)

2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his Miracles, which he did on them that were diseased.

3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4. And the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5. When Jesus then lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?

6. (And this be said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do.)

5, 6. Jesus, (when he had discoursed to them of the Kingdom of God,) and healed their Sick, (Luke ix. 11. Matth. xiv. 14.) was minded to make trial of Philip's Faith.

7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pence worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8. One of his Disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

Philemon answered him, Some Sustenance out of the neighbouring Villages; he answers, that They should give them to eat; and asked Philip, What way he could think of for supplying them on this Occasion. Compare Mark vi. 35, 36, 37. Then he enquired what Stock of Provisions they had, Mark vi. 38. Upon Examination, Andrew, &c.

10. And
10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the Disciples, and the Disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.

12. When they were filled, he said unto his Disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve Baskets with the Fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten.

14. This Miracle, like that of feeding the Israelites with Manna hitherto, in the Wilderness, convinced those that saw it, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the eminent Prophet foretold by Moses.

**Comment.**

Our Saviour's feeding vast Multitudes of People with a very small Quantity of Provisions, is, it seems, in the Opinion of the Church, a Miracle of such Consequence, as to deserve Three Publick Readings, in the Course of the Gospels every Year. 'Tis true, there is some Difference in the Circumstances of the Actions related. The Time, the Place, the Number of the Eaters, and That of the Baskets of Fragments left behind, do differ. But the Substance, the miraculous Operation, and the Uses proper to be made of it, are the same, and common to Both. The Scripture taken from St. Mark mentions Four thousand fed with Seven Loaves and a few small Fishes, This from St. John, Five thousand fed with Five Barley-loaves, and Two small Fishes. That counts Seven Baskets only, this Twelve, of Fragments gathered, after they had been
been satisfied. But it is evident, that both *Four*, and *Five* thousand so fed, *is an Effect* infinitely above the Power of Natural Causes and Agents; and so is the Remainder of *Seven*, or of *Twelve Baskets*: be the Measure of those Baskets, what it will. The Considerations therefore, on which I design to insist, and the Practical Improvements to be made of them, belonging by Parity of Reason to each Account, I shall think Both sufficiently treated of, under the *Three* following Observations, and the Inferences resulting from them.

I. *First,* Our Lord’s Behaviour, before this Feeding and Distribution, taken notice of Ver. 11. *when he had given thanks, be distributed,* &c. Or, as St. Matthew, somewhat more expressly, *looking up to Heaven, be blessed, and brake, and gave,* &c.

II. *Secondly,* The satisfying so many with so small a Store; *He distributed of the loaves to his Disciples, and his Disciples to the multitude,* and likewise of the fishes, *as much as they would.*

III. *Thirdly,* The saving of the Remainders, Ver. 12; and 13. Upon these Particulars I shall endeavour to say something, that may be of Use to Us in our own respective Circumstances.

I. I begin with our Lord’s Behaviour, before this Feeding and Distribution, called by the Evangelists, *Blessing,* and *Giving of Thanks.* By the Former, some Interpreters understand the multiplying Virtue, which he then commanded down upon the Sustenance they were about to take; and that marvellous Increase in the Hands of the Distributers, whereby it became a Repast sufficient for so vast a Multitude. Others, that he thus gave Thanks to his Father for, and begged his Blessing upon it, for the wholesome Nourishment of those Bodies, which were to be fed with it. And these Notions seem absolutely necessary to that Passage of St. Mark, who, after the mention of his giving *Thanks,* adds, that he *blessed*
blessed a few small fishes, and commanded to set them also before the People.

It is enough to warrant the indifferent Use of these two Words, that the Forms of Address to Almighty God, upon the Use of his Gifts for our Refreshment, have usually been mixed; and consist partly of Praises, and partly of Petitions. Accordingly we expressly call this Action, Giving Thanks, saying Grace, Blessing the Table, Craving a Blessing, and the like. Because the End of such Devotions is manifestly Two-fold. They are designed to render our Acknowledgments to God for his Liberality; and also to beg, that it may be sanctified to us, by tending to promote all those good Purposes, which such Bounty is intended to serve and advance. The Whole indeed of this Service seems to have been exactly described by St. Paul, when, condemning the Erroneous Superstition of Some, who preached up the Distinction of Meats, he declares the Lawfulness of All, and, that the Danger lay not so much in the Kinds eaten, as in the Manner of Eating. For every Creature of God (says he) is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with Thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God, and by Prayer.

Hence it seems evident, that a secret Sense of God's Goodness, upon such Occasions, is by no means enough; but that it is expected, Men should make solemn and outward Expressions of it, when they receive his Creatures for their Support. This is a Service and Homage, not only due to Him, but profitable to Themselves. The Creatures are His, and therefore to be received with Thanksgiving: But the Sanctifying those Creatures to Man's Use, and rendering that which is good in its own Nature, serviceable and advantageous to the Party receiving it, this depends upon the Word, or particular Blessing of the Creator; and therefore it is Our part to draw down that Word by Prayer.

This
This is to eat, and drink, like Men and Christians, when we perform an Act of Worship, which appears to have had a place even in Natural Religion, and the Practice of Heathens themselves. This was certainly observed by the Jews; This St. Paul would not omit in all the Confusion of a Storm and Shipwreck: This we have several Instances of in our Saviour: And This he here performed with great Seriousness and Zeal; thus teaching us, when, looking up to Heaven, that the Eyes of all ought, in the most literal Sense, to wait upon that Lord, who gives them their Meat in due Season.

And, What part of Religion can be better contrived, to keep up a constant Awe and Reverence of God in our Minds? Which are too apt, but will scarce find it possible, to forget him, when accustomed to call upon his Name, at every Supply of those Natural Appetites, and Necessities, which cannot but of course refresh our Memories very often. What can more effectually humble us, with a just Sense of our own precarious and depending Condition? What more dispose Men to use his Gifts moderately, to entertain them thankfully, to be content with their Portion, if it be little; to impart of their Abundance, if it be much; to compassionate those who want the same Comforts, to recollect, that they are Stewards; and that their Orders are, to give freely of what they have received freely? What, Lastly, can be more likely to sanctify, to enlarge, and multiply our Blessings, than so decent, so publick, so devout, so humble, a Testimony of our Great Benefactor's Goodness?

II. The Second Thing, I proposed to consider on this Occasion, is, The satisfying so many with so small a Store. And here I might observe the Zeal of these Multitudes; the Nature of that Refreshment they were provided with; the Quantity, which only was a present Meal,
undeniably plain, that, what we sow is not quickened, except it die; and that which we sow, we sow not that Body that shall be, but bare Grain; but God giveth it a Body, as it hath pleased Him; and to every Seed his own Body.

This is what we call Natural, because it proceeds by Method and Rule, and in a Series of Causes. But if we trace each of these to its first Head, there is no less Demonstration of infinite Power and Wisdom in this Incræase, than in That, which, in the Scripture now at hand, we distinguish as miraculous, because it was extraordinary and uncommon. Nay, I had almost said, the Demonstration I am speaking of, is greater. For, when a Miracle is wrought, Nature is set aside, and its Process superseded; the thing is done at once, in an instant, and at an heat. But in That, which we call Nature, Providence acts by Inferior Causes, and some of these, free ones too. And, albeit the whole goes on leisurely, and makes less vigorous Impressions upon the Senses: The Multiplicity however of those Causes, what Wisdom must it require to direct, what Power to influence and invigorate, what steady Management to keep them uniform? So that This is, in Effect, a long Succession of Wonders; A Chain, in which, if one Link be broken or displaced, the Whole falls to pieces. And the Links of this Chain are the Variations of every Day in the whole Year. Thus every Furrow in our Fields is loaded with Evidences of a Divine Power: And not Five thousand only, but Millions of Millions, to whom God gives Meat in due Season, are sustained by Omnipotence; and not one of them ever feeds at less Expence than that of a Wonder, nay, of an infinite Train of Wonders.

III. The Last Head, I promised to speak to, is, Our Blessed Master's Care, that the Fragments remaining might be gathered up, and put into Baskets. For which, no doubt, this had been a sufficient Reason, that Those
might prove both the Reality of the Miracle, and the exceeding Greatness of the Increase. But, in regard our Lord assigns Another, when saying, Gather up the Fragments, that nothing be lost: The proper Use, I think, of this Head, is, thence to form a Direction, how to manage our Substance to the best Advantage; and so to approve our selves Charitable and Kind, as at the same time not to be Profuse and Indiscreet. Jesus, 'tis true, by setting his whole Store before the Multitudes, hath left us a Pattern of Beneficence and Largeness of Heart. The Provisions, growing so prodigiously upon his Hands, are an Emblem and Intimation of those unaccountable Accessions, which we may sometimes observe to the Fortunes of generous and merciful Persons. And, by some Passages of Scripture, an unwary Reader might be led to think, that in those Actions there could be no Excess, at least no Possibility of Offending by such Excess. But yet the same Jesus would not, that even Fragments should be lost; And herein he hath shewed, that all Reserving for the future is not unlawful; that Charity is very consistent with Frugality; indeed not only that they may, but should go together. For God will be sure to make a mighty Difference, between the Virtue, and the specious Extreme beyond it; between the Liberal, and the Lavish Man.

That every one is bound, by the Rules both of Prudence and Religion, to moderate his Expences, to keep within his own Property, and retrench all Superfluities unsuitable to his Calling and Condition, is too notorious to need a Proof. That, which the Case before us seems rather to suggest, is, good Husbandry, in not laying out, even upon proper Objects, beyond such Proportions, as the Circumstances of our Affairs will allow. For, altho' the Poor be our Care, yet are not they our only Care. The Justice of those Demands, which our Families have upon us, I had Occasion formerly to take notice of. But, besides

Epist. for Advent Sunday.
These, the Casualties of Life, the Infirmitie of Age and Sickness, are very lawful and reasonable Restraints upon us. Our Saviour, 'tis confessed, commanded the Young Man in the Gospel, to go and sell all be bad, and give to the Poor. But this was done, as a Trial of his pretended Perfection. It was a Precept Personal to Him, not of universal Obligation, nor to be drawn into Example rashly, and at all Adventures. The Primitive Christians also brought their Goods into one common Fund, from whence Distribution was made, as each of the Brethren had need. But this is commended, only as an Act seasonable Then, not for a Standard of Practice, that should be perpetual. At this rate indeed our Saviour's Declaration, that we shall have the Poor always with us, could not hold true. So that all the Inference, resulting from these Instances, is, that Men should be in a constant Disposition of Mind, most willingly to exchange the Treasures of this Life for those of a Better; and to part even with their All, when the Service of God, and the Good of Souls, require it. But, in ordinary Cases, the Exigencies of Other People are so to be considered, as that our Own be not altogether overlook'd; And, while we help Them, care must be taken not to rob, and perfectly strip Our Selves.

Again, The very Consideration of the Objects we would relieve, makes this Caution necessary. For, the Wants and Distresses of our Brethren are not of one Day's Production, or Continuance. Fresh Objects, worthy of our Pity, are perpetually presenting themselves; And therefore we should do ill to be so lavish upon One, or a Few, as thereby to fall under a Disability of succouring the Rest. That, which is constantly a Duty, obliges us to such prudent Reserves, as may keep us in Condition to perform it long and often, even as oft, as fit Occasions shall call for it at our Hands. These Reasons (to name no more) are sufficient to prove, that Men may, and ought to proceed by a Zeal tempered with Prudence,
Prudence, even in Gifts of Piety and Charity. They should not abandon their Substance, and, by laying out all in a Heat, either cut off their own Power of being charitable for the future, or reduce it, as to become Objects of Charity themselves. And therefore I shall close with a few short Rules, in which the Example of our Saviour may be Serviceable, for directing our Dispositions, and our Behaviour, in this Point.

We cannot but observe, that the Multitudes now fed by Him, were in a Place remote from all Accommodations, ready to faint for Hunger, driven to that Necessity, by following him so far, and attending him so long, that they might reap the Benefit of his Miracles, and his Doctrine. Now, since the Necessities of our Brethren in Want are by far more and greater, than the Liberality of the Wealthiest and most Open-handed Man can possibly supply; it is absolutely necessary, that we should give with some Distinction. Wherein we shall do well to imitate our Lord, in the following Particulars.

1. That we generally bestow our Charity upon Such, as are least in a Condition of sustaining themselves: For that which the Desert was to these Multitudes, the same in Effect, are Old Age, Maimed Limbs, Long Sickness, Multitude of Helpless Children, and the Calamities, which more immediately and visibly come from the Hand of God, to the Poor in general. They disable them, I mean, from furnishing themselves, by painful Labour and honest Industry; and, in so doing, they lay them at our Doors, and charge us with them. But as for Them, whom Pride or Profusion, Sloth or Vice have reduced; Them, who continue Poor, only because they will not take any Trouble to be otherwise; the Laws of God have not commanded, and those of Men wisefly discountenance, the same Compasion for such. To Them, who make Wandering and Beggary a Trade, and choose the Shame, but Ease, of That, before an honest
13. Nor is it strange, that his Blood should have so noble and last- 
ing Effects, to any who remember, how that of Beasts heretofore, and the Ashes made of a burnt red Hei- 
fer, removed all Legal Pollutions, and restored the Unclean, when sprinkled with them, to the Service of the Tabernacle. (Numb. xix.)

14. Shall not then Christ's Blood, (whose Person is Divine, and fo 
his Blood the Blood of 
God (AEx. xx. 28.) by 
the Unity of the fame Eternal Spirit) when He offered Himself a most unblemished 
Sacrifice, be effectual to cleanse Mens Souls, (as that of Beasts did formerly their 
Bodies) from the Guilt of those Sins that make liable to death, (as that Other 
from Pollutions contracted by dead Bodies) and qualify them for the Acceptance of 
their Service to God, (as that Other admitted Men to the Communion of the 
Sanctuary.)

15. To this End, (or by this Blood) he hath 
sealed a new Covenant 
between God and Us; 
that fo, in Considera-
tion of his Death for 
the Expiation of Sins, which the first Legal Covenant could not expiate, all who 
are admitted to, and perform their part of it, may receive the Promise of Immor-
tality and Happiness in Heaven. Their Title to which is clear, by their Sins 
being thus atoned for and forgiven.

COMMENT.

The Pre-eminence of the Evangelical above the 
Legal Covenant was asserted in the Epistle for 
the last Lord's Day. The Church now proceeds to con-
firm that Assertion, by appointing one for this Day; 
which instances in some particulars, wherein that Pre-
eminence consists. An Argument carried on, by some 
Comparisons, drawn from that Tabernacle, and the 
Service of it, in which the Glory of the Levitical Di-
spensation principally lay.

I. The Person officiating.
II. The Place where he ministred.
III. The Sacrifices offered.
IV. The Ends and Effects of those Sacrifices.

These
These are the Heads of the Apostle's Reasoning, and shall be so of my present Discourse, upon this Subject.

I. The First Preference, given here to the Gospel-Covenant, regards the Person officiating in the Christian Sacrifice. Those among the Jews were offered by the Succession and Posterity of Aaron, Men in all Points upon a Level with their Brethren, excepting that Distinction God had put, by the Honour of devoting them to his Altar, and, by Their Ministry, conveying his Blessings to, and receiving the Homage and Acknowledgments due from, the Body of his People. But still those Blessings were, could be, no other, than the Economy they attended upon, had indented for. Which, properly speaking, extended no farther, than the Privileges of communicating with God in the Ordinances he had prescribed; and the Mercies of an Earthly Canaan; of which such Communion, regularly observed, was made the Condition, and the Pledge.

The same high Office does our Jesus execute under the Gospel-Dispensation. But, (as the Chapters foregoing have proved by several Instances) to much greater Advantage. He was not, like the Jewish High Priests, taken from among Men, Not of the same common frailties and Corruptions, with those for whom he mediates: but is holy and harmless, undefiled and separate from Sinners: He consequently needed not, like Them, to offer for his own Sins first, and then for the People. He was therefore a successful Sacrificer for his Peoples Sins, because under no Guilt of his own, to render him obnoxious, and require a Sacrifice. He was not of the Tribe of Levi, or the Order of Aaron, whose Priesthood was temporary, and the Persons admitted to it mortal: But of the Order of Melchisedec: Of a Priesthood unchangeable; In respect of its solemn Institution confirmed by the Oath of God; In respect also of the Priest himself, who liveth for ever to make Inter-
The Veil, through which a Passage is opened for us into the Holy; that St. John speaking of the Incarnation of the Word, expresses it by pitching his Tabernacle among us, or, in our Human Nature; and says, that thence his Glory was conspicuous:

And again, that our Blessed Lord himself calls his own Body a Temple. Manifestly alluding by These, to the Jewish Tabernacle, and Temple, and Glory of the Lord exhibiting himself there. Strong Confirmations these are, of that Presence, by which God dwelt thus among his People, being intended as a Type of that real and visible Presence, by which, in the Body of his Incarnate Son, he actually dwelt with, and exhibited himself to Men. Hence we have a Rational Account, why the Worship of God, and Mens Acceptance in it, should be confined to that Place of his Symbolical Presence; because intimating, that there is no Name given unto Men, whereby they must be saved, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whose Human Nature he is Substantially present. And this Sense will likewise correspond perfectly well, with that Character of this Tabernacle, Not made with Hands, that is to say, not of this building; In regard of Christ’s Human Nature not being brought into the World by Human Means; (which being made with Hands often denotes) nor in the ordinary way; but born of an unblemished Virgin, and conceived by an Almighty and immediate Operation of the Holy Ghost. In all which Respects, this Tabernacle too was greater and more perfect than that under the Law; and by it, by the Blood which thus became his, he entred into Heaven, as the High Priest heretofore entred into the Holy Place on Earth. The Manner of Entring was thus far alike in both; but the Blood they carried in, by no means alike. Which brings us to the

III. Third Consideration, upon which the Pre-eminence of our High Priest is asserted in the Scripture now
at hand. The Difference of the Sacrifices offered. Their High Priest entred by the Blood of Goats and Calves; Ours, with his own Blood, and ver. 12, 14. This the Blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

The Plan, upon which the Apostle forms his Argument in this Epistle, so far as the Sacrifices of each Dispensation are concerned, is, that most solemn of all the Levitical Services, the Great Day of Atonement. The Directions given by God for This, so far as affect the Point under debate, are as follow. The High Priest is commanded to kill and offer a Bullock, as a Sin-Offering for himself and his House: Afterwards to take a Censer full of Coals from the Altar, and his Hands full of sweet Incense, and to bring this within the Veil, to make a Cloud of Smoak, which might cover the Mercy-Seat; Then to bring in of the Blood of the Bullock, and to sprinkle it upon, and before the Mercy-Seat. Afterwards, to do the same with the Goat, which by Lot was that Day to be slain. The Method of proceeding is the same in Both. The only Difference is, that, as the Bullock was an Atonement for the High Priest and his House; The Goat was a Sin-Offering for the whole Body of the People. All which, and more upon the same Occasion, not necessary to be mentioned here, we have at large, in the Sixteenth Chapter of Leviticus.

Hence it is, that the High Priest is said to enter into the Holy Place by the Blood of Goats and Calves: Because he might not go in there at any time without Blood; nor with the Blood of any Sacrifices but These; nor with That neither, except on this Occasion.

Mean while, how far are these Creatures and their Blood, below the Value of that of a Man? But especially of an innocent Man, such as Christ was; For that is meant by offering himself to God without spot. An Allusion to that Ordinance in the Law, which (as I had occasion to remark before) rendred all Beasts,
wherein was any Blemish, incapable of being offered in Sacrifice. But, yet more especially, How contemptible an Expiation was the Blood of these Creatures, in comparison of His, who offered himself through the eternal Spirit; who was not only Man but God; and, by taking Our Human into His Divine Nature, hath rendered this Sacrifice of Merit invaluable, of Efficacy unquestionable, of Benefit unconceivable? So that, in no regard does the Glory of Our High Priest excel and eclipse the Legal more eminently, than in that, which this Passage sets before us, as a

IV. Fourth Difference between them, The Ends and Effects of their respective Sacrifices. The Legal satisfy to the purifying of the Flesh; The Blood of Christ purgeth the Conscience from dead Works. The Legal High Priest entred into the Holy Place once a Year; The Evangelical once in all. The Effect of Christ entering is a Redemption of the Transgressions that were under the First Testament; Consequently, the First Testament did not take away the Transgressions, even of its own Time. Lastly, This is the noblest, and the peculiar Excellence of Our High Priest, that he hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, and that, by means of His Death, they, that are called, receive the promise of eternal Inheritance.

By all these Characters is signified the Weakness, the Insufficiency of the Levitical Sacrifice, and the Power and Efficacy of Christ's alone, for taking away the Guilt and Punishment of Sin. The Grounds of Both would take up too much Time to be considered now, and will be more reasonably enlarged upon hereafter. But, in regard the Apostle attributes some, tho' not an equal, Effect to the Legal, in the Comparison at the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Verses; I will endeavour
to adjust that Point, and then draw toward a Conclusi
of this Discourse.

The Law of Moses then may be considered, either Ab-
stractedly, and in its Literal; or more Extensively, and
in its Mystical, Meaning. According to the Former, Its
Promises and Threatnings are merely Temporal, Its
Ceremonies, Conditions of attaining the One, and ef-
chewing the Other; as the Observance or Neglect of
Them kept up, or forfeited, a right of Communion in
Those Ordinances. According to the Latter, Eternal
Benefits and Punishments were implied, under the Ex-
pressions of Temporal; and thus the Outward Ceremo-
nies were Types of, and Admonitions to, inward Vir-
tues. We do not therefore, by calling These Shadows
and Figures, take from them all Manner of Efficacy and
Influence, upon the Persons heretofore obliged by them:
But, we allow them such, as bears Proportion to this
Twofold Character, in which they stood. The Impu-
rities contracted in Violation of the Law plainly drew
on a double Inconvenience. One, that the Unclean in-
curred the Wrath of God, and the Sentence of Death,
here and hereafter; Not only their Bodies, but their
Consciences, were defiled, by Acts, which, in that State
of things, were appointed Terms of Salvation and God's
Favour; The Other, that, as a mark of present Disfa-
favour, they stood incapable of Communion, either Civil
with their Brethren, or Religious with Almighty God.

Now the Last of these Inconveniences was directly
and effectually taken off, by those respective Rites and
Sacrifices, which the Law prescribed in such Cases:
They were restored to the Camp or the City, the Ta-
bernacle or the Temple, to all the Benefits and Advan-
tages expressly contracted for, by that Covenant. But, as
to the mystical and more valuable Part, the purging of
the Consciente, delivering from Death Spiritual, and,
as a Consequence of Sin forgiven, qualifying them for a
Possession of the Heavenly Canaan, These were reserved
for
for a nobler Sacrifice; a Blood better than that of Goats and Calves: Yet still a Blood, figured and represented by, and virtually shed in, Theirs. Hence the Apostle tells his Colossians, those Ordinances were a shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Christ. So far then, as they contributed to the Reconciliation of Offenders, so far they did not work by any inherent and essential, but by a derived and relative, Power. The Virtue and Acceptance of the Type was entirely owing to its Antitype; For all the Bloody Sacrifices prefigured the Offering of the Body of Jesus once for all. Nay, even those Temporal Advantages, which were actually saved to them, or recovered, by their Sacrifices, were intended to typify such as are Spiritual and Eternal. So perfectly figurative was their whole Oeconomy, So industriously contrived for Service and Subordination to the Gospel-Dispensation; that, strictly speaking, the Law was little else than the Gospel typified, the Gospel was the Law explained and accomplished. And the Difference between them is like that, which distinguishes Shadow from Substance, Clearness from Obscurity, and Prospect from Possession.

I only add an earnest Exhortation, that Two Expressions in the Epistle for this Day may be heedfully attended to. The One, that they who are called, (effectually so, by obeying that Call) are the Persons said to receive the eternal Inheritance. The Other, That the Blood of Christ purges our Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God. By Both is meant, that even such an High Priest, and such a Sacrifice, will not save Them, who take no care to save themselves. But, as the Jewish Rites restored Men to the Temple, and capacitated them for frequenting Religious Worship; so the Christian Expiation is an Encouragement to, a Comfort in, an Assurance that we shall be accepted by, our Service; but by
by no means a Dispensation from it. Were it not for this, our Endeavours must be fruitless, and, no wonder, if we turn desperate: But the Knowledge of an Atonement made, banishes our Terrors, frees us from all that Consternation and Confusion, which the Sense of Guilt, and the Fears of Vengeance, naturally create. This inspires Life and Vigor into our Undertakings. For nothing is so powerful a Motive to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, as the being perfectly satisfied, that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord. And this is directly our Case. Live without Sins we could not; Make Satisfaction to the Justice of God for our Sins we could not: And therefore God hath done this for us, and without us, by providing himself a Lamb that taketh away the Sins of the World. That which is left still upon our Hands, we cannot indeed do without God, but he hath promised to do this for us too: Yet, so to do it for us, as to do it with us, and in us, and by us. And how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? How ill do we answer the End of this Sacrifice, which was to purify a peculiar People, zealous of good Works, if we turn the Grace of God into Wantonness, and render it an Occasion of Security and wicked Presumption? Let us remember, the Design of our Church was, by such a supporting Account of our High Priest and his Sacrifice, to raise our Spirits under those Dejections, into which our Sorrow for Sin is presumed at present to have sunk them; To bring us to the Disposition of those honest Debtors, who, the more they are forgiven, the more they love; And we know what Judgment must needs be made, what Proofs expected of That by Him who hath said, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.*

John xiv. 15.
The Gospel.

St. John viii. 46.

Jesus said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, Why do ye not believe me?"

He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

What can we say too bad of thee?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I know my Father, and ye do disbelieve me.

And I seek not my own glory, there is one that searcheth and judgeth.

Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, That he is your God.

Yet ye have not known him, but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

Abraham saw my day, and was glad.

Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he seeth it, and was glad.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

The Fifth Sunday Vol. II.
Then took they up Stones to cast at him: but Jesus bid himself, and went out of the temple.

The Jews were about in their Zeal to stone him, the Punishment usual for Blasphemy, and sometimes by their Zealots inflicted, without any formal Process or Sentence of Law.

**Comment.**

As the Death of our Blessed Saviour is the Spring, from whence all our Hopes and Confidences of Happiness and Mercy flow; and as the End of his Sufferings is the Benefit of wretched Man; so the Manner of those Sufferings is likewise adapted to our Good. And, if within these it be fit to comprehend, not the last black Scene alone, but those many antecedent Passages of his Life, in which he endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself; the Gospel for this Day may well deserve its Place in our Liturgy. Thus the Church rises very gradually; In the Historical Part, from opprobrious Language, and a malicious, but vain Attempt upon his Sacred Life, to that Violence, which was permitted to take Effect: In the Instructive Part, from a Pattern of reproached and spighted Innocence, to One of Faithfulness to the very Death, and refusing even unto Blood, when God and Duty call. This I conceive the great Design of, this the proper Method for, improving that Scripture read in your Ears this Day. And therefore my Work shall be, First, To represent our Saviour’s Department upon this Occasion; And Then, To instance in such particular Virtues, deducible from thence, as would adorn our Lives, if well observed, when it is Our Lot to fall under the like Circumstances.

And First, We may, through the Management of this whole Affair, observe a Divine Prudence, in restraining at some times, and expressing at Others, the just Indignation our Lord conceived, at the Malice and Obstinate of these wicked Jews. Of this we have a remarkable
markable Pattern in the Return made to these Words: Thou art a Samaritan, and bas a Devil. The Reproach of Samaritan was one of the last Affronts, at that time capable of being passed upon any Man. It spoke him Idolater, and Schismatick, and, according to the Terms That People then stood upon with the Jews, every thing that was odious and despicable. Yet all this is only answered by Silence, as not worthy our Lord's Notice. But the Other part of having a Devil would draw down Scandal upon his Doctrine, and weaken the Authority of his Preaching. And therefore This was fit, nay it was necessary, to be confuted. And upon that Point he condescends to reason with them. Hence we may learn, how to distinguish Injuries, and how we should proportion our Resentments, according to the different Sorts, and Consequences of them. Where the Provocation is private, and terminates in our selves; It is a Mark of a great and Christian Mind, to put it up, or softly to reprove it. But where it reaches farther, and wounds deeper, Where Truth and Goodness are struck at through our Side; Silence is Tameness there, For then the Cause ceases to be Own. God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind, are concerned, in the Respect due to Virtue and Religion; And that, which is none of Ours, we ought not to recede from, nor can we give it up, without committing a Fault. Well were it, if this Rule were duly thought on, and punctually observed. Then we should see a Stop put to Prophaness, and all wicked Railleries upon Holy Things, These would not, with such a triumphant Boldness, be uttered, and esteemed a part of Mirth and Wit in Conversation, if they were not as wickedly received and applauded. Men would not be so jealous of their own Reputation, and at the same time so injurious to God's, as we find them to be. They would not for every small, for every supposed Affront, require Blood, and execute a Murthe-rous Vengeance; and yet sport with the Majesty of Hea-
ven, and his Oracles, as if These were fit for nothing, but to furnish Matter for a keen and saucy Jest. As if the Holiness of the Most High might be prostituted to the most contumelious Usage; while what the profligate Wretches falsely call their own Honour, must be sacred and inviolable, and, like the Ark of old, not touched, but upon pain of Death. So contradictory, it seems, are the Notions Some Men now have, of contemptuous Treatment, to those of our Great Master. So different their Deportment under it. He generously disdained the Infamies levelled at Himself; and His unspotted Innocence gave him the Advantage of doing it securely. Others, perhaps, are the more impatient of Reproach, because Guilt, and Self-condemnation give it a Sting; They feel less concern for the Vindicating One, whom the most blasphemous Falshoods cannot hurt, than for themselves, whose Impurities are already so foul and black, as not to bear Freedom and bold Truths.

But, Secondly, Our Saviour’s Example here instructs us also, how to proceed in that Defence, which God and Religion require from Us. For those very things, which we may, nay which we are bound to vindicate, are not to be vindicated after every Manner. Some Order, and proper Measures are to be observed, even in the most Lawful, the most necessary Returns, to those that abuse and traduce them. And for This, Christ’s own Words are a Pattern sufficient, to as many as are content to consider, and be guided by them. Jesus answered, I have not a Devil, but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. Herein he only clears himself from their wicked Suggestions, with all the Mildness, that became his Character, and the Justness of his Cause. As in other the like Occasions we find him returning cool Reason to their Rage, and barely exposing the Absurdity, the Impossibility, of their Charge against him; the Inconstancy of his Actions with their blasphemous Thoughts; And even, when the Treachery of a Disciple had
the prolonging an uncertain Tenure for a short space, and that, in a State of infinite Change and Trouble) worth giving this in Exchange for? Who must not see, that an Eternity of Torments, at least a manifest hazard of them, is too hard a Condition to close with, upon any Terms? Who, that receives the Promises of Heaven, with any becoming Degree of Assurance, would grudge to keep the Favour of God, at the Expence of all this World can boast of, and to trust Him for the Amends to be made in another? And if so, then, 'tis certain, a Willful Sin must not buy our present Eafe and Safety. For such a one is not consistent with God's Favour, or a rational Hope of Eternal Happiness. Nay not only a Sin in itself, but what a Man thinks a Sin; For, tho' he should happen to be involved in unnecessary Niceties; Yet, so long as he thinks a thing Sinful, altho' it be not really such, if we do it in that apprehension; God, who judges Men, by the Integrity of their Hearts and not by the Perfection of their Understandings, will condemn that Person, as if it were a Sin. And such it is to Him. He violates his Conscience, who goes against the Dictates and present Light of it; He is an Offender in the Perverseness of his Will, tho' he happen to be mistaken in the Determination of his Judgment. This therefore is the first Rule; Do nothing, which your Conscience tells you ought not to be done. And if there be any other Choice left, but Sinning or Suffering; you may be confident, that He who never commanded any Man to Sin; bath, in those Circumstances, commanded every Man to Suffer.

Secondly, The Other Rule is, That a Man may use all Lawful Means for his own Preservation; and, where the regular use of these is Successful, that may be accounted a Case, in which he was no way bound to Suffer. For instance: If, in a controverted Point, one uses the best means he can of informing himself, and, after diligent Enquiry and honest impartial Judging, he proceeds
proceeds with the Testimony of his own Breast; this Man is either right in his Opinion, or under such a Mistake, as shall never be imputed to him for a Crime. And therefore, whatever Advantages of Safety such a Proceeding can give, he is fairly entituled to take the Benefit of them. So again; A Man may make the best Terms he can for himself, with those that oppress or destroy him; provided he act without Fraud, and break none of those Restraints, which the Laws of God, or of Civil Society, have bound him up to. He may strive to deliver himself in distress; He may pray to God to deliver him; but Both these must be done with a resign'd Spirit. And when we beg, with Christ, That if it be possible this Cup may be taken from Us, we must beg it, and we must endeavour it, with his Reservation too, Nevertheless not Ours, but our heavenly Father's Will be done. This Submission is highly necessary; Not only as it agrees with the Condition of Sons, and Servants, and Creatures; but as it may incline the Favour of God to our Relief. For, Why should we not suppose, that he will proceed by the Rules, which Love, Honour, and the purest Reason, have fix'd among Men; That he will think it becoming his Goodness, to take those into his more peculiar Care and Protection, who are content to depend upon his Pleasure, and resign all their Affairs entirely up to his Wife and Gracious Disposals? Hence it is, that to Lawful Means I add a Regular use of those Means; because anxious and inordinate Desires, do draw down, I doubt not, many Sufferings and Misfortunes, which would not otherwise have befallen Men. And These, properly speaking, are Troubles, not of God's creating, but their own.

Again; when I say, a Man may use all Lawful Means; I do not say, that he is always bound to do it. There may be some Instances, wherein the Christian Gallantry is concerned to distinguish itself. And Heroes there have
have been, who, when they might have had it, would not accept Deliverance; but have acquir’d to themselves a just and immortal Renown, for devoting their Lives to the Service of Religion. But this is a point of Perfection; And must be left to Wisdom, and a due consideration of Circumstances, to pronounce of. We may say of it, as our Lord did of them that make themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven’s Sake,

Matt. xix. 12. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. There may be Cases, when all the safe Methods of Preservation may be neglected; but He, that seeks and uses them, sins not in so doing. If God gives not Success, then he is to sit down, and no doubt his Mercy, and a future Reward: For that defeating his Prayers and Endeavours so far, is a plain and loud Call to Suffer. But, He, who in Bravery is more liberal of himself, must be well advised. For, as Men may not be too tenacious, so neither may they be too profuse and lavish, of Life, and the Comforts of it. Last, besides these present Hardships, they find at last an indifferent Zeal return’d, with a Who hath required these things at your Hands? Love indeed is apt and desirous to give over-measure, where it can; To make up for the Defects of One kind, by double Application in Another. And sure, where God is the Object of our Love, it well becomes Us to attempt this. But still, this must not be the effect of Passion alone; Prudence should temper and direct it. And, where an Affliction is chosen, which with a Good Conscience might have been avoided: As it may happen, that the making such Choice shall be highly commendable, so it is certain, They ought not to be condemned, who chuse a Lawful Safety, and therefore make it not.

Fourthly, We have already considered Christ, as a Pattern of Meekness, in not returning opprobrious Language; let us also contemplate him, as an Example of not taking Revenge. When an outrageous Attempt was made
made upon his Life, he satisfies himself with restraining the Violence, without inflicting those Punishments, which their Wickedness deserved. And so ought We to content our selves, with those Methods, that are sufficient for our Security; without proceeding to the utmost Rigor and Severity: Even with the worst of Enemies, Even when they are in our Power, and lie at our Mercy. It is God, to whom Vengeance belongeth, and Men do but usurp it. But here you see the very Person, to whom it did of right belong, tender in using that Right; and rather chusing, to soften his Adversaries Hearts, by Patience and Long-suffering, than to confound them, by exerting his Almighty Power. Instructing us hereby, what Disposition They should be of, who pretend to be governed by His Laws, and to live by the Copy of his Practice; That it is fit, they pass by many and great Provocations, and enough for them, to consult their own Safety, without seeking the Ruin of others. And this, if it were duly considered, would set bounds to our Fury; and shew us, that, as we ought not in any case to do Injuries, so we should not repay them neither in their own kind; But cease from Wrath, and let go Displeasure; for otherwise we shall, in this Sense too, be certainly moved to do Evil.

Lastly, From this Passage, we may be certainly assured, that the Sufferings and Death of Christ were his own free voluntary Act. The same Divine, unseen Force, which held the Hands of the Men of Nazareth, when they intended to cast him headlong down the brow of their Hill; The same, which evaded the Jews present design to Stone him; was ever Ready, ever Able, to produce the same wonderful Effects. We know, it was so in the Garden particularly. And the casting those down to the Ground, who then came to apprehend him, ought to have made them understand, that, if he had not thought fit to check and withdraw it, neither their Numbers,
Numbers, nor their Weapons, could have prevailed to his Prejudice. This should enflame our Love and our Gratitude, that the many bitter things our Lord endured for Our Sakes, were not upon Constraint, but Choice: That He so signally proved the Truth of those his own Words; No Man takest my Life, from me, but I lay it down of my self: That he was barbarously treated, and ignominiously murdered, because he would be so; and the Will of God was fulfilled in this point, only because he was content and well pleased to do it. What remains then, but that, as this Holy Season requires, we meditate on this Dying Redeemer with wonder; That we represent his Willing Passion to our Souls, in all those moving Circumstances it is capable of; That we think nothing too much for Him, who was so liberal of Ease, of Reputation, of Life for Us; That we not only adore, but Imitate, that Great Example, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to God, that judgeth righteously: That we make not Wrongs, of any sort mutual, but account it our Generosity, our Duty, to suffer our selves to be outdone, in this only Instance of Evil-doing? So observing the Apostle’s Command, not to render Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing, knowing that we are Hereunto called that we might inherit a Blessing.

The Sunday next before Easter.

The COLLECT.

Rom. viii. 29. 
1 John iv. 9, 10. 
Phil. ii. 5, 8. 
3 Tim. ii. 11, 12. 

A lmighty and everlasting God, who of thy tender Love towards Mankind, hast sent thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our Flesh, and to suffer Death upon the Cross, that all Mankind should follow the Example of his great Humility;
mility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the
Example of his Patience, and also be made Partakers of
his Resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The Epistle.

Philip. ii. 5.

PARAPHRASE.

5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in
Christ Jesus.

5. With regard to
the Charity and mutual
Condescension I am ex-
horting you to, make the Humility and wonderful Love of Jesus Christ your
Pattern.

6. Who being in the form of God, thought it is not robbery
to be equal with God.

6. Who, though he
was very God, and had
taken to himself no more
than belonged of right to him, in exerting all the Glory and Majesty of the Di-
vine Nature; yet did he not affect to appear in his native Greatness and
Glory.

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon
him the form of a servant, and was made in the like-
ness of men.

7. But laid all that a-
side, did not disdain to
live in human Nature,
not only as Man, but
as the meanest Servant of God, and even of Men, ministering to their
Wants.

8. And being found in Fashion as a man, be hum-
bled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the
death of the Cross.

8. And stooping so ve-
ry low, as to die, may to
die the most painful and
ignominious Death, in
obedience to his heavenly Father's Will, and for the common benefit of Man-
kind.

9. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and
given him a name which is above every name.

9, 10, 11. This unpa-
ralledled Act of Obedi-
ence God hath reward-
ed, by advancing his
human Nature to Uni-
veral Dominion. That
the Man Christ Jesus
should now rule over,
and be adored by, all Creatures; That all Nations should acknowledge this
King, and, by submitting to his Laws and Government, promote the Glory of
God the Father; Who delights to be honoured in the Belief and Obedience, paid
to his Blessed Son, and his Gospel.

Comment.

The good Effects, which our Church proposes to
her self from this portion of Scripture, we plainly
learn, from the Collect for the Day, to be Humili-
ity,
lity, and Patience. The Former is to be expressed, by thinking no good Offices beneath us, whereby we may contribute to the Relief of our Brethren, in Their Sufferings; The Latter, by Contentedness and Constancy of Mind, in submitting to our Own. In order to excite and establish these good Dispositions in us, the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, is here set forth as our Pattern. His Love and Condescension, for our Example; That We, so far as the difference of Circumstances will allow, may not grudge to do, as He hath done before us. His Exaltation and Reward is also mentioned, for our Encouragement; That We may depend upon the like being done to Us in proportion, which hath already been done to Him, by way of Recompence for such kind Humiliation.

To treat this Subject, as we ought, it will be requisite to consider, First, What our Lord did, and how we are bound to imitate him. Secondly, What he received, and how this assures Us, of being rewarded like him.

1. A just Sense of what our Lord did we never can have, without right Notions concerning the Dignity of his Person. Which therefore the Apostle hath here illustrated, in Terms, that speak him Very God, and Very Man. The Form of God as strongly inferring the Former, as the Likeness and Fashions of Men does the Latter; if we regard only the force of the Expressions themselves. And, as the whole Course of his Conversation, the things he did and suffered, living and dying, made uncontestable proof of the truth of his Human Nature: So, if we will allow St. Paul to argue with any Consistence, his Argument here overthrows the Cavils, usually objected to the Truth of his Divine Nature. For how can any taking the Likeness or Fashions of Men deserve to be thought an emptying or humbling of himself, in a Person who is no more than Man? How
How can the Government of the whole World be committed to, or administered by, a mere Man? Ver. 10.

How can Universal Adoration become due to such a one? How can it agree with the design of the Christian Religion, to enjoin it, which aimed so directly at curing Idolatrous Mankind of their Monstrous Sin and Folly; consisting properly in deifying Men for their Merits, and, in that Ignorance of the One true God, doing Service to them which by Nature are no Gods? But especially, how should a Person deserve and obtain Divine Honours, as a Reward for his unparalleled Humility, and Piety, and most exemplary Meekness, Who, if he were not Real God, and yet thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, (but suffered himself to be esteemed so, gave occasion from his own Words to be thus esteemed, never warn'd those who took the occasion, of any Error or ill Consequence in such an Opinion) was certainly the proudest and most presumptuous, the profanest and most detestable Blasphemer? To Them therefore, who acknowledge our Lord's Divinity, St. Paul's Reasoning is just and very pressing. But, to refer it to such Condescensions, as Washing his Disciples Feet, or even the Indignities of his Passion, in a Man only, renders it weak and trifling. The Terms, expressing this voluntary Humiliation, are an empty Pomp in comparison; and such as then indeed, but only then, are full of Significance and sound Argument, when the Perfection and Majesty of Christ's Divine, and the Impotence and Vilenefs of Our Human Nature, are understood, for the Height he came down from, to the Depth he descended to.

Concerning This Condescension, how Marvellous it is in itself, and how forcible an Engagement to Humility and Charity, upon all who believe and reap the benefits of it, I did endeavour to make Men sensible, when the Church commemorated the Blessing of our Lord.
Lord taking upon him the form of a Servant, and being made in the likeness of Men. That yet more amazing Humiliation, of becoming obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, is Matter more peculiarly suitable to the Devotions of this Day. And to it therefore I shall chiefly confine my Discourse.

That Crucifixion was of all Deaths the most Painful, the most Opprobrious; A Punishment reserved for the Vilest of Slaves, and the Heinousest of Malefactors; I can scarce suppose any of my Readers Ignorant. But if they be, the History of our Dear Redeemer’s Sufferings, so particularly rehearsed, so often repeated, in the Service of this Week, will not fail to postede them with right Apprehensions of it. Waving therefore any farther Enlargement at present, concerning that, which our Thoughts will, for some succeeding Days, find themselves obliged to dwell upon; I apply myself immediately to the force and fitness of this Example, for producing, in the Minds of all who consider it, those Two Dispositions already mentioned, which the Collect hath taught us at this time most seasonably to pray for.

1. The First of these is Humility. Which, it is evident, no Person, no Instance, no Action, ever had, ever could have, so direct a tendency to promote. Well therefore might this Saviour invite Men to learn of Him, as being Meek and Lowly; since none was ever by Nature so Exalted, none by Choice so Abased: None could so empty himself of Glory and Power as He had done; even tho’ his Appearance upon Earth had been made, in all the Riches and Splendor of the greatest Monarch, that ever the World knew. But to render his Goodness still more astonishing, He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister: Thought the giving of his own Life a Ransom an Office not too kind; and doing
doing this in the quality of a Servant and a Criminal, a Character not too mean, for the sake of doing Good.

The most fatal, and perhaps the Corruption that sticks closest to our Nature, is Pride. Fit therefore, above all others, to be particularly countermined, and quite beat out of countenance, by Him, who came into the World, on purpose to correct our Corruptions, and to renew our Nature. This Vice consists in undue Exaltations of our selves, and, in consequence of these, Disdain and Contempt of Others. But, Who are those Selves? Who those Others? Lost and Undone Wretches all; Lost and Undone by the Pride of the First; and so must have continued to Eternity, if not refused by the Humility of the Second, Adam. Do We then insist upon Points and Niceties of Respect, upon Place and Precedence, with the utmost rigor, and cast away our own, or invade another's Life (Murderers in both) upon the very jealousy of an Affront? Do We neglect our poorer, or in any respect meaner Brethren, behold their Miseries with Indifference, hold them so far unworthy our Pains, or Cost, or personal good Offices, as scarce to allow them Pity or Regard? Nay but, O Man! Look upon the Blessed Jesus. See the King of Heaven, making himself of no Reputation, eating with the Traitor, admitting his unfaithful Kiss, mute before his Judges, crucified with Thieves. And all for Them, whom Thou pursuest with Revenge, or passest over with Disdain. For Thee, who thus reproachest the Mercy by which thou art Redeemed, the Lord that thus Redeemed thee. Compare the Indignities He submitted to, with Thine: His unbounded Charity, with thy Angry Resentments, Scornful Mien, and Hard-hearted Coldness; And thou wilt soon perceive, that the Pride, the Cruelty, the Unconcernedness, which in any Man is Wicked, in the Disciples of a Crucified Master, is perfectly Absurd. A Contradiction to the Name of Chris-
tian, while thou wilt not let the same Mind be in Thee, which was in Christ Jesus. 'Tis true indeed, He hath far exceeded all, that is possible for us to imitate. But the less proportion the utmost we can do bears to His amazing Condescension for our sakes; the more must They, for whom he stooped so low, if they think anything too much for Them, for whom he likewise stoop'd so low, find their own Narrowness of Spirit, and too delicate Distinctions, (where there is so little ground for such) reproached and condemned. And well it were, if They would seriously reflect, that this Saviour is one Day to be their Judge; if they would ask themselves, how they shall then be able to stand before Him, Who though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet bumbled himself to the form of a Servant, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.

2. The other Virtue, I would recommend, is Patience. Easy to be attained, when that, Last mentioned, hath opened the way to it. For it is Pride especially, that disposes us to be Angry and Revengeful, Fretful and Querulous, Uneasy with our Fortunes, and Unthankful to Providence. Against all which evil Diseases of the Mind, what Antidote more proper, more powerful can we think of, than the Example of the Meek-suffering Jesus? If our Quiet be disturbed, our Possessions invaded, our Persons insulted, our Reputation aspersed, by the Malice of unreasonable wicked Men; Let us remember the perpetual Vexations, the Injuries and Affronts, the Lies and Contradictions of Sinners against himself, which, through the whole Course of his Ministry, he endured; but which, in the Tragical Scene this Week presents us with, were Outrageous beyond any comparison. If Poverty or Friendless Trouble be our Grievance; This resembles us but more to that Son of God, who for our sakes became Poor, subsisted on the pious Bounty of his Hearers and
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Attendants; but in the Hour of his Enemies, and approach of Danger, was Betrayed by One, Denied by Another, and Forsaken by All, his Disciples. If Pain, or Sickness, tempt us to repine; what Gout, what Stone, what Melancholy, can be more Afflicting, than the Tortures He went through, the acute Pangs of his dolorous Crucifixion, and the cutting Sorrows, which wounded his Soul even unto death? So far are our most sensible Afflictions short of that weight of Sorrow, with which it pleased the Lord to bruise this Son of his Love, in the Day of his fierce Anger. But, could we suppose them equal, yet, doth not This make a mighty difference, and ought it not to compose our Spirits to Submission, that His Obedience was an act perfectly free, His Sufferings chosen, for Ours, and not his own Benefit? But We, alas! as Creatures, are entirely at the Mercy of our common Master, and Maker: As Sinners, bound to acknowledge the Righteousness of God, in all that is come upon us: To lay our Mouths in the Dust, and recollect with the penitent Thief, that We indeed are justly under the same condemnation. For this Man did nothing amiss, but all that We receive, and a great deal more, God knows, than we can receive in this World, is but the due Reward of our evil Deeds. And doth a Man complain for the punishment of his Sin? Can Impatience, and Discontent, and hard Accusations of that Providence, which disposes all Events, become One, who in the course of Justice, hath brought Misery upon himself, by his own Fault? Can He murmur at this, which he suffers as a Principal, when so much more was laid upon a Proxy? An innocent and infinitely better Proxy? Especially too, when the Wisdom and Goodness, no less than the Justice, of God have their part in every such Dispensation? For, as our Blessed Master was in the bearing; so is he likewise a Pattern in the Reward, of our Afflictions. And, in that regard,
regard, the Epistle for the Day does likewise call upon us, to contemplate him in his Exaltation. And therefore I proceed now to explain very briefly, in the

II. Second place, What our Lord received, in recompence of his Humility and Patience, and How this assures Us, of being rewarded like him.

1. Of Our Lord's Recompence we have an account in the 9th, 10th, and 11th Verses: Which acquaint us, that it consisted in an exceeding high Exaltation of him, far above any the most excellent Creatures; in making him the Sovereign Ruler of the whole World; in giving him a Title to the humblest Adoration; and in the Publication of his Gospel, and his Glories, over the Face of the whole Earth.

But, in what respect and capacity these Honours were conferred on Christ, is the main Point to be attended to, in the Case now under Consideration. As God, they could not be conferred: For his Glory, in this regard, was perfect before. He could not thus receive any Reward, any Increase of Honour. That supreme and absolute Dominion was inherent and essential to him, That universal Adoration was his strict due, from all Eternity. Whatever Addition he was capable of, he must be capable of, as Man: The Elevation of his Human Nature is therefore the thing intended by the Apostle. In this Nature it was, that He Obeyed, and Merited, and Suffered; In This, consequently it is, that he was Rewarded and Exalted. And a marvellous Exaltation it is, to place Human Nature upon the Throne of God; to subject to This Angels, and Principalities, and Powers, Men and Devils, all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the Earth. A suitable Reward to that Nature, which suffered such Indignities and Pains, for all the barbarous Treatment, and bitter Torments it endured here below; to shine so Bright, and partake in all the Majesty of the Son of God, He, by uniting it inseparably to his own Person, and thus vouchsafing to take part in its Infirmities
mities and Sufferings; entituled this Human, now his Own likeness, to a share in all the Bliss and Glories of that Divine Nature, which was originally, and always, his own. So that he is not any more, as formerly he was, the Governor of the World, and the Object of Mens Worship, as God only, but as God and Man both. Than which nothing could more effectually conduce to the Glory of his Father; Because nothing could more illustrate his Justice, and Wisdom, and Goodness; nothing more undeniably demonstrate the Acceptance and Efficacy of that Redemption, so admirably contrived, for abolishing the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, and retrieving the Immortality and Happiness of Mankind.

2. For, Secondly, This method of dealing with our Lord gives us all imaginable assurance, that They, who conform themselves to His Virtues, shall be proportionably conformed to Him, in the Reward of Them. The Reason is, because, in all he did and suffered for the Salvation of Men; And so again, in all he received, by way of Recompence for those Actions and Sufferings; he acted not in any separate and personal Capacity, but all along sustained a publick Character. This Character is a Consequence of his Incarnation, the blessed Effects whereof turn all upon This; That the Son of God transacted the whole Affair of our Redemption, in the Form and Nature of those He came to redeem. Had he therefore, at his entrance into the World, united himself to any One Man's Person, the Influence and Benefit accruing from such Union, must have been of extent, equal to that of the Union. That single Person, I mean, to whom he was united, and No other, could have been redeemed by it. But now our Blessed Saviour, when he became Man, cloathed himself with a Body, formed in the Womb of the Virgin, by the Operation of the Holy Ghost. His Person was still Divine, and the same it ever had been. Only he united to it, and exhibited himself in, our Flesh; after a manner al-
together extraordinary and miraculous. This was a ta-
ing upon him human Nature, and rendred him the
common Representative of all Mankind. In this is
founded the Title, given him by this A-
postle, of the Second Adam. For, as all
Human Nature was included in Him, who himself de-
cended from none, and from whom all descended: So
was all Human Nature made anew, as it were, in Him,
whose Human Body and Soul were as immediate a
Work of God, as that, whereby our first Parents Body
was formed out of the Dust of the Ground,
and animated with the Breath of Life. As
therefore all Mankind did virtually sin and dye in Adam,
because the whole Human Nature was then in Him;
so are all Mankind virtually Righteous and restored to
Life in Christ; because he took Human Nature at
large; and what he did, and suffered, and received in
that Nature, are the Acts, and Sufferings, and Re-
wards, of Human Nature. Consequently All, who
partake of this Nature, are not only certain of, but
may in some Sense be said already vested in, the Hap-
piness, which Human Nature in Him, by already posses-
fing it, secures their common Right to. And thus far
All shall certainly partake of it. Death was the Pu-
nishment of Sin: This is done away as effectually by
the Second, as it had been introduced by the First Adam.
Their Bodies and Souls both shall be restored to Life,
and live for ever. But the Forgiveness of Sins, and
the Happiness of Heaven, are promised upon certain
Conditions. And therefore, though All shall be im-
mortal, yet only They, who perform the Conditions
of the Gospel, shall be happy in that Immortality.

And This shews us at once the Necessity, and the En-
couragement we all have, to imitate the Virtues, for
which our Lord was so conspicuous. The Necessity, be-
cause nothing less than a Likeness to his Excellencies,
can advance us to a Likeness of that Bliss, which re-
warded
warded them. The Encouragement, because he is entered into Heaven, not for himself, but Us: The Pledge of our Immortality and Glory, by our Nature being already Immortalized and Glorified. Let us not then think any thing too much, to do, or to endure, for our Duty, and the Good of Souls; since where the Sufferings of Christ abound, his Consolations will much more abound. Let us read, and hear, and meditate on, the Scriptures commended to our Thoughts this Week, with Minds disposed to form themselves upon the Model here before us. Let us carefully observe the Interest we have in them; and rest perfectly satisfied, That, by Virtue of that Union, which he in great Humility hath been pleased to make, the Sufferings and the Rewards of Christ's Human Nature so far belong to Us, and all Mankind; that all, who follow the Example of his Patience, shall undoubtedly be Partakers of his Resurrection. Which he of his Infinite Mercy grant, who was dead and is alive again, and liveth for evermore, and hath the Keys of Death and Hell. To whom with the Father, and Holy Spirit, Three Persons and One God, be all Honour and Glory, Power, Praise and Dominion, World without end. Amen.

The GOSPEL.

Matth. xxvii. 1.

1. WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.
2. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the Governor.
3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
4. Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that.
5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.
6. And
6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.
7. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potters field, to bury strangers in.
8. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood unto this day.
9. (Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value:
10. And they gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)
11. And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.
12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.
13. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?
14. And he answered him to never a word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.
15. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.
16. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.
17. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?
18. For he knew that for every they had delivered him.
19. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him.
20. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude, that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.
21. The governor answered, and said unto them, Whether of the two will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.
22. Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all said unto him, Let him be crucified.
23. And the governor said, Why? what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.
24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.
25. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us and on our children.
26. Then released he Barabbas unto them, and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.
27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.
28. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.
29. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail king of the Jews.
30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.
31. And after they had mocked him, they took the robe from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucifie him.
32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross.
33. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,
34. They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.
35. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.
36. And sitting down, they watched him there;
And set over his head his accusation, written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save: If be be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the land unto the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

The rest said, Let him be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And behold, when he had cried again, he said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.

And when the centurion, seeing the things that were done, he gave a loud voice, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

37. 44. 45. 47. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54.

The Gospels for this, and the following Days of the Week, being very long, and altogether Historical; and best understood by comparing the Parallel Places in the other Evangelists; (all which are read in the Course of the Week) It is thought not necessary, to swell this Volume with particular Paraphrases upon them.

Comment.
Comment.

Though Almighty God was pleased to permit, that his Blessed Son should suffer all the Scandal and Punishment, due to the most heinous Malefactors; Yet did his Wisdom order Matters so, that all possible Right should be done to his Innocence. To this Purpose we read such Testimonies given of it, as, if the Jews had not been blinded by the Obstinacy of their own inveterate Malice and Rage, were abundantly full, and clear enough, to have convinced his bitterest Enemies, that they did very wickedly, in treating him so ignominiously, so barbarously. He was acquitted in the most solemn and publick Manner, by Herod and Pilate. All the Evidence, the Jews laboured to pick up and suborn against him, was acknowledged, either insufficient, or inconsistent. Nay, even the wicked Instrument of delivering him up into the Hands of them that sought his Life, enraged at their implacable and Blood-thirsty Proceedings, relented, desired to retract his Bargain, openly confessed his own Guilt, and the unblemish'd Holiness of his injured Master. For, finding that the Chief Priests had declared him guilty of Blasphemy, and delivered him over to the Power of the Roman Governor; Even This wretched Man was touched with a Compassion of his Case, and applied himself to the Jewish Rulers, to prevent farther Mischief. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Priests, and Elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the Innocent Blood.

This is the first remarkable Passage in the Gospel for the Day. And my Design is, to enquire into the Nature of Judas his Repentance, as we find it here describ'd; to shew, what Qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective. And afterwards, to make such
Collections from hence, as the Circumstances of that wretched Man, and the foregoing Particulars, minister occasion for.

I. First, I shall enquire into the Nature of Judas his Repentance, and Then, what Qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective. For, that it was defective in the main, I suppose there need no other Proofs, than such as offer themselves, from what our Saviour himself spoke concerning him. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, save the Son of Perdition. And again, The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, it had been better for that Man, if he had never been born.

Now, how these things could be true of Judas, if his Repentance had been such, as was available for procuring Pardon and Salvation; it is not possible to comprehend. He surely is not lost, whom true Repentance recovers; Nor had it been good for that Man never to have been born, who is saved at last, tho’ at the Expence of never so painful and laborious a Repentance. And therefore, since no one Truth in the Gospel is more express than This, that all who truly repent, shall most certainly be saved; It must follow, That the Person, of whom these dreadful things are pronounced, did not truly and effectually repent.

The Evangelist indeed tells us, that he repented himself; and I am well content to lay no particular Stress upon the Original Word μετανοεῖν here. It being sufficiently notorious, to any attentive Reader, that μεταμορφωσις and μετανοεῖν are promiscuously used in Scripture; Which renders any Distinctions, from the Manner of Expression, of very little or no Force, in the Case before us. But then it is no less evident, that, by repenting, is not everywhere intended a Change of Heart and Life; Not the whole of that, which Repentance strictly signifies, when made the Condition of Pardon and Salvation; but only some part, or imperfect Degree, of it. And thus we
we are to take it here. Not that *Judas* was a thorough Penitent, and became a new Man; but, that he did something necessary to be done, in order to our becoming new Men. He felt some remorse for what he had done; He wished he had not done it at all. This is one of the first Steps which all Penitents set out with. It is the Beginning, but very far from the Perfection, of Repentance. And yet This is all, which that Expression seems to import; And therefore no Argument can be formed from hence, to prove the Truth and Validity of his Repentance, properly so called. The most that can be made of it, is This; that somewhat he did towards it, but not enough to bring it to due Perfection. And therefore it is, that I purpose to consider, so far as this Passage will guide us in the Matter, how far he advanced, and how far he fell short.

1. Now First, One good Step towards Repentance was, That *Judas*, as I said, express'd great Sorrow for what he had done, and condemned himself severely for his wicked Treachery. This is usually the Beginning of Reformation, to be sensible of one's Misery, and sorely afflicted for it. But then we are to look at the Motives, which stir that Passion and Remorse, in an Offender's Breast. Few People so desperately hardned, as not to be struck with Terror, when they see the wretched Consequences of their Sins. And Fear and Suffering are Arguments, which oftentimes lay hold on those, who seem lost to all Arguments besides. Many are so profligate, as to have out-grown all Impressions of Ingruinity and Shame; But we cannot continue to be Men, and remain unconcerned for our own Interest and Safety, when once made sensible of it. Now, tho' these are Considerations, which are commonly the first in hardned and habitual Sinners, and capable of being improved from a Natural, to a Godly Sorrow; Yet, where this is the Main, or the Only Argument of our Remorse; I am afraid, it is not sufficient to work *Repentance to Salvation*. 
tion not to be repented of. For in this case we do not hate the Fault, but the Punishment. Nor are our Dispositions changed one whit, or our Love of God at all increased by it. And such seems to have been the Sorrows of Judas. He found Matters grown to a desperate Height; that there was no probable Appearance of Jesus escaping the Malice of the Jews; He recollected, it is likely, the Predictions of our Lord, concerning the dreadful Vengeance, which should overtake the Person, that betrayed him to Death. These, and probably many Other, dreadful Reflections, working together, with all that Confusion, which Fear and Guilt use to create in Mens Minds, seem to have made up that Concern, which the Text hath express'd by Repenting himself. A Concern, resulting from a Principle of Self-preservation, in the most carnal Notion of the Thing. But we find not any due Sense of the Villany of the Fact; not any condemning himself as the basest, the most ungrateful, the most abandoned Wretch alive; One, that had violated the Laws of God, and Society, and Nature, and cast all Fidelity, and Gratitude, and common Humanity, behind his back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only Aggravations due to his Crime, but the very properest Occasions of Reparation; And such, as till he came to be very tenderly touched for, and deeply wounded with, he was not capable of arriving at the true Contrition of a sincere Penitent.

2. Secondly, Another Advance towards Repentance was, Judas bringing back the Thirty Pieces of Silver, for which he had sold his Master's Life. And This is likewise necessary, that Men, who have offended for Profit, should not suffer the Wages of Iniquity to stick to their Fingers; but disgorge all their polluted Gains, and make Restitution to the utmost of their Power. For God will accept no Man's Sorrow, who is still pleas'd with the Rewards of his Injustice, and holds the Wealth fast.
fast, while he pretends to abhor the Guilt, that procured it. It is the vainest thing in the World; to hope to be accepted, or to obtain a Pardon of those indirect Dealings, by which Men have enriched themselves; without making Satisfaction for the Wrongs they have done, and shewing, that they do in good Earnest detest their Frauds and Oppressions, by giving up freely and entirely the Products, which these have injuriously extorted. It is not a Profession of Sorrow, or a Charitable Legacy upon a Death-Bed, which will serve the turn. The Altar will not sanctify the Gift, or the Giver. If Men think to compound the Matter with God, by making over to Him a Part; This will never insure their Souls, if, in the mean while, they Build their Houses in Blood; if they transmit plentiful Estates to their Heirs, or raise their Families by that Increase of Subsistence, which was purchased by grinding the Face of the Poor, or crushing the Innocent, who have a rightful Title to what They, or their Posterity, enjoy. This is Doctrine, it may be, hard of Digestion to the Great and Greedy. And the parting with the Fruits of their Wickedness is a severe Saying, which they cannot endure to hear of. So far did Judas outdo too many in his Repentance. And, if He, notwithstanding, perished in his Iniquity, what Hopes can They have of Forgiveness, who refuse to come up to his Example in this Particular? He found not Grace, tho' he sought it with Restitution: And yet They flatter themselves in their Hypocrisy, without it. But alas! The Tears of the Oppressed and Injured will move Compassion above, when those of the dissembling Penitent will be rejected with Disdain. And, be assured, Repentance is but dissembled, till the Spoils of Deceit are cast away far from you, and all unrighteous acquisitions put into their true and proper Channel again.

3. Thirdly, Here is also a farther Progress toward Repentance, in that publick and free Confession, I have sinned, in that I have betray-
ed the Innocent Blood. By which Judas did not only take
the Shame of his Fault upon himself, but, in some De-
gree, make Satisfaction to his injured Master. Men
might be apt to suspect, that, how fair an Appearance
foever Jesus made to the World, yet, had there not
been something of private Blame, which one so inte-
mately well acquainted with him, as Judas must be, was
conscious of; A Disciple, a Friend, a constant Compa-
nion, One that had been taught and sustained by him,
could never have entertained so Inhumanely treacherous
a Thought, as to give him up into the Hands of his Ene-
mies, that thirsted for his Blood. But now all the
Ground of these Jealouies was taken away, by the
Traitor’s own Testimonies of Remorse, and open De-
claration of his Lord’s unblemished Innocence. And
This would not only vindicate him to the rest of the
World, and preserve his Honour unstained to all Poste-
rity; But it ought likewise to have brought over those
wicked Accomplices, and have diverted the Jewish Ru-
lers, from their Purpose of murthing so Holy a Per-
son. For, after such an Evidence, They were more
inflexibly wicked, than even Judas himself, in pursu-
ing their Malice to this Person’s Destruction.

Now here again Judas far outstripped too many Pre-
tenders to Repentance. Men are, it may be, well enough
content, to acknowledge their Guilt between God and
their own Consciencs; but hardly to be prevailed upon
so far, as to make an open Confeジョン of their Crimes;
or do publick Justice to those, whose Rights or Repu-
tations they have injured. There is a sort of prepo-
terous Modesty, which cannot bear the Reproaches of
Other Men, at the same time, that it hath little or no
Apprehensions of the Condemnation of one’s own Mind;
And is much more afraid, that the World should know
one hath done amiss, than that God, the Judge of all the
World should know it. Whereas, in Truth, this taking
of Shame to our selves is much more necessary, in order

F f 2
to Restitution and Satisfaction, for any wrong done to our Brethren, than any private Confessions to God can possibly be. For, as we cannot hide our Injustice from Him, so neither can They, whom we have injured, suffer in his Esteem. And therefore no Acknowledgments of our Faults are sufficient, but such as make Them Reparation: Such, as may be effectual to the correcting any mistaken Imputations, in those, whom our unrighteous Proceedings had led into Mistakes; and lay the Blame, where of right it ought to lie: That is, upon the Offender himself. A frank and open Confession is so much a Debt to the Innocent; that we have by no means cleared him as we ought; till the Acknowledgment, the Sorrow, and the Reproach of our having done amiss be made as solemn, and as generally known, if it be possible, as ever the Injury, or the Aspersion had been. Thus only can we prevent that, yet more to be dreaded, Publication of our Crimes; which, whether we will or no, shall be made before Angels and all Mankind, at the last terrible Day of Account, when God shall bring the whole World to Judgment, and detect all the hidden things of Dishonesty.

Some indeed there are, who have taken Pains to shew, that, even in the Instances last mentioned, Judas had by no means done all that became him; In regard he made no Restitution, or Confession to our Lord, who was the injured Party; but only to the Jewish Rulers, his Partners and Companions in Wickedness. But it were heartily to be wished, that the Generality of wicked Persons would be persuaded to keep him Company thus far, and go the same Lengths that He did.

They might, upon These Conditions, entertain much more reasonable Hopes of attaining to another, no less necessary, Qualification of Repentance, in which His was manifestly wanting. And that is, an humble, but steadfast, Faith in the Mercy of God, and a Dependence upon that Sacrifice of his Son, which is available for the Forgive-
Forgiveness even of the chief of Sinners, provided they be believing and returning Sinners.

Now here was Judas his Downfall. The Horror of his Guilt threw him into Amazement, and Confusion, and Despair; and kept him from applying the proper, the only Remedy, that could have any Effect for his Recovery. For, Whether we understand the Account given us of his Death, here, and in the First of the Acts, of laying violent Hands upon himself, or whether of a Suffocation by extreme Melancholy: Either Sense implies intolerable Agonies, and fruitless Remorse, a fearful Expectation of Divine Vengeance, and a Distrust of Mercy, for so great a Villany.

Here then, I conceive, lay the main Defect of Judas his Repentance. And then we cannot be at a Loss for a substantial Reason, why it met with no better Success. For Repentance does not barely consist in Sorrow for Sin; but in such a Sorrow, as is tempered and supported with Hope. Not in a mere Confeffion of Sin, but in such a one, as trusts to be forgiven for Sins confessed. It imports a Change of Manners; But if there be not first a strong Persuasion, that our sincere Endeavours for the future will be kindly received, and our former Transgressions graciously past’d over; All Ground and Encouragement for such a Change is utterly taken away. It requires, that we chuse new Objects for our Affections, draw them off from the World and its treacherous Allurements, from the Flesh, and its Lusts; and sette them upon God and Heavenly Things. But He, who loves God, must of necessity consider him, under some other Characters, than those of a stern Judge, and Implacable Avenger. He must have some Notions of his Goodness. Both of That, which is essential to the Perfection of his own Nature, and of That, which infers a Disposition, to be good and gracious, tender and compassionate to Him in particular. For, nothing but Good, is, or can possibly be, the Motive of
our Love. And, if We have no Persuasion of that Good, it is, as to all Effect upon Us, as if it were not at all. For every thing works upon the Passions of Men, not according to what it is in its own Nature, but in proportion to what they apprehend concerning it. And therefore no Man can fix his Affections on Heaven and Heavenly Joys, who hath no Prospect, no Hope, of ever having any Part or Place There. 'Tis true indeed, Reason will not lead us to infer, that Sorrow for the past, or Amendment for the time to come, can be any Equivalent Satisfaction for our Offences. But Revelation hath assured us, that God may be appeased; and it hath told us how he is appeased: Even by the precious Blood of that Son, who came to give his Life a Ransom for many. God hath declared himself so fully in this Matter, that the very Heinousness of our Sins is not a greater Provocation, than the Despairing of Mercy, after we have committed them. For that Distrust does, in Effect, and by necessary Interpretation, make God a Liar, and disparage the Merits of Christ’s Sacrifice. It plainly argues, that we think God will not be so good as his Word; And, that there are some Offences so horrid, that the Sufferings of his Son cannot be a sufficient Compensation for them. Thus Hope of Mercy, and Faith in the Promises and Satisfaction of Christ, are the very Life and Spirit of true Repentance; Essential, and indispensably requisite to quicken and recommend every part of it. And, consequentially, so ineffectual must Judas his Repentance needs have been, which was destitute of these necessary Qualifications.

If it be enquired, how Judas came to be wanting in this Point; The immediate Cause, no Question, was, that God had forsaken, and withdrawn his Grace from him. But then, if we pursue this Enquiry still farther, and drive it up to its true Head; The Matter will fall at last upon Judas himself, as the proper and original Cause of his own Misery and Destruction. For, never was
was there a more flagrant Instance, of Grace obstinately resisted and abused; Of Advantages, and Knowledge to do better, cast behind One’s Back; Of presumptuous and inflexible Resolutions to do wickedly; Of Reproofs and timely Warnings lost upon a hardened Wretch; than we may observe in the Case before us. Then was the Season of Grace; And Means and Opportunities were not wanting, for deserting from his Villainous Enterprize. 'Tis true, the Devil is said to have entred into Judas. Which signifies, no question, a more than ordinary Influence, and Power over him. But we shall do well to take Notice, that this is not affirmed of Him, or of any other Person in Scripture; till we are first informed of some very grievous, and often repeated, Impieties, which have provoked God to give them over to their own Perverseness. When the Spirit of the Lord is driven away, then, and not before, the evil Spirit enters, and takes Possession. Then he permits the Tempter to have his full Scope at them, by taking off those Assurances and Restraints, which before were afforded, as a Check to their Lusts, and a Controll to his Temptations. And then God denies them the Helps of his preventing and Strengthening Grace, which they have so long resisted, and defeated.

II. I have now done with the First Head I proposed; and, from the Consideration of Judas his Repentance, proceed to make such Inferences from it, as are suitable to this Subject.

1. And First, Let me most earnestly exhort and instreat all that read this Passage, to consider the mighty Danger, and dismal Consequences, of known and wilful Sins, before it be too late to prevent, or to remedy them. One very successful Artifice, made use of by the Devil for our Destruction, is to dress up his Temptations to such Advantage; that all the Profit, all the Pleasure, all we propose to our selves, as our End in Sinning, shall be set in its Best Light, and appear in Proportions larger.
larger than the Life; But all the Difficulty, all the Danger, the Troubles and ill Effects of it, shall be infinitely lessened to, or altogether concealed from, our Sight. This Deceit is One cause, why we feel our Selves so very different Men, while we are pressing forward, heated with Desire, and big with false and flattering Expectations; from what we are, when looking back again upon the thing done, and stung with Reproaches and Self-condemnations. For alas! These will be sure to have their turn too; and the Devil is not wanting in his Address, in this Point also. Before the Fact, he hides all discouraging Circumstances; and insinuates, how small the Fault, and how easy to be Forgiven. Afterwards, he shifts the Scene, distracts us with the dismiallest Representations of our Guilt, and labours to magnify our Crime, so as to be more horrid, than can be forgiven. By the Former he blows us up into Presumption; by the Latter he sinks us into Despair. And Both contribute equally, to his Purpose of contriving our Ruin. But then, to be sure, he hath us fast, when we are entangled in the Snare, careless what we do, and verily persuaded, that there is no possibility of ever getting disengaged. The Smart of a wounded Spirit, even when there remain some hopes of a Cure, and the bitter Reflections of a trembling true Penitent, are Grievous to be born. But no words can express the Misery of that Man. who hath Sinned himself past Hope, and is given up to the Tortures and insupportable Anguish of a condemning Conscience.

This was directly the State of Judas. His greediness of Gain blinded his Eyes, and quite diverted his Thoughts, from considering the horror of his Treachery. But then that Reflection fell upon his Mind, with this terrible back-blow; And he, that brought again the thirty pieces of Silver, would have given ten thousand Worlds, no doubt, had he been Master of them, never to have yielded to this Villainous Suggestion.
therefore we are assaulted by any Temptation; Let us be careful to take the thing, in all its different Prospects. Let us consider betimes, not only the Baits of Pleasure, or Profit, or Greatness, which are apt to daze the Eyes of unwary Sinners; but remember withal, that Sorrow and Death are upon the Hook, and think what we shall do, in the End thereof. Think, I say, what our Condition will be, if God should abandon Us to black Thoughts, to the Agonies of Guilt and Despair; When we shall see nothing, but the dreadful looking for of terrible Indignation, when Fiends shall surround us, and Flames shall be continually flashing in our Faces, and our Hell shall be already begun upon Earth. In Other Cases, our Fears are apt to be the most wild and extravagant of all other Passions, and scare us with Images, far greater and more frightful than the Life; But This is the peculiar Aggravation of a lost Sinner's unhappiness, that the Misery, He lives in perpetual dread of, infinitely exceeds all the Terrors, even of his most jealous and melancholy Apprehensions. An Eternity of Torments is what no finite Imaginations can ever come up to. And as little can we form to our Selves a just Idea of the Extremity of those Torments; Which, though they were to last but for a Moment, would, even thus, be more insupportable, than whole Ages of the most exquisite Misery, which Flesh and Blood is capable of enduring, in this present Life.

Oh! Were we but careful to lay these things fairly before us, They, sure, would check us, in our hottest and most eager Pursuits; and convince us, that no Consideration can be sufficient, for the Commission of one deliberate Sin. Now this is what the Example of Judas may be serviceable to us in. We may Profit our Selves of it greatly, By those Fruitless Pangs of Remorse, which God rejected, when he had first been rejected by His Obstinacy; By its working in us, a Dread of that Justice and Indignation, which will not always be intreated,
Afterous Method, and liable to many great and fatal Mistakes. For no Remorse is so afflicting, as That which shuts Men out from all Comfort: And yet this Remorse is, of all other, the most fruitless, and the farthest off from true Repentance. There may be, and there often is, great danger in the very Degree of our Sorrow. For, if this degenerate into Aftonishment and Perplexity of Heart, into the Darkness of Horror and Confusion, into Distrust of Mercy through Christ, and a Persuasion that our Sin is greater than can ever be forgiven; It is as displeasing to God, and as destructive of Repentance, as it is tormenting and uncomfortable to the Patient's own self. So that, where these Terrors are not the effect of Disease, and a Melancholy Constitution, (as very often they are) they ought to be looked upon, as a fresh Aggravation of the Fault. For this reason God promises to heal the broken in Heart, to pour Balm into these Spiritual Wounds, by reviving Hopes, and seasonable Consolations, and the supporting Sense of his Favour and readiness to be Reconciled, and the cheering Prospect of an everlasting Blifs, which shall wipe away all Tears from the Eyes of these Pious Mourners. And, upon the same account, St. Paul commands the Corinthians, To forgive and restore the Incestuous Person, whom they had cast out of the Church, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow. In a word, God values Mens Reformation, more than their Sighs and Tears. Indeed, he values These, only so far as they contribute to That: And those Men are sorry as they ought, who are so sorry, as to Sin no more. Let no Man therefore distract himself with vain and fantastical Notions in this Matter; but let us every one so now Lament his past Offences, as to forfake and amend them. And Blessed are all they who thus mourn, For they shall not fail to be comforted.

Monday
Monday before Easter.

For the Epistle.

Isaiah lxiii.

1. Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

2. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-press?

3. I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

4. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore my own arm brought Salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me.

6. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

7. I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

8. For be said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them all the days of old.

10. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

11. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is be that brought them up out of the sea, with the Shepherd of his flock? Where is be that put his holy Spirit within him?

12. That led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting Name?

13. That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

14. As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious Name.

15. Look down from Heaven, and behold from the habitation of the holy One, and of the glory: where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the founding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

16. Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Thy Name is from everlasting.

17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servant's sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18. The
The Monday

Vol. II.

18. The people of thy belov'd have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy Sanctuary.
19. We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them: They were not called by thy Name.

Comment.

Ver. 1. to 7.

This Chapter consists of Three Parts.

In the First, The Prophet describes a Victorious Deliverer, returning from the Slaughter of his own and God's Enemies. In the Second, He breaks out into Praise for all the wonderful Mercies, bestowed on his Church and People; recounts the many signal Appearances of his Power in their Favour, down from their Rescue from the Bondage of Egypt; enlarges upon the Conducting them over the Red Sea, through the Wilderness, to the Land of Promise, where at length he fixed, and caused them to Rest; And intermingles, with the mention of these Blessings, the Ingratitude and Disobedience of the Israelites, which often provoked God to chastise them with Afflictions, and suffer their Enemies to gain Advantage over them. In the Third, He does, in the name of that People, earnestly apply to God by Devout Prayer: Lament his Displeasure, and their Sins, the wretched Cause of it; Conjure him by his former Loving-kindness, By the Relation he bore to them, as his Children and Covenanted People, By the Trust they reposed in Him alone, And by their present Calamitous Condition, to assert his own Right and Honour, to deliver his Sanctuary and Church from the Insults and Tyranny of Idolaters, who Prophaned his Temple, and Persecuted his Truth.

What particular Juncture of Circumstances this Prophecy was directed to, is not very material at present, to spend time in Examining. The Method, I am engaged in, seems to make it properly my Business, to ap-
ply this Scripture to such Meaning and Purposes, as the Church, by appointing it a Part in the Office of this Day, intended we should take it in. And therefore that Signification, which is most nearly allied to the other Portions of Holy Writ, which it stands amongst in our Liturgy, and to the Design of this Week's Devotions, will need no other reason, to recommend it to us.

Now in the First of those Parts which seems chiefly to call for our Meditation; The Prophet introduces some Person, wondering at a surprizing Object, which then presented it self. By that Person; Some understand the Prophet himself in a Vision; Others, as St. Jerom, the Holy Angels. The Matter of this Wonder is a Conqueror returning Bloody from Battel: Of whom the following account is given by way of Dialogue, and in Answer to the Questions, Who he is, and why so Habited. That a mighty Victory had been obtained, at the Expence of much Blood and Slaughter, by the powerful, but single Arm of this Mighty Warrior. That by this Victory a total Rout was given to his Adversaries, at a time, when, if He had not engaged, no other was disposed, no other Able, to have quelled the Outrage and Havock, they were making. And that the Stained Garments, he then wore, demonstrated the Sharpness of the Engagement; As his Mien, and Manner of Approach, denoted the Invincible Greatness of his Strength.

By this Description, there cannot, I conceive, be any reasonable doubt, whether we be now invited to contemplate the Hardships, and the Success, of that Combat with the Enemies of our Souls, by which Christ brought Salvation to Mankind. For such was His Conquest of Sin, and Death; when he wrested the Prey out of the Hands of Satan, and, as the Apostle expresseth it, spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphing over them in his Cross. A Conquest full of Wonder, that, in the lowest

Ebb
Ebb of seeming Weakness, discovered so much of hidden Power; That made the once infamous and accursed Tree, an Instrument of Honour to himself, and of Blessings to the whole World: Turned the Object of all Mens Aversion and Scorn, to a means of drawing all Men to him: Destroyed Death, by enduring it; by the pouring out of his own Blood, took Vengeance on the Malice of that wicked Spirit, which spilt it; and, by the Agonies of a Body expiring under Anguish insupportable, hath prevented the Everlasting Torments of many Millions of Souls.

Such Glorious Effects, as These, deserve a place in our Thoughts at this time. That they may put to silence the Impertinence of those Cavils, which unthinking and irreligious People do, from the History of our Lord's Death and Sufferings, take the confidence to start; And which, when that History is so oft inculcated and uppermost in our Minds, (as now it ought to be) the Tempter may snatch this, as a favourable Opportunity, for Suggesting. Were we indeed to read the bare Narrative, and rest in Matter of Fact alone; it might appear altogether unaccountable, how God should give up his own Blessed Son, how that Coeternal Son should give himself, to so much Misery and Shame. But, by joining the Epistle and Gospel of this Day together, the reason of that Mysterious Dispensation is, in some degree, explained to us. The Sufferings related there, are abundantly justified, by the beneficial Consequences ascribed to them here. The Redemption of Fallen Man, (since God in Mercy was pleased to esteem it otherwise) it would ill become Us sure, who enjoy the Benefit, who are indeed the Purchase, to think unworthy for his Son to Undertake, or Bought too Dear at any Price.

But, as the Advantages arising from hence prove the Fitness, and Reasonableness; So does another Argument, furnished by the Prophet here, argue the Necessity
fity of this Dispensation. For, by saying, that He trod
the Wine-press alone, that there was no Helper, and the
like: He does in effect affirm, as St. Peter did after-
wards, to the Jewish Synagogue, that Act iv. 12.
there is no other, by whom Men can be Sa-
ved. None less than He who undertook it, was ca-
pable of procuring so Glorious a Deliverance. No mere
Man could be free from Sins of his own, and all who
are not so, must stand in need of the Sacrifice of an-
other. Or, if any Man could be supposed wholly In-
ocent, That Innocence could only save himself. He
therefore, that could Vanquish Sin, and Death, and
Hell, for Others, must be much more than Man. And
He, who would attempt it, upon the same Terms our
Jesus did, must be much more than Man too. For Greater Love than this hath no
John xv. 13.
Man, that be lay down his Life for his Friends: But to
Die, and So to Die, for Enemies, and Rebels, and
Traitors, (and Sinners are all these) is a
1 John iv. 8, 16.
Perfection of Love, to which He only
could come up, who is Love itself.

To Him therefore let us, with all Humility and
Thankfulness, give the whole Glory of this Noble At-
chievement: Acknowledging all our Happiness, and
all our Hopes, to be the effect, not of our Own, not
of any Other's, but entirely due to His, invaluable Me-
rits. Let us, like the Prophet here, when publishing
his Kindness, and reflecting, (as at this time parti-
cularly we are bound to do) how Dear it hath cost
him; not forget at the same time, to lament those
Sins of Ours, which added to his Account. For, if
Isaiah found it reasonable, in Terms to Affectionate,
to Magnify his People's Deliverance out of Egypt, and
Settlement in the Promised Land: How insensible,
how unworthy are They, who read and hear the Re-
lease from a heavier Tyranny, the Destruction of a
Spiritual Pharaoh, the Passage into the true and heav-
ensly
venly Canaan opened, at the Expence of our Leader's own Life, without Impressions, as Grateful, as Human Hearts can admit? If the Prophet confes, that after all those extraordinary Appearances of Almighty God in their behalf, his People's disingenuous Behaviour turned him to be their Enemy; how greatly ought We to fear, how carefully to avoid, any unworthy returns, to One who hath Loved us so tenderly, which may justly alienate his Affection from us, and be at once our eternal Ruin and Reproach? If He again thought the former Favours of God, and the remembrance of his Covenant, proper Inducements to Incline his Mercy; With what Confidence may We be allowed to approach him, in the Anguish of our Souls, in Distresses and Temptations, when we plead his Son's Name and Merits for Acceptance, and depend upon the Goodness, which hath not only done, but endured, so much for our Sakes, for all proper Succours and Comforts? 'Tis true, our Difficulties are many, our Enemies mighty, our selves Impotent to the last degree. But let it be remembred, for our Support; that more are They that are with us, than All that are or can be against us: That the Heat of the Action is over, and we march against a Force already discomfited. He that is mighty to Save, He that hath trodden the Wine-press of his Father's Wrath alone, hath broken them in his Anger, and trampled them in his Fury. And all the Representations of his bitter Sufferings, which we are now especially conversant with, are not only so many Intimations, how much this Conquest stood him in: But certain Evidences withal, that the Bloody Field is won. And all the Prayers and Tears, the Faftings and Mournings, that now humble our Souls, and exercise our Bodies, are not the proper and efficient Causes of this Conquest, but the Instruments of applying, and securing it to us. They are Acts of Repentance.
pentance and Obedience, which hope to be accepted in the Beloved; not in any Virtue of their own, abstracted from Him: Decent Expressions of Gratitude and Love, to a Saviour, so liberal of himself for our Salvation. Thus we may die after his Example, die to the Sins, which pierced his Soul to Death; And, rising again to righteousness, conquer, as he hath done; conquer our vicious Appetites effectually, and trample down every unruly Passion. So shall we be qualified to attend, to bear a part in, his Triumphs; And, in the midst of our Religious Sympathies, when melting away in Sorrow, for his Agonies and Death, have a Right to sustain our Spirits, with the Prospect of a part, in the Glories of his Resurrection.

The GOSPEL.

St. Mark xiv.

1. After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

2. But they said, Not on the sabbath day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3. And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor: and they murmured against her.

6. And Jesus said, Let her alone, why trouble you her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7. For ye have the poor with you always, and wheresoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoeuer this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.

10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

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12. And
12. And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover?

13. And he sent forth two of his disciples, and said unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water, follow him.

14. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15. And be will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared, there make ready for us.

16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

17. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18. And as they sat, and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me, shall betray me.

19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I?

20. And he answered and said, It is I, and another said, Is it I?

21. The son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: This is my body.

23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27. And Jesus said unto them, All ye shall be offended, because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will I not.

30. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31. But he spake more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

32. And they came to a place which was called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33. And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

34. And he saith unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35. And he was went a little distance, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36. And he said, Abba, Father; all things are possible unto thee. Take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?

38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

39. And again he was went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy) neither wist they what to answer him.

41. And
And be cometh the third time, and saith unto them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; be bold, the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise up, let us go. Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the elders.

And he that betrayeth me, gave them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: take him, and lead him away safely.

And as soon as he was come, he went straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master, and kissed him.

And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

And of one of them, that stood by, drew a sword, and smote the ear of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

And Jesus answered, and said unto them, "Are ye come out against a thief, with swords and staves to take me?"

I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

And they all forsook him and fled.

And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young man laid hold on him.

And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

And they led Jesus away to the high priest, and with him were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.

And Peter followed him at a distance, even into the palace of the high priest: and he went in and sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

And the chief priests, and all the council sought for witness against Jesus, to put him to death, and found none.

But many bare false witness against him; but their witness agreed not together.

And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

We beard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and build another made without hands.

But neither so did their witness agree together.

And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?

But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the son of the blessed?

And Jesus saith, I am; and ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any farther witnesses?

Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there came one of the maids of the high priest.

And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also art one of them of Nazareth.

But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went into the porch, and the cock crew.

And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by, said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.
Comment.

THE Vileness of Judas his Treachery, in delivering up his Master to the Will of those Blood-thirsty Enemies, whose implacable Malice fought his Life, we have had occasion, in some measure, to consider, when treating of Yesterday's Gospel. The next thing, in order of Time, is our Lord's Celebration of his Last Paschal Supper, and the Institution of that Blessed Sacrament, which he designed to be a constant Memorial, of his Body broken, and his Blood shed, for us. Of This it is my purpose, particularly to treat hereafter. Let us at present therefore attend him to the Garden, in company of his Three Choice Friends; and thence to the High Priest's Hall. And so we shall employ the Meditations of this Day, partly on his Sufferings and Behaviour there; and partly on the unhappy Circumstances, into which one of those Beloved Companions shortly after fell. The Former will instruct us, how much he was content to endure for Our sakes: The Latter, will put us in Mind of our own Weakness, when content (and, as We think, able) to suffer much for His. Upon which occasion, we will farther consider, what Reparations are fit to be made, for any Failures of Duty, which such Trials of our falsely supposed Strength shall, for our Humiliation, be permitted to drive us into.

First then, What more lively Representation can we possibly desire of our Lord's willing Sufferings for Our sakes, than this, which the Tragical Scene in the Garden
den sets before our Eyes? Those Tortures of Body, and that exceeding Sorrow and Heaviness of Soul, even unto death? Those Agonies and earnest Prayers, which extorted even Sweats of Blood, and a most vehement Importunity, that the Bitterness of that Cup, he was then about to drink, might, if possible, pass from him; These are all Indications of Anguish and Grief of Heart, greater than can be expressed, on this occasion.

By all these Pangs our Lord hath convinced us, at how dear a Price he thought our Souls worth Purchasing, and what Obligations to Love and Gratitude lie upon Them, for whom he endured so much. By these he shews, how highly displeasing to God Sin is; and what Horror and Dread they are to look for, whose Personal Guilt and Obstinance render them Objects of Divine Wrath and Vengeance; since so heavy a Load of Sufferings was laid on the Son of his Love, as almost quite weighed down a Person perfectly Innocent, when he submitted to bear the Sins of Others. So heavy, that even He, who declares the design of his coming into the World to have been, that he might Suffer, and drink that bitter Cup; did yet, upon the approach and taste of it, desire, if it might be, a Release from it. In which Desire because there are some Difficulties, we shall do well to consider the probable Reasons of that Request, and to observe the Manner and Temper of it.

Now it is not by any means to be imagined, that this Request proceeded, from Ignorance of his Father's Purpose, in relation to this Affair of Man's Redemption: Or from want of that Constancy and Resolution, which became the Generous Undertaker of it: Or from any abatement of his Love toward the miserable Wretches, for whom he undertook it: Or from Rashness or Inadvertency in that trying Hour: Least of all could it proceed from any Apprehension of his Father's Anger at his Person; For he was then engaged in an Act, the most
ther is it any just Reflection upon the Second Adam, that He too was subject to the like Fears and Aversions. For God does not expect from any Man, that he should have no Unwillingness at all to suffer, when called to it; but, that he should conquer that Unwillingness, rest in those Appointments, and make God's Choice his own. The more any of us renounce our Own Will, upon such trying Occasions; the greater is our Virtue, in complying with the Divine Will. And therefore our Lord's Desires to be excused were no Disparagement, either of his Obedience to God, or of his Love to Men. They were, in truth, a higher Commendation of Both. Since, notwithstanding so tender a Sense of what he was about to undergo, he gave himself up to Sufferings, so harsh to Human Nature in general, so exceeding bitter to Him in particular. Therefore, the more passionate his Wishes were for a Release, the more meritorious was his Submission.

Now that Submission is fully express'd in the Form of Words, by which he addressed to his Heavenly Father. Begging, that if it were possible, (that is, if God saw fit, and found any other Method of accomplishing the great Work of Man's Salvation equally wise and proper,) he might be spared those Agonies and Tortures, which were rushing upon him like a mighty Torrent, and had already begun to afflict his Soul with Grief inexpressible. But, at the same time, if the Divine Wisdom continued to require these, settling himself to endure them, with an immovable Constancy of Mind. Nevertheless, not my Will, but Thine be done. The Former part of this Petition is the Voice of Human Nature, according to that Principle of Sense, which God, who implanted it in every Man, cannot disapprove, when duly regulated. The Latter is the Voice of the same Human Nature, according to that Principle of Reason and Duty, which sets bounds to our Desires, checks and controls our Passions and Inclinations, and repre-
represents it, as a becoming and necessary Act of Obedience, to resign our selves, and all our Affairs, to God's better Choice; nay even to prefer his Disposals of Them and Us, before any Desires or Inclinations of our own, in Opposition to them. And This is all the Perfection that Human Nature is capable of; All, that God expects under any sort of Difficulties and Trials; To preserve such a Temper of Soul, as, that our Sense shall be always in Subjection to our Reason; and both Sense and Reason ready to comply with the Appointments of his good Providence, and the Tenor of his Commands. He, who was Innocence it self, did, and We, without any Reflection upon our Virtue, may fear, and feel, and complain of, and pray againft, and wish to be delivered from, Afflictions, and Shame, and bodily Sufferings. For Religion does not intend to extinguish our natural Appetites, and make us cease to be Men. But then we must always remember to do thus, with that Limitation and Reserve, of which our Blessed Master here left us a Pattern; because Religion's Business is to reduce our natural Appetites to a due Subordination, and by containing them within proper Measures of Obedience, to Him who gave them us, to make and keep us good Men.

Let us once more observe the Success of this Prayer. Now That was seen, not in removing the Sufferings our Saviour deprecated; but in the Assistance of an Angel to strengthen him under them. And We, from hence, must learn to acknowledge the Wisdom and Goodness of God in all our Afflictions. We may not suppose, that he hath put off the Bowels of a Father, when he exercises our Patience, with Calamities grievous to be born. We should not presently give up those Petitions, for lost and rejected, which are not granted in the Manner we desire. But we must think our selves kindly dealt with, and our Prayers answered to very good Purpose, when he supports our Spirits under those Difficulties, which Flesh and
and Blood are too feeble to encounter; and conclude, that even Events most unacceptable will, if the Failing be not in our selves, turn at last to better account, than those more pleasing, but less profitable, which, if left to our own disposal, would have been our Portion. In short, we never determine so wisely, as when we leave all entirely to God's Choice, and our last and governing Desire, is, that not Ours, but our Father's Will may be done.

Thus much may suffice, to give us a probable Account of our Blessed Saviour's Agonies and Sorrows upon this Occasion, and of the Uses proper to be made of them. Those Sorrows, it seems reasonable to conceive, might be highly aggravated, by the clear Knowledge of the Horrors and Wrath, whereunto all, to whom these Sufferings prove fruitless, are appointed: And from a Fore-sight withal, how vast the Numbers of such will be, notwithstanding the Misery he took upon himself, to prevent, if it had been possible, their eternal Destruction. The afflictive Pain of both which Reflections we can no more apprehend, than we can the infinite Tenderness and Compassion of Him, who may be presumed to have felt it, in proportion to his own Love, for the Souls he died to Redeem.

If we now, in the Next place, observe the Blessed Jesus, Apprehended by the Officers who came to take him, Receiving that treacherous Kiss of an abandoned Disciple, usually a Token of Friendship, but now a Signal to the Malice of his Enemies; Dragged by unhallowed Hands to the Palace of the High-Priest; There Blind-folded, and Buffeted, Mock'd and Spit upon: This sets before us, On the one hand, Such barbarous and insulting Cruelty, as must needs raise our Indignation: On the Other, Such invincible Meekness and Constancy of Mind, as infinitely surpass any Instance in Story, and justly excite our Wonder, as well as furnish Matter for our Use and Imitation.

For, The more we reflect upon our Selves, and the
Resentments commonly provoked in us, by Injuries and Indignities; the more cause we shall see, to admire that Silence of our Great Master, which so high Affronts, so licentious Revilings, so false Accusations, had not the power to break; much less to extort the least Angry Return from. A Silence, at which his very Adversaries stood astonished: Especially when sensible, how very Weak the Charge against him was; and what Advantage he might easily have taken, to expose and confound the Wickedness and Malice, of those Suborned Wretches, who had the Hardinesse to bring it.

A severe Reproof This Silence is indeed of that Heat, and Clamour, and outrageous Bitternesse, which too often do, upon much less trying occasions, transport Them, who call, and profess to make, this 

Jesus their Pattern: and yet even value themselves, upon paying back Calumnies and Wrongs, Infolencies and spightful Treatment, in the self-same kind. An excellent Instruction too, what Deportment is proper for the Injured and Oppressed, when conscious of their own Innocence; and committing themselves, and the Righteousness of their Cause, to the Protection of a Just God. And, upon both accounts, of exceeding use to be frequently meditated upon, that We may, by the help of this Example, be able to master those Passions, which so few People feel themselves in a condition to deal with; and to preserve strict Decency and Temper, when attack'd by Provocations, which touch us even in the most sensible Part.

But still, this resolute Silence notwithstanding, The same Jesus, both before the High Priest, and afterwards before Pilate, hath demonstrated the force of that Courage, which Truth and Innocence inspire. For there he laid aside all Reserve, when questioned concerning his own Character; And in express words bore a Testimony, which, it was sign'd, should, and he plainly foresaw, would, draw Condemnation of Death upon
upon himself. Of so little account was even Life to Him, of so little ought it to be to Us, where the Cause of God is concerned: Indeed, where any Duty, of Importance so great, as to require (for many there are, which do require) our firm Adherence, and most perilous Vindication.

Mean while, This Contemplation of our Meek, but Constant Saviour, leads us to that of a frail and Waver ing Apostle. And, as the History hath done, so it may be profitable for Us, to join the Remembrance of the Servant's (alas! Human) Infirmities, with that of the Master's Divine Perfections. The Latter pro fits, by shewing what we should be; The Former we may profit our selves of, by seeing what we are; what we indeed are, then most of all, when least suspecting, that we are such.

Let us then look upon St. Peter in the High Priest's Palace. St. Peter, Not only an Apostle, but one of that number, singled out for a Companion of our Lord's Privacies, admitted to the Honour of his most intimate Friendship, and, upon all Occasions hitherto, expressing his Sense of these uncommon Favours, by all possible instances of Gratitude, and Love, and more than common Zeal. He was drawn hither at this very time, most probably, from an affectionate Concern for his Master. Here he resolutely ventured his Person, notwithstanding his Behaviour in the Garden just before, when wounding the High Priest's Servant, must needs have expos'd Him, more than all the rest of his Brethren, to the danger of being observed, and ill treated by them, who dealt so barbarously by his Lord. But alas! this St. Peter was presently so changed from what he had been, that, terrified with the Impertinence of an Inquisitive Servant, he disowned, and denied Jesus; repeated that Denial thrice; repeated it after sufficient space for Recollection, and at last bound the Lye upon his Soul, with solemn Oaths, and dreadful Imprecations.

Ah!
Ah! Where was now that gallant Faith, which made so glorious a Confession of this _Jesu_ being the _Christ, the Son of the living God_? Where that eager Courage, that did not fear to meet his Lord, walking upon the Sea? Where that bold Promise, that though _all should be offended, and leave their Dear Lord in his Distress, yet would He never be offended_? Where that becoming Resolution, _Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee in any wise_? Where all that Fire and Intrepidity, which, but a very little while ago, had singly engaged a whole Band of Armed Men, in hope to rescue the Lord he now abjures? What shall we say to such Advantages, such Warnings, such Proofs of Affection, such boasted Firmness of Mind, such desperate Attempts, all lost and forgotten, upon the silly Surmises of a Servant or two, without any formal Accusation brought, without any Hand laid on him? What two Men ever differed more from one another, than This Man, in an Hour or two, differed from himself? From what himself had oft been proved, and had continued all along, till that very Hour or two: from what he hoped, and believed he should and no doubt intended fully to, continue, to the last Moment of his Life?

Yet so sudden, so prodigious an Alteration our Lord foretold and permitted; And such he thought fit we should be acquainted there was, in this Great Man. Wisely to be sure; as for Other Reasons, so particularly for These. That this Example might effectually convince us, how frail even the Best are, how little Masters of their own Passions, how unfit to undertake for themselves, even when their Desires of doing well are most fervent, and their Resolutions most sincere. In short, how vain all Confidences in our own Strength and Virtue must needs be, which, by tempting us to imagine we are Something, provoke God to withdraw...
that Grace, (the necessity whereof we do not then sufficiently apprehend) and so by woful Experience, make us feel, that in truth we are Nothing.

This Fall of St. Peter however, as it ought to be applied for a necessary Mortification of our Vanity; so may it likewise serve us, for a Support under our Frailties and Temptations. But then This is a Comfort, which can be regularly administered to none, except to Them, who are careful to be like him in that Repentance, whereof we have also an account, in the Scripture now under Consideration. For, as his Fault was sudden and surprising: So was his Recovery speedy and effectual. Long it was not, before he was awakened into Recollection, by a pitying Look of his injured Master, and the Crowing of the Cock. Immediately upon the Reflection, he forsook the guilty Scene of his foul Offence, sought a convenient Place for retired Thoughts, melted away in Tears for the horror of his Crime, and from thenceforward became again the same Faithful Affectionate, Undaunted St. Peter, he had been before. The Book of Acts informs us at large, what noble Reparation he afterwards made, for this Breach of Faith. How Vigorous and Bold he was in Preaching, how Forward and even Joyful in Suffering for, the Gospel of his once denied Lord. And the same Jesus, who foretold, by what means he should Offend, did shortly after let him understand, by what Death he should glorify God.

John xxxi.

Now all these are Testimonies of greater Value, because they were the long and constant Practice of a settled Faith, the course of many Years, the habit and the sense of the Man: Whereas his Crime, tho' exceeding great, was however of short Continuance; the effect of Fear and Infirmity in great measure; and not so much the Act of the Man, as the Violence of Passions and Temptations, which had then almost unmann'd him.

The same Methods must We be sure to follow, when it shall please God to suffer any grievous Temptation to
to overtake Us. We must, upon the first sense of our Fault, burst through, and break our Snare; afflict our Souls with a Sorrow, that may carry some proportion to the sad Occasion of it: Not tarry a Moment in the way of Temptation; never look back upon our Misdemeanors, without a just Abhorrence; And, above all, use our utmost Diligence to bring Honour to Virtue and Religion, by our future Practice. 'Tis true indeed, We cannot do all, or any part of this, without the Assurances of Divine Grace. 'Tis That alone can strengthen them that stand. 'Tis that alone, must raise up them that fall. But the same Jesus, who turned upon Peter, and brought him back to himself, will not leave Us to perish in our Folly; but will find out some happy, some awakening Dispensation. And provided we be as careful, as Peter was, to observe, to strike in with, to improve it; will convert even our Temptations and past Sins, to His Glory, and our own Profit. The same powerful Intercessor prays for every sincere, though feeble Servant, that his faith fail not. But They, that are sincere, should remember, they are feeble too; and not, with this Apostle, sleep in the Hour of Danger; But Watch and Pray: Watch constantly, Pray fervently, that they enter not into Temptation. As knowing by this Example, and feeling by their own Experience, that the Willingness of the Spirit is not Preservative sufficient against the Weakness of the Flesh.

Tuesday before Easter.

For the Epistle.

Isaiah 1. 5.

5. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

undertook notwithstanding I knew how ill it would be received.

6. I submitted to all manner of contumelious Usage, and was not discouraged by it.

6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I bid not my face from shame and spitting.

7. For God, I know, will support me, so that the Malice of my Enemies shall not prevail to my Destruction. Therefore I continue impenetrable to their Cruelty and Scorn, as assured, that I shall not be put to Shame.

7. For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I let my face like a flame, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8. He is near that justifieth me; Who will contend with me? let us stand together. Who is my adversary? let him come near to me.

8. He is near that justifieth me; Who will contend with me? let us stand together. Who is my adversary? let him come near to me.

think ill of me, to come forth and make good their Charge.

9. God will stand by me, in this trial I put my self upon; and all my Accusers shall fail and fret away.

9. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.

10. If among so great a number of Slanderers and Scorners, there be found some few who fear God, and hearken to his Messenger: If these be under grievous Troubles, and have no Comfort; let not their Afflictions drive them to Despair, but (after my Example) put them upon a firm Dependance on the God they serve, for Protection and Deliverance.

10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

11. But as for You, who think to secure your Selves by wicked Means, go on in your vain Projects: But know, that the end of all your worst Imaginary Satisfaction shall be, to perish in Misery and lasting Grief.

11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass your selves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.

Comment.
Comment.

If ever suffering Innocence and injured Virtue had power to move Compassion, and melt us into Tears; if ever the Barbarity and Insolence of Base and Wicked Men could provoke our just Indignation and Abhorrence; let it appear at this time. At this, I say, the Service whereof presents us with a Scene of the blackest Villany, that ever malicious and enraged People were Guilty of; and at the same time too, with the brigest, the most unspotted Virtue, the meekest, the most invincible Patience, that ever suffer'd in human Flesh. Had some very vile Impostor been exposed, abused, tormented, as the Evangelists relate; yet the Cruelty, even to such a Man, would have been thought great, and the foulness of his Guilt would scarce have extinguish'd all our Pity. But when a Person was so ill treated, whose only Message into the World was to lead Men into the Truth, who was himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Who can be so Inhuman, as not to resent it, with a quick and tender Sense of what he endured, and with the greatest Detestation of those Merciless, Malicious Wretches, that inflicted it upon him? All this, I say, is due to our Lord's Innocence, and injured Virtue. But, when we consider farther, that those Sufferings had a secret End, unseen to the Beholders of them at that time; that they were directed and designed by Almighty God, to the most glorious Purposes of redeeming Mankind from Sin and Hell, and making this Just and Holy Person a Sacrifice, and Atonement for the whole World; When we observe that he suffered for Us, in Our Stead, and for Our unspeakable Benefit; Then Pity is too low, too cold a Passion; and it is necessary we should be transported with Wonder, and inflamed with Gratitude and Love. The Dying for Us, though in all those alleviating Circumstances, that might
might have softened Death, and made it and tolerable, that it could be made; in Us, who are fond of Life, for the moving, have reason to Magnify, as an unstance of Kindness. But, to submit to gravations, which add to the Terrors of are infinitely more Grievous, than the shews plainly, that there was nothing much for compassing our Happines: Kindness and Zeal for our Redemption know Nay, which is yet more; This Person, any Natural necessity of Dying, as We God Blessed from all Eternity, God, all of Suffering, or Pain, or Corruption: Al and Impassible as he was, he made the which could not be his Fate. He took ble of Misery and Death, and he took it that he might Suffer and Die in it. So zing was this Goodnes: So little did th his own Son, so far was the Son himself, for Us.

To have his Blood set to sale at a Price, a very low and poor one too: That Blood Purchase more than equivalent to the who ted at thirty Pieces of Silver: To be Betray one of his own Servants, his Friend and companion; One, who was honoured with an Apostle, with the power of working a Commission of Preaching his Gospel, an from the Temptation of such base Avarici ed with the Bag, and made Distributer his Master: To be Assaulted with Sword and Apprehended as a common Robber Mankind: To be haled from one Highther, and there Blindfolded, Spit upon, Insulted over: To be exposed to the Mer of False Witnesses, and, in the midst of a
posed, every way that was possible. And therefore He, who had no Sin of his own, but took Ours upon himself, must suffer all that was any way due to it, all that could be consistent with his Nature to suffer. The King of Heaven and Earth was therefore arrayed in Purple, and made a Spectacle to the People, as if he had pretended to a Royalty, which belonged not to him. A mock Crown and Scepter is given him, and Obeysance made to him in Jest and Wantonness; that he might be the gazing and the Laughing-Stock of the Beholders. Royal Salutations, seconded with Spittings in his Face, and his Scepter broke about his Head, to render him more Ridiculous and Contemptible. Malice was then let loose, and all the Instruments of Hell set on work, to make the Injury more black and detestable. This was Satan's Hour, and the Power of Darkness; and it appeared to be so, by such unrelenting Cruelties, as could never have been exercis'd, had not the Committers of them been carried beyond the common Corruptions of Nature, and for that time ceased to be Men. For, tho' the Nature of Government and Civil Constitutions require great Severities, upon such as are found, or suppos'd, to have grievously Offended; yet no Laws pretend to countenance Barbarity and Infolence, and we can scarce forbid our selves pitying the worst of Criminals. But here was a Person declared wholly Blameless; None of the Courts, before whom he stood, could convict him of the least Fault; The very Judge, who partially condemned him, washed his Hands publicly, and disclaim'd the having any thing to do in taking him off. And yet this Just Man found no Bowels, but all possible Industry was us'd to add to his Torment, and to render him more Vile and Odious, and more unworthy of Compassion.

But, tho' Infolence and Cruelty be detestable upon all Occasions, and more so yet to the Innocent and Injured, yet is there something of Difference, with regard to
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to the Dignity of the Person, against whom they, being in private, and all Good Men, I think, must needs acknowledge, that Fact with Grief, and Horror, and great But alas! though This were such a Virtue were it not so seldom been seen under the Sun; you short does it come of the Affronts and Blows that have been laid upon our Blessed Lord? The best and fairest Sons of Men are not pure in His Sight be compared with his Innocence, even the Greatest, and most Glorious Monarch infinitely more beneath his Divine Majesty; and most of his Subjects. Yet even this unblemish'd Virtue, even this Unity King suffered the Rudeness and Insults of an enraged Multitude. He permitted himself as it was written of him long before, a Wound a very Scorn of Men, and the Outcast of the People; all they that saw him, laughed him to Scorn. They entertained themselves with and ridiculing him; and, when they had solent Farce, they then proceeded to act their intended Tragedy, and resolved to cry with his Blood. Yet still they proceeded in their former Method, of giving Scoffs and laughter, to wound his Soul, as well as body. For, after they had mocked him, they crucify him. A Death, the most dolorous, that was inflicted, as the last Manifestation, upon the vilest of People. Peculiarly to himself Condition, and to the most heinous Others, both for the Shame and for the Pain.

First, Crucifixion was a Death full of Shameful, that it was inflicted, as the last Manifestation, upon the vilest of People. Peculiarly to himself Condition, and to the most heinous Others, both for the Shame and for the Pain.
vided that they were Slaves too. But otherwise, if they were free, and had the Privileges of the City of Rome; this was then thought a Prostitution of that Honour; and too infamous a Penalty for such a one, let his Mis-
de
demeanor have been what it would. Accordingly we see what Companions our Saviour had in his Death, how he was numbered among the worst of Transgressors, and (according to the Prophet) made his Grave with the wicked. Nay, so very od-
ious and abominable was this Punishment, that, when they had a mind to brand the Memory of any very fla-
gitious People, Traitors to the State, and common Enemies to Mankind; We are told, that they thought it a most effectual way to fix an indelible Infamy upon them, to hang their Pictures thus; and to crucify those in Effigy, whom they could not serve so, in their own Persons. Herein then we perceive the unspeakable Condescension of our Blessed Saviour, who did not only vouchsafe to die, but did not disdain the most igno-
minious Death, that the Malice and Scorn of his En-
emies could inflict; To take upon him the Form of the mean-
est Servant, nay of the basest and blackest Criminal. That he became obedient unto Death, was a most asto-
nishing Instance of Humility; but to stoop so very low, as the Death of the Cross, this was to make himself of no Reputation indeed.

Secondly, This Death was terrible above Others, not only for the Scandal and Disgrace, but for the extreme Pain and Torture of it. And of this the very Manner is enough to convince us. For, the Form of a Cross being that of Two Posts cutting one another to right Angles; On That which stood upright, the Body was fastned, by nailing the Feet to it; and to the other transverse Piece, by nailing the Hands on each side. The Pain whereof must needs be most acute, because these Parts of the Body, being the Instruments of Action and Motion, are provided by Nature with a much greater Quantity of Nerves,
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Nerves, than Others have Occasion for Sensation is performed by the Spirits in wheresoever They abound, the Sense must portion, be more quick and tender. As we are to consider, not only the Hands pierced through with Iron Pins; and these Thomas, required for his Conviction, danger into the Print of them: But the Weight Body hanging upon those Fastenings, inomenting Distortions of the Limbs, which signifies, when (speaking in the Person of he complains, They pierced my Hands and my Feet, I may tell all my Bones. If the Bitterness of this Pain had been in any Degree fed by the Shortness, it had yet been m But alas! it was a very slow and lingering exceeding sharp, Death. For, tho' the ever great, yet none of the Vitals were immedi ed. But the Body continued thus stretched the Anguish had by degrees quite exha rts, and driven out the Soul. Our Bless are told expressly, continued thus Threading in Languishings and Thrifts, and leisur approaching Death. And at last, with fire Groans, gave up the Ghost. What a ted is this, in Comparison of those Executions factors commonly undergo; where the Sense immediately assailed, and the Sense of Pain very short? The Romans themselves, who punishment, were frequently so compassionate scle the Party first, and content themselves sing the dead Body upon the Cross. But our's Cafè there was no relenting, no Re manity, for his Ease and Relief. Death at its most frightful Shape, and wreaked his upon him. The Length of his Misery was being unusual, that, we are told, the Gover
and in Proportion, of all, who depend upon Human Force and Subtlety, for compassing of wicked Designs. And here, Who can sufficiently admire the Wisdom of Almighty God, who thus ordered the Great Work of Man's Redemption, in despight of all the Malice and Subtlety of the Devil, and his wicked Instruments, to the contrary? The Envy and Spight of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, the Easiness and Fury of the Common People, the Rage and Insolence of the Soldiers, the profligate Consciences of false Witnesses, the Treachery and Avarice of one of Christ's own Disciples, the Timorousness of a corrupt and time-serving Judge; the Barbarity of Those, who derided, and scourged, and crucified him, and insulted over his dying Agonies and Pains; All these were made use of by the Enemy of Mankind, to destroy Jesus, and to overthrow his Kingdom, and to root out his Name, and all Honour for it, from among Men. And yet see, how vain all these Attempts were in the Event. They were over-ruled by Providence, so as to bring about those very Purposes, which the Actors, and the Evil Spirit who fet those Engines at work, laboured to defeat. They, every one, conspired to render the Matter more glorious, more uniform, more exactly conformable to the original Scheme and Design marked out for it; and Each contributed to finish that Work, which Some of them knew not of, which Others opposed, which None of them in the least intended. This was the only way they could think of, for ruining the Reputation of Jesus, and blotting out the remembrance of his Miracles and his Doctrine; And yet, in reality, it was the only way, by which his Gospel could be Established, beyond all Contradiction, and to all future Ages. For, Had not these Men been so exceedingly, so perversely barbarous and wicked, This Holy Teacher, this Innocent Liver, this General Benefactor to Wretches in Distress, could never have been taken off by so Ignominious a Death. Had he not been put to such a Death,
Eph. i. 11. 

fight may appear, yet there is One that ruleth over all, and worketh after the Counsel of his own Will. Therefore, how successful or formidable soever the Enemies of Truth and Goodness may seem in our Eyes; yet they cannot bind the Hands, nor cross the Purposes of the great Governor of the World. He will assert his own Honour, and do Right to his Suffering and injured Servants; and even then, when the Wicked think themselves most secure, will shew them their Folly, and blast them with the Breath of his Displeasure. Blessed therefore be his wise and watchful Providence, which thus consults his own Honour, and the Good of his Beloved Ones, by dark and mysterious Ways! Blessed be that admirable Management and Skill, which turns even the Obstinacy of Wicked Men, and their Attempts against Religion, into Means of promoting and securing It! Blessed for ever be that amazing Goodness, which turned an unexampled Murthter into a most precious Sacrifice; transformed the Ignominy of the Cross into a Banner of Honour and Triumph; And, when the Princes and Rulers, with Herod and Pontius Pilate, were gathered against Him and his Christ, looked down from Heaven with Scorn, and had them in Derision; put a Hook in his Neck, and a Bridle in their Lips; and, while they gratified their own implacable Malice, suffered that Malice to suggest no other things to them, than what himself had long ago determined, and his Prophets foretold, should be so done. Blessed be that Wisdom, which thus made Sin instrumental to destroy Sin: which, of the Blood shed by wicked Hands, opened a Fountain to wash away Uncleanness; and appointed the Holy Jesus, treated as a vile Malefactor, for a Prince and Saviour, nay for the only, the efficacious Author of Eternal Salvation, to all that sincerely believe and obey him! Blessed, Lastly, be that Truth, which thus preserved
23. Thus did Men gain Access to that Sanctuary, which was a Type of Heaven; but to procure them Admittance into Heaven itself, a nobler Blood (even that of Christ) was necessary.

24. For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entred into the holy place, every year with blood of others:

26. (For then must be often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27. But in this regard too he was like other Men, who die but once.

28. At his first Appearance, he was our Sacrifice for Sin, but at his Second he shall come without any such offering; to bestow that Salvation, which the Sacrifice of himself at his First Coming purchased, for all that trust in, and expect it from, him.

COMMENT.

THE Apostle had said, in the Verse next before, that Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of Death they which are called might receive Remission of Sins, and the promise of eternal Inheritance. He proceeds here, to shew the Necessity of Christ's Death, in order to that purpose. The Nature of which Argument it may be convenient to illustrate, according to the Twofold Sense of the Original Word, as it is capable of being rendred a Testament, or a Covenant.
about this Season; and formerly assigned by me to this Time, as most proper for taking it into Consideration.

Now, in this Point there are Two Parts contained, The Insufficiency of the Legal, First; And Then, The Perfection and Efficacy of the Evangelical, Sacrifice. Somewhat concerning Each of These, with all convenient Brevity and Plainness.

1. First, For the Insufficiency of the Legal Sacrifices. This Epistle contains sundry Arguments, which are very clear and full Proofs of it. In the Seventh Chapter, by shewing, that the Law is changed, by reason of its being defective in this respect; and grounding this Inference upon those Passages of the Old Testament, which speak of the Messiah; not only as a Priest more excellent than any other; but as a Priest descended of a Tribe, none of which had any right to minister in Holy things; and of an Order altogether distinct from, and foreign to, the Constitution of the Levitical Economy. Observe the Author's Reasoning: If Perfection were by the Levitical Priesthood, (for under it the People received the Law) what farther need was there, that another Priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For, the Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law. For be, of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another Tribe, of which no Man gave attendance at the Altar. For it is evident, that our Lord stran out of Judah, of which Tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the Priesthood. And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another Priest, Who is made, not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the power of an endless Life. For he testifieth, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weaknesses and unprofitableness thereof. For the Law made nothing
perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope we draw nigh unto God.

He proves it again, in the Eighth Chapter, from the Forgiveness of Sins, and the more compleat knowledge of God, and Man's Duty, being by their own Prop. Blessings properly belonging to a New God in its proper Season promised to be. And the Consequence he draws from God finds fault with, and abolishes the Old, that, if that First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been Joseph. And thus he establishes the truth of what was said just before, that Christ hath obtained Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was est. blished upon better Promises. So agreeable was the Observation of St. Paul elsewhere, that a necessity had come by the Law, then Christ died in vain. i. e. Upon this Supposition, there was no manner of need for that I. the Provision for Pardon made by its Weight laid upon it, end in the most fatal and absurd Contrivance, that ever was.

In this Ninth, and at the beginning of the Tenth Chapter, the Apostle produces a farther Evidence of the Insufficiency of Sacrifices; Particularly, of that most of the Great Day of Atonement; in that he expressly orders, frequently repeated. He made a part of the daily Worship: On such a day he then went always into the Tabernacle, accomplishing the Service of God; But in the Second went the High Priest alone once in every Year, not without Blood, which he offered and for the Errors of the People. From
of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him; For
he is able to save them to the uttermost that
come to God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to
make Intercession for them. In a word, On this account
are the Sacraments of the Christian Religion Memo-
rinals of a Propitiation already made, and Applications
of its Efficacy, and Testimonies of our Faith and
Thankfulness: Not any Offering of Christ again,
but an Offering of our Selves to God, by, and for,
him.

There is yet one Argument behind, which the Apo-
istle insists upon with great force, taken from the Rea-
son and Nature of the Thing. For thus we find him
confining the Effect of Bulls and Goats slain in Sacrifice,
to the purifying of the Flesh, but ascribing
to the Blood of Christ alone that of cleansing
the Conscience from dead works. And, in Terms yet more
expressive and peremptory, pronouncing it not possible,
that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take
away Sin. The Strength and Ground of
which Assertion we shall best understand, by observing
what is meant in Scripture by taking away Sin, and then
by that Impossibility of doing so, which the Legal Sa-
crifices are here concluded under.

Now to take away Sin is a Phrase, which, in Scrip-
ture Language, denotes the freeing any Person from
the Guilt of Sins already committed, so as that they
shall not any more be charged to him in Account, or
he suffer the Punishment otherwise due for them. And
when, as here it is, applied to Sacrifices, the meaning
is, that such Punishment is so far inflicted on Them;
that God accepts the Death of the Sacrifice, and, in
consideration of this, remits the Death of the Offen-
der, in whose behalf and stead such Sacrifice was slain.
That then, which the Apostle affirms, comes to thus
much. That Christ, by Offering himself, and Dying
for Mankind, hath released us from the Guilt and Pu-
nishment
nishment of our Sins: But, that the Beastslain in Sacrifice under the Law, did not by Their Death release Men, nay that they could not possibly do so.

By which Expression, as I have lately had occasion to explain it, we need not, we must not, understand an absolute Impossibility; as if God could not either remit Sins without any Satisfaction at all; or accept any, that he thought fit, how mean and worthless forever in it self. For, Who shall presume to limit the Supreme Governor's Prerogative, or prescribe to the Goodness and Wisdom of a Being, Infinite in every Perfection? But the meaning is, that, according to the Scheme, upon which God all along hath acted, and, considering him in the Quality of a Lawgiver and a Judge, a Nobler Compensation was necessary. And, for the Blood of Beasts to have been accepted, in lieu of the Punishment due for the Sins of Men, had been extremely incongruous; and such a method of Remission, as the Ends and Measures of Government could not have been answered by.

The Design of every Wise Governor is to contain Men in their Duty, by enacting such Laws, as may be a Rule for their Obedience; and, by enforcing those Laws with such Punishments, as shall render the Breach of them terrible and exemplary; that so Others may be deterred from doing the like, that They, who have already offended, may be afraid to do so again; and that a just Reverence for the Constitution may be preserved and maintained.

To these purposes Almighty God, having made Man Immortal, gave him a Law, the Transgression whereof he threatened with Death, of which we all have naturally the utmost Abhorrence and Dread. That Law being broken by our First Parents, They, and in Them Human Nature, became obnoxious to the Curse. To preserve his Workmanship in so noble a part of the Creation from perishing, it pleased God to accept
to Immortality? No. The Sacrifice, that takes away Sin, must not only die, but live again: Must be able to give it self Immortality, before we can be Immortal by virtue of it. And This proves, that such Sacrifice must at least be Man, must be an innocent Man, must indeed be much more than Man, must be God, as well as Man. For the Scripture is express that God only hath Immortality. And it is evident to common Sense, that a Being, which it self hath not Immortality, cannot give it to others.

By this time, I hope, the Apostle's reasoning is clear, even to a Demonstration, wherein he afferts the Weakness and Inefficacy of the Levitical, and every other Sacrifice; and the Sufficiency and Perfection of Christ's, the Evangelical, the only efficacious, the only true One. And, how can we enough admire the Riches of that Grace, which chose this Method of making his Glory so conspicuous, in every adorable Attribute, concerned in this great Work? Most truly does the Apostle declare, that Jesus Christ is become to us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, as well as Redemption.

O may these kind Intentions be accomplished in every Soul, and may that God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant; make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The
The G O S P E L:

St. Luke xxii.

NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, when
2. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they
3. Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being
4. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests
be might betray him unto them.
5. And they were glad, and covenant to give him money.
6. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto
the multitude.
7. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover
8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go, and prepare us
may eat.
9. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare
10. And he said unto them, Be hold, when ye are entered into
man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into
11. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The master
Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with
12. And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished, there I
13. And they went, and found as he had said unto them, and
passover.
14. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the
him.
15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this
before I suffer.
16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it
kingdom of God.
17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this,
your father.
18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine
of God shall come.
19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave
This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.
20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the
my blood which is shed for you.
21. But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on
22. And truly the son of man goeth as it was determined, but woe
whom he is betrayed.
23. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them
do this thing.
24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should
be greatest.
25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise
and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.
26. But ye shall not be so; but be that is greatest among you, let him
and he that is greatest among you, let him

Re
27. For whether is greater, be that sitteth at meat, or be that serveth? Is not be
that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as be that serveth.
28. Ye are they whereby have continued with me in my temptations.
29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me:
30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging
the twelve tribes of Israel.
31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that
be may sift you as wheat:
32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted,
speedeth thy brethren.
33. And be fain unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and
to death.
34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that
thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.
35. And be fain unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes,
lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.
36. Then said he unto them, But now be that bath a purse, let him take it, and
likewise his scrip: and be that hath no sword, let him sell his garments and buy one.
37. For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in you;
And be was reckoned among the transgressors: For the things concerning me have
an end.
38. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And be fain unto them,
It is enough.
39. And be came out, and went as be was went to the mount of Olives; and be Disciples also followed him.
40. And when be was at the place, be fain unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into
temptation.
41. And be was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and knelted down, and
prayed,
42. Saying, Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not
my will, but thine be done.
43. And there appeared an Angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
44. And being in an agony, be prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were
great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
45. And when be rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them
sleeping for sorrow.
46. And be said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise, and pray, lest ye enter into tempta-
tion.
47. And while be yet spake, behold, a multitude, and be that was called Judas,
one of the twelve, came before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.
48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?
49. When they which were about him, saw what would follow, they said unto him,
Lord, shall we smite with the sword?
50. And one of them smote the face of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.
51. And Jesus answered, and said, Suffer ye thus far, and be touched his ear and
healed him.
52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the
elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and
stones?
53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against
me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.
54. Then they took him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house,
and Peter followed afar off.
55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down
together, Peter sat down among them.
before EASTER.

56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and said, This man was also with him.
57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.
58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, And Peter said, Man, I am not.
59. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently said, a truth: this fellow also was with him, for he is a Galilean.
60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. Am not I yet speak, the cock crew?
61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, three times.
62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.
63. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.
64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?
65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.
66. And as soon as it was day, the Elders of the people, and the Scribes came together, and led him into their Council.
67. Saying, Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And be silent until you shall believe.
68. And if I also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go.
69. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God.
70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said, Ye say that I am.
71. And they said, What need we any farther witness? For we have heard of his own mouth.

COMMENT.

MY Purpose is at present to treat of the Influence of the Supper. Of which this Gospel relates; and the Church requires from them, of proper Years and Understanding, a description of it, at the approaching Festival.

The many useful Tracts upon this Subject, one whereof, at least, is in almost every Church, are ready to afford any great Enlargement of mine. That therefore, which will best agree with the general Scope of this Work, and abundantly suffice for the exact Analysis in view, is,

First, To consider the Manner, and the Institution of this Sacrament; And then

Secondly, To draw from thence some Practical Inferences, with relation to it.

K I 3
In both these I intend to be very Brief and Plain; and to frame my Discourse entirely upon our own Communion-Service. Than which, if carefully attended to, I am bold to affirm, all the Volumes, that have been (or perhaps that ever shall be) written on this Occasion, cannot give more clear, and pious, and profitable Instructions.

I begin with the Manner of Instituting this Sacrament. The First remarkable Circumstance is Its being done at the Close of the Paschal Supper. That, (I need not say;) was ordained, as a yearly Commemoration of God's great Mercy, in sparing the Families of the Israelites, when his Angel destroyed the Firstborn of the Egyptians: And to bringing off his own People, in Safety and Triumph, from a State of Bondage and insupportable Misery. This Blessing, great as it was, did yet prefigure One infinitely greater: Which all Mankind were now about to receive, by the Death of Christ. He, in Allusion to that eminent Type, is called the Lamb of God, and Our Passover: He therefore, having first satisfied the Law, in celebrating the Jewish, proceeds to substitute Another, Feast in its room: Thus, as the rest of Their imperfect Ordinances were swallowed up in Him, so the Commemoration of the Substance gave place to that of the Image. Hereby it is easy to perceive, not only the Fitness of such an Appointment in general; but the great Affinity it had to a former Establishment, and the Seasonableness of appointing this Sacrament at that Time.

Secondly, Our Lord, upon this Occasion, took Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and said, This is my Body, which is given (and broken,) for you. Here again is a very near Resemblance to the Rites of the Jewish Passover. In which the Master of the Family was wont in general to give God solemn Thanks for the Fruits of the Earth; acknowledging
ledging Him to be the Creator and Bestower of them: And then, applying himself to the Occasion of that Festival, and taking the Unleavened Bread into his Hand, he said, This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers did eat in Egypt. A Form, which must in all Reason be admitted, for the best Key to that so very near of kin to it, by which our Saviour consecrated Bread, to a Sacramental Use, under the New Testament. Now this Form seems plainly to signify, that neither the One, nor the Other, is strictly and literally the thing it is called; but a Memorial only, and Representation, of that thing, whose Name it bears. Nor was it indeed possible, that the Bread in Christ's Hand could be in reality his Body broken, at a time when his Body was not yet broken. But the breaking of that Bread was a proper Figure, and a lively Image, of those Wounds and Breaches, which were about to be made in his Body. Thus it was to those Disciples then; And thus it is now to Us, by representing them already made. And of this manner of Speech the Scripture furnishes other Instances in Cases of like Nature. God himself says to Abraham of Circumcision, This is my Covenant, though Abraham was not then actually circumcised. And when he was so, it is evident from St. Paul that Circumcision never was the Covenant itself, but only the Evidence and Seal of that Covenant. Moses, in like manner, says of the Paschal Lamb, It is the Lord's Passover; when yet the Lord had not passed over their Dwellings, till that Lamb was actually killed, and their Doors sprinkled with its Blood. And afterwards, that Lamb could be no other, than the Memorial of his Passing over them. So clearly it appears, that the Sign hath often the Title of the Thing signified; and, that it hath the Name and Significance of a thing to be done, as well as of a thing already done. This is a Figure usual in
any Case, but most natural, and in a manner necessary, where a Sacrament is the Subject. For the very Condition of a Sacrament implies, that the thing representing, and that represented by it, be different; it being manifestly absurd, to make any thing a Sign of itself. And, that we might lie under no Temptation to understand our Saviour's Words, in a Sense different from those other Forms I mentioned; he seems to have sufficiently explained his own meaning, by that Addition, Do this (take, and break, and eat Bread) in remembrance of me. To which Interpretation St. Paul agrees exactly, as I shall have occasion to observe by and by.

3. The same is to be said, Thirdly, concerning the Other part of this Sacrament. Where our Blessed Saviour, after Supper took the Cup, and when he had given Thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of Sins. Or, as St. Luke expresses it, in the Gospel now before us, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you. The Cup here corresponds to the Jews Cup of Blessing, at the Close of the Paschal Feast; which is now converted to a nobler and better Signification, in the Use Christians are commanded to make of it. But, by the manner of Expression, it is evident, that by the Cup was intended the Wine in it; that this Wine is the Blood of the New Testament, or the New Testament in Christ's Blood, no farther, than as it represents and commemorates that Blood, and the Covenant ratified by the shedding of it. Which Blood yet was not shed, at the Time, when this Cup first received that Denomination. And therefore here again, to set us right, St. Paul adds those other Words of our Lord, at the Consecration of it, Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

Thus
These we are to confide in, as Essential for that Purpose; and to rest assured, that the Mercies, represented by them, are as certainly imparted, by and with them, as those very Signs are, which we see, and feel, and taste. These again we are to consider, as having that Efficacy and Significance, not from any natural Force and Tendency of their own; but purely from the Ordinance and Institution of God, who appointed the Use of them for such particular Purposes.

'Tis farther observable, concerning all the Ordinances of this kind; That they begin to take place, upon some new Conditions of Obedience imposed, and as Confirmations to Promises of some signal Advantage, proclaimed as a Reward of Compliance, with the Change or Addition of such Conditions. The Instances themselves make this exceeding plain. For such are to be reckoned, The Tree of Life in Paradise, to our First Parents: The Bow in the Cloud to Noah, after the Flood: Circumcision to Abraham, upon separating Him and his Posterity to be God's peculiar: The Passover, and other Levitical Sacrifices, upon enacting the Law: And, to Us Christians, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, at the Promulgation of the Gospel. All these agree thus far, that, by the Impressions made upon our bodily Senses from Objects fit to affect them, all Doubt might be removed, concerning those Benefits, of which our Senses can have no Perception; but which do challenge a Right to our Faith, (the only Principle qualified to apprehend them) when Evidence of them is made by such Marks and Emblems, as, when rightly used, God hath determined to bestow them in Company with.

And This I take to be the true Reason of that particular Presence of Christ, in the Sacraments, above what is usually attributed to other parts of Religious Worship: That here is an inseparable Conjunction of the thing signified, with the Sign rightly administered; and a sensible Proof of that invisible Benefit, made by visible
fible Signs. For such the Sacraments exhibit to us, but other Acts of Religious Worship are destitute of. This also seems to be the Apostle's Meaning, in that Text to the Corinthians; The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? The Cup and Bread at the Holy Table are therefore the Means of exhibiting and rendring us Partakers of, his Body broken and his Blood, (or as himself, according to St. Luke, was pleased to phrase it) the New Testament in his Blood, shed for us. Of which, if we will speak intelligibly, and so, as may agree with the Terms, whereby the Evangelists and St. Paul have severally described the Act of Institution, it must be to like Effect, with the Words of our Church, in her Thanksgivings after the Communion. That here we hope, by the Merits and Death of Jesus Christ, and through Faith in his Blood, to obtain Remission of our sins, and all other Benefits of his Passion. Or (as the Other Form yet more expressly) that Them who have duly received these Holy Mysteries, God hath vouchsafed to feed with the Spiritual Food of the most precious Body and Blood of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and doth assure them thereby of his Favour and Goodness toward them; and, that they are very Members incorporate in the mystical Body of his Son, which is the blessed Company of all faithful People; and are also Heirs through Hope of his everlasting Kingdom, by the Merits of the most precious Death and Passion of his dear Son. Since then, by communicating in the consecrated Elements, we partake in the Body and Blood of Christ; that is, Since all the Advantages, which his Death was intended to procure for Mankind, are here exhibited, and sealed, to every worthy Receiver in particular; no doubt can be made, whether these Holy Mysteries be not deservedly stiled Pledges of our Dear Redeemer's Love.

2, The
2. The Other End of Instituting this Sacrament is, that it may be a continual Remembrance of Christ's Death. This likewise is manifest, not only from those Words of our Blessed Saviour himself, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; but by those also of St. Paul, *As oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till be come*. If we consider the Circumstances of the first Christians, their Hardships and Persecutions for the Faith of Christ; it must be acknowledged, that their making This so constant a part of their Solemn Worship, was an instance of a more than common Zeal. The Natural Construction of such a Practice amounting in truth to no less, than a Declaration, that they were neither afraid, nor ashamed, to confess themselves the Disciples of a crucified Lord; notwithstanding all the Cruelty and Contempt, which, it was foreseen, such Confession would not fail of exposing them to. It were to be wished, that any Age, that Ours in particular, had so just a Reverence for Christ and his Religion; as might make such open Attestations of our Adherence to him cease to be, even in this respect, necessary. But, supposing the whole World agreed in the Regards due to Christ and his Doctrine, yet would the most publick Declarations of our Thanks still continue a Duty. And, since he hath himself prescribed a Method, for preserving the great things, done and suffered upon Our account, fresh in the Memories of Men; it will very ill become Them, who are so infinitely indebted to his Kindness, to decline remembering him, in the way of his own Choosing. Accordingly, we find this always look'd upon, as the mark of Distinction for his Servants and Followers: The Admission to it, esteemed their highest Privilege and Comfort: The Exclusion from it, upon any notorious Crime, dreaded and lamented, as the most grievous of all Calamities. For this was interpreted a dreadful Omen, of such Persons being debarred entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven,
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if it should please God to take them to an inferable State: An Argument indeed, neither Part nor Lot in those Suffering judged unworthy to commemorate. Brance of this kind supposes an Inter
to, the Blessings Men remember. greatly mistaken by Them, who su Calling of Christ and his Death to m answer the Purposes of this Institution. our Lord have mentioned no other ment expressly, besides that of reme does This singly; when considered imply all those pious Acts and Dispo Treatises of Divines upon this Sacrament observed to require, as necessary. And This it is my design to Explain. my Second General Head, which, I confit of.

II. Some Practical Reflections, matter.

Now, First, By remembering Christ is implied a Remembrance of the En died. This, the Scriptures acquaint was to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of him self: To Deliver us from the Guilt and it, by Suffering in our stead; and to from the Dominion of it, by the Holy Grace. But the Scripture does as pl that these Benefits are confined to the. And therefore, to pretend to this Rem out sincere Endeavours to promote Mockery and Affront to his Suffering, the Remembrance of Christ's Death, is an Obligation to hearty Sorrow for the past; to steadfast Purposes of living good, and to actual Amendment in
Secondly, He, who remembers Christ dying for him, is supposed to have a due Sense of the Merit and Efficacy of that Death. He must believe, That God hath accepted it, in full Satisfaction to his offended Justice, and set him forth as a Propitiation, in whom we have Forgiveness and Acceptance. Consequently, he approaches this Table with assured Persuasion, that the Great Work of Redemption is accomplished. By this Persuasion he feels himself invigorated and actuated perpetually. It is like the Soul in his Body, animating every Part: It influences his whole Behaviour, supports him under Trials, arms him against Temptations, silences his Doubts, lays the Disquiet of Fears and Misgivings to sleep, banishes Despair utterly; and shews him to himself, tho' most polluted and unworthy, when considered abstractedly and alone; yet, when considered, as one for whom Christ died, the Purchase of that Blood, which could not be shed in vain; and sure to be accepted in and for the Beloved Son of God. And thus he attains to another Qualification, declared to be necessary upon our approaches to the Blessed Table, A lively, and steadfast Faith in Christ our Saviour.

Thirdly, He that remembers the Death of Christ, in our Lord's meaning, recollects, that his Blood was shed, and his Body broken for Him and for Many; Or as St. John, in Terms yet more extensive, that he is the Propitiation, not for his Sins only, but also for the Sins of the whole World. And this Reflection cannot fail to awaken those Endearments, which naturally grow, from Men being involved in the same common Danger and Misery, and partaking in the same common Deliverance. It will put us in mind, how, by suffering in our Nature, he hath united to himself all, who share that Nature. It will represent the Friendship, due to Them, who are thus made Heirs of the same Hope, Sons of the same Family, Members of the same Body, Washed in the same Baptism, Fed
at the same Table, with our selves. This made of it by St. Paul, We being members of one Bread and one Body, for we are takers of that one Bread. It will, in most sensibly the Wickedness, the Enmity, or Revenge, or any malicious Good, or Contempt, or Coldness, or Neglect, to whom Christ did not disdain to die, And thus we shall arrive at a Third Proposition to Communicating worthily in perfect Charity with all Men.

Fourthly, Remembering Christ and him more presume a Man sensible, that he is Miserable to all Eternity without it; an admirable Contrivance, for snatching out of the Jaws of Death and Hell; a most amazing Condescension in God, they are even Monsters of Ingratitude; hear, and reflect, Who it was that did endure, and for Whom; and see the consequences of his Sufferings; if they do not wonderfully excited to acknowledge, publish, the Praises of their Benefactor; our: If they do not love Him in return, think any thing too much, that He think as a Testimony of their Love. And so far above us, is not capable of being other way; if they do not make it their duty to express the grateful Sentiments they intelligible Mercy, by Acts of Reverence, Diligence to serve and obey him, and never to displease or grieve him. This Mind, which the reason of the thing Duty at all times. But, at the Season of our Lord's Body and Blood, it is so essential, that then Above all this.
So fit, so advantageous a Time is This, for feeding on the Body of our Lord; So scandalous is it, not now to do this in remembrance of Him: So much to be feared, that they do not remember Christ at all to purpose, who refuse this Respect to his Command, his Person, his Sufferings; and cannot be prevailed upon to remember him, in the Method of his own appointing.

Thursday before Easter.

The Epistle.

Paraphrase.

17. One thing I am about to mention, which deserves great blame: It is the disorderly manner of your meeting together upon Religious Accounts.

18. For I am told, that in these Assemblies, there are some of you, who divide from the rest, and eat separately; and this I believe to be true of some of you.

19. For such Divisions, which are the natural effect of Pride, and of other sinful Dispositions, God permits to take place in the Church. As for other Reasons, so for this particularly, that They, who are truly good Men, may hereby have Opportunity of shewing it, and of distinguishing themselves from the Bad.

20. When therefore you meet in such a disorderly manner, this is not behaving your selves like Men, who come to the Lord’s Supper; For that is a Feast of Love, in which every Person in the Congregation hath an equal right to communicate.

21. For your practice is, that, instead of making this to be one common, regular Table; They who come first eat first; and they who contribute much eat much: So that some are sent away empty, who had little or nothing to bring; and Others, who bring in plenty, eat and drink to excess.

22. What
22. What, have ye not houses to eat, and to drink in, or despise ye the Church of God, and blame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

you thus affront the publick Congregation, by exposing the true Christians, who are, on such occasions, all upon the same level, which deserves very sharp Reproof.

23. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread;

24. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you, for the remembrance of me.

25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my Blood: This do ye, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

26. For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

remember the Death of our Blessed Lord, and to keep him in his absence from us: In which Memorials consequently every degree or condition forever, hath an equal right to partake; equally concerned in the Mercy, remembred and represented.

27. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Piety, and to so holy a Use; and, by unequal and uncharitable Distinction in the design of an Ordinance, which expresses Christ's Love general, (high and low, rich and poor alike,) do treat his Body with contempt, like that of his Murderers, who affronted how long ago, not only a common Man, but one of the vilest of them.

28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

every Man see into, and be satisfied with, the disposition of his heart, come with due Reverence to so Holy an Ordinance, and with reverence for whom the Death, commemorated in it, was undergone, partake of this Sacrament worthily.
observed, That, in the Primitive Church, it was customary, to bring to their Religious Assemblies, every one as he was able and disposed, Provisions for a common Entertainment. Out of these Provisions a convenient Quantity was set apart, to be consecrated for the Blessed Sacrament. This Sacrament was, in some Churches, celebrated before, in Others after, the Feast of Love. For so this Entertainment was used to be called. But in all places, they were Both celebrated in company with each other. The Design of these Feasts was, to express and maintain Friendship and Concord; and to shew, that Christians esteemed themselves one Family, and one Body: To be a Comfort to the Poor, whose Necessities were thus relieved at the publick Expense; and to speak the Charity and Condescension of the Rich, who thus declared their meaner Brethren, in all Christian Privileges, fellow Members, and equal with the Greatest: These voluntary Contributions were stiled Oblations: Because every Contributor was understood to devote what he brought to a Religious Use, wholly to divest himself of any property in it, and to make of the whole one common Fund, to which God and the Church only had from thenceforth a right. As therefore these Entertainments were a Feasting with God, and with the whole Body of Believers: So Every one, who had a right to this Table, (as All had, who for some notorious Offence were not shut out from the Communion of the Lord's-Supper) had right to share alike, tho' all did not contribute alike; nay even, tho' the Circumstances of some were so strait, that they could not contribute any part at all.

Now when this Parity, an Emblem of Christ's universal Love to Mankind, was broken in upon; When every one would take upon him, to eat at his own time, and in proportion to his own bringing; This was a separating what had been made common, a taking back that, which had been solemnly given to God and his Church;
Churen; a defeating of all the Ends and Significations of these Assemblies; a Reproach to, and Robbery of the Poor; by invading the Comforts and the Refreshments, designed for them in a more peculiar manner. But especially, it was an insufferable Scandal and Profanation, when such Feasts, as were intended to promote Religion, became the Occasions of Riot and Excess. Yet these Abuses grew so vast, and gave so great and just Offence; as to render the total disuse of the Agape, or Love-Feasts, expedient. Hence it became a general Custom, to receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper singly. And hence, instead of offering Bread and Wine in kind, Money was brought, for the Support of them that minister in Holy things, and for Relief of the Poor. And such Contributions were, by publick Order, deposited in the Hands of proper Persons, most likely to know their several Necessities, and to proportion this Relief accordingly.

Is it not now as clear as the Light, that, in a Church like Ours, Where the consecrated Elements are furnished at the publick Expence; Where no Man brings or takes his own Supper, but all is delivered by the Minister, without any respect of Persons; Where Distribution is made equally, decently, devoutly, and as nigh to the Primitive Institution, as can well be imagined: Is it not clear, I say, that the Unworthiness charged upon the Corinthians, neither is, nor possibly can be, Ours? And, if so, it must follow, that these Texts of St. Paul are perverted to a very wrong use, when made the Pretence of keeping Men from the Holy Table, whose present Circumstances have no manner of concern in, or relation to them.

I readily allow, that Men may be under the danger of receiving unworthily, upon several other accounts, as well as This. Every notorious Offence against, every wilful Failure in, the Particulars, which my Last Discourse laid down, as fit Preparations for this Bles...
on, and an Error, that draws a world of ill Consequences after it. For even those Prayers, if we hold fast any darling Lust, are an Abomination; an Hypocrisy, that mocks God, and deludes one's own Soul. And I wish all People could be made duly sensible, that although a Week's Preparation, when such extraordinary Address are added to a Conscience void of offence toward God and toward Man, may be exceeding well; yet nothing can be depended upon, but the Communicating frequently and reverently; and living, as if we were every Day to communicate, between one Opportunity and another. To cease to do evil, and learn to do well; To love God, and keep his Commandments; To follow the Works of our Calling with Industry; And to provide for our Families with Honesty; To trust in God's good Providence, and be content with our Condition; To preserve Unity in the Church, Peace and Order in the State; To study to be Quiet, to do our own Business, and the Duty of the Capacity and the Relations we stand in; To abhor Uncleanliness, and Evil-speaking, and all Uncharitableness; This is true Preparation. And he that thus communicates, tho' at a Minute's warning, will never be rejected of God, or deserve to be condemned by Men. And therefore Men would do well to consider this; and, how they can answer, either living out of such a State, or neglecting the Sacrament, when they are in it.
high, as well as the most beneficial, Instance of Charity. Such, as no perverseness of our Enemies can obstruct; but such withal, as cannot come in regularly, till we have brought our selves to those that went before. Because They may be counterfeit and designing, where we transact with Men only; but in This God is a Party: and Prayer appeals to Him, for the Earnestness of our Wishes, and the Integrity of our Hearts.

2. Secondly, The Greatness of our Saviour’s Charity is most conspicuous, from the Time of putting up this Prayer. It was not only for Men, who had persecuted him to the Death, prefaced that Death with all the Calumnies and Reproaches, the utmost Insolence and Indignities, that unrelenting Malice could invent or execute; But it was at the very Instant, when he was expiring under unconceivable Torture and Anguish, and, in the most infamous manner, bleeding out an innocent Soul. It was for merciless Wretches, hardned Murthers, who were even then insulting over his last Agonies, and triumphing in their own wicked Barbarity. So far above the Power of Shame, and Pain, and Wrong, and still obstinate and exasperating Spight, was the Firmness and Meekness of his Holy Mind. And, What a Pattern have we here, to set before our Eyes? We, who are generally so soon provoked, so violently transported, so implacably incensed, at Injuries or Affronts of no mighty Consequence: So hard to forgive, even when we feel no Smart, even when the Heat is over, and the Damage imaginary only. Oh! How far short is this of His Perfection? How unlike to His true Greatness of Soul; who is said, in His Patience and Charity more especially, to have *left us an Example, that we should follow his Steps?*

3. A Third Instance of this Charity consists in the Apology, made here in behalf of his Murthers, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They might indeed, and ought to have known; but the Scriptures
Yet those Labourers had one Hour left, in which, we are at liberty to suppose, they signalized themselves, and wrought with extraordinary Diligence. But here we have a poor Wretch almost expiring, certain Death upon him, dying under publick Punishment for a very heinous Crime; And yet, at the end of a Life, led probably after the rate that Theirs generally are, whose Wickedness at length brings them to an untimely and scandalous End: This Creature is softened at once, received into Favour, and promised a Translation from the Gibbet into Paradise, that very Day.

This certainly is a Monument of Mercy; a standing Comfort, to all who truly repent, though at their last Hour. An Anchor of Hope to Sorrowful Sinners; and a plain Argument, that sincere Amendment never comes too late. For even They, who have long lain in the Snares of the Devil, and, through the course of a whole Life, been taken captive by him at his will, shall, like this reclaimed Thief, be rescued, accepted, rewarded; provided They, like Him, return to God, and improve their, never so small, Remainder of Time to the best Advantage.

But the fatal Delusion in this Case, is, That few People consider, what it is to be converted like Him. They look at the Event, but forget the Circumstances, which led to it. And hence grow those false Confidences, and the great Danger of misapplying and misapplying the account of this Matter; which I am endeavouring now to prevent, by my Second Particular upon this Subject.

For, when this Action comes to be thoroughly weighed, Some things will be found in it very extraordinary, Some that seldom have, Some that can never have, a Parallel. This Man, 'tis probable, had never seen or heard of Christ before; Or, if he had, 'tis yet more strange, that He, who had stood out till then, should come in to the Acknowledgment of him now. Now, when
own Disciples and the Companions of his Preaching and Miracles had forsaken him; when they, who once trusted it had been He, who should have redeemed Israel, despised of him, when the Companion of his Wickedness was at the same time reproaching and blaspheming him: That He, I say, should, in this lowest ebb of Misery, and Shame, and Scorn, that ever the Son of God did or could stoop to, throw himself upon his Protection, acknowledge his Kingdom, believe him Lord of a future and better State, and the Disposer of Rewards and Happiness after Death; And all this, upon so surprizing a Conviction, and in answer to the very first Calls of Grace: This argues so ingenuous a Temper, so noble and so bold a Faith, as never was outdone, as never can in all respects be equalled, except the same Jesus were again to be Crucified. For no Man's Conversion ever had, ever can have, upon other Terms, the same Disadvantages and Discouragements, which This Man's laboured under, and so generously overcame.

Might not then St. Chrysostom, as with great Force he does, rebuke the Impudence of those late Penitents, who presume to take Sanctuary in this Example? Them, who live under the Ministry of the Gospel, and enjoy both the Outward Calls of God's Word, and the Inward Solicitations of his Spirit, but turn the deaf Ear continually to Both? Who profess to believe a risen and glorified Redeemer, to expect him as their Judge, and call him Lord and King, and have lifted themselves in his Service by Baptism; But pay him no degree of that Respect, which this Stranger did, when he had rendered himself of no Reputation, and appeared in the Guise of the vilest Malefactor? This certainly shews such a Difference, as must, if reflected on, convince all wilful Delayers of Repentance, that they have no Precedent to produce for their Confidence. Indeed, Their State is as unlike to His, as that of a Conversion astonishingly speedy
speedy and gallant, is to an obstinate Backwardness and Delay. And the only part of the Comparison that holds, is that of Death being at the Door.

That God should communicate the Assistance of his Grace very liberally, to One so disposed to close with the first Motions of it, as this Thief; agrees with those exalted Notions of his Goodness, which both Reason and Revelation hath given us. But, what Assurance can we have from Either, of his Readiness to assist and bring over those, who have received it in vain? Why should They suppose, that a Spirit, so often driven away, will be at their Call, whenever they please; and, by a more than common Influence, work in them a Change, just when they come to die, which they would never be prevailed upon to concur with, or consent to, in the whole Course of their Lives? No, no. If these Men are desirous to find a Parallel, they have it here at Hand. The Other Thief, who went out of the World railing and reviling, is much more likely to be the true Emblem of Their fad Condition. He is far from being the only Instance of a wicked Creature, given up by God at his last Hour: But the penitent Thief is the only One we are sure of, reclaimed at his last Hour. And This too such a One, as cannot be drawn into Consequence by any Christian; By reason of those many Circumstances, in which it is not so much as possible, for this Case to agree, with that of Any, who shall presume to defer his Repentance, tho' but till the next Hour.

Let us therefore deal fairly with our selves, and not read this Story by halves. Let us in it contemplate the Justice of a provoked, as well as the Mercy of a forgiving, God. If to day, while it is called to day, we do our part; we have a Title to the Consolations of this Case. If we put off from Day to Day, and continue to harden our Hearts; it contains not one Syllable of Comfort for Us, but all we build upon it, is without Foundation. The Extent of our Lives we cannot, but the
certainly know. And, if once Matters come to this pass; we cannot be sure of the Power, nay we cannot be sure of so much as the Will, to repent. But, supposing this also not to be denied us: We cannot have the same Assurance of being then accepted, which this Thief had. For many things, at such a time, concur to deceive us: And whether the good Purposes, then raised in our Minds, would be steadfast and perpetual, God only can foresee. We find by Experience, many, who have resolved well, if God grant an unexpected Recovery, relapse into their old Impieties: And do not only deceive Others, but Themselves too. The only Course then to be safe and easy, is to repent so early, that the Fruits may put the Sincerity of our Change past any doubt. For we can never have too mean a Thought, of doing this upon Beds of Languishing, and at the Approach of Death. And the most that ought to be said in favour of such a Delay, is not to pronounce it altogether desperate. But this is a Danger, which, I hope, the due Observance of this Holy Season we are now in, hath delivered us from. And if so, then may we, with great Equanimity, imitate our Blessed Lord, in that Act, which I proposed to treat of in the

III. Third and last Place, described in these Words; Ver. 46. Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit. The Observations, which this furnishes Matter for, are principally these that follow.

1. This proves the Reality of Christ's Human Nature, with regard to the Soul, no less than the Body: For the Spirit here commended to God, could not be the Divine Spirit, which some ancient Hereticks imagined Christ's Body to have been actuated by; but it must be the same intelligent part of him, as Man, which is, in every one of Us, the Principle of Life,
and Sense, and Motion; Because this is it, which Death dislodges from a fleshly Mass, no longer in Condition to receive, and to be influenced by it.

2. The manner of our Lord's giving up this Spirit hath generally been thought to carry in it an Air of Authority; and to intimate, that, as the delivering it was an Act of free Choice, so the resuming of it was likewise fully in his own Power. The Form made use of on this Occasion, is such as properly denotes the leaving Goods of Value, to be kept by a trusty Friend, till called for again. It may be said indeed, that Other Good Men, who confessedly have not the same Power, are found to have committed their Souls to God in like manner. They have indeed done so, but with this Difference: That, in Christ this was a Declaration of his having purchased Immortality for human Nature, and a sort of Claim for raising it from the Dead: In Others, it is an Expression of their Faith, that their Souls and Bodies shall again be united, by Virtue of that Resurrection, which their Saviour's Rising hath ensured to them.

3. From hence it follows, that the Human Soul is a Substance distinct from the Body; that it lives after it, in a State separate from it, and such a State, as is susceptible of Happiness or Misery. For, why is the Spirit here the Object of our Lord's Care, and deposited in God's Hands; but because these Phrases are set to signify a Place of Safety from Danger, where Souls shall not only survive, but live too in a manner, far distant from that, in which they lived here; where no Temptation shall be able to assault, no Sin to pollute, no Affliction to discompose them? This we find to have been the Sense even of the Jewish Church, before our Saviour's time. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the Unwise they seemed
And their going from us to be utter Destruction, but they are in Peace.

4. Lastly, From hence there seems also to be sufficient Foundation for concluding, that the Souls of Good Men enter upon some Degrees of Bliss, immediately after their Departure out of the Body. Especially, if together with these Words to his Father, we take Christ’s Promise, made just before to the Penitent Thief, that he should that Day be with Him in Paradise.

These are Particulars, which cannot now conveniently receive an Enlargement worthy of them: and are therefore recommended to the Improvement of the Reader. Who will not find it difficult, from hence to draw such Inferences, as may turn to great Account; By supporting him under the Trials of the present Life; By arming him against the immoderate Fears of Death; And by quickning him in such Virtues and Graces, as are necessary, to justify his Hopes of exchanging this for an infinitely better State, when God shall see him ripe for it.

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Good Friday.

The Collects.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy Family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the Hands of wicked Men, and to suffer Death upon the Cross, who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole Body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer before thee for all Estates of Men in thy holy Church; that every Member of the same, in his Vocation and Ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

M & 2

O Mer-
Merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made; nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather, that he should be converted and live: Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks; and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blest Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, World without end. Amen.

The Epistle.

Heb. x. 1.

1. The Law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect:
2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that they worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.
3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.
4. For it is not possible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
5. Wherefore when we are come into the world, we are justified, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.
6. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.
7. Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.
8. Above when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither badst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law;
9. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.
10. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.
11. And every Priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.
12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.
13. From henceforth expecting, till his enemies be made his footstool.
14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.
15. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for, after that he had said before,
16. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them:
17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.
19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus;
20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21. And having an high priest over the house of God:
22. Let
22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised.)
24. And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works:
25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

**Comment.**

The Epistle for this Day, being a continuation of an argument carried on in the Chapter foregoing, hath already fallen in great measure, within the compass of two former discourses upon that subject. For this reason it is, that I conceive a paraphrase of the words not very necessary, and that all I design to say at present, shall be somewhat very briefly, on these two points.

I. First, that the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin; and,

II. Secondly, that this sacrifice was offered by him upon the cross.

I. First, I say, the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. The best light we can have concerning matters of this nature, is derived from the ordinances and customs, of the Jews, and their law. Now thence it is certain, that such ceremonies were used, as plainly intimated a translation of punishment and guilt, from the person offering, to the thing offered; and an acceptance of one life taken away, as substituted in the place of another, which, by the law, was looked upon, as forfeited.

To this purpose the owner of the beast, devoted to the altar, by bringing, and laying his hands upon the head of it, did thus declare his property first, and then the free transferring of that property to God, by delivering it to death, for the ends and uses, specified.
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fied in the law. and, with allusion to this rite it is, that we read of christ laying down his life, giving himself for us, offering his own body a sacrifice for sin; and many other passages of like importance.

it is also certain, that, in sin-offerings, the party concerned did confess his crime over the sacrifice: thus, as is expressed in the law of the scape-goat, putting his transgressions upon the head of the beast: that such beast was afterwards look’d on as unclean; that it conveyed a legal impurity to those who touched it; as being, in the eye of the law, charged with their sins, in whose behalf it was offered. this was the reason, why such sacrifices were not to be eaten, as the rest were, by the offerers, but by the priests only. they were esteem’d, in this regard, mediators between god and his people; and their consummation of it testified god’s acceptance, and the abolition of the sin. this again is the cause, why the bodies of the beasts, offered in the most solemn occasions of this kind, were carried out, and burned without the camp. all which are ceremonies necessary to be attended to, for a right understanding of those very significant passages, which speak of god’s laying on christ the iniquities of us all, of his bearing our sins in his own body, of his being made sin, and a curse for us, of his suffering without the gate of the city, in conformity to the bodies burnt without the camp, and of our having a sin-offering, of which the jews have no right to eat.

once more. it is assigned, as a reason for prohibiting the use of blood in common food, that this was given upon the altar to make an atonement for their souls; and hence it is,
is, that we so often hear of Redemption through Christ's Blood, of Peace made by the Blood of his Cross, that himself mentions the New Testament in his Blood, and the like.

These, and other Places of the same nature, every considering Man must acknowledge it reasonable to interpret, in agreement with those in the Old Testament, to which they so manifestly allude. And if so; it will follow, that Either the Jews themselves had no such thing, or else that the Death of Christ was a true, and proper Sacrifice. More truly such indeed, than any of Theirs. As it actually conveyed the Benefits, which Those could not; As its Virtue was Inherent, Theirs only Relative; And as it is the Substance, of which Theirs were Shadows and Representations. For, that Those were no better, hath been largely proved before: That This was not only a true and proper, but a sufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction, a very few Words will suffice to shew, after what I have had occasion to urge in this Point already.

How acceptable to God this Sacrifice was, it is the design of all those Texts to inform us, which declare his perfect Innocence. And this is done, either in plain Terms; Such as doing and knowing no Sin; Suffering, the just for the unjust; Not needing, as other Priests, to offer first for himself, and then for the People: Or, with reference to the Rules of chusing out the Best for the Service of the Altar; as when we find him called the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, the Lamb, that takes away the Sin of the World, that was slain from the foundation, of the world; and that offered himself to God without spot, through the Eternal Spirit.

Rom. iii. 25.
Colos. i. 20.

1 Pet. ii. 22.
2 Cor. v. 21.
7 Pet. iii. 18.
Heb. vii. 27.
1 Pet. i. 19.
John i. 29.
Rev. xiii. 8.
The same Truth is yet more clearly and fully contained, in those many Scriptures, which ascribe to Him, a compleat Deliverance from all the Inconveniencies and Miseries, which Sin is any where charged with bringing upon Mankind. Is the Sinner in Debt to the Law, and, like Bankrupts of old, or Criminals under Condemnation, liable to be given up to the Tormentors? Christ, we are told, hath cancelled the Hand-writing that was against us, nailing it to His Cross. He hath given His Life a Ransom for many; He hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law; He hath bought us with a Price, So that in Him we have Redemption through His Blood, even the Remission of Sins.

Have Sinners departed from God, alienated His Affection, and put themselves in a State, not only of Distance from, but even of Enmity against Him? The Aliens and Strangers who were once afar off, are said to be made nigh, by the Blood of Christ; And He hath reconciled us to His Father by the Body of His Flesh through death. For which reason we find Him emphatically stiled our Peace, because he hath slain this Enmity by His Cross.

Does Sin leave a Stain and Pollution upon the Souls of Men, such as renders them odious and loathsome, in the sight of a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity? His Blood is said to wash us, to cleanse us from all Sin, to purge our Consciences from dead Works; We are said to be (like the things purified from Legal Uncleanness heretofore) sprinkled and sanctified, by this Blood of the Covenant, and by that Will of God, which removed the many imperfect Levitical, that he might establish this one perfect Evangelical, Purification; Even the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, as the Scripture now before us expressly asserts.
Once more; As the dire Effects of Sin are by no Images more lively represented, than by those of Wounds and putrifying Sores, of Sickness and Death; So neither are the Benefits of our Lord’s Passion at any time more sensibly expressed, than by his Stripes healing us, by his quickening them that are dead in Trespasses and Sins, and our living in and by Him who died for us. And, to shew, that the Virtue of this Spiritual Restorative knows no bounds, he is said, to justify Men from all things, from which they could not be justified, by any former Dispensation, and to save even the chief of Sinners.

Thus much, I conceive, may very well suffice for proving the Death of Christ, not only a true, but a sufficient, Sacrifice and Satisfaction for Sin. It only remains now, that I shew this Sacrifice and Satisfaction to have contilfed strictly in That, which makes the principal Subject of our Devotions this Day, his DYing upon the Cross for us.

Now, for a right understanding of this matter, we must again be beholden to the Guidance of those Rites and Offices, so often referred to in this Epistle; Such as were peculiar to the Jews yearly Solemnity, on the Great Day of Atonement. But we must, in the Contemplation of those Rites, be sure to take this Caution along with us; That our Lord is to be considered in a double Capacity: As the Sacrifice offered; and as the Priest offering it. And therefore care must be had, to distinguish between these two Relations; between the Acts and Effects proper to him, in the One, and in the Other, of these Qualities. These were indeed united in One and the same Person, at the time of This Oblation; but they remained perfectly distinct, and had different Subjects, in every other Oblation whatsoever.

Now,
being a perfect Revolution of Time, in which all Nature seems to have finished its Course; the allowing this Solemn Atonement to be yearly and no more, was the best Intimation, which Oeconomy was capable of giving, that this Great Sacrifice should be offered but Once, and that it should suffice to perfect for ever the Persons satisfied by it.

Thirdly, The High-Priest, even at that Solemn Day, was not allowed to enter into the Holy Place, without Blood. By being denied familiar and constant Access to the Presence of God, was intimated that State of Guilt, which rendereth Men unworthy to approach him. By being allowed it, after the slaying of the Sin-Offering, is signified the removal of that Guilt and Unworthines, by God's Acceptance of the Sacrifice. So that this Access supposeth an Expiation: And the bringing in of the Blood is not the Making such Expiation, but the Evidence of one already made. This is the Type: And the Antitype exactly answereth it. Human Nature, while polluted by Sin, was incapable of entering Heaven; Our Lord, by suffering in this Nature, hath procured to it Immortality, and Admittance thither. He entred there, as Our Common Representative; And, by that Entrance, He testifieth the Expiation finished: For so it must be, or ever our Nature could gain access thither. The Ascent then to, and Residence of our Nature in Heaven, is an Argument, that God is fully reconciled. The crucified Body of our Lord, dwelling for ever with God, is a continual exhibiting of the Merits and Efficacy of his Sacrifice; but the Act of Entering is not properly a Sacrificial Act in Christ, or of an expiatory Nature; Farther than it declares the Sacrifice, and the Power of it. It is indeed an Act of Triumph after, and Reward for, having offered himself up in this Quality. The Death of our Lord on the Cross answers to the Death of the Sin-Offering at the Altar. The Remission is obtain-
ed by means of, and consequently is to be dated from, the time of shedding the Blood. Hence is our Saviour said to rise again for our justification. And how could that be said of him, if we were not justified, till some time after he rose; and if no Pardon were obtained, till his Ascent into Heaven? Hence it is said, that the Blood of the Cross made our peace; and that in the Cross, (or his Body upon it, as some understand that Passage) he defeated and triumphed over the Enemies of our Souls. Hence again, we read, that after he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: And, in the very Scripture I am upon, that, after he had offered one Sacrifice for sins for ever, he sat down on the right hand of God. And, Lastly, Hence we may reasonably presume, he expired upon the Cross, with those significant Words in his Mouth, It is finished. Of which more in the following Service for this Day.

In the mean while I only add, that What hath been here advanced commits no Violence at all upon those Texts, where Christ's Eternal Priesthood is asserted. For Sacrificing, tho' a part, was yet never the whole, of the Priestly Character. Blessing and Intercession are as essential Branches of it, as the Other. And these our Lord continues to discharge, with such fulness of Power; as not to be an humble Suppliant for, but the Author and Giver of Salvation. He is the Beltower, and not only the Ask'er of Blessings, to them, for whom he vouchsafes to intercede. And an Eternal Priest he thus far is, with regard to the Sacrificing part too; as he hath, by that One Offering for Sin, put an utter end to, and rendred all repetition of such, not only needless, but unsafe and sinful.

Upon the whole matter it is very obvious, what mighty Consolations we may, we ought to take, even in
32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.
33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.
34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and declareth that he was truly crucified.
36. For these things are done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

COMMENT.

The Service of the Church, and the Scriptures already handled, have brought Us down to the last Act of our Blessed Saviour's Sufferings, and the particular manner of his expiring upon the Cross. These therefore shall make the Subject of our present Meditation, according to the description given in the Chapter now before us, (Ver. 28, 29, 30.) viz. That, Jesus, (feeling himself afflicted with a vehement Drought, usual upon the approach of Death, but especially in that kind of Death, where extremity of Pain, and loss of Blood, exhaust the Spirits in a more than ordinary degree) complained of Thirst. For the quenching whereof, when his insulting Enemies offered him Vinegar to drink, he meekly submitted to their cruel Mockery; And having moistned his holy Mouth with it, said, It is finished; After which he presently bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost.

There are Two things especially observable from hence, which require our very attentive Consideration.

First, The true Importance of that Saying, It is finished; And,

Secondly, The particular Manner of our Lord's Dying. These I shall first Explain, and then deduce from them some proper Reflections.

I begin
I begin with the Former, The true Importance of that Saying, *It is finished.*

1. The First and most obvious Interpretation seems to regard the Prophecies concerning Christ. Those were so full and express, that there was not any one Material Circumstance, in this great concluding Scene of his Life especially, which had not been most exactly fore-told many Ages before. This shewed, that all these things, however casual they might appear when they happened, were yet conducted all along, by a wise and steady Providence; which so over-ruled the Wills, the Malice, and the Wickedness of Men, as to bring about what God had determined, and what none but He could have signified should be, so long before they came to pass. This was a Method, very agreeable to the Design of Almighty God, whose Revelations and Dealings all tended to the Mystery of Man's Redemption. That Great and Glorious Work; in which his Divine Perfections should be most eminently conspicuous; Which was of greatest Consequence to the World; And Which he therefore kept constantly in View, and made all other Dispositions subservient to it.

This is the very Reason, why the Apostles, in all their Arguings with the Jews, insist so much upon the Topick of Prophecies. Because, according to the Jews own Principles, that Person was to be look'd upon as the true Messiah, in whom these Predictions were manifestly and punctually accomplished. Hence St. John, Ver. 28. takes notice, that *Jesus therefore said, I thirst, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The other Prophecies relating to this matter, Such as, being betrayed by his Friend and Companion, forsaken by his Kindred and Acquaintance, having his Hands and his Feet pierced, his Garments parted, and Lots cast upon his Vesture; had all been made good already. But there remained One more still, One, acknowledged to belong to this Matter. For *David*, complaining of the Barbarity of
his Enemies, says, they were so far from extending their Relief; or shewing any Compassion, to what he endured; that, on the contrary, they exasperated, and triumphed in, his Sufferings. This pitieths Cruelty he expresseth, by Giving him Gall to eat, and when he was thirsty, giving him Vinegar to drink.

Now David was confessed to be a Type of Christ. And what he uttered upon these Melancholy Occasions, had a higher and farther Meaning, than his own Personal Afflictions. And therefore it was necessary for the Evangelist to shew, that This also was really and literally true of Christ; and consequently those Words had not yet received their utmost Completion. So that, when our Lord, upon receiving the Vinegar, said, It is finished, we may reasonably understand him thus: That all the other Predictions, of things antecedent to his Death, had met with Events answerable to them before. There was but One more unfinished: And, since this too had been punctually made good, by the Vinegar brought him to quench his Thirst with, in that last Extremity; No Circumstance of his Sufferings was now omitted, whereby the Prophets had distinguished and pointed him out to the Jews. Thus far all was managed in most exact Order. And therefore the Next thing he had to do, was to die. Which accordingly he did forthwith, for hereupon he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost.

2. Secondly, This Saying of our Blessed Lord is of great Propriety and Significance, if applied, as it may very reasonably be, to the Types and Figures of the Jewish Law. For the Law was a Dispensation, in the very nature and design of it, imperfect, and preparatory to a more excellent One afterwards. This Argument (as we have had frequent occasions to observe) is admirably made out, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the Apostle insists upon it, that even the most eminent Places
Places and Persons, the most remarkable Blessings and Punishments, in the Civil Capacity of the Jews, had a secret Mystery, a distant Prospect and Meaning: But, that the Ceremonial Part of their Worship was entirely made up of Shadow and Image. In short, that Jesus Christ and his Gospel, what he did, and taught, and suffered, was the real End and Substance, the entire and intended Accomplishment, which Almighty God had in view; when he instituted those carnal Ordinances, and darker Significations of his Will, and truly acceptable Worship. This was most eminently the Case, in that Branch of their Service, by which they made the nearest Approaches to Almighty God, and from whence they derived the greatest Confidence in his Favour. Their Sacrifices I mean, and those of them especially, which were appointed, and accepted, by way of Expiation for Sin. And yet you have seen, that the Apostle makes it exceeding clear, even upon their own Principles, that none of those Sacrifices could be a just ground of Confidence to Sinners; that it was not possible, they should have any Efficacy of their own, to the Purposes they used them for. The Power of taking away Sin is a Privilege, which not only the Nature of the thing rendered them incapable of, but the frequent and daily Repetition of the same Sacrifices gave plain Intimation, of their being defective in. And therefore this was peculiar to Another Sacrifice; which was, and needed to be, offered but once only: Because this High-Priest, who takes away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, hath by that One Offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified. This is part of the Apostle's Argument to the Hebrews, in his Ninth and Tenth Chapters. But whilst, since Christ did not effect that great Work till the end of the World; that is, till God made the last Declaration of himself to Mankind; and settled an Institution,
tion, in the place whereof no Other was to succeed; it was not expedient, that the Other antecedent and more imperfect Dispensations should keep Men void of all Comfort and Hope. These shewed Men their Disease and their Misery; and, if they could not apply, yet it was fit they should point out at least, and give them some Prospect of, their Remedy. Almighty God therefore, in his Wisdom and Compassion, seems to have instituted Sacrifices, to shew, that he was not implacable; that he would admit of a Ransom and Proxy, and one day accept Innocent Blood, as an Atonement for the Guilt of those that had offended him. Thus the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the World; not only in the Intention and Decree of his Father, but virtually in every one of those Lambs, appointed and accepted for the Sins of them, who lived, before this only expiatory Sacrifice was actually offered upon the Altar of the Cross. But when that had been done, and the Wrath of God was effectually appeased; there was an End of all Bloody Sacrifices. The Substance was come, and the Shadows were done away; there was no farther use of these, and, as useless for the future, they ceased of themselves. And therefore, in this Sense too, our Saviour might most truly say, It is finished; because the Legal Expiations had now attained their full Completion, in the Death he just then was about to undergo; And in the Soul, which he voluntarily poured out, as an innocent, unblemished, a perfect, and sufficient Oblation and Satisfaction, for the Transgressions of the whole World. Which leads us likewise to consider these Words in a

3. Third most comfortable Sense; As they import, That the great Work of Man's Redemption, and all that was necessary for reconciling Sinners to their incensed God, had been exactly and punctually performed, by Christ suffering in the stead, and for the sake, of Sinners. By this We are not however to understand, that
that Christ endured the very same Punishments in kind and measure, which, by the just Decree of God, were due to willful and impenitent Offenders. For These could be inflicted upon such only, as had offended in their own Persons. St. Peter urges the Necessity of our Lord’s Resurrection, from the Impossibility of his being holden of the Pains of Death. And, if his Innocence delivered him from the Power of Temporal, much more did it exempt him from that of Eternal Death. The Torments of the Damned are without End, without Hope; But everlasting Misery and Despair could never be consistent, either with the Condition of one, who had never deserved them, or with the Assurance of releasing his Brethren from them. These are the Consequences of Disobedience, and Rebellion against God. But the Sufferings of Jesus were most pleasing to God, An unexampled Proof of his entire Obedience, in the highest and most difficult Instance of Submission; An Act of Duty and unspeakable Charity; and so far from incurring his irreconcilable Displeasure, that for this very Cause God hath highly exalted him. This purchased a Reward for his human Nature; and Peace for those, who, but for his fake, could not be pardoned and reconciled. 'Tis true, God bruised him sorely in the day of his fierce Anger; but he never loved him at any time more tenderly, than when he was pleased thus to wound him. He smote him, not for any Misdemeanors of his own, in his Private, but for Ours, which, in his Publick Capacity, as the Common Representative of sinful Mankind, he had taken upon himself. It was Our Burthen, which he carried; Our Iniquities, for which he was chastised; And the Stripes laid upon him made such deep Impression, that, by the Anguish of his Wounds We might be healed. Now, in order to this, there was no need, that the very same Pains, in every point, should be inflicted upon Him,
Him, which, had not he submitted to suffer for Us, we must our Selves have suffered; But it was only necessary, that the Injuries and Affronts, offered to the Divine Justice by the Provocations of wicked Men, should receive a sufficient Compensation; that the Honour of God and his Laws should be vindicated, and Sin made as terrible and full of discouragement, as it could possibly have been, tho' no such Methods of Mercy had been used, to deliver us from the Curse and Condemnation of it. Now all these Ends were fully satisfied, by the Son of God condescending to suffer in our stead. Whatever was wanting in the Duration, or the Extremity, of those Sufferings, was abundantly made up, by the Dignity of the Person. This rendred him capable of purging our Consciences by his Sacrifice; because he offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit, that is, the Divine, united to our Human, Nature.

That Union exalted the value of this Oblation to an infinite degree, and paid a Ransom to offended Justice, of more worth than a hundred thousand Worlds. That gave Men a clear Proof, how hateful Sin is to God, who would not be prevailed with to remit it upon easier Terms, than the Agonies and Death of his only Son. That shewed, how dreadful Consequences They are to expect from their own Faults, when even this most Holy, this entirely Beloved, this Divine Person, who did not, could not know any Sin, hath undergone such bitter things for the Sins of Others. And Lastly, This leaves the Laws of God in their full Force and Obligation still; Since the matter is so ordered, that none but the Penitent and the Virtuous, shall ever reap any Benefit by this Passion. So that, tho' All have now leave to hope, and great Encouragement to obey; yet None have the least shadow of pretence for Presumption, and neglect of their Duty. For the End of those, who continue in Wickedness, is in no degree better, nay, in some
some respects, it is infinitely worse, than if Christ had never died at all. Thus have Mercy and Truth met together; and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other, in the wonderful Contrivance of Man’s Redemption. And This Signification of these Words pronounced by our Saviour here, corresponds exactly with those at the 17th Chap. Ver. 4, 5. I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self. For so likewise here, when he had run through all the bitter Stages of his Passion, endured every Pain, sustained every Conflict that was necessary, and acquitted himself as became him in them all; having now no longer business for Life, he immediately resigned it. Which brings me to the

II. Second Thing observable in the Text, The particular manner of our Saviour’s expiring upon the Cross, as it is expressed in the last Clause of the 30th Verse, And he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost. The original Phrase may denote a delivering up, or as himself expressed it, a committing his Spirit into the Hands of God, as a sacred Trust, to be restored again and united to his Body, at the time prefixed by his own Infinite Wisdom: and plainly implies such a Dissolution, and actual Separation of Soul and Body, as every common Man undergoes, when he dies. But herein is a remarkable Difference; that what is in Other Men the Effect of Necessity, was in Jesus a voluntary Act, and the Effect of his own free Choice. Hence the generality of Interpreters have thought, that St. John takes notice, that Christ bowed his Head before he gave up the Ghost; whereas, in common Cases, the falling of the Head follows after the Breath’s going out of the Body. Hence also St. Mark observes, that Jesus crying out with so loud and strong a Voice, immediately before his expiring, was one Reason, that moved the Centurion to think him an extraordinary Person. For
this shewed, that Nature was not quite spent in him; and that his Death did not come on, by such gradual and unavoidable Decays, as it usually does, when the Voice is stopped and loft, and all the Powers faulter and languish, some time before the Soul's Departure from its fleshly Tabernacle. Accordingly we find, that when the Soldiers came to take down the Bodies from the Cross, they found him dead, before those two others, that were crucified with him; And that, when Joseph came to beg the Body of Jesus, Pilate wondred to hear that he was dead so soon; and would not grant that Request, till he had first satisfied himself of the Truth of it, by enquiring of the Officer, who attended the Execution.

Of all which a very probable Account may be, Not only, that the Excess of his Pain and Sorrow had tired our Nature, and haften'd his Death; But that He, who, as himself professes, had Power to lay down his Life, and could not have it taken from him without his own Permission and Consent; did lay it down at such a time, as himself found convenient. Every step in this last Act of his Life, was taken regularly, and with deliberation. He bore a constant regard to all the Mysterious Purposes of this important Death. He would not die till they were all fulfilled; And, when they were so, he would not, because there was no Occasion that required he should, live any longer. Never was there, never can there be, such a Death in any Instance; so perfectly free, so entirely at the Person's own Disposal. For He, who struck his Enemies down to the Ground with his Majestick Presence, and afterwards gave them leave to apprehend him; could likewise, if he had so pleased, have come down from the Cross. He could have continued insensible to all the Pains of it. He could have survived the sharpest Anguish. And, had he not suspended his Divine Power, Death itself could not have taken hold on him,
him, nor have bound this strong Man, this infinitely more than Man, in those Chains, which, he therefore submitted to, that he might break and burst them a-
sunder shortly after, in a more glorious and triumphant Manner. Such was the Disease of our Blessed Redeem-
er; So voluntary and entirely his own; So wise and
wonderful in every Circumstance; So victorious, even
in that part of it, which his Enemies thought him
vanquished by; So full of Matter, so full of Comfort,
is that dying Word of the Blessed Jesus, treated of un-
der my first Head. So justly might he then, so joyfully
may every Christian now, cry out, It is finished.

The Remainder of my Discourse shall now be em-
ployed, in some few Reflections arising from these
Considerations. Such as, we do by no means remem-
ber this Death like Christians indeed, if we do not feel
our selves very sensibly affected with.

Here then we may perceive, how it came to pass,
that this Death was an Act so noble, and generous in it
self, and so exceeding beneficial to Us. For, therefore
is it a Meritorious, because not only an Invaluable, but
a Willing, Sacrifice. Therefore was this Act of Obe-
dience so well pleasing to His Father; because, even in
the most difficult and painful Instances, it proceeded
not from Constraint, but from full Consent and free
Choice. Upon this account his Love to wretched Man
is so unspeakably tender and great; because it was in
his Power to have refus'd the giving Us such costly
Proofs of his Kindness. But, tho' These are Subjects,
upon which I might very seasonably and pathetically
enlarge; Yet, having been upon them lately, That,
which I rather chuse to say at present, is; That, by
such a chosen and cheerful Submission to die for Our
fakes, our Lord hath set us a Pattern, how we ought
to behave our selves to Him, in return for such mar-
vellous Compassion and Love. That We should think
nothing too much to do, nothing too grievous to suffer,
for a Saviour, who, of his own accord and mere Grace, hath done and suffered so much for Us. To all Persons, who retain any spark of Ingenuity, and have not sinned away all the Principles of Natural Religion, Nothing can be more clear and self-evident, than that they are bound to shew themselves sensible of, and make what requital they can for, Kindnesses received. This is the Ground of that Significant Expression, used by St. Paul,

\*Cor. v. 14.\*

The Love of Christ constraineth us to Obedience. And Our Blessed Saviour takes notice, that neither the Darkness of the Heathens, nor the vicious Lives of the Publicans, had extinguished that Principle of loving those that loved them.

\*Matth. v. 46.\*

Shall Christians then be wanting in so plain a Duty? Christians, who have the brightest Light to walk by, and are under the influence of the most powerful, most engaging Example? For, What Religion ever carried the Points of Love and Gratitude to so noble a Height? What ever presented Mankind with a Pattern, that can pretend to bear any manner of Proportion, to the great, the unspeakable things, Our Master and Benefactor hath done for Us? If we observe the Kindness it Self, the Person who did it, and the Persons for whom it was done, every Circumstance is full of Wonder and Amazement. That God, who is by Nature incapable of Suffering and Death, should condescend to become mortal Man, to qualify himself for enduring the bitterest Afflictions; That he should do this, for Enemies and Rebels; (for such are wretched Sinners) That the Miseries of those, who had most obstinately provoked and injured him, and merited his utmost Indignation and Wrath, should move his Compassion to save their Souls at the Expence of his own Life; That, in the midst of Sorrows and Agonies, of Pains and Torture, he should still persevere in this most gracious Purpose, and not accept a Deliverance, till he had finished this laborious Undertaking; That he
he should embrace Poverty and Hardship, Reproach and Ignominy, Bodily Anguish and Death, with a ready and cheerful Mind, when all the Powers of Hell could not have compell'd him to one single Pang; This is such an Instance of Pity and Friendship, as no Tenderness ever did, or can compare with. And therefore We are certainly of all Creatures the most insensible, the most inexculpable; if we do not take care to apply this Example very warmly to our Consciences; If we read this History of our Dearest Redeemer's Passion, without very moving Impressions; If we do not urge every Branch of it home, and render it as effectual, as it is designed and qualified to be, for exciting in us the most irreconcilable Hatred against Sin, and kindling the most vigorous and ardent Affection for our dying Saviour. I say again, such a Hatred of Sin, and such Love of God and Christ, as this Account is well qualified to excite in us. For, What Branch of our Duty is there, which the Sufferings of our Jesus, when carefully considered, do not furnish the strongest Motives, and most unanswerable Arguments for? He commands us to repent of, that is, to be sorry for, our past Faults, and to forswake them for the time to come. And, can we read the doleful Story of this Day, Can we reflect, that they were Our Iniquities, for which he was bruised, Our Transgressions, for which he was wounded, in the Day of God's fierce Anger, without a deep and hearty Remorse? Can we think, that we contributed to his Agonies and Griefs, that the malicious Jews and barbarous Soldiers were only the Instruments of Cruelty, but every sinful Man in part the Cause, of all he suffered; and think it, without aking Hearts, and overflowing Eyes, without Confusion of Face, and a multitude of self-condemning Ropraoches? Can we behold our dear Lord's Temples pierced with Thorns, his Holy Face besmeared with Blood, his Body torn with Scourges, nailed to the Cross, hanging there in Convulsions,
fions, thirsting, fainting, bleeding, dying, in Pity to Us; and can we suffer our selves to be familiar with, and fond of, those very Lusts, which injure’d, disgraced, tormented, and slew our best Friend, and most generous Benefactor? Surely, if Men have any Gratitude, if any Bowels; this Prospect, lily represented to their Minds, must needs check their wildest Career, and damp the hottest Flames of vicious Inclinations. Surely this Thought would be a Preservative, sufficient against those evil Practices, which, we are told, do even now grieve this Saviour; And Men must be ashamed to do despight to such a Friend, and crucify the Son of God afresh, by enslaving themselves to those corrupt Affections, from whose Tyranny he died to deliver them. He hath told us, that the Proof he expects of our loving him, is to keep his Commandments; And these are such Commandments, as it would be our Duty and Interest to keep, tho’ he had never suffered for us. And, shall We shew less Cheerfulness in seeking our own Happiness, than He did, in taking upon himself our Misery and Punishment? Did He most willingly die for Us, and shall not We be content to live to Him? To Him did I say? Nay to our selves: Since it is not His, but Our Advantage that he seeks, in ordering Us to be Holy and Good Men. It may be, We shall find our Duty incumbent with some Difficulties; but What are our sharpest Trials, in comparison of His? Or how can any Submission deserve to be named, with that most condescending Resignation, whereby Christ offered himself freely to that Sorrow, and Shame, and Pain, which he had no Obligation to endure? He would not decline Death, in its most deformed and frightful Shape; He would not spare himself one Agony, that might conduce to the perfecting Our Salvation: He exposed his Innocence to the Punishments he never deserved; And shall We grudge the Obedience, which the Condition of Servants and Crea-
Creatures lays upon us? Shall We resist the Will of God concerning us, and murmur at the due Reward, nay much less than the due Reward, of our evil Deeds? He does indeed require, that we forsake all and follow him, that we lay down our Lives for his sake: But it is very seldom, that he calls Men to this last Experiment of their Sincerity and Constancy. And yet, if it were frequent, if it were sure to be the Case of every common Christian, Is not even this a reasonable Case? Is it not a very poor return, to what He hath done before us, and for us? We cannot say with Him, We have Power to lay down our Lives; For these Lives are not our own: They are God's Gift, and always in his Disposal. But He had a Right to dispose of His. He could not have been Mortal, had he not chosen to be so. His Happiness was perfect before, and received no Addition by all the Miseries he endured for lost Man; And, when He chose a Death for Our Advantage, which he was not liable to Originally; shall not We submit to the manner of Dying, which God sees fittest, when die in some manner we unavoidably must? Shall we not be satisfied to exchange a Worse Life for a Better, when otherwise, bad as it is, we must part with it for a Worse? So highly reasonable are even the hardest Conditions of a Christian's Obedience. So prevalent would a serious Consideration of our Lord's Love and Sufferings prove, to reconcile us to those Difficulties, which Flesh and Blood are most apt to start and give back at. And therefore, The proper Use of This Week's Devotions is, to enflame our Affections, to quicken our Endeavours, to arm us with Patience, to encourage our Perseverance to the End: To put us in mind, that We, like Him, can only then lay down our Heads with Comfort, when we can say, It is finished: When we measure our Life, not by the Length and Number of our Days, but by the Business and Design of it. No Death can be hasty or unseasonable, which comes,
comes, when a Man hath satisfied the Ends he lived for. No Life is long, which determines, before the Purposes of living are made good, and its Work done. But Happy, Happy They, who, after the most distressed, the most laborious, the most despised Instances of their Virtue, can sing this Song of Triumph to themselves; that they have been faithful in their Charge, and done what it was their Duty to do. If such partake in the Afflictions, and Reproaches, and Death of their Saviour; they shall assuredly be recompensed, by partaking in his Resurrection. And, when they give up the Ghost, shall immediately enter into the Joy of this their crucified Lord.

Easter Even.

The Collects.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the Death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt Affections, we may be buried with him; and that, through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful Resurrection, for his Merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle:

1 Pet. iii. 17.

17. It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

18. Of which Suffering Christ hath left us a Pattern, who died for the establishing an Access to, and Friendship with God, for sinful Men; and, being perfectly Innocent, took the Punishment of our Sins upon him: But that Body of his, which thus died, was raised again by that Divine Spirit.

19. By which also be went and preached unto the Spirits in prison.

20. Which was always urging wicked Men to Repentance, and by the impulse whereof Noah preached Repentance to the old World, and by building the Ark warned them of the Judgment of God in the approaching Deluge.
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21. The like figure whereby even Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sacrament of Baptism. But, as there, it was not the Water, or the Ark, but the Righteousness and Obedience of Noah that preserved him; So neither here is it the Water which cleanses the Flesh, but the Covenant on this occasion solemnly stipulated, and the faithful observance of it, that saves us in Baptism. The efficacy of which Sacrament for our Justification is assured to us, by our Lord's rising again.

22. Who, from and for his Sufferings and Humiliation here below, is now with his Human Body vested with Supreme Authority in Heaven, and Ruler of the whole Intellectual World. For of what degree or dignity soever the Spirits that compose it be, all of them are entirely subject to his Government.

COMMENT.

The Epistle for the Day, like the Day itself, presents to our Minds Two differing Views. The One, a Retrospect upon our dying, The Other, A most comfortable Prospect upon our Risen, Lord. With regard to the Former, We are, by his Example, excited to Patience in our Sufferings, even when those Sufferings are extreme and unjust. With regard to the Latter, we are informed, that our Lord return'd to Life, by virtue of that Eternal Spirit; which, long before his Incarnation, burnt with sinful Men, by seasonable Instructions and Warnings, to prevent the dismal Consequences of a God provoked to Anger. The Inefficacy of which good Office brought Destruction upon all the old World, except one Obedient Family, by the sweeping of a Deluge, dreadful and general, as the Impieties that had let it in upon them.

That Deliverance we likewise learn from hence, to have been a Figure of the Sacrament of Baptism; as the Ark, containing Noah and his Family, was a Figure of the Church. None were then preferred, whom that Ark did not bear upon the Water; In like manner,
ner, it is by Baptism, and in the Church, only, that Men can now be (orderly) saved, from their Sins here, and everlasting Death hereafter. The Efficacy of this Sacrament is however ascribed, not to the outward Element applied to the Body, but to the inward Disposition of the Mind, in Them, who are received by it into this spiritual Ark. This Disposition is to be expressed, by declarations of the Party's willingness, to enter into Covenant with God, and to expect Salvation upon the Terms of the Gospel. A part of Baptism so necessary, that it does not appear, that it antiently was, or that it ever ought to be, administered without such Declaration. And therefore such Consent is rightly demanded of all Baptized Persons: Expected from all of Years and Discretion to be given by themselves: Accepted for Infants by the Charity of the Church, from Sureties in Their Name; But required to be personally ratified by These too, in the too much neglected Rite of Confirmation; at a time, when they are capable of contracting for Their part of this Covenant.

The Salvation, attained by thus entering into Covenant with God, is most rightfully ascribed here to our Lord's Resurrection. That being the Evidence, that the Sins he died for were fully expiated, and, that Immortality was restored to the Nature, in which he died. The Release of our Surety was, in all reasonable construction, an acknowledgment, that our Debt was fully satisfied: And a sufficient foundation for the firmest Faith, in the Merits of Him, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us.

But Faith alone, we know, is not sufficient. Every important Article of the Christian Religion ought to have a powerful Influence upon our Practice. And therefore neither do we consider, nor believe, our Lord's Burial aright, unless That also be imitated, and drawn into Example. 'Tis a pious Observation, frequent a-
among the Fathers, that every one of the great Lines in
the Scheme of our Redemption, was set for us to copy
after: And, that the principal Actions of our Blessed
Saviour are to be look’d on, not only as Historical;
but full of Mystical Instruction, and Intimations of
somewhat to be done by every Christian too, in Corre-
spondence with their great Master. Nor is this to be
thought a flight of warm Zeal. For Scripture it self
abundantly justifies that Notion; which is indeed the
plain Importance of several Passages to the Romans,
Galatians, and Colossians.

Now, as at other times the Apostle enlarges, con-
cerning our being crucified, dying, and rising again with
Christ; So, in the Sixth to the Romans, *ver. 4-
he mentions, Being buried with Christ by
Baptism into Death; and again, in the Second to the
Colossians, Buried with Him in Baptism, *ver. 12.
wherein also ye are risen with him.

These Expressions, whatever Allusion they may have
to that Ceremony, used in hotter Climates, of immer-
sing the Body of the Baptized Person entirely: (which
answers to the Burial of Christ; as Emerging out of
the Water again resembles his Rising out of the Grave)
Yet do they certainly imply a great deal more. Our
Sins are said to be born by Christ in his own Body on the
Tree, the Body of Sin to be crucified with him: And, by
parity of reason, to be buried in his Grave. As therefo-
re, in the Professions of Faith made at Baptism,
every Christian declares his Belief, that the Body of
Christ was really dead and buried; So he obliges him-
selves, to effect that upon his Own Sins and Lusts, which
actually passed upon Christ’s Natural Body. That is,
to mortify and kill his corrupt Affections and Desires;
and not suffer them to act, and move, and draw him
into Sin; any more than the Carkass, when the Soul
is gone, and it is laid into the Earth, can any longer
perform the Offices of a living and animated Body.

O o

And,
possible Conviction should be given to the World, of these two most important Passages. Were we not well assured of his being really dead; We could not be certain, that an Atonement was made for the Sins of the World. And, had we any reasonable ground to doubt the Truth of his Resurrection, we could not depend upon that Atonement being accepted. Now what the Holy Spirit hath thought fit to record of his Burial, is so ordered, as to leave no just Suspicion, Either that our Lord's Body was not actually dead, or that the same Body, which so died, was not actually restored to Life again. This is what the Gospel for the Day gives very full Evidence of. Especially, when considered with its parallel Texts in the Other Evangelists. Which I shall call to my Assistance, in such manner, as may best conduce to the making both this Death, and Resurrection, of our Lord beyond all Contradiction clear, from his Burial now before us.

Now here we must observe,

I. First, The Persons concerned in this Action.

And,

II. Secondly, The several Circumstances of the Action itself. After which,

III. Thirdly, I shall leave the whole upon you with some practical Inferences.

I. I begin with the Persons concerned in this Action, The Principal of which was Joseph of Arimathea. Of whom the Gospels give us this farther Description, that he was a rich Man, and an honourable Counsellor, a just Man and a good, One, who had not consented to the Counsel and Deed of them who persecuted and condemned Jesus to Death; but was himself a Disciple of His, though secretly for fear of the Jews.

In All which Passages there is something material; As I shall shew, by speaking very briefly to Each of them as they lie in order.
His Riches and Honourable Station are mentioned, Not out of any Vanity and Ostentation, that a Person of so considerable a Figure should pay respect to the Body of our Blessed Master: But, partly to intimate the interest and easy access he found with Pilate; and partly to shew, how strangely God brought about an ancient Prophecy concerning the Messias, that, notwithstanding the infamous manner of his dying, he should yet make bis Grave with the Rich at bis death. Isa. liii. 9.

Now this in itself was a most unlikely thing. For the Bodies of them that were crucified, did, by the Roman Laws, hang upon the Gibbet, exposed to all the Injuries of Weather, and a Prey for ravenous Beasts and Fowls of the Air. And, tho' the Jewish Institution did not allow of this Severity to the Dead; yet did they usually bury their Malefactors, in some publick, neglected, and ignominious Place. Hence the Jews themselves besought Pilate, that all the Bodies might be taken away, to prevent the profanation of their Great Festival, and the Breach of God's Ordinance, by their continuing upon the cursed Tree. And thus they disposed of the two Thieves in all probability, as was usual in all other Cases of this Nature. But the making a distinction between Them, and Jesus who was crucified with them, was the Act of Joseph. He applied himself to the Governor, in whose disposal the Bodies of executed Persons were; and he treated it with that becoming Honour, which we shall have Occasion to observe by and by.

In the mean while, we are to take notice, that the next Character, under which we find him, is that of a Counselor. Which denotes him to have been a Member of the Jewish Sanhedrin; That very Assembly of Chief Priests and Rulers, which laid wait for Jesus: Which charged him with Blasphemy; Which used him with so much Cruelty and Contempt; Which, when their own Power would not extend to inflict that Death...
determined for the Messias, arraigned him of Sedition before Pilate: And, when he saw through the thinness of this frivolous pretence, and was disposed to release him, instigated the People to accept of a Robber and a Murtherer; and to demand, that He might be crucified. So that, when the Apostles had told us, that this Person was one of that Body; It was but necessary to acquit him from the Imputation of the common Guilt; to satisfy the World, that, tho' he was of them, he did not act with them. And for this reason St. Luke clears him of having any hand in their Villainies, and distinguishes him from his wicked Fellows; by saying, that he was a good Man and a just, and had not consented to the Counsel and Deed of the rest. Nay, St. Matthew adds here, that, He himself was Jesus Disciple, but yet with some degree of Infirmity; for St. John tells us, it was secretly for fear of the Jews. Many such he tells us, there were, among the Chief Rulers, who were convinced by his Doctrine and Miracles. But they kept their Opinion to themselves, and had not the Courage to own it publicly. How long the Rest walked under this Disguise, we know not. But it may well seem strange, that Joseph, who never durst openly profess a regard to Jesus, while living, should now, when he had suffered all the Ignominy of a Malefactor, and his Enemies thought they had effectually rid their hands of him, not stick to interest himself for the honourable Interment of a dead Master. That He should expose himself to the Insults and Contempt of his Brethren, for a Teacher, in all appearance lost and gone; Who had not the hardiness to acknowledge him, while the Power of his Instructions and Miracles spoke him more than Man, and had gained him a general Admiration. And yet, (to see the Efficacy of those Impressions, which God makes upon our Minds, even at the most unlikely Seasons of prevailing) This Man, who durst not join with Multitudes
titudes before, in paying Jesus the least respect, ventures now to stand single; goes in boldly to Pilate, as St. Mark expresses it; and does the Office, usual for dearest Friends and Relations. He begs the Body, that he might vindicate it from the contemptuous usage of common Malefactors; And thus to declare, that he thought him a Person, so distant from what he had been repre-

dented, and put to death for; as even to be worthy the highest Honours his Condition was capable of, and re-

cieved with all the Affection and Respect, due to his own Kindred and Family. For all this is intended by laying him in his own new Tomb, and by those other Cir-

cumstances, contained in the Action itself.

2. St. John adds, that Nicodemus likewise contributed to this Funeral, by bringing a great quantity of Spices and Ointments, and so Embalming the Body, as the Custom of that Country was, to preserve it from Corruption. All which seems to imply, that the Saying of Jesus, so often repeated, of his rising again the third Day, had made but slender Impression upon them. As we indeed shall find hereafter, it did upon the Apostles themselves. God in his Wisdom suffered them to be unmindful of, or very little affected with, a Per-

suasion, which had rendered all this Care unnecessary; that so this Insensibility, or Forgetfulness, might make way for more satisfactory and unquestionable Proofs of his Son's Resurrection.

I proceed now to my Second Head, where it will be necessary to observe these Few following Parti-

culars.

1. First, The Preparation of the Body for Burial.

2. Secondly, The Interment itself.

3. Thirdly, The Description of the Place, where he was laid.

1. First, Here is the Preparation of the Body for Burial, expressed by wrapping it in a clean linen Cloth.

By this, no doubt, we are to understand all the burying Clothes,
Clothes, usual among the Jews. Such as we find particularly described by St. John, in his Eleventh Chapter; Where he mentions Lazarus coming out of his Grave bound Hand and Foot, and his Face bound about with a Napkin. And, in his Twentieth Chapter, where he tells us, that Peter, after our Lord's Resurrection, went into the empty Sepulchre, and saw the linen Clothes lie in their due order, and the Napkin that was about Jesus's Head, not lying with the rest of the Clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

2. Secondly, The Next thing observable, is the Interment it self, described by Joseph's laying the Body thus wound and embalmed in his own Tomb. The Jews appear, by many Passages in the Old Testament, to have been, in all Ages, extremely solicitous concerning the Place of their Burial. Nay, even to have esteemed it a Curse, not to sleep with their Fathers, (as we often find it phrased) that is, not to lie among those of their own Race and Family. Hence such, as were Wealthy among them, purchased parcels of Ground; that they might have a Property distinct from other People, and suffer none but those of their own House to partake in them. The Care of Abram in buying a Field for this purpose, from the Children of Heth, seems to have proceeded from a desire, that the Bodies of those, who worshipped the One true God, might not be mingled with Idolaters. And possibly the Field mentioned in this Chapter to be bought for burying Strangers in, might be intended to hinder Foreigners, or those who were not entirely within the Covenant, from having, even in death, any Fellowship with Them, who look'd upon themselves as a holy and peculiar People of God. But the appropriating Sepulchres to particular Persons and Families, was in use long before our Saviour's time. And this was done, by purchasing some piece of Ground, near their respective Cities, (for within the Cities none might be buried)
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buried) and there making a convenient Repository for themselves, and those that belonged to them. Such was this of Joseph, in a Garden, not far from the Place where our Lord was crucified. And, as a Mark of his great Veneration, here he deposited the Body of Jesus, where he designed to lay his Own, and Theirs, whom Nature and Affection had made dearest, and of most honourable regard to him.

Having advanced thus far, I ought not to proceed, before putting you in mind, how uncontestable a Proof these things are, that our Lord's Body was actually dead. Pilate was so cautious in the matter, that he would not grant Joseph's Request, till the Centurion, who commanded the Guard ordered to attend the Execution, had first satisfied him, that Jesus had been some time dead. Joseph was his Disciple, and his Friend; and would not have treated the Body of one, whom he honoured and loved, in such a manner, as must needs have destroyed all remains of Life, had there been any in it. And I know not what Proof of this Matter can be possibly desired more, than that a Man’s Enemies have the killing, and his Friends have the burying, of him. The One will be sure, not to leave or deliver him up, before he be dead; And the Other will be as careful, not to bury him, till after he is so.

3. I come now to the Third Branch of my Second Head; which consists in a Description of the Tomb, wherein our Lord’s Body was laid. Every Circumstance whereof is of Weight. And, as the former Particulars abundantly evince the Reality of his Death; So This is a strong Confirmation to the Truth of his Resurrection.

1. Now the Evangelist takes Notice, First of all, That this was a new Tomb; and St. Luke expresses the same thing, by calling it a Tomb, wherein never man before was laid. The Dead, among the Jews, were unclean; and whosoever touched a Carcass, did thereby contract a Legal Pollution. It was not therefore fit for Him,
relating to it. The Persons concerned, The Manner of
treating his Body, The Place where it was laid, All
contribute great Strength, to those Two most impor-
tant Articles of the Christian Faith, the Death and Re-
surrection of Jesus. I proceed now, in the Last Place,
to lay before you some Reflections from this Subject,
and what hath been said upon it. And they are These,
that follow.

1. First, We may learn from hence, why the Chris-
tian Church hath been so careful, to insert into her
Creeds and solemn Confessions of Faith, this Burial of
Christ, as well as his Crucifixion, Death, and Resur-
rection. Because this hath so close a Connexion, with
those other Fundamental Doctrines; that we must have
wanted a great and very substantial part of the Evidence,
both of his being Dead, and of his Rising again, had
we not unquestionable Assurances of his being Buried.

2. Secondly, Here we have an Example of that com-
mon Humanity of burying the Dead. This is what all
Countries have, according to their respective Customs,
been careful of; as a respect due to that dwelling of Flesh,
once honoured with so noble an Inhabitant, as a Rational
Soul. And Mankind seem to have been all along very ten-
der, and much concerned for it. This appears, not only
from the Practice of the thing to the generality of Peo-
ple; but by making it a Punishment, and Mark of In-
famy and the last Detestation, to deny this Privilege to
such Malefactors, as have forfeited all Right to the Re-
spects, which Others challenge from us. Particularly
among Christians, the Custom of burning the Dead,
and preserving their Ashes, hath been disused; and the
 Bodies of their Deceased are laid up entire in the Grave,
with such Solemnities, and in such Manner, as might
intimate their Belief of a future Resurrection. And,
tho' the vain Expence of pompous Funerals be one of
those Extravagancies, which proceed from Pride and
Luxury; yet the Pattern here before us will bear us out
in
in all the Expressions of a decent Respect, for the Memory of Those, whom God takes away from us. We are not to be condemned for every sort of Cost upon these Occasions; As may be plainly gathered, from that remarkable Passage, of our Lord's commending highly the Piety of that Woman, who spent Three hundred Pennyworth of Spikenard very precious, to anoint his Body to the Burial. He would not have promised, that this Action should be spread, far and wide as the Gospel itself, in her Praise; He would not have suffered such honourable mention to be made, of Joseph, and Nicodemus, and the Women, who brought Spices and Ointments to his Sepulchre, if these had been blameable Expenses. And what this Pattern of Humility and Meekness allowed, it would be too delicate a Niceness in Us to condemn. If the Regard due to a Human Soul rendered some Respect to the Dead a Principle, which manifested itself to the common Sense of all Nations; shall we think, that less Care is due to the Bodies of Christians, who once entertained a more glorious Inhabitant, and were living Temples of the Holy Ghost? Those Bodies, which were consecrated to the Service of God, which bore their part in the Duties of Religion, fought the good Fight of Faith and Patience, Self-denial and Mortification, and underwent the Fatigue of many Hardships, and Afflictions, for the sake of Piety and Virtue? Those Bodies, which we own to be still under the Care of a Divine Providence? Surely, what God disdains not to take into his Protection, we ought not to look upon, as Out-cast and common Dung, or despise as unworthy our Regard. Those Bodies, which, we believe, shall one Day be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, awakened again from their Sleep of Death, have all their scattered Particles of Dust summoned together into due Order, and made Partakers of the same Glory with their immortal Souls, as once they were of the same Sufferings and Good Works: Those Bodies, which
Easter-Day.

The Gospel.

Aliighty God, who through thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome Death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting Life; We humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special Grace preventing us, thou dost put into our Minds good Desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, World without end. Amen.

The Epistle.

Paraphrase.

1, 2. If then, by the profession of Faith made in your Baptism, and a newness of Life agreeable thereto, ye are conformed to Christ’s Resurrection; consider where he is, and let your Desires and Cares be there also; even up in Heaven, and the Glories of that Blessed Place.

3, 4. The Spiritual Life ye now lead, ye live by him; the immortal one ye hope to lead, ye owe to him your Title and Hopes of: And tho’ the Excellence of this do not yet appear, because He, who now lives it in our human Nature, is abash and unseen: Yet, when he comes again, the Glories of it shall be manifested in the Person, not of him only, but of every good Christian.

5, 6, 7. In the mean while be careful to subdue those Lufts, which have no farther Ends than Earthly Pleasures, (and which, (with respect to Sin in general, sometimes called the Body of Sin) may be filled Members of that Body.) For these are great Provocations to God, and were denounced by you, at your Conversion to Christianity.

Comment.

Col. iii. 1.

1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2. Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth.

3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5. Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanliness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6. For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7. In the which ye also walked some time, while ye lived in them.
THE Epistle for this Day is designed to enforce the Duties and Virtuous Dispositions, which are natural Consequences of the Belief of a Saviour, risen from the Dead. Whom when we consider, as now in full Possession of Immortality, living and reigning in Heaven, in Human Nature; His Happiness is the Pledge of all Theirs, who, partaking of that Nature, shall perform the Conditions, left upon them, as necessary to qualify them for partaking in the same Happiness also. Of these the Apostle mentions Two, which do indeed include all the rest. (1.) The setting our Affections on things above. Of which, and the Motive to it here, (this Volume having already exceeded its just Measures) I rather choose to treat, upon a fit Occasion, like to offer itself very shortly. The Second Thing, which is truly in order to the Former, is an effectual Subduing of those Lusts and inordinate Appetites, which, above all things, obstruct that heavenly Temper of Mind. Of these, and of the Arguments urged here against them: Of the Provocation they give to God, and the Contradiction they are to our Christian Profession; I have already had Occasion to discourse at large, in the Epistles for the Second and Third Sundays in Lent, to which I refer my Reader.

At present I only add, That, As our first Entrance into Covenant with God by Baptism, (which is an Emblem of our Lord's Death and Resurrection) is the Spiritual Birth of a Christian; So a conscientious Perseverance in the Obedience, there covenanted for, is his Spiritual Life. Both which we most truly acknowledge to proceed, from the dwelling of that Spirit in us, which raised Christ from the dead. And, if besides we reflect on the Numbers, who, in the
the Primitive Church, were received by that Sacrament, which, at this Festival Yearly, began to be most solemnly administered, and whereunto the preceding Fast of Lent was a solemn Preparation; These Things, laid all together, may suffice to set the Wisdom of Our Church above any just Exception, in appointing a Collect, not only pious and useful, but alluding, and by no means foreign, to the Subject of the Day.

The Gospel.

St. John xx. 1.

The first day of the week came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, and spake to the sepulchre, and saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Paraphrase.

1. The Sabbath being now over, in reverence to which, the Women who had prepared Spices, and Ointments, to embalm our Lord's Body, had forborne attempting to do it hitherto; (Compare Luke xxiii. 56. Matth xxviii. 1.) As soon as the Morning began to dawn on the first Day of the Week; Mary Magdalene, and Mary the Mother of James and Joses, Salome, Joanna, and some other devout Women that had followed Jesus from Galilee, (Compare Luke viii. 3. xxiv. 10. Matth. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1.) having before observed the Sepulchre, and the Position of the Body, (Luke xxiii. 55.) came with Intention to anoint it. In their Passage, they had represented to themselves the Difficulty of removing the Stone, which had been rolled to shut up the Cave, and sealed with Pilate's own Signet. (Matth. xxvii. 60, 66. Mark xvi. 3.) But, arriving at the Place, they found the Stone removed to their Hands, and the Access open to the Cave; and in the Grave itself, Two Angels sitting, by whom they were told, that Jesus was not there, but was risen; as he had before declared he would do. (Matth. xxviii. 2--8. Mark xvi. 5--8. Luke xxiv. 2.--9.)

2. With this Account much astonishd, and affrighted at the Vision of Angels, they hasten back to the Place, where the Eleven Apostles, and some other Believers were assembled. (Mark xvi. 8. Matth. xxviii. 8. Luke xxiv. 10.) And, having made no mention of what they had seen or heard, to any Person, till they came thither, Mary Magdalene, accompanied with, and in the Name of, the other Women, acquainted them with all that had passed, addressing herself more particularly to Peter and John.

3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the Sepulchre.

4. So
4. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5. And he being down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie;

7. And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but wrapped together in a place by itself;

8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and saw, and believed.

9. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Upon this Evidence, he believed our Lord to be risen; tho' not upon the Evidence of the Prophecies concerning him; which as yet were not sufficiently understood by the Apostles.

10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Comment.

HOW different, my Brethren, is This Morning’s Solemnity, from those, which lately called us to the House of God! How happy the Change from Lamentation, and Mourning, and Woe, the Tragedy of a Bleeding and a Dying Saviour, to Joy and Gladness, and the Triumphs of a Living and Victorious One? For this is the Day which the Lord hath made. He hath made it high and Holy above the rest, by rising from the Dead; By being born a second time; Born from the Womb of the Earth; Born now, not so, as to prove himself Man, but God. This is that most mysterious Day, which opened the Gates of Hell, and brought a Release to the Prisoners of the Grave; Which turned our Saviour’s Cross into a lasting Trophy, and brought Honour to that once accursed Tree; Which changed his Crown of Thorns into a Ray of Glory; and, by a wonderful Effect, produced Immortality out of Death, and everlasting Renown
out of Shame and Contempt. This is that Day, peculiar to Christians; which distinguishes us from all the World besides. The Day of our Lord's Nativity Jews and Gentiles will confess; That of his Passion all the Adversaries of our Religion boast of, supposing they had foiled and vanquished this Champion of Souls; But This Day of his Resurrection none but we can celebrate; because none but we acknowledge, that he came off with Conquest, and defeated all that Malice, which endeavoured his utter Destruction. Let us therefore be glad and rejoice in this Christian Jubilee, for our last and most formidable Enemy is now destroyed. All his Attempts upon the Captain of our Salvation were weak and vain; and all the Force of Hell cannot now prevail against them, that fight under his Standard. For this is our Security, This our Rejoicing, that the Lord is risen,

\[\text{Rev. i. 18.}\]

Yea the Lord is risen indeed. The Lamb, who was slain, now liveth again, and behold he is alive for evermore; and hath the Keys of Death and Hell. So essential, so distinguishing a Mark of a Christian, and so just a Joy, is That, which the Apostles first, and after them the Churches of God, put on this Day. This was the only thing, that could put an End to the Sorrows, and Doubts, and confounding Fears, the Terrors and sad Misgivings, of the Disciples. They had indeed some Intimations given them, by our Lord in his Life-time, that the third Day should restore him. But the thing itself of rising from the Dead, was so exceeding strange, so wholly new, that it made little Impression upon their Minds. Or if it had, Grief and Disorder had quite rased that out, and all those Thoughts expired, with their Master, upon the Cross. Affliction seems to have had the same Effect upon the Apostles, which it generally hath upon melancholy and dejected Spirits: The possessing them with strong Prejudices and Distrusts, and not suffering them to see so much as the Possibility of an Event, most desirable to them.
them. The first hint they had, was from Mary Magdalene, and other zealous Women; Who, as soon as the Sabbath was over, went early with a Preparation of Spices and Ointments, to pay their last Respects of embalming our Lord's Body. These return with the surprizing Account, of the Stone being rolled away from the Door of the Cave, and the Sepulchre found open. Upon this Message Peter and John resolve to satisfy themselves, and eagerly make toward the Place. John contents himself with stooping down, and looking in; but Peter, something more curious, goes into the very Place, where the Body had lain. There he sees the linen Clothes lie, And the Napkin, that was about his Head, not lying with the linen Clothes, but wrapped together in a Place by itself. This astonishing sight invites the other Disciple to take a closer view too. And accordingly he also went in, and saw, and believed. But there is reason enough to suspect, that all he believed as yet, was no more, than what Mary had told them at the Second Verse; that the Lord was taken away out of the Sepulchre, and she could not tell what was become of him. For, that all these Circumstances convinced them, that he was alive again, and had removed himself, seems not very likely, from what follows in the ninth Verse. That as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. That is, They had not considered, or did not understand, the Necessity of the Messiah's Resurrection; And so never recollected, that, either their Master must have been false in all his Pretensions of that kind; or he must have revived again, and left the Grave, according to the time and manner, they saw it now done in.

As no Truth then is of more Importance to the Christian Religion than This, so none had greater Care taken to strengthen the belief of it. The Testimony of Angels, of Disciples, of Women, of Numbers of People; The Conversation of forty Days, The Testimony of the Elements
Elements themselves; The Earth trembling and quaking, as if in Pangs and Travel to discharge this New Birth; The Testimony of others, whose Bodies appeared in the Holy City, Nay the Testimony of the most inveterate Enemies of Christ. For even the Jews themselves, by advancing so incredible a Story, as that of his Disciples stealing him away, do in effect confess and corroborate a Truth, which they so very weakly endeavour to destroy.

Among so great variety of Proofs, I shall confine my self to those, within the Compass of this Gospel. And here what I shall observe to you will come under these Two Heads.

First, The Circumstances, in which these Disciples found the Sepulchre.

Secondly, Their great sloveness in apprehending and believing our Lord’s Resurrection. These Two Observations make up the substance of this Scripture. And it shall be my business to shew, that Both these things contributed very much to the proof of this Article of our Faith, that Christ did really rise again from the Dead.

First, The Circumstances, in which the Disciples found the Sepulchre, were a very considerable Proof of the Reality of Christ’s Resurrection, and the strongest Confutation imaginable of that frivolous Pretence, put about by the Chief Priests, of the Disciples stealing him away. Their unnecessary Caution was most happily made an Occasion of rendring that unquestionable, which they design’d especially to prevent, (viz.) The Opinion of Christ’s rising the third Day. For (as we Yesterday were told) to this End they procure a Guard of the Governor to watch the Cave, and contrive that the Stone rolled, to close up the Door of it, should be sealed with his own Signet. But, when they found all this impertinent Care of
of theirs had no effect; and the Soldiers ran frightened away with the Earthquake and Vision of Angels, and related what had happened; Then they bribed them with large Gifts, and Promises of Security and Pardon, to spread abroad a Report, that his Disciples had surprized the Grave, while the Keepers were asleep; And, that having privately conveyed away the Body, they gave out, that he had made his Words good, in rising again the third Day. A most unhappy Pretence; and such a One, as seems to carry a present Infatuation of Mind along with it. For, Who, that thinks at all, would suffer himself to be deceived, by a Lie, that plainly discovers its own falshood; and is so far from being true, that it is not possible it should be so? For, as St. Augustine, in a just Indignation, expostulates the Case with the Soldiers: Ye wicked, corrupt baseless Wretches; Either ye were awake or asleep; If awake, it was your business to secure the Body, from being stolen away; If asleep; then your own Words disprove you; For, granting this, it was impossible, you should either know what was done, or who the Persons were, that did it. So ill a Contriver is even the Father of Lies himself, as sometimes to detect himself; and to serve no other End, but only branding the Believer with the Scandal of Easiness, or Perverseness of Temper, and covering the Relator with Shame. And sure the Truth never shines so bright, as when the Oppositions, that strive to darken it, are plainly seen thorow, and under an evident necessity of being false.

That Romans, whose Military Discipline was so exceeding strict, should neglect their Post upon so extraordinary an Emergency, and when such particular Zeal and Diligence had been used; is as extravagant an Imagination, as a Man could ever think of, except that other of his Disciples stealing him away. For, Are not these the very Men, who, upon the first Assault in the Garden, all forsook him and fled? They durst not
not stand by him even then, when he declared it in his
power to call for twelve Legions of Angels to
his rescue; and have they now the con-
dience, to come in a Body, and bear away his Corpse?
They had but two Swords among them all
before; and He, who had the Courage to
use one of them, durst not afterwards so much as own any
knowledge of, or dependance on, his Master; And is the
Case now changed so monstrously, that these poor, naked,
dispirited Creatures should attempt a Detachment of
Armed Men, whose Order and Business it was, to expect,
and be provided for them? Is This a likely thing, that
They, who durst not so much as appear in publick, but
assembled themselves privately, and shut up their Doors,
for fear of the Jews, should invade a strong Guard?
That They should, all on a sudden, grow Valiant, or
rather indeed Foolhardy, to this degree? When He,
in whom they trusted, was dead; when the Stoutest
of them all, even while he was yet alive, trembled at
the Voice of a silly Servant, and did the most cowardly
Action in the World; that of affirming, nay swearing
to a Falseness, to deliver himself from the danger
of an inquisitive and busie Tongue? These are Difficult-
ties, never to be got over; and such as will not suffer
any Man, that considers them, to believe that idle pre-
tence, which the Jews so industriously reported, to
disprove our Saviour's Resurrection.

But, Let us for once suppose, what yet is most im-
probable, that the Disciples had Courage enough for
so desperate an undertaking. Yet Robberies, we know,
are committed in haste and hurry; and every Moment
is tedious, to Men under confusion and fear of disco-
very. If therefore the removing of the Body had been
their work, and they had snatched an Opportunity for
it, while the Centinels slept; Would they not have
taken it away, as it was, without staying to unbind and
undress it? Do Thieves, after they have rifled a House,
use to spend time, in putting things in order again? And is it not agreeable to all the Reason in the World, that these Persons would have been rather solicitous to make their Escape, than to strip the Corpse, to fold up the Clothes, and to lay them apart from one another in their proper places? That which renders this still more and more unconceivable, is the Custom of Interment in that Country. Which therefore St. John does not forget to mention particularly; As being in truth a fit Preparation, and proper Strengthening, to the Account he gives here. For at the 39th and 40th Verses of the foregoing Chapter, he acquaints us, that Nicodemus brought a mixture of Myrrh and Aloe about a hundred pound weight; And they took the Body of Jesus, and wound it in linen Clothes, with the Spices, as the Manner of the Jews is to bury. Now these Spices were used to preserve the Body from Corruption: Which they did, by being a sort of Shell, or Crust, over it. And this their glutinous Substance qualified them for. But the same gloppy Nature must needs make the Cloathes they were used with, cling very close and fast to the Skin, and not to be drawn off without a great deal of time and difficulty. When therefore these Coverings were found, regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by; This plainly shews the removing of Jesus's Body to be a work of leisure, and much deliberation; Such, as by no means agrees with the confusion and haste, of things done by stealth. Nor can it enter into any sober Man's Thoughts, that They, who came privily and in danger of their Lives, should so far venture the awaking of the Guard, and trifle away their time in these so hazardous, so unnecessary Niceties. So that, had the Lord been taken away, we cannot but think they would have taken him as he was, which would have served Their turn very well. But, since the Sepulchre was found empty, and the Grave-clothes left behind; We have great reason to conclude, that He took himself away. And,
And, by the same Divine Power, which brought him into the World, of a Mother, still a Virgin, that he raised his own dead Body to Life a second time, without breaking the Seal, or removing the Stone.

Matthew xxviii. 2.

For this, we are expressly told, was not His, but the Angels doing. And done it was, not to make him passage, but to make the access to the Tomb easy, and give opportunity for discovering this wonderful Work of God. These Objections, I say, lie both against the Jesus Fiction, that the Disciples had stolen their Lord; and Mary's Fear, that some other had conveyed him away. And if Peter and John had attended to what they saw, their own Eyes, and their own Reason might have convinced them, that This was Jesus his own doing, how marvellous sooner it might seem to them at that time. But, even in this too, there was a particular Providence. For Their very Slowness in apprehending and believing the Resurrection of Christ, did it itself contribute much, to the persuading Men, and proving the Reality of it. Which was the Second thing I proposed to shew, and now proceed to prove it accordingly, upon these Two Accounts.

First, That Backwardness of Believing in the Disciples added to the Evidences given of this Resurrection; and ministered occasion for several most undeniable Proofs, which otherwise had not been necessary to them. And indeed their Backwardness was so great, that one would wonder, how they should be so exceeding stupid and heavy, had not God in his Wisdom so ordered the matter, that Their Incredulity should be Our Confirmation. The Certainty of a Resurrection in general our Lord had oftentimes foretold; And that all, who were in the Grave, should one day hear his Voice, and come forth. The necessity of his own Resurrection, and the stated time of it, he had expressly declared. And, when he gave them warning at any time of his approaching Death; he never failed to
support them withal, by an assurance, that he would rise again the third Day. Notwithstanding all which Warnings, The Women, who returned from the Sepulchre, and related their Vision of Angels, though Persons of known Integrity, were yet but indifferently received. Their Words (says St. Luke) seemed to them as idle Tales, and they believed them not. Luke xxiv. 11.

The greatest use, that was made of it, seems to be the putting Peter and John here, upon examining matters more strictly. And yet even They do not appear, to have made all those Conclusions from the posture they found things in, as have been shewn, fairly and naturally to be gathered from it. After this, he appeared in Person to Mary Magdalene, as the following part of this Chapter acquaints us. But with what Success, as to the Disciples, St. Mark tells us, Chap. xvi. Ver. 10, 11. For She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But They, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed her not. The same Day, Two of them went to a Village in the Country, and he appeared to Them; walked with them, discoursed them largely, expounded the Old Testament Prophecies concerning himself, and still their Eyes and their Understandings were blinded, that they could not see him. But, by Breaking of Bread the discovery was made at last, and great haste was used, to carry back these joyful Tydings, to the rest of their Company. But when they went and told it to the residue, neither believed they them, says St. Mark. After this, he resolved to give them Ocular Demonstration, and shewing himself to the Eleven; upbraided them with their Unbelief, that They gave no credit to Others, who had seen him before. But now they were so far from trusting Others, that they durst not trust even their own Eyes. They were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they had seen a Spirit. To deliver them from...
from this Fear, he commands them to handle him; and to convince themselves, that he had Flesh and Bones, and was no airy Substance, or empty Apparition. Still they were more amazed, than convinced. And therefore, to remove all Scruple, while they yet believed not for Joy and wondered, he called for Meat, and took it, and did eat before them. This, one would think, should give Satisfaction to the most Sceptical Doubters. But Thomas, who happened not to be there at that time, would not be content even so. He required a farther confirmation yet, which was, The Marks and Wounds made by his Crucifixion. And to this likewise Jesus condescends. For, at Another Visit to the Disciples, he caused Thomas to thrust his hand into his Side, which the Spear had pierced, and his Fingers into the print of the Nails, that had fastened him to the Cross; and so gained the acknowledgment of this so very cautious Person too. Again, to make all complete, that could be any way necessary, he likewise appeared another time at the Sea-side; and there made himself known to them, by commanding a wonderful draught of Fishes.

Thus his Divine Wisdom saw it expedient (as we express it in one of our Collects) to suffer them to doubt, for the more confirmation of the Faith. And he managed those Doubts so, that no Circumstance should be wanting at last, to prove his Resurrection. And, tho' he let them into those Proofs by degrees, as They were fit for them, and able to bear them; yet he did it so artificially and prudently too, that every fresh Instance confirmed, and added something to, those that went before. The empty Sepulchre confirmed the report of the Women: Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene shewed he was alive; That to the Disciples at Emmaus proved, that it was at least the Spirit of Christ, by expounding the Prophecies, and breaking of Bread; That to the Eleven shewed the rea-
reality of his Body; The Conviction given to Thomas, proved it the self same Body, that had been crucified; And that Miracle of the Fishes argued the same Divine Nature, still united to the same Body. So that, though here be many Evidences, yet none of them are superfluous. Every one hath something new, and peculiarly its own; and All together are a Demonstration, so full and Satisfactory, of the same Christ, the same God and Man in one Person, returned from the dead; that we have great Reason to praise God, for suffering the Disciples to doubt so much, and so long; since by their not believing, but because they had seen, there is the greater Security given to Us, who have not seen, and yet have believed. For,

Secondly, This contributed likewise to the satisfying Others in the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection, as it took away all those Prejudices, that might rise, and usually do rise, upon the first Reporters taking up things too hastily. These Disciples were to be, (as they stile themselves) the Witnesses of our Lord's Resurrection. And therefore it was of great Concern to the World, upon what Convictions they embraced a Truth, which Others, who could not be Eye-witnesses of it, were to rest upon Their Testimony for. The Apostles, we know, were plain Men, and constant followers of our Lord; so that both their Ability, and their Honesty, might be called in question, upon this Occasion. The Simplicity of their Life and Conversation, though it might free them from the Suspicion of deceiving others; yet could not give any Assurance, that they were not deceived themselves. And we know, Men are often exceeding positive, in Things that afterwards prove to be false; and which might have been detected sooner, if they had had either the Judgment, or the Patience, to examine them strictly. Especially too, if there be any Interest concerned in the Case; how great a step, towards the believing
received nothing, till it had been most critically enquired into. And they stood out against those Reports of credible Men, and of their own Senses, to which, if any Consideration of Interest could have swayed them, they would have reconciled themselves the very first Moment. And more than this we cannot have, More we cannot ask, in any Witness, than Judgment, and Care, and Integrity: And all These attested to, by the Seal of the Holy Ghost, the Gift of Miracles from Heaven. So that, upon all Accounts, the Delays and Doubtings of the Apostles were of Mighty Advantage to this Doctrine of the Resurrection. They gave Occasion for more convincing and sensible Proofs of it to Themselves; And they rendered them more competent and credible Attesters of it to Others.

These are Considerations, exceeding proper for this Solemnity; to satisfy every Christian, what a firm Foundation his Faith stands upon, and to put all its Enemies to confusion. But, unless we do something more than argue for our Saviour's Resurrection; it had been the same thing to Us, if he had never risen at all. The Second Lesson for this Morning Service, and the Epistle for the Day, tell us largely, what use is to be made of this Article. That Owning, and being baptized into the belief of it, implies our being conformed to the likeness of what our Saviour hath done. That we must rise with Him; and prove, that we do so, by setting our Affections on things above; That, as Christ was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, so We should also walk in newness of Life; That, as He died to Sin once, and now liveth unto God, so We should reckon our Selves dead unto Sin, but alive unto God; Alive like Him, over whom the Law of Sin and Death hath no more dominion, and who returned not a second time to Corruption. Remember then, that Christ is risen, but remember withal, that They only

Col. iii. 1, 2. 
Rom. vi. 4, 9, 10, 11.
will have comfort of his Rising, who are thus risen with him. The great Revolution of the whole World, its second and better Creation to Immortality, began this Day. But, if we have no part in it, by Reformation and a new Life, we are of all Men most Miserable. Our Prince and King hath overcome indeed the sharpness of Death: But it is to Believers only, that be bath opened the kingdom of Heaven. And such Believers are only They, who prove their Faith by their Works. And to those he hath given a sure Comfort. Such a One, as neither Tribulation nor Distress, nor even Death it self can rob them of. For since their Redeemer liveth, they are certain, that though, after their Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet there will come another Day, when in their Flesh they shall see God. Whom God grant us to behold, and to see for our selves, that is, for our own unspeakable and everlasting Happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter Monday.

For the EPISTLE.

Acts x. 34.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35. But in every nation, be that feareth God, and worketh righteousness,

36. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all:

37. That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judæa,

38. And began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

39. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power:

40. Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.

41. And we are witnesses of all things which he did in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem: whom they slew and hanged on a tree.

42. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly.

43. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.

44. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.
The Gospel.


A ND behold, two of his Disciples went that same day to Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about two score miles.

14. And they talked together of all these things.

15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together, lo, he himself drew near, and went with them.

16. But their eyes were held, that they should not know him.

17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these which ye have with one another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18. And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest not the things that are done there in these days?

19. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word among all the people.

20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22. And certain women also, which had been with him from the beginning, said many things among themselves, as they went, concerning those things.

23. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, The sepulchre was empty, and his clothes laid there, but his body was not.

24. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women said: but him they saw not.

25. Then they told these things unto his disciples. And as they heard it, they were amazed.

26. And certain other came, saying, We have seen Christ alive. And they were amazed at that saying.

27. And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, interpreting and explaining the Scriptures.

28. And they drew nigh unto the village, where he was going: and they made all ready, for he drew nigh with them, and went on.

29. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.

30. And he came to the table, and took the bread, and gave them. And they were filled.

31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32. And they said one to another, Did our heart not burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?

33. And they rose up early, and went to Jerusalem: and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.

34. And they told their tongues what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread.
THE Proofs of our Blessed Lord's Resurrection are Two-fold: consisting partly of Matter of Fact, and partly of the Agreement of that Fact with ancient Prophecies, concerning so very important an Event. Of the Former Sort I have treated already; and have there taken in the Historical part of the Epistles and Gospels, for this, and the following Day. These indeed do seem to turn chiefly upon the Latter Evidence; And therefore my Discourses upon them shall be confined to That, and cast into one continued Argument upon it.

To this purpose we shall do well to observe; That, when by several demonstrations of his being really alive, our Lord had rended his Disciples fit to hear Reason; he put them in mind, that the Events, which they looked upon, as altogether incredible, were no other than He, in his former Conversation with them, had very frequently assured them, should be brought to pass. That they were in every point agreeable to the Prophecies, delivered many Ages before. Those Prophecies, which the Jews unanimously allowed to be intended of the Messias; and such as, since now they had seen them exactly accomplished in Him, were an irresistible Argument, that He was that very Messias. Upon this he enlarges; And, by the Explanation of those Scriptures, which related to Himself, as well as by the inward Assistances and Illuminations of his Grace, darted new Light into their Understandings, and shewed them the Correspondence and exact Harmony of those Predictions, with the things, which, they could witness, had happened to Him. The Stress hereof lies in those Passages, in which, from the mention of these former Prophecies, he draws this Inference; Only not Christ to Suffer and to enter into his...
ry? And again, Thus it is written, and it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Those Clausbes, Thus it is written, may probably mean no more than, must needs suffer and rise again, because concerning him, could not otherwise. And then the Argument is but One had declared such things concerning him, made these the Marks, which the Wret guish him by; however strange an might appear at first, yet, upon mat on, it was easie for Men to satisfie they were unavoidably necessary, for Truth of God, who had, so long been ing of them by the Prophets.

But, in truth, this necessity was more. For these things were therefore told, because God had from all Etern determined them. And they were determined, because his infinite Wisdom them, and their Subserviency to the SENDING the Messiah, for the Redemption. Therefore that Expression, Thus it beh re require, yet it may admit of, another makes it an Argument somewhat differ emer. And that is, That the Death and Jesu were in all Points suitable to the Messiah. And, that the Scheme and Redemption could not have been so pla by any other means, as by These.

This, I say, if it be not the most natural, is yet a very useful Construction of the But I shall not take the liberty of treating Latitude. And therefore, limiting my Senfe, what I have to say upon this Su only of Two Heads.
I. First, I shall instance in some of the most material Passages, which it is reasonable for us to suppose our Lord insisted upon; And,

II. Secondly, I shall shew, wherein the Force of his Argument lay, in applying these, as Remedies to the Perplexities and Doubts of his Disciples, at that time.

1. First, I shall instance in some of the most material Passages, which it is reasonable to suppose, our Lord made use of, in the present Case. He is said to have begun with Moses and all the Prophets, and to have expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Now, though it is possible he might open to them the Predictions, relating to Other Matters and Actions of his Life; yet the main Difficulties then lying before them, and the only things mentioned here, being his Passion and Resurrection, I shall confine my Discourse to such, as foretold These only. Nor shall I enlarge any farther upon Them, than to produce such, at least the principal of such, as we find expressly applied to this purpose, in the New Testament. For, since the Evangelist hath not told us particularly, what Prophecies our Lord insisted upon, to convince them at this time; I cannot think it unreasonable to presume, that the Disciples endeavoured to convince Others, by the same Scriptures, to which they owed their own Conviction. And therefore such as we find They, either relating, as quoted by Our Lord before his Death; or else urging upon the Jews in their own Persons afterwards; Such, I think, we may fairly presume, had a place in Our Lord’s Discourse, which was designed to settle their Minds, and remove their Doubts, and compose their Astonishment, occasioned by his Death and Resurrection.

I only add, before I enter upon Particulars, that there are Two sorts of things, by which future Events were signi-
signified under the *Old Testament*. Two Words; The Other in Facts. And fore distinguished, by Predictions, what the Prophets did, was in some equal Significance and Authority, spoke; Both being allowed to pro pulse and Direction of the same Divi on that account, to be as full of My lenge the same regard. Accordingly appealed to, with respect to the mat In handling which I shall consider shew, in this Discourse, what Intima Both, that Christ must Suffer; and he must Rise again from the dead, t

As to the Sufferings and Death of Cies produced in Scripture are very pious and express, as to reach every stance, relating to them. That he by a particular Friend, One that was Bounty, and retained to him; *David* the 41st *Psalm*, which *Jesus* applies xiii. 18, 19. *I speak not of you all,* I *chosen*; but that the Scripture may be eath Bread with me, bath lift up bis. *Now I tell you before it come,* that, who ye may believe that I am He. And ag 23, 24. to the Disciples Question, should betray Him; he answered a *dip*eth bis hand with me in the Dish, to *Me*. The Son of Man goeth as it is, but *Wo* to that Man, by whom the *strayed.*

St. Peter, in the *First* of the *Acts* some of those Imprecations in the 6 and 109th *Psalms*, had *Judas* his Tra gression, and the falling from his view. To this likewise our Savio
thought to allude, when he says, *Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The Potters Field being bought with the thirty pieces of Silver, and His being sold for so vile a Price, is by St. Matthew referred to an old Prophecy. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken, *They took the thirty pieces of Silver, the Price of him that was valued, whom they of the Children of Israel did value; or as it is in the Old Testament, (a goodly price that he was valued at by them). And gave them for the Potters Field, as the Lord appointed me.*

The Fears and Confusion of his Disciples are, by our Lord himself, declared to be an accomplishment of another Passage in the same Prophet, *Matt. xxvi. 31.* Then saith Jesus unto them, *All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep of the Flock shall be scattered abroad.*

The infamous manner of his Death, and the profligate Companions of his Sufferings, St. Mark observes to fall in exactly with the description given of it by *Isaiah, many Ages before. With him they crucified two Thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left: And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the Transgressors.*

David, describing the Barbarity of his Enemies, says, *They parted his Garments among them, and upon his Vesture did they cast lots.* But St. John informs us, that those Words had a much more distant Prospect; and how strangely the Avarice of the Soldiers, and the particular form of Jesus his Cloaths, concurred to give them their due and ultimate Completion, *John xix. 23, 24.* Then the Soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his Garments and made four parts, to
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every Soldier a part, and also his Coat. Now without Seam, wovven from the top throughout therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might which saith, They parted my Raiment among them on my Veilure did they cast lots. These things Soldiers did.

Our Lord, in his dying Agonies, made very Words of David in the 22d Psalm, God, why hast thou forsaken me? In which Tragical Scene is painted to the Life, a Taunts of his reviling Enemies are repeated were a melancholy Poem, describing a Depart, rather than a prediction of one to co thousand Years after. And lastly, Just before expired, He cried, I thirst. But this was the Scripture might be fulfilled, (says St. J xix. 28.) For the same David, Psalm lxix plains thus, They gave me Gall to eat, and when they gave me Vinegar to drink. Now this strictly and literally true, except in the Son of David, For to him they ran, and filled and gave him Vinegar to drink mingled with

Once more, That impertinent Malice of Soldier, who wounded his dead Body with was another Circumstance too, correspond ancient Prophecy, in those Words quoted by St. John from Zechariah, They shall look on Me whom they have pierced.

The foundation of the Eunuch's Con laid in a Text of Isaiab. And Philip could at any more apposite Scripture to bring him over to Jesus, than that, which Pro- vidence ordered, that he should just then He was led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, and dumb before his Shearers, so opened he not his
his humiliation his judgment was taken away; And who shall declare his Generation, for his Life is taken from the Earth?

Now, as in these last Words, that Prophet foretold the Meekness and invincible Patience of the Blessed Jesus, under so injurious a Death; So did he likewise the great Charity and main Design of it, and how a Person so Innocent, so Divine, came to endure so bitter things: That This was a Dispensation of God, for the benefit of sinful Man, to lay on him the burthen of the Punishment of those Transgressions, which must otherwise have sunk the guilty Committers, into irrecoverable Misery and Destruction. For if we look into the 5th and 6th Verses of that famous 53d of Isaiah, we shall find, that St. Peter does but take the Prophet’s Words into his own Mouth, when he gives this account of Christ, in the Second of his First Epistle at the 24th. Who his own self bore our Sins, in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin should live to Righteousness: By whose Stripes ye were healed; for ye were as Sheep going astray. So the Apostle. Now observe the Prophet eight hundred Years before; Surely he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, He was wounded for our Transgressions; he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, And the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.

These, I think, may more than suffice for Verbal Predictions of our Lord’s Passion. I shall instance in Two or Three of the other sort, Figures and Types, taken notice of in the New Testament. And They are These.

The First I shall mention, is, The Paschal Lamb; Appointed to be slain, and the Blood of it sprinkled upon the Doors of every Israelite, in the Night when God
flew all the First-born in Egypt. And the Use of this was, to secure the Inhabitants, where this Blood was sprinkled, from all the dire Effects of the destroying Angel. Now the like Benefit accrues to Christians, by the Blood of Jesus. St. John calls him the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World, and says, he hath washed us in his own Blood. St. Paul, that we are reconciled to God by his Blood. And that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. And St. John once more takes notice, that, when the Soldiers came to take down the Malefactors from the Cross, they broke the Legs of the two Thieves crucified with Jesus. But, when they came to Him, and saw that He was dead already, they broke not his Legs. Which he attributes to a very particular Providence, for these things were done, says he, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A Bone of him shall not be broken. It seems then, That Scripture had not been fulfilled, if any Bone of Jesus had been broken. But that Scripture is one of the Precepts concerning the Passover, in the Twelfth of Exodus; and was constant-ly observed by the Jews, in their Celebration of it. Since therefore this Scripture required, and found its full and last Completion in Christ; Some Account there must be of the Concern he had in it. And this can be no other, than the mutual Relation, between the Jewish Lamb and Him; That as the Shadow, Him as the Substance; And consequently, He is the true, the universal Passover; which turns away the Wrath of God, and, by the Merit of his Sacrifice, delivers them that have part in him, from the Destruction of the Reprobate and Wicked.

Another Image of Christ was the Sin-offering instituted by the Jewish Law. This, (I have proved already) as upon other Occasions, so especially upon the Great Day of Atonement, was to reconcile Men to God.
And the Manner of it was (it hath been said) to bring the Blood into the Sanctuary, and sprinkle it before the Lord, but to burn the Body without the Camp.

With Allusion to this, Christ is not only called our Peace, and said to be made Sin for us: But more particularly, the same Ceremonies are observed to be nicely regarded, in the Place and Manner of his Death. For thus the Author to the Hebrews argues, The Bodies of these Beasts, whose Blood is brought into the Sanctuary for Sin, are burnt without the Camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the People with his own Blood, suffered without the Gate.

One more remarkable Type there is, denoting both the Kind, and the Efficacy, of this Death. When the Israelites in the Wilderness were stung with fiery Serpents, Moses was commanded to set a brazen Serpent, resembling those in Form, on high upon a Pole; And as many as looked upon This, were healed of their Plague. Our Lord, in like manner, tho’ made in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, yet knew no Sin himself: As that brazen Serpent had the Resemblance only, but none of the Fire and Venom of those Serpents, whose Sting it was ordained to cure. Nor did the fixing it in view effect a Recovery, by any natural and necessary Operation; but the Benefit of Healing was confined to them, that fix’d their Eyes upon it; and, consequent to that, turned themselves to this Sign of Salvation, (as the Wisdom of Solomon expresses it) This Action made them capable of the Mercy of God, working in, and by, that Emblem. Thus is the Death of Christ effectual for curing the Sins of Men; Not of all indifferently, and without Distinction; but of such, as qualify themselves by Faith. All which cannot be more fully illustrated, than by that Passage in our Lord’s Discourse with Nicodemus, (John iii. 14, 15.) As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wil-
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35. Wherefore be ye also in another Psalm, Thus shalt not suffer them holy men to see corruption.
36. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.
37. But the same God, having raised again from the dead, saw no corruption.
38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.
39. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.
40. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets.
41. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall all in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

The Gospel.

Luke xxiv. 36.

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

37. But they were amazed and troubled, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.
38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me now.
40. And when he had thus spoken, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
41. And they went out, and spread abroad his doctrine: and his disciple were increased.
42. And they made a feast, and did eat and drink.
43. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, they went out into an olive garden, called Gethsemani.
44. And he saith unto them, Tarry ye here, while I go and pray over you.
45. And he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
46. And to them he said, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

Comment.
COMMENT.

I proceed, according to my Proposal yesterday, to consider the Predictions and Types of our Blessed Redeemer's Resurrection. And that, both as to the Thing in general, and as to the particular Time of it. For the Scriptures before us now extend to both: That he should rise from the Dead, and, that he should rise the Third Day.

Almighty God had promised to Abraham, That in his Seed all Nations of the Earth should be blessed; This Seed, St. Paul affirms to the Galatians, is Christ, who redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us, That the Blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. And St. Peter acquaints the Jews, that this Promise was made good to them in our Lord's Resurrection. (Acts iii. 25, 26.) Ye are the Children of the Prophebs, and of the Covenant, which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed shall all the Kindreds of the Earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you; in turning away every one of you from bis Iniquities.

David, in the Second Psalm, magnifying the Mercy of God in his Son's Exaltation to the Throne, had said, I will declare the Decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee. And St. Paul, making the Epistle for this Day his Sermon in the Synagogue at Antioch, contends for this, as the true Sense of these Words. We declare unto you Glad Tidings, says he, bow that the Promise, which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; As it is also written in the Second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.
And, that this Psalm had a peculiar Reference to the Messias, we learn, from the Allusion made to it, by the whole College of the Apostles, in the Fourth Chapter of the same Book.

The same Royal Prophet, in another Place, is carried out into Raptures of Trust and Holy Hope, which could not, in strict Propriety of Speech, belong to any but Christ. And therefore of His Person we are to understand those Words, Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption. The Application whereof, to the Matter now in hand, St. Peter vindicates thus, in his Sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Men and Brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his Sepulchre is with Us unto this Day; therefore, being a Prophet, and knowing, that God had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loins, according to the Flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his Throne: He seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that His Soul was not left in Hell, neither did His Body see Corruption. And St. Paul, in like manner, here to the Jews at Antioch, David, after he had served his own Generation, by the Will of God, fell asleep, and saw Corruption; But He, whom God raised up again, saw no Corruption.

But, In our Saviour's Resurrection, there was One particular Privilege, which distinguished Him from any other Person, miraculously brought to Life again. 'Tis, that they only were called back, and, as it were, reprieved, for a certain Term of Time; but still continued subject to Mortality; And, when that Period was expired, returned to their dark Prisons of the Grave, there to remain confined, till the General Gait of Delivery, at the great Assizes of the whole World.

But Christ, as St. Paul observes, being raised from the Dead, dieth no more, Died.
bath no more Dominion over Him. And this peculiar Exception that Apostle observes to have been punctually foretold by Isaiah. And, as concerning that God raised him up from the Dead, now no more to return to Corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure Mercies of David.

Now by these sure Mercies of David, are meant those Blessings, for which Almighty God had engaged his Truth; and of the full Attainment whereof David so often expresses his entire Confidence. Particularly That of an everlasting Kingdom, to be continued to His Posterity. Now this having manifestly failed in the first and temporal Sense; It follows, that the Promise must have a second and more sublime Sense, belonging to it. Such as imports a Spiritual and Eternal Kingdom; The same, which Isaiah foresaw in his Ninth Chapter; And which the Holy Angel at our Saviour's Incarnation declared, should be vested in the wonderful Son of that Virgin Mother.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord shall give unto Him the Throne of his Father David; And be shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End. This Investiture the Apostles declare to have commenced from his Resurrection; The God of our Fathers, say they to the Jewish Sanhedrim, hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a Tree, Him hath God exalted with his Right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. Now from hence it follows, that he could not rise to die a Second Time, because such Death must put a Period to his Reign. And consequently, That Kingdom not being everlasting, these Mercies of David were not sure; that is, The Promise would not be made good, in the just Extent, and most valuable Sense of it.

As to the particular time of our Lord's Resurrection, tho' some Passages in the Prophets are very justly inter-
terpreted of it; Yet, because I find no express Application of them, by the Writers of the New Testament: I shall content my self with that one Type, produced by Christ himself to the Jews, which at once prefigured both the Thing, and this Circumstance of it. And this was so remarkable, that our Lord refers that obstinate People hither, as to the last, and most awakening Miracle, which God reserved for their Conviction, and would hold Them inexcusable, upon whom it should have no effect. As Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, so shall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth. The Men of Nineveh shall rise in the Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and bebold a greater than Jonas is here.

Thus have I laid before you Some of the Principal Prophecies and Types, by which God signified long before, that the Messiah should suffer, and rise again from the Dead. Such as, we may probably conjecture, our Lord expounded, in his Conferences with the Disciples: Because we find them insifted upon afterwards, in their Reasonings with the Jews. It were very easy to enlarge yet more, by producing Others of the same kind, with reference to the Other Parts of our Lord's Exaltation, and the Administration of his Spiritual Kingdom. But I confine my self to these two Subjects of his Death and Resurrection, as proper to this Season. I shall now descend briefly to the Second Branch of my Division upon it, which is,

2. To shew, wherein the Strength of this Argument, drawn from such Predictions and Prefigurations, consists: And upon what Account it was proper, for bringing over these Disciples, to a Belief of Jesus therefore being the Christ, because he did actually thus suffer, and thus rise again from the Dead.

Now
Now in order hereunto we must observe,

1. First, That the Persons, to whom our Lord directed this Discourse, had been all along bred up in the Knowledge and Practice of the Jewish Religion; and had received the Writings of the Old Testament, as the Oracles of God, and the Rule and Standard of their Faith. Now the greater their Skill in these things was, the more firm their Persuasion would be of a Messiah to come. One, who should fulfil all the glorious things spoken of him there; and was to be known, and distinguished from all false Pretenders, by doing so. For of the Christ those Words of Moses are to be understood, and were constantly understood by the Ancient Jews: A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your Brethren like unto Me, him shall ye hear. And it shall come to pass, that every Soul, which hearkeneth not unto that Prophet, shall be cut off from his People. Since then their Obedience to this great Prophet was enjoined under so severe a Penalty; It must needs be, that God left them not utterly in the Dark in this most important Affair; but gave them some particular Marks and Characters, by which they might be able to discern that Prophet, to whom such Obedience was due.

2. Secondly, It is likewise observable, that the Jews acknowledged, and understood these Signs of the Messiah, as incomunicable to any Other. Hence is that Saying, When Christ cometh, Will He do more Miracles than these which this Man hath done? Hence the Appeal our Lord makes to his own Disciples, Art thou he which should come, or do we look for another? The plain meaning whereof is, first, that One famous Person was expected, entitled by way of Eminence, He that should come; and also, that the Greatness, and Number, and Qua-
Quality of his Miracles were a sufficient token, to point and single him out, when he did come. So that our Lord's Argument, (as I have formerly observed) lie thus. He, whodoes those many and mighty Wonders, foretold by the Prophets, is He that should come. Your own Senses are Judges, whether I have done these Wonders or not: And therefore, if your Senses convince you, that I have wrought such things; there cannot remain any reasonable doubt, but that I am He that should come.

3. Thirdly, Allowing some such Characters to be laid down concerning the Messiah; It will follow, that, if any of those Prophecies were in some Sense fulfilled in any of the eminent Men of old; yet there was still another and sublimer Sense, peculiar to the Messiah, which must be fulfilled in Him; and that, till this should be done, the utmost intent of those Prophecies was not Satisfied. This is the Method taken by the Apostles, particularly by St. Peter and St. Paul, in their Discourses upon our Lord's Resurrection. They prove, that the Passages of David and Isaiah were not fully made good in the Persons, who spoke them; not in the Letter, and most immediate Signification: Consequently that, supposing a double Sense, and Them to have any part in them, they had another Person in view, who should give them their utmost accomplishment. Therefore, till that were done, the Truth of God, who dictated those Expressions, had not fully discharged it self. That there were many Predictions, relating to the Messiah, is a Principle confessed by the Jews: Either therefore the Messiah was never Prophefied of, nor Prefigured at all by such; (which the Jews will not all agree in:) Or else, some Prophecies and Prefigurations, contained in the Old Testament, will require, and do contain, a future and mystical, even in the Opinion of Them, who admit a present and stricter, Interpretation. And if so; then that Person, in whom that highest and ultimate
mate Construction is accomplished, ought to be received, as the promised Messiah. That this was a method of Expounding the Old Testament, received among the Jews, seems probable from hence; That, when our Lord and his Apostles made use of it, the Enemies of the Gospel are never said to have objected against it, as an unfair way of arguing. For all Evasions of this Nature, which we now meet with, are only such miserable Shifts, as the Jews of later Ages have taken Sanctuary in. Who, to cover their incorrigible Unbelief, have thrown off those Texts, which heretofore were universally acknowledged to point at the Christ. So that

4. Fourthly, The Whole turns at last upon the Veracity of Almighty God, the Divine Authority of the Prophetick Writings, and the Agreement of what happened to our Jesus, with those remarkable things foretold of the Messiah. If God be true, whatever He hath declared shall be, must certainly come to pass. If the Prophets wrote, as they were inspired and directed by the Holy Ghost; Whatever they have laid down concerning the Messiah, must needs be accomplished in his Person. But the Prophets did declare, That the Messiah should be cut off from the Land of the Living; That He should die, under such and such Circumstances; That, after He was thus dead, He should rise again. The Person therefore, who in all Points made good these Predictions, is undoubtedly the Christ. Now Jesus did thus die, and thus rise again; No other Person, besides himself, ever did so; And consequently Jesus, and no other Person, is the Christ of God. Since therefore these Disciples confessed, that such things were dictated by God Himself, and foretold of the Messiah; And since they saw them punctually made good in their own Master; His Sufferings and Death ought not to discourage or weaken their Faith, because these were necessary to the Character and Office of Christ. Nay, had he not so suf-
suffered and died; he could not possibly have been the Christ. Thus again; in regard the same Person so described heretofore to suffer and die, was likewise foretold to rise again the third Day; The Demonstrations he had now given them, upon that very Day from his Death, of his being actually risen, were an irrefragable Evidence, that all the glorious Benefits, which the World was to expect from the promised Messiah, were to be depended upon from, and would most assuredly be found in, Jesus. So that they might boldly witness these things to the World, and preach Repentance and Remission of Sins in his Name. In His, I say, who thus died for the Sins of Mankind, and thus rose again for their justification.

To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.