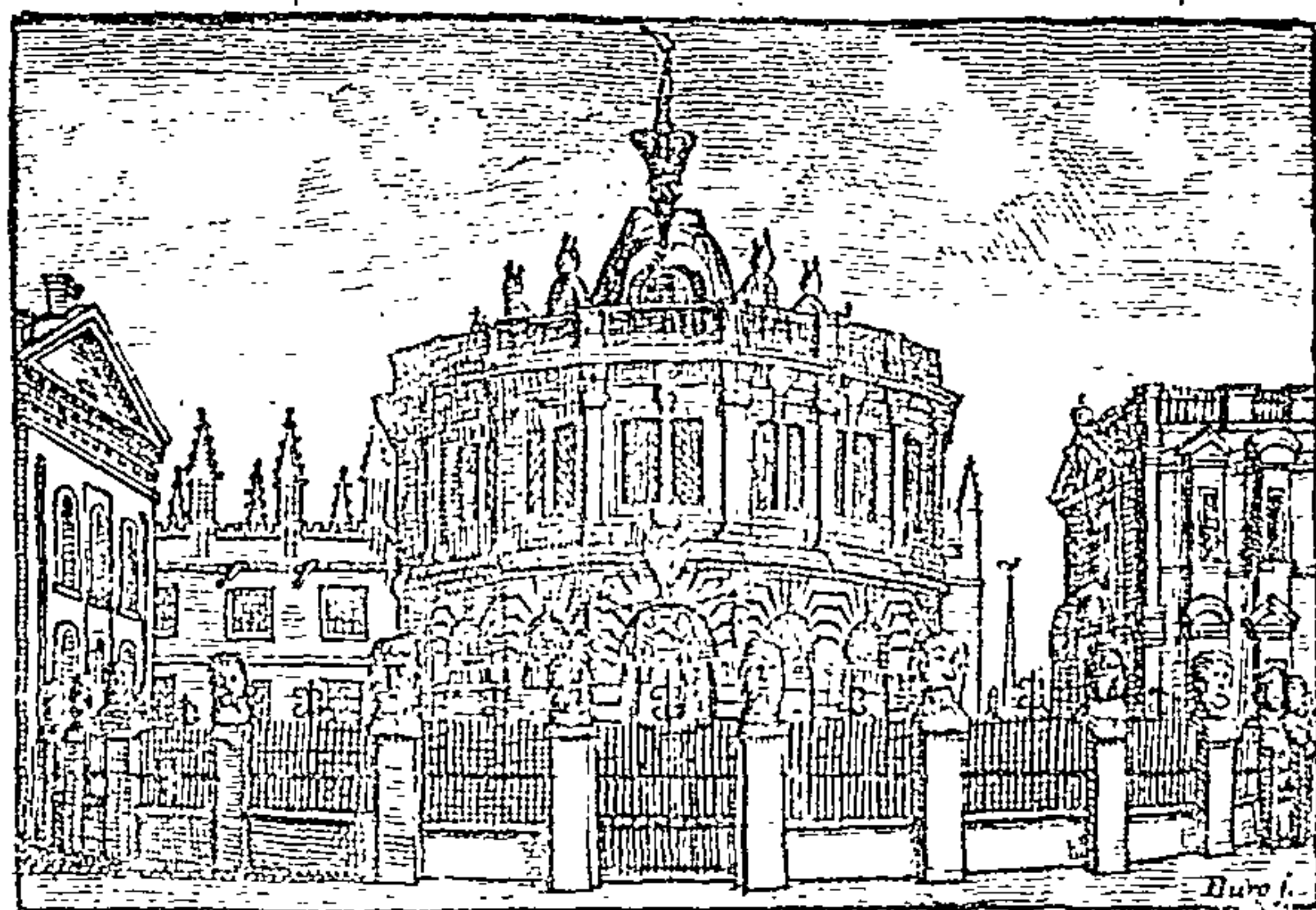


FIFTEEN  
SERMONS  
Preach'd on  
SEVERAL  
OCCASIONS.

By DIGBY COTES M. A. *Principal* of MAG-  
DALEN-HALL, and *Publick Orator* of the  
Univerſity of OXFORD.



OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE for *Ant. Peisley* Bookseller;  
and are to be Sold by *J. Knapton*, *W. Meadows*, and  
*T. Combes*, Bookſellers in *London*. 1721.

Imprimatur,

*ROB. SHIPPEN,*

**VICE-CAN. OXON.**

Sept. 15. 1727.



MS. A. 9. 2. 10

T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lady Viscountess

*Scudamore.*

MADAM,

A Volume of Sermons, will,  
I fear, be thought so  
unfashionable a Pre-  
sent, to a Lady of the first  
Rank and Taste in the Great

## DEDICATION.

and Polite World, that I shall want all your Ladyships Interest with your own Sex, and Authority over ours, to plead my Excuse, not only with the unthinking part of Mankind, who glory in their shame, in contemning Religion, as too low and mean a System of Principles, to be embrac'd by the Men of Wit and Reason; but also with the Wise and Good too, who give so far into the corrupt Mode of this licentious Age, as to be afraid of being caught in a pious Act, and ashamed of their Glory. The former will censure me for prophaning, the latter for encumbering with so vulgar and useless a Book, your Ladyship's

## DEDICATION.

dyship's Closet; a place, sacred to Elegance, Wit, Good Sense, and Good Breeding; to which, let me add, to Devotion too, and the beautiful Scene will be compleatly furnish'd with every thing that is polite, agreeable, and useful. For the Delights, the Transports of Prayer, Meditation and Religious Retirement, are too high, rational, angelical, and divine, not to be Your Pleasures; Your Ladyship is too knowing and polite, as well as too good and pious, not to enjoy as much of Heaven as you can in this World, the Abode of Sin and Uneasiness. But the gay World are as much mistaken in their Notions of Elegance,

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## DEDICATION.

gance, when they prefer the life of a Brute, to that of an Angel; as in those of Pleasure, when they are wicked for its sake, and go to Hell to enjoy it.

And why should a Lover of God be the only one that is ashamed to own his Affection, and to talk of, and converse with, the Delight of his Heart? Your Ladyship has both Devotion and Courage enough to proclaim the Praises of Him *who giveth you all things richly to enjoy*, and to acknowledge, *that your Communication is in the Law of the most High.* You esteem it as much Your Perfection and Happiness, as your Duty, to be just, charitable, and pious; and are so far from think-  
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## DEDICATION.

ing Books of Divinity too dull and inelegant Furniture, to be seen in the Apartment of Elegance it self, a fair Lady's Closet; that *Tillotson* and *Scott* have the honour of entertaining you at all hours, and the high Privilege of being plac'd on the same shelf with *Pope* and *Prior*.

It may seem strange, indeed, that, when Knowledge, the Light of the Mind, is arriv'd at its Meridian Glory; Piety, its most refin'd Entertainment here, and its Heaven hereafter, should languish, and droop, and be almost lost in that Cloud of Irreligion, Infidelity, and Profaness, which has overspread the whole Brittish Horizon.

## DEDICATION.

zon. But if they who are plac'd, like Stars, in our Firmament, dart nothing but malignant Influences, what wonder is it, if an universal Pestilence, and Corruption of Principles and Manners ensues? *If the Light that be in us be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* -- Were it not for your Ladyship, and some few such burning and shining Lights, we should, doubtless, be swallow'd up in the Abyfs of eternal Darkness.

Your Ladyship is so far from giving into those fashionable Opinions, which inspire our Youth with the falsest Ideas of Honour and Greatness, and make them cherish those Lusts and Passions, which it is  
both



## DEDICATION.

both their Duty and Happiness to subdue and regulate; that you view with Contempt the Incense that is offer'd to the rich and fortunate; and the Glories that surround the Heads of Princes, who are honour'd as Gods, when they often are, in themselves, the meanest of Mortals. Ambition, a Temptation to *Adam* in Paradise, against which perfect Innocence it self was not proof, has not Greatness enough to touch your Soul; which despises the Allurements of Wealth and Power, as glittering Trifles, and splendid Encumbrances; and turns her Eyes and Admiration from Kings and Heroes, to Saints, Apostles,

## DEDICATION.

Apostles, Confessors, and Martyrs; who overcame the World and *Themselves*, and were therefore *more than Conquerors*. These are, in your Ladyships Opinion, the brightest Characters in Life, the Persons who do Honour to human Nature, and make the most shining Figures in Story.

But 'tis the Devils Artifice, to blacken Religion, and throw a dark Cloud of Contempt over it; that if he cannot extinguish its vital Heat, in the hearts of some few, who make it their Glory and Crown of rejoicing; he may, at least, stifle its Light, and hinder it from shining. And his Policy has had the desir'd success in  
this

## DEDICATION.

this Age of Profanefs; for the whole Christian Institution is at present so much despis'd and laugh'd at, as a sett of old, primitive, superannuated Virtues; and it is thought so precise and illbred to trouble our selves or others with the least Concern for our everlasting salvation; that a fine Gentleman, with less peril of Contempt, might be seen in the most antiquated drefs, than with a sense of Religion in his heart or mouth, in a polite, I had almost said, a religious Assembly. For Piety, alas, is almost turn'd out of her own House, the House of Prayer; Curiosity, indeed, may sometimes happen to bring the gay  
and

## DEDICATION.

and polite thither; but like the inquisitive Jews, *they come to Jesus, only, that they may see Lazarus*: and think it too heavy an Imposition and Yoke to have eternal Felicity obtruded upon them, on the happy Terms, of indulging themselves in the most refin'd Intellectual Entertainments, which can be enjoy'd on this side Heaven; which will purifie, exalt, and delight the Soul thro' all Eternity.

And is this the Age which pretends to have carry'd its Pleasures higher than any before it? Is an Acquaintance with the best and greatest of Beings, the Author of all we have, or hope to enjoy, by  
Prayer



## DEDICATION.

Prayer and Meditation, in the Cloſet and at the Altar, ſuch a Friendſhip as Man ſhould reject, when God is pleas'd to offer it to him; or when it is enterd into, and embrac'd, be aſham'd of? Is not Religion the nobleſt Object of our Thoughts, the everlaſting Concern of our Lives, the ſole End for which we came into the World, and the Perfection and Happineſs of human Nature? And ſhall we deſpiſe its Light for ſhining? For illuminating this dark and benighted Age, and reflecting Glory on the God of Heaven? Muſt it burn like a Lamp under ground, where none can be warm'd by its heat, or admire

## DEDICATION.

mire its Lustre? For God's sake, Madam, exert your self, and rescue the Age from that meanness of spirit into which it is sunk. Introduce the Pleasures of Devotion into the refin'd Entertainments of the Closet; persuade the fair and the young to taste and experience how great a Good God is; the vain and ambitious to aspire after Crowns of Immortality and Glory; and the polite and elegant to relish the only pure and unmixt Pleasures of Religion and Vertue; which fill the Heart, and satisfy the Soul, while Earthly Delights only smile in the Countenance, and please the Fancy; which will improve up-  
on

## DEDICATION.

on the Taste, and grow still greater throughout an everlasting Enjoyment of them: and they will all thank you from their Souls for opening a new World to them; as distinct and different in its Views, Pursuits, Entertainments and Business, from That which the profane and wicked live in, as this Earth is from Heaven, or the life of a Brute from that of an Angel; a Paradise of pure spiritual Delights, arising from an holy, enlighten'd Mind, and the Favour and Friendship of Him whose Presence constitutes Heaven: which, by making this World the Abode of Holiness, would make it also, in a  
lower

## DEDICATION.

lower degree, the Region of Bliss and Glory.

And if they who have oblig'd the World with the Discovery of Arts and Sciences, and the Secrets of Nature, have always receiv'd our Thanks and Praises; how much more justly will your Ladyship be esteem'd a Benefactress to Mankind, should you point out an Heaven upon Earth to them? as much unknown to the Men of this World, as that they are taught to expect hereafter: for none can conceive the Pleasures which attend a Religious Life, but those who live it. *If there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth*, what Triumphs of Holy Exultation must



# DEDICATION.

must fill those blissful Regions, should your Ladyship be so happy as to restore Religion to its former Repute, and bring into the fashionable Entertainments of the Age, which seems to be at length almost ashamed of the licentious Excesses of Masquerades, and wearied with the insipid, eternal Flutter of Balls and Assemblies, a new Sett of Rational Pleasures, the Delights of Angels, and Saints in Glory. One Ray of which Glory would eclipse, and almost annihilate all our vain Ideas of Human Grandeur. Taught by You, the Fair, who Glitter here for a day, will shine in the Court of Heaven, in immortal Youth and

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ever

## DEDICATION.

ever blooming Beauty; the great and ambitious will reign with Christ; and the gay and voluptuous enjoy those Delights which God has prepar'd for them who love him; whose least praise it is, that they are inconceivably great and glorious. Millions of Souls would crowd to overtake, or accompany You, Madam, in your way to Heaven, would you but persuade them with all that Beauty of Address, and Happiness of Expression, of which you are Mistress, to follow You, and be happy; would you but open the bright and transporting Scene of your own pious and beneficent Life to them; which, amidst all the  
Allure-

# DEDICATION.

Allurements of Birth, Beauty, Riches, and Greatness, is entirely devoted to the service of God, and the Godlike Employment of doing good, and throughout every hour, every minute engag'd, in a religious, useful, or innocent Entertainment.

And by reforming the Taste of this corrupt Age, you will do Honour, as He accounts it, to God Himself; render Him lovely and amiable in the sight of Mankind, fix his Empire in their hearts, and bear up the sinking Foundations of the Moral and Christian World. The Countenance, Authority, Encouragement and Influence of your Ladyships

## DEDICATION.

Example, the most amiable, and therefore, the most powerful Recommendation of Religion and Vertue, will so warm us with its Heat, and Dazle our eyes with its Brightness, that it will enflame the Hearts of all who behold it, with the Love of God and his Truth. And there would be but small occasion for dead Rules, and unanimated Precepts of Morality and Goodness, were every part of the World enlightend by such a living system of Vertue, as that Sphere is, wherein you move.

Your Ladyship has too great a Soul to aspire after lower Accomplishments than those that will make you happy, and  
great,



## DEDICATION.

great, and honourable for ever; which will ennoble You in Heaven as well as on Earth, and render You famous in the Annals of Time and Eternity. You look down with Contempt on the short transient blaze of Earthly Splendor; and glory more in the humble Character, and Term of Reproach, as it is commonly esteem'd, of a *Good Woman*, than in being celebrated and admir'd as the most accomplish'd Person of your Sex, and the Age you live in. Firmness, Constancy, and Greatness of Mind, and a Majestick Sweetness of Behaviour, are the Ornaments you affect, and are always cloath'd with; and every Word, every

## DEDICATION.

Action of Your Life is not only attended with Innocence and Sincerity, but also with Gracefulness and Beauty. *You open your Mouth with Wisdom, and in your Tongue is the Law of Kindness.* Those Hereditary Vertues in the *Digby* Family, of Piety, Integrity, Affability, and Beneficence, like-Jewels, set in Gold, adorn your Mind, enrich'd and heighten'd with all the Charms of Politeness, Wit, the most perfect Good Sense, and the finest Breeding. Christianity her self sits in Triumph, as it were, in so bright a Soul, with all the Passions in subjection to Her, and all the Graces attending upon Her; and cannot, one would think,  
but

## DEDICATION.

but warm this frozen and benum'd Age, into a just Love and Admiration of that *Beauty of Holiness*, which has reign'd over the Hearts of the wise and good for so many Ages, and fill'd Heaven with her Saints, and the Earth with her Glory. Which, notwithstanding the inveterate Malice of the *Jews*, the Pride and Scorn of the *Pagan* Philosophy, the Fury and Revenge of the Devil, and the almost continu'd Attempts, from her first setting out to enlighten Mankind, and guide their steps in the way to Heaven, of all the Power, and Greatness, and Wit, and Learning of This World to undermine and destroy her Truth,

# DEDICATION.

Truth, and fully her Vertue,  
has shone above seventeen  
hundred years without Spot  
or Blemish. Whose Truths  
carry the same irresistible  
Force and Authority with  
them, which they had, when  
they came first out of the  
mouth of God Incarnate, and  
will triumph over and defeat  
Infidelity and Atheism, till  
Faith shall be swallow'd up in  
Vision; whose distant Rewards  
will delight the Soul, till Hope  
shall be lost in Enjoyment.  
*Whatsoever things are honest, and  
just, and true, are to be found  
in Her Doctrines; whatsoever  
things are lovely and of good re-  
port, shine forth in Her Words  
and Actions: Length of days is*  
*in*



## DEDICATION.

*in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour : Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths are Peace.* And tho' in this Age of Vanity and Folly, She seems to be banish'd from Courts and Palaces, and so coldly receiv'd in Churches, that like her great Lord, she can scarce find a place on Earth where to lay her head ; yet the day will come when Heaven shall open its everlasting doors, and the God of Heaven his Arms to embrace, and receive Her into His own Glory ; and the whole Rational Creation applaud Her as the Author of their Peace and Joy ; of such Peace of Mind, as this world cannot give them,  
and

## DEDICATION.

and of Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory: When the Kings of the Earth, who, at present, are apt to think themselves too great, the learned and polite, who are too wise and knowing, and the giddy and young, who could never find leisure to think at all of what they must do, to be fav'd by Her, shall bow down before Her, and confess with Shame and Confusion of Face, that Her Throne is in the Bosom of the most High; her Voice the Harmony of Heaven and Earth; her Words the Language of Truth and Reason; her Laws, the Glory, Perfection, and Happiness of Men, and Angels, and God Him-

# DEDICATION.

Himself; and that one Day spent in her Courts yeilds more real and solid Delight, than a whole Age of gay, fluttering, insipid, Earthly Pleasures.

I am, *Madam,*

Your Ladyships most oblig'd,

most humble,

and most Obedient Servant

DIGBY COTES.

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Spiritual Gifts.*

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A  
S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the  
UNIVERSITY

OF  
OXFORD,  
At St MARY'S.

---

I COR. XIV. 12.

*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of Spiritual Gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*

OUR Saviour being about to ascend into Heaven, and take Possession of his Mediatorial Kingdom, supports the drooping Spirits of his Disciples with an Assurance, that he would send a Comforter to them, to protect and assist them with

*Serm. IV.* Al-

Almighty Power, and enlighten their Minds with his Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge. Accordingly, on this day, *the day of Pentecost*, the Holy Ghost came from Heaven, and gave them such a measure of the Divine Assistance, as enabled them to overthrow the Prince of Darkness, and bring Men from the Power of Satan unto God. They convinc'd the *Greeks*, by undeniable Arguments, of the Truth of their Doctrine, the *Jews*, by Miracles, of the Divinity of it; so that they who stood out against the Demonstrations of Reason, were forc'd to yeild to the Convictions of Sense, and the over-bearing Arguments of Signs and Wonders. Thus by causing the glorious Light of the Gospel to shine, they disperst that cloud of Ignorance and Errour, which had overspread the face of the whole Earth, and open'd the Eyes of Mankind to behold the Wondrous Things of God's Law. In a word, so great was the success of their Ministry, so mightily in a short time *grew the Word of God and prevail'd*, that the swiftness of its Progress, against all the Opposition which the Lusts of Men, and Malice of Hell could raise against it, was a new proof that it was from God, and therefore nothing could overthrow it.

And as the Holy Spirit of God resided in an extraordinary and miraculous manner in the Hearts of the Apostles, so he has promis'd to vouchsafe his ordinary Presence and Assistance with their Successors, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, to enable them to Act

as



as Ambassadors of Christ, and finish the glorious work, which the Apostles undertook, of converting all Nations. To this end he has promis'd not to withdraw himself from them, till the great design he came about, the Sanctification of Mankind, a Blessing, as necessary as that of our Redemption, is wholly accomplish'd. Heaven indeed is the immediate Habitation of his Glory, but the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain his Power; for in the discharge of our Ministry, in all our endeavours to root out Impiety, and plant good Thoughts in the minds of Men, *lo, he is with us always, even unto the end of the World.* Matthi  
XXVIII. 20.

Not but that the Holy Spirit is in like manner present in the Heart of every good and sincere Christian, to enlighten his Understanding, excite his Will, and strengthen his Endeavours in the pursuit of Vertue. But a larger share of the Divine Assistance is usually conferr'd by the Bounty of Heaven, which distributes to every Man as much as he needeth, on those who are set apart to edify and instruct the Church of God, and present her to Christ without spot or blemish; that by their superiour attainments in Wisdom and Vertue, they may so adorn the Daughter of Sion, as to make her *the Perfection of Beauty, and the Joy of the whole Earth.*

Yet as in the Heavens *one Star differs from another Star in Glory*, so the Ministers of the Gospel, who are the Lights of the World, are esteem'd, in proportion as they are more or less

less instrumental, in promoting the only end and design of their Function, the Salvation of Mankind. And those gifts which qualify them to turn many to Righteousness, are said to make them shine like Stars in the Firmament, and ought to be prefer'd before the highest Perfections, which make them wise for themselves, but whose narrow Influence extends no farther than their own sphere of Action. For 'tis more glorious to convert a Sinner from the Errour of his ways, and to save a Soul from Death, than to be skill'd in all the Arts of Divine and Human Learning. And therefore *St Paul*, who understood all Mysteries, and was able upon Occasion to controul and countermand the Course of Nature, valued none of these Perfections, but as they were useful to him in the work of the Ministry, and desir'd to *to know nothing but Christ Jesus*. And as he exhorts the *Corinthians* to covet earnestly the most excellent gifts, particularly to seek the gift of Prophecy before that of Tongues, because *he that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, speaketh not unto Men, but unto God; for no Man understandeth him. But he that prophesyeth, speaketh unto Men to Edification, and Exhortation, and Comfort. Even so ye, forasmuch as in this Seat of Learning and Vertue, ye are zealous of Spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*

1 Cor. XIV.  
2, 3.

Which words, tho' they relate to those Miraculous gifts which nourish'd and brought up the Church in her Infancy, may not improperly

perly be apply'd to those ordinary Graces, which are still necessary for her Preservation and Defence, even when *Kings are become her Nursing Fathers, and Queens her Nursing Mothers.* For tho' the Church is now in a flourishing Condition, and the Hedges of this Vineyard of God are planted, yet if the Labourers are not enabled by the Divine Assistance, to water the Plants, and prune the Branches, and fence it round with Order and Discipline, all *they that go by will pluck off her Grapes, the wild Boar out of the Wood will root it up, and the wild Beast of the Field devour it.*

In my Discourse therefore upon these words, as they are apply'd to the Ordinary Operations of the Holy Ghost upon the Hearts of Men, I shall,

*First,* Distinguish betwixt the Gifts of Nature, and those of Grace, and shew which are properly and strictly call'd the Gifts of the Spirit.

*Secondly,* I shall lay before you the Nature and Excellency of those Spiritual Gifts, which not only make Men wise unto their own Salvation, but enable them to promote the Eternal Welfare and Happiness of others.

*Thirdly,* I shall shew by what means they are to be attain'd, and what Qualifications are necessary to prepare our Hearts for the Reception of them.

*Fourthly,*



*Fourthly, and Lastly,* I shall give some Directions how to employ them, according to the Intentions of the Donor, in the Edification and Instruction of the Church of God.

*First* then, I am to distinguish betwixt the Gifts of Nature and those of Grace, and shew which are properly and strictly call'd the Gifts of the Spirit.

By the Gifts of Nature I mean those Endowments of Body and Mind, which God, who is the Author of Nature as well as of Grace, confers upon Men, to adorn them as Men; by the Gifts of Grace, those Religious Accomplishments, which make them perfect, as Christians. Of the first kind are Health, and Strength, and Beauty of Body, a clear Understanding, a retentive Memory, and a solid Judgment; and the external advantages of Wealth and Honour; which are usually stil'd, the Goods of Fortune. These are the Blessings which advance Human Nature, consider'd in it self, to the highest Perfection it is capable of; but the Graces of the Spirit, as they take in our Relation and Dependence upon God, advance Human Nature above it self, and make us Partakers of the Divine Nature. And therefore tho' God is the ultimate Cause of all our Actions, as he gives us Life, the only Principle of Acting, and by his continual Providence supports us in it; yet in some measure he may be said to leave us to our selves in the

pur-



pursuit and Acquisition of the Gifts of Nature; since he usually suffers the advancement of our Fortune, and the improvement of our Minds, to be the just Consequence and reward of our own Industry and Application. But his immediate Concurrence is so absolutely necessary to the producing all good and moral Actions, that unless He puts into our Minds good Thoughts and Desires, and brings them forth into Actions; unless he not only assists, but, as it were, takes us by the hand, and leads us to Heaven with an out stretch'd Arm, we shall never advance one step towards it our selves, but must naturally and unavoidably sink into Hell, the Centre of Wickedness. And therefore all good Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, of what kind soever, are strictly and properly call'd the Gifts of the Spirit; and the most private Motions and Suggestions to Goodness, which whisper in our ears, *this is the way, walk ye in it*, are as much the voice of God, speaking in our hearts, as the awakening calls of the Ministers of the Gospel, when, *in his name*, and with his words, they beseech men to be reconcil'd to God.

I am in the *Second* place to lay before you the Nature and Excellency of those Spiritual Gifts, which not only make men wise unto their own Salvation, but enable them to promote the eternal Welfare and Happiness of others.

The Gifts which the Holy Spirit confers upon men, are of two sorts, The Graces of *Sanctification*, which regard our selves, and the Graces of *Edification*, which were given us chiefly that we may do good to others with them. Of the first kind are the three Evangelical Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the Vertues of Piety, Justice and Temperance, which are indispensably necessary in every Christian. And tho' these are sufficient for our own Salvation, their sphere of Acting is narrow, and their Influence extends no further than our own private station. But the Gifts of *Edification*, which put a man into a Capacity of being Beneficial to others, are Courage to support, and Abilities to plead the Cause of Religion, which has suffer'd as much from the weak Defence of its Friends, as the Attacks of its Enemies. To rebuke Vice in Authority, and stem the Torrent of prosperous Wickedness, to stop the Mouth of the Gainsayer and the Infidel, and convince the Unbeliever of the Truth of the Gospel, requires so great a share of Knowledge to instruct, of Prudence to manage, and of Courage to support our selves, in the discharge of our Function, that we may say with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these things?* none certainly, but He, who is a perfect man in Christ, *thoroughly furnish'd and instructed in every good work.*

And therefore when the Holy Ghost sets apart any Man for this high Employment, he usually confers upon him all those Natural and  
In-

Intellectual Endowments, which are able to build him up *unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. He endues him with strength of Reason and Eloquence, that he may baffle the Arguments of the subtle Opponent, and put to silence the Cavils of unreasonable Men. And makes the Word of God a two-edged Sword in his Mouth, with which he pierces the Thoughts of Men, and divides the Sinner from his most secret sins; and puts the Unbeliever, who only *said in his Heart, there is no God*, to an open shame. It would take up too much time to enumerate all the Gifts of *Edification*, which are chiefly conferr'd on the Ministers of the Gospel, to enable them to execute their Important Trust; but in general they may be reduc'd and comprehended under these three, Zeal, Wisdom, and Integrity.

By Zeal is meant such a solid, Spiritual, operative Desire to promote the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls, as is not so much a single Grace and Vertue of it self, as a gracious disposition of the Soul, fitting and preparing it for the reception and improvement of all other Vertues. Which elevates our Love, raises our Hope, and advances our Faith, to the highest degrees of Religious Perfection. Which may be felt in the longings of pious Desires, discern'd in the warmth of devout Undertakings, but can't be so easily describ'd as known and understood by us. In a word, which is so necessary a Perfection in a Christian,



stian, that the Apostle does not exhort, but suppose, the *Corinthians*, to be adorn'd with it. *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of Spiritual Gifts*, that is, forasmuch as ye are alive in Christ, and have a vital Principle of Religion in your Hearts, exciting and stirring you on to pious Actions, *seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.* For true Zeal when it proceeds from Knowledge, and is govern'd by it, when it is no irregular heat and fit of Religion, but a constant well order'd Inclination of the Mind towards Heaven and Heavenly Objects, swaying the whole Soul, and filling it with all manner of pious Intentions, renders our Religion active and vigorous, and keeps up such a just sense and awe of God upon our Minds, as will reform our disorders, inflame our Affections, and make a Man set himself with Chearfulness and Resolution to do and suffer God's Will, and act, not by chance or by ends, but by a fixt and settled Principle of promoting the glory of God, and the good of Mankind.

*2dly*, The Man of God must be also adorn'd with such an eminent share of Knowledge and Prudence, that none may be able to resist the Wisdom with which he speaks. We live in a learned and incredulous Age, and therefore Zeal in the Heart, without a proportionable degree of cool Reason in the Head to direct its Motions, will gain no Converts to Religion; for tho' the Affections are to be inflam'd by warmth of Expression, the Understanding is  
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to be convinc'd by the words of Soberness and Truth. By Wisdom I mean, that true, saving, Evangelical Wisdom, which makes us *wise unto Salvation*, and consists in a Practical and Speculative Knowledge of Christ, with an Art of applying it so, as to make it useful for Reproof, for Exhortation, for Instruction, and all the different methods of Religious Improvement. Not but that a competent skill in other Sciences is necessary, to enable us to fight the Lords Battels successfully, that when we have confuted our Adversaries with Arguments drawn from the Word of God, we may convince them that Reason is also on our side, and baffle them in the Arts of Human Learning.

3dly, Integrity is another Gift absolutely necessary in the Ministers of the Gospel, to add weight to their Advice, and edge to their Reproofs, and fix in their Minds a lasting Principle of Holiness and Vertue. By Integrity is meant such a constant, sincere and universal regard to all the parts of our Duty, as makes our Life all uniform and compact, and hinders us from turning either to the right hand, or to the left, out of the direct road that leads to eternal Felicity. For the way to Heaven is streight and open, and *the Integrity of the Upright will guide him in it*. He who governs himself by the Immutable Principles of Honour and Conscience, has a sure, and fixt, and unalterable Rule to direct his Actions. For the Nature of Vertue, and our Obligations

tions to practice it, can never be altered by external Occurrences. Let the World smile or frown, the Man of Integrity keeps on the same Course, and no prospect of Advantage, no fear of Suffering, can divert him from it. Whereas he who changes his Religion with his Interest, and is ruled by the measures of Worldly Policy, is as variable and uncertain, as the Wind or Weather, in all his Actions.

Having thus laid before you the Nature and Excellency of those Spiritual Gifts which enable us to excel to the edifying of the Church, I shall,

*Thirdly*, Endeavour to shew, by what means they are to be obtain'd, and what Qualifications are necessary to prepare our Hearts for the Reception of them. And

*1<sup>st</sup>*, We are to understand that these Graces are not to be obtain'd but by frequent Importunities, by holy struggles and wrestlings with God, and a due preparation of the Soul, to receive, improve, and make them our own, by Prayer, Industry, and Meditation.

John xiv.  
16.

Prayer is the first and greatest Instrument, by which all kind of Spiritual Gifts, and the Holy Spirit himself, the Author of them, is convey'd to us. *I will pray my Father*, says our Saviour, *and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* And if Moses spent forty days and forty nights in the Mount, in Fasting and Prayer, to enable him to converse with God and live; What sacred  
Disci-

Discipline, what Religious Retirement, is sufficient to form an Evangelical Preacher, and make his Heart a fit Temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in? *Are we set over Kingdoms*, as Jer. 1. 10. the Prophet describes our high Employment, *to pull down, and destroy* all Vice and Impiety, and *to plant*, and establish all Vertue in its stead? and can any Power less than that which is Almighty enable us to overthrow the Empire of Sin and Satan, and support the Dignity of so exalted a Function? If we are so vain as to attempt with our own strength to encounter all the Powers of Darkeness, how miserably shall we be deceiv'd in the day of Battle? but if by humble Devotion, we engage the Assistance of Heaven on our side, those Spiritual Arms of undaunted Zeal, profound Wisdom, and unbiafs'd Integrity, will make us *more than Conquerours*. Since therefore all our strength and sufficiency is from God, let us cast our selves down at the Throne of Grace, and beg that God would give us the Power to perform what he is pleas'd to command, and then command what in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness he shall think fit.

*2dly*, As our Endeavours without Prayer are presumptuous, so Prayer without the Concurrence of our own Endeavours will avail us nothing. For we must not expect to receive Spiritual Gifts, as in the Infancy of the Church, by immediate Infusion and Inspiration from Heaven: that Manna was for the Wilderness, but now the Church is in Possession



sion of the Land of *Canaan*, establish'd by Laws, and protected by Authority, we must plow, and sow, and reap the Fruits of our own Industry and Application. Thus if any Man desires the gift of Wisdom, let him ask of God, and search for it, with unwearied Care and Diligence, in that noble Repository of Divine Wisdom, the Word of God, as for a hid Treasure, and by the Assistance of Heaven, enlightning his Mind in the use of proper means, he may in progress of time expect to find it. In like manner, unless we endeavour to cultivate and improve the gift of Integrity, by a constant struggle with our Lusts and Passions; and the gift of Zeal by a thorough Understanding of the Cause we are engag'd in; our Integrity will yield to the next Temptation, and our Zeal will degenerate into an ungovern'd heat, or Religious Madness.

psal. xxxix.

4.

3dly, Tho' by Prayer and our own Industry and Application, all Spiritual Nourishment is convey'd into our Souls, 'tis Meditation and Thinking that must digest it there, and make it useful to our selves or others. *While I was musing*, says the Psalmist, *the fire kindled within me*. For Meditation unites our scatter'd Thoughts, and fixes them so long upon Divine Objects, that at last they break forth into a holy Flame, into such a fervour of Zeal and devout Affections, as can warm the coldest Thoughts and Inclinations of others. Meditation converts all that we hear or read into our own Thoughts and Conceptions, and is the



the only Friend that can introduce us into an intimate Acquaintance with our own Souls; which, while we are immerst in the hurry of the World, are too often hid from our own eyes. And as this is the best means to improve and secure, and ascertain our selves of our own Integrity, in like manner it enables us to find out the hidden Faults and Corruptions of others. For Human Nature is the same in us, and in all Men, and he who understands the Passions, and Tempers, and secret Failings of Men, and artfully applys his Instructions to them, with a moderate share of other attainments, may turn their Hearts whithersoever he pleases.

I proceed now in the *Fourth* and *Last* place to give some Directions, how to employ these Gifts according to the Intention of the Donor, in the Edification and Instruction of the Church of God.

And here we must observe, that none of these Gifts are perfect without the other; because *Zeal* without *Wisdom* is apt to lead us too far; *Wisdom* without *Zeal*, not to advance far enough, in the defence of Vertue; and both together *have only the Form, and not the Power of Godliness*, without *Integrity*. And yet each of them seems to have a different Task and Province assign'd it, tho' they all joyn together to make up and compleat every individual good Action. Thus our Zeal must be employ'd in defending the Church, our Wisdom

in planting and propagating the Gospel, and we must cause our Integrity *so to shine before Men, that they seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

1<sup>st</sup>, Our Zeal may greatly excel to the Edifying of the Church, when it is employ'd in preserving her Doctrine and Worship, her Discipline and Ceremonies, pure and undefil'd, as they were deliver'd to us by the Saints, from the encroachments that have been made upon them by the Atheist on the one hand, and by the Enthusiast and Schismatick on the other.

We live in an Age, in which Infidelity and Heresy, the one as a declar'd Enemy, the other under the disguise of a pretended Friend, have openly attack'd, and secretly undermin'd the Church of God. Jesus Christ, the great Author and Founder of our Faith, is by the one arraign'd and condemn'd as an Impostor; by the other divested of his Eternal God-head, and tho' acknowledg'd to be God's Instrument in making the World, reduc'd himself to the Condition of a Creature, and worshipt with equal Impiety and Absurdity, as a Created God. And not to mention an innumerable swarm of other Sects, which daily spring up like Tares among the Wheat, and attack the external parts and outworks of our Religion, its Discipline and Ceremonies, with success and impunity; these two Adversaries have rais'd their Batteries against her Doctrine and Worship, and almost shook the Foundation on which she stands. And therefore since

*it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing; since Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem to himself a peculiar People zealous of good works, what nobler Cause can employ our Zeal, than the Preservation and Defence of the Church of God. And now is the time to exert our Zeal to the Confusion of her Adversaries, when so many hands are lifted up against Her, that if she was not built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone, she could not stand. But God is with her as a sure refuge, and therefore defiecth she all her Enemies; God approves of the Purity of her Doctrine, of the Solemnity of her Worship, of the Order and Decency of her Discipline and Ceremonies, and because her ways please the Lord, he will force her Enemies to be at peace with Her.*

2dly, By our Wisdom we may edify the Church, when we rightly deliver the Word of God in this Sacred place, with that concern which we ought to have for the Salvation of Souls, with that Reverence which is due to the Oracles of God.

Would Men sufficiently reflect, that it is in God's name, and in his behalf, that they speak from the Pulpit; and that the words they deliver, are, or should be, the Truths of God; would they consider that upon the good or ill success of their Preaching, the everlasting Happiness or Misery of Mankind in a great measure depends; and that their own Souls must

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answer for the Loss of those who are committed to their care; with what holy Fear and awful Tremblings would they endeavour to unfold the sacred Obscurity of the Scriptural Text, and open all the Treasures of Knowledge it conceals? with what Reverence and Humility would they presume to treat of those tremendous Truths which make our Religion so august and venerable, the Life and Actions, the Sufferings and Death of an Incarnate God! He who would represent those lively Oracles, as they are in themselves, the Word of God, and not as the Inventions of Human Reason, must derive his Thoughts, his Words, and Conceptions, from those Sacred Writings which have the Holy Spirit for their Author. It is only in this Fountain of Christian Eloquence, that a Preacher can find those magnificent Expressions, which are able to describe the Majesty of our Religion, the Divinity of its Laws, and the Loftiness of its Mysteries, which the Angels desire to look into. And what Attention would wait upon the Word of God, had we the Art to deliver it with that Majestick simplicity, in which it is wrote. But when we endeavour to set it off with the Arts and Refinements of Human Learning, we corrupt and vitiate that Spiritual Manna which came down from Heaven; and instead of feeding the Flock with the Bread of Life, miserably delude their Hunger and Thirst, with vain Rhetorick and insipid Elegancies; which perhaps may please and amuse their Fancies, but  
never



never will be able to reform their Lives, and save their Souls.

3dly and *Lastly*, The Man of God must not only preserve his Integrity whole and entire within himself, and take care that his own heart shall never reproach him for the loss of it, but he must also have a good report of others, and spread the Influence of his Example, as far as his Doctrine will reach. To be desirous of a good Name is in private Persons an indispensable Duty, but the Ministers of the Gospel are in a peculiar manner oblig'd by all laudable and virtuous means, to seek the praise of Men, as well as the praise of God; that the Fame of their Integrity may go before them, and prepare the way for their Advice and Instructions. For our Prejudices against the Person, lead us insensibly into a dislike of his Doctrine; and till those obstructions are remov'd, 'tis to be fear'd his words will only enter into the Ears, and not pierce, as they ought to do, into the Hearts of his Hearers. *Who is there among you that convinces me of Sin?* John viii. 46. says our Saviour to the Jews; and because they were unable to answer this Question, he justly demands, *If I say the Truth, why do ye not believe me?* He who is himself a living Example of the Doctrine he teaches, commands the Attention, and forces his way into the Hearts of his Audience. The Dignity of his Person, and the unblameableness of his Life, add weight and force to the Holy Oracles of God, and make them the *Power of God unto Salvation.*

*tion.* But the most eloquent Preacher who has nothing but words to recommend himself by, is seldom heard with Applause, never with such Success, which is the only Applause he ought to covet, as *to minister Grace to his hearers.* If he would enforce, and inculcate, and set off his Eloquence to the best advantage, he must practice himself the Vertues which he endeavours to plant in others. For notwithstanding all his attainments in Wisdom and Knowledge, the Integrity of his Life, is like the Lock of *Sampson*, the only Gift which makes him a mighty Man in Christ, and able to pull down the strong holds of Satan. With an inferiour degree of other Perfections, he may edify and instruct the Church of God; but if he ever changes his Principles for his Interest, and removes the least part of his Integrity from him, he loses all his Strength, *and becomes like other Men.* And therefore when we approach the Throne of Grace, to seek those Gifts which may enable us to excel to the Edifying of the Church, let us ask for Wisdom, let us petition for Zeal, but let us earnestly and importunately beseech the Author of all good Things, that he would pour into our Hearts, that most excellent Gift of Integrity.

I have now done with the Four Heads I propos'd to speak to, and shall sum up what I have to say by way of Application from this Subject, in a short address to the Preachers of the Word of God, and the Hearers of it.

And

And *1st*, Permit me, with all Submission and Deference, to exhort you who have taken upon you the greatest of all Trusts, the Charge of Souls, to imitate the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, in his tender Love and Concern for Mankind; who *went about doing Good*, and took care, that every Miracle which he wrought to confirm the Truth of his Doctrine, should be an Act of Mercy to the Dumb or the Lame, the Deaf or the Blind, whose Eyes he open'd to behold and acknowledge their Redeemer, and their Ears to hear the glad Tidings of everlasting Peace and Salvation. Thus every instance of his Almighty Power was so great a Manifestation of his Infinite Goodness, that by the same Act, he promoted the Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Welfare of his Children; and proved himself to be in the largest sense of the words, the *Saviour* of Mankind. And since it requires a greater share of Diligence and Capacity to cultivate and train up Immortal Souls for Eternity, than to provide for the Health and Temporary Subsistence of perishing Bodies; let us make it the only end and business of our Lives, to instruct the Ignorant, and give Eyes to the Blind in the most excellent sense, to retrieve the Wandering, confirm the Weak, and feed that Flock with the sincere Milk of God's Word, of which the Holy Ghost hath made us Overseers: that at the great Day of Accounts we may present them to Christ, with these words which will entitle us to the greatest Rewards in the Kingdom

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dom of Heaven, *of those whom thou hast given me, to keep, I have lost none.*

And that the work of God may prosper in our hands, let me intreat you, my Brethren, who come hither to be taught and instructed by us, to bring along with you pious and teachable Minds, and to hear with Attention, Humility and Reverence, the words that are able to save your Souls. For permit me to tell you with that plainness and freedom of Speech, which becomes a Minister of the Gospel, who is commanded to *exhort and rebuke with all Authority*, that one great cause why our Preaching has so little effect on the Minds of our Audience, is, because they come with *itching Ears*, to be amuz'd and entertain'd, and not with holy Desires to have their Souls reform'd, and made fit to appear before the Lord Jesus; when he shall descend from Heaven in flaming Fire, with his mighty Angels, to take vengeance on them, who have heard the Word of God, without profiting by it.

*Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour and Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, now and ever.*

