THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

WILLIAM WARBURTON,

LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE FIFTH.

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BISHOP WARBURTON'S

WORKS.

VOLUME THE FIFTH:

CONTAINING

SERMONS AND DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS.

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THE

THE

PRINCIPLES

OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED

RELIGION

OCCASIONALLY

OPENED AND EXPLAINED;

IN A

COURSE OF SERMONS

Preached before the

HONOURABLE SOCIETY

OF

LINCOLN'S INN.

By the Rev. Mr. WARBURTON, Preacher to the SOCIETY.

To the Worſhipful the

Maſters of the Bench

OF

The Honourable Society

OF

LINCOLN'S INN.

THE following Diſcourſes were preached, and are now publiſhed, with a view of vindicating Religion from the inſults of Libertines, and the indiſcretions of Enthuſiaſts. Nor will ſo fair a purpoſe be at all ſullied by the motive I had for this addreſs: which was, only to acknowledge, in the moſt grateful manner I was able, my obligations to the Bench for the honour done me, at the laſt vacancy, in the generous offer of the Preacherſhip of the Society; as well as for Your conſtant civilities to me ever ſince I was honoured with the charge. Theſe Diſcourſes, therefore, ſuch as they are, are humbly offered to You, by,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt obliged and faithful Servant,

W. WARBURTON.

Lincoln's Inn,
Nov. 28, 1752.

SERMON I.

THE NATURE AND CONDITION OF TRUTH.

JOHN xviii. ver. 38.

PILATE SAITH UNTO HIM, WHAT IS TRUTH? AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE WENT OUT AGAIN.

THE bleſſed Jeſus was had before Pilate as a criminal of State: and the Governor began to queſtion him upon that footing. But when he found the kingdom, which this ſuppoſed Criminal was accuſed of claiming, was one merely ſpiritual, or, in Pilate's conception, a kingdom only in idea; he conſidered Jeſus as no proper ſubject of his animadverſion. And ſo far he acted as became his public character.

But his incurioſity or indifference, when TRUTH was offered to be laid before him as a private man, and by one who, he knew, had the repute of exerciſing every ſpiritual power neceſſary to inforce it, ſhews him in a light much leſs excuſable. The negligent air of his inſulting queſtion will hardly admit of an apology "You tell me, ſays he, of Truth: a word in the mouth of every Sectary,

Sectary, who all agree to give that name to their own opinions. While Truth, if indeed we allow its existence, still wanders at large, and unacknowledged. Nor does it seem worth while to realize and fix her abode: for those things which Nature intended for general use, are plain and obvious, and within the reach of every man."

Sentiments like these characterised the ruler of an Asiatic province, who had heard so much of Truth in the schools of philosophy, and to so little purpose. Pilate, therefore, finding a Jewish Sage talk of *bearing witness to the truth*, the pretended office of the Grecian Sophists, concluded him to be one of their mimic Followers. For it was now become fashionable amongst the learned Jews to inlist themselves into one or other of those schools. Thus the famous Philo was an outrageous Platonist: and Jesus calling himself a KING, this, and what was generally known of the purity and severity of his morals, probably made Pilate consider him as one of the STOICAL WISE MEN, who alone was free, happy, and a King;

Liber, honoratus, pulcher, Rex denique Regum.

Now, as on the one hand, the character of the Greek philosophy, which was abstracted and sequestered from civil business, made Pilate conclude, that the ministry of Jesus had nothing dangerous or alarming; so, on the other, its endless enquiries and quarrels about TRUTH, and which of the Sects had it in keeping, made men of the world, and especially those whose practice declined the test of any moral system whatsoever, willing to be persuaded, and ready to conclude, that this boasted Truth, which pretended to regulate and direct human conduct, was indeed no better than a fanciful and shifting vision.

This, I presume, was the light in which Pilate considered the Saviour of the world. Had he suspected Jesus for the founder of a public Religion, to be erected on the destruction of the established worship of the Empire, the jealousies of the Roman Court, since

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the change of the Conſtitution, had doubtleſs made this ſervile miniſter of power very attentive and officious to ſuppreſs it in its birth.

But a religion, whoſe object was the TRUTH, was at this time ſo unknown a thing, that a Pagan Magiſtrate could have no conception of it, but as of a new ſect of philoſophy. All the Religions then in credit had for their object, inſtead of Truth, public utility; and for their means, inſtead of Creeds and formulas of faith, only pompous rites and ceremonies. So that if this corrupt Politician did, indeed, regard the doctrine of Jeſus as a new Religion, it was ſuch a one as ſome modern Stateſmen have been ſaid to form of it; a ſort of *divine philoſophy in the mind*; from which, it is true, the governments and politics of this world have little to apprehend. For it was not till Paul *reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come*, that *Felix trembled.* And had the Goſpel, at this time, been repreſented to Pilate on its practical ſide, it is probable that he, as any other Stateſman, had been in the ſame condition. But Such can hear talk of the TRUTHS of God unmoved and unimproved, who tremble at his judgments, and anticipate the terrors of his vengeance.

But if the ill uſage of Truth by the Philoſophers could ſo diſguſt the Politician of old, as to make him indifferent to an acquaintance of this importance; What, muſt we think, will be her treatment amongſt modern Stateſmen, whoſe views are neither more pure nor more generous; and whoſe penetration, perhaps, does not go much beyond the buſy men of antiquity; when they ſee her ſo freely handled by thoſe amongſt us, who call themſelves her Miniſters, and profeſs to conſecrate her to the ſervice of Religion? Amongſt ſuch, I mean amongſt the active, no leſs than amongſt the idle part of the faſhionable world, Pilate's queſtion is become proverbial, when they would inſinuate that TRUTH, like VIRTUE, is nothing but a NAME.

"What is this TRUTH, ſay they, of which the world has heard ſo much talk, and hath received ſo little information? You boaſt

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of it, as the Guide of life, yet ſtill its reſidence remains unknown. Which would tempt one to ſuſpect, that either there is no ſuch thing; a thing eſſentially different from falſehood; or that its nature is too fine and ſubtile for the groſſer intellect of man to comprehend. But above all, what is that GOSPEL TRUTH, which its Miniſters, in their very attempts to recommend, are wont ſo much to diſcredit and abuſe? We do not mean that dim Specter or Phantaſm of it, which hath ſo long haunted and poſſeſſed the Schools; but, that which you call, its brighteſt Subſtance, as it ſits inthroned in the hearts of the Faithful. How miſerably is this ſhaken, not only by the diſſentions of its Friends, but by every the ſlighteſt effort of its Enemies! And while objections to Religion lie plain and level to the capacities of the vulgar; the ſolution of them requires the utmoſt ſtretch of parts and learning to excogitate; and equal application and attention to comprehend. From all this (ſay they) we are naturally led to conclude, That the Goſpel-doctrines are no truths; or at leaſt truths of no general concern; ſince they are neither uniformly held by thoſe who are employed to teach them; nor ſubject to the examination of ſuch as are enjoined to receive them."

Something like this, I apprehend, may be the private ſentiment of thoſe who have more decently diſcarded all care and concern about the things of religion.

And as it cannot be denied but that men's acquired paſſions and appetites have concurred with the conſtitutional weakneſs of human nature to form theſe concluſions againſt Truth; and eſpecially that beſt part of truth, Religion; Charity ſeems to call upon us to detect and lay open the general cauſes which have given birth to men's prejudices againſt both.

I. And firſt, with regard to Truth in the abſtract; the various hindrances to its diſcovery; and mens' backwardneſs to acquieſce in it, when found.

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The principal and ſureſt ſtep towards the poſſeſſion of the Good we ſeek, is our love and affection for the object. This quickens our induſtry, and ſharpens our attention. So that the LOVE OF TRUTH hath been always recommended by the Maſters of wiſdom as the beſt means of ſucceeding in the purſuit of it. There is hardly any one who ſuſpects he wants this LOVE: and yet, How few are there whom their confidence does not deceive! We miſtake the love of our Opinions for the love of Truth, becauſe we ſuppoſe our own opinions true: and yet, for the moſt part, they have been received upon credit; and conſequently are much more likely to be falſe. Hence, this imaginary love of Truth proves, in fact, little better than the love of Error: and the affections, being now miſplaced, they are a greater impediment to us in the purſuit of Truth than if we had no affections at all concerning it.

How then ſhall we know when we have this love? for ſtill it is neceſſary we ſhould have it, if we would follow Truth to any good purpoſe. It is difficult to deſcribe what every man muſt feel for himſelf; and yet as dangerous to truſt only to our feelings, when the object is ſo eaſily miſtaken. However, When we ſet out in ſearch of Truth as of a ſtranger, and not in ſearch of arguments to ſupport our familiar opinions; when we poſſeſs ourſelves in a perfect indifference for every thing but known and atteſted Truth; totally regardleſs of the place from whence it comes, or of that to which it ſeems to tend; when the mind, I ſay, is in this ſituation, no one, I think, can fairly diſpute the reality of its attachment.

1. But our appetites rarely ſuffer us to obſerve this ſtrict and rigid conduct. We ſeek the gratification of our humour even in the laws which ſhould correct it. Hence ſo many various SYSTEMS OF MORALITY, to ſuit every man's proper frame of mind, and bent of conſtitution. The indolent, the active, the ſanguine, the flegmatic, and ſaturnine, have all their correſpondent Theories. Now, inquirers of this turn muſt needs be admirably qualified for the diſcovery of Truth! While juſt as one or other of the com-

plexions carries him, the man is drawn by a ſtrong, though hidden impulſe, into the very centre of his congenial ſyſtem. And what will be the iſſue? His concern, from henceforth, is not the trial, but the ſupport of his opinions; which can be no otherwiſe provided for than by keeping the arguments in favour of them always in view, and by ſtriving to forget whatever ſeems to have a leſs indulgent aſpect.

2. Prejudices miſlead the inquirer no leſs than his paſſions. He venerates the Notions he received from his forefathers: He reſts in them, upon the authority of ſuch whoſe judgment he eſteems; or, at leaſt, wiſhes them well, for the ſake of the honours and profits he ſees attached to the profeſſion of them. Nay, he can perſuade himſelf to patronize what he has once choſen, for reaſons ſtill more remote from the concluſions of common ſenſe. He likes them becauſe they are old; becauſe they are new; for being plain and ſimple; for being ſublime and myſterious; for being followed by the Few; for being followed by the Many; in a word, on a thouſand other accounts, with which Truth hath no manner of concern. But this muſt never be forgotten, that, let Prejudice drive from what quarter it will, it is ſure to make ſhipwreck of the Underſtanding, thus flattered and betrayed.

But then bad as this is, Since this too is certainly the caſe, that the impediments in the purſuit of Truth are not eſſential but accidental; we may well account for our miſtakes in ſetting out, the ſlowneſs of our advance, and the rubs and oppoſitions in our paſſage, without having recourſe to any ſceptical concluſions in favour of the incomprehenſible nature of Truth, or the inacceſſible ſituation in which the eternal Author of all things hath placed her. For is this any reaſon, that becauſe ſome Truths are ſo deep that our haſte and impatience will not ſuffer us to ſound them; others ſo diſguiſed that our diſſipation will not allow us the attention neceſſary to diſcover them; and others again ſo ſuſpected that our prejudices diſpoſe us to reject them; That becauſe ſome errors are repreſented ſo plauſibly as to look like Truth; others ſeem ſo com-

commodious as to be wiſhed Truth; and others again appear ſo faſhionable as to uſurp all the prerogatives due unto it; Is this, I ſay, any reaſon for ſober men to conclude, that either there is no difference between what We call Truth and Falſehood; or that the difference is ſo inſenſible that it will not ſerve us for a diſtinction? Our very Senſes, in many caſes, our Reaſon in more, and our Hearts in almoſt all, will convince us of the contrary.

II. We come next to conſider the objections to RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

1. And firſt, with regard to the Miniſters of Religion, their paſſions and their prejudices. It is rather to be lamented than objected to us, that conſecration to the ſervice of heaven will not exempt good men from the frailties of humanity. As to the bad, indeed, if it does not aggravate their crimes, at leaſt it renders them more ſcandalous: and, in general, when the matter is of high concernment, the paſſions both of good and bad are always, from the common impotence of our nature, proportionably inflamed. Miſtaken conſtancy, or irregular zeal, makes this man tenacious of received opinions: and the obliquer affections of avarice or ambition make that man reverence ſuch as are eſtabliſhed. Oppoſition, likewiſe, will make both but too much diſpoſed to obtrude what they ſuſpect to be falſe; and to ſecrete what they know to be true. This draws them ſtill further from the road of Truth, while all they ſeek is to be at diſtance from one another's Parties and Opinions. So long, therefore, as theſe intereſts prevail, the plaineſt Truths will be diſputed, and the moſt notorious Errors patronized and ſupported; the obſcureſt Principles preferred to the cleareſt, and the ſubtileſt concluſions take place of the moſt ſimple.

2. Inveterate errors concerning the nature and end of God's WRITTEN WORD, errors long ſince ſanctified by time and authority, are another ſource of thoſe diſgraces to which Revelation is become ſubject. The Goſpel is ſo commonly honoured with the name of TRUTH; and holy Scripture in general ſo frequently re-

commended for its capacity of *leading us into all truth*, that men have been apt to regard it as a treaſury of Science; and to apply to their Bible for all the principles of human knowledge. And under this deluſion, the vain inquirer, to cover the diſhonour of a fruitleſs ſearch, hath always had recourſe to that exhauſtleſs fund, the human Imagination; which is ever then moſt extravagant when Reaſon is at greateſt diſtance. How miſerably, for inſtance, hath the Moſaic account of the Creation been diſhonoured by the wild and jarring expoſitions of men devoted to this or that ſect of PHILOSOPHY or MYSTICISM! Platoniſts, Materialiſts, Carteſians, Chemiſts, Cabaliſts, and all the impure fry of phyſical, philological, and ſpiritual Enthuſiaſts, have found their peculiar whimſies ſupported, and made authentic, in the firſt and ſecond chapters of the book of GENESIS!

How, again, have the Jewiſh LAW and the GOSPEL of Jeſus been abuſed by Slaves and Rebels; or by ſuch as were ready to become either; to find, in one, the DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS; and, in the other, the Supremacy and DOMINION OF THE CHURCH!

But amidſt all the folly and miſchief attending this perverſion of the Bible, in ſupport of human ſyſtems of Philoſophy and Politics, had men only reflected, that, though Scripture be ſaid to be *written to make us wiſe*, it is added—*unto ſalvation* *; they would have ſought for the principles of natural and civil knowledge amongſt their proper Profeſſors: and have ſtudied Scripture only to inveſtigate that *wiſdom which is from above*; and *is firſt* PURE, *then* PEACEABLE †: a wiſdom, which, at the ſame time that it enlightens the Judgment, rectifies the Heart; and ſo takes away all ground of contention both from a perplexed head and a bigotted temper.

III. But the thing which, moſt of all other, indiſpoſes ſceptical men to the truths of Revelation is, "That the ſmall remain of

* 2 Tim. chap. iii. 15.

† Jam. chap. iii. 17.

SCRIPTURE-

SCRIPTURE-TRUTH which the friends and miniſters of Religion have left unimpaired, lies a prey to its enemies: obvious (they ſay,) to a thouſand objections; and every objection level to the capacity of the Vulgar: while the ſolution of them not only requires the beſt abilities to frame and draw out, but the cloſeſt attention likewiſe to comprehend."

Now, as this is ſuppoſed to affect both the nature of Truth in general, and the character of the Goſpel in particular, we ſhall conſider it in either light.

1. All objections to Truth muſt needs be founded in falſe judgment: Falſe judgment proceeds from ignorance, or a ſuperficial view of things: But this ignorance is the proper allotment of the Vulgar; So that, what ariſes from thence, as referring to, and conſonant with their capacities, cannot but make a quick and eaſy impreſſion. On the contrary, the ſolution of theſe difficulties muſt needs be formed on a true judgment of things. This judgment ſprings from a profound view of Nature. But ſuch a view requires a large detail: and the mutual connections and dependencies of things, a ſtrict examination: hence the neceſſity of time to acquire, and of attention to comprehend. Theſe different properties in OBJECTIONS and SOLUTIONS are ſo conſtant and notorious, that the eaſe of queſtioning fooliſhly, and the difficulty of anſwering wiſely, is become proverbial.

Hence we collect, that even admitting Revelation to be true, it would be neceſſarily attended with the diſadvantages here objected to it.

2. In vindication of the character of the GOSPEL it may be replied, That it is one thing to underſtand the meaning of a truth delivered in a propoſition, and another, to comprehend all the reaſons on which that truth is founded. The firſt of theſe is all that is NECESSARY for man to know: For when God vouchſafed the revelation of himſelf to the world, he annexed SAVING FAITH to the knowledge and acceptance of clear and ſimple propoſitions, ſuch as theſe, that *Jeſus is the Meſſiah, the Redeemer of mankind.*

They

They miſtake his Goſpel, and alter the terms of his Covenant, who put ſalvation upon the evidence to be given of the NECESSITY OF A SAVIOUR. The learned Divine, we preſume, is able to ſatisfy all ſerious inquirers, in both theſe particulars: But if the reaſoning which proves the latter, exceed the capacity of the mere Vulgar, it derogates nothing from Revelation; ſince the knowledge of that matter makes no part of the terms of our ſalvation. All, that man can wiſh ſhould be indulged him, in conſideration of his natural infirmities, is indulged him: For the utmoſt he could deſire is, that the Truths, which come propoſed to him from God, be plain and conſiſtent; and accompanied with Credentials from the ſender. Agreeably hereto, the fundamental doctrines, which the Chriſtian religion objects to our belief, are the exiſtence of one God, the Creator; and his moral government of the world; that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, ſent by his Father to redeem mankind from ſin and miſery, and to reſtore them to eternal life, by the ſacrifice of himſelf upon the croſs; and that the Holy Spirit is the ſanctifier and enlightener of all thoſe who *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.* Propoſitions of the utmoſt clearneſs and preciſion. Nor is the evidence of their original leſs ſimple or intelligible; ſuch as the Miracles performed, and the Prophecies fulfilled, in atteſtation of them.

So admirably fitted for the groſs body of mankind, is this Religion, both in its genius and promulgation! No abſurd incredibility in Nature, propoſed; no blind ſubmiſſion to Authority, required. The doctrines, as clear as they are pure, equally ſolicit the Underſtanding and Affections; and are adapted to ſatisfy the Reaſon, at the ſame time that they allure the Will. In a word, inforced with that power and conviction as makes it difficult for an ingenuous mind to reject them, though under cover of that civil (but criminal) diſmiſſion of the Roman Governor.

IV. But then, "If theſe fundamental articles of the Goſpel-covenant were contrived by divine Wiſdom, with ſuch ſimplicity and plainneſs,

plainneſs, How came they, it will be aſked, to be ſo delivered as to afford occaſion for the inquiſitive to ſtart a thouſand curious queſtions, which have no other tendency than to perplex and obſcure them." To this, we beg leave to ſay, that, though, indeed, ſacred Scripture, as far as it reſpects the eſſentials of the Chriſtian faith, be exceeding clear and ſimple, yet it does, at the ſame time, contain many profound, and even impenetrable myſteries. Myſteries, however, which no leſs manifeſt the adorable wiſdom, than the open doctrines do the abounding goodneſs of our all-gracious Maſter.

The Goſpel is a Covenant or Tranſaction of God with Man. The immenſe diſtance between the Parties contracting muſt needs make the ſeveral parts of the covenant very diſſimilar. So that, if from Man's nature and ſituation we may expect, that, when God vouchſafes to direct us by a revelation of his WILL, all his commands will be brief, evident, and full; we muſt, on the like reaſoning, conclude from the nature of the other contracting Party, the God of the univerſe, that when he vouchſafes to inſtruct Man in the revelation of his TRUTH, there will be ſome things in the *Covenant of Grace*, which will partake of the ſublime obſcurity of its Author.

It was the ſame God who framed the Chriſtian Oeconomy and the Newtonian Syſtem. Why therefore ſhould it be matter of objection to the former, and not to the other, that there are many things ſurpaſſing human comprehenſion in both? Is the doctrine of Grace more ſtupendous than the velocity of Motion given to Light? Or is the incarnation of the Son of God more aſtoniſhing than the leaſt poſſible quantity of Matter ſufficient to make a World? If therefore the Newtonian philoſophy (which is built on Science) hath revealed and demonſtrated the powers of Nature amidſt all that darkneſs; how can we doubt of ſeeing God in his Goſpel, though ſurrounded with the impenetrable depths of infinity? In a word, I think we might as reaſonably conclude againſt the divine original of the Goſpel, if there were no traces of ſuch myſterious

myſterious parts, as if there were only ſuch. An unclouded ſplendor, and undiluted obſcurity, equally diſcrediting the Works and Diſpenſations of Heaven.

But, of the dark parts of Revelation there are two ſorts: one, which may be cleared up by the ſtudious application of well-improved talents; the other, which will always reſide within the ſhadow of God's throne, where it would be impiety to intrude.

However, neither the one nor other make part of the eſſential doctrines of our Faith. The impenetrable nature of the latter totally unfits them for objects of religious belief; and the difficult comprehenſion of the former unfits them for becoming objects of the People's. But as it is this ſort only which can afford any reaſonable ground to the objection before us, we ſhall be a little more particular.

The Goſpel profeſſes itſelf to be the completion of one entire Syſtem, advancing by a gradual progreſs, through various Ages and People, from the Creation of man to his Redemption. A Diſpenſation of this character cannot but be contrived and conducted on principles of the ſublimeſt wiſdom. So that as, on the one hand, the knowledge of the relations of the parts to one another; and their various coincidencies, and mutual operations, to produce, either their diſtinct, or their united effects, will be extremely difficult; ſo, on the other, the attainment of this knowledge will be neceſſary, if we aſpire to that full and comprehenſive idea of Religion, which can alone enable us to detect and ſatisfy the doubts and cavils of Infidelity.

Now, in this conſiſts the ratio and eſſential grounds of the Goſpel-doctrine; of which, one would think, the only iſſue ſhould be credit, and glory to the Chriſtian Faith. But unadviſed inquirers exploring the depths of infinite Wiſdom without modeſty and reverence, have given a handle to licentious men to turn theſe proofs, explored improperly, and imprudently inforced, into an argument againſt the divine original of Revelation. And this pretence making its appeal to the ignorance of the Vulgar, is greedily embraced.

In

In the mean time, the ſolution of the cavil demanding an enlarged view of God's moral Oeconomy, acquired by the right application of general knowledge, well digeſted, we need not wonder, that a better underſtanding than commonly falls to the ſhare of the People is required to enable us to ſee the force of ſuch reaſoning.

But is this general incapacity any real objection to the truth of our Religion? By no means. It is perfectly agreeable to our ideas of God's moral attributes, that he ſhould inform men of his Will; that he ſhould deliver to them a rule of action, accompanied with the ſanctions of a Law: It is as conformable to our ideas of Man's relation to his Maker, that he ſhould receive and obſerve this Law. Reaſon, indeed, expects that the delivery of it be attended with theſe conditions, That the propoſitions in which it is contained be clear and intelligible; the truths in which it is conveyed, agreeable to the nature of things; and the pretenſions of thoſe intruſted with its propagation, confirmed by ſuperior power. Along with this Law is proclaimed the free gift of a general bleſſing; which the Giver might beſtow at his pleaſure, as well in one reaſonable way as in another.

Has man any more to expect before he vouchſafes to accept this free bleſſing, or condeſcends to be governed by this equitable Law? Reaſon ſays, No. But Paſſion and Prejudice ſtand out. "We want, they cry, to be informed how we came to ſtand in need of this Salvation. We want to be inſtructed in the ratio or eſſential grounds of the doctrine propounded."

Now if divine Wiſdom had not thought fit to comply with ſo bold and inſolent a demand, Could we accuſe him of being wanting to his favourite Man? Surely we could not. Yet God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to humour our caprice. He hath laid open the *depth and riches* of his Syſtem ſo fully, as to enable thoſe, who are duly qualified with human knowledge, to ſatisfy theſe demands, and to explain the WHY of his Oeconomy of Redemption.

Will this content us? By no means. "The ſolution, it is "ſaid, is founded in ſuch principles of ſpeculative ſcience as the

"People can never comprehend." But for this, there is no remedy. The fault, if there be any, lies not in the mode of the religious Diſpenſation, but in the nature of Truth itſelf: Which requires much attention of the beſt gifted and beſt improved underſtanding to penetrate to its general principles. Would you have the eternal nature of things altered to gratify your prejudices? Truth, no more than its Author, can ſink to the level of your ignorance; but You, by a proper cultivation of your reaſon, may riſe to Truth, may reach its ſublimeſt heights, its reſidence near the footſtool of the Almighty.

"This attempt, you ſay, the ſtation and condition of the people will never ſuffer them to make; they have neither leiſure to learn, nor opportunities to philoſophiſe."—Be content then with thoſe ſimple principles, and plain arguments for Religion, explained above: and have the candour and honeſty to own, that, if you want knowledge to judge of the anſwers of the learned, to infidel objections; you want it equally to judge of the objections themſelves; which, therefore, ſhould never indiſpoſe you to what you do underſtand; Principles, which conſtitute thoſe eſſential articles of faith by which you muſt be ſaved. And if the higher and more intricate truths of Religion exceed your capacity, be aſſured (if for no other reaſon than this) that you may be ſafely ignorant of them. In the concerns of life, about which, men are generally more in earneſt than in the affairs of Religion, you take the concluſions of Science upon truſt, and erect them into principles: You navigate, you build, you ſtate accounts, and truſt to the mathematician for the ratio of thoſe rules by which you work and attain your purpoſe.

But to this you will ſay, "It is true, indeed, that in the common affairs of life, men go on upon truſt; but then uniform experience ſhews, they are in no danger of being deceived; for the conſtant ſucceſs attending the operations, thus conducted, aſſures them, that the rules by which they act are deduced from principles of Truth."—And is that FAITH and OBEDIENCE, which

conſtitut

conſtitute us the Diſciples of Chriſt, leſs uniformly productive of good? Did Faith ever violate civil peace; or Obedience impair domeſtic felicity? In vain you tell us of that frantic Zeal, of that dire Superſtition, which have ſet whole Kingdoms in a flame, and deſolated private Houſes. The firſt miſchief they always do is to corrupt FAITH and OBEDIENCE: and after this, to charge upon theſe, the evils cauſed by their deſtroyers, is adding mockery to injuſtice.

And here let me obſerve, that the Founders of our holy Faith were in this, as in all other parts of their conduct, truly admirable. What they chiefly inſiſted on to the People at large, was the BELIEF of a few ſimple propoſitons, as neceſſary to Salvation. When they addreſſed themſelves to ſuch Particulars who were fitly qualified and rightly diſpoſed, ſuch who have heads to diſtinguiſh, and hearts to chuſe the right, they as warmly recommend EXAMINATION, *to ſearch the Scriptures*, and *to try all things*. Yet the only uſe a late writer could find in ſo ſage and generous a conduct was to turn it to abuſe, in a piece of profane drollery, called *Chriſtianity not founded on argument*. An egregious exploit! and worthy the Author's charitable views; the mock conſolation of Fanatics, and the ſly merriment of Sceptics and Unbelievers.

But now, we are ſtopt ſhort and told, that all our pains might have been well ſpared; for that the neceſſity of theſe profound defenſes, ſo much embroiling the learned and embarraſſing the Vulgar, doth not ariſe from the nature of truth, but from the folly or knavery of its Advocates. "It is aſtoniſhing (ſays the Ob-"jector) how Divines could take ſo much ſilly pains to eſtabliſh "myſtery on metaphyſics, revelation on philoſophy, and matters "of fact on abſtract reaſoning. A Religion founded on the autho-"rity of a divine Miſſion, confirmed by propheſies and miracles, "appeals to fact: and the facts muſt be proved as all other facts, "that paſs for authentic, are proved. If they are thus proved, "the Religion will prevail without the aſſiſtance of ſo much pro-

" found reaſoning *." To which I reply, That, had this charge on the Divines been well founded, the objection would yet have been uncandid and diſingenuous. For who were they that drew the Divines into metaphyſics, philoſophy, and abſtract reaſoning, but theſe Objectors themſelves? And on what occaſion, but this?—The advocates of Revelation did not want to be told that a " Reli-" gion founded on the authority of a divine Miſſion, and confirmed " by propheſies and miracles, appeals to facts," and was to be proved by human evindence: For in reality, by FACTS they had already proved it: And with ſuch force and Evidence, that unbelievers were driven from their Objections to the Facts, and reduced to take refuge in Philoſophy—" You preſs us with facts (ſay they) and the teſtimony of antiquity: ſupports too ſlender to bear the unnatural load of REVELATION! A thing impoſſible in itſelf, as it oppoſes the eſtabliſhed order of Providence: A thing impoſſible under the Bible repreſentation of it, as ſeveral paſſages in that book directly oppoſe our common notions of God's Attributes."—In this ſtrait, what was to be done, but either to confeſs the force of the objection; or, by the aid of that *metaphyſics*, *philoſophy*, and *abſtract reaſoning*, which the laſt objection appeals to, and which the other condemns, to ſhew its futility and weakneſs. For the conſtitution of nature cannot be explained without metaphyſics; and the Attributes of God cannot be confronted with his ſuppoſed commands, without the uſe of abſtract reaſoning. And yet, for ſubmitting to this neceſſity, for undergoing this drudgery, the Divines are upbraided, ridiculed, and turned into contempt. And by whom? By the very men who occaſioned the diſtreſs, and defied them to get out of it.

Nor is this the worſt. The Divines are repreſented as applying their " metaphyſics, philoſophy, and profound reaſoning, to pro-" pheſies and miracles." How groſs the miſrepreſentation! They had more wit, they had more honeſty (I ſpeak not here, nor does

* L. B's Letters concerning the ſtudy and uſe of Hiſtory.

the

the Objector, of two or three crack-brained visionaries), than to take so much *silly pains*. They applied this reasoning as became them; not to matter of FACT, but of RIGHT. It was pretended, that God could not give a Revelation; that he could not select a chosen People; that he could not accept a vicarious atonement. And against these bold assertions, the Christian Divine directed all the force and evidence of true Philosophy.—With what success, the latest posterity shall tell with gratitude.

V. But it is not only from what lies hid, but from what hath been discovered, that the enemies of our Faith can raise objections to its discredit. If, in these later times, it hath been pretended, that a more rational idea of God's dispensations hath been proposed; if the various genius, the comparative excellence, the mutual dependence, the reciprocal illustrations of the several Parts, and the gradual progress of the Whole towards perfection, have been investigated with a penetration, solidity, and precision unknown to those ages which time alone hath taught us to esteem venerable; if, I say, this hath been pretended; We are then asked, "How it came to pass, that Truths, so sublime and useful, should have lain hid till now; When the light of the Spirit was sent so early, and had illuminated the Church so long? How it came to pass, they were denied to the best times; and, after a long course of ages, reserved as a reward for the very worst?"—And when they have asked this, to discredit OLD truths; they can, in order to increase the prejudices against them, join with bigots, how inconsistently soever, to decry the NEW.

To this objection, it is sufficient to reply, That the promise and gift of the SPIRIT may be considered either as it concerned the first propagators of the Word; or as it concerned the teachers and hearers of it ever since. As to the immediate disciples of Christ, there is no doubt of their being abundantly inlightened for the work of their ministry; whether it was in making converts, in founding churches, or in composing those occasional instructions, by which

Christians

Chriſtians of all ages may improve the current benefits they receive from the aſſiſtance of the ſame Spirit,—And that aſſiſtance is the ſecond point we are to conſider.

Now the endowment of Grace is, in this reſpect, juſt the ſame with every common endowment of Nature; of little advantage without our co-operation! God hath given men hands and feet, to procure good and to avert evil. But the benefit does not operate like a charm; it is to our dextrous application of the members that we owe all the advantages ariſing from their uſe. So it is in the free-gift of the Spirit: it was beſtowed upon us to enlighten the Underſtanding, to aſſiſt the Judgment, and to redreſs the diſorders of the Will. But if either we refuſe to exert theſe faculties, or will direct them to improper objects, the uſe and efficacy of Grace muſt ſurely be defeated. Theſe reflections will enable us to give a reaſonable account how it might happen, that very important truths, concerning God's moral Diſpenſations, may have remained hid for ages, and yet be reſerved (to the greater glory of his Goſpel in its greateſt need), for the diſcovery of theſe worſe and latter times.

This ſuppoſed ordonance, in the œconomy of Grace, may receive credit from what is confeſſed to have happened in the œconomy of Nature.

The power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of the Author of the Syſtem to which we belong, is ſo clear and evident from every obvious configuration of Matter ſurrounding us, that it cannot eſcape the notice of the moſt inattentive, or lie concealed from the moſt ignorant. Hence a God, the Maker, Preſerver, and Governor of the world, is the concurrent voice of Nature.

Now Creation and Government, from which the morality of human actions is deduced, are the great principles of natural Religion. So that God could not be ſaid to have been wanting in the diſcovery of himſelf to the loweſt of his reaſonable creatures. Yet though the obvious marks of his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, thus obtrude themſelves upon all men; it is certain that a well-

well-directed ſtudy, in the contemplation of the great book of Nature, opens to us ſuch ſtupendous wonders of his Power, ſuch awful ſcenes of his Wiſdom, and ſuch inchanting proſpects of his Goodneſs, as exceed all conception of the unlettered and uninſtructed Spectator. Some faint taſte of theſe beauties, the more Inquiſitive enjoyed very early: But their ſucceſſors, by too much indulging to SPECULATION, and allowing too little to EXPERIENCE, inſtead of finding a real, invented an infinite variety of ideal Worlds; all as diſhonourable to the Author of Nature as diſtant from his Truth. At length, men grew wiſer by the follies of thoſe who went before them; and a different method of ſtudying Nature was invented and purſued; in which Fancy was excluded, and Fact only allowed for a ſolid ground of phyſical progreſſion. From this time, Science advanced; the veil of Nature was drawn aſide; and her ſacred Myſteries expoſed to the open admiration of all men.

This was the caſe in the Syſtem of Nature. The Syſtem of Grace ſeems to run exactly parallel.

The great principles of Revealed Religion are FAITH and OBEDIENCE: And theſe are clearly and fully taught in the Goſpel; and are alone ſufficient to *make men wiſe unto ſalvation.* But we ſhould greatly derogate from God's Moral government, not to ſuppoſe it abounding with the like myſterious wonders as the Natural. And to the ſtudy of theſe, there were more calls, and much better opportunities. The knowledge of God's moral Diſpenſation is the duty of every man; and more eſpecially of the Miniſters of Religion: So that partly on account of the importance of the ſubject; partly to enable us to oppoſe ourſelves to the malice and ſophiſtry of the enemy; but principally in obedience to the command, to *ſtudy the Scriptures*; it has, from the firſt ages of Chriſtianity down to theſe times, been one of the principal occupations of the Learned. Yet what through unfavourable circumſtances in the Civil and Literary world; what through the bias of inveterate prejudices; but, above all, from the oblique intereſts and turbulent paſſions of

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the inquirers themſelves; the various ſyſtems of Religion, invented by Divines, and which all pretend to find in Scripture, have diſhonoured the Redemption of mankind near as much as thoſe of the Philoſophers had diſhonoured the Creation of the univerſe: till here, as in the other caſe, the ſame ſpirit of prudence and ſobriety, which taught men the true method of treating the things of Nature, by a careful ſtudy of the volume of creation, led them into the right way of treating the things of God, by a careful ſtudy of the volume of Redemption. So that if, in theſe times, the advances in the knowledge of God's WILL ſhould haply prove as conſiderable as thoſe in the diſcovery of his WORKS, it will not be beſide a reaſonable expectation; as ſimilar means are always likely to produce ſimilar effects.

We have placed theſe correſpondent hiſtories of the progreſs of the human mind, in NATURE and GRACE, thus near one another, that, by comparing the parts of them together in the ſame view, we may ſee whether there be any objections to the truth of new diſcoveries in religious matters that do not equally hold againſt the truth of new diſcoveries in natural; of which, for their newneſs alone, no man ever yet entertained the leaſt ſuſpicion.

Firſt, then, as to God's primary diſcovery of his Nature in the great book of Creation, compared to the diſcovery of his Will in the volume of his written word, we may obſerve his goodneſs in either caſe to be equally conſpicuous. In the former, a man need but open his eyes to ſee the Divinity in every object; in the latter, he who *runs may read* the means and method of his own Salvation: In neither, is any thing wanting, that is neceſſary, to inſtruct the moſt ignorant in their dependance, and their duty. For further information in the works and ways of Providence, God wiſely reſerved it for the reward of the manly and virtuous improvement of the Underſtanding.

It is true, in fact, that throughout a vaſt ſeries of ages, neither of theſe Inquirers made any very conſiderable advances in real know-

knowledge: but it is as true, that the impediments, in both caſes, proceeded not from any difficulties in the nature of the things inquired after, but from the wrong methods employed in the ſearch. Inſtead of endeavouring to find out the real conſtitution of things from the frame of God's works, as they are objected to our ſenſes; or the nature of Revelation from the ſtudy of the word, as conveyed to us in Scripture; they invented imaginary Syſtems out of their own ſlender ſtock of Nothing; and then, by wreſting and diſtorting, forced Nature and the Bible to father this ſhadowy and ſpurious iſſue.

But both Divines and Philoſophers, when they became convinced of their follies, and, in conſequence of that conviction, proceeded with more modeſty, as well as better ſenſe, to renounce their fanciful Hypotheſes, and to erect Theories on the real conſtitution of things, Both, I ſay, made great advances in natural and religious truth.

Theſe two important ſtudies, therefore, being alike circumſtanced, and having run the ſame fortune, demand, in all reaſon, the ſame judgment to be paſſed on their pretences.

But, alas! we are not accuſtomed to be thus equitable. One of the principal ſources of human errors is the drawing different concluſions from the ſame principles.

It is confeſſed, that the book of Nature is ſo plain and clear, that every ſentence names and reveals its Author: that if leſs obvious Truths have lain a long time concealed, it was men's own fault, in adhering to a perverſe method of inquiry; and that when afterwards a better was invented, and they began to apply it with more care and ſobriety, knowledge opened and enlarged itſelf proportionably: while the ſudden blaze of light which followed, was ſo far from making Truth ſuſpected, that it diſſipated all thoſe doubts which had before been held of its obſcure and equivocal nature.

But now if we turn from Phyſical to Religious inquiries, we ſhall find, that the very contrary inference hath been drawn from all the ſame circumſtances. Becauſe men had been long unſucceſsful in the diſcovery of the higher truths of Religion, not only theſe, ſo lately found and ſo difficultly comprehended, but even the moſt obvious principles, early delivered and generally received, have been rendered doubtful and ſuſpected.

But there is another ſort of Men, the pretended friends indeed of Religion, who, from too great reverence for things eſtabliſhed, have joined with ſuch as have too little, in decrying all NOVELTIES in religious matters.

Theſe Men, abhorring the vanity to be thought wiſer than their forefathers, have in expreſs terms declared their diſpleaſure at *making* what they call *experiments in Religion*.

Divines, it is true, have long diſputed how *experiments in Religion* ſhould be made. Some would employ Scripture alone; others were for taking in Fathers and Councils; and a third ſort for applying raillery and ridicule to the proceſs. But, till of late, every man was for ſome *experiment* or other. For what is *making experiments* but (as we have juſt ſhewn) illuſtrating Revelation by new arguments ariſing from new diſcoveries made in the order, fitneſs, and harmony of the various diſpenſations of Religion amongſt themſelves, juſt as Philoſophers (of whom the word is borrowed) unfold nature by new diſcoveries made, from repeated trials, in the contents of bodies.

No experiments in Religion is indeed the Language of Stateſmen (for in ſome things bigotry and politics agree, as extremes run eaſily into one another by their very attempts to keep at diſtance), becauſe, according to the Politician's Creed, Religion being uſeful to the ſtate, and yet only a well-invented fiction, all *experiments*, that is, all enquiries into its truth, naturally tend, not to confirm, but to unſettle this neceſſary ſupport of civil Government.

But,

But, for one who believes Religion to come from God to be frighted with the danger of *experiments*, is to take his friend for his enemy, the moſt ridiculous of all panic terrors.

One might reaſonably aſk ſuch a one how it comes to paſs that *experiments*, of ſo ſovereign uſe in the knowledge of Nature, ſhould be calculated to make ſuch havock in Religion? Are not both the works of God? Were not both given for Man's contemplation? Have not both, as proceeding from the common Maſter of the Univerſe, their depths and obſcurities? And doth not the unfolding the myſteries of moral government tend equally, with the diſplaying the ſecrets of the natural, to the advancement of God's glory, and the happineſs of Man? In a word, had no experiments been made in Nature, we had ſtill ſlept in the ſhade, or wandered in the labyrinth of School Philoſophy; and, had *no experiments been made in Religion*, we had ſtill kept blundering on in the rugged and dark paths of School-divinity.

To end as we began, with the inſtruction afforded by my text. What reaſon ſeems to require of us is this; That if yet we know not THE TRUTH, we ſhould ſeek it of thoſe who do: and if the plain and ſimple principles of it will not ſerve our turn, but that we will needs philoſophize, and demand a reaſon for every thing, that at leaſt we ſtay for an Anſwer; and ſtay, too, till we underſtand it, before we venture to pronounce the Religion of our country to be nothing but a mere human impoſition.

SERMON II.

GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

PSALM CXLIV. ver. 3.

LORD, WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU TAKEST KNOWLEDGE OF HIM?
OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU MAKEST ACCOUNT OF HIM?

THUS the holy Prophet, ſeized with a ſacred horror at an UNIVERSE ſtretched out through the immenſity of boundleſs Space; and with a rapturous gratitude for that GOODNESS who has graced his favourite Man with ſo tender and ſo intimate a regard.

Meditations of this kind are, indeed, moſt obvious and affecting. The RELIGIONIST and the MAN OF THE WORLD have equally employed them to reduce Humanity to its juſt value; though for very different purpoſes; the firſt, to excite religious gratitude in others; the ſecond, to encourage himſelf in an impious NATURALISM.

When the Religioniſt compares this ſmall Spot of earth to the whole of its Syſtem; and ſees a number of primary and ſecondary planets,

planets, habitations like his own, if he may judge by probable analogy, rolling round with it, and performing their various revolutions about one central fire, the common ſource of light and warmth to all, He is abaſhed at the mean and diminiſhed rank his own world bears in this ſolemn and auguſt aſſembly.

When, by the aid of improved Aſtronomy, he compares this ſubaſtral œconomy with the ſyſtems of the fixed ſtars; every one of which reigns a Sun, directing and influencing the revolutions of its attendant planets; and ſees that, as the Earth is but a point compared to the orb of Saturn, ſo the orb of Saturn itſelf grows dimenſionleſs when compared to that vaſt extent of ſpace which the ſtellar-ſolar Syſtems poſſeſs and occupy; This Lord of the creation ſhrinks ſuddenly from his height, and mingles with the loweſt croud of unheeded and undiſtinguiſhed Beings.

But when, by the further aids of ſcience, he underſtands, that a new *Hoſt of Heaven*, too remotely ſtationed for the naked ſight to draw out and review, hath been made to iſſue into day; each of which ſhining ſtrangers is the Leader of a troop of others, whoſe borrowed luſtre, too weakly reflected, no aſſiſtance of art can bring forward; and that ſtill, when ſenſe ſtops ſhort, ſcience purſues the great diſcovery, and reaſon carries on the progreſs through the mighty regions of boundleſs ſpace; the fatigued imagination, tracing ſyſtem after ſyſtem, as they riſe to light in endleſs ſucceſſion, turns frightened back upon itſelf, and overwhelms the labouring mind with terror and aſtoniſhment: whence, it never can diſengage itſelf till it riſes on the wings of FAITH, which bear this humbled creature from himſelf, and place him before the throne of God; where he ſees the myſteries of that Providence laid open, whoſe care and bounty ſo magnificently provides for the meaneſt of his creatures.

Thus piouſly affected is the Religioniſt with the ſacred horrors of this amazing ſcene; an univerſe ſtretched out through the wide regions of ſpace, and terminated on all ſides by the depths of infinity.

But

But let us turn now to the Man of the world, whom this view of things, rather DEGRADES than HUMBLES. Calmly contemplative in the chair of falſe ſcience, he derides the miſtaken gratitude of the benighted Religioniſt; a gratitude riſing not on reaſon, but on pride. "For whether, ſays he, we conſider this earth, the manſion of evil, or man its wretched inhabitant, What madneſs is it to ſuppoſe, that ſo ſordid a corner, and ſo forlorn an occupant, can be the centre of God's moral government? What but the lunacy of ſelf-love could make this ſhort-lived reptile, ſhuffled hither as it were by Fate, and precariouſly ſuſtained by Fortune, imagine himſelf the diſtinguiſhed care, and the peculiar Favorite of Heaven? As well, ſays he, might the blind inhabitants of an ant-hill, which chance had placed on the barren frontier of an extended Empire, flatter themſelves with being the firſt object of their monarch's policy, who had unpeopled thoſe mighty deſerts only to afford room and ſafety for their buſy colonies. The moſt, that reaſoning pride can tempt us to preſume is, that we may not be excluded from that general providence, governing by laws MECHANICAL, and, once for all, impreſſed on matter when it was firſt harmonized into ſyſtems. But to make God the MORAL, that is, the cloſe, the minute and immediate inſpector into human actions, is degrading him from that high rank in which this philoſophy of inlarged creation hath ſo fitly placed him: and returning him to the people, traveſted to the mortal ſize of local Godſhip: under which idea, the ſuperſtitious vulgar have been always inclined to regard the Maker and Governor of the World."

Thus widely diſtant are the concluſions of the philoſopher, from the ſentiments of the religious man.

But who are the inlarged thinkers, and on which ſide reaſon declares, it is the purpoſe of this diſcourſe to inquire: Where, we truſt, it will be found, that Man notwithſtanding the vaſt diſtance between him and his Creator, is indeed the ſubject of God's MORAL government, juſt as inſtinct prompts him to hope, and religion directs him to believe.

I. If

I. If from the difference of intrinſic dignity, and native worth in the CREATURE, we can conclude aught concerning the proportioned degrees of nearneſs in which it ſtands to its Creator, we ſhall be forced to give the place of honour to MIND above MATTER.

We are dazzled with the pomp and ſplendor of a viſible Creation: and the auguſt forms of material things hinder us from diſcerning the deſpicable qualities of that ſubſtance out of which they are faſhioned. But view this ſubſtance well, and we ſhall find, that what philoſophers call the INERTNESS of Matter, a quality eſſential to it, places it in the very loweſt claſs of what we can conceive of Being. So that were it not for the virtue of ATTRACTION, a thing foreign and extrinſic to it, Matter would be totally unfit for all the known purpoſes of its Creation.

To make Matter, therefore, any way conſiderable, its accumulated bulk muſt ſupply for its inherent baſeneſs. And yet the beſt Philoſophy, proceeding on geometric principles, hath informed us, that poſſibly all the ſolid matter in the univerſe may be comprized within a narrowneſs of limit* ſtill more aſtoniſhing than even that immenſity through which we find it dilated and expanded.

Thus MATTER carries in it no further marks or notice of a creating Hand, than an aptitude of falling back into nothing on the withdrawing the influence of that power which brought it into being.

* See Newton's Opt. p. 243. Octavo Edition.—"The Sagacity of our author [Newton] (ſays Dr. Pemberton, in his excellent View, &c.) has diſcovered a "method by which—the leaſt portion of matter may be wrought into a body of any "aſſigned dimenſions how great ſoever, and yet the pores of that body none of them "greater than any the ſmalleſt magnitude propoſed at pleaſure; notwithſtanding which, "the parts of the body ſhall ſo touch, that the body itſelf ſhall be hard and ſolid. "Which ſhews that this whole Globe of Earth, nay all the known bodies in the univerſe "together, as far as we know, may be compounded of no greater a portion of ſolid "matter than might be reduced into a Globe of one inch only in diameter, or even "leſs." View of Sir Iſaac Newton's Philoſophy, p. 355, 356.

being. While, on the contrary, a rational MIND preſents us with the ſtrongeſt and brighteſt image *, it is poſſible for a Creature to reflect of its Creator. It partakes of that divine virtue, the power of agency within itſelf. It has a capacity of imagination to turn its regard from the preſent, to the paſt and future; an ability of judgment to examine and rectify the informations of ſenſe; and a freedom of Will to give morality to all its thoughts and actions.

But beſides this obvious ſuperiority of Mind over Matter in the nature of their eſſences; there is as ſenſible a difference in the ends of their Creation, or in the effects produced by the exertion of their ſeveral qualities. The material world was made but for the ſake of the intellectual; and conſequently it is not to be ſuppoſed, that MORAL GOVERNMENT, which regards the end, ſhould be neglected; while NATURAL GOVERNMENT, which concerns only the means, ſhould ingroſs the whole of the Ruler's attention. With reſpect to the effects produced, Mind will, here again, have the ſame advantage; moral fitneſſes having a greater intrinſic excellence than natural: for Matter being devoid of conſciouſneſs, the end of the Natural is only good effected; while the end of the Moral is good felt and enjoyed.

Mind, therefore, cannot but engage the care of Providence; which is confeſſed to ſuperintend the movements of that Matter, whoſe combinations ultimately regard only mind and Intelligence.

But what makes faſtidious reaſon ſo averſe to the idea of God's moral government, when it ſo eaſily admits his Natural, is that in this latter caſe, ſyſtems are thought to be ſuſtained and kept in order only by the general laws of mechaniſm, impreſſed on Matter at its Creation; or by certain powers lodged within it, to mold it into form, to puſh it into motion, and to give the true bias to its operations: ſo that here, the Deity works neither immediately nor particularly, but leaves every thing to the government of thoſe ge-

* Gen. chap. i. ver. 26.

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neral Laws, or at leaſt to the adminiſtration of that ſecondary power, or Plaſtic Nature, which ſuperintends the execution of his Laws: while he himſelf, the ſovereign Lord of Being, deſcends not from his high eſtate, nor ſuffers his ſupremacy to be degraded by a minute attendance on every particle of body; or polluted by an intimate contact with groſs impure materiality. On the other hand, they ſee, moral government muſt be conducted on different principles. For it's ſubject being free agency, and it's object the direction of the effects which ſuch an agency produceth, the attention of the Deity muſt be inſtant, immediate, and particular; the relations of Maſter and Servant, of Lord and Subject, neceſſarily implying the moſt cloſe and conſtant intimacy.

But what ſhall we ſay, if the indiſpoſition to God's moral government, on account of this difference, be a mere prejudice? An indiſpoſition not derived from Nature, but the falſe explanations of it's phænomena, obtruded on us by vain ſyſtem-makers? Indeed, this ſuppoſed diſtance and ſeparation of the great Artiſt from his Work, after having once ſet the Machine a-going by the firſt impreſſion of his general Laws, is the gratuitous concluſion of a talking Philoſophy: The later, and more correct inquiries into the material ſyſtem, on the unerring experience of the Newtonian phyſics, have clearly diſcovered, that God is intimately preſent to every particle of Matter, at every point of Space, and in every inſtance of Being. For a VIS INERTIÆ, or reſiſtance to the change of it's preſent ſtate, being an eſſential quality of Matter, and inconſiſtent with any motive, force, or power in that Subſtance, all thoſe effects commonly aſcribed to a certain eſſence reſiding in it, ſuch as gravity, attraction, elaſticity, repulſion, or whatever other tendencies to Motion are obſerved in Matter, are not powers naturally belonging to it, or what can poſſibly be made inherent in it. So that theſe qualities, without which, Matter would be utterly unfit for uſe, muſt needs be produced by the immediate influence of the firſt Cauſe, inceſſantly performing, by his almiglity finger,

the minuteſt office in the Material Oeconomy; working ſtill near us, round us, within us, and in every part of us.

If, then, in the Natural government of the world, the immediate, the inceſſant influence of the workman on his work in general, through all its ſyſtems up to the whole; and, in particular, through all its leſſer portions down even to the minuteſt atom, be neceſſary to enable Matter to perform its functions; there is no reaſon to revolt againſt that cloſe connexion neceſſarily ſuppoſed between the Creator and Creature, in God's Moral government; or to wonder that the order of Rationals ſhould be honoured with the ſame immediate preſence, the ſame degree of nearneſs and intimacy, with which the Godhead viſits the whole inanimate creation.

II. Hitherto, we have endeavoured to affirm the reality of God's Moral government here below, by conſiderations drawn from the nature of the Creature. Let us now turn to the CREATOR; and ſee if thoſe things which human reaſon diſcovers of his ATTRIBUTES do not farther contribute to eſtabliſh this important truth.

But we have been told, and with airs of ſuperior knowledge, that theſe pretended attributes, as they are commonly ſpecified, and diſtinguiſhed into natural and moral, are a mere human fiction; invented, by aid of analogy, from the actions, paſſions, and qualities obſervable in man: And that the ſimple nature of Deity is one uniform perfection; of which, infinity being the baſe, we can have no diſtinct idea or conception.

To this, it will be ſufficient to reply, That it is indeed true, that theſe ſpecific attributes, from which we deduce all our knowlege of the Nature and Will of God, are formed on analogy, and bear relation to ourſelves. But then, we ſay, ſuch attributes are not on that account the leſs real or eſſential. The light of the SUN is not in the orb itſelf what we ſee it in the RAINBOW. There it is one candid, uniform, perfect blaze of glory: Here, we ſeparate its perfection, in the various attributes of red, yellow, blue, purple, and what elſe the ſubtile optician ſo nicely diſtinguiſhes.

But

But ſtill, the ſolar-light is not leſs real in the rainbow, where its rays become thus untwiſted, and each differing thread diſtinctly ſeen, than while they remain united and incorporated with one another, in the Sun. Juſt ſo it is with the divine Nature: It is one ſimple individual perfection in the Godhead himſelf: But when refracted and divaricated, in paſſing through the human Mind, it becomes Power, Juſtice, Mercy; which are all ſeparately and adequately repreſented to the Underſtanding.

I ſhall venture, therefore, to conſider the divine perfection, as thus reduced and unfolded to human contemplation, under the name of Attributes, without any fear of miſtaking ſhadows for realities.

And here, I ſay, that the Natural attributes of the Deity, conſidered as Creator and Lord (and with theſe relations only, the Religioniſt has to do) may be compriſed in thoſe of POWER and WISDOM: His Moral, in thoſe of JUSTICE and GOODNESS.

Now I hold, that though the idea of his natural attributes be as clear, in the abſtract, as that of his moral; yet the idea of his moral attributes is, in the concrete, more adequate than that of his natural *.

The reaſon ſeems convincing. The moral relation in which we ſtand to God, as free Agents, is juſt the ſame whether man exiſts alone, or whether he be but a link in the chain of innumerable orders of Intelligences ſurrounding the whole Creation. Hence

* What is here ſaid may enable us to form a proper judgment of the following cenſure.—"I would not ſay, God governs by a rule, that we know, or may know, "as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the juſtice of "his proceedings towards them; which a famous Divine hath impiouſly advanced in "a pretended *Demonſtration of his being and attributes*. God forbid! But this I may "ſay, that God does always that which is FITTEST to be done. And that this fitneſs, "whereof neither that preſumptuous dogmatiſt was, nor any created being is, a com-"petent Judge, *reſults from the various natures and more various relations of things. S.* "*that as Creator of* ALL SYSTEMS, by which theſe *natures and relations are conſtituted,* "*he preſcribed to himſelf the rule which he follows,* AS GOVERNOR OF EVERY SYSTEM OF "BEING."—Lord Bolingbroke's Idea of a Patriot King, printed 1749, p. 94.

we muſt needs have a juſt and full knowledge of our duty to him, and of his diſpoſition towards us: On which knowledge is founded, the exactneſs of our conceptions of his Moral attributes, his JUSTICE and GOODNESS. But the natural relation in which we, or any of God's creatures, ſtand towards him, as Material Beings, is not the ſame, when conſidered ſimply, as when a portion of a dependent and connected Whole. Becauſe, whenever ſuch a Whole exiſts, the harmony and perfection of it muſt firſt of all be conſulted. This harmony ariſeth from the mutual ſubſerviency and union of its parts. But this ſubſerviency may require a miniſtration of government, with regard to certain portions of matter thus allied, different from what might have followed had thoſe portions ſtood alone; becauſe that preciſe diſpoſition, which might be fit in one caſe, might be unfit in the other. Hence we who know there is a Whole, of which our material ſyſtem is a part, and yet are totally ignorant both of its nature and extent, can have but a very confuſed idea of that phyſical relation in which we ſtand towards God. So that our conceptions of his natural Attributes, his POWER and WISDOM, which are founded on that idea, muſt, in the concrete, be proportionably vague and inadequate.

Shall we, then, confide in that information which our leſs adequate ideas of God's power and wiſdom afford us of his natural government; and yet reject that which our more adequate ideas of his juſtice and goodneſs give us of his moral government? We underſtand both, and rightly, as aſſuring us that he preſides both in the one and in the other Oeconomy. But let us not forget, that this information is conveyed to us with very different degrees of clearneſs and preciſion. A difference, on the ſide of moral government above natural, in proportion as our knowledge of God's moral attributes is leſs vague and inadequate than our knowledge of his natural.

III. Thus far from a ſeparate conſideration of the CREATOR and his WORKS. Let us ſee, in the laſt place, whether the ſame Truth may not be further ſupported from a joint view of BOTH of them together.

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The idea of an immenſly extended Univerſe tempts weak reaſon, deluded by ſenſe and narrowed by prejudice, to ſuſpect that this point of ſpace, in which man exiſts, may well eſcape a buſied Ruler, who has innumerable Worlds upon his hands. We do not reflect, that the ſame reaſoning, which leads us to conclude that a point of ſpace may be overlooked in God's providence, piercing through infinite extenſion, would lead us to conclude, that there may be points of time, throughout infinite duration, which likewiſe eſcaped his attention. Yet the abſurdity of this, we feel: Why not then of the other? The reaſon is, becauſe the portions of Time riſe only in ſucceſſion; whereas all the parts of ſpace exiſt together.

But this IMMENSITY, in which bewildered man conſiders himſelf as abſorbed and loſt, will, on due reflection, evince the very contrary to what it is brought to prove. Were Creation not thus widely extended, the infinity of its Author might perhaps ſeem leſs evident. And how far the influence or power of a Being not infinite might reach would be yet more uncertain. But a boundleſs creation ſhews its Author to be infinite: So that the remaining queſtion concerning the extent of Providence will amount to this, Whether an infinite Being can extend his care to every the minuteſt portion of an Univerſe to which we can ſet no bounds. A queſtion which will hardly deſerve an anſwer.

"But (ſay theſe objectors) the moral ſyſtem wants one eſſential mark of divine ſuperintendence, which is ORDER; and this the natural very eminently bears. The Sun keeps its firſt appointed ſtation; the Planets perform their accuſtomed revolutions; each Element preſerves its diſtinct properties; and all nature concurs to produce that harmony, with which things ſet out, when God honoured his riſing Creation with the attribute of GOOD. But Man deflected early from his primeval righteouſneſs, and felt the miſeries of a depraved ſyſtem ere he had fully taſted the bleſſings which flow from the rectitude of the Will, and from the even balance of the Affections. And what he ſo early loſt, Time has never yet been

able

able to reſtore; ſo that he is likely to continue the ſame forlorn abandoned creature throughout the whole of his exiſtence."

But theſe Objections are as vague as they are ſtale. We have been accuſtomed to talk at random of the ORDER of natural things; and we ſuffer ourſelves to aggravate the DISORDERS of the Moral.

We can judge but very imperfectly of the whole of the material ſyſtem. For how ſmall is the portion of Body objected to our view! and how fleeting the period of time allotted for our ſtudy!

We ſee indeed, perpetual peace and concord in our own ſolar World; but we know little of the aſtral ſyſtems, innumerable and remote. And the little we do know gives cauſe of ſuſpicion that all there is not ſo regular and conſtant, as analogy to what we find here, would tempt us to conclude. New ſtars have ſuddenly ſhone out; and have as ſuddenly diſappeared: Phænomena, which look either like eccentric ſtarts in the Courſes of thoſe bodies, or deſtructive revolutions in their Natures. Nor are we without ſome appearances in OUR OWN Syſtem, to give countenance to theſe ſuſpicions in the more remote. Perhaps the Ring of Saturn may be no other than a leſs irregular fragment of a cruſhed and broken Globe. The wounds, our own Earth hath formerly received, are yet deep and ghaſtly; which though ſkinned over by time and human culture, are ſeen, by thoſe who pry the leaſt beyond its ſurface, to bear all the marks and memory of a ruined world.

But to turn from theſe ſuppoſed flaws and maims in ſome of the parts, to the acknowledged perfections of the general Syſtem. Its order and harmony, it muſt be owned, ſpeak moſt fully to the ſuſtaining power of its Lord and Maſter: yet thoſe who have penetrated deepeſt into its myſteries * have diſcovered rooted evils and growing diſorders, ſcarce ſenſible, indeed, at preſent, but what, in

* — "While Comets move in very eccentric orbs in all manner of poſitions, blind "fate could never make all the planets move one and the ſame way in orbs concentric; "*ſome inconſiderable irregularities excepted, which may have ariſen from the mutual actions of* "*Comets and Planets upon one another; and which will be apt to increaſe till this ſyſtem wants a* "*reformation.*" Newton's Opt. 4th edit. p. 378.

time,

time, and without the intervening hand of its Maker, will render the frame of nature altogether unfit for the purpoſes of its general deſtination.

It is true, it may be ſaid, "That theſe proceed ſlowly and inſenſibly, while moral diſorders infect at once, and ruſh like a torrent over the fair boſom of Creation."

The thing perhaps is too true: but the inference is unjuſt. This difference is not to be aſcribed to a contrary conduct in the Governor, but to the contrary natures of the ſubjects.

Paſſive Matter being totally inert, its reſiſtance to the Laws impreſſed upon it muſt be extremely weak: and conſequently the diſorders ariſing from that reſiſtance, proportionably ſlow and unheeded: while that active ſelf-moving principle, the Mind, flies out at once from the centre of its direction, and can, every moment, deflect from the line of truth and reaſon. Hence moral diſorders began early, became preſently exceſſive, and have continued through all ages to diſturb the harmony of the Syſtem.

Nor are the different methods employed by Providence, for the reform of either ſyſtem, leſs diſtinguiſhable, than the different qualities of Mind and Matter, which occaſioned ſo wide a diſtance in the progreſs of their ſeveral diſorders: as may be ſeen by comparing them together. From whence it will appear that the diſorder and the reform of that diſorder, in either ſubject, are wiſely proportioned to one another.

When the inertneſs of MATTER hath occaſioned irregularities in the corporeal ſyſtem, it hath no ability in itſelf to redreſs them. They muſt go on, though ſlowly, from bad to worſe, till diſabled nature calls upon the hand of God for an extraordinary reformation.

But MIND, is ever applying remedies to its own diſtempers. Firſt, by the check put to them by the ſtimulation of oppoſite paſſions and affections; for the appetites are inceſſantly defeating one another's natural tendencies, and perpetually producing contrary effects. So avarice reſtrains luxury; ſelf-intereſt withholds injuſtice;

injuſtice; and ſloth quenches ambition: So revenge and hatred procure public juſtice; treachery often prevents a national deſtruction; and envy and oppoſition to power produces a ſage and cautious adminiſtration.

Thus the jarring intereſts of corrupt paſſion keep moral evil within moderate bounds, and give time and opportunity to the mind to recover the government and direction of itſelf; in the regulation of the appetites and reformation of the will: And this is the ſecond way the mind has of procuring remedies for its own diſtempers.

In theſe different methods of reforming either ſyſtem, the divine goodneſs is equally diſplayed; only his power is more viſibly exerciſed in the one, and his wiſdom in the other. When blind Matter deviates, as nothing but the conducting hand of God can bring her back into the road of Nature, ſo the force attending that reduction is ſo far from impairing her eſſential virtue that it heals and reſtores it. But the like intervention with a rational Agent would impinge upon his freedom. God has therefore ſo admirably contrived, in the diſpoſition of his moral Syſtem, that it ſhould be able to reſtore itſelf; by making its very diſorders contribute to its reform, in the check the vitious paſſions give to one another's operations; and in the opportunities with which time ſupplies the Mind, to aſſume its native ſovereignty, for the carrying on the reformation.

Thus we ſee God's government in morals becomes as conſpicuous as in natural things: For, the diſpoſing cauſes and effects in ſuch a manner as to make vice defeat its own end, no leſs manifeſts the attention of infinite wiſdom, than the aiding matter to produce its proper deſtination, is fitted to diſplay infinite power.

But to perceive the force of what is here ſaid, we muſt remember, that moral government conſiſts of TWO PARTS; The one, a Proviſion to prevent evil, and to ſupport good; The other, a deſtination of reward and puniſhment, aſſigned in due proportions to the agents of either: Our ſubject concerns the firſt part only: The

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ſecond is to be explained on other principles; and is not within the limits of this Diſcourſe.

To conclude, The ſober inquirer will not be diſpleaſed to find at length, that the objections to God's moral Government ſpring from the weakneſs of our faculties, and the prejudices attending our ſituation; joined to a corrupt vanity which makes human reaſon the meaſure of all things: and that this Philoſophy, which bears ſuch a ſhew of inlarged and ſuperior knowledge, ſtands on the narrow bottom of ignorance, and as it riſes in vanity, increaſes in abſurdity.

To HUMBLE HUMAN REASON is the work of true Religion, and, if not the end, is always the iſſue, of ſound Philoſophy: but to DEBASE HUMAN NATURE is the low aim of impiety, and the darling project of corrupt manners. Providence laid open the knowledge of his works to excite our gratitude, and ſtrengthen our attachment to their Author. What the philoſopher ſaid of *the knowledge of ourſelves* may be well applied to the knowledge of the univerſe. "Let us not imagine it was given merely to humble human arrogance: One great purpoſe of it was to impreſs upon our hearts a ſenſe of the divine goodneſs towards man *." To turn this knowledge, therefore, to a brutal debaſement of our nature, or a philoſophic oblivion of our Lord and Maſter, is the loweſt depravity of an intelligent Being. In a word, if reaſon and piety have no weight, let natural ſhame deter us, when we can never merit this diſtinction, at leaſt from diſhonouring the grace by irreverent cavils at the diſpenſation.

* Illud γνῶθι σεαυτὸν noli putare ad arrogantiam minuendam ſolum eſſe dictum, verum etiam ut bona noſtra norimus. Cic.

SERMON III.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND MAN.

1 Ep. JOHN IV. ver. 20.

IF A MAN SAY, I LOVE GOD, AND HATETH HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR; FOR HE THAT LOVETH NOT HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HATH SEEN, HOW CAN HE LOVE GOD WHOM HE HATH NOT SEEN?

THE ſuperior excellence of the Goſpel-morality above all other ſummaries of human conduct, whether preached up as a RELIGION by Prieſts; inforced for LAW by the founders of Society; or recommended under the name of PHILOSOPHY by the Maſters of wiſdom; is now ſo generally ſeen and acknowledged, that even the enemies of Revelation have been forced to confeſs, It is as well in perfection as in purity, as well in public uſe as in private, truly worthy the original it aſſumes.

An advantage which the Miniſters of our holy Religion have, with great judgment, taken all occaſions to inforce, and with equal ſolidity to explain.

But

But there is another circumſtance in this divine Oeconomy which carries the honour of it ſtill higher, as directly tending to prove, That the Goſpel-morality which is ſo worthy of God, had, in truth, God for its immediate Author. And this perhaps may not have been inſiſted on with the frequency and attention which ſo important a matter ſeems to require.

The circumſtance I mean is, that profound and enlarged knowledge of human nature, which the Apoſtles diſcover in their manner of recommending moral duties. In this diſpenſation, theſe *weak and fooliſh inſtruments*, in the hand of Providence, have foiled and diſgraced the boaſted wiſdom of Greece and Rome: and in that very way wherein their wiſdom moſt excelled; in ſhort and detached precepts, compoſed for the conduct of human life by men ſtudious to reduce their long laborious ſearches after happineſs into weighty and compendious aphoriſms *.

But before I proceed to explain the words of my text, which afford ſo illuſtrious an example of this truth, I ſhall conſider, in general, the occaſion of them.

The life, the ſpirit of Chriſtian Religion is univerſal benevolence. Agreeably to this, we may obſerve, That the firſt founders of the Churches, let the occaſion be what it would, whatever Diſcipline they eſtabliſhed, whatever Doctrine they inforced, whatever vice or Hereſy they ſtigmatized, or whatever grace or virtue they recommended, CHARITY was the thing ſtill preſent with them, and always in their care. Charity, *the bond of perfectneſs*, the *end of the commandment*; that etherial principle, which, like the elaſtic fluid of the Philoſophers, animates, connects, and enobles the whole Syſtem of intelligent nature.

The beloved Diſciple of our Lord particularly, who may be well ſuppoſed to *know his Maſter's will*, ſeems to have written the Epiſtle, from whence I take my text, with no other deſign than to recommend this firſt of Virtues, CHARITY: at a ſeaſon too,

* Γράμμα βραχέα ἀξιομνημόνευτα. Plat. in Protag.

when, as Hereſies were ſpringing up apace, ſome modern Theologiſts would be apt to think he might have employed his time and talents to more advantage. And indeed one might aſk, and ſcarce abſurdly, why ſo very much upon Charity, in an age when the *followers of the Lamb* had ſo few inducements to pollute it? For the Faith being yet chaſte from the proſtitutions of the Schools, and the Hierarchy uncorrupted by the gifts of Conſtantine, the Church laboured neither under Bigotry nor Ambition, the two fatal incentives of uncharitable Zeal. But the reply is eaſy. It was the providence of that prophetic ſpirit which ſet before them the image of thoſe miſerable times, *When iniquity ſhould abound, and the love of many ſhould wax cold:* and they were willing to bear witneſs, and to record their teſtimony againſt the future violaters of *the bond of perfectneſs*. For I can by no means enter into the refinements of him who diſcovered that *Jeſus* and his followers might preach up love and charity the better to enable a ſet of Church politicians, ſome ages after, to tyrannize over thoſe whom the engaging ſounds of benevolence and brotherly love had intrapped into obedience *.

Beſides, this is not delivered like a temporary direction: it is not barely recommended: the reaſon, on which it ſtands, is given

* "Terrors alone, though accompanied with miracles and prodigies of whatever "kind, are not capable of raiſing that ſincere faith and abſolute reliance which is re- "quired in favour of the divinely authoriſed Inſtructor and ſpiritual Chief. The "affection and love which procures a true adherence to the new religious foundation, "muſt depend either on a real or counterfeit goodneſs in the religious founder. "Whatever ambitious ſpirit may inſpire him; whatever ſavage zeal or perſecuting "principle may lye in reſerve, ready to diſcloſe itſelf when authority and power is "once obtained; the firſt ſcene of doctrine, however, fails not to preſent us with the "agreeable views of *Joy, love, meekneſs, gentleneſs, and moderation.—Charity and Bro- "therly love* are very engaging ſounds; but who would dream that out of abundant Cha- "rity and brotherly love ſhould come ſteel, fire, gibbets, rods, &c." Characteriſtics, vol. iii. p. 114, 115, ed. 4th. But the general premiſes are as falſe as the particular inference is abſurd. Mahomet did raiſe that *ſincere faith and abſolute reliance*, amongſt his followers, by *terrors* alone, and without that *affection and love* employed by the founder of Chriſtianity.

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with it; a reaſon founded in the nature of things, and ſupported by the very order of Providence. *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* An argument, which, for its unaffected ſimplicity, a modiſh Freethinker will be tempted to deſpiſe; and yet would pretend to admire, had it come from Plato or Cicero.

But ſome, perhaps, may like the reaſoning not the worſe for its being evangelical: and ſuch will bear with me while I attempt to illuſtrate its ſuperior force and beauty.

The argument is founded in the true theory of the RISE and PROGRESS of the SOCIAL AFFECTIONS; of which the following account may afford us ſome imperfect notion.

An endeavour to preſerve its Being makes part of the eſſential conſtitution of every created thing. Hence, in the Inanimate, a reſiſtance to outward force; in the Animate, a purſuit or an abhorrence of what is helpful or hurtful; and, in Man, that firſt and ſtrongeſt paſſion of his nature, SELF-LOVE; from whence all the other appetites derive their force, and to which they direct their aim. Its uſe is to aſſiſt the heart to awaken Virtue, and to puſh out and develope the great principle of BENEVOLENCE.

It is true, indeed, that Benevolence, ariſing from this ſource, at firſt runs thick and turbid; but, as it holds its way, it refines; it purifies and expands its current, till it hath loſt all memory of its low original.

For the paſſion of ſelf-love, aided by the kindred appetite of NATURAL AFFECTION, ſoon makes an effort to move outward; and looking forward with an inſtinctive-tenderneſs on our offspring, it is taught to turn its regard, as far back, with rational-gratitude on our Parents. And though the former be loving ourſelves as repreſented in others; and the latter, only loving others as repreſented in ourſelves; yet the principle of Benevolence being now awakened, it begins, from this moment, to deſert its origine: it extends itſelf to our remoter relatives; and, in a little time, takes in every con-

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nection of domeſtic life. And, thus continuing to enlarge and widen, by ſuch time as it grows impatient of reſtraint, the wants and reliefs, the ſervices and protection, which exerciſe its virtue in this inferior ſtate, enable it to form ideas of a nobler Community, and to trace the out-lines and image of a SOCIETY. This produceth another effort, and of a more exalted kind; the object of benevolence being no longer an INDIVIDUAL, but a WHOLE.

From this time the ſocial paſſions make large advances; and Benevolence, improved and ſtrengthened even by the ſelfiſh ſenſe of mutual wants, and the experienced means of mutual relief, extends its influence and efficacy through the whole community of thoſe who need, or can impart, aſſiſtance: and thus, on the natural plan of domeſtic-connections, erects that artificial regimen called Civil-ſociety. So that, as before, Benevolence advanced from particular to general; it now riſeth ſtill higher, from PRIVATE to PUBLIC. And thus, having a Community for its object, it wins and truly deſerves its name: Self-love being now abſorbed in the nobleſt of all ſocial-paſſions, THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY; which the Roman Patriot, in a philoſophic analyſis of its generation and conſtituent parts, rightly defines to be that which "includes all "other ſocial affections *."

Thus doth SELF-LOVE, under the varying appearance of natural-affection, domeſtic relation, and the connections of ſocial habitude, at firſt work blindly on, obſcure and deep in dirt; but, as it makes its way, it continues riſing, till it emerges into light; and then, ſuddenly expiring, leaves behind it the faireſt iſſue: which, nobly forgetful of its low beginning, advances on the ſteps of Virtue, till it reaches to RELIGION.

For the intereſts of mere animal life being well ſecured in this firſt progreſs to Benevolence; the Mind, which hitherto only cared for the Body, begins to make proviſion for itſelf; and, having laid

* Chari ſunt *Parentes*, chari *Liberi*, *Propinqui*, *Familiares*: ſed omnes omnium Charitates PATRIA una complexa eſt. CIC.

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in for the other's wants and weakneſs, attends, in good time, to its own ſuperior dignity and importance.

And now, placed on ſo fair an eminence, as the LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY, and its ſight purged and defecated from the groſs remains of evaneſcent Self-love, it goes on widening its views, till it hath taken in the whole race of Mankind; conſidered but as one Policy, or rather, FAMILY; connected by the equal participation of one common nature; and ſupported by the conſequent right of one common meaſure; and therefore the endeared object of one general benevolence.

Thus DOMESTIC life, which firſt produced Civil-ſociety, and then gave birth to this more generous and enlarged community, at length brings Benevolence round again into itſelf, as to its full and final completion, by drawing the whole race of mankind into one common FAMILY.

But, in the courſe of this progreſs, the Mind, as it widens, becoming fatigued and dazzled by its intenſe ſolicitation of this growing Whole, hath frequent need, at its ſeveral ſtages, to catch at and to reſt in partial objects.

Hence the origine of FRIENDSHIP *, the ſolace and ſplendor of private life; which while we are advancing towards that only

* "*Private Friendſhip*, and *Zeal for the Public and our Country*, are virtues purely *voluntary* in a Chriſtian. They are *no eſſential parts* of his CHARITY. He is not ſo tied "to the affairs of this life; nor is he obliged to enter into ſuch engagements with this "lower world, as are of no help to him in acquiring a better." Characteriſtics, 4th ed. vol. i. p. 98, 99. The Philoſophy of this remark is like the candor. For if (as we ſhall now ſee) no one can acquire the love of God without having love or benevolence to man; ſo neither can this benevolence (which certainly is not a *virtue purely voluntary in a Chriſtian*) be acquired, without having had *private Friendſhip and zeal for the Public and our Country*. The reaſon is the ſame in both caſes: the road to the more *general* ſtages of benevolence lying, all the way, through the more *particular*. *Engagements*, therefore, *with this lower world*, (to uſe the language of the noble Writer) *are* (contrary to his concluſion) *of* great *help to us in acquiring a better*.— But when Chriſtian Charity had been repreſented as not ſpringing from Virtue, it was no ſuch bold abuſe of the public indulgence to endeavour to perſuade us, that the Chriſtian Faith *is not founded in Argument*.

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adequate object of human attachment, a Whole teacheth us by the way all our journalary duties to Particulars.

Having thus endeavoured to explain how all the virtues of humanity ariſe, and have their ſource, from the gradual expanſion of the great principle of Benevolence: we come, in the next place, to conſider, how, in its further advances to perfection, RELIGION itſelf emergeth from it.

In all the objects of love and benevolence, the attractive quality is GOOD. And this connexion being made by the nature and conſtitution of things, the greater the apparent good, the ſtronger muſt the paſſion grow. Now when the whole human race is conſidered by us as the object of our love; The ſteps by which we are led to this high advance in benevolence, ſuch as Man's origine, his common nature, and the dependence of the happineſs of the individual on the ſpecies, carry us naturally higher; to ſeek the firſt cauſe of ſo orderly and well-regulated an effect. An inquiry, which terminates in the Author of this, and of all other good: Whom, as ſuch, we are forcibly drawn to purſue, and to aſpire after; and in the contemplation of whoſe nature and attributes we find at laſt the SUPREME AND SOVEREIGN GOOD: from whence, as we ſay, all other good ariſeth, and in which they are all contained. HE, therefore, challengeth our ſupreme and ſovereign love; which never ceaſeth to advance and enlarge itſelf, till it end in an UNION with him.

And thus the laſt great effort of benevolence produceth what we call, RELIGION; whoſe end all agree to be HAPPINESS.

This is the true account of the riſe and progreſs of UNIVERSAL LOVE: which, as it regards man, our holy faith calls CHARITY; as it regards God, PIETY.

But there were in the apoſtolic times, and will be in all times, a ſort of men who are for catching at the rewards of faith without undergoing this long, but pleaſing *labour of love*; and whoſe frantic aim is to make a ſacrilegious divorce between Charity and Piety. Theſe men aſſume to themſelves great merit in loving God, while they

they treat their Brother with contempt and cruelty. But what ſays the Apoſtle, in my text? Provoked at their hypocriſy, he ſtrips off the maſk, and brands them with the odious name of LIARS: a name, in Scripture language, of the moſt opprobrious import; as given to Impoſtors of all kinds; and implying in it every thing corrupt both in moral and religious practice. *If a man* (ſays St John) *ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* The force and beauty of which reaſoning the foregoing account, of the riſe and progreſs of Benevolence, will enable us to underſtand.

"You pretend, ſays the Apoſtle, to *love God*, though you *hate your Brother*. Vain and fallacious! The love of every object begins, like all our other paſſions, from ſelf-love: Thus we love ourſelves, by repreſentation, in our Parents, and in our Offſpring: it extends to our remoter relatives; and ſo on, through the whole vicinage, to every fellow-member of the Community. And now, ſelf-love refined by reaſon, and ſublimed by virtue, begins to loſe its nature, and deſervedly to take another name. Our Country next claims our love: we then extend it to all Mankind; and never reſt till we have, at length, fixed it on the moſt amiable of all objects, the great Author and Original of Being.

This is the courſe and progreſs of HUMAN LOVE; gradually riſing from the individual to the whole: as unlike, in its progreſs as in its purity, to the DIVINE BENEVOLENCE; which, in gracious aid of its Creatures, takes a different courſe: for, ſpringing from the Whole, it ſpreads and expands itſelf through every moral ſyſtem, till it claſps and embraces the Individual.

And now (purſues the Apoſtle) I reaſon thus, Can you, miſtaken man! who are not yet arrived at that inferior ſtage of benevolence, the love of your Brother, *whom you have ſeen*, that is, whom the ſenſe of mutual wants, and the experience of mutual relief, amongſt the joint partakers of one common nature, might teach you to love, can you pretend to have attained the top and ſummit of this

virtue, the love of God, whom *you have not ſeen*, that is, whoſe wonderful œconomy, in the ſyſtem of creation and government, which makes him ſo amiable, you appear to have no conception of; You, who have not yet learnt, that your own low ſyſtem is ſupported on the great principle of benevolence. Fear him, flatter him, fight for him, as you blindly dread his power, you may: But, to love him, as you know not his nature, is impoſſible."

This is St. John's ſimple reaſoning. From whence I conclude for the divinity of that Spirit which could infuſe ſo much ſublime knowledge into the pen of a rude unlettered fiſherman.

Nor does it leſs recommend the excellence of our holy Religion than the wiſdom of this its Miniſter: for what could give us a higher idea of Chriſtianity than its making the love of man the previous ſtep, the only way of acquiring, that happy frame of mind, divinely tempered with the love of God; which fits us for what is the end and completion of all religion, the poſſeſſion of his Spirit?

But this doctrine, which explains the connection between *the love of God and man*, has ſtill a further uſe. It keeps our holy Faith pure from SUPERSTITION, BIGOTRY, and FANATICISM: the three worſt diſhonours to which Religion is expoſed.

1. FOR DIVINE LOVE thus produced, and riſing on the knowledge of God's nature, will keep religious worſhip free of SUPERSTITION, will preſerve it from all barbarous and abject ceremonies; and from all ſelfiſh and uncharitable devotion. It will remove from God's ſervice all ſlaviſh dread of his anger for the neglect of actions indifferent; and all childiſh hope of atoning for violated morality by the performance of others, equally indifferent.

2. THIS LOVE, ſtanding on the foundation of human benevolence, whoſe object is God's rational creation, will exclude all the BIGOTRY of falſe Zeal, which, for God's ſake, is ever ready to deſolate the earth. For now, no one can be ſo abſurd to imagine, that

that the means of perfecting the fruit of faith, which is the love of God, is by ſhaking the root of charity, benevolence to man. I am aware, how certain propagators of the Faith, ſometimes the deſpicable tools of others' impotency, but as often the viler ſlaves of their own ambition, have endeavoured to hide their corrupt paſſions under the thin covering of a School-diſtinction. While they would perſuade us, that it is pure charity to man which thus facTiouſly engages them in, what they call THE CAUSE OF GOD: and that what plain honeſt men ſtyle a want of Charity, when they inſult the fame, the fortune, or the perſon of their Brother, is the very height of this princely virtue, a Charity for his ſoul—So, indeed, it may be of the Hangman's Charity, who waits for your Clothes. But St. John's, or St. Paul's, it could not be. It could not be that *Charity* which was *not eaſily provoked, which thought no evil*; *bore all things, hoped all things, believed all things*. A Charity, which begins in candor, inſpires good opinion, and reſts in the temporal welfare of our Brother.

3. But the *deceitfulneſs of the heart* is ingenious in expedients to elude the commandments of God. And when Bigotry, by its coarſe and butcherly violations of Charity, hath ſufficiently diſcredited its own meaſures, FANATICISM, with equal rage, though with ſomewhat a milder aſpect, ſteps in to diveſt us of our humanity, under pretence, to aſſimilate it to the divine nature, by annihilating all love of the Creature, and reſolving every other affection into the pure unmixed love of God; as if the leaſt portion of benevolence, communicated to our Brother, was a robbery to our Maker. The fumes of ſpiritual madneſs diſable theſe men from ſeeing ſo far into the order of things as to underſtand, that till we can throw off the condition of related Beings, as well as the paſſion of humanity which reſults from it, our fellow-creatures will always have a claim to our benevolence. In compaſſion therefore to ſuch, Holy Scripture has provided a ſtill eaſier inſtruction than this negative precept of my text, by the addition

of the poſitive command, THAT HE WHO LOVETH GOD, LOVE HIS BROTHER ALSO *.

Such then is the Religion which Jeſus came into the world to teach. Whoſe foundation being laid in the *love of our Brother*, provides for our peace and conſolation here; and whoſe ſuperſtructure terminating in the *love of God*, ſecures and eſtabliſhes our happineſs hereafter.

* 1 John iv. 21.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND MAN.

PROVERBS xvii. ver. 5.

WHOSO MOCKETH THE POOR REPROACHETH HIS MAKER.

OF all the truths, for the direction of our conduct, with which this royal treaſury of ancient wiſdom abounds, there is none fuller either of profitable uſe or profound ſcience than this contained in my text; which ſo ſeverely cenſures all expreſſions of contempt towards thoſe whom Providence has thrown below us on the diſtreſsful ſtage of human life.

And, as we muſt firſt clear our corrupt nature from this rankneſs, before we can attempt to cultivate that immortal amarant of paradice, Chriſtian love and benevolence; it may not be improper to ſhew the reaſon and explain the uſe of the WISE MAN's divine aphoriſm, *Whoſo mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker.* As much as to ſay, "He who maketh the Poor the object of his contempt and ridicule, on account of thoſe diſaſtrous circumſtances which

which attend the want of the goods of fortune, tacitly condemns and reproaches the wiſe and gracious order of Providence."

But it may not be amiſs, previouſly to conſider, In what ſtate it is, that man becomes the object of this criminal *mockery* to his fellow-creature. It is plain, it cannot be in that where he lives uncivilized. For there, the diſtinctions between RICH and POOR, whereon the inſolence of wealth formeth thoſe odious compariſons, which conclude in the contempt of penury, have hardly any place; that ſordid condition, which, now contraſted to pomp and grandeur, is become the ſubject of opulent ſcorn, being there ſo general as to admit no room for an unfavourable diſtinction: But, an univerſal parity, like darkneſs, blots out all difference between honourable and mean. Nay, ſhould the civilized beholder be diſpoſed to regard with contempt the wants and miſeries of this ſtate, it would not be the criminal contempt forbidden in my text: becauſe the ſtate of nature is not that in which Providence intended we ſhould remain; as appears by the large aſſiſtance imparted to us, to free ourſelves from the diſtreſſes of it. So that if, by a ſhameful indolence, man ſhould neglect to improve thoſe advantages, the ſordid circumſtances, inſeparable from an uncivilized condition, would have no claim to be exempted from ſcorn and *mockery*: and, conſequently, however CHARITY might ſuffer, PROVIDENCE was not inſulted.

It is only in SOCIETY, therefore, that the Poor become ſubject to this outrage. And, in this ſtate only, the outrage becomes IMPIETY. For Civil regimen, by inventing and improving the accommodations of life, and by ſecuring, to the owner, what is ſo invented and improved, changeth the natural equality of conditions amongſt men; and introduceth that invidious diſtinction of POOR and RICH; made far more bitter from the inſolence of Wealth, than the envious longings of Poverty. For it is the vicious caprice of Riches to be impatient under a rivalſhip in the advantages of fortune, and yet, at the ſame time, inſenſible to the diſtreſſes, and con-

contemptuous to the condition of thoſe who have never ſtriven with them for any of thoſe advantages.

So that there is no circumſtance in the diſtreſſes of want, but what inſulting wealth can make the ſubject of its *mockery*. To ſome, their narrow Minds, their groſs conceptions, their unimproved talents, are fruitful ſources of contempt and merriment. Others, who cannot riſe ſo high in their diſcoveries, can yet find matter of mirth in their impropriety of phraſe, their unpoliſhed manners, their ill air, and unformed figure. Nay to ſuch exceſs of corruption have unbleſt Riches brought their poſſeſſors, that ſome can make that very SORDIDNESS itſelf, that miſerable cloathing of poverty, a ſubject for their ſcorn and ridicule. So that whether it be for want of thoſe advantages of mind and perſon which their poverty diſabled them from procuring, or whether it be for that very poverty itſelf, they are ſure never to eſcape the inhumanity of unfeeling wealth.

Bow how highly criminal theſe inſults are, my text now leads me to conſider.

As Society is the only means of procuring the accommodations, and preſerving the dignity, of our animal and reaſonable nature; and as this nature is endowed with appetites and qualities which make it ſeek, and fit it for SOCIETY; we muſt needs conclude, Society to be, what Scripture informs us it is, THE ORDINANCE OF GOD. Now it is eſſential to this Society, that the goods of fortune be unequally diſtributed; To the end, that ſome be goaded on by want to ſeek their relief in new inventions and improvements, which, tending to the better commodity of life, are objective to the public good; and that others be enabled by abundance, and diſpoſed by the love of eaſe and pleaſure, to promote and encourage thoſe endeavours. For were the goods of fortune to be equally divided, ſuch a diſtribution would ſoon return us to the ſtate of unimproved nature, by taking off thoſe ſpurs to induſtry, the rewards attending the improvements of *ſocial* life.

Again,

Again, as an unequal diſtribution was required to anſwer the ends of civil community, ſo the various tempers, talents, and appetites of men were admirably fitted to introduce, and framed to perpetuate this inequality.

Hence, we conclude, That theſe different ſtations in Society were marked out and diſpoſed by the peculiar ordinance of Providence: For he, who decrees the end, muſt needs be ſuppoſed to direct the means conducive to it.

But admitting this to be the caſe, it muſt needs follow, that he who makes any of theſe conditions of life the ſubject of his ſcorn and *mockery*, *reproaches* the juſtice and goodneſs of the Director of the ſyſtem. For that man can never be ſaid to be treated with a common degree of goodneſs, who is thruſt into ſuch a ſtation as makes him the object of reaſonable contempt to his fellow-creature; a creature of the ſame ſpecies, and who has no imaginable pretenſions to better treatment from the juſtice of their common maſter.

We muſt needs, therefore, ſubſcribe to the doctrine of the text, That no greater inſult can be offered to the wiſdom, the juſtice, or the goodneſs of God, than by looking down with deſpite and *mockery* on the poverty of our diſtreſſed brethren.

Yet vile as this *mockery* is, the frequent practice hath made it ſo unheeded, that we ſee it committed daily without ſuffering ourſelves to be affected with that averſion and abhorrence, ſo juſtly due unto it. Hence the ſerious admonition of the *wiſe man*; who, the better to aſſiſt our humanity in the free exerciſe of its natural feelings, awakens religion, by branding the vice as an IMPIETY: in every deliberate act of which is compriſed all that is moſt criminal in our degenerate and corrupt nature.

This ſpecies of impiety in particular, contains the baſeſt INGRATITUDE towards God, and INHUMANITY to our Brother: Which, including the violation of all our relations as reaſonable creatures, ſinks us below the very beaſts themſelves.

And can there be a worſe ingratitude towards the great Diſpoſer of all things, than for man to make any ſtation in Society the object

object of his contempt? Society, which God himſelf *ordained* for the advancement of human happineſs! and which can be only procured by means of thoſe various degrees and ſubordinations, productive of that condition, which we impiouſly make the matter of our ſcorn. Is this a fitting return for the care and kindneſs of that Maſter, who drew us from a ſtate of ſavages, who led us to a life of civility, and hath put it in our power to improve the bleſſings of Providence, and the endowments of reaſon, moſt ſuitably to the dignity of our nature!

We may reflect, likewiſe, that we, who thus offend, do by the peculiar indulgence of Heaven, reap all the benefit of Society; while thoſe we injure are ſo circumſtanced as to bear all the inclemencies and hardſhips of it; a burthen, which weighs the heavier on them, as it is borne alone. And yet if we look into ourſelves and them, and compare what we find on either part, we ſhall diſcover nothing which could diſpoſe the *righteous Judge of all the earth* to decree a ſtate of eaſe and affluence for us, and condemn them to indigence and labour. Nay, were we not blinded by ſelf-love, we ſhould ſoon find, in this deſpiſed quarter, men whoſe underſtandings and honeſty, whoſe piety and diligence, whoſe care and affection for their families, whoſe conſcientious ſubmiſſion and obedience to authority, might well enable them to diſpute, and qualify them to carry the ſtation of honour, from their Betters.

But how deteſtable muſt this ingratitude appear, when we reflect further, That theſe low ſtations, the object of our ſcorn, were ordained for no other civil purpoſe than to ſupport us in that diſtinction of abundance, from the wanton abuſe of which ariſes all this guilt of contempt which ſo juſtly ſubjects the offender to God's righteous judgment. So that we carry our impiety to ſuch a height, when we *mock the poor*, that we even *reproach our Maker* with the very bleſſings which, at their expence, he heaps upon ourſelves.

And this leads me to the ſecond point, the INHUMANITY to our Brethren. Indeed the very conſiderations, which upbraid our ingratitude to our *Maker*, expoſe our inhumanity to the *Poor*. For

can any thing be more inhumane than, when the ſtations of Society are thus neceſſarily unequal, and when Providence has thrown our lot amongſt the few who reap in eaſe the accommodations of it, at the expence of multitudes, who had as good a claim to that diſtinction; Can any thing, I ſay, be more inhumane than to treat their leſs happy condition with outrage and contempt? A condition, from which no ſuperiority of nature, no advantage of intellectual, or merit of moral endowments, nothing but the eſtabliſhed order of things, hath exempted us, or ſubjected them.

If to this, we add (as hath been juſt obſerved), that their low condition was eſtabliſhed to ſupport us in the proud diſtinction of abundance, it muſt greatly inflame our guilt, and increaſe our confuſion. For to the Poor it is, that we are immediately, and almoſt ſolely, indebted for every advantage of eaſe and pleaſure, which improved and refined ſociety affords (advantages which we are but too apt to eſteem the principal bleſſings of ſociety); it being by their inceſſant toil that the elegances of polite and faſhionable life are procured for us. While all the reward They have, for becoming benefactors to the Great and Wealthy, is but the hard and ſcanty ſuſtenance of a miſerable Being. A Being only leſs miſerable than That, which the inſolent Rich-man himſelf muſt have been content to drag, in a life unaſſiſted by the ſweat and ingenuity of the Labourer and Artificer. For were it not for the inceſſant drudgery of the Poor, we ſhould ſoon be brought back again, even amidſt our largeſt accumulations of fortune, to a condition of diſtreſs which would ſoon wipe out all that odious circumſtance of inſolent compariſon, from whence ariſes this mean, this vile, this unmanly contempt for the lower ſtations of our fellow-citizens.

But what is alone ſufficient to ſtrike us with horror at ſo wretched an inhumanity, is the conſideration of thoſe numerous diſorders of body, thoſe Maladies, to which a reſtleſs application of all their faculties for the ſupplial of our imaginary, and therefore endleſs wants, perpetually ſubjects the induſtrious Poor. How, by toiling in purſuit of commodities, they themſelves are never to enjoy, Some

are

are confined to the peſtilential damps of mines; and Others expoſed to the rage of elementary, and ſolar fires: Theſe doomed to ſtruggle with the various inclemencies of diſtempered air: and Thoſe, to undergo the rotten vapours of fenny waters, or the corroſive humidity of the ocean: Here a too ſedentary occupation viciates the torpid fluids: and there, a too violent deſtroys the overſtretched tone of the ſolids: The baleful materials employed, or worked upon, often ſtrike the artiſt with acute diſtempers; and the manner or method of working as often draws on chronical: ſo that the ſhop of the artificer may be truly called the warehouſe of Death. The maladies, which ſwarm ſo thick and conſtant in it, have even afforded matter for the charitable Phyſician to compoſe diſtinct works of the *Diſeaſes of Artificers* *: Where we find the diſtempers of each Labourer to be as numerous as the Tools he works with; and as peculiar as the materials he employs.

Such then is the nature of the crime ſo ſeverely condemned in my text; and ſuch the circumſtances which ſo deeply aggravate it. The ſerious conſideration of theſe things will be abundantly ſufficient to confound the pride of Opulence, and ſhame the Rich man into thoſe duties to God and his Brother, which his STATION more indiſpenſably requires; that very circumſtance which, to the diſhonour of human nature, he hath ſuffered to miſlead him into ſo ſcandalous a violation of both.

This ſalutary humiliation will lead him eaſily back into the road of Piety and Charity. He will grow warm with gratitude to his *Maker*, and ſoften with compaſſion for his brother. But gratitude and compaſſion, which ſtop at acknowledgments and commiſeration, are as great an inſult on God and Man, as that more open *mockery* condemned in my text.

The only acceptable way, of teſtifying our repentance, in an impious age ſo forward to cavil at the ordinance of Providence, is to diſcharge thoſe duties which have a natural tendency to vindicate its ways. God hath given us every encouragement, to perform them.

* Bernardini Ramazini De morbis Artificum.

He hath put it in the power even of miſerable man, and how great is that honour! to juſtify the œconomy of his ſyſtem: For the faithful diſcharge of what our various relations to our Fellow-creatures require of us, will repair all thoſe deformities of defect and exceſs, which nature or fortune is for ever caſting over the fair face of Creation. For what is it (in the opinion of impious men) that ſo greatly diſcredits the diſpenſations of Providence, but that ſtate of miſery to which the bulk of mankind is condemned, in order to ſupport the Few in the full tide of wantonneſs and riot? Would the Rich once begin to think themſelves the diſpenſators of Providence for the Poor, Impiety would ſoon be forced to confeſs, that the goods of fortune, though unequally divided, were yet wiſely and graciouſly adminiſtered: All men would ſee, that the pouring down wealth on high ſtations was only a ſacred depoſite to ſupply the wants and diſtreſſes of the low: Wants very wiſely impoſed, as a neceſſary means of producing thoſe accommodations which Man's improved nature indiſpenſably requires.

This, and this only, can atone for the enormity condemned in my text. This will ſupport the Order, and is conſequently the beſt vindication of the Oeconomy, of Providence; which wants nothing to render it as reſpectable to the world, as it is illuſtrious in itſelf, but this reaſonable compliance to the common dictates of Humanity and Religion.

SER-

SERMON V.

THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF THE MESSIAH.

1 COR. I. 30.

JESUS CHRIST WHO, OF GOD, IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND SANCTIFICATION AND REDEMPTION.

IN theſe memorable words, the Apoſtle, Paul, hath given us a full and exact Character of the Perſonage of the holy JESUS, and of the nature of that Religion he was ſent to propagate amongſt Men.

Wiſdom and *Righteouſneſs* deſcribe a MESSENGER ſent from God with the publication of the eternal Law of Truth and Right: and *Sanctification* and *Redemption* denote the MESSIAH foretold, who was to atone for man's tranſgreſſions, and to reſtore him to his loſt Inheritance.

Theſe two important matters, the firſt of which reſpects the WORKER; and the ſecond, his WORK; I propoſe to make the ſubject of the following Diſcourſe.

I. The

I.

The Jews, at the time of Chriſt's advent, were in full expectation of their long promiſed Meſſiah. So that St. John tells us, the multitude on their being miraculouſly fed by Jeſus, cried out, *this is of a truth that* PROPHET *that ſhould come into the world* *. And indeed, this judgment was ſuch a one as the People are generally wont to paſs; crude, undigeſted, and made up of a mixture of truth and falſhood. It was true, and they argued rightly, that the worker of this miracle was a PROPHET SENT from God. But it was falſe, and they were too haſty in concluding, that This was the proper proof of his being the PROPHET FORETOLD in their ſacred volumes. For though one of the marks of this Prophet (as it muſt be one of every meſſenger ſent immediately from God), was the working Miracles; yet there were many other circumſtances, reſpecting both his time and perſon, which were to unite in that Character, before he could be ſaid, *to be, of a truth, that Prophet that ſhould come into the world.*

This, therefore, on the whole, muſt paſs for a popular prejudice in favour of the Son of God; but yet a Prejudice: Leſs unreaſonable, indeed, than many, they preſumed to entertain againſt him: As when they thought an idle Proverb ſufficient to controvert the ſtrongeſt evidence of his Meſſiah-character. *Can any thing good come out of Nazareth*, ſaith Nathanael, *an Iſraelite in whom there was no guile* †, but, as appears from hence, a great deal of fooliſh prejudice.

The two great Prophets of God, placed by him at the head of each of his Diſpenſations, were MOSES and JESUS. In this they differed, that Moſes bore the ſimple Character of a DIVINE MESSENGER; Jeſus, the more complex one of a DIVINE MESSENGER FORETOLD. For, though the deliverance of the ſeed of Abraham was predicted in the ſacred records along with the deliverance of the

* Chap. vi. 14. † John i. 46, 47.

ſeed

ſeed of Adam; yet as the firſt was only a type and prelude of the other; it was not Moſes the deliverer of the Jews, but Jeſus the deliverer of mankind, the finiſher of God's great work of REDEMPTION, who had the diſtinguiſhed honour of being foretold; as well by intimation in a myſterious ritual, as by a more open declaration in the oracles of the Law and the Prophets.

However, the preliminary ground of credence was the ſame, in both; namely, that the doctrines they taught were worthy of God. This worth conſiſts in their TRUTH, and in their IMPORTANCE.

1. No falſhood can iſſue from the fountain of Truth. Whatever therefore pretends to come from God, which contradicts our common notions of his Being and attributes, muſt of neceſſity be condemned for an impoſture, notwithſtanding any appearance of extraordinary power in the propagator of ſuch doctrines. And ſhould an Impoſture happen to be attended with theſe circumſtances of power, it could not be fairly deemed an imputation on God's goodneſs, ſince the holy ſpirit hath foretold, that deceivers ſhould come with *lying miracles*, almoſt of force to draw aſide *the very elect themſelves*; and ſince, againſt the illuſions of theſe deceivers, God hath given us ſo ſure a teſt and criterion as are the common notions concerning his Being and Attributes.

2. Nor is it, in the ſecond place, a ſufficient ground of credence, that what is thus taught be ſimply true. It muſt be truth of importance. Such as in its immediate tendency reſpects the *good of man*, and in its ultimate, the *glory of God*. Theſe are the neceſſary qualities of ſuch doctrines as we eſteem WORTHY the extraordinary patronage of Heaven.

This then, may be called the preliminary ground of Credence, but not the CREDENTIAL itſelf. An important Truth is indeed worthy of God. But neither the Truth, nor the importance of it, ſhews that it had God for its immediate Author. Becauſe it is impoſſible to meaſure the bounds of human capacity, or to aſcertain what progreſs an improved underſtanding may make in the diſcovery

covery of divine and moral truths. We have been told indeed, but by men of no great authority, "That the proper credentials of a divine miſſion are the truth and importance of the doctrine propoſed." But in this, they are neither ingenuous nor ſerious. They hold no extraordinary Revelation at all. So that this is only one of their DISGUISED SENTENCES: which, like moſt others from the ſame quarter, is conveyed under an equivocal expreſſion, confounding common ſpeech, and making TRUTH and DIVINE TRUTH the ſame thing.

The proper Credential, therefore, of a Meſſenger from God is the POWER OF WORKING MIRACLES. A ſort of evidence fitted to the capacity of all men. For the difference between true and falſe miracles, that is, between what we ſhould admit and what we ſhould reject, does not conſiſt in the firſt's being the finger of God; and the other, the operation of a finite Being: for then, man, who knows ſo little of the material and intellectual world, would have no criterion to diſtinguiſh between the true and falſe: But the difference conſiſts in this, That true miracles are ſuch as are worked in confirmation of doctrines worthy of God; and falſe, ſuch as aim to ſupport doctrines unworthy of him. Our ſecurity for the firſt concluſion is the goodneſs and juſtice of God, which will never ſuffer us (I do not mean the *good* in diſtinction to the *bad*, which is a low and foreign conſideration, but mankind in general), to be brought into a ſituation where no human means can be found to prevent our falling into error. Our ſecurity for the ſecond, is the certainty that immoral doctrines could never come from God; and the uncertainty what power other agents may have to produce appearances contrary to the common courſe of nature.

This ſeems to be the true notion of a MIRACLE, as it ſubjects all which pretend to that character, to the deciſion of human judgment; every man being able to diſtinguiſh between what is done in confirmation of doctrines worthy of God, and what is done to ſupport doctrines unworthy of him. As on the other hand, that which defines a Miracle to be the immediate work of God, muſt needs be

be a falſe notion of it, becauſe it would render the Credential of Miracles an inſufficient ſecurity, by reducing us to an inability of diſtinguiſhing between the true and the falſe.

On the whole, then, we conclude, that MIRACLES are the full Credential of a SIMPLE MESSENGER from God; ſuch as we ſuppoſe MOSES to be.

But, now, ſomething more is neceſſary to eſtabliſh the complicated Character of a MESSENGER FORETOLD, ſuch a one as JESUS challenged to himſelf.

It is not enough for ſuch a Character that he works the moſt amazing Miracles; unleſs, at the ſame time, he be found to have thoſe various marks upon him which belong to the Meſſenger foretold. For having aſſumed both parts of the prophetic Character, and united them in his own perſon, he is no longer at liberty to disjoin and prove them ſingly: ſo as that, when by miracles he hath eſtabliſhed the Character of a *divine* Meſſenger, this will remain unſhaken, though he ſhould fail in proving himſelf, by other evidence, the Meſſenger *foretold*. For not only all falſhood is incongruous to a divine miſſion, but is diſſociable with all truth. Whatever ſupernatural evidence, therefore, is produced by ſuch a perſonage, comes in equally in atteſtation of both parts of his Character; and if it fail in one, cannot be made to ſupport the other.

Now Miracles can be no proof of his being the Meſſenger foretold, when his perſon, actions, and fortunes agree not, in all circumſtances, with the prophetic deſcriptions of that Meſſenger. For Miracles cannot change times and places; or make that to be, which is not, and that not to be, which is.

From hence, therefore, we draw this ſecond concluſion, "that Miracles were not the full, or only, Credentials of Jeſus, who was a Meſſenger foretold." There needed another kind of evidence to eſtabliſh his pretenſions: and that was, that he exactly anſwered to the deſcription of the predicted MESSIAH, or, in other words,

that he accompliſhed the Prophecies concerning him. And this we ſay he did in the ampleſt manner.

But now it may be aſked, "Were his Miracles of no uſe to eſtabliſh his Meſſiah-Character?"

The anſwer will lead us to the ſecond part of what we are to ſpeak to: The nature of thoſe ancient prophecies which foretell the promiſed Meſſiah of the Jews.

We have obſerved that the office of this Meſſiah was to compleat and perfect God's great work of REDEMPTION; to which, all his various diſpenſations to mankind were directed. As therefore Jeſus was the finiſher of the whole Oeconomy, it is natural to ſuppoſe that neither the worker nor his work would be forgotten under any of thoſe diſpenſations. This is indeed the fact: He is remembered under all of them, though in a manner conformable to the ſpecific nature of each. Thus, when he is revealed to Adam, the repreſentative of human kind, he is ſpoken of as the deſtroyer of their ſpiritual enemy who ſhould *bruiſe the head of the Serpent* *: when promiſed to the Patriarchal family, he is repreſented as the glory and bleſſing of their Race, the *Shiloh*, *to whom ſhould be the gathering of the people* †. And when to the Moſaic Republic; as a *Prophet* and Lawgiver *like to* its firſt founder ‡. So that in all theſe graphical deſcriptions, though the drawing was the ſame, yet as the colouring was different, this would be one ſource of obſcurity.

Again, as each diſpenſation was preparatory to what ſucceeded, the relation between the type and antitype occaſioned the prophecies concerning the ſucceeding diſpenſation to be intermixed with others reſpecting the fortunes of the preſent. Thus, for inſtance, the ſpiritual victories of the Meſſiah are intermixed with the temporal deliverances atchieved under the Jewiſh Leaders. And this is another ſource of obſcurity.

* Gen. iii. 15.
† Gen. xlix. 10.
‡ Deut. xviii. 15.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the Chriſtian Diſpenſation is in its nature entirely oppoſite to the Jewiſh; and yet the prophetic account of it is conveyed under ideas altogether appropriate to the LAW. But this, by the wiſeſt deſignation of Providence. One important part of Jeſus' his office was to break down the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles, to extend the privilege of being the ſelect people of God to all the race of Adam, to free his countrymen from the bondage of the ceremonial Law, to teach all men the worſhip of God *in ſpirit and in truth*; in a word, to change temporal bleſſings into eternal. But, at the time of making thoſe predictions, the Moſaic ſyſtem had not run out half its courſe: and ſo was not to be expoſed to popular contempt by an information that it was only the harſh rudiment of one more eaſy and perfect. Now an exact and plain deſcription of the Meſſiah's office, which would have told the people this ſecret, muſt needs have indiſpoſed them to the reverence due to their LAW. A myſterious repoſe, therefore, was to be caſt over theſe *living Oracles*, which ſhould preſent no more to the dull conceptions of the People, than a large increaſe of bleſſings, to be procured in the *age to come*, by ſome mighty Deliverer. And the expedients employed for this purpoſe bear the cleareſt marks of the divinity of their Author.

The firſt was in the EXPRESSION; by repreſenting theſe ſpiritual bleſſings figuratively, under the carnal terms of the Law. Civil peace, national triumphs, and worldly plenty, to denote religious rectitude, victory over ſin and death, and large effuſion of the Holy Spirit.

The ſecond expedient was in the SENSE. For it being neceſſary to the carrying on the general ſcheme of Providence, of which the Moſaic inſtitution made ſo conſiderable a part, that the various fortunes and illuſtrious deliverers under this diſpenſation ſhould, from time to time, be foretold for the conſolation of thoſe to whom the prophecy was delivered; and for the truſt and confidence of poſterity which ſhould ſee it fulfilled; for this end, I ſay, the Holy Spirit made uſe of theſe intermediate events for types

and ſymbols of the ſufferings and victories of the Meſſiah, the final object of Prophecy. This all-wiſe contrivance of Providence produced what Divines call the SECONDARY SENSE OF PROPHECY *. And of this ſpecies is the body of thoſe predictions which relate to the Meſſiah.

Theſe two expedients therefore are another ſource of myſterious obſcurity.

What now are the inferences which muſt be drawn from the NATURE OF ANCIENT PROPHECY, as here explained? They are theſe.

1. That the only reaſonable way of eſtabliſhing the evidence riſing from it, is to ſet the various predictions together, to compare them with one another, and to illuſtrate what is obſcure in *this* Prophecy with what is clear in *that*; to reconcile the ſeeming diſcordancy in particular parts by the order, union, and harmony which reſults from the general œconomy of the whole.

2. The ſecond inference is, that even after all the advantages gained by the uſe of this method, there will ſtill remain many obſcurities in particular prophecies, which human wit alone will never be able to remove or clear up.

But, in contradiction to the firſt inference, we have been lately told, "That Prophecies are to be conſidered and inforced like Miracles, ſingly and independently, as ſo many diſtinct arguments: and that to conſider them in a chain, and as having a mutual connection with one another, is a fanciful and romantic ſyſtem, which deſerts the foundation laid by the Evangeliſts for their explanation †."

* See Div. Leg. Book vi. ſect. 6.

† —"The Evangeliſts applied them [the Prophecies] ſingly and independently on each "other, to this or that occaſion, as ſo many different arguments for the general truth "of the Goſpel.—He [the Bp. of L.] ſeems to have rejected the whole evidence of "Prophecy as it was underſtood and applied by the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts; and to "have ſubſtituted, in its place, a romantic ſyſtem or fanciful chain of antediluvian "Predictions."—Dr. Middleton's Examination of the Bp. of London's Diſcourſe concerning the uſe and intent of Prophecy, p. 5, 8.

But

But the Objector ſeems not ſufficiently to have conſidered the very different natures of theſe two extraordinary interpoſitions of Providence, in ſupport of its diſpenſations, MIRACLES and PROPHECIES.

Single Miracles refer to no Whole or Syſtem. Each is independent of another, and hath its own entire evidence in itſelf. If we conſider a miracle, as in the object of the performer, it is ſimply the credential to a divine miſſion: if we conſider it as directed to its ſubject, it is a diſplay of the wiſdom, the juſtice, or the goodneſs of that Being by whoſe power it is performed. And in either caſe, it carries its evidence along with it, and receives no aid or addition from without. Indeed, it would be abſurd to ſeek it in any other place. For, put the miracles as near together as you will, and embody them as cloſely as you can, the ſtronger will give no ſupport to the weaker. When Jeſus rebuked * the winds and the waves, and a calm enſued; If any one ſhould pretend, that the quiet naturally followed the emotion, and was not the immediate effect of divine power, the urging his walk upon the Sea † would not remove the objection. So again, when Peter ‡ raiſed Dorcas from the dead, Should an unbeliever ſay, ſhe was only in a ſwoon, the urging the reſtoration of Lazarus, after he had been dead four days §, would hardly ſilence the cavil. The reaſon is plain, and the ſame in both caſes. The ſimilar Miracles had no dependance on one another.

The Prophecies on the contrary, though, like the Miracles, they may be conſidered ſingly and apart; and the peculiar object of many of them be clearly fixed from their own evidence; yet the truth of the greater part, and the fulleſt conviction in all, ariſe from their being ſeen in one view, and conſidered as a dependent, connected, and entire Whole; becauſe the general object of all is one compleat Diſpenſation, conſiſting of various and ſubordinate parts,

* Matth. viii. 26.
† Matth. xiv. 26.
‡ Acts ix. 41.
§ John xi. 39.

which

which reflect mutual light and add mutual luſtre to one another. Hence the clearer Prophecies muſt always communicate of their evidence to the more obſcure. Thus if any one ſhould doubt over what part of God's moral diſpenſation the Meſſiah ſhould reign, whether the Jewiſh or Evangelic, when he is propheſied of in the words—*Yet have I ſet my King upon my holy Hill of Zion* * ; he may be fully ſatisfied by the Prophecy of Jeremiah : *Behold the day* is come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make *a* NEW COVENANT *with the houſe of Iſrael, not according to the covenant that I made with their Fathers, &c.*——*But*—*I will put my* LAW INTO THEIR INWARD PARTS, *and write it in their Hearts* †.

And the reaſon of this difference is evident ; The ſubject of prophecies is ONE ; and the ſubject of miracles are MANY.

In oppoſition therefore to ſo plain a truth, it would be idle to tell us, " That Jeſus and his Diſciples employed the Prophecies ſingly and independently on each other, to this or that occaſion, as ſo many different arguments for the general truth of the Goſpel." We own they may be thus employed : and when they are ſo, they are conſidered under the nature of Miracles, and urged, as the object well expreſſes it, *for the general truth of the Goſpel.* But what then ? If, becauſe there are ſome prophecies plain and clear enough to ſtand alone, on the principles of thoſe to whom they were addreſſed, and therefore the Evangeliſts have put them into that poſition ; muſt the dark and obſcure ones, which require the aid of others to ſupport them, be treated in the ſame manner ? Are we not rather to conclude that their different circumſtances require a different management ? This is ſo far from deſerting the foundation of the Evangeliſts ‡, that it is proſecuting divine knowledge upon the ſame principles. Theſe very Evangeliſts employ ſingle maxims of morality, independent on each other. But is this any

* Pſalm. ii. 6. † Chap. xxxi. 31.

‡ " It is certain there was no occaſion to deſert that foundation which the Evan- " geliſts had laid, and to take refuge in a precarious ſyſtem." Exam. of the Bp. of Lond. p. 24.

proof

proof that there is no ſyſtem of morals: Or that our urging thoſe truths ſyſtematically, and under all their dependencies, which the Evangeliſts propoſed ſingly and without connection, is a *deſerting the foundations of the Goſpel?*

Would you have the whole truth? it is this? The fitteſt way of conveying inſtruction to the People, whether prophetical or moral, was to urge their verities ſingly and independently. For long deductions and chains of reaſoning were unſuitable to the capacities of thoſe with whom Jeſus and his diſciples were concerned. But *ſyſtematical and political Divines* (as they are here called) were engaged with Philoſophers and Free-thinkers. And the fitteſt way of urging Prophecies and moral truths to ſuch, was to propoſe them ſyſtematically and in a chain. For it had been pretended that certain Scripture-prophecies have no ſupport from fact; and that certain Goſpel-precepts have no foundation in reaſon.

2. We come now to the ſecond conſequence reſulting from the nature of Prophecy. And this is, that there will be ſtill many difficulties in particular Prophecies, which mere human wit, with all the aſſiſtance of ſcience, will never be able to remove.

And here comes in the anſwer which we promiſed to give to the queſtion "concerning the uſe of Miracles to eſtabliſh the Meſſiah-Character?"

And this we ſhall venture to make in the affirmative; and to declare, that they are of great uſe.

It hath been already obſerved, that no miracles are ſufficient to prove thoſe Prophecies to relate to Jeſus, which, on the logical rules of interpretation, can be plainly ſhewn to relate only to another: becauſe Miracles cannot make that to be true, which is falſe.

But the concluſion is very different in matters which human wiſdom muſt leave for ever in doubt; and which, on account of the obſcure delivery of the Prophecy, Reaſon finds itſelf unable to reſolve. In this caſe, the word of an infallible Interpreter (and ſuch we muſt eſteem him who is endowed with the power that Jeſus exerciſed)

exerciſed) hath all the authority requiſite to decide in doubtful queſtions. Human wiſdom cannot reſolve which of two things was in the Speaker's meaning: but the wiſdom reſiding in that Agent, to whom God hath imparted the knowledge of all divine myſteries, can reſolve it; and the Miracles of Jeſus ſhew that this knowledge was communicated to him.

And AUTHORITY hath here the force of the moſt convincing evidence. Common reaſon, in the affairs of civil life, hath always directed men to the like ſolution. In all their doubts they have recourſe to ſuperior wiſdom. On this, they regulate their conduct, and reſt ſatisfied in the ſecurity of its deciſion. The Authority in queſtion, to fix the ſenſe of doubtful Prophecies, differs only in this, that the evidence of the reſolved truth is unſpeakably greater, as divine wiſdom exceeds human.

And we have the ſame ſecurity (infinite Goodneſs), that we ſhall be kept from error, when Miracles are employed to fix the ſenſe of doubtful Prophecies, as when more generally applied to ſupport the character of a divine Meſſenger. Miracles being a ſpecies of evidence which reaſon directs us to confide in, as well in one caſe as in the other.

With regard therefore to Prophecies thus circumſtanced, we ſay, that the authority of a worker of miracles may be fitly applied to ſhew, that *he is of a truth that* PROPHET *that ſhould come into the world.*

So that we ſee, licentious writers, from Porphyry down to Collins, have miſemployed their pains in proving, "That the Prophecies which are ſaid to concern the Meſſiah are ſo indeterminate, that, on the common rules of interpretation, we can never apply them with certainty rather to him than to any other Jewiſh Deliverer." For was it true, as it certainly is not, all that could be inferred from thence is only this, That ſuch Prophecies conclude nothing in favour of a particular application, till the obſcurities, ariſing from the intermediate manner in which they are delivered, be removed. There are ſome obſcurities which no human lights

can

can penetrate, but there are none ſo impervious but muſt give way to the divine.

It is the proper reſort, therefore, of ſuperior wiſdom to decide this doubtful queſtion, and tell us, to whom ſuch Prophecies belong.

And muſt not He, who inſpired the Oracle, know of whom he made the prediction? For it was the ſame ſpirit who caſt a myſterious veil over Truth in the Jewiſh Prophecies, and became manifeſt in the Chriſtian Miracles. Thus much theſe licentious writers themſelves will be forced to own, while they reaſon, as they do here, on the ſuppoſition of real Prophecies, and only pretend to bring in queſtion their received meaning.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, That to clear up doubtful Prophecies by the application of Miracles, is a ſpecies of evidence which determines the judgment with as perfect aſſurance as if the prediction had been conceived in the plaineſt terms of grammar, and in the directeſt propoſitions of logic.

But the miſtake lay here, The enemies of our Faith ſaw clearly enough that Miracles could not eſtabliſh a ſenſe of Prophecies in oppoſition to all human rules of interpretation; and therefore concluded that Miracles had no influence on Prophecy at all. This was too haſty. They ſaw in what caſe the authority of Miracles was excluded; but they would not ſee where it came in; and ſo, becauſe a Miracle could not do every thing in eſtabliſhing the Meſſiah-character, they would ſuffer it to do nothing.

But let us leave the perverſity of men, to adore the good Providence of God; whoſe POWER, in the uſe of Miracles, is ſo admirably fitted to ſupply and clear up the defects and obſcurities, which his WISDOM ſuffered to remain in the Prophecies.

II.

Having explained and vindicated the Character of this laſt great Meſſenger of God; the ſubject leads me to conſider the nature and genius of the Religion he was ſent to propagate amongſt men. So that having ſeen the TRUTH of his Miſſion, we may now underſtand the USE and NECESSITY of his Work.

St. Paul, in the words of my text, hath marked out thoſe eſſential qualities which diſtinguiſh the CHARACTER and OFFICE of Jeſus from all other, whether true or pretended, Meſſengers from God. *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays he, *is made unto us, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs; and Sanctification and Redemption.* Now as this was addreſſed both to the Gentile and Jewiſh converts in the Church of Corinth, it is contrived to ſhew, in one view, how Chriſtianity hath reformed the depravities of PAGANISM, and ſupplied the deficiencies of the LAW.

This beautiful ſummary of Goſpel-bleſſings (for now we turn from the Worker to his work) is ſo artfully adapted to the Writer's views and purpoſes, as will deſerve a particular explanation.

And here let me previouſly obſerve, That though the *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs*,—the *Sanctification* and *Redemption*, here mentioned, be each reſpective to the whole race of mankind; yet the GENTILES are more particularly concerned in the WISDOM and RIGHTEOUSNESS; and the JEWS in the SANCTIFICATION and REDEMPTION. In explaining, therefore, theſe four eſſential offices in the Meſſiah-character, I ſhall conſider each of them as referring diſtinctly and particularly to the One or other of theſe two great diviſions of the religious world.

I. And firſt, concerning the reformation of the GENTILES, by Goſpel *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs*.

1. *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, is *made unto us*, WISDOM. That is, He was *made* Wiſdom unto the Gentile world by inſtructing it in the knowledge of the true God; his nature and attributes: And by explaining the relation in which man ſtands to his Maker. A WISDOM, which, at this time, the Gentiles greatly wanted: moſt of them being deſtitute of that knowledge; and all, without exception, ignorant of that relation.

The early deſcendants of Noah ſoon loſt the revealed knowledge of their Creator. Which though indeed revived by an extraordinary diſpenſation of Providence, was however confined within the gates

gates of a ſingle family: While the reſt of mankind, partly by too great a confidence in that unfaithful guardian of Truth, TRADITION; and partly from too little attention to their better inſtructor, REASON, fell into the moſt ſenſeleſs Idolatries.

For living at firſt ſcattered abroad in independent tribes, their groſs, untutored minds could riſe no higher than to the ſenſible cauſes of good and evil: the moſt conſiderable of which being the elements and heavenly bodies, Theſe became the firſt object of their worſhip and veneration. And having experienced them to be, ſometimes, the authors of health and plenty; and ſometimes again, of peſtilence and famine, they from thence began to entertain an opinion of good and evil Demons.

But being now collected into Bodies, and formed into Communities; the ſudden ſupplial of all the wants of life, which followed, was ſo ſenſibly underſtood, that miſtaken gratitude took another channel, and turned as ſtrongly on their deceaſed Lawgivers, the generous procurers of this their improved condition; whom they ſoon venerated and exalted into Gods.

But as civil life introduced and encouraged the culture of the mind as well as body; both the firſt, and ſecond mode of worſhip were, from their manifeſt abſurdities, in danger of falling under the popular contempt. To prevent this mitchief, the Legiſlator diverted the ſteddy attention to either, by confounding them together; making ELEMENTARY and HERO-WORSHIP repreſentative of one another; and then laying on a new cover over both, by the invention of a third ſpecies of idolatry, SYMBOLICAL of the other two. But a further account of this matter, and how the two original and ſimple forms produced that more monſtrous compound; in which, firſt of all, brutes, and then, ſtocks and ſtones were worſhipped;—from what accidents of error, from what contrivances of fraud, theſe prodigies aroſe, which hath ſince given ſo much exerciſe to the learned, all this is without the limits of the preſent diſcourſe *. Let it ſuffice to obſerve, that St. Paul hath not

* See The Divine Legation, Book IV.

aggravated the caſe, where, in his Epiſtle to the Romans, he ſays, that the Gentile world had *changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things* *.

This was the condition of the Pagan world in general. And though, from time to time, ſome thinking men aroſe amongſt them of a more enlarged underſtanding than the common, who, as the ſame Apoſtle obſerves, could, from the *viſible things* of a created world, infer the *eternal power and Godhead* of its Author †; yet even theſe, as he adds, when *they knew God, glorified him not as God* ‡; never ſo much as once attempting to introduce his worſhip to any People or Nation amongſt whom they lived, or where they had the greateſt credit. So that the one true God, though KNOWN in moſt places, was no where publicly WORSHIPPED but in the land of Judæa only.

This leads me to the ſecond point, "The univerſal ignorance in the Gentile world, of the relation in which man ſtands to his Creator." The Philoſophers and Lawgivers had concurred in a general opinion (the abſurdity of which is ſufficiently expoſed by the ſucceſs of the Hebrew Sage and Legiſlator in a different conduct) that to teach publicly the knowledge, or to eſtabliſh nationally the worſhip of the one true God, would be of great diſſervice to ſociety; and had therefore kept all conſideration of him incloſed within the veil of their MYSTERIES. And further, to hide from their own conſciences the fraud and prevarication of ſuch a meaſure, they firſt brought thoſe whom they had intruſted with that knowledge, and afterwards, themſelves to believe, That the FIRST CAUSE was an extra-mundane Being, too excellent, as well as too remote, to be approached, and addreſſed to, in the firſt inſtance. On which account, they ſaid, he had delegated the government of the world to inferior Deities, his ſubſtitutes; and had made Them the immediate objects of religious worſhip. In cultivating this ſuperſtition

* Chap. i. ver. 23. † Ver. 20. ‡ Ver. 21.

they

they found another advantage: it gave a ſhew of reaſon to that ſenſeleſs Polytheiſm whoſe riſe and progreſs we have juſt deſcribed: and, at the ſame time, ſcreened it from the approaches of over-curious inquirers. But then it could not fail of producing very fatal miſtakes concerning the cloſe and near relation in which man ſtands towards God.

All this ſhews how expedient it was for the happineſs of Mankind, that *Jeſus* ſhould *be made, unto us, wiſdom*; when the moſt enlightened teachers of it amongſt the Gentiles *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe became fools*, by their *not glorifying him as God* whom they had clearly diſcovered to be the only true one.

Let us now ſee the need the Jews had of this *wiſdom*; for though, as was ſaid, it be principally objective to the ſtate of the Gentile world, yet it hath its after-view to the followers of the Law; who wanted, likewiſe, though not in the ſame degree, the aid of *evangelic wiſdom*. For the Character of a national, tutelary Deity, under which, God had been pleaſed to aſſume the patronage of their idolatrous Forefathers in Egypt; the Form of their civil conſtitution, which was Theocratical; and the Genius of their ceremonial worſhip, which was fitted, through the groſſneſs of their prejudices, to ſecure the great end of their ſeparation, preſervation from idolatry; all theſe, I ſay, concurred, amongſt a perverſe people, to beget wrong notions of the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD; as if They ſtood by nature, or adoption, in a nearer relation to him than the reſt of their fellow-creatures; being choſen for the objects of his ſpecial care, on account of ſome inherent excellence; or at leaſt for ſome ſecret fondneſs which God had, and would indulge, for the illuſtrious race of Abraham. Vain notions, and of dangerous conſequence! which, though they received no real ſupport from *Moſes and the Prophets*, were yet, by length of time, ſo rooted and interwoven in the paſſions and affections of that people, as to need a *new Law* to weed them out.

And thus was *Jeſus* indeed *made Wiſdom* both to Jew and Gentile; by inſtructing the ignorance of the one, and reforming the

error

error of the other, in that ſupreme ſpecies of Wiſdom, the knowledge of the true God.

2. The advantages of his being *made*, *unto us*, RIGHTEOUSSNESS, come next to be conſidered.

As the ignorance of, and miſtakes concerning, the FIRST CAUSE were ſo univerſal in the Gentile world, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that the ſtate of VIRTUE was in any very good condition amongſt them. And in fact, we find that their Morality was neither ſpeculatively ſolid, nor practically ſincere.

The fitneſs of ſome actions and the unfitneſs of others are diſcoverable from the NATURAL RELATIONS and eſſential difference of things. And this fitneſs and unfitneſs are further ſupported by a MORAL SENSE, or an inſtinctive approbation of good, and diſlike of evil. But ſtill, the proper ground of moral obligation is the WILL OF GOD: Becauſe all obligation implies an obliger; and *moral fitneſs* is only a rule to direct us to the will of the obliger; nor is the *moral ſenſe* any other than his arbitrary impreſſion, to diſpoſe the human will to a conformity with the divine. The Will of God, therefore, is the real ground of obligation; or that which properly maketh man accountable for his actions *.

Now this only ſolid foundation of morality the Gentile world always wanted: and indeed, while under the ignorance and miſtakes mentioned above, could not but want. For their falſe Gods having, as muſt needs be, from the private views and intrigues of the Prieſts their interpreters, many different and contrary Wills, theſe could never be made the ground of a conſiſtent morality: and the true God being eſteemed an extramundane Being, who left his Government to others, afforded no WILL at all, for this purpoſe. So that their only recourſe for inſtruction and practice was to the MORAL SENSE, and NATURAL RELATIONS of things; which, though they might preſent a ſpecious ſyſtem to the underſtanding, had not weight or authority to incline the Will †.

* See Divine Legation, Book I. Sect. 4.

† See Divine Legation as above.

For

For their practice of Virtue (to come to the ſecond point) was as impure as it was unſtable. In morals, Example hath the ſtrongeſt influence: and this influence increaſeth in proportion to the dignity of the ſubject in which it is found. The Example of the Deity, therefore, which inforceth itſelf on a principle of Religion, muſt needs have the ſtrongeſt and wideſt influence. But the actions of the Pagan Gods, recorded in their ſacred ſtories, were ſo immoral as could not but highly corrupt the practice of their worſhippers. And Antiquity informs us, that in truth it did ſo.

Nor ſhould a moral cauſe of this degeneracy from Virtue be forgotten. St. Paul aſſures us that God, for their puniſhment *in not retaining him in their knowledge, gave them over to a reprobate mind, to* DO *thoſe things that are not convenient.* Hence, as he tells us, they were *filled with all* UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, *fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs* *, *&c.* The account goes on, in ſo black a catalogue of vice, as ſufficiently ſhews that, at the time *Jeſus Chriſt was made unto us righteouſneſs*, the Pagan world was ſunk into the loweſt ſtate of miſery and corruption.

Nor were the Jews themſelves ſo ſound, in theſe particulars, as not to want this great phyſician of the Soul. And what was ſaid of the *Wiſdom* is true of the *Righteouſneſs*, mentioned in my text; it hath a ſecondary reference to the choſen People. For, the wrong notions they had conceived of the *God of their fathers*, and of the relation in which they ſtood to him, had much viciated and deformed their ſocial virtue. They confined the precept of loving their Brother to the deſcendants of their fraternal Tribes; and neglected and deſpiſed the reſt of the ſons of Adam; who, becauſe ritually unholy and prophane, were deemed to be naturally unrelated to them. A Principle which made them as unfaithful ſubjects, when for their crimes they were ſentenced to the yoke of the Gentiles, as they were mercileſs neighbours while independent and more powerful; neither *rendering to Cæſar the things which were*

* Rom. chap. i. ver. 28, & ſeq.

Cæſar's;

Cæſar's; nor to God the things which at all times he principally required of them—*to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly* before him *. This, and other errors which their falſe Traditions had introduced, and which ſome original compliances with the *hardneſs of their hearts* had occaſionally countenanced, made Jeſus tell his followers, that, *unleſs their* RIGHTEOUSNESS *ſhould exceed the* RIGHTEOUSNESS *of the Scribes and Phariſees, they ſhould in no caſe enter into the kingdom of Heaven* †.

From what hath been ſaid then it appears, that Jeſus, as he *is made unto us, wiſdom and righteouſneſs*, is to be conſidered under the Character of a MESSENGER SENT from God, to inſtruct men in the ways of RELIGION and VIRTUE. How much ſuch a one was wanting, we have endeavoured to ſhew in a fair repreſentation of the ſtate of BOTH, at the time of his coming.

II. But this was not the whole of his Character. He was a MESSENGER FORETOLD; as appears, and is inſinuated from what is further ſaid of him, That he was *made unto us Sanctification and Redemption.*

To ſuch as are unacquainted with the preſent ſtate of Theology amongſt us, it may perhaps ſeem ſtrange that I ſhould ſtop, in this place, to obſerve, that *Sanctification* and *Redemption* are as true and eſſential offices in the Character of Jeſus, and as extenſive to Mankind, as the *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs* aſſigned unto it. But there are ſome amongſt us, who give a figurative ſenſe to the latter attributes in my text; and in reality confine the character of Jeſus to that of a Meſſenger ſent from God, to inſtruct the world in truths of religious *Wiſdom*, and moral *Righteouſneſs*.

But to ſuppoſe, that when the Son of God is ſaid to be *made wiſdom and righteouſneſs*, we muſt underſtand by it that he really taught men *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs*; and yet, when he is ſaid to be *made ſanctification and redemption*, he did not really *ſanctify* and *redeem*; but that, by inſtructing men in a more pure and perfect

* Micah, chap. vi. ver. 8. † Matt. chap. v. ver. 20.

worſhip

worſhip, he only excelled all the IMAGINARY; and abrogated all the CARNAL *ſanctifications* and *redemptions*, both of Jews and Gentiles; to ſuppoſe this, I ſay, is the higheſt violation of all rational interpretation: and gives us a meaner idea of the eternal Son of God than a Pagan Sophiſt would have entertained of him on hearing St. Paul's firſt ſermon at Athens. But this perverſity can be charitably accounted for no otherwiſe than from a violent diſguſt theſe men have taken at ſome current explanations of the *doctrine of Redemption*; fitter indeed to diſcredit, than to confirm or recommend this fundamental principle of our holy Religion. But this is a matter which requires a different treatment. I ſhall conſider it in its proper place *; and now proceed with the ſubject before us.

I have obſerved, that as *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs* were principally addreſſed to the Gentiles; ſo *Sanctification* and *Redemption* were directed to the Jews. But, as a regard to the Jewiſh people was not excluded in the former; ſo neither was a regard to the Gentiles excluded in the latter.

It is eaſily ſeen why the repreſentation of Jeſus's *being made unto us Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs* is particularly addreſſed to the Gentiles: They moſt wanted thoſe bleſſings. Nor is it more difficult to apprehend why the repreſentation of his being *made unto us Sanctification and Redemption* is particularly directed to the Jews: for in their cuſtody were depoſited the *living Oracles*, which explain that ſtate and condition of man, from whence ariſes the neceſſity of *Sanctification* and *Redemption*.

I. But let us conſider the words as they lye in order. *Jeſus Chriſt* (ſays the Apoſtle) *was made unto us* SANCTIFICATION; that is, he *ſanctified*, or made us holy.

It was a received opinion in the ancient world that human nature had contracted a ſtain or pollution: and that not only particular purifyings, but alſo ſome general *Sanctification* was neceſſary to put man in a capacity of being reſtored to the favour of the Deity.

* Divine Legation, Book IX.

Whether this Opinion aroſe from the remains of a Tradition concerning the FALL; or from every man's conſcious feeling of his own diſorders; or whether both concurred to its eſtabliſhment, is very uncertain. However it had that tone of the voice of Nature, Univerſality. And though it gave occaſion to infinite ſuperſtitions in the rituals of national luſtrations, yet the neceſſity of ſome real *Sanctification* ſeems fairly to be deduced from it.

When God, therefore, ſeparated the Jewiſh people, the firſt object of their Legiſlator's miniſtry was to render them pure and holy. And as by reaſon of the inveteracy of their prejudices, and the groſſneſs of their apprehenſions, the real means of purifying human nature were to be conveyed under the cover of ſuch rites and ceremonies as were then in uſe amongſt men; ſo becauſe the common way of making a people holy, was to adopt them into the protection of a tutelary God; and of rendering particulars clean, was by ablutions and other cathartic rites; the Almighty was pleaſed to aſſume the titles of their national God, and regal Governor; and to inſtitute, in the offices of his worſhip luſtrations, and expiatory ſacrifices, as well for particulars as the Community. On theſe accounts it is that he tells them, *Ye ſhall be unto me a* KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, *and an holy nation* *: for the regal and ſacerdotal were the two peculiar characters of ancient *ſanctity*.

But the LAW *having only a ſhadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, could never make the comers thereunto perfect* †: therefore the true *Sanctification* of mankind was reſerved for the miniſtry of Jeſus; when being collected together into one people, under his government as LORD; and received into his protection by the *juſtification of faith* in him as MESSIAH, they became *a* ROYAL PRIESTHOOD *and an holy nation* ‡, as the Apoſtle calls them, alluding to the title given to the Hebrews by Moſes; and transferring it to the Chriſtian Church in a completory ſenſe, as it was applied to the Jewiſh, in a typical.

* Exod. chap. xix. ver. 6.

† Heb. chap. x. ver. 1.

‡ 1 Pet. chap. xi. ver. 9.

But

But a matter of ſo high importance as the completion of God's religious diſpenſations, in the final *Sanctification* of mankind, will deſerve a fuller explanation.

When the *Sanctifier* (whoſe character and office cannot well be conſidered ſeparately) was accuſed, by thoſe who traverſed his miniſtry, of purpoſing to overturn the eſtabliſhed Religion, he anſwered, *Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets. I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil* *. How he executed this commiſſion, in the character of SANCTIFIER, we are now to conſider.

Under the old Law, God was pleaſed to take upon himſelf the office of KING; he aſſigned the office of PRIEST to Aaron; and that of PROPHET, to Moſes; the Prieſt being the MEDIATOR or Advocate for men to God; and the Prophet the MESSENGER of God to Men. Now the Meſſiah taking all theſe offices on himſelf; and uniting them in his own Perſon, did, in the trueſt and exacteſt ſenſe, *fulfil the Law and the Prophets.* For by *the Law and the Prophets* is meant the whole of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, as delivered by Moſes, and explained and illuſtrated by thoſe holy men, whom God, from time to time, raiſed up to govern and inſtruct his people.

This Inſtitution conſiſted of three parts; the POLITICAL, the CEREMONIAL, and the MORAL, under which was contained the SPIRITUAL.

1. The *political* part was a THEOCRACY. The purpoſes of this extraordinary form of government, as they related to the carnal adminiſtration of the Moſaic Oeconomy, I have conſidered elſewhere †. But the ſpiritual end was to introduce the dominion of the Son, which was to be extended to all mankind. The *Prophets*, the interpreters of the Law, whom, as well as the *Law* itſelf, Jeſus tells us, he was ſent to *fulfil*, inform us at large, how this

* Matt. chap. v. ver. 17.

† See Divine Legation, Book V. Sect. 2.

peculiar regimen was to become an univerſal bleſſing. Firſt by the reſignation of the Theocratic dominion to the Son *; and ſecondly, by extending that dominion over the whole race of mankind †. Thus the Meſſiah *fulfilled* both what the genius of the *Law* and the inſpiration of the *Prophets* foretold of him; as it concerned the government political. And in ſo doing he aſſumed the title of KING *of the Jews.*

2. The ſecond diviſion of the Moſaic Law was the *ceremonial:* a ceremonial, which heavily loaded every part of God's worſhip with multifarious and irkſome rites. Now though the common condition of humanity declares that this duty, eſpecially the public part of it, can never be decently or properly diſcharged without the aid of ſome exterior ceremonies; yet the minute obſervance of ſo complicated a Ritual tends rather to ſtifle than to invigorate the ſpirit of devotion. We may therefore reaſonably conclude, that theſe things, which have no moral worth or value inherent in them, were not inſtituted on their own account, but for the ſake of ſome occaſional good they were found capable of producing. And of this, we have clear intimations in the writings of the Prophets. They frequently tell us that the *ceremonial Law* was of no uſe or value in itſelf; but that, the thing in which God moſt delighted, was the moral Law of righteouſneſs ‡. If then the Jewiſh Ritual was of ſo ſlight account with the Inſtitutor himſelf, it may be reaſonably aſked how it came to be ſo minutely delivered and ſo ſcrupulouſly exacted in his ſervice? In this likewiſe the Prophets will inſtruct us. It was impoſed to reſtrain a headſtrong people from Idolatry, to which they were violently and obſtinately carried §: and, for that purpoſe, it had a perpetual reference to the then reigning ſuperſtitions. But as this ſecurity from idolatry (conſidering them as a People) was for the ſake of preſerving a

* Iſaiah ix. 6, 7. † Ibid. chap. xi. 10.
‡ Amos chap. v. 21, & ſeq. Micah chap. vi. 7, 8.
§ Jerem. chap. vii. 22, 23. Ezek. chap. xx. 24, 25.

found

found and pure foundation for the future diſpenſation, of which, This was only the rudiments, it pleaſed the divine wiſdom that the ceremonial Law ſhould not only be directed againſt thoſe ſuperſtitions, but ſhould likewiſe be typical of all the great parts of that future diſpenſation: and whoever examines the *ceremonial Law* with the care and attention ſo important a ſtudy requires, will confeſs that both one and the other were equally in the intention of the Law-giver *.

The ultimate end therefore of theſe rites being to prefigure the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, He may, with a peculiar propriety, be allowed to call himſelf the *fulfiller of the Ceremonial Law*. It being incomplete and deſtitute of its final purpoſe, till Jeſus had performed the whole of that miſſion which the *ceremonial Law*, by prefiguring, had predicted. And when that was once performed, the Types of courſe were to ceaſe. Now theſe types conſiſting of various kinds of ſacrificial rites, Jeſus by offering up himſelf on the croſs for the ſins of mankind, as was foretold by the Prophets, eminently *fulfilled* the ceremonial Law, in quality of PRIEST.

3. The laſt and nobleſt branch of the Jewiſh Law was the *Moral:* which inſtructs man in all his relations, whether to his common nature, to God, or his fellow-creatures. This, though delivered pure by Moſes, and according to the truth of things, did yet, like the two other branches (as we have ſeen above) need the maſter-hand of this divine Teacher: who, in delivering to mankind a more perfect ſyſtem of moral duty as was predicted of him †, diſcharged the office of PROPHET, or of *a Meſſenger from God*; as in that of PRIEST he diſcharged the office of *the Meſſenger foretold.*

But under the *moral*, as we have ſaid, was compriſed the *ſpiritual.* And it was this which was more peculiarly the prophetic office: whoſe buſineſs it was not only to give to every part, in

* See Divine Legation, Book IV. Sect. 6.

† Iſaiah, chap. xi. 5. Chap. xlii. 1, 4.

this

this œconomy, its due rank; but to foretel the future fortunes of all; How the Political ſhould be EXTENDED; the Ceremonial FULFILLED; and the Moral, PURIFIED and exalted.

Thus we ſee, from the nature, end, and condition of this *political*, *ceremonial*, and *moral* œconomy, that Jeſus was the *fulfiller of the Law*; and, from his doing this in the very manner the inſpired men of old predicted, that he was likewiſe the *fulfiller of the Prophets* *. Hence he became truly and properly the SANCTIFICATION of the *People of God:* and through them, of the whole *Church of Chriſt*.

This is that aggregate or corporate holineſs to which the Gentile nations blindly aſpired; and of which, the Jewiſh people had gained only the ſhadow.

But, beſides this GENERAL *Sanctification*; which, as we have ſhewn, is the immediate office of the Son; there was a PARTICULAR, by which each individual was cleanſed and purified; and this was performed through the miniſtry of the HOLY SPIRIT, the *Comforter*, whom Jeſus, on his leaving the world, had promiſed to ſend upon the faithful, to remain with them for ever †. Who, by the effuſion of divine grace ſhed abroad in their hearts, effects that purity of mind, which all other ritual modes of private luſtration tried at in vain, or at beſt did but typically repreſent.

Now both theſe purifications, the aggregate and particular, make together, that true *Sanctification*, of which Jeſus is ſaid in my text to be the author, and beſtower on mankind.

We have obſerved that *Sanctification* and *Redemption* are addreſſed to the Jews primarily; as *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs* are to the Gentiles. But as the former graces had a ſecondary reference to the Jews, ſo the latter, as we ſhall now ſee, have the ſame reference to the Gentiles.

* See Divine Legation, Book VI. ſect. 6.

† John xiv. 16. Chap. xvi. 7.

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The want of a *Sanctifier* in the Pagan world was ſtill more urgent and deplorable than in the Jewiſh. For the Gentiles having received DEMONS for their tutelary Gods, and devoted themſelves to unclean ſpirits by their national worſhip, the PUBLIC was become, in the ſaddeſt ſenſe of the word, PROPHANE. And, by adminiſtring their demonic rites in all the unnatural and exorbitant practices of murder and uncleanneſs, PARTICULARS were become in the higheſt degree IMPURE.

Thus Gentile impiety and pollution being at its height, and the Jewiſh holineſs and purity exterior only, and imperfect, there was a preſſing NECESSITY of *Jeſus's* being *made unto us, Sanctification.*

2. But this was not the ultimate benefit beſtowed on man, through the miniſtry of Jeſus. *Sanctification* was only preparatory to a greater bleſſing: and, like the wedding-garment in the parable, a habit of dignity given to appear in before *the Lord our Redeemer.*

For, in the laſt place, the Apoſtle tells us, *he was made unto us,* REDEMPTION.

Amongſt the many gracious diſpenſations of God to Mankind, the Moſaic hiſtory informs us of one, in which *the depth of the riches both of his Wiſdom and Knowledge* claims our more particular admiration. And this is the FREE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY to the firſt man; and, through him, to his Poſterity, on the eaſy condition, we find, annexed unto it: which Adam having too eaſily violated, he and his whole race returned into a ſtate of mortality and corruption.

From this bondage under death and ſin, God, in his infinite mercy, decreed to deliver us. And the condition of a remitted forfeiture being as abſolutely in the breaſt of the Remitter, as the condition on which the bleſſing was originally conferred; he was pleaſed, it ſhould be done by ONE man's willingly offering himſelf to death for an atonement for ALL. That *as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhould many be made righteous* *.

* Romans, chap. v. 19.

How

this œconomy, its due rank; but to foretel the future fortunes of all; How the Political ſhould be EXTENDED; the Ceremonial FULFILLED; and the Moral, PURIFIED and exalted.

Thus we ſee, from the nature, end, and condition of this *political*, *ceremonial*, and *moral* œconomy, that Jeſus was the *fulfiller of the Law*; and, from his doing this in the very manner the inſpired men of old predicted, that he was likewiſe the *fulfiller of the Prophets* *. Hence he became truly and properly the SANCTIFICATION of the *People of God:* and through them, of the whole *Church of Chriſt*.

This is that aggregate or corporate holineſs to which the Gentile nations blindly aſpired; and of which, the Jewiſh people had gained only the ſhadow.

But, beſides this GENERAL *Sanctification*; which, as we have ſhewn, is the immediate office of the Son; there was a PARTICULAR, by which each individual was cleanſed and purified; and this was performed through the miniſtry of the HOLY SPIRIT, the *Comforter*, whom Jeſus, on his leaving the world, had promiſed to ſend upon the faithful, to remain with them for ever †. Who, by the effuſion of divine grace ſhed abroad in their hearts, effects that purity of mind, which all other ritual modes of private luſtration tried at in vain, or at beſt did but typically repreſent.

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How agreeable this ſuccinct account of Man's FALL and RESTORATION is, to what the beſt and moſt received philoſophy teacheth us both of God and Man, ſhall be conſidered at large in a fitter place *.

This future *Redemption* of the world had been promiſed, even from the time of the *Fall*, to the holy men of old, in terms more or leſs obſcure, as beſt fitted the diſpenſation under which the prediction was delivered. The Choſen People had a more defined image of it in their typical redemption from the ſlavery of Egypt, and their admiſſion to the temporal bleſſings of the land of Canaan. It was ſtill more circumſtantially figured in their public ritual, through the miniſtration of expiatory ſacrifices, performed with many ceremonies plainly deſcriptive of the great ſacrifice on the Croſs, for the ſpiritual *Redemption* of mankind.

This people, then, muſt hear with conviction, and, as many of them as were unprejudiced, muſt confeſs with pleaſure, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, by being *made unto us Redemption*, was the true completion of the *Law and the Prophets*.

Nor was this bleſſing of *Redemption* without a ſecondary reference to the ſtate and condition of the Gentiles; whoſe Religion was not merely ineffectual, like the Jewiſh, to redeem them from the chains of death and ſin, but ſuch as had brought them under the more diſgraceful bondage of ſubjection to the Devil, thoſe wicked ſpirits, whom they worſhipped and adored as their patron Gods.

This was the condition both of Jews and Gentiles, when the Meſſiah came to ſet men free. And here let it be obſerved, in honour of thoſe two Characteriſtic miracles, the *raiſing the dead*, and *the caſting out devils*, that the one elegantly deſigned his office of redeeming the Jews from the *power of the grave*, and the other his office of freeing the Gentiles from the *tyranny of Demons*. The beauty in this diſpoſition of the œconomy was too ſtriking to be paſſed over in ſilence: Otherwiſe, I think, even this moderated

* Divine Legation, Book IX.

uſe,

uſe, of ſpiritualizing the miracles, ſhould be forborn; as fanciful and precarious. We can conceive no otherwiſe of the miracles of a divine Perſon coming from God, let the peculiar mode of his diſpenſation be what it will, than that they ſhould be objective to the corporal infirmities of men. Now between theſe and their ſpiritual diſorders, there is, by their common qualities of want and diſtreſs, ſo much ſimilitude and ſo natural an analogy, as affords no ground of reaſonable ſuppoſition, that one was a deſigned or prophetic repreſentation of the other.

Thus have I endeavoured to ſhew, which was the main purpoſe of this diſcourſe, *That Jeſus is made unto us, Sanctification and Redemption*, in as true and real a ſenſe as he is our *Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs*. Nor is this a matter of ſmall moment. The teaching *Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs* made his miſſion EXPEDIENT: but the beſtowing *Sanctification and Redemption* made it NECESSARY.

To inſtruct the world in the knowledge of one God, and in the practice of moral virtue, was, without doubt, putting us into the road of the divine favour; and making our attainment of the ſupreme good more eaſy and expeditious. But God, whoſe *mercies are over all his works*, and who, in this very revelation, hath informed us, that from thoſe to whom little is given, much will not be required *, would have received his miſerable creatures to his mercy, in what condition ſoever he had ſuffered them to remain, if ſo be they had taken care to make the beſt uſe of the little that was afforded them.

But *Sanctification and Redemption* do more than ſhew us into the road of God's favour: They reſtore us to the free privilege of LIFE AND IMMORTALITY; which man having forfeited, by a breach of the condition on which it was beſtowed, had no pretence to reclaim; ſo that whenever it was reſtored, it might be given on ſuch conditions as the all-gracious Donor ſhould think fit to impoſe. It is reſtored: and the conditions are FAITH in, and OBEDIENCE to,

* Luke xii. 48.

a crucified SAVIOUR; who, by this ſacrifice of himſelf, became the *Sanctification and Redemption* of mankind. The conſequence is, that theſe are not only uſeful and *expedient* for procuring God's favour, but abſolutely *neceſſary* for our recovery of life and immortality.

This is placing CHRISTIANITY on its proper baſis, a foundation of real ſtrength and ſolidity.

But when the preſumption of men tempts them to disjoin what God hath put together, not only the benefits of that union are loſt, but other various, and unthought-of evils ariſe, which ſubject the religious œconomy, thus abuſed, to every kind of injury; diſhonouring the Author of our Faith; and expoſing the Chriſtian profeſſion to perpetual inſults.

This was never more unhappily verified than in the caſe before us.

1. For he who conſiders Jeſus only in the light of a Republiſher of the Law of nature, can hardly entertain a higher opinion of the Saviour of the world than ſome have done of SOCRATES, whom Eraſmus eſteemed an object of devotion, and many a good Proteſtant hath thought to be divinely inſpired. For was not Socrates, by his preaching up *moral virtue*, and by his dying to bear witneſs to the *unity* of the God, *made*, to the Grecian people, and (by means of their extended commerce of politeneſs) to the reſt of mankind, *wiſdom and Righteouſneſs?* And what more did Jeſus? for, according to the principles of this paganized Chriſtianity, his titles of MESSIAH and REDEEMER are reduced to mere figurative and accommodated terms. But theſe bold extremes men ran into through their ignorance of the nature of thoſe prophecies which foretel his advent; and the abſurdity of thoſe ſyſtems, which pretend to explain his office.

2. As this Theology degrades Jeſus to the low condition of a Grecian Sophiſt; ſo it renders his Religion obnoxious to the inſults of every daring Impoſtor. -

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He was ſent, ſay theſe new Doctors of the Church, to teach mankind the worſhip of the true God, and the practice of moral righteouſneſs *.

"This will be readily allowed, replies an underſtanding MAHOMETAN †: And on this very principle, WE hold, that when Jeſus had done his office, and mankind had again relapſed, into *anti-chriſtian* Idolatry and Polytheiſm, as before into *Pagan*, God ſent OUR PROPHET, who worked the like ſudden and ſenſible reformation in the NORTH-EAST, that your Prophet did in the NORTH-WEST."

What reply now will our rational Divine make to this apology for ISMAELISM?

All he has to ſay is, "That Jeſus and his Apoſtles have every where intimated, that his Goſpel is the laſt of God's diſpenſations; on the terms of which our final doom is irrevocably to be decided: ſo that all future pretenders to the like office and character muſt needs be eſteemed impoſtors."

But here a DEIST would come in, and take advantage of our diſtreſs; for it is to be obſerved alike of all theſe ſhifting defences of fanciful, and unſcriptural ſyſtems, that they only ſupply new arms

* A celebrated Frenchman, who writes on all ſubjects indifferently, and perhaps, knew better what he was about than theſe Divines, goes ſtill further, and affirms, That Chriſtianity is not only no more than the Religion of nature perfected, but that *it could not poſſibly* be any more.—"Nôtre Religion revélée n'eſt même, et *ne "pouvoit etre*, que cette Loi naturelle perfectionnée." *Diſcours ſur le Theiſme*, par M. de Voltaire.

† The Alcoran teaches, that Jeſus did not ſuffer on the croſs. Yet Mahomet denied our Saviour's Divinity. Why then ſuch averſion to the *paſſion?* Evidently for this reaſon, the doctrine of REDEMPTION followed; and that compleated the ſcheme of *revelation*, and (as we ſhall ſee) ſhut out the Impoſtor's pretences. M. Otter, a very intelligent traveller, of the Academy Royal of Inſcriptions, tells us of a conference he had with a learned Perſian. The Mahometan ſaid, they reverenced all our ſacred writings, except St. Paul's—*qu'ils reſpectent tous, excepté Saint Paul.* [Voiage en Turque et en Perſe, vol. i. p. 22.] Why was this *exception?* On the ſame principle: becauſe St. Paul is full of the doctrine of REDEMPTION; explains the Chriſtian ſyſtem by it; and makes the whole Faith depend upon it.

to the various adverſaries of our faith; A Deiſt, I ſay, would be ready to reply, "That it is indeed true that Jeſus hath declared his own Miſſion to be the LAST: but that this is the artful expedient of every pretended Meſſenger from Heaven, in order to perpetuate his own ſcheme, and to obviate the danger of an antiquated authority. The Impoſtor, Mahomet himſelf, hath done the ſame. He, who here obtrudes his armed pretenſions upon us, hath ſecured the duration of his ſenſual Religion by the very ſame contrivance: A thing, in his ideas, ſo much of courſe, that he did not even object to Jeſus's uſe of it, who had employed it before him; and for no other purpoſe than to cut off his, and all following pretenſions to the like character. On the contrary, he avowed and maintained the general truth of the Nazarite's commiſſion. Now (purſues the Deiſt) a method employed by a confeſſed impoſtor is taken up with an ill grace by the defender of true religion. But I draw a further conſequence (ſays he) againſt the Goſpel, from this repreſentation of Chriſtianity. For if the preaching of moral truth and righteouſneſs were the whole of Jeſus's character and office, then his miſſion did not anſwer its purpoſe, the laſting reformation of mankind, in the knowledge of God, and in the practice of virtue: ſince the world ſoon fell back again into the ſtate from which Jeſus had delivered it; as appears from the hiſtory of the times in which Mahomet appeared, and the advantages he made of that degeneracy."

Thus ſubjected to the inſults and injuries of every kind of impoſtors, who ſet upon deluding the credulous, either by inventing NEW Revelations or by decrying the OLD, do theſe REPUBLISHERS expoſe the holy faith of Jeſus: That faith which, we are told, was *founded on a rock*, impregnable to the aſſaults of men and demons; to the ſophiſms of infidelity, and the preſtiges of impoſture! And ſo, indeed, it is, if we will take it as we find it; if we will receive it as it came from above; if we will preſerve it pure and entire as it was delivered to the Saints, THE REDEMPTION

OF

OF THE WORLD, BY THE SON OF GOD, IN THE VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF UPON THE CROSS.

This ſecures * the character of Jeſus from the inſults of falſe pretenders; and his Goſpel from the injuries of falſe reaſoners.

For, firſt of all, if Jeſus did, indeed, *redeem* mankind, and reſtore them to their loſt inheritance, the ſcheme and progreſs of revelation is compleated: which beginning at the LAPSE, naturally and neceſſarily ends in the reſtoration and recovery of LIFE AND IMMORTALITY by the death and paſſion of our Lord. CHRISTIANITY conſidered in this view (and in this view only Scripture gives it us to conſider) ſoon detects all the artful pretences of impoſture; and ſecures its own honour by virtue of its very eſſence: the great ſcene of providence being now cloſed, in a full completion of its one, regular, entire, and eternal purpoſe.

Secondly, if Jeſus indeed *redeemed* mankind, then did he neither preach nor die in vain: it not being in man's power, with all his malice and perverſeneſs, to defeat or make void the great purpoſe of his Coming. For though one part of his Miſſion was to inſtruct the world in *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs*, which it was in man's power to forget and neglect; yet, what is chiefly eſſential in his character, and peculiar in his office, the *Sanctification* and *Redemption* of the world, man could not fruſtrate nor render ineffectual: For it is not in his power to make that to be undone which is once done and perfected.

The faſtidious Caviller therefore hath employed his pains to very little purpoſe in attempting to diſcredit Revelation from this topic. His laboured diſcourſes on the moral ſtate of the world, before and ſince the coming of Chriſt, are quite beſide the queſtion. For, though, where the compariſon is fully and impartially ſtated, I will venture to ſay, the advantage will be found to lie on the ſide of our Religion: yet ſuppoſing the truths preached by Jeſus, and

* See Div. Leg. Book IX. where the conſiſtency of this Doctrine to right reaſon and the nature of things is evinced at large.

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the aſſiſtance given by the Holy Spirit, have not much improved the general morals of mankind; How does this tend to the diſcredit of the Goſpel? unleſs the Goſpel can be proved to have no natural tendency to make men better? But this is ſo deſperate an undertaking, that, I believe, infidelity will hardly be perſuaded to engage in it. Indeed the contrary is ſo true, that, as I have ſhewn elſewhere, when you lay together the ſtate of PAGAN and CHRISTIAN virtue, one manifeſt and eſſential difference is found between them; which is this, That in the Gentile world, men often acted wrong UPON PRINCIPLE; in the Chriſtian always AGAINST PRINCIPLE *. Now, not to inſiſt upon the neceſſary reſtraint this muſt be upon vice; it plainly demonſtrates the NATURAL TENDENCY of the Goſpel-truths to make men virtuous, and, to inforce them with a ſtronger impulſe, did not ſuit the genius of a rational religion, whoſe objects was free agency.

But the proper anſwer to this idle cavil is taken, as we ſay, from the topic before us. Inſtruction of the world in *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs* was but the ſecondary end of Chriſt's miſſion. The firſt and primary, was to become its *ſanctification* and *redemption*; the one muſt needs be common to every revelation coming from God; the other is peculiar to the chriſtian: and this, as we have ſhewn, cannot poſſibly be fruſtrated, or rendered ineffectual.

To conclude from all that hath been ſaid: As we ſhould not affect to pry into the nature of thoſe things which God hath been pleaſed to withhold from our ſearch, and to cover with the ſacred veil of Myſtery; ſo neither ſhould we reject a Truth, expreſly delivered, becauſe we may not fully comprehend all the reaſons on which it ſtands. In a word, as we ſhould not venture to go on where the ſilence of Scripture directs us to ſtop; ſo neither ſhould we preſume to ſtop where, with ſo loud a voice, it commands us to go on.

Men have been made ſufficiently ſenſible of the miſchiefs attending the firſt of theſe indiſcretions, the being *wiſe* ABOVE *what*

* Div. Leg. Book iv. § 2.

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is written: I have here endeavoured to ſhew, that the other, the being *wiſe* AGAINST *what is written*, is not attended with fewer inconveniencies. What then remains but to chuſe the middle way, the way to become *wiſe unto ſalvation*; and, neither, in practice or ſpeculation, to ADD to, nor to DIMINISH from, the WORD OF GOD?

Let us therefore religiouſly adhere to the doctrine of my text in its juſt extent, That *Jeſus Chriſt, of God, is made unto us* WISDOM *and* RIGHTEOUSNESS, *and* SANCTIFICATION *and* REDEMPTION.

SER-

SERMON VI.

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE MESSENGERS OF THE GOSPEL.

MATTH. x. ver. 16.

BEHOLD I SEND YOU FORTH AS SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES: BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS, AND HARMLESS AS DOVES.

SUCH was the direction given by our bleſſed Lord to his Diſciples, when he ſent them out to preach the *glad tidings of the Goſpel.*

The CHARACTER of the Chriſtian Miſſion is denoted in theſe words, *Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep* :—And the CONDITION of an unbelieving World in the following, *I ſend you in the midſt of wolves.* Though the Faith was to be propagated only by the mild meaſures of perſuaſion, yet even this would provoke the *wolliſh diſpoſition* of the *powers of darkneſs*, to put in ure all the iniquitous contrivance of fraud and violence for its ſuppreſſion.

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Their provident Maſter, therefore, in the concluding words of my text, delivers them a rule for the innocence and prudence of their own conduct. *Be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.* A direction equally reſpecting their PRIVATE and their PUBLIC Character. Whereby, the firſt might correſpond with the dignity of their office; and the other, with the objects of their care. So that, as men, the HUMAN virtues; as miſſionaries, the SOCIAL are recommended to their practice: and both, under the familiar images of the ſerpent's wiſdom, and the innocence of the dove.

What theſe *human* virtues are, the alluſion in the figurative EXPRESSION will diſcover: What the *ſocial*, muſt be determined by the occaſion of the PRECEPT.

Be ye therefore (ſays the bleſſed Jeſus) *wiſe as ſerpents and harmleſs as doves.* A direction, conveyed in two proverbial ſayings, whoſe import the Diſciples perfectly underſtood.

The firſt alludes to a vulgar ſuperſtition of the ancient world, which gave credit to certain artiſts, who pretended to the power of rendering ſerpents innoxious by the force of charms, and incantations. The men who traded in this impoſture, in order to hide their frequent miſcarriages, made the people believe that *fome* of theſe ſerpents had gotten a trick as good as their own; which was *to ſtop their ears* to their inchantments. This counterplot was as readily believed, as the other's magic power, in an age, where every thing was well received, which excited the hearer's admiration. Hence the proverb of *the deaf adder that ſtoppeth her ears; which refuſeth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely*: by which, Moraliſts would infer the wiſdom and ſafety of abſtaining from unlawful pleaſures.

The ſecond, of being *harmleſs as doves*, alludes to an ancient and as fanciful an error of the Naturaliſts, that *the dove is without a gall*; or, at leaſt, bears it not within *.

* Ἄλλα μὲν ἔχουσι χολὴν αὐτοφυῆ, ἀλλ' ἀφ' ἑτέρου δεχόμενον γραφῆσιν, ἔχουσι τὰ ὀπίδια ὀρθά. ἡ γὰρ τὴν χολὴν ἔχει. Horapollinis Hieroglyph. l. ii. c. 48.

The whole of this monition therefore, to the diſciples in their private character, implies, That they ſhould learn to abſtain from all unlawful, unmanly and intemperate pleaſures; and to ſuppreſs in themſelves all the ſentiments of rage, anger, and revenge. The ſerpent's wiſdom being directed againſt the CONCUPISCIBLE paſſions, as the dove's innocence is againſt the IRASCIBLE: and both together make one general precept for the ſubjection of our brutal nature to the rational: in which conſiſts the exerciſe of the *human* virtues.

Could any thing be more harmleſs than this method of propagating religion? Could any thing be more holy than the manners of its propagators? What regard to the rights of men, to the Laws of ſociety, was enjoined to the Offerers of the Goſpel! What neglect of the intereſts of fleſh and blood was required of the Receivers of it! TRUTH was the laſting foundation on which Jeſus erected his Church: and VIRTUE the living principle which was to actuate its members.

Indeed the purity of his intentions and the rectitude of his meaſures are ſo evident from the evangelic hiſtory of his life and death, that the moſt ſtubborn infidel is ready to clear him of fraudulent impoſture, and to centre all his ſuſpicions in a well-meaning ENTHUSIASM.

This is the laſt miſerable refuge of obſtinate impiety. And the order of the diſcourſe, which now brings us to conſider the precept of the text, as it reſpects the meſſengers of Jeſus in their PUBLIC CAPACITY, will enable us to expoſe it in all its nakedneſs.

Be ye THEREFORE *wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.* Wherefore? becauſe they were *ſent forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves*; that is, unarmed and defenceleſs amidſt the *powers of the Prince of this world.* The virtues, recommended to them under their public capacity, were, we ſee, objective to theſe powers; and therefore, of the *ſocial* kind; and conſiſted in prudence and juſtice; as the other, recommended to them in their private capacity, and objective to themſelves, were of the *human*; and conſiſted in temperance and

and forbearance. And here let me obſerve, in honour of God's word (which ſhould be the principal end of all diſcourſes from this place), the mutual connexion and reciprocal influence, which the two parts have on one another. The *human* virtues were to recommend their MISSION; and the *ſocial*, to recommend their PERSONS. But to proceed.

If Jeſus had been an Enthuſiaſt, there was no time when the fanatic ſpirit would ſo forcibly have broken out as at this juncture; the critical juncture of ſending his diſciples abroad to convert the world. An Enthuſiaſt, poſſeſſed with the high glory of propagating and eſtabliſhing a new religion, to ariſe and be denominated from himſelf, would have his ſpiritual paſſions kindled and inflamed to their utmoſt bearing, at that important moment of commencing his enterpriſe.

But the words of Jeſus upon this occaſion beſpeak their Author to be perfectly cool, and collected within himſelf. *Behold, I ſend you as ſheep in the midſt of wolves.*

Let us reflect upon them with attention. Though I am not altogether of opinion with thoſe who conſider the premonition (to which the words of my text allude) ſo frequently repeated by Jeſus to his followers, of the various perſecution that awaited the profeſſion of his Goſpel, as the cleareſt evidence of his prophetic ſpirit: becauſe I think a common obſerver of the ſtate and genius of the then prevailing ſuperſtitions might eaſily foreſee what would be the early fate of a Religion ſupported by no other powers than thoſe of Reaſon and Grace, when it openly oppoſed its truth and purity to a world ſunk deep in error and corruption. Yet ſo far muſt always be confeſſed, that this ſerious attention to the event would not have made part of the Character of a heated and inflamed Enthuſiaſt. When we find, therefore, the founder of our holy religion calmly attentive to the reception his Doctrine was likely to meet with from the People, and provident of the treatment his Servants were ſure to receive from the Magiſtrate, we muſt needs conclude that he then poſſeſſed himſelf in that dignity of repoſe,

under a comprehenſive view of his ſcheme which became a great Prophet, ſuperior to all the infirmities as well as chances of humanity.

But his proviſion for his faithful ſervants did not ſtop at the ſalutary warning here given unto them. When he had hinted at the treatment of the world towards them, *Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves*, he directs what ſhould be their conduct to the world; *Be ye, therefore, wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves*. A direction which none under the influence of a fanatic ſpirit would be either forward to give, or fond to ſee obſerved. For religious Enthuſiaſm, as we know by ſad experience, places its chief glory in deſpiſing human prudence, and in violating and trampling upon human peace.

Its two great ſtates or ſtages are the SUFFERINGS and the TRIUMPHS of its deluded Inſtruments. And, in both, this hot and firey ſpirit fatally hurries them into the moſt miſchievous extremes.

At the new birth of a viſionary Sect, which is generally the ſuffering ſtate of Enthuſiaſm, thoſe under its influence are apt to give great advantages to their oppoſers, and to bring as great diſcredit on themſelves. And all for want of this *wiſdom of the ſerpent*; for want of uſing theſe means of human prudence which both reaſon and nature urge and dictate to us, for the ſupport of our opinions, and for the preſervation of our perſons.

The method Enthuſiaſm chuſes to employ in propagating its tenets is the reverſe to this *wiſdom of the ſerpent*; as we may ſee by comparing the practice of modern Enthuſiaſts with that of the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles; who had formed his conduct on this monition of his Maſter. *He became all things to men, that he might gain ſome* *: They comply in nothing, through a viſionary fervour to gain all. St. Paul, with this allegoric picture of *wiſdom* before his eyes, was polite, artful, and inſinuating; always on the watch to take honeſt advantages of every principle, and practice

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

of

of his adverſaries; in order the more effectually to recommend the Goſpel of Jeſus to their favour *. The Fanatic is ſtubborn, rude, poſitive, and overbearing. So far from being diſpoſed to turn the beſt ſide of his adverſaries' wrong opinions forward, the better to ſet off his own, that he is ever prompt to miſrepreſent their right ones: and abhors the temptation of ſuffering you to be of his Faith; unleſs you expreſs it in his own words, and allow him all his conſequences. And miſtaking the precept of *being at enmity with the world* for an averſion to men as well as principles, he helps forward an unjuſt perſecution from the public, when he ſhould be reconciling particulars to his pretended miſſion.

Nor is his conduct leſs extravagant now it concerns the care of his perſon, than before, in the recommendation of his opinions. Part of the *wiſdom of the ſerpent* conſiſts, as Jeſus elſewhere explains it, in prudently evading the fury of our enemies; ſo that when they perſecute us in one city, we may fly to another †; a point of prudence, which St. Paul, on many occaſions, as temperately as ſucceſsfully put in practice ‡. And when the ſame prudence directed him to withſtand the Magiſtrate's Faſces, it was not as a Teacher of truth, but as a Citizen of Rome §. But neither precept nor example is ſufficient to moderate the fervors of fanatic zeal. So that having ſtirred up the people to miſchief, and provoked the magiſtrate to injuſtice, he cloſeth the ſcene, without either the Confeſſor's merit, or his Maſter's paſſport, in ruſhing with preſumptuous confidence on the flames.

This then being the native hue and complexion of powerleſs Enthuſiaſm, Is it poſſible to believe, that He who, in the direction of being *wiſe as ſerpents*, diſcredited and condemned all this extravagance of conduct, could himſelf be an impotent Enthuſiaſt?

But let us next ſee the viſage Enthuſiaſm puts on when it is now become triumphant, and has gotten the People in its train. If,

* Acts xvii. † Matt. x. 23.
‡ Acts ix. 25. xiv. 6. xvii. 10. xxiii. 17. xxv. 11.
§ Acts xvi. 37. xxii. 25.

in

in its ſuffering ſtate, it haply wore the face of patience and forbearance, it now ſhews, by the ſudden change of countenance, that it eſteemed them the virtues rather of the time than of the perſon. For when Power hath changed hands, and the magiſtrate is come over to its ſide, it is ever ready to turn the ſame authority againſt others which had been ſo abuſively employed againſt itſelf. And if haply it contents itſelf to ſtay the ſlower iſſue of the more artful and clandeſtine methods of diſcouragement and wholeſome ſeverities, yet if theſe do not ſucceed againſt differing opinions, it falls with the quicker appetite on the more direct and open meaſures of violence and oppreſſion.

Now the unbeliever will be forced to own, that Jeſus, with only the common proviſion which a great genius can never be without, might fairly foreſee, that a Religion ſo pure, ſo reaſonable, ſo uſeful to mankind, againſt which there was nothing to oppoſe but the abſurdities and miſchiefs of Paganiſm, muſt, by the uſe of common prudence in the propagation of it, notwithſtanding the oppoſition which was as eaſily foreſeen, at length become ſuperior and triumphant. So that an Enthuſiaſt, who had left inſtructions how his Miniſters ſhould act when that time came, would naturally direct them to exert all their zeal; to demoliſh the high places, to cut down the groves, to ſlay the falſe prophets with the ſword, and to eſtabliſh a perfect uniformity. For there is nothing in which the fanatic ſpirit ſo delights to riot as in the abuſive application of the rules and principles of one of God's diſpenſations to another, though of a genius directly oppoſite.

On the other hand, our ever-bleſſed Maſter, who not only foreſaw, but predicted the progreſs and ſuperiority of his Goſpel, reſtrains his miniſters from all ambitious politics, and unjuſt violence, in the ſingle precept of *being harmleſs as doves*. For while they obſerved this rule, and preſerved this character, they could never aim at uſurping on the State, or tyrannizing in the Church: But would leave the Magiſtrate his ſword; would leave the People their conſcience; and be content to remit the religious fate of Kingdoms

to

to the wiſe providence of God; who in his own good time will bring all men to the knowledge of his Truth.

Thus hath the holy Founder of our Faith digged up, by the very roots, the whole ſyſtem of Impoſture. He has quelled the wildneſs of the Fanatic in the command to be *wiſe as ſerpents*; he hath checked the ambition of the Enthuſiaſt in the command to be *harmleſs as doves*: ſo that the unbeliever muſt either acquit him of theſe affections, or muſt retract what he ſeemed ſo willing to allow him, the greatneſs of his talents and abilities. For, if we will credit theſe men, The great ſupport of his Character was a well-directed enthuſiaſm: and yet he effectually contrived to damp its influence at that very criſis when an Enthuſiaſt would have let looſe his genius, and given it the utmoſt force and moment.

It is ſeen, that in this account of a well-directed Enthuſiaſm, I have ſuppoſed it to conſiſt of an equal mixture of EXTRAVAGANCE and ART: the firſt betraying itſelf in the ſtruggle, and the laſt in its application of the fruits of victory. And whatever inconſiſtence there may appear to be in this repreſentation, I apprehend the fault lies only in the contradictions of our corrupt nature.

It is commonly indeed ſuppoſed, that the more wild and extravagant a fanatic temper is, the more clear it muſt needs be of all fraud and artifice: But both reaſon and experience are ready to ſhew us our miſtake.

Fanaticiſm is a fire, which heats the mind indeed, but heats without *purifying*. It ſtimulates and ferments all the paſſions; but it rectifies none of them: and thus leaving the appetites unſubdued; pride, vanity, and ambition, inſinuate themſelves into the impotent and diſordered mind, under the diſguiſe of purity, holineſs, and perfection. And while they are at work, Religion, which lent them theſe more honeſt appellations, will be ſo far from curbing the owner in the uſe of oblique means, that the ſtrongeſt influence of fanaticiſm will be naturally directed to puſh him upon them, as the beſt inſtruments for the ready introduction of what he calls the *truth*.

Nor

Nor does the PHYSICAL ſtate of the Enthuſiaſt's mind give any ſtronger check to fraudulent practice than the MORAL. For when this paſſion or affection hath taken poſſeſſion of a great genius, who, if he chance to have a lively imagination, is as ſubject to its controul as the meaneſt, the violence of his fervours makes him impatient of ſtop or defeat, in what he takes to be the *cauſe of God*; and conſequently, to caſt about for any kind of means to remove or repair it: readily perſuading himſelf, that any means are lawful: And his ſuperior genius will enable him to find them; and when found to improve them to their utmoſt uſe, by all the arts of fraudulent addreſs. Hence, if we examine the hiſtory of mankind, we ſhall ſee, that the Founders of empires and falſe religions, which theſe Artiſts contrived ſhould ſupport one another, were frank Enthuſiaſts: But, at the ſame time, ſufficient maſters of themſelves, to turn, with proper addreſs, that ſpirit which they had catched and communicated, to the advancement of their proper ſchemes. And it is obſervable, that wherever one of theſe perſonated actors was not perfect in both his parts, he was ſoon hiſſed off the ſtage. The reaſon is evident: it ariſes from the nature of things. Without Enthuſiaſm, the adventurer could never kindle that fire in his followers which is ſo neceſſary to conſolidate their mutual intereſts: for no one can heartily deceive numbers, who is not firſt of all deceived himſelf; or, in other words, ſeen to be in earneſt. But then, on the contrary, when the ſpirit of fanaticiſm is ſufficiently ſpread and inflamed, it can never produce any great or notable iſſue, unleſs the raiſer and director of the machine be ſo far maſter of himſelf as to be able to turn the point of this powerful inſtrument to the objects of his project, and keep it conſtantly directed to their advancement.

Indeed (as hath been obſerved above) the ſucceſsful Directors of this Drama have generally exhibited more of art in their latter ſcenes, and more of enthuſiaſm in the former. The reaſon of which too is not leſs evident. Fanaticiſm is a kind of ebullition or critical ferment of the infected mind: which a vigorous nature can work through,

through, and by ſlow degrees be able to caſt off. Hence, hiſtory informs us of ſeveral ſucceſsful Impoſtors who ſet out in all the blaze of fanaticiſm, and ended their career in all the depth and ſtillneſs of Politics. A prodigy in our nature; but not the rareſt; and exhibited with ſuperior ſplendor by the famous Ignatius Loiola. This illuſtrious perſon, who verified the obſervation of one that almoſt equalled him in his trade, "that a man never riſes ſo high as when he does not know whither he is going," began his extaſies in the mire; and yet ended with the direction and execution of Councils, that even in his own life-time began to give the Law to Chriſtendom.

Amidſt all theſe diſtractions of human reaſon and obliquities of worldly politics, we ſee a ſpiritual Empire ſuddenly ariſe; we mark its progreſs; we trace its extent; we examine its eſtabliſhment; and comparing all its parts with their reference to a whole, we find it in effect to have, what was fancied of old Rome, every eſſential character of eternity. Yet was this ſurprizing Revolution brought about by means entirely different from thoſe by which all the great changes and eſtabliſhments amongſt mankind have been introduced, I mean FRAUD and FANATICISM. What, then, are we to conclude, but that the Religion of Jeſus is as divine in its origine as it is pure and perfect in its eſſence: and that its Author was as free from all the viſions and obliquities of Enthuſiaſm as he was replete with all the wiſdom and virtue of Heaven?

SERMON VII.

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE MESSENGERS OF THE GOSPEL.

MATT. V. 16.

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour, as we may collect from the foregoing chapter, had delivered to his Followers the great Principles of the Goſpel Diſpenſation; which conſiſt in a clearer knowledge of the true God; the loſt and forfeited condition of man; and reſtoration to life and immortality by faith in the Meſſiah.

Having thus taught them what they were to believe, he proceeds in this, and the following chapter, to ſhew them what they were to practiſe; introducing his *Sermon on the Mount* with the words of my text, *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* As much as to ſay, The uſe you are to make of your ſuperior knowledge is to compleat and recommend your practice; that, from thence may ariſe, what is the legitimate end of all human actions, *Glory to God.*

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This is the general ſenſe of the words. But the equity, the importance, the neceſſity of the precept do well deſerve a more particular illuſtration.

It conſiſts of three diſtinct parts.

The firſt is contained in the more general direction of *Letting our Light ſhine before men.* By *light* is meant *knowledge*, or the participation of *truth*: and not, as it is commonly underſtood, *good works*. And this appears not only from what hath been juſt obſerved of the diſpoſition of the precept, with regard to what precedes and follows it; but likewiſe from the propriety of the words themſelves, *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works*; for the thing ſeen, and the inſtrument of ſeeing, muſt needs be different. Not to ſpeak of the propriety of the figure, in the word *light* for *knowledge*. For what light is to the eye, that knowledge is to the mind: On which account it is become a metaphor running through all languages, but hath a peculiar grace and energy in the application of my text: The Great Author of our faith being deſcribed by the inſpired men of old under the ſame figure, *That there ſhould come a* STAR *out of Jacob*: wherefore St. John gives him the title of the LIGHT *which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

By this *light's ſhining before men* is meant, that it ſhould be diffuſive to all, as the nature of light is in itſelf, which ſends out its rays on every ſide around; and that it ſhould be communicated to all, as light is in its uſe and application amongſt men; for as Jeſus ſays in the words preceding my text, *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick.*

But rightly to apprehend the reaſon of giving an expreſs precept for the doing what appears ſo natural for his followers to do, and ſo reaſonable that they ſhould do, we muſt conſider the ſtate and condition of Truth at the publication of the Goſpel; where we ſhall find that the ſocieties of the wiſe and learned, in the ſchools of the philoſophers and in the colleges of the prieſts (from whence iſſued the voluntary and appointed inſtructors of the world), had

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imbibed, from one another, very inveterate prejudices concerning the communication of truth to the people.

In their ſacred fraternities, partly to hide the weakneſs of the national religion, and partly to preſerve the veneration for, and to increaſe the gain of the prieſthood, every thing was wrapt about with myſtery and ſhut up within the cloiſters of their temples. The books that contained the doctrine and diſcipline of religion were carefully ſequeſtred from common eyes; and the inquiſitive tempers of the vulgar reſtrained and checked by oracular denunciations againſt prophane curioſity.

The ſame incommunicable ſpirit prevailed in the ſchools of the Philoſophers. Theſe deſpiſed the people as much as the Prieſts impoſed upon them; and ſhaking off their common relation to the groſs body of mankind, they ſoon began to think, that the doctrines and ſpeculations of their ſchools were of a nature too excellent to come into the markets and aſſemblies of the Vulgar. Hence their ſolemn engagements of ſecrecy; by which they kept their knowledge confined within the limits of their own ſect or profeſſion. Thus ſtood the *Pagan* world with reſpect to Truth.

Amongſt the *Jews*, That great body called the Phariſees, which had all the learning and power of the Sanhedrim in their hands, had likewiſe, in imitation of the Gentile colleges of Religion and Learning, formed themſelves into a Sect; and as they had borrowed many Pagan practices and opinions, which had miſerably polluted the Law of Moſes, ſo this, amongſt the reſt, of confining Wiſdom to the walls of the Temple; and *taking away the key of knowledge from their brethren* *.

Such being the perverſe ſtate of things, it was no wonder that Jeſus ſhould deem it of high importance to the intereſts of Truth, to caution his followers againſt a prejudice that had ſo univerſally infected all the teachers of Philoſophy and Religion.

* Luke xi. 52.

But,

But there are ſtill further reaſons to inforce this precept: The Chriſtian faith hath its advantages of *ſhining*, and the Teachers of it their obligations to *light it up*, which are no where elſe to be found amongſt all the various ſyſtems of wiſdom or holineſs.

For, 1. The Religion of Jeſus is fit for, and worthy the knowledge and examination of every man. The ſeveral modes of Pagan worſhip, as they compoſed the national religions, were contrived and framed by Lawgivers, in ways that beſt ſerved the ends of their ſeveral ſocieties; ſo that public ſervice, rather than truth, being the object of their inſtitutions, theſe were but badly fitted for popular examination: which, therefore, in conſequence, was forbid. But Jeſus, who had no oblique ends to ſerve, *his kingdom not being of this world*, delivered only pure and exact truth, which will ſtand the ſevereſt teſt, and moſt critical inquiry: And This, which was ſo fit, was, at the ſame time, moſt neceſſary to be communicated to all, as propounding to mankind, *The terms of ſalvation* to be obtained only by *his* Goſpel. Unlike, in this too, to the wiſdom of the ancient Sages, which compriſed only idle and fruitleſs truths, with which the people had no concern; or abſtract and obſcure ſpeculations, with which they had no acquaintance.

Secondly, The Teachers of this Religion had the higheſt obligations freely to communicate of their knowledge to others. The pretence, on which the ancient maſters of wiſdom juſtified themſelves in a contrary practice, was the coſt and labour they had been at in acquiring knowledge. A long and ſtudious application to letters, in the painful probationary trials of their ſchools; The many and dangerous voyages they had undertaken in ſearch of wiſdom, at their great expence of fortune, eaſe, and health: Theſe gave them, as they thought, an excluſive property in the Truths which they had ſo dearly bought, and ſo often paid for. Whereas the followers of Jeſus had all their divine wiſdom brought home unto them, without coſt or ſearch. Hence it is that their Maſter elſewhere tells them, *Freely you have received*; *freely give* *. Tha

* Matt. x. 8.

is,

is, You can have no pretence to conceal, or ſell, the Knowledge, which was given to you without ſearch or price.

II. But it was not enough for this *light to ſhine before men*; it was not enough for the followers of Jeſus to communicate of their ſaving knowledge to others: it was So to ſhine, that the world might ſee and underſtand the virtues of its enlighteners. And this is the ſecond particular of the precept. *Let your light* so *ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works.* And as before, the PROPERTY of light was alluded to, in the command that it *ſhould ſhine*; ſo here, the USE, that it *ſhould ſo ſhine.* For light is not held forth for the manifeſtation of itſelf; but to illuſtrate ſomething elſe, which men would recommend to public notice.

It is here ſuppoſed, you ſee, that the DOCTRINES of Chriſtianity will lend a *light* to *good works*, whereby they may be better ſeen and underſtood. And this with great reaſon. There are two ways of eſtimating moral actions; either by the merit of the Performer, or by the benefit of the Effects. If by the benefit of their effects, there is no need of knowing the motive of the actor; on which all merit muſt be eſtimated. In ſuch caſe, we only praiſe the action for the good it produceth: or if the actor have any ſhare in the applauſe; as his motives may, for aught we know, be only prepoſſeſſion, habit, or gentleneſs of temper; it is but juſt ſuch commendation as we give to animals undegenerate, and diſplaying the good qualities of their reſpective ſpecies. But when we would eſtimate *good works* by the merit of the Performer, which is the caſe in queſtion, we are then to know his motives of action. Theſe ariſe out of his principles; and are more or leſs noble as thoſe principles are more or leſs legitimate. Now as the principles, or *light*, of true religion produce the nobleſt motives for *good works*, which are love of God and univerſal benevolence towards man; with great reaſon does the holy Jeſus ſuppoſe, that this *light* will add the higheſt luſtre to CHRISTIAN MORALS; and make them, as he well expreſſes it, *ſeen*; that is, ſeen in their full light and ſplendor.

By

By this branch of the precept, again, it was our Maſter's purpoſe to diſcriminate his followers from the Pagan prieſthood; who neither practiſed virtue themſelves, nor taught it as of much avail to the people. If they were but frequent in their temple ſervice, and exact in their ritual ſolemnities, theſe falſe guides aſſured them that the Gods were pleaſed, and they had done their duty.

It was much the ſame with the Jewiſh. The love of God and of their neighbour was forgotten, or *made of none effect*, as our Lord tells them, *through their traditions* *; and nothing found to ſupply their place, but *new Moons and Sabbaths, faſts and ſolemn aſſemblies* †; which had ſo thoroughly uſurped the place of Virtue, as, in time, even to diſpute the very name with it.

III. But we have not yet the full ſenſe of my text. It was not enough that the *light* of Jeſus's followers *ſhone before men*, and that their *good works* were *ſeen* by it: They were to be SUCH *good works* as from whence *glory to God* might reſult. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* And this is the third and laſt particular of the precept.

It would be the higheſt folly and arrogance, in the reptile, man, to imagine that he, by any of his endeavours, could add to the *glory of God*, with whom eſſentially dwells all power and perfection for evermore. But though the pomp of ceremonies, the ſervility of proſtrations, the coſt of ſacrifices, and the dedication of ſumptuous temples, can add nothing to his *glory*; yet is he graciouſly pleaſed, ſo long as we continue ſubject to his Son, and obedient to his laws, to reckon our procuring and advancing our own mutual happineſs, by the exerciſe of *good works*, as the augmentation of his proper *glory*.

But it is not only in the *end*, but in the *means*, of procuring human happineſs, that our holy religion hath advantages peculiar to itſelf, for the promotion of *God's glory*. We are taught by this

* Mark vii. 13. † Iſaiah i. 13.

religion,

religion, that, of ourſelves, and without the aſſiſtance of Heaven, we can do *no good work*, for that it is the Holy Spirit who directs us *both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure* *. God therefore being the immediate giver of this *grace*, all that proceeds from it muſt be placed to his account, and to the augmentation of his *glory*.

Here again will the followers of Jeſus be diſtinguiſhed from all other teachers. The Pagan and Jewiſh prieſthood were, indeed, by their very profeſſion, taught, that the *glory* of the Deity was to be their aim. For religion being their employment, and the object of religion, God; they could not but ſee that his *glory* was principally to be regarded. But in the way of doing it they were both equally miſtaken. They placed this *glory*, as we obſerved before, only in the magnificence of their temples, the train of their proceſſions, the awfulneſs of ſacrifice, and the humiliation of expiatory penances. They never ſuſpected that *peace*, *good-will towards men*, advanced *glory to God in the higheſt*.

The Philoſophers were ſtill more in the dark as to this matter. For though, in one point, they ſaw clearer than the prieſts, that Virtue was infinitely preferable to the pomp of ſolemneſt ſacrifice; yet, in cultivating the duties of morality, they were ſo far from thinking of the *glory of God*, that they refined and ſublimated VIRTUE for no other purpoſe than to advance the *glory of man*. Nor could it well be otherwiſe amongſt men, who were ignorant both of the true ground of moral obligation, and of our natural inability to act upon it: from which two principles, rightly derived, *glory to God* moſt eminently reſults. For, firſt, their motives to the practice of virtue were abſurd and illegitimate. One followed it *for the love of fame and reputation*; another, *for the intrinſic beauty of its nature*; a third, *for the benefit of its effects*; a fourth, *for that the laws of his country required it*; a fifth, *for he knew not why*: But none practiſed it on its true principle, *conformity*

* Philip. ii. 13.

to

to the will of God: from whence *glory* to him naturally proceeds. Again. They were as much miſtaken in man's ability. They pretended that their SAGE had the whole exerciſe of virtue in his power, by the mere force and rectitude of his own nature, without any aid or aſſiſtance from the Deity. Nay, the *Stoics*, a ſect which, of all others, moſt cultivated the ſcience and practice of morality, were ſo far from ſeeking the aſſiſtance of Heaven, that, with an unparalleled extravagance, they placed their WISE MAN in a rank ſuperior to their GODS, as having in him ſomething of higher ſtrength and fortitude; for that he perſevered in virtue, amidſt a thouſand difficulties and diſcouragements; whereas the virtue of the Gods had no temptations to ſhake it *. In a word, ſuch utter ſtrangers were they, in general, both to the nature of God and Man, that Cicero, delivering the ſentiments of ancient wiſdom on this matter, expreſſes himſelf to this effect: "All the commodities "of life, ſays he, are the gift of Heaven, but virtue no man ever "yet thought came from God. For, who ever returned him "thanks, that he was good and honeſt? And why ſhould he? "for virtue is, of right, our own praiſe, and that in which man "reaſonably GLORIES. This, in ſhort, is the opinion of all the "world, that the goods of fortune are to be aſked of Heaven, but "that wiſdom is to be had only from ourſelves †."

* Eſt aliquid, quo SAPIENS antecedat Deum. Ille naturæ beneficio, non ſuo ſapiens eſt. Sen. Ep. liii.—Ferte fortiter, hoc eſt quo Deum antecedatis. Ille extra patientiam malorum eſt, vos [Sapientes] ſupra patientiam. Idem Lib Quare bonis, etc.

† The whole paſſage is in theſe words: Atque hoc quidem omnes mortales ſic habent, externas commoditates, vineta, ſegetes, oliveta, ubertatem frugum et fructuum, omnem denique commoditatem proſperitatemque vitæ, à Diis ſe habere: virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit. Nimirum rectè. Propter virtutem enim jure *laudamur*, et IN VIRTUTE RECTE GLORIAMUR. Quod NON contingeret, ſi id DONUM A DEO, non à nobis haberemus. At verò aut honoribus aucti, aut re familiari, aut ſi aliud quippiam nacti ſumus fortuiti boni, aut depulimus mali, cùm Diis gratias agimus, tum nihil noſtræ laudi aſſumtum arbitramur. Num quis, quòd bonus vir eſſet, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quòd dives, quòd honoratus, quòd incolumis——Ad rem autem ut redeam, judicium hoc omnium mortalium eſt, fortunam à Deo petendam, à SEIPSO ſumendam eſſe SAPIENTIAM. De Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 36.

But now it will be ſaid, and it is not an objection to be concealed, How is this precept to the Diſciple, to be accommodated to the Maſter's practice? Jeſus directs the Meſſengers of his word to *let their light ſhine before men:* and yet his own was ſo obſcurely diſpenſed, that his followers are ever and anon ſoliciting him to explain his meaning. And his anſwer to them, upon one of theſe occaſions, only increaſes the embarras. *Unto you* (ſays he) *it is given to know the Myſtery of the Kingdom of God, but, unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables; that ſeeing they may ſee and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not underſtand; leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and their Sins ſhould be forgiven them* *. A penurious diſpenſation of truth is the leaſt offenſive circumſtance in this dreadful account of his commiſſion. The keeping numbers in darkneſs, in order to work their deſtruction, gives but an untoward idea of a divine Meſſenger; and a much worſe of him in particular who, by his own declaration, was ſent *not to deſtroy men's lives but to ſave them* †, or, as he expreſſes it on an occaſion more to our preſent purpoſe, *to ſave that which was loſt* ‡.

I ſhall examine this offenſive circumſtance in the Goſpel diſpenſation, not merely to ſhew the conformity between Jeſus's own practice, and that which in my text he recommends to his followers; but principally to vindicate the juſtice of the divine conduct towards thoſe, who, it is confeſſed, were the proper objects of his vengeance. And the rather, as this circumſtance is become a ſtumbling-block which licentious men are ever ready to throw in the way of the ſtaggering and the weak-ſighted.

In order to do this, we muſt go back to the inſtitution of the Law. This eſtabliſhment, though preparatory to the Goſpel, was yet, in order to fit it to the genius of the Jewiſh people, delivered under a carnal cover; which, for the ſake of *what was to come,*

* Mark iv. 11, 12.
† Luke ix. 56.
‡ Matt. xviii. 11.

the

the Prophets, from time to time, were ever lifting up; and pointing to the ſpiritual ſubſtance beneath. Notwithſtanding this attention of providence to conduct them to their true happineſs, the genius of the people prevailed; and inſtead of ſuffering the SUBJECT diſcloſed by the prophets to erect their minds to heavenly things, They catched at the EXPRESSION to fortify themſelves in their carnal habitudes. In a word, The Jews growing more and more earthly-minded; and with an obſtinacy ſo peculiar to them, that their blindneſs ſeemed to ſpread in proportion to their increaſe of day-light; By ſuch time as the change of the œconomy approached, any cover for truth, even the plaineſt apologue, or moſt obvious parable, was ſufficient to keep them in that ignorance, into which their paſſions and prejudices had brought them.

Againſt this hardneſs of heart and groſſneſs of underſtanding, the prophets had long ſtruggled, by all the addreſs of information, by all ſeverity of reproof; till at length, every mean of reformation having proved ineffectual, God, in his wiſe providence, thought fit, that thoſe who would not ſuffer him to ſave them ſhould, for a warning to an impious world, have their rejection of the Lord of life predicted by the mouth of his Prophets; and their final deſtruction recorded in their own Oracles.

The time foretold was now come. The Lord of life was ſent to THEM and to all MANKIND. And agreeable to his buſineſs, was his Office and Character. To mankind at large he was primarily a divine Meſſenger: To the Jews, a divine Meſſenger foretold. To prove his miſſion, he worked miracles: to prove himſelf the Meſſiah, he fulfilled Propheſies. Under the firſt part of his Character, *his light ſhone before men* in the manner he recommends it to his followers' imitation: under the latter, it *ſhone* indeed, but ſo as to be ſubſervient and inſtrumental to the evidence ariſing from the marks predicted of their promiſed Deliverer. Now God, by Iſaiah, had ſaid, "Alſo I heard the voice of the Lord "ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend and who will go for us? Then "ſaid I, Here am I, ſend me. And he ſaid, Go and tell this

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" people, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, " but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make " their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes: leſt they ſee with their " eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, " and convert and be healed *." From this prophecy, (which the Diſciples might have ſeen was then fulfilling on the Jews †, in the very mode of communicating the Goſpel to them) our bleſſed Saviour deduceth the proof of his Meſſiah-Character—*Unto you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand* ‡. As much as to ſay, Take this mark amongſt others of the truth of my pretenſions: My offers of Salvation, as was foretold, are rejected of my Countrymen; and I have delivered my meſſage to them in ſuch terms, and attended with ſuch circumſtances, as the good providence of God hath foretold; and by foretelling, hath preſcribed the Meſſiah to employ, in order to promote the accompliſhment of his will. So that Jeſus, we ſee, is not here declaring the MODE, in which, as a divine meſſenger, he was to propound God's good will to man: Much leſs is it any intimation of the peculiar GENIUS of the Goſpel; which in one place ſelected it's favourites, and in another doomed the unhappy to perdition: But it is a ſimple aſſertion that the prophetic prediction, or, if you will, God's ſentence, was now fulfilling or executing on the Jews: And that Jeſus, as the inſtrument of it's completion, was indeed the Meſſiah foretold. In a word, he is here ſimply inſtructing his followers in the wiſe and wonderful accompliſhment of Scripture prophecy, concerning the fate of the Jews and the fortunes of their Meſſiah; to convince them of God's righteous dealings, and of the truth of his own miſſion. Let what conſequence ſoever therefore, concerning the divine juſtice, be drawn from this declaration, it concerns not Jeſus, as preacher of the Goſpel; but God himſelf as the giver of the Law.

* Iſaiah vi. 8, 9, 10. † Matth. xiii. 14. John xii. 39.

‡ Luke viii. 10.

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We addreſs ourſelves then, with due reverence, to juſtify his ways to man; which we truſt may be done without preſumption or difficulty, where Revelation informs us of the act; and Natural light inſtructs us in the equity and reaſon of it.—"Alſo I heard the "voice of the Lord ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend and who will go "for us? Then ſaid I, Hear am I, ſend me. And he ſaid, Go "and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and "ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people "fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes: leſt they "ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand "with their heart, and convert and be healed."

Here, we ſee, the event predicted, is the rejection of the Meſſiah: and though we find it ſo predicted as may ſeem to imply it was likewiſe influenced, *leſt they ſee with their eyes*, yet as we are able to give a good account why ſuch terms might be uſed though no ſuch influence were exerted, it does not follow that the event was indeed influenced.

Firſt then, we may obſerve, that, had it been the intent of the holy Spirit to impreſs upon the hearer no more than the CERTAINTY of the event, we cannot conceive how this idea could have been conveyed more naturally and elegantly than by words which imply an INFLUENCE, *make the heart of this people fat, &c.* For the human mind being unable to reconcile free-will and preſcience, it can hardly be brought to conſider a future event as any other than a contingency, till the idea of a ſuperior influence be taken in.

Secondly, where the matter revealed concerns God's MORAL GOVERNMENT, the ſubject ſeems to require, that the natural effects of vice ſhould be repreſented as poſitive inflictions, as judicial puniſhment for crimes. Philoſophically ſpeaking, A hardneſs of heart, in the courſe of things, brought on this fatal blindneſs: But, prophetically, The blindneſs is a Puniſhment for their hardneſs of heart; *to them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables, that ſeeing they may ſee and not perceive, etc.*

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The ſubject, I ſay, ſeems to require this repreſentation; men being but too apt to conſider the natural iſſue of things, as out of the bounds of moral government; though in reality it make a very eſſential part: for what ſuch men call the ETERNAL RELATIONS are indeed no other than a DISPOSITION, of God's free appointment; and therefore whatever evil reſults from ſuch diſpoſition, may in a moral ſenſe be truly and properly conſidered as a poſitive infliction.

And I am the rather inclined to believe that the prophecy in queſtion is to be underſtood in this ſenſe, when I conſider the conduct both of Jeſus and his apoſtles to this abandoned people. The firſt offer of the Goſpel is made to them: and it is not till their rejection of it, that Jeſus turns to the Gentiles. He took care that his followers ſhould obſerve the ſame conduct. And no reaſonable account, I think, but this, can be given of his ſuffering them to remain ſo long under the deluſion of that groſs prejudice, that the offer and benefits of the Goſpel were confined to the race of Abraham. For the conſequence of this was their being ſtrongly driven to try all methods with a people to whom their commiſſion was ſuppoſed both to begin and end. They were ſo driven; and did not leave Judea till forced away by perſecution: and then, the ſame prejudice turned them, firſt of all, to the *diſperſed amongſt the Gentiles* *.

But let us now ſuppoſe this predicted blindneſs to be, what the objectors would have it, a poſitive infliction of evil. If ever there were puniſhments in mercy, this was certainly one of them. We ſee from their whole hiſtory, how morally impoſſible it was that they ſhould be converted by any mere conviction. All their faculties were ſo totally poſſeſſed with ideas of a temporal deliverance, that they would have rejected a ſpiritual dominion even from the hand of God himſelf: as they had before rejected a glorious Theocracy under his own ineffable adminiſtration, for the ſake of a

* John vii 35.

faſhionable

faſhionable Tyranny, like what their neighbours groaned under. Now, in ſo deſperate a condition, the increaſe of light muſt have been the increaſe of condemnation. The greateſt mercy therefore that could have been afforded them was to *make their heart fat, their ears heavy, and to ſhut their eyes.*

But he who will inſiſt that the words, which follow—*leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert and be healed*—do neceſſarily imply a puniſhment in judgment, rather than in mercy, ſhall not be contended with by me: ſo little reaſon do I think we have to ſtand out, from the apprehenſion of its impinging on the moral attributes of God. Be it then a puniſhment in judgment.

To ſuppoſe no ſuch for long ſlighted grace, is making the higheſt benefit the cheapeſt and the vileſt: and if we ſuppoſe any, the moſt adequate ſeems to be the loſs of that which had been long, and impiouſly abuſed.

To believe offered ſalvation to be always at hand, after much ſcornful rejection of it, is to diveſt God of his juſtice; and to leave him nothing to exerciſe over man but his mercy. But whenever the concluſions, which we draw concerning God's diſpenſations towards us, from one of his attributes, are made at the expence of another, we may be aſſured that they are falſe becauſe unreaſonable.

Further, Every covenant of God with man, on the ſyſtem of God's revealed will, is a covenant of grace or favour; Which therefore may be juſtly made (as in fact it is made) with this conditional puniſhment annexed and declared. And what fitter, in the nature of things, than that long and continued inſults on the Giver ſhould be puniſhed by a total deprivation of the gift?

But laſtly, this part of the great Diſpenſation ſeems, in ſome caſes, to be neceſſary for the ſupport and dignity of God's moral government. If God had nothing to do but to pardon, man would ſoon find nothing to do but to offend.

The

The two great ſources of human infelicity are PRESUMPTION and PREJUDICES; and theſe we are apt to indulge in all the objects of our WILL and JUDGMENT: the conſequence of which is, our ſo frequent miſcarriages in the purſuits both of HAPPINESS and KNOWLEDGE.

One of the boldeſt inſtances of preſumption is our ſo commonly neglecting the *calls of grace:* ſo that nothihg leſs than this awful part of God's diſpenſation, the *ſhutting the door* on thoſe who have long and vilely trifled with it, was ſufficient to give a check to ſo impious a folly.

The impatience of labour, and the violence and allurements of the appetites, are the ſource of all our prejudices and wrong judgments: and while we continue to be miſled by that maſter prejudice, the INNOCENCE OF ERROR, there is little reaſon to expect we ſhould be diſpoſed to bring our opinions to a ſtrict account. But this awakening truth, of the puniſhment for abuſed mercy in taking away the means of information, will diſpoſe us to give Religion as early and fair hearing; and make us ſenſible that Error is never innocent while the door of Truth ſtands open before us.

But the beſt proof of God's righteous dealing are the THINGS DONE: and it is only for want of full demonſtration here, that we are forced to have recourſe to any other: It being but to ſupply and ſupport the lower degrees of evidence in the hiſtory of God's diſpenſation, that we reaſon upon the juſtice of them from the nature of things. In all caſes where we have ſenſible demonſtration of the fact, the reaſoning, as is fit, goes the other way; and the juſtice of doing is proved from the thing done. Whether God could caſt off his choſen nation, and keep or leave them in irremediable blindneſs, is to be proved, where the rejection reſts only on moral evidence, from what we know of his nature and attributes. But where this puniſhment, whoſe commencement reſts only on ſuch evidence, is ſtill executing before our eyes, in this caſe, the ſenſible demonſtration of the fact is a better proof of the juſtice of it, than all that metaphyſic reaſoning can ſupply.

This

This we preſume to be the real caſe of the Jewiſh people. Whenever this dreadful judgment of God, which fell upon them in a national deſtruction, had its beginning; whether at, or before their refuſal of ſalvation from the Lord of life; ſo much at leaſt is certain, that it ſtill continues to operate with unremitted vigour. For, as in civil tribunals, which are wont, in the caſe of more atrocious criminals whoſe death but half ſatisfies the demands of juſtice, to doom the lifeleſs carcaſe to be gibetted up in terror, and expoſed to the ſight of the ſurvivers, ſo it hath pleaſed eternal Juſtice to act, in its diſpoſition of the remains of this unhappy nation. For though their civil and religious policies have been long overthrown and aboliſhed, yet the Name ſurvives, and the Race ſtill exiſts, as diſtinct and ſeparate, and perhaps more unmixed than while they were a Nation. A dreadful diſtinction, and ſupported againſt a thouſand circumſtances which muſt, according to all our rules and experience of human affairs, have long ſince ſwallowed and abſorbed them into the great and undiſtinguiſhable maſs of mankind. The circumſtances, I mean, are ſuch as ariſe from their diſperſion over the whole earth, without proper habitation, country, or national connexion. For a fixed abode, as the head-quarters of a powerleſs people, ſeems to be a kind of preſervative againſt extinction; and as we are told (by thoſe who would willingly leſſen the miracle of this puniſhment) hath actually kept in being, the *Guebres* and the *Parſis* in ſome retired corners of India. And yet the TEN TRIBES, when doomed to the like deſtruction, found a fixed habitation; who nevertheleſs are abſorbed and loſt as if they had never been. Now, though the philoſopher and politician will but badly account for this; The religioniſt can reſolve it with eaſe. He ſays, that God Almighty had decreed and foretold that the firſt diſperſion ſhould abſorb the name and memory of the people puniſhed; and that the laſt ſhould preſerve and hold them up, the viſible objects of his preſent vengeance, and of his future mercy.

But then, how are they held up? As the refuſe of the earth, the outcaſt of nations, and the opprobrium of humanity; equally

hated and deteſted by all the differing religions and various policies of mankind. For, in order to convey down the juſtice of the ſentence, along with the execution, (ſo wonderful are the ways of God) the VICE of this abandoned people continues to this day, as inſeparable from their perſons, as the puniſhment, it produced upon their race. And avarice, fraud, and a ſavage inhumanity, like an incurable leproſy, as effectually diſtinguiſh their obduracy from the ſhifting follies of mankind, as does the adherence to their rabbinical ſuperſtitions.

To reſume then, and to conclude with the main queſtion, which led us into this inquiry, The conſiſtency between the openneſs and evidence recommended by Jeſus to his followers; and the parables and dark ſpeeches delivered by himſelf.

We preſume, it now appears, that there is a perfect harmony and agreement between the precept and the example: that the firſt is declarative of the eſſential genius of the Goſpel; the ſecond only an occaſional appeal to the evidence of Jeſus's Meſſiah-character: and conſequently, which is the inference to be drawn from both, that throughout the courſe of Chriſt's miniſtry, every thing, as well what was kept back from ſome, as what was clearly and fully revealed to others, equally tended to the advancement of God's GLORY, and the GOOD of mankind.

SERMON

SERMON VIII*.

THE EDIFICATION OF GOSPEL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

2 PETER, Chap. i.

5. GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH, VIRTUE; AND TO VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE;
6. AND TO KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE; AND TO TEMPERANCE, PATIENCE; AND TO PATIENCE, GODLINESS;
7. AND TO GODLINESS, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS; AND TO BROTHERLY-KINDNESS, CHARITY.

THE holy Apoſtle beginning his farewel epiſtle to the Churches with a commendation of their FAITH, takes occaſion from thence to inſtruct them in the nature of that CHRISTIAN EDIFICATION which they were to raiſe on it; and, as his laſt *labour of love*, brings together, and lays in, all the various materials proper for ſo great a work.

* N. B. This Diſcourſe was printed and publiſhed while the Rebel Army was in England, in the latter end of the year 1745.

But we ſhall have a very wrong, and much too low, conception of our Apoſtle's ſkill, if we conſider theſe but as materials rudely thrown together without art or choice; and ſtanding in need of other hands to range them in that architectonic order wherein they are to be employed. For on a careful ſurvey of his plan it will be found, that no other than that Spirit which directed the workmen of the old tabernacle could give ſo artful a diſpoſition to the materials of this new *building not made with hands, whoſe builder and maker is God* *.

He hath marked out the Foundation, he hath fixed the Baſis, proportioned the Members, adorned the Superſtructure, and crowned the Whole with the richeſt of materials. And all this with ſuch juſtice of ſcience, ſublimity of thought, and force of genius, that every foregoing Virtue gives STABILITY to the following; and every following imparts PERFECTION to that which went before: Where the three Orders of this heavenly architecture, the HUMAN, the DIVINE, and SOCIAL Virtues, are ſo maſterly diſpoſed, that the *human* and *ſocial* have their proper ſtrengths and graces heightened and ſupported by the common connection of the *divine*: Where every thing, in ſhort, concurs, in its proper ſtation, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt* †.

In conformity to the Maſters of Science, who deliver it to their diſciples as a firſt principle, that no conſiderable advancement is to be expected without much pains and labour, our holy artiſt introduceth his rules with this preliminary precept,—GIVING ALL DILIGENCE. And if this be neceſſary in civil matters, where nothing oppoſeth the progreſs to perfection but *the length of art and ſhortneſs of life*; with how great reaſon are we here enjoined *diligence*, where, beſides thoſe diſcouragements, we have numerous enemies within us under the diſguiſe of friends, the confederated Paſſions, to retard our progreſs; and devils, and evil men without, to ſtop us as we preſs forward in the career of virtue?

* 2 Cor. v. 1. Heb. xi. 10. † Eph. iv. 12.

But

But the neceſſity of this *diligence* will be fully ſeen in the ſequel of our diſcourſe; where we explain the care and circumſpection required in the cultivation of every Chriſtian Virtue, here recommended, to prevent its languiſhing by defect, or luxuriating by exceſs.

St. PETER, *as a wiſe maſter-builder* *, chuſeth for his foundation that ROCK on which our Lord had promiſed him to *build the Church*;

Add to your FAITH——

as directed by the ſame divine Spirit with his fellow-labourer St. PAUL, who bids *every man take heed how he buildeth*; *for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is* JESUS CHRIST †.

But the ſimplicity and clearneſs of the doctrine of *Faith* could not ſecure it, even in the apoſtolic times, from being perverted to countenance the moſt fatal error concerning its nature and efficacy; while it was miſtaken to be *alone* ſufficient to make man acceptable to his Maker, and, *without good works*, to entitle him to the rewards of the Goſpel-covenant. To explain the original cauſes of this error, and to ſhew how the perfect novelty of the doctrine of Faith —the illuſtrious marks of that Spirit, which then accompanied the profeſſion of the Faith—and the method the Holy Spirit directed the Apoſtles to purſue in the propagation of the Goſpel—to ſhew, I ſay, how all theſe accidentally contributed to ſupport this error, is beſide the bounds and purpoſe of the preſent diſcourſe.

It ſhall ſuffice to obſerve, that this dangerous extravagance, which hath continued more or leſs, to infect all ages of the Chriſtian Church, ſpread immediately ſo ſwift and wide, upon the wings of that divine truth, that a *man is juſtified by Faith without the deeds of the law* ‡, that the apoſtolic writers found it neceſſary to give it a frequent and formal confutation. And on this account, St. Peter's firſt precept enjoins us to add or build *Virtue* upon *Faith*.

* 1 Cor. iii. 10. † Id. ib. 11.

‡ Rom. iii. 28.

Add

Add to your Faith, VIRTUE *.

From henceforth, *Faith*, which, while it was ſingle and ſolitary, remained *dead*, as the ſacred writers expreſs it, being thus *cloathed upon* by virtue, becomes alive and vigorous, and productive of all the fruits of grace and immortality.

A reciprocal advantage *Virtue*, thus erected, receives from *Faith*: for we ſhall find theſe advantages to be, all the way, reciprocal. The weakneſs of unguided Reaſon, and the violence of ill-balanced paſſions, had reduced MORAL VIRTUE, both in principle and practice, to ſo ſhadowy and precarious an exiſtence, that the Wiſeſt in the Pagan world could not forbear lamenting its helpleſs condition; and owning that nothing but a Revelation from Heaven could realize and ſupport it.

They miſtook the true foundation of Morality; Some placing it in the native excellence of virtue, others in the exterior benefits, of which it is productive. They were left deſtitute, and expoſed to the free rage of ungoverned paſſions, without aid, and with uncertain proſpect of reward.

But it was the *Diſpenſation of Faith*, which taught us that the true foundation of Morality was compliance to the will of our Creator and ſovereign Lord. It was *Faith* which enabled us to ſurmount all the oppoſition of the appetites, by holding out to us an infinite reward; and which the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit hath placed within our reach. Thus, to uſe the words of the apoſtle Jude, *building up ourſelves on our moſt holy* FAITH, *praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keeping ourſelves in the love of God, we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life* †.

* I underſtand the word ἀρετὴ, in this place, in its common acceptation as it is uſed by moral writers. But Grotius ſays, Vox ἀρετὴς non poteſt hic ita generaliter ſumi ut Phil. iv. 8 & apud Philoſophos. It is fit we hear his reaſon, that the reader may judge between us. Sequuntur enim multa virtutum nomina, quare ἀρετὴν hic recte puto poſſe accipi fortitudinem in fide. He owns—Eſt in hoc periodo egregia gradatio. I think I have ſhewn there is ſuch a gradation; but its beauty and correctneſs depend on ἀρετὴ's being taken *generaliter*, *ut Phil.* iv. 8. *& apud Philoſophos.*

† Ver. 20, 21.

But

But though *Virtue* be here enjoined, and in all the preaching of our bleſſed Saviour, and in all the writings of his Apoſtles, inceſſantly repeated and inforced; yet if we expect to find in them any regular or methodic body of Morality, we ſhall be much miſtaken. With reſpect to this, the New Teſtament, all along, refers us to another Guide. For God having before revealed the whole doctrine of Morality by the RELIGION OF NATURE, and none of God's diſpenſations contradicting another, it was enough for the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity, when they preached up *Virtue*, to refer their followers for particulars, to what Natural Religion taught concerning it.

This being ſo, and that the great Pandect of the LAW OF NATURE is to be ſearched and ſtudied, in order to attain a perfect knowledge of moral duty, there is need of much pains and exerciſe of mind to learn that *Virtue* we are here enjoined to build upon *Faith*. For though Nature hath ſtamped ſo ſtrongly the firſt principles of moral duty in the breaſts of all men, that even a kind of friendly inſtinct will not ſuffer us to be totally ignorant of them; yet the numerous deductions from thoſe firſt principles, of what is fit and right, in every circumſtance of life, being to be collected by the ſetting together, comparing, and ſorting our ideas, through all the various combinations of moral complexities, it requires, even with the aſſiſtance of Holy Writ, much reflection and habitude; and without that aſſiſtance, is a taſk utterly unſurmountable, as the experience of all ages hath fully ſhewn.

Scripture then conſtantly referring to the Law of Nature, what can reſult from the ſtudy of Scripture, by one ignorant of that Law, but doubt and uncertainty, if modeſt; and if vain and preſuming, and at the ſame time (which hath too often happened) a teacher of others by profeſſion, what but miſtakes and errors, the fatal errors of Superſtition and Fanaticiſm? For doubtleſs to an ignorance of natural Religion muſt be aſcribed thoſe extravagances to which ſo many Sects and Parties have, in their ſeveral turns, been obnoxious.

But

But much of this miſchief had been avoided, had men duly attended to the words of our Apoſtle: who, with this deſign, gave us the next precept of my text. *Add*, ſays he,

to Virtue, KNOWLEDGE;

or that wiſdom which is the reſult of the ſtudy of Nature in the purſuit of Truth.

I.

And that you may ſee with how prophetic, as well as juſt, a ſpirit St. *Peter* was here directed, I ſhall ſtop a moment to hold you out a picture of *Virtue* unattended with that *Knowledge*; copied from no obſcure or diſgraced originals; but from ſuch whoſe lives are preached up for examples, and their deaths commemorated with divine honours; ſuch as have ſhrines and altars dedicated to their worſhip; and vows and petitions offered up to their divinity; in one word, POPISH SAINTS.

To underſtand this matter truly, We muſt conſider, that *Virtue* conſiſts in acting agreeably to thoſe relations, in which we ſtand to our common Humanity, our Fellow-creatures, and our Creator. For as RELIGION, in the largeſt ſenſe of the word, includes the duty we owe ourſelf and neighbour; ſo MORALITY, in its larger ſenſe, includes the obſervance of that relation we ſtand in towards God. And when the practice reſpects man, it is called VIRTUE; when it reſpects God, it is PIETY.

Theſe relations are commonly diſtinguiſhed into the *human*, the *ſocial*, and the *divine* virtues: The end and deſign of all which is to perfect man's nature;

1. By reſtraining, regulating, and directing, the private and ſelfiſh appetites, *according to the dictates of reaſon.*

2. By cultivating, improving, and enlarging the ſocial paſſions and affections, and employing them in the ſervice of our Species, *according to the dictates of charity.*

3. By

3. By exercising our understandings in the contemplation of the first Cause, and by owning our relation to him in suitable acts of rational worship, in order to unite us to our supreme Good, *according to the dictates of grace.*

Now when, in the Church of Rome, *Knowledge* came to be esteemed of no use to improve or direct *Virtue*; but that *Ignorance* was thought as well the mother of all other virtues, as *of Devotion*: When the *Law of Nature* came to be shunned as a dangerous and fallacious guide; and *Faith*, traditional, not scriptural, had usurped its province of interpreting *Gospel-righteousness*; then it was, that these bright examples of a new kind of virtue appeared amongst them, in a barbarous rabble of Saints; who under the common name of RELIGIOUS, and on pretence of a more sublime and elevated virtue, than natural Religion taught, ran into the most horrid excesses of Fanaticism and Superstition. For,

1. Instead of REGULATING the selfish appetites, they laboured all they could to eradicate and destroy them, as things, even in their nature, vicious; as the graceless furniture of *the old man with his affections and lusts.* All was dismal and dark about them: inordinate watchings, excruciating disciplines, attenuating labours: these miseries, still further aggravated by hunger, thirst, and nakedness, were the best means these poor mistaken followers of *him*, who said *his yoke was easy and his burthen light*, could think of to regulate the selfish passions. Till the body, deprived of every kind of good, which the gracious hand of Providence hath so largely poured out for the solace of its creatures, gave way, and yielded to the fury of this fanatic penitence: While he was esteemed the greatest *Saint* who was the most expeditious *Suicide*.

2. Instead of improving and ENLARGING the social affections, these Saints fled into caves and deserts, or shut themselves up for life in the dust and silence of a cloister. Where, to unfit themselves for serving their friends and families, they renounced their possessions, to give to *pious uses*; that is, to support the sloth of lazy Mendicants, or the luxury of debauched Churchmen: To unfit them-

themſelves for ſubmiſſion to the Civil magiſtrate, they entered into treaſonable engagements of unlimited obedience to their ſpiritual ſuperiors: To unfit themſelves for ſerving their country or mankind, they took vows of voluntary poverty, and renounced all ſecular employments: And laſtly, as much as in them lay, to make war againſt their very Species, they unnaturally devoted themſelves to a ſingle life, in blaſphemous oppoſition to that firſt great command and bleſſing, *increaſe and multiply*.

3. Laſtly, inſtead of USING REASON in the offices of devotion, to attain the ſupreme Good, an union with the Deity; By crediting the *Imagination*, they have often thrown themſelves, with extatic tranſports, into the arms of the Demon. While, in the place of internal acts of ſober meditation, nothing was ſeen but viſionary raptures, and transfigurations; nothing heard but predictions, prophecies, and revelations: In the place of external acts of rational worſhip, they celebrated the holy offices with gay and childiſh ornaments, with barbarous and ſuperſtitious rites, and with baſe and ſervile proſtrations. And the favourite objects of their worſhip were in all reſpects agreeable to the form; either the idolatrous adoration of a conſecrated wafer, or of thoſe yet leſs ſubſtantial divinities, which have their exiſtence only in a lying legend.

You have here a faithful picture of Popiſh *Virtue* ſtript of *Knowledge*. From whence you may collect how miſerable a creature man grows, when he throws aſide his *Reaſon*, the firſt kind gift of Heaven, in order to follow the falſe lights, which cuſtom, fancy, or the paſſions, have ſtuck up in his breaſt; and how equally miſerable that Society muſt be, which ſupports a Religion, where IGNORANCE hath diveſted *Virtue* of all its charms, poiſoned all its health, and made it as deſtructive to Communities, as barefaced open vice.

Here, you have been ſhewn, in a terrible example, the miſchief done by *Ignorance* to *Virtue*; of how much ſervice *Knowledge* is to it, you may collect for yourſelves.

I now

I now proceed to ſhew the reciprocal ſervice *Virtue* does to *Knowledge*. *Knowledge* is the perception and attainment of TRUTH; and *uſeful Knowledge* the perception and attainment of thoſe truths, which tend to the perfecting of our nature. But the carnal paſſions, operating averſely to ſuch truths, cloud and darken the underſtanding, ſo as to miſlead us even in thoſe of the moſt eaſy diſcovery, and of the higheſt importance. Again, to acquire a competent ſhare of *Knowledge* we muſt, as I have ſaid, *give all diligence* in the purſuit of truth, ſo as to trace her throughout her hidden receſſes: But it is only a love for the object, which can heartily engage us in the purſuit: And this can ariſe from nothing but the beauty of it. Now while *Vice* uſurps the heart, *Truth*, her mortal enemy, will be a neglected Gueſt. But when *Virtue* has aſſumed her ſeat, the paſſion for Truth will revive. For *Truth* and *Virtue* are twin-born ſiſters; and, with only a name of diſtinction, participate of one common nature; *Truth* being ſpeculative *Virtue*, and *Virtue* only practical *Truth*. And now the underſtanding makes a free progreſs in knowledge, as having no headſtrong appetites to miſlead it, nor earthly paſſions to damp its affection.

From henceforth, the only danger is from the quarter oppoſite: Leſt the mind's ardent love of truth ſhould engage it in abſtractions; and carry it beyond the limits of thoſe truths, which are given us for our contemplation here.

In order to apprehend this danger, we are to underſtand, that, of the immenſe intellectual ſyſtem, an extremely ſmall portion only lies really within our reach; the infinitely larger part reſiding near the ſource of Light itſelf; whoſe effulgence becomes darkneſs to the dazzled view of the impotent Intruder.

The reaſon why ſo much is kept out of ſight, and ſet above the reach of man's comprehenſion, who by the unwearied vigour of his faculties ſeems naturally capable of a much wider graſp, appears to be this, Leſt, in our earthly condition, the mind ſhould become diſtracted by too great variety of ideas; or that it ſhould make a wrong choice; and purſue truths of leſs preſent importance too far,

to the neglect of thoſe more neceſſary for its improvement, in this our probationary condition.

This reaſon is much ſupported by obſerving, that in the enlightened part of the intellectual world, nay even in thoſe cleareſt and brighteſt portions of it, where full ſcience is to be had, ſpeculations, puſhed beyond a certain point (that point where Uſe is reaſonably ſuppoſed to end, and mere Curioſity to begin) bring our concluſions to obſcurity, extravagance, and contradiction.

The not attending to this ſeems to have been the very thing, which hath given birth, and ſo long continuance, to SCEPTICISM. For men ſeeing this to be the iſſue of the cleareſt principles, when purſued to an intemperate length, concluded, againſt their ſenſes, that what ended in darkneſs had never really begun in light. Reaſon indeed convinced them that ſo perverſe a progreſs was not the NATURAL CONDITION of things; but they would not ſuffer expe-rience to teach them, that it was the ARBITRARY DECREE of infinite wiſdom and mercy, which impoſed this barrier to the extravagances of its giddy, lawleſs creature.

But however this may be, certain it is, that men, raiſed and heated by an over-fond paſſion for knowledge, have been always apt to run into the boundleſs regions of chimera's. Where, though loſt and bewildered, yet, if of warm imaginations, and inflamed with the ambition of Inventors, they have taken more delight in thoſe obſcure and ſhadowy paths, than any ſober follower of truth, within the limits of open day and nature.

Now theſe follies, ſo taking in themſelves, and ſo miſchievous in their conſequences, proceeding from a want of modeſty, and due conſciouſneſs of the narrow limits of the human underſtanding, St. Peter, in his next precept, with admirable ſkill, reſtrains. *Add*, ſays he,

to Knowledge, TEMPERANCE *;

that

* Ἐγκράτεια ſignifies moderation, or a temperate uſe of things in general. To denote the ſpecies, the Ancients ſaid, ἐγκρατὴς ἀφροδισίων—γαστρὸς ἐγκρατὴς—ἐγκρατὴς ὕπνου, θυμοῦ, οἴνου.

When

that is, *ſobriety*, *moderation*, *continence*, in the purſuit of truth. For as *Virtue*, without *Knowledge*, falls into all kind of FANATICISM in practice; ſo *Knowledge*, without *Temperance*, leads to all kind of HERESY in opinion. St. Paul obſerved, even in his time, the ſeeds of *intemperate* knowledge begin to ſpring up and ſpread amongſt his converts; and therefore cautions them againſt *vain philoſophy and a knowledge that puffeth up* *. But this ſo deformed and laid waſte the Chriſtian Church in after-times, that the *new earth* ſeemed, for many ages, to be under a *ſecond curſe* of *bringing forth nothing but thorns and thiſtles*; ſo much more ſevere than the *firſt*, that theſe delicacies were not to be produced without much labour, and *ſweat of the brow*.

II.

Here again the ROMAN CHURCH affords us a ſad example of the miſchiefs of *intemperate knowledge*: For though, as was obſerved before, there was great ſcarcity of *true knowledge* to direct their *Virtue*, they abounded in *falſe knowledge* to corrupt their *Faith*: Though they refuſed to make the RELIGION OF NATURE the interpreter of *Goſpel-righteouſneſs*, they ſanctified the VAIN PHILOSOPHY OF THE GREEKS † to explain *juſtifying Faith*.

We have ſeen what ſort of SAINTS the Church of Rome adores: Let us now ſee what kind of DOCTORS ſhe builds her faith upon. As their DEVOUT retired to their Cloiſters to deform *Virtue*, ſo their LEARNED aſſembled in their Schools to corrupt *Faith*. Where, miſtaking Theology, which is a ſcience

When the ſpecies is not thus deſigned, we have no way of determining the ſenſe of ſo generical a word, but the context. Cic. uſes *temperantia* in the ſenſe ἐγκράτεια is here explained.—Qui autem, ſi maxime hoc placeat, *moderatius* tamen id volunt fieri, difficilem quandam TEMPERANTIAM poſtulant in eo, quod ſemel admiſſum coerceri reprimique non poteſt: ut propemodum juſtioribus utamur illis, qui omnino avocent a Philoſophiâ quam iis qui rebus infinitis *modum* conſtituant: in reque eo meliore quo major ſit, *mediocritatem* deſiderent—tamen nec *modus* eſt ullus *inveſtigandi veri*.—De Fin. l. i. c. 1.

* Col. ii. 8.—1 Cor. viii. 1.

† The philoſophy of Ariſtotle being the foundation of School Divinity.

of

of practice, for a ſcience of ſpeculation, *Knowledge*, which is only the means, they took to be the END of Religion; and as that, which is the end of any thing, cannot be too much cultivated, they purſued *Knowledge* with ſuch *intemperate* rage, that, as if Religion was only a trial of ſkill, and the rewards of it to be adjudged to the beſt diſputant, they ſpent their whole lives in agitating and ſubtilizing queſtions of faith: Abundantly happy if, with all their toil, they could at length obtain the never-fading titles of *Doctors profound, irrefragable, ſubtil*, and *ſeraphic*. Theſe, under the reverend name of SCHOOLMEN, long monopoliſed the manufactory of Faith; and wove their cobwebs thin and dark for the hangings of the Sanctuary.

To ſuch then, you will eaſily believe, the APOSTLE'S CREED ſoon became too plain and ſimple. They wanted one that would afford eternal matter for diſpute and wrangle. So, from the article of *Mary the* VIRGIN, they invented one of *Mary the* GODDESS: From the article of *Chriſt once offered on the croſs for our redemptio*, they ſpun out a *daily Sacrifice*: and the horrid idea of a *Tranſubſtantiation*: From *his deſcent into Hell* they deduced the fable of *Purgatory*: From *belief in the holy Catholic Church*, the blaſphemous tenet of the *Pope's infallibility*: From the *communion of Saints*, the idolatrous *worſhip of dead men*: And from the *forgiveneſs of ſins*, the gainful trade of *auricular confeſſion, and human abſolution*.

But none of theſe ſtrange doctrines being to be found in *Scripture*, they were forced to call in the aid of TRADITION to ſtrengthen the feeble Powers of SCHOOL-SUBTILTY. And Tradition drawing after it a thouſand other beggarly errors, which were all now to be ſupported; this gave riſe to an after-birth of Hereſies, and freſh employment for the foſter-fathers *of the Schools*. So that at length, the true foundation, the ſimple faith in JESUS THE MESSIAH, was loſt and forgotten; and lay for many ages buried under two deformed heaps of rubbiſh, SCHOOL-DIVINITY and TRADITION. Over each of which, like the Ædiles in *ancient Rome*, a venerable Magiſtrate

Magiſtrate preſided, *That* called the *Maſter of the Sums*, and *This*, of *the Sentences* *.

At laſt, in God's good time, this precept of *adding temperance to knowledge* began to be attended to; And the truth, which flamed out from the well-conducted labours of ſuch, ſoon burnt up and conſumed this precious ſuperſtructure of *wood, hay, and ſtubble.* When the true Faith, like *oft-tried ſilver*, appeared again in its native purity and candour. In this condition we received it from our fathers. So ſacred a depoſite let us religiouſly preſerve, and with the ſame pious care tranſmit to our poſterity: Having always in mind that *we are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets* (not the Maſters of the *Sums* and *Sentences*) *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone* †.

The avoiding theſe evils therefore, is the advantage which *Knowledge* receives from *Temperance.* A reciprocal advantage *Temperance* receives from *Knowledge:* For *Temperance* being nothing but the withdrawing from all viſionary purſuits, and abſtaining from all raſh judgment, out of a ſenſe and conviction of the weakneſs of human underſtanding, was *it* not founded upon *Knowledge*, it would be in danger of degenerating into a ſlothful Scepticiſm, a total uncertainty of all things from a ſuperficial examination of the moſt obvious; a fatal aptitude in concluding that truth was not to be found, from being too ſoon weary of the ſearch. A condition which, we experience, hath befallen, and muſt, unavoidably, befall thoſe, whoſe *Temperance* is not founded on *Knowledge.* But being thus ſecured, *Temperance* preſerves a vigorous, yet a ſober courſe: For the regular reſtraint which it impoſeth on the mind doth not hinder us from the moſt active exerciſe of our faculties, but only confines it to objects fitted for our contemplation.

We have obſerved, that the reaſonableneſs of the practice of *Temperance* ariſeth from our ſenſe of the weakneſs of human underſtanding. Now this ſenſe ſhould not only diſpoſe us to be mo-

* Thomas Aquinas, and Peter Lombart.

† Epheſ. ii. 20.

derate

derate in our own opinions, but to be candid and charitable to the opinions of others; and till *Temperance* hath acquired this quality, it is partial and imperfect.

To render it compleat, St. Peter, therefore, in his next precept, injoins us to *add*

to Temperance, PATIENCE *;

that is, *long-ſuffering*, and bearing with the contradiction of Others. This is indeed the natural conſequence of a perfect *Temperance*. For having experienced, in our own caſe, how inſenſibly errors inſinuate themſelves into the mind; how plauſibly they aſſume the air of truth, when called to account; how obſtinately they maintain their ground, when now become ſuſpected; and what labour is required to diſpoſſeſs them, even after they are detected and expoſed;—having experienced, I ſay, all this, we ſhall be well inclined to bear with *Patience* the contradiction of our erring Brother. We ſhall ſtill preſerve the affection we had for him before he went aſtray; and ſhall not ſuffer his being of another Church, or Sect, or Party, or any thing but an *unchriſtian life*, to leſſen that affection; but with *Temperance* and *Patience* wait the ſecond coming of the Meſſiah to *ſeparate the tares from the wheat* †.

III.

The want of which *virtues*, amongſt thoſe, who yet dare to call themſelves *the followers of the Lamb*, hath brought more deſolation on the Chriſtian Church, than all the perſecutions of Pagan Emperors, or the eruptions of northern Barbarians: leſs Pagan, and

* The original is ὑπομονή. The reaſon why the Apoſtle uſed this word rather than μακροθυμία, which may ſeem to be the more proper word for the ſenſe I give to *Patience*, appears to me to be this—The Church, at the time of writing this epiſtle, was in a ſubjected and diſtreſſed condition. And ὑπομονὴ is the *Patience* of thoſe in ſubjection, as μακροθυμία is the *Patience* of thoſe in authority. Beſides, ὑπομονὴ in the New Teſtament generally ſignifies a *Patience* attended with hope and expectation of better. And that ſenſe I make to be required here.

† Matt. xiii. 30.

leſs

leſs Barbarian, than the author of the PRINCIPLE OF INTOLERANCE, who pretending to ſit in the Chair of him, who here enjoins us *to add patience to temperance*, and calling himſelf the *Vicar of Chriſt*, hath not been aſhamed to make *him* the pattern of his conduct, who was *an accuſer of his brethren, and a murderer from the beginning* *.

The Chriſtian Church, in its infancy, breathed nothing but concord, love, and charity. It had *then* a ſpirit as pure, and innocent, as the ſtate of childhood itſelf. The holy brethren were, *in malice, children*; howbeit, in *underſtanding*, that is, in rational faith, in vigorous virtue, and in ſober knowledge, they were *men*. And thus was the *new Jeruſalem built like a city, that is at unity in itſelf* †. No diſputes, no ſtrife, no emulation, but who ſhould moſt excel in works of charity and piety.

But, alas! this glorious riſing of the Goſpel, which came with *healing in its wings*, and promiſed the arrival of that long-wiſhed-for day of *everlaſting peace*, was of a ſudden overcaſt, and nothing ſucceeded but ſtorms and tempeſts. For our evil Genius, the *Prince of the air*, was early at work to obſcure and deface the promiſed triumphs of the *Sun of righteouſneſs*. Nor was the engine he employed to defeat man's *Reſtoration*, different from that, with which he procured his *Fall*: It was, ſtill, *Knowledge* without its regulator, *Temperance*.

For when now the SCHOOLS, by obtruding on the world a ſyſtem of ſanctified abſurdities under the name of *catholic religion*, had produced ſchiſms and diſſentions; and the CLOISTERS, by perfecting their ſaints in a ſour inhumanity and holy pride, had raiſed a ſpirit impatient of contradiction (and the papal hiſtory informs us, that their learneſt Doctors were the moſt unintelligible, and their Holieſt ſaints the leaſt forbearing); then it was that their Church, impregnated with theſe miſchiefs, brought forth the Fury, PERSECUTION.

* John viii. 44. † Pſal. cxxii. 3.

Of all the *Myſteries of iniquity*, that of perſecution is the ſooneſt learnt, and eaſieſt reduced to practice: On which account it hath had its proficients, that were fit for nothing elſe, in every Sect and Party: But the honour of reducing it to a ſcience, and conducting it on certain principles, is ſolely due to the CHURCH OF ROME. For no ſooner was a people found who refuſed to receive *the mark of the Beaſt*, than, aſſiſted by the Schools and Cloiſters, it erected that infernal Butchery, the INQUISITION, the maſter-piece of its *eccleſiaſtical Policy*; which, under the name of an HOLY OFFICE, as directly violates the law of Nature and Nations in the injuſtice of its *proceſs*, as all the precepts of the Goſpel in the inhumanity of its *judgments*.

But (holy Jeſus!) ſhould I relate the tricks, the treacheries, the frauds, the rapines, the delays, the horrors of impriſonment, the tortures of the rack, the bloodſhed, the murders practiſed there, murders committed with ſo exquiſite a malice, that *body*, *ſoul*, and *reputation*, are intended to fall a ſacrifice at once,—ſhould I but repreſent, I ſay, theſe things to you in their native colours, your juſt indignation would endanger that heaven-born Charity, which it is my aim to recommend to you even here, and here chiefly, where I am pointing out the enormous evils which the excluſion of her bleſſed influence occaſions. And though I have expreſſed myſelf with the free reſentment of a man who regards POPERY, not only as the corruption of true Religion, but as an inſult on the SENSE, and an invaſion of the LIBERTIES of mankind; yet would I carefully endeavour to keep within the bounds of that charity which conſtitutes the character of a miniſter of Chriſt.

I ſhall therefore draw a veil over this unhappy ſcene, which gives ſo deadly a wound to the integrity of the Chriſtian name; and infixes ſo laſting a diſgrace even on our Common nature. Content to have given you one general view of the PAPAL RELIGION, which, under the name of a *Religion*, is indeed no other than an impious *Farce*. I have ſhewn you, in their order, the three acts of which it conſiſts: The firſt played by their *Saints*, and their ſubject, *fa-*

natic

natic Virtue: The ſecond by their *Doctors*, and theirs, *unintelligible Faith:* The third by their *Prieſts*, and theirs, the antichriſtian *diſcipline of racks and gibbets.* I have ſhewn you likewiſe the connection theſe three parts have on one another; and the natural tendency of the two firſt to produce the dreadful *cataſtrophe* of the third. For when Virtue becomes ſtript of humanity, and Faith forſaken of reaſon, charity is ſoon loſt in zeal, and piety changed to perſecution.

Such a view ſhould teach us to ſet a juſt value on our own happy Conſtitution, where *Goſpel-light* and *Civil liberty* go hand in hand. And be You well aſſured that theſe two bleſſings muſt ſtand or fall together: That Civil ſlavery will make room for Popiſh cruelty; and that Popiſh ſuperſtition will ſupport a tyrant in trampling on our laws. For the politician knows that the ſureſt way of fixing ſlavery is to tie it on the conſciences of men: And the prieſt hath experienced, that the mind is never ſo tame and ſervile, ſo ſubmiſs in ſwallowing contradictions, as when the body is already broken and humbled by the ſtroke of tyranny.

Thus hath the Apoſtle ſhewn us, that the ſecurity againſt the evils of diſſention and intolerance are *Temperance* and *Patience*; which teach us to *feel* our own weakneſs, and to *bear* with that of Others. But here again the infirmity of our Common nature betrays itſelf; and *Temperance* and *Patience*, excellent and divine as they are, become ſubject to the general fate of human virtues, grow degenerate and depraved. Thus, too often, moderation and tolerance ſink into careleſsneſs and indifference, a fatal indifference for all truth, and all religion. That men, and even Churches, are but too apt to fall into that remiſs and *lukewarm* ſtate, for which, the holy Spirit denounced ſo ſevere a judgment on the *Laodiceans* *, we have melancholy proof. Nor is ſuch a degeneracy hard to be conceived. For when the corroſive ferment of bitter Zeal, which deſolates mankind under a pretended concern for the glory of God,

* Rev. iii. 16.

has, by the infuſion of the cool and heavenly dew of moderation, been brought to a gentle temperament; the Mind, become tired, and aſhamed of its late tumultuous diſorders, is apt to ſink into the other extreme, of a languid and unactive indifference. I wiſh I had no cauſe to ſay, that this very age and place have ſeen this ſhameful infirmity of our nature exemplified. And whoever reflects upon the indiſcreet zeal which diſturbed the Church in the beginning of this century, and on the nature of that *effectual* cure which began to operate, before we reached to the middle of it, will not, if he be ſerious and impartial, accuſe me of an uncandid reflection. But to return. To provide againſt this evil is the deſign of our Apoſtle's next precept, which bids us *add*

to Patience, GODLINESS.

And then, (as St. James adviſeth *) we *let Patience have her perfect work*. For then, at the ſame time that we preſerve the greateſt moderation towards others, we ſhall keep alive the holy fire of innoxious zeal in ourſelves. For by *Godlineſs* is meant the warm and affectionate diſcharge of all the duties of divine intercourſe, whether in public acts of devotion, or in private ſentiments of meditation.

With exquiſite ſkill likewiſe hath our Apoſtle raiſed this ſecond ORDER of Chriſtian architecture, *godlineſs*, or the *divine virtue*, on the former, namely, the *human*. For, by this means, *godlineſs* cannot degenerate, as it did in the CHURCH of ROME, from not obſerving this direction, either into fanaticiſm, ſuperſtition, or bigotry; but will remain ſober, rational, and truly ſublime.

And yet there is another danger to which it is obnoxious. For by long and intenſe exerciſe in holy offices, the joy and tranſport that elevates the mind, thus filled with its true and proper object, GOD, naturally diſpoſeth us to contemn all inferior things; and from deſpiſing the things, but too often, to deſpiſe the perſons who

* Chap. i. 4.

delight

delight in them: And by making odious compariſons, like the *Phariſee to the Publican*, to forget our relation, our near relation, both by nature and grace, to the meaneſt of our ſpecies. Hence ariſeth SPIRITUAL PRIDE, the laſt and moſt fatal enemy to true *Godlineſs*. Now for this, too, the Apoſtle, in his next precept, provides a remedy. *Add*, ſays he,

to godlineſs, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS.

Thus begins the third, and laſt ORDER of this Chriſtian building. And, from this time, *Godlineſs*, placed between, and ſupported, on each hand, by the *human* and *ſocial* virtues, becomes ſtable and permanent. And while it receives this united aid from both, it returns it back again to both.

We have ſhewn the benefits *temperance and patience* receive from *godlineſs*: We are now to ſpeak of that which *brotherly-kindneſs* receives from it.

The moſt beauteous, and elevated branch of *brotherly kindneſs* is FRIENDSHIP, whoſe natural root and origin is ſimilitude of manners. But *theſe* being as often bad as good, friendſhip becomes as frequently a confederacy in vice, as a community of virtue. So that this adorable virtue, the cordial of private life, and largeſt ſource of public good, by being built on the falſe foundation of *ungodlineſs*, hath often produced all that miſchief to Society it was deſigned by nature to prevent. But when, as here, it is rightly placed on *godlineſs*, it ſtands ſecure from abuſe, and is enabled to bring forth all its genuine fruits of public beneficence.

Brotherly-kindneſs is now only liable to one diſorder, (for human depravity will ſhew itſelf to the very laſt), and it is this, that *brotherly-kindneſs* being enjoined to be built on *godlineſs*, or Religion, men are yet too apt, like the *Phariſees* of old, to confine their *brotherly-kindneſs* within their own *ſect* or *pale*: While all *without* are treated by them as the wounded traveller by the Prieſt and Levite.

But

But this narrow and partial benevolence the Apoſtle has effectually removed in the concluding precept of my text. *Add*, ſays he, in the laſt place,

to brotherly-kindneſs, CHARITY;

that is, univerſal love of all mankind. This regulates and perfects all the other virtues; and is, itſelf, in no want of a reformer. All the other virtues, as we have obſerved, degenerate both by defect and exceſs: This is incapable of either. Its nature and eſſence ſecure it from defect; and its fruits and products from exceſs.

This then is the crown, the keyſtone of this heavenly edifice, this triumphant Arch of immortality; or, as the holy Apoſtle more emphatically calls it, THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS *. This, with reſpect to the foregoing Virtues, is like the gilt dome or covering of the imperial Palace. Without which, the ſtrongeſt foundations, the richeſt ornamented walls, the beſt-diſpoſed apartments, become, in a little time, but naked and deformed ruins; open to every ſtorm, and expoſed to all the deſolation of waſting elements.

WITHOUT THIS, if we may believe his fellow-labourer St. PAUL, the reſt of the Chriſtian building hath neither ornament nor uſe. The very FOUNDATION is precarious and unſtable: *Though I have all* FAITH, ſays he, *ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no* CHARITY, *I am nothing*. VIRTUE, likewiſe, without it, is equally unprofitable: *Though I give my body to be burnt, and have no* CHARITY, *it profiteth me nothing*. KNOWLEDGE likewiſe without it is vain and brutal: *Though I ſpeak with the Tongues of men and of angels, and have all* KNOWLEDGE, *and have not* CHARITY, *I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.* EVEN GODLINESS is unacceptable without it: *Though I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and have no* CHARITY, *I am nothing*. Laſtly, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS, when ſeparated from it, goes unrewarded: *Though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not* CHARITY, *it profiteth me nothing*.

* Col. iii. 14.

But,

But, IN THIS, as the ſame Apoſtle tells us, are comprized all the efficacies of the foregoing graces: For, like FAITH, he tells us, it *believeth all things*, it *hopeth all things*; like VIRTUE, *it thinketh no evil, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly*; like true KNOWLEDGE, it *vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up*; like TEMPERANCE and PATIENCE, *it ſuffereth long, and is kind, is not eaſily provoked, beareth all things, endureth all things*; like GODLINESS, it *rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth*; and like BROTHERLY-KINDNESS, it *envieth not, ſeeketh not its own.*

In a word, beginning then with FAITH, and finiſhing with CHARITY, or, as the ſame Apoſtle much better expreſſeth it, FAITH WORKING BY CHARITY *, we come by juſt degrees to erect, after the divine model here given us, that heavenly edifice of *Chriſtian perfection, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord* †.

* Gal. v. 6.

† Eph.. ii. 20, 21.

SER-

SERMON IX.

OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

MATT. XXIII. 9, 10.

CALL NO MAN YOUR FATHER UPON THE EARTH: FOR ONE IS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. NEITHER BE YE CALLED MASTERS: FOR ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST.

TO claim Rule or Maſtery in matters of Religion, on mere human Authority, ſhews ſo much impudence; and to acknowledge the claim, ſo egregious folly; that one could hardly conceive any man, who had been *delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, ſhould be in danger, either of aſſuming it himſelf, or ſubmitting to it when aſſumed by others. For what FATHER, doth common ſenſe bid us acknowledge, but him who *begot us through the Goſpel*; *our Father which is in Heaven*: Or what MASTER, but him who *viſited and redeemed his people*, even *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*.

1. But this Government of God's Church under the *Goſpel*, not being adminiſtered, as under the *Law*, in PERSON, but by a WRITTEN

WRITTEN RULE; the Miniſters of the *word*, under pretenſe of interpreting it, took occaſion to introduce their own authority; and on that, by inſenſible degrees, a very wicked Uſurpation. The buſineſs of interpreting was, at firſt, modeſtly aſſumed, as a mere act of *Charity*, to aſſiſt the brethren in the ſtudy of God's word. But the employment being commonly confined to a certain *Order*, this act of Charity ſoon grew into an office of Authority, which at laſt put the *Law* and the *Gloſs* upon an equal footing.

The Pretenſe for the exerciſe of this office, on which the Uſurpation took its riſe, was the OBSCURITIES in ſacred Scripture. Unhappily, it was not underſtood, that the *very Obſcurities themſelves* were a ſufficient evidence that the ſubject of them could never be matter of faith neceſſary to ſalvation. What perhaps contributed to obſtruct ſo obvious a truth, was the great privileges aſcribed to *Chriſtian Faith.* So that men became more ſolicitous to have it large and full, than to have it pure and perfect.

2. The adminiſtration of Chriſt's Kingdom by a *written Word*, on his withdrawing bodily from his Church, gave another advance to this uſurped Authority, of a more public nature. It neceſſitated the Church to aſſume a form approaching to that of mere human Societies; in which, Rulers and Governors were ordained to keep the ſeveral members in ſubordination to the whole; which could be only done by inveſting ſuch Governors with a power to inforce a *common formula of Faith.* And though this was barely neceſſary to keep Society together; yet we ſee, how eaſily it might be abuſed, to introduce an uſurpation over Conſcience.

3. Hitherto we have conſidered the ſteps to this unjuſt dominion, condemned in my text, as they advanced from WITHIN the Lord's heritage: Others roſe from WITHOUT. For our *civil* as well as *ſpiritual* Governors have been equally diſpoſed to play the Tyrant over Conſcience; and, not rarely, have agreed to ſhare the Tyranny between them.

The *civil Magiſtrate*, the Apoſtle tells us, *is the miniſter of God to us for good*; that is, the means of procuring and preſerving theſe

bleſſings, which our reaſonable nature, and the indulgence of providence, concur in enabling us to enjoy. In order to this end, the enforcement of the GREAT PRINCIPLES both of *common morality*, and of *natural religion*, fall under his Juriſdiction. Such of them, I mean, as are abſolutely neceſſary to form that fundamental bond of civil Society, OBEDIENCE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE. But, under this pretenſe, the civil Magiſtrate hath frequently attempted to draw in the WHOLE of Religion into his Cognizance. And this uſurpation, many miſtakes concerning his Office, and the nature of civil Society, joining in with imaginary neceſſities of State, contributed to ſupport. He obſerved, that the *regal* and *ſacerdotal* character were of old commonly united in the ſame perſon. And the particular reaſons of this conjunction not being conſidered, he imagined that what was only an accidental coalition, was a perpetual union. Again, he ſuppoſed civil Society, whoſe ſole end is the ſecurity of one certain kind of good, comprized in the temporal liberty and property of man, to be ordained, for the attainment of all poſſible good of every kind; which neceſſarily implied his care in, and juriſdiction over, Religion. Laſtly he concluded, that NECESSITY OF STATE required an Univerſal conformity to the *Religion of the Sovereign*. A *neceſſity* merely imaginary: for wherever religious TOLERATION is allowed, diverſities of ſects never affect the peace of civil Society. Indeed, when the Magiſtrate begins to violate the rights of Conſcience, then this *neceſſity* becomes real: but it is a neceſſity of his own making; it does not ariſe from the nature of things. Therefore the cauſe, which was in his own power to reform, he ſhould have reformed; rather than have ſought to remedy the effects by further injuſtice. He ſhould have taken-off that iniquitous reſtraint; which, in forcing to Church-conformity, by civil penalties, hath occaſioned the violation of the national peace; rather than, by additional penalties, to ſeek to regain that peace, in an univerſal conformity of mere outward profeſſion; under which, the power of Religion vaniſhes.

Such

Such were the pretenſes of our ECCLESIASTICAL and CIVIL Governors, to *Maſtery* and Dominion in the *Lord's Inheritance*: From whence we may collect the care and tenderneſs of our bleſſed Maſter, in this early warning to his Followers againſt exerciſing, or ſubmitting to, this Antichriſtian Claim. *Call no man Father upon the Earth: for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called Maſters: for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt:* Which words plainly imply, that whoever requires religious Obedience, or a right over Conſcience, by his own Authority, is an Uſurper in another's Juriſdiction; and whoever pays obedience to ſuch a Claim, is a rebel to his lawful Maſter. For revealed Religion coming immediately from God, the LAWGIVER, and the SUPREME MAGISTRATE, are one and the ſame; and all Authority properly reſides in him.

But Man's claim is not only unjuſt, and Man's ſubmiſſion to it ſinful; but they are both, in the higheſt degree, extravagant and abſurd.

A juriſdiction in matters of Faith is what no human authority is capable of adminiſtring; as all human authority is ſubject to error and miſtake. This is ſo obvious an objection, that the Biſhop of *Rome*, who firſt ſet up this claim, or at leaſt, digeſted it unto a Syſtem, ſoon ſaw the neceſſity of ſupporting it on a pretended INFALLIBILITY. And though this was adding blaſphemy to uſurpation, yet it made the *Myſtery of Ungodlineſs* conſiſtent: and free, at leaſt, from the abſurdity of thoſe, who confeſs themſelves *fallible*; and yet exact the ſame ſubmiſſion to their Authority as if they could not err. Which of them is the moſt abſurd is eaſily underſtood; but which of them the moſt preſuming is hard to ſay: For if one intrenches upon Heaven, the other ventures to inſult common ſenſe.

But the mere weakneſs of the underſtanding is not the only circumſtance that diſqualifies men for this authority over Conſcience. The prejudices, ariſing from the paſſions, make the unreaſonableneſs of implicit ſubmiſſion ſtill more apparent. The moſt ſpecious

exerciſe of human Authority is doubtleſs in thoſe Aſſemblies called GENERAL COUNCILS. And yet every one, not an utter ſtranger to Church-hiſtory, muſt have learnt, that the ſame partialities mix themſelves in their concluſions, which miſlead *Civil Aſſemblies*. And, where is the wonder, if Churchmen, acting on an uſurped plan, ſhould deviate from the paths of *Faith* and *Charity*, when we every day ſee Stateſmen, in their proper office, miſtake the plainer road of Juſtice and the public Good.

One, therefore, *is our Father, which is in Heaven: One is our Maſter, even Chriſt.* And their Will, as announced to us in *Sacred* SCRIPTURE, is the *only Law*, to which Chriſtians, as ſuch, are held and obliged. On this Rock, where Chriſt built his Church, every private Man may ſafely repoſe his conſcience. To this truly infallible Guide, we may commit ourſelves with perfect confidence; in this aſſurance, that ſo much of God's Will as is neceſſary for us to know, is eaſy to be known; and that whatever is dark or difficult in his *Word*, is therefore not neceſſary to be known.

But if human Authority hath uſurped upon Conſcience; there are not wanting thoſe who, on the other hand, have uſed Conſcience for a *cloke of maliciouſneſs*: and, on pretence of *one being our Father which is in Heaven*, have denied that Obedience to the CHURCH OF CHRIST, which, as a mere human Society, it might claim; and which, on that very footing, Chriſt himſelf hath commanded us to pay unto it, where he directs his followers to *hear the Church* *.

But Authority, which theſe words imply, is a mockery without ſubmiſſion and obedience. Hence the reaſonableneſs of ſubſcription to a *general formulary of Faith*; which the nature of Society makes neceſſary, in order to tie a number of particulars into one body. A bond, which may have its due efficacy without violating any of the rights of Conſcience: For all the juriſdiction which follows from it is only this, that ſo long as any member of the Commu-

* Matt. xviii. 17.

nity

nity profeſſeth that general *formulary*, which the end of Society requires, to admit him into Church-communion, he be obedient to ſuch Laws of his ſpiritual Governors, as concern DISCIPLINE: So far, the Authority of the Church, as a religious Society, extends; and no farther. For whenever a private Member of it can no longer, with a good conſcience, ſubſcribe to the *points of Doctrine* profeſſed; or conform to the *mode of worſhip* in practiſe; or ſubmit to the *rules of diſcipline* inforced, all that remains is expulſion, or Excommunication; but, unattended with opprobrious cenſures, civil incapacities, or corporal or pecuniary inflictions; in a word, with every conſequence that may injuriouſly affect the perſon, fortune, or reputation of the ejected Member.

II.

But to return now to my text. As the reaſon againſt *calling any one our Father upon the Earth*, is not founded in our own ſtrength, and our neighbour's weakneſs, but in the common infirmity of all; the other prohibition naturally follows, *that neither ſhould we affect to be called Maſters*. For if, purely to preſerve the rights of Conſcience, and to vindicate the Authority due to God's tribunal, we refuſe to acknowledge man's juriſdiction; with what face can we claim that for ourſelves, which we have denied to all others?

And yet it is a melancholy truth, that when the great ſeparation was made from POPERY, on this very principle, that it had uſurped the titles of FATHER and LORD, due only to God and his Son; Thoſe holy Men, who were obedient to the *warning voice*, which called them out of *Babylon*, were too apt to forget the condition, on which only, they had a right to vindicate their Chriſtian liberty from the dominion of a MASTER; which was, the not pretending to MASTERSHIP themſelves.

The ſpirit of Dominion ſoon betrayed itſelf in theſe newly manumiſed Churches of God: Firſt, by too unreaſonably narrowing the bottom of Church-communion; and then, by perſecuting of thoſe whoſe

whoſe Conſciences would not ſuffer them to ſubſcribe to their terms. So that the ſimple, uniform GOSPEL FAITH, on which the Proteſtant Churches were profeſſedly founded, ſoon became broken into Sects and Conventicles: And every defenſeleſs Party, which had moſt ſuffered for opinions, no ſooner got Civil Power on their ſide, than they returned the injuſtice with double injury. For Perſecution, though it may ſtrengthen and improve our Faith, doth not ſo eaſily enlarge our Charity.

It hath been offered in excuſe for this behaviour of the Proteſtant Churches, on their ſeparation from the Church of *Rome* (for, their perſeverance in it afterwards, will admit of no apology), that the SPIRIT OF PERSECUTION hath a marvellous malignity in its nature, above all other errors, to corrupt and deprave the human mind. So that when every other Iniquity of Papal power had been now detected and expelled; this ſtill ſkulked behind, within the cloſe receſſes of the heart; and, as often as it could diſguiſe its deformity under a zeal for the *work of Reformation*, was ready to ſtep out again and play the Devil.

This is not to be wondered at. There is ſcarce a material error in the CHURCH OF ROME, which doth not ſooth and cheriſh ſome or other of our corrupt paſſions and prejudices: but PERSECUTION regales them all: It flatters our SPIRITUAL PRIDE, the vanity of ſuperior knowledge, and a purer faith: It confirms our BIGOTRY, the miſtaken zeal for the honour of God and holy Church; and it ſupports our AMBITION, the itch for *Maſtery*, and miſrule. Were it not for ſo powerful a bias, this Iniquity, which had moſt imbittered their thraldom, and kept them longeſt in their chains, muſt, on their firſt deliverance, have been immediately detected, and marked out for execration.

It is true, however, there was another accident, which found buſineſs for this *Fury*, when once it had got harbour in the fair boſom of the reformed Churches. The Proteſtant profeſſion was founded on the principle of FREE INQUIRY, and the liberty of private judgement. But as it is rare for men not to abuſe a long

ſequeſtered

ſequeſtered privilege, when new recovered, by puſhing the exerciſe of it to an extreme; ſo it happened in the *work of reformation.* Several curious fancies grew up with the ſimple Faith of that *Goſpel,* from whence the Reformed, in general, ſought their knowledge of God's will. And they being, through their long inexperience, as unknowing in the real nature of Church-communion, as inattentive to the ſimplicity of Chriſtian-faith, through deſertion of their Guide; theſe fancies, harmleſs, indeed, while held indifferent, were, by their fond inventors, ſoon made important, and the terms of Fellow-memberſhip. The effect was fatal: It ſerved to rend the Reformation into various Sects and Parties. We may be ſure, the Church of *Rome* would take advantage of this miſcarriage. They did ſo: and upbraided the *work of Reformation* with being conducted by a Spirit of confuſion: They inferred, that when men had once left the *centre of unity*, and would ſeek truth by a *liberty of thinking*, which authorized private judgment, there would ſoon be as many falſe opinions as free Inquirers: And as many Sects as both. The Reformed ſeemed ſenſible of this opprobrium: But it being ſuppoſed impracticable to go back to the ſimplicity of the *Goſpel-faith*; and on that ſimplicity, to regulate the terms of Church-communion; they contented themſelves with ſtopping where they were; which they thought they ſhould be able to do, by applying unjuſt coercion to all ſuch novelties, as, either by their ſubtilty or plauſibility, promiſed the birth of a *new ſect*, or, by their groſſneſs and extravagance, reflected diſhonour upon *Reformation* itſelf.

To proceed. This Error was not more diſgraceful to the *beginnings* of *Reformation,* than fatal to the *progreſs* of it.

It hath, indeed, been obſerved, and perhaps with truth, that the reſtraint of religious liberty hath made men more eager to exert and exerciſe the right of thinking for themſelves. But this was accidental; when, after a long and indolent reſignation of the underſtanding to authority, ſome caſual perſecution of a new opinion had ſerved, as a ſtimulus, to quicken the benumbed faculties of Reaſon.

Reaſon. And even then, the benefit was much allayed by the ſmall helps which ſuch times afford to the diſcovery of truth; and the great danger there is in uſing ſuch as may be had: Hence it was, that during the twilight of dawning Science, men, the beſt intentioned, and naturally the beſt qualified, did, in ſtruggling to get free, advance ſuch crude and haſty concluſions, as greatly diſcredited that *Goſpel-liberty*, they were then labouring to promote. Of this we have many unhappy examples in the firſt efforts towards Reformation.

But the iſſue would be very different in different circumſtances; in ſuch eſpecially where the Spirit of Liberty had done its general work; and had eſtabliſhed the few great principles of Goſpel-truth and purity. If, amongſt theſe, the antichriſtian diſcipline of reſtraint ſhould be received, adieu to all further advances in Reformation. Coercive power would from henceforth keep it for ever tied down to that imperfect ſtate, in which Church Authority had found it. For, in this caſe, the *reverence* paid to the new Authority, under which particulars had ſheltered themſelves from an old Tyranny, would concur with its *power*, to depreſs and diſcredit private Judgment.

Nor would this prove a ſlight or trivial evil. For we are not to think the work of Reformation could be perfected at once. Thoſe who know, in general, what prejudices old habits impreſs on the moſt vigorous mind, even while enlarging itſelf by Liberty; and thoſe who know in particular, how haſtily and ſometimes how tumultuarily the Reformation was brought about, will eaſily underſtand, that the whole Goſpel Regimen was not likely to be reſtored together: and that ſuch a perfect recovery required time and leiſure to ſtudy; and freedom to profit by our ſtudies, in *the Word of God.*

But ſtill further. Did perſecuting Churches diſcourage private judgement in order to take the matter into their own hands, that *Truth* might have the ſanction of Authority, and they themſelves the

the honour of doing it further ſervice, ſomething might be ſaid, perhaps, in excuſe for this proceeding. But, alas! their infringement of religious liberty ariſes from a different principle. They diſcourage private inquiry, not becauſe it is carrying on by better hands, but becauſe there needs no inquiry to be made: The work of Reformation, they ſay, is already perfected; and the duty of particulars is now to acquieſce. A ſtrange concluſion, which the practice of unjuſt reſtraint, indeed, hath made familiar, but is, in itſelf, a very indecent preſumption. For, as a Proteſtant Church claims no INFALLIBILITY like the Church of *Rome*, nor immediate INSPIRATION like fanatic Sectaries, it muſt needs confeſs itſelf obnoxious to error: and from the unfavourable circumſtances ſpoken of before, very likely to fall into it. And then, whatever miſtakes it had committed through the condition of humanity, it might, from time to time, have redreſſed with good grace, on the modeſt principles of Reformation. This was an advantage which *infallible* and *inſpired* Pretenders had, by their knavery and folly, put for ever out of their power. But reſtraint and perſecution deprived the Reformed Churches of this advantage: For when once they were in the train of implicite ſubmiſſion, they grew aſhamed to own they had any errors; and with reaſon; for what could more expoſe the criminal abſurdity of ſuch proceeding? Therefore, whenever the force of Truth had worked a change in the general principles of a Proteſtant Church, as it did more than once in the matter of *Calviniſtical Predeſtination*, men had rarely the courage to confeſs it. Which made one of their enemies obſerve, with a ſneer, *That it was allowable for the* New Reform *to change: but not avow the change* *.

There is yet another miſchief behind, which is ſtill more general; I mean, that of Schiſms, diviſions, and increaſe of Sects and

* Il eſt bien permis de changer dans la nouvelle reforme, mais il n'eſt pas permis d'avouer qu'on change. Boſſuet Var. V. *i.* p. 405.

parties. For though, as hath been obſerved, the effect of Perſecution, in theſe circumſtances, is to ſtifle Truth; yet it gives life and vigour to a thouſand Counterfeits. For, that thorough diſcipline of uniformity, which brings all to one dead level in the *Church of Rome*, is utterly impracticable in the *Churches of the Reformed*. Proteſtant Rulers, indeed, may, by *ſtirring up* the humours, elude and prevaricate with their own principles; but it is impoſſible they ſhould ever go ſo far as to be able to put in practice the principle of their capital enemy: And yet there is no other that hath force enough to *expel* thoſe humours. Now although the *miſchief to the State*, from various ſects and parties, may be reaſonably well amended by a juſt TOLERATION, afforded to ſuch, whom the Church, from the narrowneſs of its communion, ejects; yet the *miſchief to Religion* ſtill remains. The Object of Civil Government is PEACE; and this, a *toleration* ſecures: But the object of Religion is TRUTH; and this a diverſity of Sects, ariſing from the cauſe in queſtion, will always diſcredit. So that, in this ſenſe, SCHISM is a real and irremediable evil, which no Civil-prudence can palliate or cure: and which nothing but the Church, by widening its Communion, can prevent or remove.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain the equity and wiſdom of my text. I have pointed out the good which follows from the obſervance, and the evils which ariſe from the violation, of the precept.

What remains is only to caution you from ſuffering the ABUSES here expoſed (and now ABUSES are become the favourite topic of declamation *, and the faſhionable motive for diſbelief), let not this, I ſay, prejudice you either againſt the REFORMATION in particular, or againſt the CHRISTIAN RELIGION in general.

Thoſe Communities, and Bodies of Men, who made the firſt ſeceſſion from the *Church of Rome*, did it, amongſt other cauſes,

* See Lord Bolingbroke's poſthumous Volumes, whoſe reaſoning, ſuch as it is, proceeds, from one end to the other, on this ſingle topic.

to

to avoid the *profeſſion* of thoſe *errors*, and the *practice* of thoſe *ſuperſtitions*, which that antichriſtian power tyrannically inforced upon Conſcience. The meaſure was evidently right. And if they narrowed their juſtification on that partial principle, *that their opinions were true, and their adverſaries' falſe*, inſtead of carrying it to that genuine and more generous ground, *That Chriſtian Liberty gives every man a right to worſhip God according to his Conſcience*; and conſequently, by ſo doing, laid the ſeeds of unjuſt reſtraint; this is no more to be admired, where no inſpiration is pretended, than that, in *Civil matters*, men ſhould labour to promote the general good on erroneous or miſtaken Principles. Many of the Chief Inſtruments of our deliverance from Popery and arbitrary Power, by the late happy *Revolution*, proceeded, we know, in their accompliſhment of that glorious work, on maxims, which controverted the true origine of Government, and were unfriendly to the benefits it procures. Yet what honeſt man doth not rank them amongſt the favoured Servants of Providence, employed in the advancement of a general Good? Why then ſhould the *work of Reformation* be more hardly thought of, becauſe the Inſtruments of Chriſtian Liberty were not more dextrous in diſengaging themſelves from inveterate prejudices, than the Inſtruments of Civil Liberty? We muſt aſſign both events to the particular providence of God; or give them both up to the direction of Fate and Fortune. We muſt either be content to join the Character of Proteſtant to that of Patriot, or we muſt throw them both off together.

As little ought thoſe unjuſt meaſures to prejudice us againſt the *Goſpel in general:* which was ſo far from leading *Men* into them, or encouraging *Churches* to perſevere in them, that the genius of the Diſpenſation is manifeſtly violated thereby.

The ſum of all is this, that if we would not diſhonour our FATHER, and his Son Jeſus, our MASTER; nor give Scandal to the good, nor a handle of blaſphemy to the bad, we ſhould no

longer elude this great Commandment; but obey it in that candour and ingenuity, in which it was delivered. To *call no Man Father upon Earth, becauſe one is our Father in Heaven*; nor aſpire *ourſelves to be called Maſter, becauſe one is our Maſter even Chriſt.*

SERMON

SERMON X.

OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

MATT. XXIII. 2, 3.

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES'S SEAT. ALL, THEREFORE, WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, THAT OBSERVE AND DO: BUT DO NOT YE AFTER THEIR WORKS: FOR THEY SAY AND DO NOT.

THE SCRIBES and PHARISEES, the public Teachers of the LAW, were now fallen into that depravity of manners, which the *Law* had foretold and condemned; and conſequently, ſunk into that general neglect, which is ever the lot of profligate Inſtructors, whether ſet over us by civil or divine Appointment.

An Impoſtor, who had a *new* Syſtem to introduce, upon the *eſtabliſhed*, thus ſhaken by the corrupt morals of its Teachers, would certainly have improved ſo favourable a circumſtance, by inflaming the general averſion againſt thoſe who moſt ſtood in his way. But the *Son of God* declined this advantage: on the contrary, he reproved this popular prejudice, though ſo friendly to his own Miſſion;

Miſſion; and endeavoured to reconcile them to their Teachers, his inveterate Enemies, on ſuch rational principles as beſt affirmed the People's Obedience, and their Directors' Authority. Secure in his own Virtue, he rejected the obliquities of human Policy: and, in order to rectify the error on which the miſchiefs of a deſpiſed authority ſubſiſt, He inſtructs his hearers to diſtinguiſh between the *public* and *private* Character of the Teacher. He ſhews them that though Men, who *ſay and do not*, ſhould never be followed for EXAMPLES; yet, that Miniſters of Religion, who *ſit in Moſes's chair*, and are inveſted with authority to teach the *Law*, are to be attended to as INSTRUCTORS, when, in their office, they denounce and inforce the ordinances of God. Nothing appears more reaſonable than this diſtinction.

And yet in another place of the ſame Evangeliſt, our Holy Maſter ſeems to inſinuate a very different doctrine. "BEWARE (ſays he) "of falſe Prophets, which come to you in Sheep's cloathing, but "inwardly they are ravening Wolves. Ye ſhall know them by "their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? "Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt "tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall "know them *."

Here, we ſee, it is expreſsly ſaid, That they whoſe morals do not correſpond to the purity of their doctrine ſhall have no regard or obſervance paid unto them; but, ſhall be ſhunned and avoided as deceivers; becauſe the corruption of their manners is a ſufficient proof of the impoſture of their pretences. *Beware of falſe Prophets —Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles?* On the other hand, our text inſtructs us to reverence the immoral Teacher; and to ſeparate his manners from his Doctrine. *All whatſoever they bid you obſerve, That obſerve and do: but do not ye after their works.*

To reconcile theſe two places of Scripture, it will be ſufficient to obſerve, That very different Perſons and Characters are the ſubjects of theſe two different directions.

* Matt. vii. 15—20.

They

They of my Text were an Order of ESTABLISHED TEACHERS; with whom the cuſtody of God's Word was intruſted; to be diſpenſed on all occaſions to the People. Theſe Men had groſsly *abuſed* indeed, but yet not *forfeited* their truſt; and therefore it was the part of every good Citizen to ſupport them in their Character. And though the *Jewiſh Oeconomy* was now near the eve of its diſſolution; when part was to be aboliſhed, part to be reformed, and the remaining part to be compleated, by the laſt Revelation of God's Will, intruſted to his Son; Yet the dignity of Truth, and the eminence of that Perſon who came to bring Truth into the world, required, that the intereſts even of an expiring Diſpenſation ſhould not be neglected.

But the FALSE PROPHETS, mentioned in the other Scripture, *who come in Sheep's cloathing, but with wolfiſh diſpoſitions*, and therefore to be ſhunned and avoided as deceivers, are ſuch as aſſume a very different character. The character of God's extraordinary Meſſengers, intruſted with the delivery of a *new Revelation* to mankind. For, about this time the expectation of the promiſed Meſſiah was very general. So that ſelfiſh and ambitious men were encouraged to perſonate his Character. Though the marks, by which they are deſcribed, might, one would think, have prevented the miſchiefs the deluſions drew upon this infatuated People.

Having now ſeen the perfect agreement of the different rules delivered in theſe two Scriptures; Let us enquire into the *reaſons* of them.

In the caution againſt *falſe Prophets* it is directed, that, in caſe the morals of a pretended Meſſenger from God be inconſiſtent with his Office, we ſhould ſhun and avoid him as a cheat. And ſurely with much reaſon. The very nature of things informing us, that, when God thinks fit to reveal his Will, in an extraordinary way, to man, he will not diſgrace his diſpenſation by an unworthy Inſtrument. Both the *dignity* and the *intereſts* of Religion require, that the firſt bearer of it ſhould be thoroughly poſſeſſed of that power of virtue which true Religion beſtows.

It

It is highly abſurd to fancy, that ſo bright an emanation from the ſource of Light and Purity, as *divine grace and favour*, ſhould be conveyed to us through unclean and polluted hands. Neither would the Author of good endure the near approach and intercourſe of ſuch an Agent; neither could the good, he beſtows, be ſo conveyed, without ſtain and defilement.

The intereſts of Religion will not ſuffer ſo impure a conveyance. In propagating a new Religion, there are many corrupt prejudices to overcome. To ſee therefore the Meſſenger of God untouched with the importance of his high commiſſion, and unrenewed himſelf with the renovation he conveys to others, would afford thoſe prejudices too much aid and aſſiſtance.

But, this ſanctity of manners, which is ſo expedient to ſupport the honour and intereſts of the miſſion, is indeed the natural and inſeparable attendant on the Office. For, in the promulgation of a new Religion, beſides thoſe marks of truth ariſing from the reaſonableneſs and purity of the doctrine, which ſhew it worthy of God; to prove it actually came from him there is need of certain *miraculous gifts*, which the Holy Spirit imparts to thoſe with whom he then condeſcends to dwell. But the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit is the *Sanctification of the heart*.

From all this, we muſt conclude, that, when our bleſſed Maſter warns us to reject all ſuch for Impoſtors who pretend to an extraordinary commiſſion from God, with morals unſuitable to their meſſage, he doth it upon the beſt grounds of truth and expediency.

But now we muſt be careful to obſerve, that the caſe of *ſuch* is very different from theirs, whom God, in the ordinary courſe of his providence, raiſeth up, from time to time, as the bare Inſtruments of a REFORMATION in Religion; and who pretend to no higher character: Of whoſe agency, Providence avails itſelf to free an old eſtabliſhed Religion from the errors contracted through length of time and the malice of men. Here, the ſame concluſion will not

not hold; moſt of thoſe circumſtances being wanting which made the *inconſiſtency* between the public and private Character of the *extraordinary Agent*: And God, now adminiſtring the affairs of his Church by the ſettled Oeconomy of his common Providence, may ſometimes be well ſuppoſed to do here, as in the reſt of his moral diſpenſations, to *produce good out of evil*; to uſe wicked Inſtruments, in the natural courſe of things, to promote the ends of virtue; and make the oblique intereſts of the world ſerve to advance the honour, and to reſtore the purity of his Laws.

Of this different conduct the Jewiſh Hiſtory affords us an example. When God, at various periods, revealed his Will to particular families, and to his choſen people; the agents and meſſengers, whom he honoured with his commands, were ſelected from the moſt virtuous amongſt men; ſuch as NOAH, ABRAHAM, and MOSES. But when, during the eſtabliſhed order of things, he decreed in the courſe of his providence, either to execute vengeance on the oppreſſors of *his People*; to purge the holy land from *Idolatry*; or to puniſh the tranſgreſſors of the *Law*; he frequently employed the agency of wicked kings and rulers, to bring his judgments to their purpoſed iſſue. But we need not wonder at this deſignation, when we ſee Providence did not diſdain to employ the like imperfect Inſtruments in a work that approached ſtill nearer to the dignity of the firſt operation of divine Love; I mean the ESTABLISHMENT of Religion: of which, that of the *Law* was committed to DAVID, and that of the *Goſpel*, to CONSTANTINE.

This, our Adverſaries of the *Church of Rome*, do not ſufficiently conſider *, when with ſo much triumph againſt the work of *Reformation*,

* The celebrated M. Boſſuet ſays,—M. Burnet prend beaucoup de peine à entaſſer des exemples de Princes tres-déreglés dont Dieu s'eſt ſervi pour de grans ouvrages. Qui en doute? Mais—montrera-t-il un ſeul exemple où Dieu voulant REVELER aux hommes quelque verité importante et inconnuë durant de ſiecles, pour ne pas dire entierement inoüie, ait choiſi un Roi auſſi ſcandaleux que Henri VIII. et un Evêque auſſi lâche et auſſi

mation, they object to us thoſe impure Inſtruments, who had neither motives nor manners ſuitable to the truth or purity of that *Goſpel Faith* which they pretended to reſtore. We are ſo far from being aſhamed of receiving benefit from men who ſupply theſe circumſtances of reproach to themſelves, that, ſupported by the

auſſi corrumpu que Cranmer? Hiſt. des Var. L. VIII. Tom. I. p. 349, 8vo. Here the learned Writer plainly confounds the two different Characters diſtinguiſhed above. The Inſtruments of *Reformation* pretended to no agency or commiſſion from God, to REVEAL any thing to Man. And if they diſcovered an *important truth which had lain hid for many ages*, it was by laying open the *Scriptures* to the inſpection of all men; after they had been ſo long locked up from the vulgar, in the learned languages.—But he goes on—Si le Schiſme de l'Angleterre, ſi la reformation Anglicane eſt un ouvrage divin, rien n'y ſera plus divin que la PRIMAUTE' Eccleſiaſtique du Roi, puiſque ce n'eſt pas ſeulement par la que la rupture avec Rome, c'eſt-a-dire, ſelon les Proteſtans, le fondement neceſſaire de toute bonne reforme, a commencé, mais que c'eſt encore le ſeul point où l'on n'a jamais varie depuis le Schiſme. Id. ib. Now, though I take the SUPREMACY of the Magiſtrate to be a *divine work*, in the ſenſe that all civil Inſtitutions, founded on the principles of Equity and Juſtice, are the *ordinance* of God [Rom. xiii. 2.] yet it is not pretended to be a *divine work* (as the learned writer puts it) in conſequence of its being an eſtabliſhment introduced by the Inſtruments of *Reformation*: becauſe the Character of *ſuch Inſtruments* is very different from that of an *inſpired Agent*, ſent immediately from God, to reveal his will to mankind; into whoſe Meſſage nothing merely human can inſinuate itſelf under the form of a divine inſtitution. The *Reformation*, itſelf, which theſe *Inſtruments* have eſtabliſhed, will likewiſe, partake of the imperfections of the Founders. So that the *continuance* of an error no more impeacheth the providence of ſuch a work than the *introduction* of it. But we will ſuppoſe the Magiſtrate's ſupremacy to be as anti-chriſtian as this learned Prelate would repreſent it, and then apply his argument to one who was confeſſedly ſuch an Inſtrument for the reformation of God's Church, I mean JEHU; to whom God himſelf ſpeaks in this manner—"And the Lord ſaid unto Jehu, Becauſe thou haſt done well in execut-"ing that which was right in mine eyes, and haſt done unto the Houſe of Ahab *ac-*"*cording to all that was in my heart.*"—2 Kings x. 30. Here we have an *Inſtrument of God*, in all its forms. Let us put *him* then into the Biſhop's argument, inſtead of Hen. VIII. and ſee how it will fadge. "If Jehu's deſtroying BAAL [the POPE] *out of Iſrael*, was a *divine work*; nothing could be *more divine* than his eſtabliſhing the GOLDEN CALVES [the King's SUPREMACY] *in Bethel and in Dan.* v. 28, 29." I leave it to the advocates of the Church of Rome to find out a diſtinction by which their Champion's argument will be made to conclude for *Jehu's* Reformation, and at the ſame time, againſt that of Henry VIII.

general

general principle, ariſing from the Doctrines of theſe two Texts, as here reconciled and explained, we find, in the perverſity of Man, new matter of *Glory to God.* And we bleſs the hand, which turned the Avarice of a furious Friar, and the luxury of a debauched Monarch, from their natural miſchiefs, to become Inſtruments of the choiceſt bleſſings; the recovery of LETTERS and the reſtoration of RELIGION.

Indeed, it would be hard to conceive a reaſon, why this kind of Diſpenſation ſhould not be eſteemed as adorable in the religious government of the world, as it is in the moral; where we ſee, and without heſitation acknowledge, the goodneſs, the power, and the wiſdom of God: whoſe Providence is inceſſantly employed in turning the crimes and paſſions of ſelfiſh men, to the advancement of public Juſtice. How many wholeſome Laws have had their birth from the oblique views of intereſted *Miniſters!* How many ſalutary inforcements of them from the blind paſſions of diſappointed *Factions!*

Indeed, if we ſhould ſo far miſtake, or, rather, abuſe theſe bleſſings, as to turn our gratitude, or repoſe our truſt, upon the Inſtruments, inſtead of the Sovereign Hand which guided them, Their vileneſs might then be fairly objected to us: But while we are careful to give the honour where it is due, none of that juſt reproach, which may fall upon the Inſtrument, will at all affect the glorious work it was employed to produce *.

So

* Yet this ſophiſm, miſerable as it is, is the favorite argument both of SUPERSTITION and INFIDELITY: and conſtantly employed to diſcredit that Providence by which the work of *Reformation* was effected. The firſt ſtep to the ruin of that unhappy Monarch, whoſe bigoted poſterity has ſo often diſturbed and endangered our civil peace, was the being perverted by this very deluſion. *Father Orleans* tells the ſtory from his own mouth.—Ce fut à Bruxelles au ſortir de France qu'ayant aſſez de temps pour lire, il tomba ſur l'Hiſtoire d'*Heylin*. Il la lut avec attention, et au travers des divers pretextes dont les Proteſtants s'efforcent de colorer le ſchiſme de leur plays, il reconnut evidemment que cette ſeparation, ſi contraire à la maxime d'unité, qui eſt le fondement

So far, as to the reaſonableneſs of the caution againſt *falſe Prophets*. But now, as to the reſpect due to *immoral Miniſters*, or the appointed Teachers of eſtabliſhed Religion, who lye under the ſame imputation of diſcrediting their doctrine by their practice, we ſhall ſhew their caſe to be very different; and conſequently that the dif-

dement de l'Egliſe, etoit en effet l'ouvrage des paſſions humaines; que l'*incontinence* d'Henri VIII. l'*ambition* du Duc de Somerſet, la *politique* de la Reine Elizabeth, l'*avarice* de ceux qui d'abord s'etoient emparez des biens Eccleſiaſtiques, avoient été les principes de ce changement; que l'eſprit de Dieu n'y avoit point de part. Il ſavoit que Dieu s'etoit ſervi de PROPHETES d'une vie ſainte, pour être les chefs de ſon Peuple toutes les fois qu'il s'etoit agi de leur intimer ſes volontez touchant la Rcligion; que dans le changement de Loi, des APOSTRES revêtus de la vertu d'enhaut, et plus ſemblables aux Anges qu'aux autres hommes, avoient annoncé l'Evangile; que *dans les relachemens* arrivez dans l'un et dans l'autre Teſtament, *ce n'etoient point des hommes charnels*, des ames vindicatives, des eſprits ambitieux, qui avoient prêché la reforme, mais des *hommes pleins de l'eſprit de Moyſe, ou de celui de Jeſus-Chriſt*, ſeuls canaux dignes de récevoir les eaux qui coulent de ſes vives ſources pour ne les point rendre ſuſpectes de s'être corrompuës en venant à nous.—I hardly need ſtop to obſerve, that the ſophiſtry and falſe reaſoning of all this has been expoſed above, in the *diſtinction*, laid down, between an *ordinary Inſtrument* and an *inſpired Agent*—He goes on—Des reflections ſi raiſonnables ouvrirent les yeux au Duc d'York: des lors il fut Catholique dans l'ame; et ce fut dans cette diſpoſition d'eſprit qu'au temps du retabliſſement il repaſſa en Angleterre——La Ducheſſe d'York, par un evenement remarquable, fut convertie en liſant le même Livre, qui avoit converti le Duc. Hiſt. des Revol. d'Angleterre, Tom. iii. What the *Prieſt* thus urges with the cunning of a Stateſman, to diſcredit the Proteſtant Religion; the *Politician* employs with the zeal of a Miſſionary, to decry Revelation in general. "With the ſame impartial eye (ſays Lord Bolingbroke to his noble Friend), "that your Lordſhip ſurveys the abuſes of Religion, and the corruptions of the Church, "as well as Court, of Rome, which brought on the *Reformation* at this period; you "will obſerve the *Characters* and *Conduct* of thoſe who began, who propagated, and "who favoured the *Reformation:* and from your obſervation of theſe, as well as of the "*unſyſtematical manner* in which it was carried on, at the ſame time, in various places, "and of the want of concert, nay even of *Charity*, amongſt the Reformers, *you will* "*learn what to think of the ſeveral Religions*, that unite in their oppoſition to the Roman, "and yet hate one another moſt heartily; *what to think of the* ſeveral ſects, that have "ſprouted, like ſuckers, from the ſame great Roots; and *what the true principles are* "*of Proteſtant Eccleſiaſtical Policy*."—L. Bolingbroke, Letter VI. *of the ſtudy of Hiſtory*, Vol. i. p. 209, 210.

ferent

ferent reception which my text directs us to afford them, is equally reasonable.

Whatsoever (says the text) *they bid you observe, that observe and do: but do you not after their Works, for they say and do not.* That is, "As they are appointed to dispense unto you the doctrines and precepts of Religion, and to support and inforce them, with all the power of their wit and eloquence, attend to them, as to a public Character, with reverence; but shun their ways, and forbear to imitate their practice, which stands condemned by their own contrary professions. In a word, receive them for your *Instructors*; but beware of taking them for your *Examples*."

The fitness and reasonableness of this direction may be seen, both from the NECESSITY and the NATURE of the office.

1. We learn from the experience of all ages, that, to preserve Religion amongst the people, there is need of public teachers, to be set apart for that purpose. Thus in the *Jewish state* they were appointed by God's particular direction: amongst the policied nations of *Paganism*, by the civil magistrate: and wherever *our holy Religion* hath got footing, both divine and human authority have concurred to their establishment. The office therefore of the Ministers of a national Religion, like ours, is to support and cultivate that *Revelation*, which the first Messengers of it, by their extraordinary graces, had planted and disseminated throughout the world. For its divinity being *once* thus powerfully evinced, all that remained for the constant exercise of the ministry was to have the *exterior* evidence of its *truth*, and the *interior* evidence of its *excellence*, set in the fairest and most convincing light. And as this might be done by the common aids of *reason* and *grace*, the power of *miracles*, as no longer necessary, was withdrawn from the Teachers of Religion. So that it was now no matter of wonder, though it will always be of scandal, if men, equally subject with their hearers to the common infirmities of their nature, should, in more degenerate times, fall under the same vassalage to sin and corruption.

However,

However, that this will not excuſe their hearers from rejecting their miniſtry, and diſregarding their doctrine, appears plainly from the ſecond conſideration, the *nature* of their office.

2. Whoever aſſumes to inſtruct and direct the People, upon the footing of his own authority, hath need to be irreproachable in his life and converſation; becauſe the truth of what he delivers reſts upon the integrity of his character. Fraudulent and corrupt manners very juſtly diſcredit all he would recommend. And, though his prevarication cannot alter the nature of things, yet it ſeems to acquit his hearers for their neglect of him; and for declining to examine what he delivers on his own perſonal authority. This was the caſe of the ancient PHILOSOPHERS. While the firſt of them practiſed the virtues ſuitable to their name and title, they were treated with regard and reverence. But when, in after-times, they became as notorious for their immoralities, they deſervedly ſunk into general neglect. The Firſt Chriſtian apologiſts urge their vices home upon them; and conſider the popular contempt into which they were fallen as the natural conſequence of their profligate manners: For even uncultivated reaſon tells us, that it is abſurd to expect *grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles.*

But a *Miniſter of eſtabliſhed Religion* ſtands upon another footing. He delivers nothing on his own Authority. His office is to inforce God's *eſtabliſhed* Truth by argument and perſuaſion. The Guide he recommends is not HIMSELF, but HOLY SCRIPTURE; which he invites all men diligently to ſtudy and examine. And if, in aid of his general office, he maketh one part of his miniſtry to conſiſt in *interpreting* what he thinks may *miniſter grace to the hearers*, it is but to aſſiſt them in their Knowledge of God's Word: and to weigh the force of what he offers, in behalf of its Authority. Now what have the private morals of ſuch a Character further to do in this matter, than to excite the compaſſion of every charitable hearer? who cannot but lament that ſo much ſcience, and application to holy things, as is neceſſary to fit him for the diſcharge of his employment,

employment, ſhould not have force enough to ſubdue his evil habits.

But if, on this account, we do unreaſonably to ſet at nought a Miniſter of Chriſt; how abſurd is it to encourage or excuſe ourſelves in our vices, by his bad example. We reject the authority he has from God, we reſiſt the evidence he draws from Reaſon, yet ſeem to reſpect, in him, the works of the fleſh and the tyranny of enſlaving Paſſions.

But, of all the deluſions into which licentious men are apt to fall, the moſt unhappy ſure is that, which, from the vices and imperfections of the *miniſters of the Goſpel*, inclines them to reject, or entertain ſuſpicions of, that *Religion itſelf*, they are intruſted to teach: And yet I believe nothing has more contributed to keep men attached to their infidelity than this fooliſh prejudice.

Did the Goſpel deliver, or was it ſuſpected to deliver, any doctrines even of the remoteſt tendency to encourage its Miniſters in their vices, much might be ſaid for this ſtrange concluſion. But when it is by thoſe very doctrines that the People diſcover the true nature and enormity of vice; when it is by thoſe doctrines they hear the Preacher condemned out of their own mouths; it ſeems ſtrangely perverſe to think amiſs of Religion on that accouut. Surely theſe men of reaſon have not brought themſelves to expect, that, in the ordinary courſe of God's providence, a mere knowledge of his Will, and of the truths ariſing from it, ſhould have a reſiſtleſs force to bear down inveterate habits, and ſubdue the ſtrongeſt bent of human inclination.

In concluſion, I have only one caution to ſubjoin, That what is here ſaid of the prejudices and perverſities of the *Hearers of the Word*, be not miſtaken, as intended for an excuſe of the immoral *Preachers* of it. Their guilt admits of none. Againſt them, under the names of the *Scribes and Phariſees* of my text, Jeſus, in the ſame

ſame place where he vindicates their public character from contempt, hath denounced the ſevereſt woe of offended Heaven. *Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, How can you eſcape the damnation of Hell?* But when he ſpeaks ſtill more directly to the *Miniſters of his own Religion*, his condemnation goes ſtill higher. *It is impoſſible* (ſays he to his Diſciples) *but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a mill-ſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, than that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones* *. The *woe* denounced againſt the *Miniſters of the Moſaic Law* was for offences ariſing from enormous crimes: But this, againſt the *Miniſters of the Goſpel*, is, for offences, occaſioned even by indiſcretions. *Whoever* (ſays he) *ſhall offend one of theſe little ones:* and this, with the higheſt reaſon, both on account of the ſuperior holineſs of the Goſpel, and the ſuperior charity required of its Followers.

In a word, The Crime of a profligate life, in the *Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, is aggravated by many conſiderations.

The acquired knowledge, neceſſary for the ordinary diſcharge of their office, gives them advantages, in religious wiſdom, above other men: So that if their progreſs in virtue be not proportionable to their ſuperior knowledge of its nature and effects, they become very guilty before God; who, by the mouth of his Son, has aſſured us, that *to whom much is given, from him much will be required* †.

Their ſolemn dedication and ſeparation to the ſervice of Religion, likewiſe demands a more eſpecial ſanctity of manners. The very Heathens ſaw, that ſuch as were employed about holy things, ought to be endowed with, or at leaſt ſhould learn to acquire, a higher degree of purity, than thoſe who ſtood further from the altar: And accordingly public authority exacted from them the obſervance of a ſtricter and ſeverer rule of moral conduct.

* Matth. xviii. 6.

† Luke xii. 48.

The

The ſum of all is this, That the *Hearer* ſhould not entertain prejudices againſt Religion, on account of the bad life of the *Preacher:* Nor, on the other hand, ſhould the *Clergy* ſuffer theſe unjuſt prejudices of the *Laity* to abate their horror for a faithleſs diſcharge of their Truſt. Let them equally concur in confeſſing the divine original of VIRTUE and RELIGION, in the midſt of all their abuſes of both; let them concur to give Glory to God, while each lies humbled under the deep ſenſe of his own condemnation.

SERMON XI.

OF CHURCH COMMUNION.

LUKE. IX. ver. 49.

AND JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, MASTER, WE SAW ONE CASTING OUT DEVILS IN THY NAME; AND WE FORBAD HIM, BECAUSE HE FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US. AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, FORBID HIM NOT: FOR HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US.

WHEN Jeſus, in the entrance on his Miniſtry, had thought fit to confirm the truth of his Goſpel, by the EVIDENCE OF MIRACLES, he was graciouſly pleaſed to contrive, that that which was the credential of his Miſſion ſhould, at the ſame time, miniſter relief and conſolation to the *bodily* infirmities of thoſe, whoſe *ſpiritual* diſorders he was ſent to heal. On this account, as well as to give additional luſtre to his Character, he communicated of this divine power to his Followers.

But

But theſe groſs and carnal-minded men conſidered their gifts and graces, not as a *truſt* imparted to them for the benefit of others; but as a *prerogative* given them in proper to adorn their own perſonal characters. So that, on ſeeing a man diſpenſing the ſame bleſſings, though in the name of their common maſter, yet becauſe he *followed not with them*, they forbad him the exerciſe of his miniſterial function; as if they themſelves had been erected into a Society or Company, with the privilege of an excluſive trade: And, with great ſatisfaction in this their conduct, they acquaint their heavenly Maſter with the ſilence they had impoſed upon this preſuming Schiſmatic. But they were ſurprized at their reception, when, inſtead of applauſe, they were received with this cold admonition, *Forbid him not: for he that is not againſt us is for us.* Yet they would have ſeen reaſon to be thankful for the moderation and gentleneſs of the reproof, had they reflected on the abſurdity, as well as iniquity, of their behaviour. For it was but juſt before* that theſe very men, who now reſtrained a *Follower of Chriſt* from exerciſing the virtue communicated to him, becauſe he was not of their *Society*, had themſelves eſſayed the very ſame power, and, through the deficiency of their faith, had eſſayed it in vain. So that we may reaſonably conclude, there was in this *firſt* exertion of uncharitable reſtraint, what has been found in it ever ſince; not a little envy mingled with a great deal of zeal.

Yet as carnal as this temper is, and as ſeaſonably as it was reproved, it has rarely failed to ſhew itſelf in every age, and almoſt in every country, to ſtop the progreſs of the Goſpel, and narrow the *Communion of Saints*.

And here, as in all other caſes, where the genius of our holy Faith is violated, a text was at hand, to flatter their prejudices, and ſupport them in their deluſions. For St. Matthew† tells us, that Jeſus, on a certain occaſion, delivered himſelf in the following manner, HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME. A declara-

* Ver. 40. † Ch. xii. 30.

tion ſo oppoſite to the former, that it will require to have the two texts accorded, before we can draw any certain concluſion from either of them.

It is to be obſerved, then, that theſe different propoſitions are delivered by Jeſus at very different junctures: ſo that we may preſume they were directed to different objects; and may therefore be well reconciled, and made to ſtand quietly together. This is indeed the caſe; they bear a very friendly aſpect towards each other.

The words of my text were occaſioned by the diſciples forbiding a man the exerciſe of his miniſtry, though he profeſſed his faith in Jeſus, becauſe he conformed not to the diſcipline of the *Twelve*. But the words in St. Matthew were directed to another ſort of men, his enemies, the *Phariſees*; who, when they were convinced of the truth of his miracles, were yet ſo prejudiced againſt his miſſion, that they affected to believe, *he caſt out Devils by Belzebub, the Prince of the Devils*. The abſurdity of which impious ſubterfuge, when Jeſus had expoſed as it deſerved, he ſubjoined this general truth, *He that is not with me is againſt me*.

Here we ſee it is the diſſenting from the FAITH OF JESUS, not from the DISCIPLINE OF A CHURCH denominated from him, which deprives the Diſſentient of any ſhare in him. And, indeed, as it would ſeem to violate the ſtrong Benevolence of our holy Religion, to debar the faithful of their claim to its benefits, on account of their ſeparating from, or rather not aſſociating with, ſome of its profeſſors, in Church-fellowſhip; ſo it would apparently diſhonour its dignity, and defeat its peculiar virtue, to imagine that the oppoſers of it had a right to its privileges, on this only title, that they ſtood upon the common foundation of the *moral Law*.

Theſe two texts, therefore, do not only agree well together, but do indeed imply the truth of one another. For if the benefits be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to humanity, it is not fit they ſhould depend on ſo precarious a ground, as this or that *mode of diſcipline*: And if it be the proper virtue of Chriſtianity, to beſtow them, it would not

not be juſt that any other mode of belief ſhould ſhare in the honour of conveying them.

Theſe reciprocal Truths, likewiſe, have a commodious application: and we may properly oppoſe them to thoſe two extremes; one of which is apt to bewilder the zealots for the *national Religion*; the other, the lukewarm profeſſors of *Chriſtianity at large*: While one ſide ſuppoſeth, there is no Salvation out of the *pale of his own Church*; and the other, that there is no happineſs which *moral virtue alone* is not able to procure.

Theſe errors are equally hurtful to true Religion. But the former only is my preſent ſubject: It is that which my text condemns. How juſtly, we ſhall now ſee.

This narrow, intolerant Spirit, which excludes from the benefits of the Goſpel, all without the national or eſtabliſhed pale, notwithſtanding their profeſſion of the common faith of Jeſus, is alike injurious to GOD and MAN.

I. For firſt, it alters the TERMS OF SALVATION, as they are delivered in the Goſpel; which are, *Faith in Chriſt, and repentance towards God*; by adding others to them, ſuch as *fellow-memberſhip in Church Commnion.* To change the fundamental Laws of Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom, where he is the only Lawgiver, is an offence of the higheſt nature, as not only implying ſimple diſobedience, but uſurpation likewiſe. A Church acting with this Spirit, not only throws off Subjection, but aſſumes the Sovereignty: And is no longer the Sheep-fold of the good Shepherd, but the den of Anti-Chriſt, the Thief and Robber.

Again, This innovation is oppoſite to the doctrine of REDEMPTION, and foreign to the whole genius of the Goſpel. They were not the ſins of men, as they make collective bodies in Communities, but the ſins of each individual of our common ſpecies, for which Chriſt died. The deſcendants of *Adam* had, through his tranſgreſſion, loſt the free gift of immortality; which was as freely reſtored by the death and ſufferings of Chriſt. But to whom was it reſtored? not to collective bodies, who ſhould worſhip this

Reſtorer

Reſtorer with public Rites and Ceremonies; but to every particular man who had a *lively faith* in him. The Goſpel is the publication of the *glad tidings* of this reſtoration: And though indeed it was firſt addreſſed to the Jews, as a NATION, a Church, or Society; yet this was not becauſe the redemption of Mankind had any thing to do with Societies of Men as ſuch; but becauſe the *Race of Abraham*, from whoſe loins the promiſed Redeemer was to ſpring, had been, by God's ſpecial appointment, collected into a Body, as amongſt other uſes, ſo for this, the better to prepare his way, and to mark his predicted original according to the fleſh. But when the Gentiles had in their turn the Goſpel offered unto them, the addreſs was only to PARTICULARS. For though the terms of Salvation reſpected the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, yet the *Roman Senate*, as ſuch, had no concern in them. And thoſe *particulars* who received the word, became not neceſſarily, from the ſimple nature and genius of the Faith, members of any Community, but of the ſpiritual Kingdom of God. And though for the better conveyance of the glad tidings of the Goſpel, it was expedient that the Diſciples of Chriſt ſhould be formed into a kind of Sodality, yet the founder of our holy Faith never intended this, or any other religious Society, to be part of its eſſentials; as appears from his expreſs words in my text, where he receives one, who was propagating the faith in him, to all the benefits and prerogatives of his Religion, though he was out of the pale of that fraternity he had juſt then inſtituted.

Now what Jeſus himſelf did, in this eſtabliſhment, for the propagation of Religion, was done afterwards by his Apoſtles, in imitation of him, for the ſupport and continuance of it. They erected Churches and Societies wherever they came: which being founded in one common Faith, were in Communion with one another, as the various parts and members of the ſpiritual Kingdom of God; but, at the ſame time, no more eſſential to that Faith than their own ſodality founded by their Maſter.

Nay,

Nay, for the very reaſons of eſtabliſhing the Churches, namely the conveyance and ſecurity of Religion, it appears they could not be eſſential to the Faith; nothing more obſtructing its progreſs than the notion of a Society's being eſſential to it, as the conſequence of that is the confining Salvation to ſome one Church or Communion.

From all this it appears, that a principle, which narrows the communion of Saints, is contrary to the doctrine of Redemption, and foreign to the genius of the Goſpel. Such are the diſhonours this notion brings upon Revelation.

II. Humanity is not leſs injured by it. For firſt it turns the free gift of God into a bartering trade; the liberty of the Goſpel into a ſpiritual tyranny. For when once it is believed, that there is no ſalvation out of a particular Church, and that the admiſſion into it, and excluſion from it, are at the diſpoſal of a certain order of men, the perſons and fortunes of the faithful will lye at the mercy of their Miniſters. And it will require a very uncommon ſhare of Grace and Virtue not to abuſe ſo dangerous a privilege; and to reſtrain avarice and ambition from proſtituting the ſacred ordinances of Religion to lucrative and ſecular purpoſes.

Of this we ſee a ſad example in the CHURCH OF ROME: who, from the principle of no ſalvation out of its own Community, at length brought men to believe, that ſalvation depended on the Clergy's duly adminiſtring the ſacraments, and other offices of Religion. From hence aroſe all the mercantile traffic of Indulgences, and the whole political machine of Excommunication. And by this means the CHURCH, that is the CLERGY, got themſelves poſſeſſed of all the power, and almoſt all the wealth, of the Chriſtian World.

Secondly, Religious Societies formed by divine appointment to ſpread and to ſupport the FAITH, and, together with it, the great principle of univerſal BENEVOLENCE, became, through the bigotry of this error, the very bane of *benevolence*; by exaſperating every Church

Church or Society againſt another, for its excluſive pretenſions; and by ſtirring up reciprocal hate and averſion to one another, from the ſuppoſed ſtate of reprobation in which they all lie amongſt themſelves; till the whole Church militant, inſtead of directing its warfare againſt their ſpiritual enemies, turns its arms upon itſelf: and dividing into ſeparate bands and parties, each damns and curſes, ſmites and perſecutes the other, who appears with marks and badges different from his own. For perſecution naturally follows unchurching and reprobation. And Zeal is never at eaſe till it hath completed the ſyſtem of deſolation.

This may be ſeen from the conduct of the very men in my text, amongſt whom this evil firſt appeared; for the Story informs us that their next exploit, after ſilencing this bold Separatiſt, was the calling down fire from heaven on the heretical Samaritans *. A circumſtance recorded by the holy Spirit to inſtruct us, how eaſy a ſtep it is, from INTERDICTION, to the SECULAR ARM.

Theſe are ſome of the miſchiefs which ariſe from the wretched bigotry of confining ſalvation, and the benefits of Chriſt's death and paſſion, to one Church or Society; forgetful of that juſt reproof which ſo ſeaſonably curbed this ſpirit in its birth, *Forbid him not; for he that is not againſt us is for us.*

But falſhood is never ſo effectually expoſed as when it is traced and laid open to its original. Let us follow this error then to its ſource.

The nature of things require, that men profeſſing a *Religion* ſhould form themſelves into a *Society*, in order to ſupport that profeſſion. On this principle it was that *Moſes* and *Jeſus*, the Authors, under God, of a revealed Religion, poſitively inſtituted that Society which the nature of things virtually preſcribed: But with this difference; the Moſaic Religion being temporary, the rudiments of one more compleat, and given, in the interim, only to a ſingle family or people, in order to keep them ſeparate from the

* Ver. 44, 45.

reſt

reſt of mankind, it needed ſuch a peculiar Ritual, as ſhould give it a PUBLIC as well as a PRIVATE part; and make the *houſe of Iſrael*, as well as each *individual* of it, the ſubject of Religion. In this caſe, the *religious ſociety* was *eſſential* to the Religion, and compoſed a Church of one denomination; out of whoſe pale no man could be intitled to its benefits.

But Jeſus, as the Author of an *univerſal* Religion, though riſing on the foundations of the *Moſaic*, had only the general reaſon for forming his diſciples into a Society, namely, for the better ſecurity of the Faith; conſequently, the *Society* made *no eſſential* part of his Religion; nor needed a Church of one denomination, within which the benefits of it ſhould be confined.

Yet, ſo it happened, that the Rulers and Governors of this Church, which, as we ſay, aroſe out of Judaiſm, did not rightly conſider *what Spirit they were of* *, nor ſufficiently advert to the reaſons, on which that peculiarity, in Judaiſm, was founded; and ſo transferred it into *Chriſtianity*, as they had unwarily done many others, to its irreparable damage and diſhonour.

What hath been here ſaid is ſufficient to unmaſk that vile impoſture obtruded on the early Chriſtian Church, called the APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS. The Forger of which apparently went on this falſe principle, that ſome one individual Society was as eſſential to *Chriſtianity* as it had been to *Judaiſm*: ſo that a ſyſtem of Laws, equivalent to the Ritual of *Moſes*, was as neceſſary in one Religion as in the other: to ſupply this want, the honeſt man, whoever he was, ſet upon his worthy labour. And in all probability foreſaw, that his forgery would neither want advocates nor arguments, ſuch as they were, to keep it in credit. We have ſeen of theſe: and the amount of their reaſoning comes to this, "that if the *Conſtitutions* be not genuine, the Apoſtles made no Laws for the government of Chriſt's Church; which would ſink its dignity below the Moſaic." They were not aware, that this imaginary advantage did not ariſe from the perfection, but the imperfection of the Jewiſh Religion.

* Luke ix. 55.

But now let me not be misunderstood, as if from all this I would infer, that it were indifferent, in what Church or Society we profess our Faith in Christ. Some Churches, we know, have become so corrupt as to endanger the salvation of those who continue in them, and, on this principle, amongst others, we separated from the CHURCH OF ROME. Well would it have been, had the first Separatists kept entire, and not split and divided themselves into different Sects. But since Providence decreed otherwise, their posterity had yet a task behind; and this was, to chuse amongst the several Churches erected on Reformation Principles, that which came nearest to the purity of the Gospel. For with some or other, the Genius of our holy Religion, and the condition of mankind, require that we should join.

The choice too should be made with the utmost precaution. For amongst the various Societies of *Christians*, there are some, in which the holy *Ordinances* are more regularly administered; *Discipline* more equitably inforced; and Christian *Liberty* more watchfully protected. Now all these circumstances tending to forward the true Believer in the way of his Salvation, it is of much importance to him to chuse his fellow-membership in that Church, which is most exactly dressed on the model of primitive rectitude and simplicity.

Thus, we see, there is a wide difference between declining to join in Communion with this or that Church here, and excluding them from the *Communion of Saints* hereafter. Nothing can justify the latter. Whereas prudence, integrity, and common justice, frequently require us to keep separate from a Church of this or that denomination, when by joining in communion with it we subject ourselves to unprofitable, difficult, or dangerous ordinances; when it imposeth on us what we may think sinful or unjust; or, lastly, when it hath contracted that enormous stain and pollution here condemned, *the denying salvation to all out of its own pale.*

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My purpoſe, in this diſcourſe, was only to expoſe the vain opinion of inherent ſanctity, or ſuperiority, or excluſive privilege in one Church above another, merely becauſe founded by a *Paul*, a *Peter*, an *Andrew*, or a *James*: or merely becauſe adminiſtered by an Hierarchy, by an equal Miniſtry, or a moderate Epiſcopacy. Becauſe ſuch opinions have produced, and do ſtill ſupport, that wretched Spirit, which here, on the Authority of God's Word, I have endeavoured to diſcredit, and ventured to condemn: confiding in the Oracle of eternal Truth, *that he that is not againſt us, is for us*; and will be treated by our heavenly Maſter, not as a Rebel, but a Subject; and therefore ſhould be now conſidered by Us, as he will then be by Him, who is the common Judge of us both.

SERMON XII.

OF CHURCH COMMUNION.

EPHES. IV. 3.

I BESEECH YOU, THAT YE WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED—ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.

THE nature and genius of the Chriſtian Religion annexes the rewards of the Goſpel-covenant to a *Syſtem* of FAITH or belief: and, at the ſame time, requires and encourages examination into the truth and reaſonableneſs of ſuch a Syſtem. From the firſt circumſtance ariſes the diſcredit, from the other the danger, of difference in opinion; whether that difference reſpects the *truth*, or only the *importance* of doctrines ſuppoſed to belong to the integrity of the Chriſtian Faith. And on this diſcredit, and on this danger, is founded the admonition of my text, *to endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit*.

By

By theſe *endeavours* the welfare of Religion, and eſpecially of the Chriſtian, is beſt conſulted. For,

The flouriſhing condition of every ſyſtem of things, whether *ſpiritual* or *civil*, conſiſts in their being *kept* in a ſtate of Peace and Honour.

Concord and uniformity in opinions, after a careful examination of their truth, does, in a ſupreme degree, ſecure the peace of the Church, and advance the honour of Religion; as will be ſeen by conſidering, what it is that moſt diſturbs and diſgraces both.

Unreaſonable fondneſs for our own notions, and miſtaken zeal for God's glory, make us eager to bring others over to our opinions. And in proportion to the fancied importance of the doctrines, and to the wideneſs of the difference, will be our endeavours to prevail; and at the ſame time, our reſentment at their oppoſition.

Diverſity of religious opinions, therefore, muſt needs produce ſuſpicions very oppoſite to ſocial peace; ſuch as perverſity of will, corruption of heart, and, what ſeems leſs uncharitable, but is yet more hardly endured, a narrowneſs of mind and ſentiment. Theſe ſoon proceed to open cenſures, and mutual bickerings; till at laſt each party regards all that differ from them as the enemies of God, and unworthy of their benevolence and love.

Nor is difference of opinion leſs injurious to the honour of our holy Religion, than obnoxious to the peace of the Church.

One would naturally expect, that the fundamental doctrines of a Religion delivered as the final completion of all God's preceding revelations, and intended for univerſal uſe, ſhould be preciſe and clear; agreeable to the moſt obvious reaſon, and conformable to the plaineſt truth. To find, then, diſputes and differences concerning Doctrines deemed to be eſſential, muſt needs have an ill effect on the popular reputation of Religion; and afford its enemies a handle (which the ſanctity of its precepts will always make them very ready to lay hold on) to bring in queſtion the divinity of its original. They will ſay, "That the mark of a divine truth is the fullneſs of its evidence; which is a *neceſſary* quality of truths propoſed

for

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THE nature and genius of the Chriſtian Religion annexes the rewards of the Goſpel-covenant to a *Syſtem* of FAITH or belief: and, at the ſame time, requires and encourages examination into the truth and reaſonableneſs of ſuch a Syſtem. From the firſt circumſtance ariſes the diſcredit, from the other the danger, of difference in opinion; whether that difference reſpects the *truth*, or only the *importance* of doctrines ſuppoſed to belong to the integrity of the Chriſtian Faith. And on this diſcredit, and on this danger, is founded the admonition of my text, *to endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit*.

By

By theſe *endeavours* the welfare of Religion, and eſpecially of the Chriſtian, is beſt conſulted. For,

The flouriſhing condition of every ſyſtem of things, whether *ſpiritual* or *civil*, conſiſts in their being *kept* in a ſtate of Peace and Honour.

Concord and uniformity in opinions, after a careful examination of their truth, does, in a ſupreme degree, ſecure the peace of the Church, and advance the honour of Religion; as will be ſeen by conſidering, what it is that moſt diſturbs and diſgraces both.

Unreaſonable fondneſs for our own notions, and miſtaken zeal for God's glory, make us eager to bring others over to our opinions. And in proportion to the fancied importance of the doctrines, and to the wideneſs of the difference, will be our endeavours to prevail; and at the ſame time, our reſentment at their oppoſition.

Diverſity of religious opinions, therefore, muſt needs produce ſuſpicions very oppoſite to ſocial peace; ſuch as perverſity of will, corruption of heart, and, what ſeems leſs uncharitable, but is yet more hardly endured, a narrowneſs of mind and ſentiment. Theſe ſoon proceed to open cenſures, and mutual bickerings; till at laſt each party regards all that differ from them as the enemies of God, and unworthy of their benevolence and love.

Nor is difference of opinion leſs injurious to the honour of our holy Religion, than obnoxious to the peace of the Church.

One would naturally expect, that the fundamental doctrines of a Religion delivered as the final completion of all God's preceding revelations, and intended for univerſal uſe, ſhould be preciſe and clear; agreeable to the moſt obvious reaſon, and conformable to the plaineſt truth. To find, then, diſputes and differences concerning Doctrines deemed to be eſſential, muſt needs have an ill effect on the popular reputation of Religion; and afford its enemies a handle (which the ſanctity of its precepts will always make them very ready to lay hold on) to bring in queſtion the divinity of its original. They will ſay, "That the mark of a divine truth is the fullneſs of its evidence; which is a *neceſſary* quality of truths propoſed

for

for general belief, and inforced by religious ſanctions, both on account of the importance of the truths themſelves, and the incapacity of the people to comprehend any but the moſt obvious. Yet the endleſs diſputes concerning fundamentals ſeem to ſhew, that ſuch pretended truths want this neceſſary degree of evidence: and ſo cannot have the original which they pretend to."

Such are the objections of men, who are always ready to take offence as they are to give it, by throwing ſtumbling blocks in the way of the weak and captious. And though the force of theſe cavils be but ſmall; yet the evil ariſing from the occaſion is very great.

Having thus ſhewn the importance of *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit*; the next is to propoſe direction for its better obſervance; 1. By explaining how it became violated: and 2. How it may be reſtored to its integrity.

The genius of Chriſtianity, as well as the repeated declarations of its Founder, concur in aſſuring us, *That it is by* FAITH ALONE *we are juſtified, or intitled to the rewards of the Covenant of Grace.* Hence ſome men, who held this truth in its greateſt ſimplicity, thought they never could have enough: and ſo, inſtead of ſtopping at the few general and fundamental Principles of Chriſtian faith, clearly delivered, and uniformly believed by all, they went on, and brought into the Church, as terms of Communion, abſtruſe queſtions relating to points obſcurely delivered; and made ſtill more doubtful by having the Principles of the Greek Philoſophy, to which the *ſacred Writers* paid no regard, and with which the *Faith* hath no concern, applied to their ſolution. They did not conſider, that the very obſcurity itſelf ſufficiently declared that they never were propoſed by the gracious Author of our Faith, for fundamental articles; nor conſequently that he ever intended the profeſſion of them as the neceſſary condition of Church Communion. Much leſs had this imaginary defect in the all-perfect *word of God* given any ſcandal, had it been conſidered, that the proper aim and buſineſs of the Founder of an univerſal Religion muſt needs be, to

repreſent

repreſent the divine Being under the idea of the MORAL GOVERNOR of the World, without any further explanation of his metaphyſical Nature than ſo far forth as it tended to promote the moral purpoſe of Religion.

Now the violation of the *unity of the Spirit* having been occaſioned by theſe miſtakes, we may eaſily collect that the means of preſerving it entire had been the requiring no more, as the terms of Church Communion, than what Chriſt hath delivered to be explicitely believed: and theſe not conſiſting of many particulars, and all of them clear and ſimple, had afforded no handle for difference or diverſity of Opinions: eſpecially had due care been taken to expreſs, as much as poſſible, thoſe points of Communion, in ſcripture terms, without running out into modern gloſſes, conceived upon the principles of Science and Philoſophy merely human; on which, as we ſaid, the divine wiſdom of holy Scripture has neither relation nor dependence.

Theſe had been the moſt direct and efficacious means, I know of, for preſerving the *unity of the Spirit*: Always ſuppoſing that previous diſpoſition of HUMILITY and CHARITY, which all parties confeſs to be neceſſary for the union of opinions, as well as of hearts and affections.

But ſince, through a neglect of theſe rules, this unity of the Spirit hath been unhappily violated, the next queſtion is of RESTORING it. Which what is here ſaid concerning the means of its preſervation ſhews us is to be done.

1. By retrenching all unneceſſary articles, to which the animoſity of parties, the ſuperſtition of barbarous ages, and even the negligence of time, have given an imaginary importance: and by reducing the formula of Faith to the primitive ſimplicity: Leaving all diſputable points, together with ſuch other as no party deems neceſſary, to the free deciſion of every man's private judgment: whereby the terms of Church Communion will be made as wide as is conſiſtent with the welfare and good government of a SOCIETY.

2. As

2. As diviſions, long kept up, have inflamed the paſſions, ſtrengthened the prejudices, and biaſſed the judgments of the contending Parties; another, and indeed principal means of reſtoring unity, is the mutual compliance with one another's weakneſſes. And this, methinks, would not be difficult amongſt well-diſpoſed men, as we muſt needs eſteem thoſe to be, who ſeek to regain this *unity of the Spirit:* For though theſe long contentions may have made us blind to our own infirmities, yet they have rather ſharpened our ſight towards thoſe of our adverſaries. So that a general weakneſs being mutually ſeen and pitied, the very paſſions raiſed by our differences may be naturally brought to promote our reconcilement.

But notwithſtanding this apparent eaſe in bearing with one another's weakneſſes, it deſerves a more than ordinary care to put the diſpoſition in practice; as Eccleſiaſtics of all denominations are but too apt to reaſon wrong in applying it to their mutual endeavours for reconciliation. "The demands of our adverſaries, ſay the eſtabliſhed party, are for matters owned by themſelves to be no duties; and againſt others they confeſs to be indifferent: why then ſhould we alter the ſtated order of things to comply with their perverſeneſs or imbecillity?" But thoſe who reaſon thus ſeem not to conſider that they themſelves become guilty of the very miſcarriage of which they accuſe, and rightly accuſe, their Adverſaries. For if the thing in queſtion be of matters indifferent, why are they not complied with, for the ſake of ſo great a bleſſing as the *unity of the Spirit*, how fooliſhly or obſtinately ſoever demanded? Allow them to be weak or willful for inſiſting on indifferent things as the terms of fellow-membership in Church Communion; Do we ſhew leſs of this imbecillity in refuſing to comply with them in theſe indifferences? which, becauſe they are ſo, we pretend our oppoſites ſhould not be indulged in. For wherein conſiſts their fault or folly but in treating indifferent points as *Duties* by an obſtinate demand of them? And wherein conſiſts our wiſdom, but in treating indifferent points as *Sins* by as obſtinate a refuſal? Now

when

when this mutual miſcarriage hath defeated, as it often hath done, the repeated endeavours of good men on all ſides to reſtore the violated *unity of the Spirit*, each Party may reaſonably blame the conduct of the other, but it is impoſſible he can juſtify his own. Indeed it would be hard to ſay who are moſt to blame; Thoſe who oppoſe eſtabliſhed authority for the impoſition of matters indifferent; or that Authority which rigidly inſiſts on them, and will abate nothing for the ſake of tender uninformed Conſciences: I ſay it would be hard to reſolve this, had not the holy Apoſtle done it for us, where he ſays, *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and* NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES*. *I myſelf*, ſays he, *do ſo, and all for the Goſpel's ſake.* This is the man who tells us *he had fought a good fight and overcome.* And we may believe him; for, in this contention, the Party that ſubmits is always Conqueror.

But now, though the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT cannot be purchaſed at too high a price, yet UNIFORMITY of eſtabliſhed worſhip may be bought too dear. Here then, in purſuit of this ſpiritual bleſſing we muſt ſtop; and not venture to go one ſtep further: We muſt not dare to procure it either at the expence of TRUTH or JUSTICE. It muſt be now left to the good care of Providence. And this, as we ſhall ſee next, is implied in the very words which direct us to attempt it.

1. It is the *unity of the* SPIRIT which the Apoſtle recommends to us, to keep and preſerve. But if, for the ſake of *uniformity of* WORSHIP, we diſguiſe, or betray, or give up any fundamental Truth, it becomes a *confederacy* of the *Spirit of this World:* at beſt a politic Union for the preſervation of civil peace: A peace, where Religion is not the actuating principle, but only the cloke and cover.

2. Nor again, was this *unity of the Spirit* preſerved (ſo long as it was preſerved), nor is it to be again recovered, by reſtraint or CIVIL-COERCION. This would be violating that *bond of peace*, in

* Rom. xv. 1.

which, the Apoſtle tells us, the *unity of the Spirit* is to be kept. For *force upon the Conſcience* being a violation of man's natural rights, it will be always reſented accordingly. Hence it is that Perſecution for Religion neceſſarily tears aſunder all the bonds of Peace and Charity; and reduces the Church of Chriſt to that diſtracted condition which our bleſſed Maſter deſcribed when he foretold the miſeries that would ariſe from Perſecution. *The Father* (ſays he) *ſhall be divided againſt the Son, and the Son againſt the Father; the Mother againſt the Daughter, and the Daughter againſt the Mother. And a man's foes ſhall be thoſe of his own houſe.*

When therefore thoſe *means* ſpoken of above have, through the early folly or later perverſity of man, proved ineffectual to preſerve or to reſtore the *unity of the Spirit*, the only remaining care to which we ſhould then turn us, is the keeping faſt the BOND OF PEACE.

Now the only means of ſecuring this, as experience hath fully ſhewn us, is by a general TOLERATION, or full Liberty to all Chriſtian ſects (who give ſecurity for their good behaviour to the civil Government) of worſhiping God according to the dictates of their own Conſciences, without lett or moleſtation from the ESTABLISHED RELIGION.

Under this wiſe and well-regulated proviſion, when the bleſſing of *unity of Spirit* cannot be obtained, the Church of Chriſt may be ſtill enabled to enjoy all the benefits which ariſe from the *bond of Peace*. So that though men will not be perſuaded to go all one way to Heaven, yet it is to be hoped, when no human impediment is laid acroſs the road, that good men of all parties may get thither at laſt; though ſome with more, and others with leſs difficulty.

The diſtractions and iniquities of theſe latter ages give us no reaſonable grounds to hope for a better condition of the Church. It is therefore that which reaſonable men would aim at. It is that which our own Church enjoys. Here we ſought our peace: and here

here happily we have found it: The experience of a courſe of years having diſcovered that it is productive of much good, and preventive of many evils.

But the reſtleſs mind of man, rarely at eaſe with the preſent ſtate of things, and ſtill impatient for a better, has ever, as opportunities ſerved, been aſſuming various projects, of viſionary improvements, but all really tending to defeat or diſturb this well-ordered regulation.

The moſt plauſible, yet as viſionary as any, is that called a COMPREHENSION. A word very expreſſive to diſtinguiſh the Thing, from that *Unity of the Spirit*; and even from that *Uniformity*, ſpoken of above. An *Unity* is the agreement in heart of thoſe who aim at the ſame thing though by different ways; an *Uniformity* exacts a profeſſion of the ſame thing by the ſame way; but a *Comprehenſion* would be for tacking together different things and different ways, even under the exiſting difference of profeſſion. The firſt is brotherly-concord; the ſecond is Church-communion: but the laſt is political-combination. Nor is the Scheme leſs impracticable than it is miſchievous; as may be ſeen from the following conſiderations.

1. This project hath of late been conceived by men who agreed in nothing but in a diſſatisfaction with the preſent order of things. For one ſide having been unjuſtly prejudiced againſt the equity of a TOLERATION; and the other, as unjuſtly, againſt the rights of an ESTABLISHMENT; they readily concurred in a *Comprehenſion*, that ſeemed to ſuperſede the uſe of both. But we needed not the gift of prophecy to foreſee that it would come to nothing; ſince the very thing which ſo naturally brought the confederates together, would, when they underſtand one another, as naturally ſeparate them; namely, the profeſſion of inconſiſtent Principles: and if not ſo; yet their Principles being at the ſame time *equally falſe*, it would make their ſtaying together ineffectual: For what could a mutual falſehood produce but an impracticable abſurdity. And well

perhaps is it for Religion that it always does ſo. For this *Compreheſion*, the ape, and mimic of *Unity*, tends to the *deſtruction* of that ſpiritual SOCIETY, which *Unity* ſtrengthens and ſupports.

2. The Projectors of it are generally private men, who undertake for more than they can perform. For it is not the temper of *Societies* to come into what is promiſed in their names, by men uncommiſſioned to act for them.

3. The main end of a *comprehenſion* being PEACE; indeed the only end that could induce the Magiſtrate to engage in ſuch a buſineſs; and the Community being already in poſſeſſion of this bleſſing by a well-ordered *Toleration*; He will, I ſuppoſe, be very hardly perſuaded to exchange an experienced good in poſſeſſion, for one untried; which, though it appear fair in proſpect, yet the road to it may prove difficult and dangerous.

4. It hath been often eſſayed in vain by the worthieſt and wiſeſt men of their times, ſuch as CASSANDER and GROTIUS. And it is no wonder this fancied *Magiſterium* ſhould ſtill evaporate in the *projection*. For either the *Comprehenſion* muſt be ſo large and looſe as to diſſolve all Church Government, and even Religious Society: Or, if it be ſo tempered as to keep theſe ſubſiſting, there will be need of all the regulations which diſtinguiſh and ſeparate things *tolerated* from things *eſtabliſhed*; and then *Comprehenſion* will ſhrink back again into an empty name.

On the whole, Since the Church of Chriſt hath been ſo unhappy as to be deprived of its greateſt bleſſing, the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, let not the ſame, or even contrary follies, be of force to perſuade ſuch who are ſenſible of the loſs, to try concluſions with what yet remains, the next beſt good of Society, THE BOND OF PEACE; but rather let them be content to preſerve what we ſtill poſſeſs, by ſuch ſober means as the genius and diſpoſition of the times will permit us to employ. Theſe we have long experienced to be abundantly ſufficient. So that thoſe who wiſh well either to the ESTABLISHED, or to the TOLERATED, Societies of Chriſtians, have nothing to do but

but to prevent the exercise of their distinct powers from degenerating: This, indeed, might at last provoke the MAGISTRATE to lend an unwilling ear to the ignorant and destructive schemes of these vain and idle Visionaries: But till then, I suppose, Sober Churchmen, and experienced Ministers of State, will have this mutual confidence in one another, that nether the Church will abuse its privileges, nor the State leave it unprotected.

SER-

SERMON XIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING ON REVELATION.

LUKE xviii. 8.

—When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?

THIS is one of thoſe fatal MARKS expreſſive of the latter fortunes of the Chriſtian Church, as foretold, in the ſacred Writings, amongſt the Signs of the ſecond coming of the *Son of man*. And with This, many other of thoſe ſigns now concurring, ſeem, in the opinion of ſerious men, to point out to us the near approach of that awful period; the completion of the *moral*, and the renovation of the *natural* ſyſtem of things.

But the labour of the Chriſtian Divine will be perhaps better employed in ſearching out the natural cauſes of the riſing diſorders in the Church of Chriſt, than in hazardous conjectures about Futurity; although laid open to him in ſome meaſure by the import of thoſe *marks*, which the predicted evils are ſuppoſed to bear.

And

And indeed, if He have not this diſcretion, his ſpeculations will ſometimes, as in the caſe before us, be rudely called off from the Prophetic matter, to other conſiderations, in which the honour of *Chriſtianity* is more immediately concerned.

A late noble Writer *, who, together with the Religion of his Country, hath attempted to erafe from the minds of men the very idea of all that goes under the name of Religion, hath, amongſt his diſcoveries of the FIRST PHILOSOPHY, laid down the following maxim: "That ſince the revival of learning in the Weſt, and the conſequent practice of thinking for ourſelves, the CHRISTIAN FAITH hath kept gradually decaying; and men have given leſs and leſs credit to its pretenſions †." From hence he would infer, and not illogically on ſuch a gratuitous Principle, "that the Religion of *Jeſus* is falſe."

I propoſe therefore to debate this matter with him; a point of the utmoſt importance to the honour of Revelation.

His Lordſhip's propoſition may be expreſſed in plainer terms, "That the more the world has advanced in real knowledge, the more it has diſcovered of the intenable pretenſions of the Goſpel."

To expoſe the futility of his maxim, I ſhall firſt of all ſhew, that it was not IGNORANCE which gave the Goſpel its early credit: Which is a preſumption, at leaſt, that KNOWLEDGE hath not ſince hurt it.

NOW CHRISTIANITY aroſe when KNOWLEDGE was at its height, in the latter part of the *Auguſtan* age; and in the very centre of human learning, *Rome*, *Greece*, and the *Leſſer-Aſia*. Neither was it propagated in confederacy with Sophiſts or Philoſophers; but in direct defiance of all their eloquence and reaſoning; over which,

* Lord BOLINGBROKE.

† *The reſurrection of Letters was a fatal period: the Chriſtian ſyſtem has been attacked, and wounded too, very ſeverely ſince that time.*—And again, *Chriſtianity has been in decay ever ſince the reſurrection of Letters.*—Lord BOLINGBROKE, on the ſtudy and uſe of hiſtory, Vol. I. p. 182, and 185. Octavo Edition.

after

after a ſharp conflict of FAIR ARGUMENT, it at length compleatly triumphed: Nor, again, under the protection of civil Rulers, or the Imperial authority; for theſe were all combined to its deſtruction; ſome with the arms of human learning and Philoſophy, as MARCUS ANTONINUS and JULIAN: but the far greater part with the more peculiar argument of Tyrants, the ſword of the executioner: Yet theſe, likewiſe, the Goſpel, after a ſtill ſharper conflict of PATIENCE and SUFFERING, brought over to the ſide of Truth and Reaſon.

But what need we more? We have the noble Author himſelf giving teſtimony to the fact; and, in his *uſual way*, deſtroying his own ſyſtem of political philoſophy. He not only confeſſeth, that at the publication of the Goſpel, the Gentile World was highly advanced in knowledge, but that this knowledge facilitated the reception of its truths. Speaking of this very æra, he ſays—"Poly-"theiſm was mitigated; Idolatry was in good meaſure diſtinguiſhed "away, amongſt the Philoſophers at leaſt. Oracles and the Arts "of Divination grew into contempt: and if Heatheniſm was kept "up by men above the vulgar, it ſeemed to be ſo only by the "Prieſts for lucre, and by others for fear of having no Religion "at all. THUS THE WAY WAS PREPARED BY REASON FOR REVE-"LATION, in the *Countries where Chriſtianity firſt appeared, and* "*which were enlightened by Philoſophy* *." But his Lordſhip goes further; he not only confeſſeth that this learned age was favourable to the SUCCESS of *Chriſtianity*, but that it was moſt adapted to its GENIUS; ſince, thoſe who publiſhed it choſe rather that it ſhould be ſubmitted to the examination of REASON, than forced upon the world by the weight of AUTHORITY." "It is plain" (ſays his Lordſhip) "that the firſt publiſhers of *Chriſtianity* did not reſt "the cauſe primarily or ſolely on AUTHORITY of any kind. It is "plain that they ſubmitted the Goſpel, and the Authority of thoſe "who publiſhed it, to the examination of REASON, as any other "ſyſtem even of divine Philoſophy ought to be ſubmitted †."

* Bolingbroke's Works, Quarto Edition, vol. IV. p. 373, 374. † Vol. IV. p. 267.

After

After this, to talk of any real advantage the Goſpel can gain by *ignorance*, or any real hurt it can receive from *knowledge*, is reckoning much upon the advantage of favourable hearers.

Another *preſumption* that Knowledge is not injurious to the intereſts of Religion, was the later conduct of the MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL. The noble Writer, whoſe ſuggeſtion I am here oppoſing, hath thought fit to repreſent them as a ſet of knaviſh Politicians combined together to ſupport Revelation as the beſt ſyſtem to advance the Wealth and Power of their Order. But whether Revelation be a divine Truth or a commentitious Fable; whether the Order be Miniſters of Religion, or Confederates in Iniquity; it is at leaſt certain, that men who have devoted their time and talents to the ſervice of this Inſtitution muſt needs be beſt acquainted with its nature, and with the means moſt proper to advance, or to retard its intereſts. And this their ſuperior knowledge will admit of no diſpute, if, as is pretended, Revelation was their INVENTION: for they could not but be very intimate with the work of their own hands. Now it is remarkable, that when divers accidental cauſes had concurred to revive learning in the Weſt (not the leaſt of which was the protection and encouragement the Clergy afforded to the exiled Greeks), this Order was amongſt the firſt, as ſoon as ever it had given any ſigns of returning life, to cheriſh and ſupport it; to raiſe and reſtore it to its ancient dignity and ſplendor. One amongſt them in particular having done more in this ſervice than all the Laity of that age together. I need not tell the learned hearer, that I mean ERASMUS*. The inference I would draw from

* There is one circumſtance in the life and character of this excellent Perſon, that diſtinguiſhes him with advantage from moſt others, even of the greateſt eminence in Letters: and will for ever endear his memory to the Wiſe and Good. His zeal for the intereſts of Learning and Religion was equally warm and conſtant. To ſerve the firſt, he began with diſcrediting the MONKS, the mortal Enemies of reviving Letters. He puſhed them with all the vigour of his wit; and ſeemed reſolved to give no quarter to that ignorance which was become the mother and nurſe of all the bigotry, and ſuperſtition, which moſt diſhonoured and defiled Religion. In this attack on the eſtabliſhed

from it is this, That had the Clergy, who beſt underſtood the mutual effects which *Learning* and *Revelation* muſt have upon one another, been apprehenſive that LETTERS would prove injurious to the FAITH, which it was, it ſeems, their *peculiar* intereſt to ſupport; ſo cunning Politicians had never acted ſo abſurd a part as to promote Learning when it was in their power to ſuppreſs it. Yet they did ſupport it. And, with no great aſſiſtance from the Laity, advanced that degree of eminence in which our Fathers have ſeen it.

I know it hath been pretended, that in this ſervice the Clergy were paſſive; that they entered into it with reluctance; that they went heavily with the current, which then ran ſtrongly to the advancement of Science. But they who ſay ſo, know little of the hiſtory of thoſe times. It is true, the poor *Monks* in the midſt of all their blindneſs, ſaw well enough the havock Learning would

barbarity of the times, he ſucceeded ſo well, as to bring good Letters into faſhion: to which he gave a new ſplendor by preparing for the preſs correct Editions of many of the beſt antient Writers both eccleſiaſtical and prophane. But his labours were not yet ended. He had a new adventure to undertake. He lived to ſee the *zeal* for Letters, which he had been ſo inſtrumental in promoting, carry the VIRTUOSI of *Italy* into an oppoſite and yet more ridiculous extreme than the *monkiſh*, when he firſt ſet upon laughing ignorance out of the world. The Italian Latin Writers (and almoſt every body then was a Latin Writer), from their dread and horror of monkiſh barbariſms, would uſe no word, not even when they treated of the higheſt myſteries of Religion, but what had been conſecrated as it were in the Capitol, and diſpenſed to them by the ſacred hand of TULLY. Eraſmus obſerved the growth of this folly with the greater concern, as he thought he ſaw, under all their fondneſs for the Language of old *Rome*, a growing libertinage, which diſpoſed them to think ſlightly of the Chriſtian FAITH; and, what is ſtill ſtranger, gave them even a reverence for the abſurdities of the old Gentile worſhip. Now, this oppoſite extreme, he thought it equally his duty to expoſe: which he hath done in that immortal work intitled CICERONIANUS: and done ſo effectually, that the public was ſoon brought back to that juſt medium which he had been all his life endeavouring to mark out for their obſervance: Purity, but not Pedantry, in Letters; and Zeal, but not Bigotry, in Religion. In a word, the employing his talents of genius and literature on ſubjects of general importance declared him a TRUE CRITIC; and his oppoſing the extremes of all Parties in their turns declared him an HONEST MAN.

make

make throughout all the quarters of Superſtition: and therefore employed their weak endeavours to ſtop the progreſs of it. But what was the iſſue? They made themſelves doubly ridiculous: for the learned Clergy were not now content to deſpiſe, they found it neceſſary to expoſe, their ignorance. Soon afterwards indeed the world was ſurpriſed with the ſudden riſe of a more formidable Order of Religious, the JESUITS; who perhaps had been well pleaſed to have acted their parts like their predeceſſors, in the ſhade of cloiſtered ignorance. But the matter was then too far gone. Theſe Politic Fathers, if you will, were indeed forced to ſwim with the ſtream: but they went in it with ſo good a grace that few have more effectually contributed to the advancement of Learning. In a word, this was the *general Spirit* of the Chriſtian Clergy; both of the Friends and Enemies of *Rome*, that from the time in which *Letters* gave the firſt ſymptom of recovered life, to the preſent, they cheriſhed them with a zeal and aſſiduity next to what they uſed in the ſupport and defenſe of their more peculiar charge, *Religion*.

What then muſt we conclude, but that they thought, and ſtill think, that the Chriſtian Faith is much benefited by the application of human Learning to its ſervice? They were not miſtaken, as I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew.

For, from theſe PRESUMPTIONS, I proceed to a DIRECT PROOF, that as the infant growth of the Goſpel was not retarded by that flouriſhing ſtate of Knowledge which ſaw it in its birth; ſo the revived Knowledge of theſe latter ages did greatly ſupport the eſtabliſhed honours of Revelation, by illuſtrating its primeval Truths.

Since the more careful cultivation of natural and moral Science, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, and ANTIQUITY, have all contributed to ſpread a new light over the evidences of it.

In *natural Philoſophy*, more exact enquiries have been made into the contents of the ſuperior covering of the terraqueous Globe; the peculiarities of whoſe arrangements give the ſtrongeſt evidence

to the Moſaic account of the *Deluge* *. And the immortal Theory of *Newton* abſolutely demonſtrates that intimate relation which *Moſes* ſpeaks of, between the *Creator* and his *work*.

Prophane Hiſtory, the more nicely it is examined, the more clearly it diſcovers, through all its corruptions, an exact and ſurprizing conformity with the *ſacred:* It affords a vaſt number of precious Monuments that ſerve to illuſtrate thoſe obſcurities in holy Writ, which time and the univerſal change of manners, both Social and Civil, have unavoidably occaſioned amongſt men.

The Science of *Antiquity*, which is properly converſant with the manners and cuſtoms of ancient times, ſupports the general credit of ſacred Scripture by illuſtrating thoſe internal marks that prove the high antiquity to which they pretend.

The Science of *Morals* hath been more ſucceſsfully purſued, and more happily inveſtigated, ſince the revival of Letters, than at any other period whatever. And this, reflected upon Goſpel-morality, hath thrown ſuch a luſtre on the purity of its nature, on the utility of its general direction, and on the truth of revelation principles, as ſhews its original to be indeed divine.

True Knowledge being thus friendly to the FAITH, you will naturally expect, I ſuppoſe, to find the great Maſters of Science confirming what is here ſaid, by their warm attachment to REVELATION. The expectation is not unreaſonable. And you have the

* The contents of the Ocean are found, in a petrified ſtate, all over the terreſtrial part of the Globe; and in places moſt diſtant from thoſe in which they were firſt formed. I ſay they are found over all the earth, but not in all ſorts of ſoils indifferently. And from theſe two circumſtances conſidered together, an inconteſtable proof of the truth of the Moſaic relation, I think, may be deduced. Had theſe adventitious foſſils not been found in every quarter of the Globe, we could not conclude the Deluge to have been *univerſal:* and had they been found in all kind of ſoils indifferently, we might ſuppoſe them to be (what they were once commonly thought) the natives of thoſe narrow beds in which they are diſcovered, and a kind of *luſus naturæ*. But when we ſee them ſpread over every climate, and yet only in ſuch ſoils as are proper for the preſervation of *foreign bodies*, we rightly conclude them to be the depoſite of a Deluge of waters which covered the whole face of the Earth.

pleaſure to ſee every great name amongſt the Laity, ſuch as BACON, BOYLE, NEWTON, GROTIUS, SELDEN, SYDENHAM, PASCHAL, and LOCKE, no leſs reſpectable for their ſincere belief of *Chriſtianity* than for their profound Knowledge in their ſeveral Profeſſions. Nor ſhould you ſuffer yourſelves to ſuſpect that the weight of this argument is at all diminiſhed if there be others, accounted in the rank of Learned Men, who have affected to think ſlightly of the Religion of their Country. For when the matter is to be decided by Authority, Hobbes I ſuppoſe will not be oppoſed to Newton, or Spinoza to Bacon. Much leſs would any one compare Toland with Grotius, or Tindal with Selden, or Coward and Morgan with Harvey and Sydenham.

If then true Science hath thus advanced the credit and glory of REVELATION, by the nature of its principles, and the ſentiments of its profeſſors; and if yet there hath been, ever ſince the revival of LETTERS, a gradual defection from the Faith, we muſt ſeek for the cauſes of this Apoſtaſy in ſomething elſe than in a SUPERABUNDANCE OF KNOWLEDGE. And on a fair inquiry, I perſuade myſelf, they will not be difficult to find.

We have juſt ſeen, how one diviſion of the learned world, into the GREAT and the SMALL *Philoſophers*, contributes to the credit of Religion: another, into the MORAL and the IMMORAL, would no leſs ſupport its honour, were it not too invidious a taſk to oppoſe theſe to one another, by name. But the various inſtances may be ſafely truſted to every man's own recollection. For who hath not obſerved, that in the learned world every the moſt virtuous perſon hath been moſt eminent for his adherence to *Revelation*: and that ſuch who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the cauſe of *free-thinking* have been generally as remarkable for the free indulgence of their paſſions. Nor is it at all ſtrange, that, when men have nothing to hope, and much to fear from a Religion propoſed to them as true, they ſhould for their own eaſe be willing to find, or, if that fails, to ſuſpect it to be falſe. And when once men are in this diſpoſi-

tion,

tion, they will never want objections to FACTS eſtabliſhed by the fulleſt evidence; or to DOCTRINES ſupported by the ſtrongeſt reaſoning.

But, it will be ſaid, perhaps, "Why did not this natural, though unreaſonable, prejudice appear ſooner? Men have been always vicious; and have ever ſince the firſt appearance of *Chriſtianity* been made uneaſy in their vices."

The fact is true. But the anſwer to the queſtion eaſy. We are to conſider that, for many ages preceding the reſtoration of Learning, SUPERSTITION had invented a thouſand expedients to evade the threats of Religion againſt a wicked life, to reconcile the difference; and to make Salvation conſiſtent with the practice of habitual immorality. So that bad men were under no temptation to quarrel with the evidences of their Faith, in order to enjoy their vices in quiet.

But the caſe is much altered ſince Religion, by the aſſiſtance of revived Learning, hath been reſtored to its ancient purity. The original terms of the Goſpel Covenant between God and man are ſeen to be immoveable: That *habitual crimes* can be no otherwiſe atoned for but by *ſincere repentance:* And that the very eſſence of *repentance* conſiſts in forſaking vice, and returning to the actual practice of virtue.

However, admitting ſo rare a phenomenon as an Unbeliever of real learning and reaſonable morals; it would be abſurd to aſcribe this to his ſuperior Knowledge, when ſo natural an account may be given of this traverſe, from his learned paſſions and infirmities. A *progreſs in arts* is far from working that change in the heart and affections which a *progreſs in the practice of Religion* is wont to do. The higher you advance in FAITH, the eaſier you ſubdue, and the more ſkilfully you balance your appetites and affections: but too often, the further you advance in SCIENCE, the more you inflame thoſe appetites and render them intractable. PRIDE and VANITY grow ſpontaneouſly out of the conſciouſneſs, whether real or imaginary, of ſuperior knowledge. As theſe paſſions render us impatient

impatient of inſtruction, and ſcarcely ſubmitting to be *ſelf-taught*, ſo they are moſt gratified when we quit the opinions of the croud. "If all my Learning (ſays ſuch a one to himſelf) only leads me to think with the *Many*, and to have my ſcience confounded in the maſs of popular opinions, how ſhall I be diſtinguiſhed with advantage from the ignorant and illiterate? To give ſuch people a due eſteem for my importance, they ſhould ſee that Learning leads men to concluſions, very diſtant from common ſentiments. Theſe viſions, light and fantaſtic as they are, have, I am afraid, led many ſcholars to affect a ſingularity in thinking, which their better judgments, if not their very hearts, condemned.

This infirmity of learned heads did not eſcape the noble Writer, whoſe maxim is now under conſideration; when, ſpeaking of what he calls *the reſurrection of Letters*, he ſaid, "In the darkneſs of "ignorance, ſuperſtition prevailed: in the light of knowledge, "overweening curioſity, the offspring of SELF-CONCEIT; as ſelf-"conceit is of PRIDE *." And in another place, "As men advance "in Knowledge, their *ſelf-conceit* is apt to increaſe †."

But if ſimple vanity be thus ſtrong, how powerful will it prove when joined to warm reſentments for neglected merit or injurious ſuſpicions? I wiſh I could not ſay, there have been ſome, even of thoſe conſecrated to the ſervice of Religion, who have ſuffered thoſe paſſions and reſentments to carry them into the quarters of the Enemy.

But as to the Learned of that time, many circumſtances concurred to indiſpoſe them towards the Religion of their Country. They went to the cultivation of the *new Learning*, as it was then called, with a ſort of enthuſiaſm. They were promiſed wonderful things from it. And nothing could more flatter their paſſions than to fancy they had diſcovered by it, that the Religion, under which ſenſe and conſcience had lain ſo long oppreſſed, was falſe; a prejudice they would be very ready to indulge out of revenge to the

* Vol. iv. p. 170.

† Vol. iv. p. 171.

Monks,

Monks, who employed all their Authority to diſcredit and diſcountenance the *new Learning*, and all the favourers of it.

Again, there are ſome Sciences little converſant in that kind of proof by which the truths of Religion are ſupported; ſuch as the ſimple and mixed Mathematics, which labour only in ſtrict demonſtration. What wonder then, that the ſimple Demonſtrator *, unuſed to calculate the numerous combinations that conſtitute the various degrees of moral probability, ſhould, when the evidence for Religion came before him, appear little fitted, and leſs diſpoſed to eſtimate its force?

To the *incapacity*, which an addiction to certain Sciences induceth, may be added the *prejudices* which certain circumſtances in the ſtate of the two Religious parties, that divide the Weſtern world, were apt to occaſion. In the CHURCH OF ROME, the groſs corruptions; and amongſt PROTESTANTS, their endleſs diviſions into ſects and factions. The *corruptions* were apt to make doubting men ſuſpect *Revelation* to be only a knaviſh Fable; the *diviſions*, that it was only an enthuſiaſtic dream.

Hitherto it appears that it is not Learning, but the infirmities of thoſe who profeſs Learning, which produce that infidelity whoſe origin is the ſubject of our inquiry.

But certainly, its largeſt ſource is *pretended learning* and *ſuperficial knowledge*; the very defect and want of that, to which his Lordſhip aſcribes the preſent propenſity to unbelief. In a ſtate of *ſimple ignorance* men hardly get ſo far as into the confines of doubt: which was their caſe before the *reſurrection of Letters*: Superficial

* "Les Geométres mêmes (ſays a very able judge of theſe matters) qui devroient mieux connoître les avantages de l'analiſe, que les autres Philoſophes, donnent ſouvent la preference à la ſintheſe. Auſſi, quand ils ſortent de leurs calculs pour entrer dans les recherches d'une nature differente, on ne leur trouve plus la même clarté, la même preciſion, ni la même *etenduc d'eſprit*. Nous avons quatre metaphiſiciens celebres, DESCARTES, MALEBRANCHE, LEIBNITZ, et LOCKE. Le dernier eſt le ſeul qui ne fut pas Geometre, et de combien n'eſt il pas ſuperieur aux trois autres?" Eſſai ſur l'Origine des Connoiſſances Humaines, 2de partie, p. 289, 90.

know-

knowledge ſoon brings them thither, and ſupplies them with many ſhallow objections againſt Religion: and this has been the ſtate of things ever ſince. And the vanity that accompanies learned purſuits being ſtronger and more unchecked in the entrance to Science than in the more advanced ſtages of it, as having but little of that *conſcious ignorance* to counterbalance it, which increaſes in proportion to our progreſs, the doubts and objections of the half-learned will ſoon terminate in ſettled infidelity. Hence it is we find the leaders and profeſſors of Free-thinking to have been generally of this claſs of men. And hence it is, that there are now much fewer Unbelievers amongſt eminent men in the learned Profeſſions than at the revival of Letters. For as Science has kept advancing, and the true theory of nature opened, men's hard thoughts of Revelation have gradually leſſened and ſubſided. The Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*, when the Schools firſt got to its ſource in the ſixteenth Century, inclined the Italian literati to *Atheiſm*: and the new inventions of *Deſcartes*, in the ſeventeenth, diſpoſed the French to *naturaliſm*. They have both now given place to the true theory of nature. And Newton, as well by his doctrine as example, has taught the Philoſophic world to believe and tremble. Nor is the preſent overflow of infidelity any objection to the truth of this obſervation. For, as to the great body of unbelievers, it is neither deep, nor yet ſuperficial, Learning that gives the bias. This, indeed, may form the *leaders*: but it is FASHION only (as in every other folly) that perverts the *followers*.

For juſt as in the times of IGNORANT DEVOTION, *believing* was the mode; ſo in theſe our days of LEARNED INDIFFERENCE it is *free-thinking*. It is not much nor little learning, it is not knowledge, nor yet ignorance, which influences the body of mankind in their Opinions, any more than in their dreſs; it is CREDITABLE IMITATION, the thing we call FASHION.

In a word, if we conſider LEARNING in the ſenſe of a *diſcipline for the improvement of the underſtanding*, it has at all times been of

infinite advantage to REVELATION. Yet it muſt not be denied, that it may ſometimes be ſo circumſtanced as to produce much miſchief. I have ſhewn that both antient and modern Learning have contributed to the propagation and eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion: yet it is but too true that the one, in the *genius of its Doctrines*, and the other in the *mode of its propagation*, have, with great good, accidentally occaſioned variety of evil.

The *metaphyſical principles* of antient Philoſophy were deſtructive of the great Doctrines of our Faith *; which made St. *Paul* caution the Churches, leſt any ſhould *ſpoil them through Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men* †.

The *mode of propagation* has done all the miſchief in theſe latter times. The uſe of Letters among the Antients, even in the flouriſhing ſtate of them, was confined to the FEW; who, by their ſtations in life, were enabled to make a real and a reaſonable improvement. But ſince the invention of printing, the *inſtruments of Knowledge* have grown ſo common as to get into the hands of the PEOPLE: where, inſtead of improving the underſtandings, they have had no other effect than to inflame the paſſions: of which, RELIGION, SOCIETY, and even LETTERS themſelves, now feel the miſerable effects.

On the whole then we ſee, how ridiculous as well as malicious the noble perſon's obſervation is, "That Revelation owes its credit to ignorance; and loſes ground as Learning and Science advance againſt it." For what there is of fact, on which he ſupports his obſervation, is only this, that *there is a greater number of Unbelievers amongſt the profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſince the revival of Letters than before.* But if this inference be juſt, it would hold as well againſt the *being of a God*, as againſt the *truth of Revelation*: for, to one Atheiſt in the Monkiſh times, there were a hundred at the revival of Learning. One degree of ſcience is fitted to diſcover error; and another, to find out the truth. In the interim, the infirmity

* Divine Legation, Book III. Sect. 4.

† Col. ii. 8.

of

of our nature betrays us, and in running from an abſurdity we rarely ſtop till we be got intangled in its oppoſite.

But the inference is, in every view, ſo groundleſs, that *Chriſtianity* (as we have ſhewn) made its firſt way againſt the higheſt powers and prejudices, in the very centre of the moſt flouriſhing age of Knowledge.

At the laſt revival of Letters it received the ſtrongeſt aid from human Science; and the ſincereſt homage from the moſt illuſtrious names that ever adorned or cultivated Letters.

The only enemies it found amongſt the Learned were either ſuch as were immoral in their lives; or were tied down by a falſe Philoſophy to inveterate prejudices; or were carried away by vanity; or were incompetent judges by their unacquaintance with the nature of the proofs; or laſtly ſuch who *pretended only* to a Knowledge they indeed had not.

And as to the groſs body of licentious men, Learning had no concern in the affair; Theſe were entirely under the ſway and influence of FASHION.

From all this we conclude, that let INFIDELITY be riſen to what height it will, it is not yet of that kind which brings any real diſcredit to REVELATION.

The Rejectors of it, therefore, would do well to conſider the grounds on which they ſtand; and what account they will be able to give to the great Judge of all the earth at his ſecond coming, for having contributed to that horrid defection which he hath foretold will be then found amongſt men.

THREE SERMONS

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE LATE REBELLION,

IN MDCCXLV.

AND

A DISCOURSE

ON

THE NATURE OF THE MARRIAGE-UNION.

SERMON I.

OCCASIONED BY

THE UNNATURAL REBELLION.

Preached and publiſhed in the Month of November 1745, while the Rebel-Army was in England.

1 Ep. PETER ii. 17.

FEAR GOD, HONOUR THE KING.

THE holy Apoſtle has, with great propriety, joined together theſe two precepts of our duty to GOD and the CIVIL MAGISTRATE; as well knowing what mutual influence Religion and Society have, and what mutual aid they beſtow, upon one another: that the truth and purity of Faith preſcribe and recommend the rules of civil juſtice; and that a free and equal Government favours and encourages the profeſſion of the truth.

But not only the genius and diſpoſition of Religion and Government diſpoſe them to this friendly intercourſe of good offices; but the actual adminiſtrations of their reſpective powers are always imparting

parting mutual aſſiſtance to one another. The State lending its coercive power to reſtrain and puniſh that vice and immorality which renders all religious profeſſion, contaminated with it, vain before God; and the Church employing the terrors of the Lord to inforce obedience to the Magiſtrate's lawful commands: teaching men ſubjection, *not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.*

But this is a truth, which, I preſume, will eaſily find its way to an *Engliſh* audience; who now actually poſſeſs and enjoy all thoſe bleſſings which ariſe from ſo natural and ſacred an Union. For by the *equity* of our *civil* Conſtitution the *conſciences of men* are not only left free, but protected in their liberty: and by the truth and power of our *religious*, the *rights of citizens* have been more than once ſupported, when threatened by arbitrary and illegal power.

But then, though true and pure Religion, and a juſt and equal Government, be thus fruitful of mutual good; Superſtition and Deſpotic power are, on the contrary, as productive of mutual evil; inceſſantly inflaming one another's diſorders, till they ſink the wretched victims of their tyranny into the loweſt ſtate of miſery and diſtreſs.

For when once Superſtition hath violated the rights of conſcience, then, in order to diſpoſe the civil magiſtrate to become the executioner of their decrees, or, if they fail in that, to be an unconcerned Spectator of their violence, they preach up his DIVINE RIGHT, and a power from Heaven like their own: with a free invitation to make as bold with property, as they have done with conſcience. On the other ſide, whenever the civil Magiſtrate aims to play the tyrant, he naturally begins with giving up ſenſe and piety for a prey to Superſtition and Church cenſures; in order to ſave labour, and to receive one half of the man already ſubdued to his hands.

In a word, that Religion, which renders void the firſt precept of my text, by taking way the *fear of God*, will always be for introducing a form of Government which renders void the ſecond, by taking away all *honour from the King*. And ſo, reciprocally, will

will an *honourleſs King* promote the worſhip of a *fearleſs God.* And for the truth of this, we need look no further than upon the inſolent attempts, juſt now making, to overturn our happy conſtitution in Church and State, and, in its ſtead, to introduce POPERY and ARBITRARY POWER.

But of this complicated monſter, now crawling from the North, which, Amphiſbena like, has at either end a Head, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that though Each may lead and follow in its turn, yet they are ſtill inſeparable: and that between them both, they effectually make void this great Chriſtian ſummary of human conduct, to *fear God and honour the King*: POPERY entirely effacing from the *minds* of men all religious fear of the Deity; and ARBITRARY POWER tearing from their *affections* all manly honour for the Magiſtrate.

To begin therefore with POPERY, under its beſt face, that of a *Religion*, though it be, in truth, little other than a mere *Antichriſtian Policy*.

This Religion ſtrips Chriſtianity of the *fear of God*, Firſt, by transferring much of the worſhip due to the Creator upon the creature, in their idolatrous adoration of dead men; by whoſe merits and mediation the anger of the offended Deity is ſuppoſed to be appeaſed, and the unalterable terms of juſtice, between God and man, removed or relaxed: The very ſame idolatry, which, the Apoſtle *Paul* aſſures us, had baniſhed all *fear* of the Deity out of the Pagan world, when the *wrath of God was revealed* by Jeſus *from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* That is, who mixed with their knowledge of the true God, the moſt abominable idolatries, *and changed his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, &c.* A practice, which, if it begins not in a contempt of the Deity, muſt neceſſarily end in it, and take away all *fear of God's* JEALOUSY.

A ſecond way, in which *Popery* takes away the *fear of God*, is in its doctrine and diſcipline of penitence. We are taught, as well by nature as the Goſpel, that ſin is ſo offenſive to God's purity as to *provoke his wrathful indignation* upon tranſgreſſors. Hence, the *fear of God's* diſpleaſure tends to keep men in their duty; and to call them back to it, when they have tranſgreſſed, by a ſeaſonable repentance.

Now, in the *church of Rome*, the doctrine of attrition with abſolution roots out all this holy *fear*, by teaching men, that an ill-ſpent life is to be attoned by ſimple ſorrow, and the prieſt's forgiveneſs, at the hour of death: Whereby, all *fear of God's* JUSTICE becomes evaded.

A third way, by which Popery takes away the *fear of God*, is in transferring his rule and government in the Church, upon a mere man, aſſuming to himſelf all power both in heaven and in earth. And he adminiſters this power with the ſame extravagant impiety with which he uſurped it; by giving indulgences to ſin, and diſpenſations from the moſt ſolemn obligations of morality. So that ſuch an exerciſe of Church Authority cannot but work out of the minds of men all *fear of God's* DOMINION.

A fourth way, by which Popery takes away the *fear of God*, is in its tyranny over conſcience, called ſubmiſſion to the *Holy See*. It is the Goſpel-doctrine, that God alone is the Judge of conſcience; that it is accountable only to him; and that to bring it before another Tribunal is to uſurp upon the rights of the Divinity. For *who art thou*, ſays the Apoſtle *Paul*, *that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth.* Yet hath this unchriſtian Church, in defiance of the *divine*, and in oppoſition to the maxims of *human* laws, erected a COURT OF INQUISITION, which impriſons, ſtarves, and burns all who ſet not their opinions by thoſe of the *Holy See*. Now, amongſt the numerous evils of this infernal butchery, this is not the leaſt, that it has a natural tendency to root out all *fear of God*: For Hypocriſy (which is the only genuine offſpring of Force) familiarizing its maſk to the face of Heaven, ſoon

ſoon wears out of the mind all *fear of the divine* OMNISCIENCE, intent only on deceiving theſe more dreaded tyrants over conſcience.

Thus we ſee, by how many various ways the *fear of God*, which is the ſoul of piety, is weakened and rendered void by this daring Impoſtor, who uſurps the reverend name of the *holy catholick Church*.

Its inſeparable companion, DESPOTIC POWER, which generally follows it, but now, indeed, ſeems to lead the way, under its moſt hideous form of a bloody and unnatural rebellion, tends equally to deſtroy all *honour* due to *Kings*.

Let us conſider from whence the *honour* due to that ſacred character is naturally derived: and how inevitably arbitrary power tendeth to deſtroy it.

The firſt ground of *honour* is, that a KING, who conſiders the people, as his CHILDREN, of his family and houſhold, is inceſſantly employed in feeding, ſupporting, and enriching thoſe committed to his care. So that gratitude, which requires all the returns of filial duty and affection, gives him *honour*, *as to a common father*. On the other hand, a TYRANT, who regards his ſubjects as his SLAVES, born for the gratification of all his impotent purpoſes, is only ſolicitous how to make the moſt of their blood and ſweat: the fruits of which he ſquanders away in wild projects of depopulating ambition, or in his more deſtructive habits of luxury and pleaſure: So that, inſtead of *honour*, his actions repay him with deſerved averſion and CONTEMPT.

Another ground of *honour* is the equal protection a *King* affords to all his ſubjects; not ſuffering his people to be oppreſſed in their religious rights by cruel or intolerant Churchmen; or, in their civil, by proud and overbearing Nobles; which gives him *honour as their common protector*. The *Tyrant*, on the contrary, who wants the aſſiſtance of Superſtition to ſupport his illegal prerogative, and the connivance of the Powerful, in the unjuſt exerciſe of it; delivers up his people, for a prey to Both; that himſelf may direct and

preſide in the common pillage; which muſt needs turn all eſteem and *honour* into hatred and DETESTATION.

Another ground of *honour* is, that the rule which the King preſcribes to the exerciſe of his power is the old, eſtabliſhed, and well known Laws of the realm; by which the people are ſecured in the freedom of their perſons, and in the enjoyment of their poſſeſſions. Hence the *King becomes honoured as the common judge*, the avenger of wrong and oppreſſion. On the other hand, the *Tyrant*, by making his *will and pleaſure* the rule of his adminiſtration, impriſons and confiſcates without legal complaint or forfeiture; which, expoſing liberty and property a prey to court ſycophants, reduces all *honour* to a SERVILE FEAR.

The laſt ground of *honour* is, the *King's* owning himſelf created by the People, and for their ſake*: The end of his office, being the public good: So that he is *honoured by them as their common benefactor*. A *Tyrant*, on the contrary, claims his right from Heaven, or Nature, or Conqueſt, or, in a word, from any thing, rather than that from whence only a free obedience can ariſe; and conſequently holds the People made for the gratification of his pleaſure, and the ſupport of his magnificence; and that, when he condeſcends to employ himſelf in their ſervice, 'tis merely of his princely grace and favour; which turns all *honour* into jealouſy and DISTRUST.

Thus, here again, we ſee, how *arbitrary prwer*, ſo eſſentially different from our happy Conſtitution, deprives the Magiſtrate of all civil honour, by making him unworthy of it; and leaving nothing in its place but contempt, averſion, jealouſy, and ſlaviſh fear.

When we are therefore bid by the Apoſtle PETER to *honour the King*, we muſt conclude, he previouſly ſuppoſes, that we have had the courage to procure for ourſelves ſuch a Conſtitution as

* Rex detur propter regnum, et non regnum propter Regem. Forteſcue, de Laud. Leg. Ang. c. 37.

eſtabliſheth

eſtabliſheth a *King worthy of honour*; or, at leaſt, that we have the grace to preſerve and ſupport what our anceſtors' courage hath procured for us. For if, where the Apoſtle bids us *fear God*, he means that we ſhould adhere to the great Lord and Governor of the univerſe, in oppoſition to thoſe dumb idols, which it was the purpoſe of *Goſpel-holineſs* to root out; then certainly, where he bids us *honour the King*, he muſt needs mean a legitimate Magiſtrate, in oppoſition to a lawleſs Tyrant, ſo contrary to the true ſpirit of *goſpel-liberty*. And St. PAUL, where he exhorts men to civil obedience, defines this lawful Magiſtrate to be one, who *beareth not the ſword in vain—A terror not to good works but to the evil—A miniſter of God to us for good—An avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*: the very deſcription of our own conſtitutional Monarch. In a word, If it were the intent of the Holy Spirit, in the precept of *fearing God*, that we ſhould ſupport Religion in the purity of the Goſpel: then certainly it was his intent, in the precept of *honouring the King*, to recommend to us a legal Government, which only can ſupport Religion in that purity.

Hence we ſee, that to *fear God and honour the King* is, in other words, to ſupport our holy Religion againſt *popiſh Superſtition*; and our equable government againſt *Arbitrary power*. Precepts never out of ſeaſon to recommend to free Men and Chriſtians: but, in this time of public danger, when both are ſo inſolently threatened, and, in them, every thing that is dear and valuable to honeſt men, the duty of our miniſtry calls upon us, with all our power, to inforce them.

If therefore, my Brethren, you have yet in your hearts any ſentiments of true Religion, any feeling for the love of your Country; if you be *Chriſtians* any more than by profeſſion; if you be *Britons* any more than by name; if you have the piety, as well as reaſon of Proteſtants; if you have the virtue, as well as the rights and privileges of Free-men; you will now *ſtand faſt in the liberty in which Chriſt has ſet you free*, and in which the Holy Spirit, by my text, exhorts you to perſevere.

You will drive far from you the yoke of *Rome*, now ready to be once more caſt about your necks. A yoke, which your forefathers could not bear, even when uſe had made it habitual; and ignorance had ſhut them up from the ſight of Truth and Liberty. But You, who have a clear view, as well as a free choice, of good and evil, will doubtleſs prefer Goſpel light to the Anti-chriſtian kingdom of darkneſs. You will, doubtleſs, prefer liberty of conſcience to blind obedience, or the dungeons and fires of an Inquiſition; You will prefer piety to ſuperſtition, virtue to fanaticiſm, your Bible to the maſs-book, and ſenſe to nonſenſe.

You will employ all your virtue to oppoſe the inſults of *France*, which your forefathers, at all times, ſo well knew how to repel: You will rather chuſe to truſt your liberties and properties to laws of your own making, than to be beholden, for the precarious enjoyment of them, to the *good will and pleaſure* of that monſter in the creation, that deſpoiler of God's Works, an arbitrary and an unlimited Maſter.

In a word, would you aſpire to be virtuous; would you be willing to be thought religious; would you continue to be happy here, or would you entertain hopes of happineſs hereafter; you muſt now, all of you, in your ſeveral ſtations, concur to the vigorous ſupport of that glorious Conſtitution to which you have the honour to belong: The pride and confidence of our friends! The envy of our Neighbours! The terror of our enemies, and the admiration of mankind! Happy nation! the nurſe of heroes, the ſchool of ſages, the ſeminary of holy martyrs, the diſtinguiſhed favorite of Heaven! But how momentary are all theſe bleſſings, when freedom is once ſeparated, and divorced from virtue! for, according to the generous ſaying of an ancient freeman, *That very day which ſees a man a ſlave takes away half his virtue.* But, above all, let me remind the benevolent man, that though we ourſelves be the firſt and greateſt, yet we ſhall not be the only ſufferers by ſo terrible a reverſe. The effects of it will be felt

felt by the remoteſt nations. *Britain* hath now the diſtinguiſhed glory of being the Depoſitary, as it were, of civil and religious Freedom, for the reſt of mankind: And while we continue faithful to our truſt, there are ſtill hopes that the degenerate ſons of men may, ſome time or other, catch this noble fire from us, and vindicate their ravaged birth-right. But, in our deſtruction, Liberty itſelf expires; and human nature will deſpair of evermore regaining its firſt and original dignity.

Theſe indeed are motives conſecrated to ſuch only whom the ſacred ſpirit of Liberty inſpires. However, if theſe be too exalted for the times of a general luxury and corruption (the unhappy effects of ill-uſed freedom) there are yet other conſiderations, and ſuch as are abundantly ſufficient, to animate thoſe who have not loſt all ſenſe of Manhood, along with their Virtue and Religion.

For when ever had an *Engliſhman* higher cauſe of reſentment, than at preſent, when he ſees *Spain*, whoſe impotency we have long deſpiſed, and *France*, whoſe violence we have never failed to repell, preſume to impoſe, upon a powerful Nation, a mean, ſervile, tributary Tyrant; and to attempt the dethroning an illuſtrious Family, raiſed by Providence, for the Head of the Proteſtant intereſt abroad; and appointed by a willing People, the Protector of *Britiſh* liberty, at home?

But, what ſo juſt an indignation may fail to effect, the ſecret ſenſe of ignominy and diſhonour will amply ſupply. Should we not bluſh to have it ſaid, that a mighty Kingdom, a People that ſtill gives laws to the Main, and has long held the balance of Power between contending Empires, was ſuddenly overturned by a rabble of ſuperſtitious ruffians, of mountain robbers, of half-armed and half-ſtarved barbarians, with a wild and deſperate Adventurer at their head; and reduced, by the madneſs of theſe miſerable varlets, from the moſt free and happy people upon earth, to be a Province to *France*, a Warehouſe to *Spain*, and a patrimony to the pretended

ſucceſſor

ſucceſſor of St. *Peter?* The very thought of ſo amazing a diſhonour is enough to cover us with confuſion. And certainly, if ever this diſhonour ſhould befal us, the moſt inclement, the moſt inhoſpitable of our *American* Plantations, would be far too good for us to run into, and hide our coward heads: There we might waſte our wretched days; ſtill more imbittered with this cruel reflection, That when LIBERTY, now driven from the Continent, had retired for refuge, and taken ſhelter, in *Great Britain*, we were unable to ſtay her parting footſteps, though ſhe brought with her all her dowry of religious, of civil, and of ſocial Virtues.

And now, if happily this conſideration be but of power to kindle again any of the ſeeds of old *Engliſh* valour, they may be eaſily excited and blown into a flame by a virtuous *emulation* of our brave and generous Anceſtors: The firſt in *Europe* who ſhook off that very Superſtition and Tyranny with which we are now inſulted; and ever after, with the utmoſt vigour, repelled all the wicked attempts for their re-eſtabliſhment: But never with ſo great hazard and expence as againſt that infatuated Family from whence this Pretender boaſts to have had his birth, and from whence he derives his imaginary title, founded on I know not what jargon of indefeaſible hereditary Right for the King, and paſſive-obedience and non-reſiſtance for the Subject: A title, which the much provoked reſentment of an injured People hath long ſince with the higheſt juſtice diſſolved and abrogated.

Nor ſhould *Gratitude* loſe its ſhare in waking us from our fatal ſlumber of luxury and pleaſure. The bleſſings thoſe brave men purchaſed for us are ineſtimable, and the price they paid for them was immenſe. So that the warmeſt return of gratitude is due to the *Manes* of our Benefactors. Let us pay it in that way which moſt becomes us, and would beſt pleaſe them; a vigorous exertion of all our faculties to preſerve the bleſſings they have procured for us.

But if neither ſhame nor gratitude can work upon us to venture any thing for the keeping ourſelves free and happy, yet, at leaſt,

natural

natural affection, and pity for our Poſterity, (the laſt bar to ignominy in the abſence of virtue) ſhould make us either reſolve to die bravely, or to deliver down unimpaired to our children that glorious heritage which our provident fore-fathers bequeathed to them, through us. And not ſuffer our cowardice or indolence, at this important juncture, to hazard the intailing upon our wretched offſpring a long ſeries of ignorance, ſuperſtition, want, ſervility, and all the miſeries and diſtreſſes which attend *arbitrary government*, and *Papal communion*.

But if it be the unhappy fate of *England* that no generous motive, worthy the breaſts of men and citizens, can make impreſſion on her ſons, now become inſenſible through ſloth and luxury, They may yet, nay They ſhould be applied unto, as Slaves, and awakened with the ſervile dread of puniſhment: A puniſhment as great as it is inevitable! The divine vengeance purſuing them at heels, for their violated oaths and perfidious engagements; when in the face of Heaven, by the moſt ſacred office of Religion, they invoked GOD as a witneſs and avenger, and ſwore allegiance to his excellent Majeſty KING GEORGE. For natural Religion will teach us, though we throw off all reverence for the Revealed, that no crime is more offenſive to the great God of Truth than the breach of public oaths. And civil Hiſtory will inform you, that none is ſo ſpeedily and ſeverely puniſhed: A puniſhment, moſt becoming the juſtice of Heaven. For the ſanction of an Oath was the only means, amongſt equals, of bringing men into Society; and is ſtill the only means of keeping Societies entire.

But I truſt, that neither Virtue nor Religion will be wanting, on this great occaſion, to repel the ſtorm now gathered over us; how much ſoever the ſtate of both may need amendment. In concluſion, therefore, let me recommend it to men in all ſtations, as one of the moſt general and efficacious means for the ſucceſsful diſcharge of their duty to the King and Government, religiouſly to implore a long forgotten ſuccour, laughed at by moſt, and ſcarce

truſted to by any, *The aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit*, to warm our Affections, to purify our Hearts, to enlighten our Underſtandings, to ſtrengthen our Wills, and to ſupply all the weakneſſes and defects of our corrupted Nature; to the glory of God's holy Name, and the good and happineſs of Mankind.

A SERMON

A

SERMON

ON THE

GENERAL FAST DAY,

December 18, 1745.

Preached and publiſhed while the Rebel-army was in England.

SERMON II.

JOEL II. ver. 20.

I WILL REMOVE FAR OFF FROM YOU THE NORTHERN ARMY, AND WILL DRIVE HIM INTO A LAND BARREN AND DESOLATE.

GOD, by the prophet JOEL, having denounced againſt a ſinful People, the invaſion of the *Aſſyrians*, together with the forerunners of that judgement, his *army of locuſts*; at the ſame time, declares, that, on their true repentance, he would drive the Invaders back again into the horrid regions from whence they came; and with a ſlaughter as great as their preceding ravages and deſolation.

Now the apoſtle PAUL tells us, that *whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope* *: By which we underſtand in general, that the like diſpoſition of humiliation before God, of hearty repentance for our ſins, and ſincere reſolution

* Romans xv. 4.

of

of amendment, are the proper means of enabling us, at this juncture, to drive back the haughty powers of *France*, which now hover over us; togther with their fore-runners, this Northern army of locuſts; allured hither by the ſcent of prey, becauſe, as the prophet expreſſes it, *The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them, a deſolate wilderneſs* *.

Thus far human reaſon, the true interpreter of Scripture, will allow us to infer. But further to conclude of God's dealings with States and Societies from his diſpenſations to the Jewiſh People, will be the occaſion of our turning that Scripture, which, the Apoſtle here tells us, was *written for our learning and inſtruction*, to our deluſion and ruin. Yet, from this character given of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, in ſeveral places of the Scriptures of the New, men have not only ventured to regulate God's proceeding with Particulars, but alſo to judge of the fate of Kingdoms and Societies, by his adminiſtration of the *Jewiſh* Nation. This hath been the ſource of numberleſs ſuperſtitions. Some of which diſhonour Religion, by derogating from the juſtice of God: while others weaken and diſtract Government, by violating the rights of men. And all of them defeat the rational concluſions of that *learning* and inſtruction which may be found in Scripture; and which is *able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation.* In the number of theſe ſuperſtitions is the popular opinion, That God, in the common government of the world, puniſheth children for the crimes of their parents: A diſpenſation peculiar to the *Jewiſh* Nation; and there indeed adminiſtred with the higheſt equity †: but, in the preſent order of things, not to be employed without impinging on God's juſtice. So again, that other abſurd fancy, which tranſfers to modern Kings the title peculiar to the *Jewiſh*, of the LORD'S ANOINTED: equally violates the rights of Men. For to reſiſt the *Lord's anointed*, who was God's Deputy or Lieutenant in his kingdom, was rebellion againſt God. Hence court flatterers, when

* Joel ii. 3.

† See Divine Legation, Book V.

they

they had given the title to modern Kings, did not reſt till they had inveſted them with the prerogatives of it likewiſe. And from thence inferred their divine Right, and the people's unlimited Obedience. Whereas, had this title, which belonged to the Jewiſh Kings in a literal and real ſenſe, been applied, as it ought, to our Monarchs, in a figurative and accommodated meaning, it had been of excellent uſe to inſtruct the People in the ſacred character of every legitimate Magiſtrate; the reſiſting of whoſe ordinances is, indeed, the reſiſting the ordinance of God.

But another place may be more proper to go through the many various errors and ſuperſtitions, which have ariſen, in theſe latter ages, from a miſapplication to the Men and Societies of the world at large, of the Principles and Providences on which the *Jewiſh* ſtate was formed and conducted. It ſhall ſuffice at preſent, that I have juſt pointed out their nature and conſequences; and ſhewn how they ariſe from an apoſtolical declaration ill underſtood; *that whatſoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*, which, when rightly interpreted, yield that *patience and comfort*, St. Paul ſpeaks of, as the genuine fruits of Chriſtian *hope*. Let us diſtinguiſh, therefore, and always have in mind, that the DOCTRINAL points of the Old Teſtament were written for our *belief*; the MORAL parts for the regulation of our *conduct*; and the DEVOTIONAL for the exerciſe of our *piety*. This will lead us to St. *Paul*'s true meaning, where he ſays, *All ſcripture is written by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs* *. But then, as to the greater part of the Volume of the Old Teſtament, that which is HISTORICAL, and gives account of the Laws and Fortunes of the Jewiſh Republic, it was written for our *information*, concerning the general œconomy of God's diſpenſation to mankind; of which the divine eſtabliſhment and adminiſtration of that Commonwealth makes a conſiderable part. A RELIGIOUS POLICY *added*, as the Apoſtle ſays, or thruſt

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

in,

in, between the PATRIARCHAL and CHRISTIAN Diſpenſations, *becauſe of tranſgreſſions*; and to preſerve the memory of the true God, in an idolatrous world, *till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made* *. For this end, God ſaw fit to erect that State into a THEOCRACY, properly ſo called; in which he himſelf was the ſupreme civil Magiſtrate.

The conſequences of which form of Government were theſe: 1. That it was adminiſtered by the exertion of an *extraordinary* providence. 2. That Religion and civil Society were thoroughly *incorporated*. 3. That Religion had a *public*, as well as a *private* part; the ſubject of it being as well the State collectively, as individuals ſeparately. And, 4. That the ſanctions both of religion and ſociety were *temporal* rewards and puniſhments. Of all this, that is to ſay, of the expediency and even neceſſity of ſuch a form of Policy, for the carrying on the great ends of God's moral government of the world, and the natural conſequences ariſing from it, I have elſewhere diſcourſed at large †.

Now from the *firſt* circumſtance, the exertion of an *extraordinary* providence, it follows, that we are not to regulate our ideas of God's dealing with us, as a State or Nation, by his adminiſtration of the *Jewiſh Theocracy*; Mankind being now under a *common*, not an *extraordinary* providence: I mean, it follows, we are not to expect it in the DEGREE; though, indeed, from this circumſtance, nothing hinders but we might expect it in the *kind*.

But then from the other *three* it follows, that we are not to expect it, even ſo much as in the KIND. For Religion, among the *Jews*, was incorporated with their Society, and had a PUBLIC part: Hence *Impiety*, when it abounded, became a public crime; and, as ſuch, was, from time to time, ſeverely puniſhed on the State. But, the *Chriſtian* Religion hath no public part; hath not the State, as ſuch, but individuals only, for its ſubject. Hence *Impiety* is not now a *public*, but a *private* crime: For which, the offender will

* Gal. iii. 19.

† Divine Legation, Book V. Sect. ii.

doubtleſs

doubtleſs be ſeverely puniſhed, but his puniſhment ſhall be according to the rules of the Goſpel diſpenſation.

Again, the *Jewiſh* ſanctions were TEMPORAL only; which made it fit, and ſometimes *neceſſary*, that the crimes, even of private men, ſhould have their puniſhment inflicted on the State, as by that means condign miſery was derived on particulars. But the ſanctions of our religion are *future rewards and puniſhments*; for the latter of which, impious and wicked men are properly reſerved; and therefore, there is not the ſame expediency in puniſhing them *through* the State.

This then, to which numberleſs other conſiderations might be added, is ſufficient to ſhew, that we have no real authority from *Scripture*, when interpreted on the principles of human reaſon, to conclude, that God's dealing with the *Jewiſh* people is the meaſure of adminiſtering his providence over other States: Or that, becauſe the PRIVATE vices and impieties of men under that œconomy have, by the juſt judgement of God, often brought diſtreſs upon the COMMUNITY, that they have now the ſame tendency to provoke his wrath and indignation againſt ours.

This I preſume to be a fair repreſentation of this important ſubject: And I hope, it will not be judged unſeaſonable in a time of general danger; when, though the ill ſtate of our moral condition ſhould not be kept hid from us, yet methinks it ought not to be aggravated by diſcouraging examples drawn from thoſe dreadful judgements inflicted on the *Jewiſh* nation: A parallel much inſiſted on; but not with that exactneſs which the dignity of the ſacred Writings demands, or the criſis of our preſent Diſorders ſeems to require; when every good man will deſerve the public thanks, *Quod de republica non deſperaſſet.*

But it will be aſked, "Are not vice and impiety the certain deſtruction of Communities? And are not Communities the ſubject of God's mercies and judgements?" My anſwer is in the affirmative: And it will ſerve to ſupport what hath been already ſaid, concerning that crude, inconcluſive Divinity, which makes God's

dealing with the *Jews* the model of his Providence in the world at large. It will, at the ſame time, explain and clear up what may be further obnoxious to objection or miſinterpretation.

To the firſt of theſe queſtions, therefore, I ſay, that where, in defining the nature of the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth, I ſpoke of God's national judgements on his *choſen People*, for their impieties, I uſed the exact and philoſophic language of a Divine; and meant thoſe *conſequences* of wrong which follow from the *will of God*; not the *effects* which ariſe from the *nature of things*. Rewards and puniſhments of the firſt kind are thoſe only which revealed Religion acknowledgeth for the ſanction of its precepts: though platonic preachers, in their moral harangues, may have been accuſtomed, by a *latitude* of expreſſion, to call the miſchiefs ariſing naturally, out of moral evil, by the name of *God's judgements*. Which, perhaps, would ſcarce deſerve notice, were they not accuſtomed likewiſe to confound Theſe with the judgements of God, *properly ſo called*; to the great injury, as I think, of revealed Religion, for reaſons too long and too intricate to be here aſſigned. Now, as to the natural iſſue of vice and impiety, nothing can be more certain than that they are the inevitable ruin of a Commonwealth. For IMPIETY, which conſiſts in a contempt of the ſanctions of Religion, removeth the firſt and ſtrongeſt pillar of Society, the fear of divine puniſhment, for falſhood and wrong. From hence ariſeth a diſregard to the *outward tye of oaths*, the great ſecurity of the MAGISTRATE; and a diſregard to the *inward tye of conſcience*, the great ſecurity of the PEOPLE. As *impiety* undermines ſociety, ſo VICE more openly attacks it. But both with the ſame fatal ſucceſs. The epidemic evils of every powerful Community in its decline, are LUXURY and AVARICE: Which, by an unnatural mixture, are inceſſantly begetting one another even in the ſame breaſt. By theſe means, the NATIONAL WEALTH, one of our main ſtrengths againſt foreign invaſions, becomes in part *exhauſted*; and, which is almoſt as bad, in part, *unequally diſtributed*: And the PERSONAL VIGOUR of the people, which makes the other, is either enervated by opulence miſ-

miſemployed, or debaſed by ſordid and inactive poverty. But to reckon up the train of evils, which iſſue from theſe two maſter-vices, would be an endleſs taſk. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that theſe are the evils which fill private Families with unnatural quarrels; infeſt the Courts of juſtice with chicane; and diſtract the councils of Government with faction. FACTION, which accumulates all the evils of diſſention in one; and fraught with the diſpoſitions of the worſt citizens, impudently pretends to all the qualities of the beſt. FACTION, which ſcruples no ſhape however venerable, no name however ſacred, to draw the deluded People to ſecond her private and corrupt purpoſes, masked over with pious zeal for Religion, and diſintereſted love of our Country.

But then if the evils of *impiety* and *vice* be, ſeparately, ſo deſtructive to a Public; How malignant muſt they prove, when they act in concert? as they always do, when they exiſt together. For prophaneneſs gives an edge and keenneſs to immorality; and immorality claps on a leaden biaſs to the mind, which accelerates it growing averſion to Religion.

However ſecure, therefore, the PUBLIC may be from apprehending the *judgements of God* for the iniquity of particulars, yet we ſee it has every thing to fear, from *the nature of things*. A caſe, which when arrived to a certain point, admits even of leſs hope than the other. For God, whoſe mercies are over all his works, frequently withholds the evils of his poſitive judgements from ſinful man; but never reverſes the order of Nature to embolden him in his wickedneſs. Yet we have this conſolation at leaſt, that, though ſuch deſtruction be ſure, it is ſtill in our power to avert it. It is only reſolving on a ſpeedy courſe of ſobriety, juſtice, and piety: By which, as kingdoms become great, ſo by that only can they remain ſecure. For, as in the natural body, an athletic habit, acquired by abſtinence and exerciſe, can never be preſerved by intemperance and ſloth; ſo a body politic become powerful by the

modeſt parſimony, by the virtue and religion of its citizens, can never ſupport its power by their luxury, injuſtice, and impiety.

We come now to the ſecond queſtion, "Whether STATES, as well as PRIVATE MEN, may not be the ſubject of divine diſpleaſure, ſo as to bring down its ſevereſt judgments upon them?" To which we reply, that Nothing is more certain. A Society is an *artificial man*, having like the *natural*, all thoſe eſſential qualities, which conſtitute a MORAL AGENT; The diſcernment of good and evil; A will to chuſe, and a power to put its choice in execution. Hence the rules of civil juſtice, in the intercourſe betwen nation and nation, are the very ſame, as thoſe, in a ſtate of nature, between man and man. And accordingly we find (for here Scripture comes in again *for our learning*) that God dealt with the *Jewiſh* nation under this idea. And though his *particular contract* with it will not ſuffer us to collect, a mode of providence over others, ſimilar to what was adminiſtered amongſt them; yet his entering at all into *contract* ſhews that ſtates are conſidered, and will be dealt with by him as MORAL AGENTS.

We muſt needs therefore conclude, both from *Revelation* and *Reaſon*, that the hand of Heaven diſtributes good and evil to Societies, according to their merit or undeſert: Not upon that fancy, that as States are only *artificial beings* with a preſent exiſtence, and incapable of a future, therefore God is obliged in juſtice to puniſh and reward them HERE. This is a mere ſchool invention, and confuted by the general hiſtory of the moral world: Where, we find indeed many ſignal examples of the divine vengeance inflicted upon States and Communities; yet, generally, at ſuch a diſtance from the crime, that the puniſhment is not *identical*, as according to this learned fancy it ought to be: for the *ſameneſs* is not real or natural, but nominal and artificial only. Again, according to this doctrine, the adminiſtration ſhould be conſtant and exact, failing in no inſtance, nor defective in any degree. Whereas we have many examples in States as well as private men, where iniquity hath abſolutely

ſolutely eſcaped the rod of divine vengeance. From all this we conclude, that, not for the fantaſtic reaſon here confuted, but for one far more weighty and ſubſtantial, SOCIETIES are puniſhed or rewarded according to their behaviour; a reaſon worthy the dominion of the great Lord of the univerſe, That is to ſay, For example, and to keep alive the ſenſe of God's providence, in a careleſs and impious world.

It remains, therefore, only to conſider what thoſe actions of Society are, which we ſuppoſe to be the objects of divine favour or diſpleaſure: Now theſe (in a Society, like our own, eſtabliſhed on a ſyſtem of Laws which ſecure reverence to the Deity, and impoſe due reſtraint on vice and immorality) can be evidently nothing elſe than the obſervance or neglect of GOOD FAITH, juſtice, and equity in the tranſactions of one of theſe communities towards all others. By this teſt, therefore, we might well conſent that *Great Britain* ſhould be tried to the utmoſt; tried even by her enemies. When it would be clearly ſeen whether, in her collective capacity, ſhe deſerves, or has juſt reaſon to fear that impending vengeance, from the hand of Heaven, with which, in a time ſo critical, good men may be but too apt to terrify themſelves and others.

In all our national tranſactions ſince the REVOLUTION to theſe times, *Great Britain* has been ſo unfaſhionably tenacious of the public faith, and ſo generouſly intent on the good of *Europe*, that we have never paſſed for Politicians amongſt thoſe who are moſt famed for their ſcience in the myſteries of State. And as to the war which we are at preſent engaged in; though the corrupt intereſts of Private Men, of Trading-bodies, and of State-parties amongſt us may have all concurred to puſh us forward; yet a common obſervation is ſufficient to ſatisfy you, that it was firſt begun againſt SPAIN, for ſatisfaction of real injuries, which they had owned, acknowledged; and in public convention contracted to repair. But, encouraged by our unhappy diviſions, the agreement was unjuſtly violated, as ſoon, almoſt, as it was made. In this quarrel we were *principals*. An *auxiliary* war, in which the PUBLIC

FAITH

FAITH called upon us to engage, followed, in ſupport of the houſe of AUSTRIA, taken at advantage, and againſt all the ſpirit of treaties cruelly attacked and plundered. Both theſe together ſoon produced a *defenſive* war againſt FRANCE; whoſe reſtleſs ambition (eſſential to her Conſtitution) ſeizing every favourable conjuncture of advancing that idol of her politics, the giving law to *Europe*, now ſupported *Spain*, to perſiſt in denying to do us juſtice, and encouraged the other enemies of the houſe of *Auſtria* to join her in their ungenerous depredations. And all this with an apparent deſign to break that eſtabliſhed and equitable balance of Power, ſo neceſſary for the peace and felicity of *Europe*: Which when ſhe found us reſolved to maintain, ſhe publicly denounced war againſt us in all its forms.

This is a true ſtate of the public quarrel; of our ſhare in it; and of our conduct with regard to all our neighbours. Now what is there in all this, that ſhall make us afraid to appeal for aid and protection to the tribunal of eternal juſtice?

If reparation, by the ſword, for national injuries, after all the ways of peace had been tried in vain; If the diſcharge of public faith, when ſolemnly demanded, in behalf of a confederate Power, moſt cruelly oppreſſed; If ſelf-defence againſt thoſe who openly ſet themſelves to defeat the honeſt purpoſes which Juſtice called upon us to diſcharge; If, laſtly, the ſupport of the eſtabliſhed balance of power, that is, of the liberties of *Europe*, againſt the moſt deteſtable perfidy, the moſt unjuſt uſurpations, and the moſt lawleſs and deſtructive ambition; If, I ſay, all, or any of theſe, may intitle us to the protection of Heaven, we ſeem to have the beſt grounded expectations for its declaring in our favour.

This public act of humiliation before God is therefore enjoined with a modeſty and holy confidence, not always obſerved by AUTHORITY on theſe occaſions: Where, with an impiety that makes ſober men aſtoniſhed, the tremendous Majeſty of Heaven is too often mocked and inſulted, by invoking its bleſſings on the arms of

fraud,

fraud, rapine, and injuſtice. But, bleſſed be God! GREAT BRITAIN hath now a CAUSE, for which it may not only with decency ſupplicate the protection, but with confidence appeal to the juſtice of Heaven: a *cauſe* founded on the ſolid baſis of SELF-DEFENCE, PUBLIC FAITH, and the LIBERTIES OF MANKIND; all nobly vindicated in a juſt and neceſſary war.

There is only one impediment to the happy iſſue of our appeal; and that is the PRIVATE vices and impieties of the People: And to remove this, was the purpoſe of this ſolemn Act of devotion; in which we are called upon by our gracious *Sovereign* (ever intent upon our welfare) to humble ourſelves before the avenging hand of God, and to deprecate his Judgements, by a free confeſſion of our ſins, and a determined purpoſe of amendment.

I have ſhewn you how certain and inevitable a deſtruction VICE and IMPIETY always bring upon a People. If this be not ſufficient to induce you to a ſpeedy reformation, think upon the conſequence of perſiſting in them at this juncture; when, by ſuſpending the protection of Providence, which, as a Community, I have ſhewn, we have juſt reaſon to expect, we haſten, by a ſtroke from Heaven, that ruin, which is more ſlowly advancing from the nature of things. So that, in our inſtant reſolves, not only our *future* welfare, a matter of infinite importance, which we have in common with all men, but our *preſent*, is eminently concerned. The enjoyment of all that is dear and valuable to men, depending on the preſervation of our happy Conſtitution, more ſhaken by our inteſtine vices, than by the arms of its degenerate and rebellious Citizens, now audaciouſly advanced into the very heart of the Kingdom.

Let us then, in good earneſt, reſolve upon a thorough Reformation; A return to that gracious ſimplicity of manners; that amiable modeſty in dreſs and diet; that temperance in pleaſures; that juſtice in buſineſs; which made BRITAIN ſo diſtinguiſhed in the manly annals of our forefathers. Let us ſpeedily return to that

ſober

ſober piety, that ſerious ſenſe of Religion, by which our Anceſtors were encouraged to form, and enabled to ſupport, the PRINCIPLES on which this happy Conſtitution is erected. But above all, as the firſt ſtep into the old paths of honour, let us emancipate ourſelves from that deteſtable ſpirit of libertiniſm, impudently aſſuming the name of FREETHINKING; the bane of common life, the opprobrium of common ſenſe, and the *diſhonour* even of our common humanity. Let us but be inſtant in doing this, and we ſhall ſoon have earth and heaven once more in conjunction, to make us happy and victorious over all the confederated enemies of our peace.

A DE-

A DEFENCE OF THE PRECEDING DISCOURSE.

A Free and equal Government is the greateſt temporal bleſſing the Almighty ever beſtowed upon mankind. Such an one, in his great mercy, he beſtowed on us; of which we were in full poſſeſſion, when a vile unnatural rebellion, ſupported by the moſt formidable Power in *Europe*, threatned to overturn it; and on its ruins, to erect a civil and eccleſiaſtic tyranny; the moſt deteſted evil wherewith God, in his wrath, ever permitted the enemy of mankind to deform the fair work of creation.

At this important juncture, when no human means, ſufficient to ſave us, were at hand, but our determined courage to live and die with the Conſtitution, I obſerved ſome good men were apt to terrify themſelves and others with an apprehenſion, that the *private* vices of the people had brought down this judgement of God, upon the PUBLIC, which it was to be feared muſt end in its deſtruction. Into this kind of Divinity I ſuppoſed them to be led by the conſideration of God's dealing with the JEWISH PEOPLE; on whom, in the magnificence of his royal bounty, he had graciouſly beſtowed the moſt excellent of all civil governments; ſubjected, however, to deſtruction in puniſhment for their *irreligious practices*.

At this juncture, a faſt-day being appointed by authority, to implore God's bleſſings, and to deprecate his judgements, I underſtood it to be my duty, on ſuch an occaſion, both as a miniſter of God's word, and a ſubject of the King, to examine into the reaſonableneſs of theſe apprehenſions; and to ſhew, to thoſe committed to my care, what they had indeed to truſt to.

In the firſt place, therefore, I endeavoured to prove, that the caſe of the Jewiſh People could not, for many reaſons, be brought into example: That the method of Providence, there adminiſtered, did indeed admirably fit the *Moſaic* conſtitution; but the Chriſtian œconomy had revealed unto us a different way of puniſhing the ſins of particulars: And that, on the principles of natural light, we might gather, that the puniſhment of a right conſtituted Public was due only to civil crimes; from which we being remarkably free, I concluded, that our happy conſtitution had great reaſon to expect the diſtinguiſhed protection of heaven: For that it would be hard to find, throughout the hiſtory of mankind, any one State, either antient or modern, Monarchy or Republic, ſo long, and ſo eminently, diſtinguiſhed for its OBSERVANCE OF PUBLIC FAITH: There being but one inſtance ſince the Revolution (at which time, our Conſtitution, properly, aroſe) where *good faith* was not moſt ſcrupulouſly and religiouſly diſcharged by it.

Such was the doctrine I delivered in the preceding diſcourſe. And was it natural to think, that at ſuch a time, and on ſuch an occaſion, it ſhould give offence to a Divine of the Church of *England?* It did. And I was then told from the preſs, that "The "clergy very well know, and needed not my help to inform them, "that God was under a ſpecial covenant with the *Jews* for tempo- "ral good and evil. But as this covenant, whatever privileges it "gave to the *Jews* above other nations, could not deſtroy God's "right as univerſal governor; an argument therefore would very "properly lye from God's dealing with the *Jews*, to what other "nations are to expect in like caſes, in ſuch points as either reaſon "or Scripture ſhew, to appertain to God's univerſal government; "of

" of which ſort is the puniſhing nations and kingdoms for the " wickedneſs of them that dwell therein. As appears from the " FLOOD, from the caſe of SODOM and GOMORRAH, of the NINE- " VITES, and of thoſe HEATHEN NATIONS whom the *Jews* were " raiſed up to deſtroy (as the Scripture expreſsly ſays) *for their* " *wickedneſs* *."

The pernicious doctrine to be confuted, we ſee, was this, " That " God, in his common government of the world, doth not deprive " nations of that greateſt bleſſing he ever beſtowed upon them, a " *free and equal Government*, for the vices of *particulars*." This poſition, I ſupported on our *natural* notions of God's providence; and on what we find *revealed* of his moral government in Scripture. In the firſt, the Objector was ſilent: In the ſecond (where I conſidered the *Jewiſh* government as the only caſe that could ſeem to ſupport the contrary opinion), he ſupplies my omiſſions: and urges me with God's judgements on the *people at the flood*, *on Sodom and Gomorrah*, the *Ninevites*, and the *ſeven nations*.

But amongſt all theſe, I could not find one *free and equal government*; for which, only, I undertake to be an advocate; and therefore they were omitted. Some of them were uncivilized tribes, living in a ſtate of nature, in which there was *no* bleſſing of Government to take away: And others, in a ſtill viler condition, the ſlaves of petty tyrannies, where the deſtruction of the State was the removal of God's ſevereſt curſe. In a word, I was ſpeaking of the greateſt human happineſs hoſtilely attacked, and in danger of being loſt. And the Objector confutes my doctrine, by inſtances of the greateſt human miſery occaſionally removed: The deſtruction of the noble Conſtitutions of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; to which, not over decently, he thought fit to compare the free Government of *Great Britain*. I was ſpeaking, and ſpeaking only, of a CONSTITUTION, of a COUNTRY, where civil and religious liberty flouriſhed at their height. I never concerned myſelf, how God would deal with a rabble of ſavages: nor thought it worth while to

* Hiſt. of Abraham, &c. p. 100.

conſider, what kind of a puniſhment it was, to thoſe who groaned under it, to overthrow a tyranny. I regarded thoſe illuſtrious Societies as hardly coming into account, when God, in his juſtice, weighs the fate of nations.

" * But Mr. *W.* (ſays the objector) who loves to be by himſelf, " after having retailed to us the principles of *The Divine Legation*, " comes to this concluſion, diametrically oppoſite to the ſenſe of " his brethren, and I believe of all Chriſtian divines from St. *Paul* " to this day, *viz.* that *we have no warrant to conclude, that becauſe* " *the private vices and impieties of men under the* JEWISH OECONOMY, " *by the juſt judgement of God, frequently brought amazing deſtruction* " *on their nation, that it has now the ſelf-ſame tendency to provoke his* " *wrath againſt* OURS." This I ſhould have thought might have ſet the Objector right; and have ſhewn him, that I confined my doctrine to the bleſſing of a *free* and *equal* government, when I conſidered none other than the JEWISH and OUR OWN. But he ſeems to mean well, and to be much embarraſſed: Let us try to help him out.

The temporal puniſhments, which God inflicts upon iniquity, have three objects. *Particulars*; a *People*; and a *State* or *Government*. The puniſhment of the two firſt Objects, I hold to be inflicted for the CRIMES OF MEN; the latter only for the CRIMES OF THE STATE. The ſubject of my ſermon was concerning the puniſhment of *legitimate* States, *as ſuch*. The particular caſe confined me to this conſideration; the imminent danger of our happy Eſtabliſhment from a powerful body of rebels, which, at the moment of my writing, had penetrated, without controul, to the very centre of the kingdom. With God's puniſhment for the ſins of particulars, by, what may be called, the *national judgments* of famine, peſtilence, or any other way that hurts not the *Conſtitution*, my ſubject was not concerned. In this, as much a lover of ſingularity as he is pleaſed to repreſent me, I believe with my *brethren*. I believe theſe judgments to be ſent for the ſins of private men;

* Hiſt. of Abraham, &c. p. 101.

but

but ſo reſtrained, as not to hurt that great gift of God, a free and equal Government: For here I ſtop; and ſtill affirm, that if a State be a MORAL AGENT, its actions, *as ſuch*, are thoſe only which make it *accountable:* God, according to my theology, never depriving us of a bleſſing, he hath been pleaſed to beſtow, till that bleſſing hath been abuſed. The very caſe of the Moſaic œconomy, which ſo much miſleads the Objector, might, if he had attended to plain facts, have ſet him right. He might have ſeen, that, in this Diſpenſation, if a Particular tranſgreſſed in his Ceremonial obſervances, divine puniſhment purſued Particulars. When the body of the People diſuſed or had corrupted the holy Ritual, the body of the People ſuffered. But it was IDOLATRY only which brought deſtruction on the Republic. For *Idolatry* was the introducing another *Law*; which was *high treaſon:* it was the transferring their *obedience* from their Supreme Magiſtrate; which was *rebellion:* Crimes deſervedly puniſhed by ſubjection to a foreign yoke. And this puniſhment was inflicted on the State at different periods, both under the adminiſtration of their Judges and their Kings. Its laſt final Overthrow was attended with a general diſperſion which ſubſiſts to this very day. And the crime, as the puniſhment, was the ſame. For the rejection of the Meſſiah was a ſpecies of this *Treaſon* and *Rebellion*. *Idolatry* ſet aſide the *Law*; and *Rejection of the Son of God* was ſetting aſide their *ſupreme Magiſtrate*, on whom the Father had devolved his Kingly rule and Government. In a word, though the Jewiſh State was frequently overturned for what are no *crimes of State* with *us*, yet it never ſuffered for what were no *crimes of State with them*. And this may ſerve to obviate the charge of Contradiction, which the Objector brings againſt me, for ſuppoſing the *People* are puniſhed for *private Sins*; and yet denying that the *State* incurs the danger of God's judgements for any thing but *public crimes*.

Had the Objector conſidered all this, and it lay as open to his conſideration as it did to mine, his Monſters, both before, and after the flood, might have been well ſpared: His *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, his

his *Ninevites*, and the *Seven nations*. Juſt as pertinent, on this occeſion, as the giants *Gog-magog* and *Coryneus*. Having ſaid thus much for the *truth* of my doctrine; One word, if it may be done without offence, concerning its *expediency*. This will be beſt ſeen by conſidering what muſt be the natural conduct of a good man, on the principles of the Objector, in a State (which he compares to *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*) when ſo imminently threatned as ours was at the time of my preaching this ſermon. Muſt not ſuch a one, all theſe circumſtances concurring, think us a devoted people? And would he not, in mere piety, deem it a ſtruggling againſt God when he fought for the Conſtitution. What encouragement would be now left him for the diſcharge of his duty as a Citizen? He is ſuppoſed to meaſure every thing by the Jewiſh ſtandard. He knows what character hiſtory has tranſmitted to us of thoſe Zealots for their country, who ſo long oppoſed the progreſs of *Titus's* arms, in the laſt deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Theſe he finds repreſented as an abandoned crew of miſcreants, impiouſly oppoſing the fixt deſtination of Providence: And is it charitable to believe that this *good Chriſtian* of the Objector's making would dare to follow their example? Beſides, on ſuch grounds as theſe, what falſe theology could not perfect, real poltronry would ſupply; which, by the aid of a religious principle, would teach men to diſguiſe their Cowardice under the ſpecious ſhew of a pious reſignation.

A SER-

A

SERMON

PREACHED ON THE

THANKSGIVING DAY

FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF

THE LATE UNNATURAL REBELLION,

IN MDCCXLVI.

SERMON III.

2 COR. iii. 17.

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY.

THIS is the character St. *Paul* gives of the GOSPEL in the purity of its profeſſion; that it begets LIBERTY; the bleſſing, through which the perfection of our nature is obtained. For, by *Liberty* is to be underſtood that right and due exertion of our faculties which terminates in TRUTH and VIRTUE; The *Slavery* of rational creatures conſiſting in a ſubjection to *Vice* and *Error*.

The various kinds of *Liberty*, thus procured, may be the ſubject of ſome leſs confined Inquiry. On this occaſion, I ſhall conſider only one, but that of the nobler ſort, CIVIL LIBERTY; And ſhew, from REASON and FACT, that, *where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is* this *Liberty*.

I.

1. TRUE RELIGION, delivered in the Goſpel, and called in my text the SPIRIT OF THE LORD, *recommends* and encourages a LIBERTY OF ENQUIRY; and ſupports and *indulges* the free exerciſe of Conſcience. But men practiſed in the exertion, and habituated to

the enjoyment, of theſe RELIGIOUS RIGHTS, can never long continue ignorant, or bear with patience the invaſion, of their CIVIL. The human faculties can never long remain in ſo violent and unnatural a ſtate, as to have their operations perpetually defeating one another, by the contrary actions of two ſuch oppoſite Principles, as thoſe of *freedom* and *reſtraint*. The one or other muſt, in a little time, overcome. Either the inveterate *ſpirit of tyranny* will viciate the purity of Religion, and introduce that blind ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding, and ſlaviſh compliance of the Will into the CHURCH, which it exacts in the State; Or elſe the *ſpirit of the Lord* will break down the barrier of an unequal, deſpotic power, and bring into the STATE, as well as Church, *a free and reaſonable ſervice.*

2. TRUE RELIGION teaches, that its *End* is the HAPPINESS OF MAN; in oppoſition to all the ſuperſtitious fancies of the *falſe*; which place it in the arbitrary, the ſelfiſh, or the capricious manifeſtation of God's power, or intereſt, or glory. And this naturally leading us to the *end* of civil Government, will direct us how to form a *right* Conſtitution, when we have, by the foregoing Principle of free inquiry, already detected the injuſtice of the *wrong*; which profeſſes to make the People, for the ſake of the Prince.

3. That equitable Policy, by which TRUE RELIGION governs in the Church (and *true*, as well as *falſe* Religion muſt always have a Church to govern) will further aid us, when we have now found the *end* of civil community, to attain the *means* likewiſe, by copying, in civil matters, from that eccleſiaſtical ſubordination of authority and limitation of power, where the Sovereignty reſides in the whole body of the Faithful; Not, as in the adminiſtration of corrupt Religion, where a deſpotic Clergy conſtitutes the CHURCH.

4. But, above all, That grandeur and elevation of mind, that ſublimity of ſentiment, that conſcious dignity of human nature, which TRUE RELIGION raiſes; which Holy Scripture dictates; and which the *Spirit of the Lord* inſpires, will be ever puſhing us forward to the attainment of thoſe CIVIL RIGHTS, which we have been

been taught to know by reaſon, are Ours; and which, we have been made to feel by experience, of all Ours, are the moſt neceſſary to human happineſs.

By theſe ſeveral ways, is the *Spirit of the Lord*, or TRUE RELIGION, naturally productive of the great Bleſſing, CIVIL LIBERTY. But turn now to the reverſe of the medal; and there we ſhall find the antipart of this divine truth; and read in as clear characters, that, *where the Spirit of* POPERY *is*, *there is* SLAVERY.

Inſtead of freedom of inquiry and uncontrouled liberty of Conſcience; inſtead of making the end of Religion human happineſs; inſtead of an equitable adminiſtration of Church policy; inſtead of that elevation of mind and conſcious dignity of Human nature; we are here preſented with a blind ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding; with a forced compliance of the will; and with abſurd and ſuperſtitious doctrines concerning God's deſpotic and capricious government; imitated, in its own HIERARCHY; and adminiſtered by an ambitious and corrupt Clergy, who labour to eſtabliſh narrowneſs of thought, lowneſs of ſentiment, and baſe and abject conceptions of MAN, created *after* GOD'S *own Image*.

II. I proceed now to my ſecond point; namely, to confirm the foregoing obſervations, by FACT: From which likewiſe it will be ſeen, how naturally *true* Religion is productive of civil Liberty.

1. When the fierce and free nations of the North diſmembred and tore in pieces the ROMAN EMPIRE, they eſtabliſhed themſelves in their new conqueſts, on one common principle of policy; in which, the LIBERTY OF THE PEOPLE made, as it ought to do, the Baſe, and operating Power. And erected on ſo juſt a plan, theſe GOTHIC Governments might have ſtood till now, had not the rank influence of PAPAL SUPERSTITION ſo viciated thoſe generous Policies, that, when the great inſtruments of Reformation firſt appeared, they ſaw the Weſtern world as deeply loſt in *civil*, as, in that from which they were appointed to free it, *eccleſiaſtic* ſlavery. For the triumphant *Hierarchy* had amply revenged the fallen Empire on

the necks of its deſtroyers. But it was now wonderful to obſerve, how equal a pace, the civil and the religious Reformations kept with one another. Wherever the influence of the GOSPEL reached, it never failed to redreſs the exorbitances of Government: While thoſe places which continued ſunk in SUPERSTITION, ſtill groaned under the weight of civil oppreſſion: In a word, the æra of political and religious freedom was the ſame: So general is the truth of my text, that, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

2. To this perhaps it may be objected, That as the Reformation of religion on the Continent was generally the work of the populace, and ſometimes carried on in a very tumultuary way, it is more reaſonable to aſcribe the conſequent regulations in the State to this lucky *circumſtance* of popular fervour, than to any *natural influence* of the Goſpel. But this objection will be ſeen to have little weight as we come nearer home: Here we ſhall find, that Reformation produced the ſame happy fruits, in *England*, where it was begun and perfected by the Prince; who can hardly be ſuppoſed to have formed deſigns of liberty, in favour of the People, againſt himſelf.' What regulations, therefore, in the balance of power, ſucceeded the reformation of the Church, we muſt needs aſcribe to the ſole influence of true Religion. Now, when the firſt foundations of it were laid amongſt ourſelves, we knew little more of civil liberty than the name. For though, in *Magna Charta*, we had a kind of *Original Compact*, as the laſt appeal of the People; Though the hiſtorical and legal records of our Conſtitution declared us to be a free Nation; And though we had, from time to time, aſſerted our right to freedom, as in *claims at law*, to prevent forfeiture from preſcription; yet was the balance of power ſo ill adjuſted, by that undue *inclination* which SUPERSTITION had made in property; and by the more hurtful *ſeparation* it had eſtabliſhed between the temporal and ſpiritual Intereſts, that public liberty lay at the mercy of a Court cabal, compoſed of Churchmen and Miniſters of ſtate; where it had rarely room to breathe, but when the two intereſts

intereſts quarreled among themſelves; which they never did, but when the crown refuſed to ſhare the tyranny with the mitre.

Add to this, that he who fixed this foundation was a luxurious ſanguinary tyrant *; who, tricked and deluded by the Court of *Rome* in a ſcandalous purſuit of a papal *diſpenſation*, threw off in a rage the biſhop of *Rome's* uſurped ſupremacy: And, by that act, notwithſtanding the acceſſion of a NEW SUPREMACY to himſelf, laid the firſt ſtep to the deſtruction of his own exorbitant power in the State. In which we can never ſufficiently admire and adore the rectifying Hand of Heaven; who made arbitrary power his inſtrument to lay the foundations of Liberty; and employed the impious pretenſions of the *Romiſh* ſee to introduce Reformation.

2. From this time of *Goſpel light*, a CONSTITUTION became ſeen and underſtood: And the Church made no advance to its original purity, but the State was the better for it, in ſome additional ſecurity to public liberty. In a word, their intereſts were now found to be ſo inſeparable, and the aid they lent each other ſo reciprocal, that, whenever the COMMON ENEMY formed ſchemes to the prejudice of the *one*, He always began with ſome attempts againſt the *other*. Thus, when the two firſt Princes of the houſe of STUART aimed at a deſpotic power in the State, they firſt endeavoured to viciate the ſimplicity and freedom of reformed Religion, by the pomp of *Worſhip*, and the ſervility of *papal Diſcipline*. And again, when the two laſt of that unhappy Houſe laboured to reſtore the *Romiſh* ſuperſtition, they tried to pave the way by a *power of diſpenſing with the laws*.

* —" For Henry the Eighth; if all the pictures and patterns of a mercileſs prince " were loſt in the world, they might all again be painted to the life, out of the ſtory " of this king. How many ſervants did he advance in haſte, but for what virtue no " man could ſuſpect; and, with the change of his fancy, ruined again, no man know- " ing for what offence? How many wives did he cut and caſt off, as his fancy and af- " fection changed? How many princes of the blood, with a world of others of all " degrees, did he execute? Yea in his very death-bed," &c. Raleigh's Pref. to his Hiſt. of the World.

In

In the firſt of theſe important ſtruggles, the defence of our happy conſtitution was intruſted to the LAITY: In the latter it was aſſumed by the CLERGY. And were we to judge only by events, theſe would be enough to expoſe the injuſtice of that clamour ſo frequently raiſed againſt our Order by the common enemies of our holy Faith, "that in all matters wherein public liberty is concern-"ed, the Clergy, either through malice or ignorance, ſo embroil "and defeat the counſels of honeſt men, as ſhews they are invete-"rate enemies, or at leaſt very unfit agents, of the *common rights* "*of ſubjects.*"

But I will not take this advantage. Nor does their cauſe or character require it. The truth (and truth can never hurt them) was this, The LAITY were new in the trade of oppoſition. They felt their grievances too ſenſibly: They reſented them too warmly. They had ſuffered under many repeated acts of injuſtice; and the frequent promiſes of redreſs, which they had procured by a conſtant attention to their truſt, they had ſeen as often violated. Succeſsful oppoſition made the Spirit of liberty run high: and diſtruſt and jealouſy hindered them from finding any other ſafety than in arms; though ſatisfaction had been already procured by the ordinary, legal way, of the Conſtitution. What followed was all madneſs and deſpair: till anarchy and confuſion ſhut up the dreadful ſcene of JURIDICAL murders and SPIRITUAL impieties. But, ſee now, the efficacy of Liberty and true Religion, when they have mingled their powers together! The ruined Conſtitution roſe again more ſuddenly than it fell: But, riſing out of a chaos, by the ſole force of its natural virtue, unaſſiſted by the experienced hand of Policy to form and proportion its parts, it revived with the ſame imperfections that had occaſioned all the preceding calamities. A melancholy preſage, that the friends of liberty were not yet gotten to the end of their labours. Such was the miſcarriage of the LAITY.

But now the CLERGY, when it came to their turn, on a later occaſion, to ſtand in the gap againſt oppreſſion, had learned the great

great art of putting their Enemy * in the wrong, by forbearing to excite the people to the laſt remedy of the Conſtitution, till He had plainly ſhewn that he was inexorable, by arming himſelf with a *divine right* to govern againſt Law. And even then, grown wiſer by former errors, both of their own and of the *Laity*, they conducted themſelves ſo ſagely, and directed others ſo temperately, that they not only recovered the Eſtabliſhment from the brink of ruin, but enabled the Legiſlature to repair and perfect thoſe defects and weakneſſes which had ſo often brought it into that condition. This gave a new birth to the Conſtitution, and fixed it on that ſolid baſis of liberty on which we now enjoy it; and which nothing, but our own follies, can unſettle. For though it may be ſtirred or ſhaken by the application of any trifling power, yet, like that ancient image of its ſtate, the *rocking-ſtones* of our anceſtors the DRUIDS, no united force can remove it from its centre. For that exactneſs of balance which ſubjects it to the firſt appearance of danger, ſecures it from all real and ſubſtantial injuries.

Amongſt the benefits this new Eſtabliſhment produced, the CHURCH received, as it well deſerved, its ſhare; which was the removing from it that ſcandal to true religion, *reſtraint on the conſciences of men.* But the Church of *Chriſt* never receives a courteſy from the State, that it does not, ſooner or later, repay with intereſt. Of which it hath given us an inſtance in the unnatural rebellion juſt now ſuppreſſed: when every thing that is dear to us came ſuddenly, nobody knows how, into hazard; and was, by the valour and conduct of a brave young Prince, under the manifeſt guidance of Providence, as ſuddenly retrieved. At this important juncture, no order of men better approved themſelves to the State than the body of the Clergy; though all exerted an unuſual vigour for its preſervation. And to this wiſe and happy attachment, of a WHOLE PEOPLE TO A CONSTITUTION, was owing, next to the diſtinguiſhed protection of Heaven, the preſervation of *Britiſh* liberty, and in that, of the liberties of MANKIND.

* James II.

Thus

Thus have I endeavoured to ſhew, from REASON and FACT, how naturally true Religion produceth civil freedom: and, when produced, how ſtrongly it ſupports it. Which is a ſufficient anſwer to the dull invectives of ignorant or malicious Libertines, againſt *Chriſtianity* and its *Miniſters*; as if both were obnoxious and unfriendly to the cauſe of liberty; as if the end of Religion was to chain down ſlavery on us by conſcience; and the buſineſs of the Clergy only to faſten the rivets. On the contrary, we have ſeen, under the firſt head, how auſpicious the true Faith is to free Government; and under the ſecond, how faithfully devoted the Miniſters of that Faith are to its intereſts.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that their merit to the State was very equivocal at the *Revolution*; the time when they moſt pride themſelves in their ſervice to it: For that their great object was the CHURCH: with little regard to the civil Eſtabliſhment; whoſe reformation they retarded, if not endangered, by that abſurd ſyſtem of SUCCESSION, which they had been long inſtilling; and whoſe infection then worked ſtrongly to the diſturbance of that auguſt aſſembly then ſolemnly *convened* for ſettling the nation.

To which I anſwer, it is no wonder, the Clergy ſhould be moſt ſolicitous about what was their proper care; what they beſt underſtood; and what was then deemed to be in moſt danger: That if they knew little of the nature and rights of Society, they might be well excuſed, as they had been miſled by a ſet of COURT DIVINES, who had betrayed and ſacrificed the Principles of the REFORMERS, to the practices of *James* and *Charles* the Firſt's Miniſters; and as they had never been taught by *experience*, the bleſſings of a free Government, regulated upon true principles. Nor is this candid repreſentation at the expence of juſtice: For when now become happy by a Conſtitution, which they themſelves had ſo largely contributed to procure, they manifeſted, by their early and unanimous aſſiſtance, in the late danger to the State, that they know as well how to prize the benefits of free Government, as the bleſſings of pure Religion.

On

On the whole, therefore, whether we conſider the genius of Religion, or the conduct of its Miniſters, we muſt needs conclude, That *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

II.

But REVELATION rarely gives us one Truth to contemplate, without enabling REASON to purſue the argument, to the diſcovery of another. So it is in the caſe before us. The very PROOF of this apoſtolic propoſition, that *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, ſhews the fact to be inverted; and, that WHERE LIBERTY IS, THERE IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, *i. e.* that civil liberty is favourable to, and naturally productive of, true Religion. For if, as hath been ſaid, true Religion be auſpicious to civil liberty by the ſimilar PRINCIPLE on which both are eſtabliſhed; by the ſame MAXIMS on which both are adminiſtered; by the like END to which both are directed; and by the ſame ENLARGEMENT *of the human faculties*, which both naturally produce; it will then follow, that *civil liberty is equally auſpicious to true religion:* So that whichever be the firſt eſtabliſhed, it will, when all foreign impediments are away, make room for, and introduce the other *.

This

* En regardant la Religion ſimplement du côté de la politique, il paroit que la PROTESTANTE eſt la plus convenable aux *republiques* et aux *monarchies*; elle s'accorde le mieux avec cet eſprit de LIBERTE qui fait l'eſſence des premieres: car dans un état ou il faut des négocians, des laboureurs, des artiſans, des ſoldats, des ſujets en un mot, il eſt ſur que des citoiéns, qui font vœu de laiſſer péril l'eſpéce humaine, deviennent pernicieux. Dans les monarchies, la *religion proteſtante*, qui ne releve de perſonne, eſt entierement ſoumiſe au gouvernement; au lieu que la *catholique* établit un état ſpirituel, tout-puiſſant, fécond en complots et en artifices dans l'état temporel du prince; que les prêtres qui dirigent les conſciences, et qui n'ont de ſupérieur que le pape, ſont plus maîtres des peuples que la ſouverain qui les gouverne, et que par une addreſſe à confondre les intérêts de Dieu avec l'ambition des hommes, le pape s'eſt vu ſouvent en oppoſition avec des ſouverains ſur des ſujets qui n'étoient aucunement du reſſort de l'Egliſe. *Memoirs de la Maiſon de Brandebourg*, p. 276. *ed.* 8vo.

This inverted truth is, on this ſide as well as on the other, confirmed likewiſe by *Fact*. The Chriſtian Religion, on its firſt appearance, making its earlieſt and readieſt way, through the free cities of *Greece* and *Leſſer Aſia*.

But to bring the matter home to the preſent occaſion; let us juſt take a view of the advantages which civil freedom affords for the exertion of the *Spirit of the Lord*, both in *faith and practice*, by means of the two great principles of LIBERTY and JUSTICE; on which, a free State is founded and adminiſtered.

It is pleaſant enough likewiſe to ſee another writer, the celebrated M. Voltaire, a very good Catholic, whom a *philoſophic Spirit*, an' pleaſe you, *l'eſprit vraiment philoſophique*, has taught to deſpiſe REVELATION; to ſee him, I ſay, bring this very truth to diſcredit both the *Goſpel* and the *Reformation*. The *latter*, in his opinion, only reviving that REPUBLICAN SPIRIT in the Weſt of Europe, which the other firſt kindled in Greece and Aſia. "Ne pourroit-on pas trouver peut-être l'origine de cette nou-"velle peſte qui a ravagé la terre [la fureur des guerres de Religion] dans "L'ESPRIT REPUBLICAIN qui anima les premieres Egliſes? Les aſſemblées ſe-"crettes, qui braivoient d'abord dans des caves & dans des grottes l'autorité des "Empereurs Romains, formerent peu-à-peu un etat dans l'etat. C'etoit un REPUB-"LIQUE cachée au milieu de l'Empire.—Les anciennes opinions RENOUVELLES depuis "par LUTHER, par ZWINGLE, par CALVIN, tendoient pour la plupart à detruire l'au-"torité *Epiſcopale*, & même la puiſſance *Monarchique*. C'eſt une des principales cauſes "ſécrettes, qui firent reçevoir ces dogmes dans le nord de l'Allemagne où l'on craignoit "d'être *aſſervi* par les Empereurs. Ces opinions triompherent en Suede & en Danemarck, "pays où les peuples étoient *libres* ſous des Rois. Les ANGLOIS, DANS QUI LA NATURE "A MIS L'ESPRIT D'INDEPENDANCE, les adopterent—Elles penetrérent en Pologne, et "y firent beaucoup de progres dans *les ſeules villes où le peuple n'eſt point eſclave*. La "Swiſſe n'eut pas de peine à les reçevoir, parce qu'elle etoit *Republique*. Elles furent "ſur le point d'être établies à Veniſe par la même raiſon—Les Hollandois ne prirent "cette Religion, que quand ils *ſecouerent le joug* de l'Eſpagne. Genève *devint un Etat* "*populair, en devenant Calviniſte* *." Here he owns, that as, in the former inſtances, Civil Liberty procured Reformation, ſo in this of Geneva, Reformation procured Civil Liberty. His aſſignation of the *cauſe* and *effect* is not exact. Reformation was the *cauſe* in Holland and ſome other places as well as in Geneva. However, you have here an Enemy of Revelation bearing teſtimony to theſe great truths, that WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY; and that where liberty is, there *the Spirit of the Lord* will not be long abſent.

* Le Siécle de Louis XIV. Tom. II. p. 185. Lond. 1753, 8vo.

1. The

1. The firſt advantage ariſeth from the allowance of free enquiry, which the maintenance of the rights of conſcience diſpoſeth men to make in religious matters. By this employment, we come of courſe to the Author of Truth and to the profeſſion of his Religion in its PURITY: This was the caſe of thoſe, who took the liberty before it was allowed them: Nor was their labour vain. They dug through the rubbiſh of papal ſuperſtition, till they came to the pure fountain of Goſpel-truth. FREE ENQUIRY can never fairly, and of itſelf, terminate in UNBELIEF. Infidelity is the natural product of reſtraint and ſpiritual tyranny, when borne by us with ſuſpicion and reluctance. For then we are apt to reflect, and to reaſon on the truth and fitneſs of the things impoſed. And the leaſt attention is ſufficient to convince us of the abſurdity of what we find thus violently eſtabliſhed. But reſtraint not affording us the *means*, nor ſlavery the *courage* to penetrate through inveterate errors into truth, we run with blind reſentment into a brutal infidelity; hurried forward by that common infirmity of the unſtaied mind, which perpetually inclines it to fall from one extreme to another. Hence it is we ſee *France* and *Italy* over-run with the worſt kind of *Deiſm*. There our travelling Gentry firſt picked it up for a rarity. And, indeed, at firſt, without much malice. It was brought home in a cargo of new faſhions: and worn, for ſome time, with that levity by the importers, and treated with that contempt by the reſt, as ſuited, and was due, to the apiſhneſs of foreign manners: Till a ſet of ſolemn blockheads, grown inſolent by liberty, and malicious by unſucceſsful attempts towards diſtinction, abuſed the indulgence of a free Government, in reducing thoſe vague impieties into a ſyſtem. And ſo it was, that licentious ignorance came to be diſtinguiſhed with the name of FREE-THINKING. Thus *liberty abuſed*, we ſee, comes to the ſame iſſue with *liberty oppreſſed*. They both terminate in IGNORANCE, with this only difference, that the one is the ignorance of the *Few*, and the other the ignorance of the *Many*. But that theſe are not the genuine fruits of liberty appears from the example of the beſt and

wiſeſt Men, whom it hath ever conducted to the knowledge and belief of Revelation.

2. Nor is civil liberty leſs friendly to the MORALITY, than to the DOCTRINE, of the Goſpel. The Government of a free State is adminiſtered by a ſyſtem of equal laws; founded in the general maxims of Juſtice; and objective to the Common good. For all States are adminiſtered by the ſame principles on which they are erected. Now a habitude to ſuch laws muſt needs enable men to judge more truly, and to think more favourably, of the *morality* of the Goſpel; ſolely calculated to promote the peace, and to multiply the bleſſings of mankind. For as to that inconſiſtence, between the maxims of POLICY and RELIGION, ſo affectedly inſinuated by thoſe who would palliate their vicious practice, or recommend their impious opinions, it is no where to be found, but in the adminiſtration of deſpotic Governments, or of thoſe mongrel free ones, which, forſaking the genius of their inſtitution, act like ſuch as are moſt arbitrary. And, indeed, how could the maxims of *Policy* and *Religion* be inconſiſtent? Unleſs there were DIFFERENT ROADS to *happineſs here*, as the ſupporters of this paradox pretend there are, to *happineſs hereafter*. But ſince the temporal good of Man, whether riſing, as in *Religion*, from the acts of particulars to the whole; or deſcending, as in *ſociety*, from the acts of the whole to particulars; ſince this, I ſay, can only be procured by the application of the ſame invariable principles of NATURAL JUSTICE, we muſt needs conclude, That true Policy and Religion are not only perfectly conſiſtent, but (as was the purpoſe of the foregoing account to ſhew) mutually beneficent.

Theſe reciprocal advantages, ariſing from the very Being and Nature of either inſtitution, are one part of that mutual aid and ſupport, ſo much ſpoken of, which Religion and civil Government lend to one another.

A *ſecond* ſprings from the natural influence of their reſpective powers: And there is yet a *third*, which is derived from the artificial application, and interchange of thoſe powers. But of the two latter parts,

parts, I have elſewhere diſcourſed at large * ; and mention them in this place for no other purpoſe than to give light to an acknowledged Fact, employed to enforce the application, proper for this glad ſolemnity, in which we celebrate the divine mercies for our late providential deliverance.

III.

Now the ſenſe of theſe mercies ſhould always riſe in proportion to the conſciouſneſs of our own demerit. And this will naturally draw us to that only acceptable return of ſervice, *The reformation of our lives and manners.*

The unhappy condition of human things makes the greateſt goods of providence moſt liable to abuſe. The moral State of the People is now felt by all, and apprehended by many. For, bleſſed be God, our condition is not yet ſo deſperate as to render us inſenſible.

It is a FREE Government only that attains the *end* of Government; which is, ſo to improve the mind and accommodate the body, as to make a rational life ſafe and elegant. Its *equity* allows free enquiry, which leads to truth; and its *policy* encourages commerce, which produces plenty. But men grown wanton by proſperity abuſe the liberty of thinking, and the fruits of induſtry; ſo as to indulge every wanton fancy of the mind, and every vicious appetite of the body. From hence ariſe INFIDELITY and LUXURY, the two capital evils of our infatuated countrymen.

The heighth, to which they are both arrived, cannot be aggravated; and need not be particularly deſcribed. The caſe is notorious, and confeſſed. So that nothing remains, on this occaſion, but to exhort you, from motives of the utmoſt conſequence, now at length after Religion hath done ſo much for you, in producing liberty, to let liberty do its part, and produce *the Spirit of the Lord*; that is, a reverential *regard* for that which gave birth to liberty,

* See The Alliance between Church and State.

Revealed

Revealed Religion, and a *moderate* uſe (ſuch as even natural Religion preſcribes) of theſe good things, which Commerce, the offſpring of liberty, hath procured for us.

1. We may conſider, therefore, in the firſt place, how unſuitable it is to the nature of civil Freedom to fall back into the ſlavery of vice and error, to which tyranny had kept men enthralled. The excellency of civil Freedom conſiſts in its power of emancipating the mind as well as body; and making the whole man dependent on himſelf. For what matters it to be exempted from the chains of a precarious tyrant, if we ſtill continue ſlaves to the caprice of our own corrupt nature? We are freed by Providence from the unjuſt dominion of a Maſter, that we may *enjoy* the bleſſings of Nature in that juſt meaſure in which they are beſtowed upon us. But can this be done amidſt the exceſſes of *Luxury* and *Irreligion?* The *enjoyment* of good implies *pleaſure* in its uſe. But all pleaſure ariſes from theſe two ſources, the *paſſive ſenſation* and the *reflex act*. In the firſt, *moderation* conſtitutes the pleaſure. For thoſe agreeable ſenſations, which the appetite to good provokes, and the poſſeſſion of it gratifies, are all loſt and diſſipated by *exceſs*; which produces, inſtead of pleaſure, diſguſt and loathing; every racking diſtemper of the body, and every inflamed paſſion of the mind. From the ſecond ſource, the *reflex act*, ariſes our grateful meditation on the Giver. And what generous mind is there whoſe pleaſure, in the moderate uſe of worldly things, is not doubled by the conſideration of their flowing from the kindneſs of a friend, whoſe affection for us is always operating for our good? How high then muſt be the raptures of the religious man, who conſiders all he enjoys as the gift of him who gave him life, and preſerves him in being. But all this pleaſure *Irreligion* deſtroys; and leaves nothing in its ſtead, but an unſatisfactory indulgence of the groſſer appetites; much below the brutal, as it is haunted with the diſmal apprehenſions, of a miſerable reverſe: a reverſe not in his power either to prevent or retard, as it is, upon his own wretched principles, the caprice of Chance, or the fixed order of Deſtiny; which

which is for ever clouding or ſhifting the ſcene. Thus unſuitable to the ends of *Freedom* are vice and error.

They are no leſs inconſiſtent with the character of a *Free-man.* It is the Free-man's glory to have vindicated the dignity of human nature, in ſhaking off oppreſſion, and becoming his own maſter. This is indeed his glory. But if he ſtop here, his ſweat and blood are ſpent in vain. Had he a body only to take care of, he had done his work, when he ſecured it from outward violence. But Humanity is not an empty carcaſe. Its nobler part is an informing mind; the guide, the director, and final object of its operations. If he ſuffer this to be brought into ſubjection, all his boaſts of outward Freedom are childiſh and impotent.

Yet ſhall this wretched victim of Luxury and Irreligion look high: and pretend to pity the SAVAGE, who hath never got, and deſpiſe the SLAVE, who was unable to preſerve, the mighty bleſſings of Social life and Liberty. But let Them ſpeak for themſelves: Let us hear them in their turn, and obſerve how eaſily they confound his miſerable Vanity and Arrogance. "—And why," ſays the *Savage*, "will you affect to pity me? Do not I uſe the gifts "of Nature juſt as you employ the benefits of Society? Whatever "chance hath thrown in my way, or my honeſt toil hath pro- "cured, I waſte indeed, and devour with an intemperate and beaſt- "ly appetite. But are you more humane or circumſpect, after "having amaſſed the ſpoils of your Country, or ſucceeded to the "patrimony of your Anceſtors? You may diſguiſe, indeed, our "common brutality under the civilized language of *ſacrificing to* "*your genius:* But your riot is the more inſufferable, as your pre- "tended *arts of life* have taught you to preſerve, to improve, and "to multiply the bleſſings of Providence, ſo as to make the en- "joyment laſting and diffuſive. Whereas We waſte them juſt as "we receive them from Nature's hand, rude and periſhable: being "as unable to preſerve or improve them, as *to uſe them with mode-* "*ration*; Moderation, that *art of life*, which, ſenſible experience "tells us, muſt needs be the leader and conductor of all the reſt.

"For,

" For, whatever difference there may be, in other reſpects, between " Society and Savage life, they agree in this, that want, diſtreſs, " and miſery, are the certain iſſue of luxury and riot. But here, " the untaught *Indian* might ſet you a leſſon. The * patience, " the fortitude, and reſignation, with which we bear the wants, " we bring upon ourſelves, aſtoniſh the civilized beholder. But, " if he tell us true, of what paſſes in Cities, the iſſue of your " luxury wears a very different face. The firſt approaches of diſ- " treſs make you reſtleſs and impatient. You quarrel with the " Government you are ſo vain of; you deſpiſe the Rulers you have " choſen; you trample on the Laws you had ſo hotly demanded; " and, unleſs the relief be ſpeedy, your giddy madneſs drives you " on, till you precipitate yourſelves into that condition, you ſo " much affect to pity, a *State of Nature*: Indeed, ſo circumſtanced, " of all conditions the moſt pitiable. For this which, with us, is " a *State of Peace*, is, with you, as both the politician holds, " and the people feel, a *ſtate of war and madneſs*, where every " man's hand is ſet againſt his God and his brother." Thus might the Savage anſwer.

Nor has the Slave of arbitrary power leſs advantages in this contention, while he thus addreſſes this vain idolater of liberty; "You " triumph in your generous exploits; when, in vindication of your " own freedom, you retrieved, what you call, the ſcandal of " human nature, the lying patiently at the foot of a tyrant. But " ceaſe theſe empty braggs, and attend to your gains. What have " you got, good man! by ſhaking off oppreſſion? Have you ſhaken " off, with it, thoſe Impieties that make oppreſſion heavy, and " Slavery indeed a ſcandal? If the plague-ſore of irreligion, that en- " demic evil of deſpotic governments, ſtill continues to corrupt your

* This character of the ſavage is common to all the natives of South and North America, as our voyagers and miſſionaries agree.—Gloutons juſqu'à la voracité, quand ils ont de quoi ſe ſatisfaire; ſobres, quand la néceſſité les y oblige, juſqu'à ſe paſſer de tout, ſans paroître rien deſirer. Relation d'un voyage dans l'Amerique Merid. par M. de la Condamine, p. 52.

" notions,

" notions, how miſerable is your boaſted freedom! You are only " accumulating guilt, while you thought to reap the fruit of your " labour. Glory or profit you can pretend to none. That fortitude " of reaſon, which led you to Liberty, hath *betrayed* you in the " purſuit of Truth: and thoſe unſightly errors you have embraced " in its ſtead, ſuffer you not to *enjoy* the bleſſing you had ſo greatly " purchaſed. You borrow our vices, while you deſpiſe the ſlavery " that produced them; not conſidering that our abject ſtate affords " ſome excuſe for theſe diſorders, which your happier ſituation " renders unpardonable. You have light to lead you to the ſource " of truth; you have liberty to profeſs it. Error is of a piece with " the reſt of our fortunes. And if, like beaſts of burthen, we are " to move as our conductors drive us, it is ſomething more tolera- " ble to drudge on blindfold, than to have the uneaſy proſpect of a " better way, which we are not permitted to purſue." Thus far with juſtice, might thoſe, we moſt pity and deſpiſe, recriminate upon us.

In a word, without freedom from *vice* and *error*, the reſt is but the ſhadow of liberty. At beſt, but as the ornaments of dreſs to a diſtempered body, abſurd and cumberſome; though, to one in ſtrength and vigour, they become the preſervation of health, and the improvement of natural beauty.

2. But if what we owe Ourſelves and the dignity of our common nature will not move us; we ſhould, at leaſt, conſider what we owe to *Providence*. Our caſe, how light ſoever we may make of it, is a little uncommon. We find ourſelves in poſſeſſion of the greateſt human good, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, at a time when almoſt all the reſt of mankind lie in ſlavery and error. This is no ordinary mercy. Nor is this conceit the effect of that vulgar prejudice to *country* or *opinions*, which always inclines men to overrate their own advantages. It is a Fact, we feel: a Fact, we ſee: a truth which all the concluſions of reaſon ſupport; and the united voice of experience confirms. So that if there be any thing certain, this is not to be diſputed, That we *Engliſhmen* (how unworthy ſoever)

ſoever) are at preſent moſt indebted to Providence of the whole race of mankind.

Nor is this all. The beſtowing theſe bleſſings on us was but the *earneſt* of God's favour to us. His election of us for the inſtruments of his glory is more clearly ſeen in his preſervation of us, at every important criſis, when human power and policy, as in our late deliverance, ſeemed combined to our deſtruction. Of which, whoever doubts, muſt be either very ignorant of our hiſtory, or very ready to call in queſtion God's moral government. Not that we are to fancy ourſelves, on theſe accounts, the peculiar favourites of Heaven. But rather that we hear it ſpeaking to us, as it did ſometime to the *Jews*, *I do not this for your ſakes, O houſe of Iſrael, but for my holy name's ſake.* It is poſſible we may be ſelected by Providence, in theſe latter ages, to preſerve the memory of civil liberty amidſt a ſlaviſh world, as the *houſe of Iſrael* was formerly, to keep alive true religion amidſt an univerſal apoſtaſy. And, if this be the caſe, we betray our truſt as well as forfeit our obligations, when we neglect to make a ſuitable return.

But, on whatever footing we receive our bleſſings, our debt of gratitude is the ſame: which, at this time eſpecially, calls upon us to conſider ſeriouſly how we ſhall beſt addreſs ourſelves to diſcharge it. Right reaſon tells, that the moſt acceptable way of returning God's mercies, is to apply them to the attainment of that *further good*, which they are capable of producing: Eſpecially when, in the nature of things, the mercies given are only the MEANS; and that *further good* is the END. We have ſhewn, that CIVIL LIBERTY does, above all other bleſſings, afford us the largeſt helps to the improving ourſelves in the *principles* and *practice* of TRUE RELIGION. How deſperate then is our ingratitude if we neglect to make the beſt uſe of ſo happy a ſituation! a ſituation which enables us to advance as far beyond our neighbours in piety and virtue, as we are placed above them in liberty and power: And if, inſtead of applying theſe advantages to the purpoſes for which they were intended by Nature, and directed by Providence,

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it ſhould be found we have only abuſed them to the inflaming our impiety and luxury, what name can be given to ſo horrid a profanation! an abuſe of God's mercies ſo ſtrangely unnatural, that though experience makes it familiar to us, yet retired Reaſon ſtands aghaſt at ſo inexpiable a prodigy.

3. But however indulgent we may be to thoſe idle notions in *theology*, which promiſe us impunity for our tranſgreſſions of the *law of God*; we yet would bluſh to be thought ſo ignorant in *philoſophy*, as not to know, that there is no eſcaping the ruin which follows the violated *order of things*. NATURE, to which our libertines fly, from the GOD OF MERCY, is more ſtubborn and vindictive. We have ſhewn the mutual aid and ſupport which true religion and civil liberty impart to one another; and the neceſſary connection eſtabliſhed between them. We always find, that when civil liberty is gone, the *religion of the ſovereign* takes place; that is, any kind of ſuperſtition fitted to the ſupport of arbitrary power: and ſlaves are ready to receive even the worſt. Again, the fall of true religion, whether betrayed by *Superſtition* or ſuffering open violence by *Infidelity*, draws after it the deſtruction of civil liberty.

How *Superſtition* helps it on, hath been ſhewn in the former part of this diſcourſe: and how *Infidelity* (that is, a contempt both of the principles and practice of religion) precipitates its ruin, is ſeen by all who underſtand what effects *impiety* hath on the *ſecurity*; and *luxury* on the *ſtability* of Government. Theſe are old beaten topics, which the common ſenſe of mankind hath made current in all ages.

IV.

I ſhall attempt, therefore, to illuſtrate and inforce this truth (which one may juſtly reckon amongſt the firſt principles of true politics) by an obſervation not ſo commonly attended to, "That "though *Impiety* and *Luxury* be the certain bane of civil ſociety in "general, yet they are more ſpeedily deſtructive of a FREE "STATE."

The two immediate ſupports of Government againſt inward and outward violence, are PUNISHMENT *of offenders*, and FUNDS *for the public expence*. Now, irreligion and luxury hinder a *free State*, more than any other, from making theſe neceſſary proviſions: as, in ſuch a State, the *conviction* of the guilty, and the *exaction* of ſubſidies, are regulated and reſtrained by equal and eſtabliſhed laws.

The enlarged wants, and inflamed appetites of men in ſocial life, have ſo improved their cunning in the arts of ſecret injuſtice, as to evade all the force and reſentment of human ſtatutes. Here Religion comes in aid of the Law, to frighten men, by the terror of an inviſible Judge, from thoſe crimes which eſcape the notice of the Magiſtrate.

Now, take off this reſtraint, and ſee the different effects it will have upon a *free*, and a *deſpotic* Government. The Latter hath found, in the very genius of its conſtitution, a ſpeedy and vigorous remedy to this evil, by (what goes for nothing with an arbitrary Magiſtrate) the violation of natural juſtice, in the uſe of the rack, and conviction on doubtful evidence. Which, though perhaps begun in the wantonneſs of power, repeated to gratify ſome oblique intereſt, and continued out of habit, were at length found ſo neceſſary a balance to diſorder, where Religion had loſt its hold, that it became a maxim in theſe ſorts of Governments, "that it was "better ten innocent men ſhould ſuffer, than that one offender "ſhould eſcape." And on this maxim, they have long regulated their adminiſtration of civil juſtice.

On the other hand, a *free State*, not only denounceth the crimes it puniſhes, by written Laws, but preſcribes and adjuſts the proof of them by explicit modes of invariable practice. While the proſecution of them is carried on by eſtabliſhed Forms, regulated on public equity, and the national juſtice of a whole community. This, with all its general uſes for the ſecurity of particulars, cannot but embolden the ſecret contrivers of evil: which our Law ſeems to have been aware of when it endeavoured to hide the inconvenience under a maxim founded in its natural lenity, "that

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"it is better twice ten guilty perſons ſhould eſcape, than one in-"nocent man ſuffer *." A maxim, though becoming the genius and dignity of a free Society; yet at the ſame time it betrays the want of ſome reſtraining Principle, which may co operate with human Laws. So that when Religion is gone, which only can afford a principle adequate to this ſervice, we ſee in what a deſperate condition the beſt Governments, becauſe they are the beſt, will be left.

Again, with regard to the ſupport of Government againſt foreign injuries. In a free State the public ſubſidies are the act of a delegated legiſlature; and ſo, of courſe, the voluntary contributions of the People: Which generally will be reſtrained in too light a proportion to their abilities, rather than extended to the neceſſities of the occaſion. Now when a free People are debauched by luxury, and impoveriſhed by the expence which muſt feed and ſupply their exceſſes; and conſequently, are become both unwilling and unable to anſwer the public demands, To what diſtreſs muſt the State, in ſuch exigencies, be reduced?

But it is not thus in a land of ſlaves: where the blood and ſweat of the people make part of their Maſter's exchequer: Where what is deemed the wealth of the Country to-day, becomes the Court-treaſure to-morrow: where money, by the magic of arbitrary power, is transformed into fairy favours; of one value when iſſued out; and of another when called in again.

Now this being the conſequence of the ESTABLISHED ORDER OF THINGS, it is no wonder it ſhould be inevitable. For why did God eſtabliſh this order, but to fix ſuch bounds of right and wrong as ſhould ſerve for the direction of mankind? On the contrary, might events happen out of, or contrary to, this courſe, then would God's providence no longer govern, nor man's purpoſes have any aim; but the *moral* world would fall into a chaos as incapable of

* Mallem revera viginti facinoroſos mortem pietate evadere, quam juſtum unum injuſte condemnari. FORTESCUE, de Laudibus Legum Angliæ, C. xxvii.

obſerving

obſerving the law ordained for its direction, as the *natural* was in that ſtate from which the almighty fiat awaked it, and called it forth for creation.

On the whole then, my brethren, if you have any regard to your character of free ſubjects to a lawful Prince, of grateful worſhippers of a beneficent God, or of rational dependents on a well-ordered Syſtem; you will, in good earneſt, ſet upon reforming thoſe horrid abuſes which make vicious Free-men a ſcandal to thoſe ſacred relations. Remember you are called upon by all that is excellent in Humanity, by all that is holy in Religion, and by all that is right and fit in the Order of things. And ſhould you ſtill continue deaf to the united voice of *Nature* and *Grace*, that which is out of Nature, and reprobate to Grace, the only things you have left, atheiſtic CHANCE or FATE, will prove utterly unable to ſnatch you from this impending ruin.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

ON THE NATURE OF THE MARRIAGE UNION.

MATTH. xix. 6.

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER.

GOD, as *Creator* of the World, is Author of the *conſtitution of* NATURE; and as *moral Governor* of the World, he is Author of the *conſtitution of* GRACE. It is impiety, therefore, in man to attempt any alterations in either Syſtem: whether it be by *putting aſunder what God hath joined together*, the crime here forbidden; or by joining together what God hath put aſunder; which is generally the next ſtep in this progreſs of human folly. For when men have diſſolved the eſtabliſhed combinations made by God, their preceding intereſts invite them, or their ſubſequent neceſſities draw them on, to make others of their own.

I ſhall

I ſhall firſt explain the Precept of my text in its general import: and then conſider it as applied to the particular occaſion on which it was delivered.

Amongſt the more important combinations in the *conſtitution of Nature*, God hath *joined together*, as CAUSE AND EFFECT, Virtue and Happineſs, Vice and Miſery. Now ſhould the CIVIL MAGISTRATE ſo far forget his office of GOD's Delegate, as to annex rewards to Vice, and puniſhment to Virtue, he would incur the double guilt of *putting aſunder what God hath joined together*, and of joining together what he had put aſunder.

Again, God hath joined together, as RELATIVE AND CORRELATIVE, Children's obedience to their Parents, and Parents care and ſupport of their Children. Here too ſhould the CIVIL MAGISTRATE, like the Jewiſh Prieſts with their *Corban*, infringe upon the firſt, on pretence that the Public had need of all the Children's ſervice; and on the latter, on pretence that it hath need of the purſes of the Parent; he would be equally guilty of this impiety.

All attempts to ſeparate what God hath joined together in the *conſtitution of Grace* hath the ſame wickedneſs and folly. God hath joined together, AS THE FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTUCTURE of one Church in Chriſt, the Jewiſh and the Goſpel diſpenſations. But ſhould PARTICULARS, when embarraſſed and perplexed with difficulties ariſing from certain circumſtances in the Jewiſh Hiſtory and Religion, preſume to violate this connexion, by denying any neceſſary dependence of Chriſtianity upon it: what would this be but the prophane ſeparation here condemned?

Again, God hath joined together, AS THE GIFT AND THE CONDITION OF IT, Belief in Jeſus the Meſſiah, and everlaſting life. A connexion, which, in the language of Divines, is called *juſtifying Faith*. But ſhould PARTICULARS, from their ignorance, their imperfect conception of the true nature of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, or from the injury which the abuſe of this doctrine hath occaſioned to

to virtue and morality, venture to deny that it is *faith alone which juſtifies*, ſuch men would aſſuredly incur all the guilt of this impious ſeparation.

This is but a ſmall ſpecimen of the numerous caſes which might be given of the folly and perverſity of men, in rebelling againſt God, and violating the conſtitution of NATURE, and the œconomy of GRACE. But it is enough to ſhew what miſchiefs attend, and what impieties accompany, the ſeparating by human will, or by human Authority, what God by his will, or his nature, hath joined and united. For what can be conceived more deſtructive than to violate the ſettled order of things; or more impious than to counterwork the deſigns of him who eſtabliſhed that order?

But to come to the particular occaſion of the precept.

The Law of Moſes, for the wiſe ends of Providence, indulged the *Iſraelites* in the uſe of *Polygamy* and *Divorce*. Theſe, which were allowed them for the *hardneſs of their hearts*, had, by length of time, and the corruption of their manners, ſtill further degenerated into a more licentious abuſe: ſo as to ſtand in need of the animadverſion of him who came to *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*.

He more obliquely reforms *Polygamy*, by obſerving that, at the Creation, the human race began by a *male and female*; and that theſe were made *man and wife* *. He more directly condemns their practiſe of *Divorce*, by obſerving that God had pronounced, *They twain ſhould be one fleſh* †. From whence he infers, that *whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and ſhall marry another, commits adultery, and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery* ‡: for that God having joined them together on thoſe terms, it was impiety in man to alter the conditions of the contract: *What God* (ſaith he) *hath joined together, let no man put aſunder*.

* Ver. 5. † Ibid. ‡ Ver. 9.

That it is highly criminal, therefore, for human Authority to put aſunder thoſe whom God in matrimony hath made one, is allowed and confeſſed on all hands.

The only queſtion is, WHEN the two Parties may be ſaid to be THUS *joined together*, or *made one*.

To determine this, we ſhould conſider MARRIAGE under all its forms. And, firſt, in its moſt ſimple idea, diveſted of its relation to *revealed* Religion and *civil* Society.

This union is, in itſelf, partly *natural*, and partly *ſocial*.

So far as regards the *condition*, that is, the prohibited degrees; and the *end*, the procreation of the ſpecies, it holds of *Nature*: In what concerns the mutual aid and ſupport of the parties, and their diſtinct claims to certain rights and privileges, it holds of *Society*. But *Nature* and *human Society* alone ſeem not to have determined either againſt POLYGAMY or DIVORCE.

Revealed Religion and *Civil* Government ſoon followed. They were introduced to perfect human nature according to their ſeveral characters. What additions or regulatious they brought with them is next to be conſidered.

RELIGION declares marriage to be the union of one to one: and the reaſon given is, that God at firſt created only one of each ſex. It declares the union to be indiſſolvable; becauſe the female was made out of the ſubſtance of the male. And thus marriage, from a *natural*, became a *religious* union.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT requires, that to make *private contracts* (in which Society is affected) valid and binding, they be entered into and executed by preſcribed and public forms. 1. Becauſe the miniſtry of public juſtice is to compel to the performance of them: ſo that it is but fit it ſhould preſcribe the conditions of the act it is to vindicate. 2. Becauſe ſome contracts, as this of marriage, have civil rights and privileges annexed unto them.

Thus we ſee, Marriage is of a MIXED nature; in part a ſacred ordinance, in part a human inſtitution. It hath both a *natural*, and

and a *ſocial* efficacy: Conſidered in a natural light, as an union of male and female, from whence all the charities of human life ariſe, it is a *religious* contract: Conſidered in a ſocial light, as creating new relations and connexions, all of which have their diſtinct rights and privileges aſſigned to them in civil life, it partakes of a *civil* contract.

This diſtinction is marked out to us by the nature of things; and confirmed by Laws, divine and human.

What then, it may be aſked, are the diſtinct parts which GOD and the MAGISTRATE claim, as their peculiar, in this ſolemn contract? It is from God that two are made one by an indiſſolvable tie: and this is the LAW OF RELIGION. It is from the Magiſtrate that this Union, ordained by Heaven, is executed by a ſolemn form preſcribed by the State: and this is the LAW OF SOCIETY.

In confirmation of what is here ſaid, it is remarkable that in the Jewiſh Law, where all even the moſt minute matters that concern religious rites and ceremonies are circumſtantially preſcribed; nay, where the moſt exact directions concerning the legality and illegality of Marriages are delivered; it is remarkable, I ſay, that there is no *Form* of the marriage-ceremony: though the *Ritual Law* abounds with all other forms that relate to Offerings, Luſtrations, and Sacrifices. The ſame ſage œconomy may be remarked in the Goſpel. Though Jeſus, as we ſee, reformed the abuſive practices crept into Marriage, yet he preſcribes no *Form* for the celebration of it: as he has done for *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*. What is this but a plain declaration by the Founders of both Religions, that the *Form* of celebration belongs to the civil Magiſtrate?

From all this, it neceſſarily follows, That till this ſacred Union, inſtituted by God in Paradiſe, be ſealed and confirmed by ſuch rites and ceremonies, as the wiſdom and policies of civil States direct to be obſerved, God hath not *joined* any Pair *together*, according to his holy ordinance: and that the obſervance of ſuch rites

and ceremonies is eſſential to that union which he declares to be indiſſolvable.

To ſuppoſe this Union may be *authentically* made in the preſent ſtate of Religion and Society, without the intervention of the civil Magiſtrate, leads either to *fanaticiſm* or *licentiouſneſs*.

The only two conceivable means beſides are, Either God's *revelation* of his purpoſe to the parties concerned, as in the caſe of the firſt pair: Or elſe his *declared* ſanctification of the natural deſires, and private agreement of thoſe who come together by ſenſual impulſe, without the intervention of the Magiſtrate's allowance, and the ſanction of his cooperating authority; ſo as to make their private act God's act, and thereby erect it into that religious Union, which he forbids human power to diſturb or violate.

To expect God's extraordinary appointment would be opening the door to a new ſpecies of fanaticiſm which, inflamed by the moſt violent of our natural paſſions, would know no bounds.

To give the prerogatives of a ſacred union to the private deſires of the two ſexes would diſturb Society, by rendering Succeſſion precarious, the Relations which ariſe from marriage uncertain, and the Rights and prerogatives annexed to them undeterminable.

In a word, the one would diſhonour the ſanctity of Religion; the other would diſorder the harmony of Civil life. And therefore we may be ſure God hath not done, nor will do, either one or the other.

We return then to our concluſion, That the marriage-bond which Jeſus, in my text, forbids man's preſumption to diſſolve, is a contract ſo VIRTUALLY circumſtanced as the Laws of Religion ordain; and ſo FORMALLY executed as the Laws of each particular Society preſcribe.

Where either of theſe requiſites are wanting, it is not that Union of which God is pleaſed to call himſelf the Author; and which he forbids

forbids man, on any other terms than that which the Religion of his Son preſcribes, to diſſolve.

From theſe clear *principles*, and this certain *deduction*, we collect the *juſtice* and Religion, as well as *expedience* and true Policy of a late ſalutary Law ſolely calculated for the ſupport and ornament of Society: by which the juſt rights and Authority of Parents are vindicated; the peace and harmony of families preſerved; the irregular appetites of Youth reſtrained; and the worſt and bateſt kind of ſeduction encountered and defeated. I mean, that ſage proviſion, whereby all pretended Marriages, not ſolemnized as the WISDOM OF OUR ANCIENT CONSTITUTION directs, are rendered null and void.

For the diſſolution of a mock-marriage not entered into with the previous qualifications the Law of Nature enjoins, nor executed by the public forms which the Laws of Society require, is ſo far from *putting aſunder thoſe whom God hath joined together*, that it is only breaking an inſolent and diſorderly confederacy in licentiouſneſs, where God's Sanction and the Magiſtrate's Authority are equally inſulted: and by a crime too which indeed favours the moſt of that very impiety we are ſo commendably anxious to avoid: there being nothing which God hath more inſeparably united than the *obedience* of Children to the *care and protection* of Parents.

And if the indulgence of former times hath confirmed ſuch irregular and lawleſs combinations, which this Law condemns and diſſolves, it proceeded on wrong and miſtaken notions concerning the nature of Marriage. For Popiſh policy had turned this Union into a Sacrament; and Proteſtant ſimplicity had, by way of *interim*, given a kind of authority to thoſe Canons in which the ſyſtem of that policy was contained. But now, that the true principles of *natural Law* and *revealed Religion* have made this ſolemn and ſacred contract better underſtood, and that the abuſes of it were become intolerable, the wiſdom of the Legiſlature found it neceſſary to pro-

vide

vide the efficacious remedy in queſtion: the only one which, on mature conſideration, was found to be effectual. And it is worthy our notice, that this, which was the more immediate object of their care, is contrived with ſo much provident ſagacity, that, had it been their directer purpoſe to ſeek a means for reſtoring the SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE to its ancient honours, we cannot conceive a more effectual method than what this very *remedy* has provided. The things which moſt contribute to excite reflexion, and to impreſs awe and reverence for any ſolemn Rite, being all here ſcrupulouſly required; ſuch as previous caution, public notoriety, open celebration, and a well-atteſted record.

With matters of policy we have nothing to do, any otherwiſe than as the truths of Religion come in queſtion, by their being actively or paſſively concerned. And therefore I ſhould here conclude what I had to ſay on this ſubject, but that a very material objection to my general argument is ſuppoſed to ariſe from the expreſs words of Scripture. This is within our province; and, I preſume, I may be permitted to examine it.

My argument proceeds on this principle, that MARRIAGE being in part a *religious*, and in part a *civil* contract, it muſt, in order to give it its eſſential efficacy, be entered into on ſuch terms as Religion enjoins, and compleated by ſuch forms as the *Civil* Magiſtrate preſcribes. From whence it is inferred, that the mutual agreement of the two Sexes alone is not ſufficient to make a *legitimate Marriage*, either in the ſight of GOD or of SOCIETY.

But, to this it is objected, That the *premiſſes* muſt needs be falſe, ſince St. PAUL hath expreſly declared againſt the *concluſion*. "Know ye not (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. What, know ye not, "that HE WHICH IS JOINED TO AN HARLOT IS ONE BODY? FOR

"TWO

"TWO (ſaith he) SHALL BE ONE FLESH. But he that is *joined* "*to the Lord is one Spirit* *."

"Hence, ſay the objectors, it appears, that no more than the mutual agreement of the two Sexes to come together is neceſſary to give this contract its moſt eſſential quality, namely, INDISSOLUBILITY, ſince the Apoſtle declares that the two ſexes meeting, or at leaſt living, in *Concubinage* (a ſtate Societies diſallow, and therefore a contract in which the Magiſtrate doth not interfere) become ONE BODY; the very circumſtance which makes an *inſeparable union*."

To underſtand the weight of this objection, we muſt conſider the Apoſtle's manner of treating his ſubject.—To ſhew the great enormity of *fornication* in a profeſſor of the Goſpel, he employs, for one of his topics, that eſſential property of Marriage, the making the two parties, one *fleſh* or *body*.

By FORNICATION, we will ſuppoſe him to mean frequenting the *Stews*, or that more decent indulgence of the irregular paſſions called *Concubinage*. And then, according to the ſenſe of the objectors, he lays down this poſition, *That every whoremonger and harlot become one fleſh and one body, by virtue of the holy ordinance of Matrimony inſtituted in Paradiſe*. A poſition, which not only diſturbs and violates Society; but, by confounding Concubinage with Marriage, and making them one and the ſame, leaves the Apoſtle nothing to argue againſt, even in the height of his reſentment at a criminal aſſociation, which this very topic is employed to aggravate.

But this is not all. The Apoſtle, according to this interpretation, *makes one of two*, where Jeſus *makes two of one*. For the Saviour of the world allows *fornication* for a ſufficient cauſe of *divorce*. So that the crime is made to have two contrary effects at once.

* 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16, 17.

Again,

Again, If fornication *makes one, of two*; then, by God's Laws it is both commanded and forbidden. For we are directed to make that union, whereby *two become one*, in the injunction to *increaſe and multiply*; and yet we are warned, again and again, to *flee fornication*.

Since therefore the ſenſe which ſupports the objection abounds in theſe abſurdities, we muſt ſeek a reaſonable meaning elſewhere. That is, in the Author's context, and in the courſe and tenour of his own reaſoning.

St. Paul, in order to expoſe the enormity of fornication amongſt Chriſtians, conſiders every man as the member of *Chriſt's* ſpiritual body; and every man, living in fornication, as the member of a harlot: a profanation which renders the criminal unworthy of the ſpiritual union with *Chriſt*. But then, to make the Corinthians ſtill more ſenſible of this profanation, he ſets before them the *cloſeneſs* of that ſpiritual union; which, in his accuſtomed manner, he inforces by analogy to the thing prophaning. Juſt as, in another place of this Epiſtle, he expoſes the profanation of the Lord's ſupper when joined to an Idol-feaſt, by a compariſon between what thoſe two Rites had, or were ſuppoſed to have, in common *. But the union of *Concubinage* not ſo well fitting his purpoſe as that of *Marriage*, he employs the latter to inforce the enormity of the former, and, without ſtopping to change the terms, continues the uſe of the word *Harlot*, to predicate of her, what is ſtrictly true only of a *Wife*, namely, that *he which is joined to her is one body*.

This ſeems to be a fair account of the Apoſtle's illuſtration. And the manner of expreſſing it is altogether ſuited to that quickneſs of conception, and rapidity of argumentation, which diſtinguiſh this great Apoſtle's reaſoning. "He was a man (ſays Mr. Locke) "of quick parts and warm temper; mighty well verſed in the "writings of the *Old Teſtament*, and full of the doctrine of the

* See the Diſcourſe on the Lord's Supper, in the Fourth Volume.

"*New*.

" *New.* All this put together ſuggeſted matter to him in abundance, " on thoſe ſubjects that came in his way. So that one may conſider " him, when he was writing, as beſet with a croud of thoughts, " all ſtriving for utterance. In this poſture of mind it was almoſt " impoſſible for him to keep a ſlow pace, and obſerve minutely " that order and method of ranging all he ſaid, from which " reſults an eaſy and obvious perſpicuity — One may ſee his " thoughts were all of a piece in his Epiſtles: his notions were " at all times uniform, and conſtantly the ſame: though his " expreſſions very various. *In them he ſeems to take great liberty.* " This is certain, that no one ſeems *leſs tied up* to a form of " words *."

The character here given of St. Paul's *knowledge* ſhews him to be too well verſed both in the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* diſpenſations to aſcribe the *eſſential attribute* of MARRIAGE to FORNICATION or *concubinage:* and yet his *genius* made him very capable, amidſt a torrent of thought and croud of expreſſion, to uſe one term for another, which had in them thoſe ideas in common of which he wanted to make uſe.

But it may be thought perhaps a much eaſier, as well as juſter ſolution of the difficulty, to ſuppoſe that, by FORNICATION, the Apoſtle meant neither *frequenting the ſtews,* nor yet *concubinage;* but a *formal marriage;* though within the *Jewiſh* prohibited degrees.

It is certain that this was the general term which the followers of the Law employed to deſign ſuch marriages. And we ſeem to have a very eminent example of it in that famous apoſtolical decree which commands " to abſtain from pollutions of Idols, and from " FORNICATION, and from things ſtrangled, and from blood †." For this ſenſe of the term removes a difficulty which will for ever embarras the Decree, while *fornication* is underſtood to ſignify

* Preface to his commentary on St. Paul's Epiſtles.

† Acts xv. 20.

vague luſt; whereby things *poſitive* and *moral* are confounded, and put upon the ſame foot of obligation; either making abſtinence *from fornication* temporal; or abſtinence from *things ſtrangled and from blood*, perpetual.

But in the place in queſtion the ſenſe ſeems yet more evidently determined. The *fornication*, the ſubject of this *ſixth* Chapter, plainly refers to the *fornication* deſcribed in the *fifth*. "It is re-"ported commonly (ſays the Apoſtle) "that there is fornication "amongſt you: and ſuch fornication that is not ſo much as named "amongſt the Gentiles, THAT ONE SHOULD HAVE HIS FATHER'S "WIFE *." The crime in queſtion therefore appears to be a MARRIAGE, on the principles of the Jewiſh Law, inceſtuous.

And thus the objection, which ſtands on a ſuppoſition that St. Paul is ſpeaking of *concubinage*, in which the marriage-ceremony does not take place, nor conſequently the Magiſtrate interfere, comes to nothing. And let not the Apoſtle's calling it ſuch a ſpecies of fornication, *as was not named amongſt the Gentiles*, induce us to think it ſuch a Marriage as the Gentiles eſteemed illegal, and conſequently an union the civil Magiſtrate did not authorize, which would bring us round again to *concubinage*, from whence we ſet out: for by theſe words he only meant that it was diſreputable and ſcandalous amongſt them, not ſuch as was contrary to the Laws †.

The *fornication* then in queſtion was a ſcandalous *marriage*. And being altogether unſuitable to a Chriſtian's profeſſion, we find ‡

* 1 Cor. v. 1.

† "That the marrying of a Son in Law and a Mother in Law was not prohibited "by the Laws of the Roman Empire, may be ſeen in Tully: but yet it was looked on "as ſo ſcandalous and infamous, that it never had any countenance from practice. "His words, in his oration *pro Cluentio*, § 4. are ſo agreeable to the preſent caſe, that "it may not be amiſs to ſet them down. *Nubit Gener Socrus, nullis auſpiciis, nullis "auctoribus. O ſcelus incredibile, et, præter hanc unam, in omni vita inauditum!*" LOCKE, on the place.

‡ See the ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, chap. ii.

that

that the offender, on St. Paul's remonſtrance, took advantage of the Laws of divorce then in uſe, to ſhew his penitence.

All, therefore, we learn from this famous Caſe, is this general truth, corroborative of the foregoing argument, that where a pretended Marriage is ſolemnized in defiance of any Law, divine or human, which has a right to regulate the terms of the contract, it never was that union which God declares to be indiſſolvable, but one virtually void at the very making; and that the enacting its diſſolution by a poſitive Law is only declarative of the Law of right reaſon and Religion concerning it.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE tendency of the foregoing diſcourſe is to ſhew, that the Legiſlature, in the Law concerning Marriage, was ſo far from unſettling the rights of Religion, that it ſupported and inforced them. The Legiſlature has, indeed, been defended on other principles.

It has been ſaid, that this Law, which *annuls* illegal Marriages, concerns itſelf only with their *civil effects*; and meddles not with the conſcience of the parties; who may be ſtill bound by the religion of the contract, when all the civilities are diſſolved. And this caſuiſtry, it ſeems, has the authority of the biſhops STILLINGFLEET and FLEETWOOD for its ſupport. The former of theſe learned men expreſſes himſelf in this manner: "Marriage "being a contract of a civil and public nature, it is very juſt "and fitting that the Civil Society and the Chriſtian Church ſhould "appoint rules and orders for the decent performance of it, and "may appoint penalties to the breakers of thoſe rules; ſo far as "to illegitimate the Children born of ſuch marriages, which is "*nulling* the contract as to the *civil effect* of it. But I do not "ſee how either Church or State can null the CONTRACT AS TO "CONSCIENCE, SO AS TO MAKE IT LAWFUL FOR SUCH PERSONS TO "MARRY OTHERS *."

* Miſcell. Diſcourſes, p. 73.

This

This determination, when applied to vindicate this act of civil power, ſeems to have a very extraordinary aſpect; as fixing the imputation of injury, to Society and Religion, in the very attempt to throw it off.

It intangles the Parties irregularly contracting, between two Authorities. They are deprived by Law of all the civil benefits conſequent on Marriage; and are at the ſame time bound by Conſcience to hold the contract indiſſolvable.

If they follow Conſcience, Society is like to ſuffer by throwing bars in the way of the marriage ſtate: If they follow Convenience, under the ſhelter of Law, they violate the duties of Religion.

It is of moment, therefore, to examine a doctrine ſupported by ſo reverend Authority, and which appears to be attended with ſuch manifeſt abſurdity.

I apprehend the conceit may have ariſen from not diſtinguiſhing a real difference in the general nature of Contracts. One kind there is into which a Man *may lawfully enter*, without obſerving the conditions which the laws preſcribe to contracts, it undertakes to ſupport and vindicate. There is another, into which a man *may not lawfully enter*, without obſerving the conditions.

Of the firſt ſort are thoſe which concern the ſale and alienation of real property. If ſuch be tranſacted by a *verbal* form only, when the law requires a *written*, I apprehend no *civil effects will follow*; though the parties be obliged in juſtice and good faith to perform the terms of their agreement.

Of the ſecond ſort is that of *Marriage*. If this be entered into by any other form than what the Laws of Society preſcribe, no obligation will follow, in Conſcience. In the preceding diſcourſe I have attempted to ſhew, that Marriage is of this ſort: that, without the ſanction and concurrence of the Magiſtrate, neither divine nor human laws permit the parties to enter on the contract. The

legal

legal incapacity therefore occaſions an original *nullity*, which a poſitive law only declares and ſupports. So that Conſcience is, in this caſe, no further concerned than to oblige the Party *deluding* to make civil reparation for the accidental injuries accruing, by his profanation of the rite, to the Party *deluded*: But as to the Contract itſelf, this not receiving its eſſential quality of indiſſolubility till made on the terms which civil laws preſcribe, it was null and void from the beginning.

The authority of parents, the harmony of families, the peace of Society, all ſeem to require the diſſolution of perſonal contracts of this kind illegally tranſacted. The wiſeſt of all Lawgivers has fully declared himſelf to be of this opinion in a caſe purely and entirely religious, in the moſt awfull of all contracts, Vows made to the Almighty: For, in conformity to the genius of the Moſaic Religion, God indulged his choſen People in frequent contracts or intercourſe with him, by Vows. Now the Code of this Divine Lawgiver expreſſly decrees, that "if a woman vow a vow unto "the Lord, and bind herſelf by a bond, BEING IN HER FATHER'S "HOUSE IN HER YOUTH; and her Father hear her vow, and her "bond, wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, and her Father ſhall "hold his peace at her; then all her vows ſhall ſtand, and every "bond wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand. But if her "Father DISALLOW her in the day that he heareth: not any "of her vows or of her bonds, wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, "ſhall ſtand: and THE LORD SHALL FORGIVE HER, BECAUSE HER "FATHER DISALLOWED HER *." He goes on, in the ſame manner, to give the like privileges to the *Huſband*.

Here we ſee a bond, in its own nature the moſt irremiſſible, entered into according to the genius, and by the direction, of Religion: Yet if it be oppoſed, though but by human conſiderations, by thoſe to whom the contracting party owes duty and obedience, and under whoſe care and protection ſhe remains, it becomes void

* Numbers xxx. 3. ſeqq.

as

as if it had been never made. The Parent, or the Huſband the natural Guardian, may confirm or annul it, juſt as he ſees convenient: but it never became a real indiſſolvable bond, till, by their acquieſcence, it had received its eſſential nature.

On the whole, it appears, that there are two kinds of contracts in uſe amongſt men; one of which it is not ſo much as lawful to enter into without the magiſtrate's allowance; and of this kind is MARRIAGE, which therefore, ſo irregularly made, becomes null and void from the beginning. The other kind may be lawfully tranſacted, without following the Magiſtrate's preſcribed rule; and therefore, this, indeed, will bind in conſcience, though no civil effects ariſe from it.

SERMONS

SERMONS

AND

DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lady MANSFIELD.

MADAM,

YOU ought not to think ſtrange of an addreſs of this kind from a *Churchman*, to the Grand-daughter of that great Magiſtrate, who, while he held the Seals for the King and Conſtitution, beſides the moſt exemplary attention to the proper buſineſs of his Office, was elegantly ambitious to give the laſt poliſh to his Country, by a patronage of Learning and Science. Into this equal paſſion he reſolved all his private ſatisfactions. He took early into his notice, and continued long in his protection, every great Name in Letters and Religion, from CUDWORTH, who died in the reign of Charles the Second, to PRIDEAUX, who lived under George the Firſt. It was the care and culture of an Age: and in ſpite of a diſſolute, abandoned Court, he made the reign of Charles the Second to be, what it is now likely to be always eſteemed, OUR GOLDEN AGE OF LITERATURE.

The glory of bearing this relation to ſo *faithful a Guardian of the human Faculties in their non-age*, Providence, in reward of your virtues, hath doubled, in a ſtill nearer relation to One, who, in his high Station, may with the ſame juſtice be eſteemed the great ſupport of Civil Liberty; and is now engaged in the like generous taſk for the very BEING of a free Community, which the other ſo ſucceſsfully accompliſhed for that chief Ornament of it, LITERATURE and SCIENCE.

But the honours you derive from others, you preſerve untarniſhed, by the ſplendor of thoſe you have acquired for yourſelf, in the courſe of a ſober and enlightned Piety; which makes you an example to the beſt of your Sex, as the patriotic Virtues of your illuſtrious Conſort will make him, to the wiſeſt of his.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP'S

Moſt obliged,

And faithful Servant,

Dec. 24, 1766.

W. GLOUCESTER.

NATURAL AND CIVIL EVENTS THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

AT LINCOLN'S-INN-CHAPEL,

On the firſt public FAST-DAY after the Calamity of Liſbon,

MDCCLV.

SERMON I.

Natural and Civil Events the Inſtruments of God's Moral Government.

LUKE XIII. 1, 2, &c.

THERE WERE PRESENT, AT THAT SEASON, SOME THAT TOLD HIM OF THE GALILEANS, WHOSE BLOOD PILATE HAD MINGLED WITH THEIR SACRIFICES.

AND JESUS ANSWERING, SAID UNTO THEM, SUPPOSE YE THAT THESE GALILEANS WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL THE GALILEANS BECAUSE THEY SUFFERED SUCH THINGS?

I TELL YOU, NAY: BUT EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

OR THOSE EIGHTEEN, UPON WHOM THE TOWER OF SILOAM FELL, AND SLEW THEM, THINK YE THAT THEY WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL MEN THAT DWELT IN JERUSALEM?

I TELL YOU, NAY: BUT EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

THIS ſolemn reproof hath been commonly underſtood, and often quoted, as a condemnation of the opinion which aſcribes "the general calamities effected by natural or civil cauſes, to God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin;" but ſurely, with little reaſon; for that

that opinion is founded in the very eſſence of Religion. What the text condemns is the ſuperſtitious abuſe of it, which uncharitably concludes, that "the ſufferers in a general calamity are greater ſinners than other men."

That this was the caſe, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew—from the character of the ſpeaker—from the ſtate and circumſtances of the hearers—and from the very words of the text itſelf.

1. He who goeth about to inſtruct others in the knowledge of God, whether commiſſioned from Heaven or prompted by his own Charity, muſt needs conceive that the moral Governor of the univerſe, whoſe eſſential character it is, not to *leave himſelf without a witneſs*, doth frequently employ the phyſical and civil operations of our ſyſtem, to ſupport and reform the moral. For ſuch a Governor will manifeſt his dominion in whatever world he is pleaſed to ſtation and exerciſe his accountable and probationary creatures. In man's ſtate and condition here, natural and civil events are the proper inſtruments of moral government. The teacher therefore of Religion, or of a moral Governor, will be naturally led to inculcate this truth, that general calamities, though events merely phyſical or civil, were (amongſt other ends) ordained by the Author of all nature to ſerve for the ſcourge of moral diſorders. For to ſuppoſe, that phyſical or civil events, whether friendly or adverſe, ſuch as peace or war, fertility or dearth, health or peſtilence, are the proper inſtruments of reward and puniſhment, and yet, that God doth not ſo employ them, but will rather have recourſe to what we call miraculous operations, is an unwarranted and indeed diſreſpectful notion of divine Wiſdom; as implying a kind of incapacity in the Almighty to fit the natural to the moral ſyſtem in ſuch a manner as to make the former a ready inſtrument for the regulation of the latter.

2. If, from the character of the ſpeaker, we turn to the ſtate and condition of the hearers, we ſhall ſee further reaſon to acquieſce in this concluſion. The Jews, of all people upon earth, were beſt juſtified in aſcribing national calamities to the anger of offended Heaven.

Heaven. They were of a Race long accuſtomed to receive rewards and puniſhments through the inſtrumentality of Nature; and of a Religion which more ſolemnly and exactly diſpenſed them; for the moſt part indeed, they were miraculouſly inforced; yet frequently too, adminiſtered in the common order and courſe of Nature: ſo that ſuch a people, whoſe ſacred books bore teſtimony in every page to the puniſhment of crimes by peſtilence, by famine, and the ſword, could never heſitate a moment to conclude, that the calamities of the wicked Galileans were a mark of God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin.

3. Laſtly, the very words of the reproof [—*except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*], evidently imply, that amongſt the many ends effected in the adminiſtration of Nature, this was one, to expreſs God's diſpleaſure at human iniquities, in order to bring men to REPENTANCE—*except ye* REPENT, *ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*: that is, *periſh* for the ſame cauſe (your ſins), and by the ſame inſtrument (the Roman power). In which it appears, that our bleſſed Lord alluded to his own prediction, of the exterminating vengeance impending over the whole Nation by the arms of Veſpaſian.

But now, if the belief of a moral end, in theſe general calamities, be a principle of Religion, proper to be inculcated, to ſupport the reverence due to the moral Governor of the world; What was it, you will aſk, that could deſerve ſo ſolemn and ſo ſevere a reproof as our Lord's words are confeſſed to convey, on this occaſion?

The anſwer is eaſy. It was that deteſtable ſuperſtition, which ſo often accompanies, and ſo fatally infects, this generous principle of Religion; the ſuperſtition of aſcribing public calamities, not to God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin in general, but to his vengeance on the perſons of the unhappy ſufferers; who, for ſome fancy or other, this Superſtition concludes to be greater ſinners than other men.

This deſerved all the ſeverity of our Lord's cenſure, as it implied groſs ignorance in the nature of the puniſhment; and betrayed a malignity of heart which defeated the very end of the diſpenſation.

1. When Sodom and Gomorra were deſtroyed by a fire from Heaven, and the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan extirpated by the command of God, who furniſhed the inſtruments, which he employed, with extraordinary powers for their deſtruction, the people of God were authoriſed to conclude, that thoſe nations were ſinners above all other men; and, conſequently, that their puniſhment was inflicted for their own immeaſurable iniquities, as well as for a warning and example to the reſt of mankind. But when God, by the admirable direction of his general providence, ſo adjuſts the circumſtances of the natural and moral ſyſtems, as to make the events in the former to ſerve for the regulation of the latter, we muſt, in all reaſon, conceive that ſuch events are principally deſigned as alarms and warnings to a careleſs inattentive world; and that their moral purpoſe was rather general example than particular vengeance: for the attaining of which end, it is ſufficient for us to believe, that thoſe who ſuffer are ſinners deſerving puniſhment; not that they are greater ſinners than thoſe who have eſcaped; poſſibly much leſs, as the preſervation of theſe was neceſſary for the carrying on ſome other great and inſcrutable deſign of Providence, in the more general government of the moral world.

From all this, it appears, that though, indeed, we be allowed, on the ſobereſt principles of reaſon, to conſider ſuch unhappy ſufferers as the criminal object of an offended Maſter; yet are we by no means authoriſed on any principles, either of reaſon or religion, to conclude that they are more criminal than others.

2. This leads me to another reaſon of the ſeverity of our Lord's reproof; the extreme uncharitableneſs of this wicked ſuperſtition: For when once we begin to eſtimate the degree of demerit by the frequency or ſeverity of the puniſhment, and the degree of God's diſfavour in proportion to the demerit, theſe our diſtreſſed brethren will be no longer the object of our pity, but of our ſcorn and averſion, as the abandoned and the outcaſts of Heaven. And when ſuperſtition is once got into this train, ſo frequent and general are the

the calamities of human life, that Chriſtian communities, from a brotherhood of love, would ſoon degenerate into a deſperate crew of miſcreants, each rejoicing in the pains, and triumphing in the miſeries of others.

3. A third reaſon of the ſeverity of the reproof is, That this ſuperſtition has a direct tendency to defeat the very end of the chaſtiſement. It is inflicted to rouſe, to wake, and to alarm a drowſy, inattentive world; to beget, in thoſe who have eſcaped, humility and circumſpection; which, by a timely repentance, may avert the vengeance hovering round them. But when men, by this wretched error, are become ſo debauched as to fancy, that the unhappy, on whom the evil falls, are *ſinners above all others*, they no longer conſider the puniſhment as a warning of ſome approaching miſchief, but as a paſſed vengeance, in which themſelves are but remotely concerned, and have therefore no need to ſcrutinize their own conduct, or diſturb their quiet with ſelf-apprehenſions. Thus the gracious purpoſe of Heaven being defeated, and the hand of mercy ſtretched out in vain, an exterminating vengeance follows, and the dreadful ſcene cloſes in a final deſtruction.

This was the caſe of theſe very men to whom the reproof of Jeſus was addreſſed. They were far gone in the ſuperſtition here condemned. They had long conſidered general diſaſters in this abſurd and impious light: and the ſuffering Galileans ſupported them in the ſatisfaction they took in their own ways. Exemplary warnings became loſt upon them; and every freſh gleam of divine mercy only ſerved to ripen them into the ſpeedy objects of his juſtice.

Things were now at a criſis; and the laſt *warning-voice from Heaven* was given in the caſe of the Galileans, ſuffering by that very ſcourge, the Roman power, which ſtood ready at the door to drive and ſweep away their very name and nation. And now the gracious Saviour of the world exerts this laſt effort of his goodneſs towards them, in an explanation of the nature of theſe puniſhments: He ſhews that their principal purpoſe was for their admo-

nition and amendment, to awake them to repentance, and an abhorrence of their ways; which if neglected or delayed, *they too ſhould periſh*, and in a more general deſolation.

But the *day of grace* was paſt: they were deaf to Reaſon, to Nature, and to Religion. Their doom was now pronounced; and that inſtrument of God's vengeance, the Imperial *eagle*, ſcenting the *carcaſs* * from afar, came down with an exterminating wing on this devoted Nation, already more than half deſtroyed by its inteſtine vices and corruptions.

The contemplation of this awful judgement is at this time ſo peculiarly uſeful to Us, that I almoſt ſcruple to call you away from an attention to it, though it be to ſet before you a view of the wonders of divine Providence, which this PRINCIPLE preſents and opens to us.

For what I propoſed, after explaining my text, was to ſhew, that the doctrine of it, which aſcribes THE GENERAL CALAMITIES, ARISING FROM NATURAL CAUSES, TO GOD'S DISPLEASURE AGAINST SIN, diſplays his glory in the faireſt colours, and eſtabliſhes man's peace and happineſs on the moſt ſolid foundations.

And, ſecondly, that the preſent faſhionable opinion, THAT NATURAL EVENTS PROCEED NOT FROM A MORAL RULER, AND HAVE NO RELATION TO MORAL GOVERNMENT, is the ſource of perpetual diſquiets and alarms to the abandoned and forlorn inhabitants of the earth.

1. Firſt then, we may obſerve, that the application of natural events to moral government, in the common courſe of Providence (a diſpoſition of things to be diſtinguiſhed from that whereby God, in the conſtitution of univerſal nature, hath annexed happineſs to virtue—and to vice, diſtreſs and miſery) connects the character of Lord and Governor of the intellectual world, with that of Creator and Preſerver of the material: A conſideration of great uſe, as for other religious purpoſes reſpecting God's glory, ſo particularly for

* Matt. xxiv. 28.

this,

this, that it redreſſes the old Manichean impiety, ſo derogatory to it, which makes an evil Principle a ſharer with him in the direction of the Univerſe: For the conſtant undiſturbed courſe of the natural ſyſtem, when compared with the diſorders of the moral, firſt gave birth to that monſtrous imagination. Now this doctrine, of the PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY, the direction of natural events to moral government, obviates all irreligious ſuſpicions; and not only ſatisfies us that there is but one Governor of both ſyſtems, but that both ſyſtems are conducted by one ſcheme of Providence.

To form the conſtitution of Nature in ſuch a manner that, without controlling or ſuſpending its laws, it ſhould continue through a long ſucceſſion of ages to produce its phyſical revolutions, as they beſt contribute to the preſervation and order of its own ſyſtem, juſt at thoſe preciſe periods of time when their effects, whether ſalutary or hurtful to man, may ſerve as inſtruments for the government of the moral world; *e. g.* that a foreign enemy, amidſt our inteſtine broils, ſhould deſolate all the flouriſhing works of rural induſtry; that warring elements, in the ſtated order of natural government, ſhould depopulate and tear in pieces a high-viced city, juſt in thoſe very moments when moral government required a warning and example to be held out to a careleſs world, is giving us the nobleſt as well as moſt aſtoniſhing idea of God's GOODNESS and JUSTICE.

Had the government of the moral ſyſtem generally required the controll and alteration of natural laws in that ſenſible effect which we call a *miracle* *, it might have argued defect of wiſdom: Had the government of the natural ſyſtem required the operation of ſuch laws as would be always diſturbing and defeating the ſanctions of the moral, it might have argued defect of power. But where the

* We can ſee but two neceſſary occaſions of this extraordinary diſpenſation;—the one, to atteſt and ſupport the truth of a *new Religion* coming from God; the other, to adminiſter a *Theocratic government*. Theſe are occaſions worthy the divine Wiſdom, and neceſſary in the nature of things.

ſtated laws of Phyſics, while they are promoting their own purpoſe, are, at the ſame time, ſo contrived as to ſupport, invigorate, and inforce the ſanctions of Religion, this, I ſay, muſt needs give us the nobleſt, as well as moſt aſtoniſhing idea, of God's WISDOM and POWER.

Nor do the glories of this Diſpenſation afford leſs conſolation and comfort of ſecurity to the truly pious man. For when it is underſtood, that the courſe of nature was, by the laws impoſed upon it from the foundations of the world, ſo contrived as to co-operate with the laws of moral government, ſuch an one, on the appearance of any of theſe public warnings to awake the nations from their lethargy of vice, will never be terrified and diſtracted with the vain apprehenſions of an undiſtinguiſhing deſolation, which is out of his power to avoid; as being well aſſured, from the nature of the judgement, that a ſincere purpoſe of amending the public manners will be able to avert the approaching vengeance.

Nor let men ſo rationally inſtructed in the ways of God ſuffer their well-placed confidence to be ſhaken by this plauſible ſophiſtry, "That it is utterly unphiloſophical to ſuppoſe that a preſent and inſtantaneous change in our conduct can ſtop or avert a natural event, eſtabliſhed, by a ſtrong connected ſeries of cauſes, which have kept operating ever ſince the foundations of the world." We can tell theſe pretending reaſoners that our religious confidence is not derived from ſo abſurd a principle, a principle erected on the narrow and unfaithful ground of ſuperſtition. Our concluſions are drawn from the moſt reaſonable conceptions that man can entertain of his Creator and Lord: Who, when he made the world (in which all time was as an inſtant before him), the free determinations of the human Will, and the neceſſary effects of Laws phyſical, were ſo fitted and accommodated to one another, that a ſincere repentance in the *moral* world ſhould be ſure to avert an impending deſolation in the *natural*; not by any preſent alteration or ſuſpenſion of its eſtabliſhed Laws, but by originally adjuſting all their operations to all the foreſeen circumſtances of moral agency: So

as

as to make Matter and Motion (beſides their other purpoſes) to ſerve for the regulation of the Underſtanding and Will. We ſhould bluſh, let me tell them, to be thought ſo uninſtructed in the nature of Prayer as to fancy it can work any temporary change in the diſpoſitions of the Deity, who is the *ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever:* Yet we are not aſhamed to maintain, that God, in the chain of cauſes and effects, which not only ſuſtains each ſyſtem, but connects them all with one another, hath ſo wonderfully contrived, that the temporary endeavours of pious men ſhall procure good and avert evil, by means of that PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY which he hath willed to exiſt between moral actions and natural events.

Thus we ſee, theſe two eſſential doctrines of Religion, "God's "JUDGMENTS in phyſical and civil events," and "the efficacy of "the good man's PRAYER," ſtand equally on one and the ſame Principle, the belief of that original connexion between the natural and moral World.

And here let me expoſtulate with thoſe unhappy men, who, from a confeſſed truth that theſe more general deſolations proceed entirely from natural cauſes, have too confidently concluded that they cannot be eſteemed the warnings of a moral Governor: and therefore, after having been moſt alarmed by them while they were impending, have been the firſt to ridicule their own imbecillity; which had led them, before they were aware, to the very brink of repentance. An inſtance of this unmanly conduct we ſaw amongſt ourſelves, when Heaven, in mercy, not long ſince ſhook a guilty land. A repetition of the ſtroke ſo alarmed and terrified its inhabitants, that, in their fright, they ſeemed in haſte to give a ſpecimen of their contrition and reformation. But a third ſhock not coming at the expected interval as that between the firſt and ſecond, the raſh project of amending their manners vaniſhed like a morning miſt; and they returned with equal ſpeed to their accuſtomed follies and diſſipations. And to what was all this owing but to a double blunder, unbecoming *a nation of Philoſophers?* They had firſt entertained a falſe idea of theſe Warnings, as if they were

phænomena

phænomena out of nature, prodigious and miraculous; and when they came to underſtand that they were only the effects of phyſical cauſes, they then, by as ſhameful an ignorance, concluded that they had nothing in them formidable or threatening to an impenitent World. Whereas a moderate ſhare of NATURAL THEOLOGY would have taught them, that though theſe warnings by diſaſters were indeed the operations of the phyſical ſyſtem, yet they were providentially connected with the moral, and pre-ordained to ſupport its ſanctions. But where was the wonder that that which began in Superſtition ſhould end in Irreligion? for, by a ſtrange and monſtrous kind of conception, extremes, in the moral world, are always begetting their oppoſites.

2. But now, in the laſt place, let us take a view of the ſtate and ſituation of thoſe men, who ſuppoſe that God does not uphold the World as the moral Ruler of it, but as the phyſical Diſpenſer only; and it is certain, that thoſe, who deny theſe natural diſaſters to be connected with the moral ſyſtem, can have no other idea of God's Government.

Such men, amidſt all theſe dreadful warnings of alarming Nature, will find their condition to be moſt diſconſolate and forlorn; their Principles having bereft them of thoſe hopes which are ever ſpringing in the breaſt of the religious man: who is taught both by Reaſon and Revelation to conclude, that theſe effects of God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin may be averted by ſincere repentance. For though the irreligious Naturaliſt acknowledges a Governor of the univerſe, yet, as he ſuppoſes this Governor to direct all things by his natural attributes of *power* and *wiſdom*, and not by his moral, of *goodneſs* and *juſtice*, his acknowledgment of a God affords him no more ſecurity againſt his fears than if there were no God at all; and that the univerſe lay entirely at the mercy of Chance or Deſtiny; becauſe a mere phyſical Director having no reſpect to the ſyſtem of Rationals, their preſervation or deſtruction will not be dependent on their behaviour, but on the purpoſes of the phyſical ſyſtem; the ſupport of which (for aught this Philoſopher can tell) may

may require the deſtruction of Mankind, inſtead of their preſervation: and the very next ſhock of the diſordered Globe work thoſe neceſſary changes in Matter and Motion which may conclude in the ruin and annihilation of its inhabitants.

Thus the hapleſs Unbeliever, while diſordered Nature is ſounding in his ears, hath no where to fly for refuge from his terrors: he ſees himſelf in a fatherleſs and abandoned World, expoſed to all the rage of deaf and unrelenting Elements: He may find, indeed, ſupport and comfort in Religion: but it is below the dignity of his Philoſophic character to ſeek it along with the ſuperſtitious herd: it being unworthy *a man of Science* to ſuppoſe, that the ſyſtem of Nature was created, and is conducted, to ſerve any other Purpoſes than its own; or that the SUBLIME PRINCIPLE OF ATTRACTION was impreſſed upon Matter to bring about any other revolutions than of thoſe vaſt bodies which are the objects of his learned contemplation.

In a word, every rational reflexion ſerves to eſtabliſh the religious Principle of my text, as here explained.

It is ſhewn to be agreeable to Reaſon and to Religion, under the preſent conſtitution of things.

It is ſhewn to tend moſt to the glory of God, and to the peace and happineſs of Man.

It is ſhewn, that that *vain philoſophy*, which diſcards this Principle from its creed, diſhonours Providence, and moſt diſtreſſes Human life.

What have we then to do, but to regulate our practice, and repoſe our confidence, on a Principle ſo well eſtabliſhed. A ſincere, a ſpeedy and a perfect reformation will not fail to avert the anger of the Lord, now gone out againſt the ſinful inhabitants of the Earth. I mean, a reformation of the general manners, where each of us, in our ſeveral ſtations, muſt concur to heal the breaches made in our excellent Conſtitution by our party-follies; to oppoſe the enormous progreſs of avarice and corruption; to check the waſting rage

for pleaſure and amuſement; to ſhake off thoſe unmanly luxuries crept in to domeſtic life, ſome for the gratification of our appetites, but more, for the diſplay of our vanities.

When we have done this, we have done our part. And then theſe *terrors of the Lord* will ceaſe; or they will become harmleſs and even ſalutary to us. We ſhall, if it be our lot to meet that great day of *his coming*, foretold by our ſacred Oracles, not only ſtand, with the man of morals, ſerene and fearleſs amidſt the craſh of falling worlds, but, with the religious man, become partaker of the *glories of the Lamb*, riſe triumphant over them in thoſe happier regions of perpetual ſtability and peace.

A SERMON

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SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

JANUARY 30, 1760.

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SERMON II.

ISAIAH xix. 13—14.

THE PRINCES OF ZOAN ARE BECOME FOOLS, THE PRINCES OF NOPH ARE DECEIVED; THEY HAVE ALSO SEDUCED EGYPT—— THE LORD HATH MINGLED A PERVERSE SPIRIT IN THE MIDST THEREOF.

THE Prophet is here foretelling the diſgraces and calamities which GOD was then about to bring upon a ſinful People, at that time the moſt renowned for the wiſdom of their civil Policy.—*The Counſel of the wiſe Counſellors of Pharaoh is become bruti/h*, ſaith the Prophet: for the JUDGMENT was attended with all thoſe circumſtances of ſavage *brutality*, which moſt diſgrace Civil Wiſdom: *I will ſet* (ſays GOD) *the Egyptians againſt the Egyptians; and they ſhall fight every one againſt his Brother, and every one againſt his Neighbour; City againſt City, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom.* How great a reſemblance this denunciation of divine vengeance bears to the hiſtory of the grand Rebellion, every man, who is not an utter ſtranger to the moſt diſgraceful epoch of our

ſtory,

ſtory, will readily perceive; when *Brothers* of the ſame Houſe, and *Neighbours* of the ſame *City*, hoſtilely ſeparated into oppoſed Camps; when the Inhabitants of adjoining *Counties* divided, in mutual enmity, under their reſpective Leaders; and when the two *Kingdoms* of Scotland and Ireland renounced the protection of their common Sovereign, and inſulted and invaded his imperial crown. For when a breach is once made in a well-framed Conſtitution, perfected by the wiſdom, and regulated on the experience of ancient Policy, the confuſion which follows it is always more outrageous, and frequently more incurable, than diſorders ariſing in the looſer and leſs perfect Forms of Government.

The miſeries foretold in this Prophecy are repreſented as inflicted by the avenging hand of GOD.——*Behold the Lord rideth upon a ſwift cloud, and ſhall come into Egypt—The Lord ſhall ſmite Egypt.* The mercy which followed is equally repreſented as the work of his all-gracious hand—*He ſhall* SMITE *and* HEAL *it* *.

And thus, the total deſtruction of our Conſtitution, and the ſudden and ſurpriſing recovery of it, when things were moſt deſperate, have been ever conſidered, by ſerious men, as a manifeſt indication of the hand of GOD, which firſt in juſtice *ſmites*, and then, with equal mercy, *heals* and reſtores.

Indeed, all who believe the *moral government* of GOD, how much ſoever they may differ concerning his mode of adminiſtering it among Particulars, and how obſcure ſoever his ways may appear in the tracts of private life, yet concur to acknowledge and to revere his viſible interpoſition in the revolutions of States and Empires.

In the early years of this returning Solemnity, while mens thoughts and expreſſions were under the influence of recent paſſions; the whole of the celebration might not, perhaps, ſo well anſwer the ends of a public humiliation: when *Characters* on the one hand intemperately painted, and *Compariſons*, on the other,

* Ver. 22.

impiouſly

impiouſly invented, turned an act of Worſhip into a day of Contention. But theſe were the unruly workings of a ſtorm juſt then ſubſided. Time, which ſo generally corrupts other religious Rites, hath given a ſobriety and a purity to the returning celebrations of This.

And as Providence is commonly ſeen, even in its moſt uncommon Operations, to work by ſecond Cauſes, the ſagacity and prudence of thoſe who have of late ſupplied this Place, have been more uſefully employed in inveſtigating and collecting theſe Cauſes: From whence, more ſalutary leſſons may be gathered, for the uſe of civil life, than are to be met with in any Hiſtory of public revolutions, where mere human agency is ſuppoſed to have done moſt.

James the Iſt received the crown of England, with the ſeeming advantage, but indeed with the real inconvenience of ſucceeding to a line of imperious Monarchs, who, by a concurrence of various accidents, had been enabled to make bold incroachments on the liberty of the Subject, and the old genius of the Conſtitution. Theſe incroachments had been almoſt ſanctified by the regal glories of the laſt of that haughty race. But James, inſtead of providing againſt the impending miſchiefs of ſo critical a ſituation, when a new intereſt then riſing called loudly to ſet the balance even, took advantage of the Crown's over-weight, to advance thoſe occaſional acts of intemperate Prerogative into a regulated Syſtem of arbitrary power.

In theſe Myſteries of State he took early care to initiate his Son: who received them, when he came to the ſucceſſion, with much more good faith than they were delivered to him by his Father; and (as on that account it happened) with more fatal conſequences to himſelf. For, what was only Policy in James, became Religion in the Martyr Charles: and King-craft is made of much more ductile ſtuff than Church-bigotry; at leaſt it knows when to yield and when to act inflexibly; whereas the Policy which is *not of this world*, nor, I am afraid, of the *other*, is apt to do both, unſkilfully and perverſely.

perverſely. Thus James favoured the Hierarchy, as it was a buttreſs to the Crown; Charles revered it as the Ordinance of Heaven: The Son therefore, to preſerve the Order itſelf, fatally conſented to exclude the Biſhops from their ſeat in Parliament: but the Father would have avoided this error, and ſtopped the ruin in its firſt movement, ſince Biſhops out of Parliament, he knew, could be of little ſervice to his Prerogative. And, on the ſame principle, we may conclude, that, had he found them already out of Parliament, he would never have riſked his Crown for their perſervation. Yet this, the virtuous Son reſolved to do; and he ſtood the deſperate hazard with the greateſt complaiſancy of Conſcience.

If the civil rights of the People had for a long time been ill underſtood, or little regarded, the wonder was the leſs that the rights of Religion had been ſo groſsly violated. Theſe Princes held that all were to conform to the *Religion of the State*; and that, for every man to worſhip GOD in his own way, the Father thought was a factious, and the Son, an impious invaſion of the Supremacy.

Leaſt of all ſhall we think it ſtrange that, amidſt theſe errors in Government, neither of theſe Princes attended to that large acceſſion of property and power, which was ſilently, but rapidly, devolving on the People. So that by the time Charles was moſt intent to puſh forward his Father's deſpotic Syſtem, the People were become rich by a long commercial peace: and therefore leſs diſpoſed to bear, and more able to repel, what they deemed to be oppreſſion.

Under theſe circumſtances, for fourteen years together, they modeſtly and conſtitutionally proſecuted the Claim of their Rights, in the Courts of Juſtice and in the Courts of Legiſlature. They ſought redreſs by Law, but the fountain of Juſtice, by running through the Palace, was become corrupted. They ſought redreſs in Parliament, which was often obtained; but as often violated or evaded as it was obtained; till, at length, the very door of redreſs was ſhut againſt them, and a long remiſſion of Parliament deprived them

them of the laſt ſupport of the miſerable, the very *hope* of being relieved. For the ill-adviſed Sovereign choſe to reign without Parliaments; poor and needy, in the ſtile of a Cappadocian Monarch,

Mancipiis locuples, egens æris—

rather than be the opulent Head of a free and a free-giving People.

The Treaſury having been long exhauſted, and thus kept unrepleniſhed, all men foreſaw that on the leaſt commotion, whether at home or abroad, a Parliament would be forced upon the Court. And the *Country Party*, as it was called, did not neglect to accelerate this remedy, by taking advantage of the indiſcretions of a great Churchman, to kindle and inflame the liturgic heats in Scotland.

But as what was then called PURITANISM (which, in the ſubſequent confuſions, ſplit into many Sects of various denominations) was ſo intimately connected with this quarrel, and did ſo largely contribute to the confuſions it produced, it may not be improper juſt to recount its origine and progreſs; the claims it made, and the treatment it received.

In the early times of Reformation, unhappy ſcruples aroſe amongſt the Clergy concerning the *Government* of the national Church. But theſe captious men underſtood ſo little of religious rights, that they had no ſooner formed a Party, than they thought themſelves obliged in conſcience to overthrow the eſtabliſhed Hierarchy; and to erect what they called, the DISCIPLINE, in its place. Their firſt attack was by *remonſtrances to Parliament*: and when that failed, by entering into criminal cabals, to extort, what, they found, would not be readily given up to them. But this factious Spirit, meeting with the able and vigorous adminiſtration of Elizabeth, was timely ſuppreſſed; and the very attempt to diſturb ſo popular a Government brought upon them a general Odium.

And here, in paſſing, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that while theſe Engliſh PURITANS, who embraced the abominable opinion of Calvin concerning Predeſtination, were ſtruggling with the State for an *Eſtabliſhment*, the Dutch REMONSTRANTS, who were raiſed, at the ſame time, by Providence to free the Church of Chriſt from the impiety of this Doctrine, never contended for more than a *Toleration*.

Hitherto the fault lay entirely on their ſide; who, in a ſeditious way, aimed at more than was their due. But they paid dearly for their folly; for, in this unſucceſsful ſtruggle, they loſt, as is commonly the caſe in party-quarrels, what they had the beſt pretence to demand. For when their Enthuſiaſm, as a new Sect, was reaſonably abated, and their factious temper, as an old one, had been vigorouſly oppoſed; they ſeemed well content to accept what they had at firſt wantonly rejected. But, they now met with an exaſperated Government (too ready to return their inſults), which, inſtead of complying with this more ſober requeſt, enacted a number of penal ſtatutes, to compel their conformity to the eſtabliſhed Worſhip.

When James ſucceeded to the Crown of England, he came South with much prejudice againſt theſe *Diſciplinarians*; from whoſe Brethren in the North he had undergone the moſt ſcandalous indignities; ſo that he was ſufficiently indiſpoſed to remit or ſoften the rigour of theſe penal Laws. His Son deteſted the Puritans, as they were the declared enemies of his Favorite Prelacy; and therefore, throughout the former part of his reign, treated them with ſuch ſeverity, (the Laws having made their enemies their judges, or, at leaſt, their judges were become their enemies) that many of them abandoned their native Country for new ſettlements in America.

Mens civil and religious rights being thus equally trampled on, it is natural to believe, that, when the Country-intereſt firſt made head againſt the Court, the Patriots and the Puritans would meet half-

half-way, to act in concert againſt oppreſſive Authority: Their GRIEVANCES for violated rights, and, what is more, their PRINCIPLES in favour of the doctrine of reſiſtance, being preciſely the ſame.

And now, Religion and Liberty become the united cry, the fatal Scene began to open. The diſturbances in Scotland forced the King back upon Parliaments. The firſt he called was ready to reſtore the Conſtitution, and preſerve the rights of the Crown, when he unſkilfully diſſolved it. The next, into whoſe hands he fell, never remitted of their remorſeleſs vengeance till they had deſtroyed the King, the Conſtitution, and Themſelves.

It unfortunately happened, that the Sovereign's frequent breach of faith had made the Patriots ſo diffident of his Word, that they would find no ground on which to begin a reformation, but that whereon, if ever they became factious, they might erect a Tyranny of their own: I mean that fatal, unconſtitutional Law, which impowered the Parliament to ſit till it ſhould be pleaſed to diſſolve itſelf.

When this point was ſecured, they began indeed as if they had no other intention than to reform thoſe groſs enormities of Prerogative, which had well nigh overturned our free Conſtitution, and rendered it deſpotic. And in this generous labour the greateſt and wiſeſt in thoſe two auguſt aſſemblies heartily concurred: All they who afterwards became the temporary Guard and moſt ſhining Ornament of that unhappy Monarch's military Court. And what was ineffectual to the ſafety of their Maſter; they gained for themſelves that laſting glory in the records of Hiſtory, which diſintereſted Virtue only can procure.

The King had now made ample ſatisfaction for all his former miſcarriages: And our free State was fully vindicated, in a regular and parliamentary way. The two Houſes had now obtained all the ſecurity for the enjoyment of their recovered rights, which the nature of the Conſtitution would afford; and were, therefore, in all

reaſon, now to perform their promiſes, of " making the King, as ſoon as he ſhould be pleaſed to give them this ſecurity, *the greateſt and moſt glorious Monarch of his time.*"

But the King made his conceſſions with ſo ill a grace, that they only ſerved to remind the Public of his former breaches of faith, and to revive their diffidence in the royal Word.

This ſupplied the Demagogues of the Houſe with a ſhew of neceſſity for ſome *further ſecurity* againſt the King's return to his old mode of Government. But all, which, by the nature of the Conſtitution, could be given, had been given already. Yet this would not induce theſe men to deſiſt: they held it pardonable if they themſelves made *one breach* in the Conſtitution, when it was to prevent the Crown from ever making more; and therefore, with great confidence in their Cauſe, they demanded the MILITIA.

When Charles, who, till now, kept granting all they required, had got them at this advantage, the making *breaches* in the Conſtitution (the very thing which gave them all their credit againſt him), he ſuddenly ſtopt ſhort. He found himſelf in a condition to divide the People with them; and, what was more to his reputation, to draw the wiſer and worthier part of the Parliament along with him. An appeal was now made to the Sword, and a war immediately enſued.

At this ſad period, when *Patriotiſm* had degenerated into *Faction*, the King for once acted ably, and ſeized the lucky opportunity of putting his Parliament in the wrong.

And in the wrong they ſurely were. Yet, in the majority of thoſe who demanded this *unconſtitutional* ſecurity, there was not any formed deſign againſt the Monarchy, it was rather an ill-timed proviſion and overcare for their own ſafety *.

* One who perhaps had this formed deſign ſpeaks the very ſenſe of thoſe who had it not, in theſe words—if a war of this nature muſt be determined by treaty, &c. Ludlow, fol. ed. p. 52, at the top.

I ſuppoſe

I ſuppoſe it to be a truth unqueſtioned in Politics, "That the "UTMOST SECURITY which a Conſtitution can give for the obſer-"vance of a public regulation, is a GOOD SECURITY." The indemnity of Particulars, the private ſafety of Thoſe who extorted theſe royal conceſſions, is another matter. The Patriots plainly underſtood they had mortally offended a vindictive King; for though the Martyr could forgive, yet the Monarch was of a different temper; and that, ſooner or later, they or their families might fall a ſacrifice to his reſentments: For well they knew, that, although the People would be ſtill likely enough to interpoſe in behalf of *Patriotiſm* againſt the violation of Parliamentary Eſtabliſhments; yet there were ſmall hopes that they would ever be brought to move in Court quarrels, on the private complaints of the *Patriots*.

This was Policy, indeed; but a Policy diſclaimed by Public Virtue. For when the queſtion is reduced to this, whoſe intereſt is to take place; that of the Public, or of Particulars? the *true* Patriot will not heſitate in his choice. But the *Falſe* did here, what is the eſſential of his Policy to do, he covered his own intereſt under that of the Public: and being well perſuaded that himſelf was in danger, he endeavoured to perſuade others, that the Conſtitution was ſo likewiſe. And he was but too ſucceſsful in the impoſition.

This may ſeem ſtrange; for nothing is more placable than a provoked People, when they have brought their Governors to reaſon. But we muſt remember, the Patriots had a powerful Ally in this quarrel; who having yet received no ſatisfaction at all, were well diſpoſed, and at the ſame time well able, by the nature of their Profeſſion, to keep up the rage and apprehenſions of the People. This neglect of their ſo truſty Coadjutors may, at firſt ſight, appear ſtill more ſtrange; That they, who had united in a common quarrel; whoſe ſeveral rights had been alike invaded; who had laboured under equal ſufferings; and who, from their firſt confederacy, had ſerved the CAUSE with equal zeal and ſucceſs; that of theſe con-

federated

federated Parties, the One ſhould have gained every thing which Patriots could deſire, and the Other only (which, but to the malice of a Puritan, could be no ſatisfaction at all) the excluſion of the Biſhops from their ſeat in Parliament. For what leſs could be expected, when the *Patriots* had procured the abolition of illegal and tyrannic Courts; a Declaration of the People's Rights; and a triennial Parliament; than that the *Puritans* ſhould recover, what the law of nature itſelf had given them, a full Toleration for their *Diſcipline* and mode of worſhip? But ſo little was this part of natural law underſtood, that it is very probable, had a *Toleration* been demanded by the Patriots, the King and his Divines would have broken with the Parliament on that point, juſt as they afterwards did, on the abolition of Epiſcopacy. It is very certain, that had the King offered a *Toleration* to the Puritans, they would have rejected it on the very ſame principle: For it was an axiom in the Theology of both, THAT TO CONNIVE AT ERROR WAS TO PARTAKE IN THE GUILT OF IT. Hence the King was naturally inclined to perſecute Sectaries; and the Puritans to overturn Eſtabliſhments. Now, things being in this train, when the Patriots, anxious for themſelves, as before for the Public, inſiſted on further ſecurity for the royal conceſſions, they found an eaſy way of bringing the Puritans (who as yet had gained nothing) into their meaſures; which was, by making one of their *unconſtitutional ſecurities* to be, the ABOLITION of EPISCOPACY.

But the ſword was already drawn; and not in behalf of the CONSTITUTION on either ſide; for the King, who now profeſſed to defend it, ſtill miſtook his own Adminiſtration for it; and the Parliament, which levied war on a point *unconſtitutional*, was ſoon governed by men who profeſſed to overthrow it; ſo that the ſword was not likely to be ſheathed, till Tyranny on the one hand, or Anarchy on the other, had introduced a new ſpecies of ſlaughter in place of the old; and Judicial murders had ſucceeded to the Military.

It

It is true, that in the courſe of this mutual carnage, each Party, in its turn, offered and accepted propoſals for peace. But this was not from any real deſire or hope of obtaining it, but to cajole the People to whom that ſide would have been extreme odious, which had appeared averſe to laying down their arms. However, partly through the experienced calamities of war, and partly from mens better knowledge of one another, by means of thoſe reciprocal meſſages for peace, the better ſort of Courtiers grew more averſe to deſpotic rule, and the honeſter Patriots more diſguſted with popular devices; which might have produced ſome good effect, had not theſe dawnings of returning ſenſe and ſobriety been ſuddenly overcaſt by the unexpected appearance of a New Party, riſing out of the ferment of the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE; A ſwarm of armed Enthuſiaſts, who out-witted the Patriots, out-prayed the Puritans, and out-fought the Cavaliers; and, with the moſt rapid progreſs, overturned and deſolated all before them, in their extreme haſte to ſet up the fifth Monarchy of King Jeſus.

Thus fell the unhappy King in a popular ſtorm; raiſed, indeed, by himſelf; but inflamed by his enemies, even after he had corrected the diſorder of thoſe unruly Elements which gave it birth, and were now ready, as he ſaw too late, to bear down all things in their courſe.

The King had many Virtues, but all, of ſo unſociable a complexion as to do him neither ſervice nor credit.

His *Religion*, in which he was ſincerely zealous, was over-run with Scruples: and the ſimplicity, if not the purity, of his *Morals*, was debaſed by Caſuiſtry.

His *natural affections* (a rare virtue in that high ſtation) were ſo exceſſive as to render him a ſlave to all his Kin: and his *ſocial*, ſo moderate as only to enable him to lament, not to preſerve his friends and ſervants.

His *Knowledge* was extenſive, though not exact: and his *Courage* clear, though not keen: yet his Modeſty far ſurpaſſing his magnanimity,

nimity, his *Knowledge* only made him obnoxious to the doubts of his more ignorant Miniſters: and his *Courage*, to the irreſolution of his leſs adventurous Generals.

In a word, his Princely qualities were neither great enough nor bad enough to ſucceed in that moſt difficult of all attempts, the enſlaving a free and jealous People.

The full conviction of this truth made LAUD (who was not ſo deſpicable a Politician as we commonly ſuppoſe him) upon ſeeing his Coadjutor, STRAFFORD, led out to ſlaughter, lament his fate in theſe emphatic and indignant words,—*He ſerved a Prince who knew not how to be, nor to be made, Great* *.

The execrable Parricide which followed, cannot, indeed, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, be charged upon the Patriots and Puritans; who, when it was too late, did all in their power to prevent it: However, without changing the nature of things, they cannot be totally acquitted of that horrid impiety; ſince their rejecting, from ſelfiſh and perverſe motives, the full reparation the King had made to the *Public*, becauſe he would not agree to an *unconſtitutional ſecurity* for THEMSELVES, was the unavoidable occaſion of all the miſchiefs that enſued. For though no man ſhall be made to anſwer for the evils which, through human perverſity, ariſe from the faithful diſcharge of his duty: yet no caſuiſtry will acquit him, even of the undeſigned miſchiefs which ſpring naturally from his unjuſt purſuits †.

* Hiſtory of his own Life and Troubles, p. 178.

† Col. Axtel, one of the Regicides, ſaid at the Gallows,—"I muſt truly tell you "that before theſe late wars, it pleaſed the Lord to call me by his grace, *through the* "*work of the* MINISTRY; and afterwards keeping a day of humiliation in faſting and "prayer with MR. SAMUEL ASH, MR. LOVE, MR. WOODCOCK, and other MINISTERS "in *Laurence Lane*, they did ſo clearly ſtate the cauſe of the Parliament, that I was "fully convinced in my own conſcience of the *juſtneſs of the war*, and thereupon en- "gaged in the Parliament ſervice, which (as I did and do believe) was the CAUSE OF "THE LORD; I ventured my life freely for it, and now DYE FOR IT." State Tryals, vol. II. 3d ed. p. 415.

Theſe

Theſe confuſions kept increaſing, under different Forms, each more ridiculous or more horrid than the other, till this miſerable Nation, now become the ſcorn and opprobrium of the whole Earth, at length grew tired, rather than aſhamed, of its repeated follies. In this temper they haſtily recalled the Heir of the Monarchy: And as the cauſe of all their miſeries had been the inſiſting on unreaſonable conditions from the Crown, they did like men driven out of one extreme, who never take breath till they have plunged themſelves into another, they ſtrove to atone for their unjuſt demands upon the virtuous Father by the moſt laviſh conceſſions to his flagitious Son; who ſucceeded to the Inheritance with all thoſe advantages of an undefined Prerogative, which an ambitious Prince could wiſh for the foundation of an arbitrary Syſtem. A ſad preſage to the Friends of Liberty, that their generous labours were not yet at an end! Indeed, within leſs than half a century, the old family-projects, taken up again by the two laſt princes of this line, revived the public quarrel. But it was conducted under happier Auſpices, not by the aſſiſtance of SECTARIES, but by the NATIONAL CHURCH: and concluded in the final eſtabliſhment of a free Conſtitution.

And now, to reflect a little on this melancholy Story. Never did Piety and Politics, in their friendly aſſociation for the public ſervice, project any thing more uſeful to Church and State, than the inſtitution of this annual Solemnity; which ſerves to keep awake an awful ſenſe of Providence, to create an abhorrence of licentiouſneſs, and to cheriſh a generous but ſober affection for Liberty.

Nor was there ever any period in the Engliſh Story ſo fruitful of important Leſſons for the uſe of civil Life as that which, with ſo much ſhame, we now commemorate; and which, but for this uſe, the wiſdom of Government would, I conceive, have, long ago, buried in oblivion.

Of the various inſtructions, which both PATRIOTS and MINISTERS may gather from theſe crimes and follies of our Forefathers,

I ſhall beg leave but juſt to mention two or three of the moſt important.

I. The PATRIOT may learn, from the *immediate* cauſe of the War, that when, at any time, his brave and ſucceſsful ſtruggles for his Country have reſtored again the diſordered balance of power in a free Community, he may learn, I ſay, to be content with that Security for the enjoyment of his labours which the nature of the Conſtitution affords; and not think of demanding ſuch branches of the Prerogative in hoſtage, which, if given, would deſtroy that very balance, for the preſervation of which, he pretends to require them. On this rock the Patriots of that time ran; which caſt them, ſtript of their popularity, on the unfaithful and abandoned ground of their Adverſaries: For what material difference is there between acting UNCONSTITUTIONALLY for the ſake of monarchic power, and acting thus for the ſake of popular? And whenever the Patrons of liberty ſhall give this advantage to the Enemies of it, as much of that popularity which the firſt loſe, the other will gain; and ſo, the conteſt becoming more equal, *Force* alone muſt decide: which cannot but end in the ruin of the Conſtitution, after it is become a principle with both, to alter and unſettle it.

II. The PATRIOT may learn from the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE, to beware of all innovations not ſtrictly *conſtitutional*, how right ſoever they may appear to the friends of Juſtice, or equal to the friends of Liberty. And could any thing be more ſpecious than that fair diſtribution of power and profit, in what was called the NEW MODEL? The members of the two Houſes had ingroſſed to themſelves all the poſts and offices in the Military. This raiſed ſuſpicions amongſt their people, that men who got ſo greatly by the war would never be very forward to put an end to it. Hereupon the Parliament, in a fit of affected generoſity, paſſed an *Ordinance*, which ſeparated the intereſts of the two bodies, by not permitting a Member of either Houſe to receive a Commiſſion in the Army.

Army. But what was the effect of this ſeparation? A deluge of independent Republicans broke at once into that Camp, which was formed, or pretended to be formed, for the *defence of King and Parliament.* Such was the ſad iſſue of an UNCONSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENCE ariſing from the *new model!* And all this was, to avoid the imaginary danger of a *dependence* ſtrictly *conſtitutional:* that is, a *dependence* of the parts, on one another; a *dependence* as neceſſary for the regular motions of the civil machine of free Government, as any the like ſubordinate combinations in phyſical or artificial bodies.

I. Again, MINISTERS OF STATE may learn, from the faults of Charles's adminiſtration, not to diſpenſe with the royal Word for the ſake of ſome preſent convenience; which (beſides the public miſchiefs that attend the violation of a thing ſo ſacred) is indeed the cancelling THEIR OWN beſt ſecurity. When the King's ableſt ſervant had, in the great wants of the Treaſury, encouraged his Maſter to break his faith, ſo often pledged to his Parliament, never more to exert any of thoſe branches of baleful Prerogative, which they had ſo often fulminated; he little ſuſpected that he was opening the way to his own ruin, by habituating his royal Maſter to think ſlightly of his promiſes, in the number of which was protection to himſelf. And when he underſtood the whole ſeverity of his fate, which this policy had brought upon him, it was with no good grace that he exclaimed, *Put not your truſt in Princes, for there is no* FAITH *in them.*

II. Another leſſon MINISTERS OF STATE may learn from the tranſactions of thoſe times, of no leſs importance to their Maſter's intereſt, and their own honour, which is, never in their Sovereign's diſtreſſes to throw their own miſcarriages upon Him, and to turn all his graces upon themſelves. A faithful ſervant to his Prince (and ſuch a one the two Charles's had) will procure friends for his Maſter; and provide for himſelf only through his Maſter's favour: ſuch a Servant will give honeſt Counſels; yet if others be followed, he will excuſe, with all his wit and au-

thority, the ſhare his Maſter had in promoting them. But it w the hard fate of the Martyr Charles to be commonly ſerved by Miniſters ſo ungenerous, that they were the firſt to decry unſucceſsful Counſels though given by themſelves, and to throw them upon the obſtinacy, the bigotry, and the uxorious folly of the Sovereign. A baſeneſs of conduct which contributed as much to make the King odious to the Public, as all the intrigues of the Long Parliament. It is no wonder that theſe unfaithful Servants took the advantage of his misfortunes to preſs him for dignities and places of truſt and power, at a time when ſuch things afforded little benefit to themſelves, yet were of infinite diſſervice to their Maſter. For theſe ill-timed honours exaſperated the perſonal enmities of the Leaders in Parliament againſt theſe Miniſters, and indiſpoſed them to any terms of accommodation with the King: For they had reaſonably laid their account to ſhare with the Courtiers, in the Sovereign's good graces, whenever a Peace ſhould be brought about: but now they were made deſperate, by finding that the King had nothing left to give.

In the laſt place, I would obſerve, that this ſtruggle between King and Parliament, before each ſide flew to Arms, will ſerve to confirm a general truth of much importance to all Parties, That, in civil contentions, the OPPOSITION (to uſe a modern term) is much apter to degenerate into faction, than a MINISTRY to run into deſpotic meaſures. For the very attempt to decry an Adminiſtration, will, by degrees, render it ſage; but the application of *miniſterial* power againſt an *Oppoſition*, makes *Oppoſition* popular at once; and popularity preſently runs into licence. Thus, in fact, it happened here. Before either ſide had taken the field, the King's Adminiſtration was grown public-ſpirited, and the Parliament was become a Faction.

To conclude all, Let no lover of his Country be too ready to take ſcandal at the contentions to which free States are ſo obnoxious. Civil commotions have the ſame uſe, in the moral world, that

ſtormy

ſtormy and tempeſtuous ſeaſons have in the phyſical. In the ſtagnation of a continued calm, the beſt ſyſtem ſickens and decays; but theſe periodic agitations ſtifle corruption in the ſeed, give new vigour to the languid Conſtitution, and enable the vital Principles of it to perform their deſtined operations. It is true, indeed, when a ſtorm is let looſe upon either Syſtem, it ravages and deſtroys what it was meant to ſupport and actuate. The *Syſtem of Nature* has the Providence of God to curb the blind violence of ſtubborn matter, which elſe, in the impetuoſity of its courſe, would ſoon reduce itſelf to its former Chaos. The *Political Syſtem* has nothing but the Providence of Government to ſuſtain it againſt its own fury, from falling into Anarchy. But the Providence of Government is weak and bounded; and needeth all the aſſiſtance of good ſubjects to ſtrengthen its hands, and enforce obedience to its inſulted Authority. It was the rejection of this ſalutary duty in ſome, and the careleſs diſcharge of it in others, which, at the fatal period we now commemorate, was the laſt cauſe of all the deſolation that enſued.

SERMON

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

INCORPORATED SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS;

ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1766.

SERMON III.

REVELATION of St. JOHN, chap. x. ver. 11.

AND HE SAID UNTO ME, THOU MUST PROPHESY AGAIN, BEFORE MANY PEOPLES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES, AND KINGS.

GO *and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt,* was the great Commiſſion intruſted by our Divine Maſter to his Diſciples. And we know how faithfully they diſcharged their truſt; theſe latter ages of extended Commerce having diſcovered the moſt evident marks and traces of their footſteps, in every Region, how remote ſoever, of the then known World.

But there was a NEW WORLD to be diſcloſed, another Hemiſphere to be explored; though reſerved for thoſe daring Adventurers who in theſe later times have pierced through the trackleſs waſte of the great Atlantic Ocean.

And for this Orphaned World the holy Spirit made the like charitable proviſion.—Where the future fortunes of the Church, from its

humble Cradle to its inthronization in glory, are foretold to St. John, in a regular ſeries of Prophetic viſions, enigmatically repreſented, the Apoſtle ſees *a mighty angel deſcend from Heaven*; *a rainbow ſurrounding his head*; *his face like the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire* *. In this ſo graphical a deſcription of the Son of God, cloathed in all the pomp and majeſty of his Father, the *attitude* is moſt obſervable; *His* RIGHT FOOT WAS ON THE SEA, *and his left on the Earth* †: An attitude expreſſive of his ready Providence addreſſed, in the fullneſs of time, to unveil this NEW WORLD ſo long concealed in the boſom of the Deep; and pointing out to his Church the religious uſe that was to be made of this diſcovery. For the angel having *ſworn* (which denotes the revelation to be a matter of high importance) and intimated (by the words, *there ſhall be time no longer*) that the conſideration of time is not to be taken in ‡, the Subject being of a diſtant period; he addreſſes himſelf to St. John, who here repreſents the *Church*, in the words of my text—*Thou muſt propheſy* AGAIN *before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and Kings*.—As much as to ſay, "The Church hath been faithful to her great Truſt, in all things which have been hitherto in her power to diſcharge. But a time will come, when this mighty labour, ſo ſucceſsfully undergone, in the converſion of the *Old World*, is to be repeated in the *New*. For the Church muſt PROPHESY AGAIN, or preach the Goſpel for the *ſecond time* to many new-diſcovered People and Nations." *To propheſy*, ſignifying here what it does in many other Places of the New Teſtament, to preach the glad tidings of the Goſpel.

Hence it appears, that to preach the Goſpel to the *new World* when diſcovered, is not a mere act of ſimple Charity, but a work of indiſpenſable duty.

The providential Diſcovery was at length made; and though, in itſelf, replete with all the ſeeds of temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſings, yet was it the immediate occaſion of the moſt infernal miſchiefs.

* Rev. chap. x. ver. 1.

† Ver. 2.

‡ ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. v. 6.

For

For as in the *old* World the Devil ſtept in to intercept the firſt fruits of Creation due to the all-bounteous Author, ſo was it, in the *new:* While, under the maſk of Religion, if ever Popery might be ſaid to wear that maſk, the Evil One excited his Agents to deſolate this late-diſcovered Continent, by the butchery and ſacrifice of millions; and all, for having more gold than they knew how to uſe, and more Land than they knew how to cultivate. But while theſe *Dogs of Hell were crying havock*, and the Inhabitants of the *new* World on the brink of extirpation, God raiſed up his choſen Inſtruments in the *old* to reſtore Chriſtianity to its health and purity, then labouring in its laſt pangs under popiſh tyranny and ſuperſtition. For the Goſpel, long ſequeſtered and ſhut up, was of neceſſity to be known again before it could be *preached* AGAIN. The REFORMATION OF RELIGION once more opened this living Source. And then it was that the Senſe of my Text became apparent; and that the Church firſt addreſſed itſelf to this undertaking.

Nor was this the only benefit. The Church of Rome itſelf, in order to ſupport its ſhaken uſurpation, was obliged in this, as in other palliations of its abuſes, to vie with us in the diſcharge of this *ſecond Miſſion*, in which our venerable Corporation has borne ſo large a Share.

I am but little acquainted with the hiſtory of its pious Eſtabliſhment; but I reaſonably ſuppoſe it to have been founded in obedience to this SECOND CALL: and, conſequently, that the peculiar objects of its exalted Charity were the barbarous Americans, ſo long kept hid *in the Shadow of Death.*

I. Our Colonies, indeed, opened the Door to this ſpiritual Enterprize; and were, in reaſon, to be paid for their pains with ſome portion of the heavenly Manna; not ſo much for relief of their own wants, as for the wants of their Poſterity. Our Colonies were formed and firſt peopled by religious and conſcientious men; who, made uneaſy at home by their intolerant Brethren, left the *Old World*, to enjoy, in peace, that firſt and chief prerogative of Man,

the free worſhip of God according to his own Conſcience: At one time PURITANS driven over by the Epiſcopal Church; at another, CHURCHMEN forced thither by the Preſbyterian Faction; juſt as the revolutions of State threw the civil power into one or the other hand. For it muſt be remembered (though to the opprobrium of humanity) that, of all the errors of that Antichriſtian Church from which the GOSPELLERS were, with deriſion, expelled, this moſt abominable of all, PERSECUTION FOR OPINIONS, ſtuck the faſteſt; and after having tarniſhed the ſplendor of almoſt every Proteſtant Community in its turn, was the lateſt, and with moſt difficulty, ſhaken off.

Now, amongſt the general *Wants* of new Colonies, compoſed of ſuch kind of Men, RELIGION is rarely one. Of this our Coloniſts carried over an ample Cargo; ſufficient for themſelves and their Poſterity: and might therefore have been ſafely left to live upon their own Stock.

So that had this been all, our important Miſſion had not ſtopped at the Door, but only taken advantage of its opening, to addreſs ourſelves directly to the *Gentiles*.

But though the zeal of the firſt Coloniſts (rekindled by this violent remove to the other Hemiſphere) kept Religion alive and active, yet their Poverty diſabled them from ſupplying fuel to the vital flame; I mean, proviſion for A PREACHING MINISTRY. Inſomuch, that, without the kindly aſſiſtance of their Mother-Country, this new Chriſtian-Commonwealth had been, as the Roman hiſtorian expreſſes it of the imperial City in its Cradle, *Res unius Ætatis*. Againſt this danger, a timely aid was to be provided. And the Founders of our Society not being *Fanatics*, would not intruſt the care to *Fanatics*: a People always ready, yet never fitted for one of theſe ſpiritual Enterprizes, indeed, ſo forward as to go out upon a *ſecond call*, naked and pennyleſs like thoſe holy men, who, with the large viaticum of Miracles, went out upon the *firſt*. It was thought fit therefore to aſſign a decent maintenance for theſe late labourers in the Lord's Vineyard; who, having *ſtood all the day*

day idle, were called, at the *laſt hour*, to their work. To this the Charter of Incorporation alludes; where, ſpeaking of the purpoſe of the Society to appoint Miſſionaries to the Colonies, it adds—*which, by reaſon of their poverty, are deſtitute and unprovided of a* MAINTENANCE *for Miniſters, and the public worſhip of God.*

This purpoſe hath been hitherto ſoberly purſued: our Miſſionaries to America having carefully avoided the Conduct of thoſe of Rome, into the Levant; whoſe principal deſign hath hitherto been to reduce the diſtreſſed Churches of Greece and Aſia to a ſubmiſſion to the Papal-Tyranny.

Notwithſtandig this ſage and decent conduct, certain of the Colonies, where the Eſtabliſhed Church is *Preſbyterian*, and ſtill in its antient ſpirit of PURITY, have taken offence at our Miſſion exerciſed in their quarters, though only for the ſervice of the diſperſed Members of the *Epiſcopal* Church, reſiding amongſt them.

Such a behaviour in a People, where wealth and Civil Faction have, as uſual, inflamed religious zeal, is enough to remind us of that criſis, when the Diſciples of *Jeſus* are directed *to ſhake off the duſt of their feet for a teſtimony againſt them.*

Nor would ſuch a Seceſſion lead us from the proper buſineſs of the SOCIETY. For though a Miſſion to the Colonies was firſt in the execution, yet, as appears from what hath been ſaid, it was only ſecondary in the original Scheme.

Here, then, we might well leave theſe contentious People to themſelves, did not a miſerable circumſtance ſtill call for our rejected Charity: I mean, the ſpreading GENTILISM in the Colonies themſelves. Not a brutal ignorance of God, as amongſt the ſavage Natives; but a blaſphemous contempt of his holy Diſpenſations, amongſt our *Philoſophic Coloniſts*. The Origine of which folly was, however, no more than this——

The rich product of the Plantations ſoon ſupplied the Coloniſts with all the *conveniencies of life*. And men are no ſooner at their eaſe, than they are ready addreſſed to pleaſure. So that the ſecond Venture of our Coloniſts was for the *luxuries of ſocial life:* amongſt which,

which, the Commodity called FREETHINKING was carefully conſigned to them, as that which would give a reliſh and ſeaſoning to all the reſt. For in this cloſe union of Senſe and Reaſon in our Nature, the Man is at unreſt, till each part be properly accommodated. While the body is content with a temperate enjoyment of its appropriated Good, the mind finds its pleaſure in the purſuit of Knowledge, and in the practice of Virtue. But when the body plunges into the luxury of Senſe, the mind will extravagate through all the regions of a viciated Imagination. And theſe corporeal and intellectual Vices ſupporting one another, the ravages they make of Humanity are not to be controlled.

Thus it came to paſs, that the very People, whoſe Fathers were driven for Conſcience-ſake into *the waſte and howling Wilderneſs*, is now as ready to laugh at that BIBLE, the moſt precious relick of their ruined Fortunes, as at their Ruffs and Collar-bands.

Againſt this outrageous Folly (the ſure prognoſtic of a falling State) the deareſt Charity requires us to oppoſe all our ſpiritual endeavours, before we go on upon the great Duty to which we are ſummoned in my text.

II. This brings me to that point, which I next propoſed to conſider, *Our Miſſion to the Gentiles.* And here, in entering on the ſubject, it may not be unuſeful to obſerve the advantages which Popery hath over the Reformed, in training up their Labourers to this Harveſt. For we ſhould be unjuſt to ROME not to acknowledge its zeal to be equal to that of other Churches, in diſplaying the Chriſtian Banner throughout the habitable world.

To ſee their advantages in a true light, we ſhould conſider what are the proper qualifications of one of theſe *Soldiers of Chriſt*—What he is diſpoſed to do, and what he is ready to ſuffer, in this religious warfare, amongſt Heathens, whether civilized or barbarous—He muſt have an ardent zeal and unwearied diligence; Appetites ſubdued to all the diſtreſſes of want, and a Mind ſuperior to all the terrors of mortality.

Now,

Now, theſe qualities and habits, their ſeveral *Orders of Religious* (from whence their Miſſionaries are taken) very early labour to inculcate. One quality is more deeply implanted by *this* Order, another by *that*; and the moſt neceſſary and eſſential are formed in *all:* thus all the monaſtic Inſtitutions kindle and keep alive that exalted charity which ends in a Self-ſacrifice for the ſalvation of our Brother.

The JESUITES ſubdue the Will by the ſevere diſcipline of blind obedience: to ſtand wherever they are placed, and to run whereever they are called. The CARTHUSIANS ſubdue the Appetites by a tedious courſe of bodily labours and mortifying abſtinences: and the Order called THE CONGREGATION OF ST. PAUL, ſubdues the whole man: For, in a ſenſe as peculiar to them as to their holy Patron, they *die daily*; the obſervance of their whole rule conſiſting in one continued meditation on the King of Terrors.

Nor is this all. The ſeveral *Orders*, like Workmen who travel ſeparately on the various parts of the ſame Machine, each of them to be diſpoſed by the Maſter-Artiſt, in its proper place and to its deſtined uſe; the *Orders*, I ſay, ſend their ſubjects, thus prepared, to the *College* DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, to receive their laſt finiſhing, by inſtruction in the Languages, the Manners and the Cuſtoms of the barbarous Nations, to whoſe converſion they are appointed and addreſſed. And, indeed, without ſo long and regular a preparation, it is not in Nature, whatever Grace may effect, for any man chearfully, and, at the ſame time, ſoberly to undergo all the accumulated diſtreſſes, ever ready to overtake a faithful Miſſionary.

For want of theſe advantages, a Proteſtant Society, like ours, hath been too frequently obliged to take up with ſubjects from amongſt men of ruined fortunes; ſuch, whoſe impotency of mind have ſhewn them unable to bear either Poverty or Riches. Or elſe from amongſt heated Zealots, totally unqualified for every ſober and important work.

And, indeed, when we conſider the greatneſs of our wants in this kind, we ſhould be tempted to wiſh for a COLLEGE, deſtined

for

for the ſupplial of a ſufficient number of able Miſſionaries in conſtant ſucceſſion, brought up, from their early youth, in ſuch a diſcipline as may be judged beſt fitted for ſuch a ſervice. And here it may not be impertinent to obſerve, that ſhould the Governors of that famous UNIVERSITY, to which a munificent Benefactor hath bequeathed a large eſtate for the erection of a NEW COLLEGE, be at a loſs to execute his intention in ſuch a manner as may give new vigour to the decayed Spirit of Learning and Religion, they may find, in a COLLEGE DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, an eſtabliſhment which would interfere with no other, and would give additional ſanctity to all the reſt.

Having premiſed thus much, I come more directly to *Our Miſſion to the Gentiles*; conſidered in obedience to the Command, to *Propheſy* AGAIN *before many peoples and nations*; that is to ſay, Barbarians *bond and free*. Theſe latter, the Aborigines of the Country, Savages without Law or Religion, are the principal Objects of our Charity. Their temporal, as well as ſpiritual, condition, calls loudly for our aſſiſtance; and more eſpecially as *civilizing*, will be found a neceſſary ſtep to *converſion*.

The benevolent Spirit of Antiquity, which ſet their Heroes and Law-givers on reforming the ſavage manners of their barbarous Neighbours, and communicating to them the bleſſings of CIVIL-LIFE, as divine as it appears, hath been yet outdone in the Charity of theſe later times, which ſends Miſſionaries amongſt the wild inhabitants of the new World, with the greater bleſſing of the Goſpel. But the conſtant ill ſucceſs of this glorious Undertaking, hath been a long time matter of grief to all good men. Something therefore muſt needs be much amiſs, to defeat a purpoſe which Grace and Nature conſpire to advance. And, if we ſearch carefully into it, we ſhall find it to be this, *the preaching of it to ſavage and brutal Men.* For the GOSPEL, plain and ſimple as it is, and fitted in its nature for what it was ordained to effect, requires an intellect ſomething above that of a Savage to apprehend. Nor is it at all to the diſhonour of our holy Faith, that ſuch a one muſt be taught a previous

previous Leſſon; and firſt of all inſtructed in the *emollient arts of life.* And it is not one of the leaſt benefits of SOCIETY that, at the time it teaches us to improve every bodily accommodation, it enlarges and enlightens the underſtanding by the activity which the mind exerciſes in improving thoſe accommodations.

For want of this previous culture, it hath happened, that when, by the unwearied labour of the Miſſionary, numbers of theſe Savages have been baptized into the Faith, ſuch Converts have never long preſerved, nor were they able to propagate among their Tribes, the *Chriſtianity* they had been taught; but ſucceſſive Miſſions have found, the work was ever to begin anew.

From whence we conclude, that they ſet out at the wrong end; for, to make the Goſpel *underſtood*, much more to propagate and eſtabliſh it, theſe Barbarians ſhould have been firſt taught the *civil arts of life.* And, indeed, to civilize a barbarous People is, in itſelf, a work of ſuch exalted charity, that to find it neglected, when a further and far nobler end than the *arts of life* may be procured by it, is matter of infinite aſtoniſhment.

We juſtly cenſure the Popiſh Miſſionaries for their ill-directed zeal in propagating a *Commentitious Goſpel*, for pure and genuine Chriſtianity. But then we muſt be ſo fair to confeſs that, in the preparatory part of their Miſſion, their conduct and addreſs have been ſo humane and rational, as to be well worthy of our imitation. Nor need this give ſcandal to any good Proteſtant. Our great Maſter himſelf hath recommended to the *Children of light* the Example of the *Children of this World*, becauſe, ſays he, *theſe are wiſer in their generation*; that is, they are more ſkilful than the *Children of light*, in ADAPTING MEANS TO ENDS.

This learned Audience eaſily underſtands that, by the *Children of this World*, I mean the JESUITES: they are emphatically ſo. Now theſe men have, both in South and North America, ſucceſsfully practiſed the method I here preſume to recommend: which is, firſt of all, to CIVILIZE the ſubjects of our Miſſion. The ſteps they took to effect this great purpoſe were no leſs judicious than the pro-

ject itſelf was noble and benevolent. They began with teaching the Savages the Art of AGRICULTURE; of all the civil arts, the moſt eſſential, as it ſooneſt reduces men from a roving wandering life into ſettled habitations, the firſt great bond of the Social State. The Provinces of *Paraguay* and the Iſland of *California* do, for this bleſſing, proclaim them the Benefactors of Mankind. And had they but taught the ETERNAL GOSPEL in its *purity*, at the time they taught the tranſitory arts of life in their *integrity*, they would have deſerved all the praiſe, and much of the Power they aſpired to.

But in all this affair, the awful Juſtice of Providence on the Inſtruments is no leſs conſpicuous than his Bleſſing on the Work; which, when conſidered together, will afford an uſeful warning to Mankind.

This SOCIETY OF JESUS, as is too well known, had, from their very firſt eſtabliſhment, in direct oppoſition to the profeſſed end of their inſtitution, and in defiance of the ſacred name they had aſſumed, immerged themſelves in the worſt part of civil intrigues; which they carried on in ſo flagitious a manner, that there is hardly a Court in Chriſtendom (into moſt of which they had inſinuated themſelves) where they have not left manifeſt traces of their Antichriſtian Politics, in ſeditions and aſſaſſinations, ſanctified and ſupported on the two main pillars of their ſyſtem, *relaxed Morals* and *Papal Omnipotency*.

At length, after having rioted in theſe diſorders for a century and an half, they conceived, either out of humanity or avarice, the noble project of civilizing the inland Inhabitants of South America; whom the Spaniards and Portugueſe, on the Eaſt and Weſt, had, by their diabolic treatment, rendered ſo outrageous againſt their Perſecutors, that the fierceſt beaſts of prey were a more deſireable neighbourhood.

In this condition the Miſſionary Jeſuites found theſe perſecuted Indians: and, for the eaſe and ſafety (as they pretended) of the Chriſtian Colonies on each ſide, they ſat upon the deſperate project of

of taming them to humanity : which at length indeed they effected; though with infinite labour and prodigious ſlaughter of the brethren of the Order.

However, the attempt ſucceeded : and the Jeſuites, out of theſe wild and rabid tribes, founded ſo equal and powerful a Republic, as by their virtues to diſgrace the neighbouring Colonies, and by their Policy to give umbrage to the two Catholic Monarchs, to whom thoſe Colonies belong.

For the FATHERS, now Fathers indeed, and worthy of their name, *the Fathers of a People*, ſeeing the morals of the ſurrounding Colonies incurably corrupt, could find no other effectual means of ſecuring the infant virtue of their new eſtabliſhments from the contagion of Spaniſh and Portugueſe manners, than by a total excluſion of all commerce and communication between them.

This ſerved for a pretence to the two monarchs (whoſe ſovereignty over Paraguay the Fathers acknowledged) to take to themſelves the fruits of that Sovereignty, now become a morſel delicious enough to excite a regal appetite.

They therefore entered into a kind of Partition-Treaty to ſhare Paraguay between them ; a Treaty which is likely to end in the ruin of this long envied and deteſted Order : Indignant Providence ſeeming to have decreed, as a leſſon to mankind, that while, for the ſake of Humanity, this glorious work ſhould be preſerved, that yet for the ſake of divine Juſtice, theſe unworthy inſtruments, who with impunity had ſo long wantoned in civil miſchief, and confounded and inſulted all things ſacred and prophane, ſhould at length fall by their firſt virtuous project.

But we, who have GOD and the Monarch on our ſide, have nothing of this to fear. On the contrary, we have every thing to encourage us in this arduous taſk ; which is now rendered more promiſing and eaſy, by the large dominions lately acceded to the Britiſh empire in America. Our entrance into the heart of theſe barbarous Nations being now no longer interrupted and traverſed

by the frauds, the falſe inſinuations, and the malicious Tales of our European Rivals.

The *ſpiritual* benefits ariſing from the labour of *civilizing* are many and ſubſtantial. At preſent, the Savages (who have ſenſe enough to ſee that the Europeans keep many things from them of high importance to their welfare) obſerving in us, while buſied only in our Goſpel Miſſion, a total diſregard to their temporal intereſts, are difficultly brought to think, that the ſpiritual matters, preſſed upon them, are of much importance either to themſelves or their Teachers. But when they have been firſt of all ſo ſenſibly obliged by us as to be redeemed from the miſeries of a brutal life, and ſet at eaſe by the ſecurity, and made happy by the accommodations of Society, they will naturally give a grateful and ſerious attention to their Benefactors, inſtructing them in ſublimer truths, and directing them to ſtill more ſubſtantial happineſs. In a word, From mercileſs enemies, ever addreſſed to ravage and deſolate the borders of our Colonies, we ſhall make them our cordial Friends, ready to embrace peace; a peace, not forced upon them by the terror of our arms, or feigned by them through the allurements of treacherous Preſents, but immoveably eſtabliſhed by gratitude and love, and further ſupported by the mutual advantages of HONEST COMMERCE.

But, alas! we are yet far from this glorious Term of our labours. The hindrances have been many—Partly from the *qualities* of the Miſſionaries, and in part from the ravenous *purſuits* of our Coloniſts.

Of the Miſſionaries, ſome have been over-heated with that Fanaticiſm which diſpoſes men to an utter contempt of *worldly things*: ſo that, inſtead of teaching the Savages the benefits of ſocial life, and recommending civil manners to their roving Tribes, they are much rather inclined to throw aſide their own, and accommodate themſelves with the dried ſkins and parched Corn of the Natives. Others of a cooler turn and lower form of Superſtition, took it into their heads, that the Vices of improved life (as they may be now

now gathered in their full bloom amongſt the Coloniſts) would more indiſpoſe the Americans to the precepts of the Goſpel, than their preſent ſtate of brutality incapacitate them from apprehending the doctrines of it: and therefore, on the whole, thought it beſt to keep their Converts ſhut out from the advantages of ſo dangerous a Society.

But, without queſtion, the obſtinate perſeverance in this fatal meaſure is chiefly owing to the falſe and inhumane policy of the Coloniſts. A policy common to them all, which makes them deſpiſe and ſet at nought even the horrors of a *Savage War*, for the ſake of an unequal Traffic between the improved and unimproved gifts of all-bounteous Nature.

From the *Free*, I come now (the laſt point I propoſe to conſider) to the Barbarians *in bonds*.

By theſe I mean the vaſt multitudes ſtolen yearly from the oppoſite Continent, and ſacrificed by the Coloniſts to their great Idol, the GOD OF GAIN. "But what then? (ſay theſe zealous Worſhippers of Mammon) it is our own *Property* we offer up." What! Property in your Brethren, as in herds of Cattle? your Brethren both by Nature and Grace, Creatures endowed with all our Faculties, poſſeſſing all our qualities but that of colour? Does not this equally ſhock the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common ſenſe? But, alas! what is there in the infinite abuſes of Society which does not ſhock them!

In excuſe of this violation of all things civil and ſacred (for *Nature* created Man free, and *Grace* invites him to aſſert his freedom), it hath been pretended, That "though, indeed, theſe miſerable Outcaſts of the Race of Adam be torn from their homes and native Wilds by force and fraud, yet this violation of the rights of humanity improves their condition and renders them leſs unhappy." But who are You, who pretend to judge of another man's *happineſs?* that State, which each man, under the inſtinctive guidance of his Creator, forms for himſelf; and not one Man for another? To know what conſtitutes *mine* or *your* Happineſs, is the ſole prerogative

rogative of Him who made us, and caſt us in ſo various and different Moulds. Did theſe your Slaves ever complain to you of their *unhappineſs* amidſt their native woods and deſarts? or, rather, let me aſk, did they ever ceaſe complaining of their condition under you, their Lordly Maſters? where they ſee, indeed, the accommodations of Civil life; but, the more to imbitter their miſeries, ſee them all paſs by to others, themſelves unbenefited by them. Be ſo gracious then, ye petty Tyrants over human freedom, to let your Slaves judge for themſelves, what it is which makes *their own happineſs*. And then ſee whether they do not rather place it in the *Return* to their own Country, than in the contemplation of your Grandeur, of which, their diſtreſſes make ſo large a part. A *Return* ſo paſſionately longed for, that, deſpairing of *happineſs* amidſt the Chains of their cruel taſkmaſters, they conſole themſelves in the fancy that their *future ſtate* will be a return to their own country; where the equal Lord of all things will recompenſe their ſufferings here. And I do not find, their haughty Maſters have yet concerned themſelves to invade this laſt refuge of the miſerable. The leſs hardy of them indeed wait for this conſolation till overwearied Nature ſets them free; but more reſolved tempers have recourſe even to ſelf-violence, to force a ſpeedier paſſage.

But it may be ſtill urged, "that although what is called *human happineſs* be of ſo fantaſtic a nature, that each man creates it for himſelf, yet *human miſery* is more ſubſtantial and uniform throughout all the tribes of Men. Now, from the worſt of real miſeries, the ſavage Africans (ſay their more ſavage Maſters) are entirely ſecured by theſe forced emigrations; ſuch as the being perpetually hunted down, like beaſts of prey or profit, by their more fierce and powerful Neighbours."—In truth, a bleſſed change! from the being hunted to the being caught. But who are they that have ſet on foot this general HUNTING? Are they not theſe very civilized violators of humanity, themſelves? who tempt the weak appetites, and provoke the wild paſſions of the fiercer Savages to prey upon the reſt. However, in favour of an *eſtabliſhed enormity*, it is fit that all

all that can be urged ſhould be inforced. Something, I own, indeed not much, may be ſaid in favour of this traffic. The TRADING IN MEN was the ſtaple Commodity of the moſt early times: for, as the Poet obſerves,

Proud Nimrod firſt the bloody chaſe began,
A mighty Hunter, and his prey was MAN.

But, to bring this nice conſideration home to ourſelves. We of this Corporation, by the ceaſeleſs change of Property, are become the innocent partakers of the fruits of ſo iniquitous a traffic; a very worthy benefactor having bequeathed unto us in truſt, for the Propagation of the Goſpel, A PLANTATION STOCKED WITH SLAVES. An odd Legacy to the promulgators of the *Law of Liberty!* But intended, perhaps, as a kind of compenſation for theſe violations of it. And, if ſo, I am certain it will fully anſwer the pious intention of the Donor. God, out of this *Evil* (according to the gracious way of his Providence) having made us the honoured Inſtruments of producing *Good.*

The *cruelty* of certain PLANTERS, with reſpect to the temporal accommodations of theſe poor wretches, and the *irreligious negligence* of others with regard to their ſpiritual, is become a general Scandal.

Now this ſingular Donation will enable us to redreſs both the inhumanity and impiety of this conduct within the limits of our own Property. But this is the leaſt part of the advantages we ſhall reap from it. What is of infinite more importance is the EXAMPLE we ſhall be enabled to hold out to the Colonies at large; an Example to invite or ſhame all tyrannous Maſters into a more compaſſionate treatment of their fellow-creatures by Nature and their Brethren by Grace.

It would be impiety to ſuſpect that the Society will not perſevere in making this uſe of ſo fortunate a circumſtance; ſince their duty more particularly exacts it, and their means of all kinds enable them to do it with effect.

To

To conclude, From what hath been ſaid may be ſeen how faithfully this incorporated Society have laboured to diſcharge their Truſt.

I have ventured to hint at what appears to me the *beſt means* of perfecting the Work, by ſetting before you (though far unable to do it to advantage) the new encouragements we have to *Propheſy* AGAIN *before many Peoples, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings.*

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the printing this, a pamphlet has been publiſhed, intituled, *A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School in Connecticut, New-England*; in which is *a Letter from the Indians of Onohoquage* to the Directors of this Charity; curious enough, on many accounts to be here tranſcribed.

Lake Utſage, July 31, 1765.

BRETHREN,

WE were informed by our Meſſenger that we ſent to you laſt Spring *(Gwedelhes*, or *Peter Agwirondongwas)*, that you would not only aſſiſt us by ſending us Miniſters to teach us Chriſtianity, but alſo that you would aſſiſt us in ſetting up Huſbandry, by ſending a Number of white People to live with us; who, when come, ſhould build us Mills, teach us Husbandry, and furniſh us with Tools for Husbandry, *&c.*

We greatly rejoiced at hearing of it, and expected them this Spring, but are diſappointed; at which we are very ſorry: But we hope that we may yet receive them, and ſhould much rejoice in it, ſhould you ſend them to us.

We would have you underſtand, Brethren, that we have no Thoughts of ſelling our Land to any that come to live among us. For if we ſhould ſell a little Land to any, by and by they would want to buy a little more, and ſo our Land would go by Inches, till we ſhould have none to live upon.—Yet as thoſe that come to inſtruct us muſt live, we have no Objections againſt their improving as much Land as they pleaſe; yet the Land ſhall remain ours.

We have, Brethren, never petitioned to you yet for any to assist us, but only those that come with God's *News* (*i. e.* the Gospel); yet, as you have offered to assist us likewise in teaching us Husbandry, we greatly rejoice in it, AND THINK THAT THEY SHOULD GO TOGETHER, the one as well as the other, and that we want Instruction in both. Brethren, we send our kindest Love to you, and remain your Brethren,

Isaac Dakayenensere.
Adam Waonwanoron.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

SERMON IV.

ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

PROV. xxvi. ver. 4, 5.

ANSWER NOT A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST THOU ALSO BE LIKE UNTO HIM. ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

THE *contempt* of Religion ſoon followed the *abuſe* of it: and the abuſe of this ſacred Inſtitution is almoſt coeval with the thing itſelf: for that corruption of heart, whoſe diſorder Religion was ordained to cure, hath been ever ſtruggling againſt its remedy.

I. In the days of Solomon, when *Wiſdom* was at its height, *Folly*, as we learn from many paſſages of that regal Sage, kept equal paces with it. Hence it was, that, after exhibiting many lively paintings of the irreligious Scorner, he ſubjoined directions to the generous Advocate of Piety and Virtue, how beſt to repreſs their inſolence and vanity. ANSWER NOT *a Fool* (ſays he) *accord-*

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ing to his folly, leſt thou alſo be like unto him. ANSWER *a Fool according to his Folly, leſt he be wiſe in his own conceit.*

Short iſolated ſentences were the mode in which ancient Wiſdom delighted to convey its precepts, for the regulation of life and manners. But when this natural mode of inſtruction had loſt the grace of novelty, and a ſtudied refinement had new coloured the candid ſimplicity of ancient converſe, theſe inſtructive Sages found it neceſſary to give their moral maxims, the ſeaſoning and poignancy of *Paradoxes*. In theſe lively and not uſeleſs ſports of fancy, the Son of David, we are told, greatly excelled. We find them to abound in the writings which bear his name: and we meet with frequent alluſions to them, in all the parts of Sacred Writ, under the names of *Riddles*, *Parables*, and *Dark-ſayings*.

Now of all the examples of this ſpecies of inſtruction there is none fuller of moral wiſdom than this *Paradox* of my Text, or which in the happineſs of the expreſſion hath ſo artfully conveyed the Key for opening the treaſures of it. But as a *dark* conceit and a *dull* one have a great proximity in modern Wit; and a nice *difference* is not diſtinguiſhed from a *contradiction* in modern reaſoning; this Paradox of the Sage hath been miſtaken by his Critics, for an *abſurdity* of ſome of his Tranſcribers, who forgot the negative in the latter member of the ſentence; and ſo is to be ſet right: and at an eaſier expence, than unfolding *dark ſentences of old*, namely, exchanging them for clearer, of a modern texture; which TIME may make *ancient readings*; and which a careful collation of its blunders may hereafter make the *true* *.

II. But

* So again, Prov. xviii. 22. *Whoſo findeth a Wife* (ſays the Wiſe-man) *findeth a good thing*; *and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* But ſo bold an aſſertion hath revolted the more experienced Critics. They *preſume* that Solomon expreſſed himſelf according to thoſe venerable MSS. which read—*Whoſo findeth* A GOOD WIFE *findeth* A GOOD THING; *and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* And this out of regard to the truth of things. But Solomon ſure was never ſent into the world to make this diſcovery. It was a fitter exploit for the *old Hermit of Prague*, the Poet ſpeaks of, who although he *never ſaw*

pen

II. But they who chooſe to receive Scripture in its antique Garb, will perhaps venture with me, to try whether the ſeeming contradiction in the common text cannot be fairly unriddled without any other aid than of the words themſelves in which the *dark ſaying* is conveyed.

Had the *Folly* of theſe Fools been only of one condition or denomination, the advice *to anſwer*, and *not to anſwer*, had indeed been repugnant to itſelf; but as the *folly*, by the Wiſe Man's own account of it, is ſeen to have been of different kinds, in ſome of which, *to anſwer* might offend the dignity of Truth; and, in others, *not to anſwer* might hurt its intereſts; *To anſwer*, and *not to anſwer*, is a conſiſtent, and may, for aught theſe Critics know, be a very wiſe direction.

Had the advice been given ſimply and without circumſtance, *to anſwer the Fool, and not to anſwer him*, a Critic who held the Sacred Text in reverence, would ſatisfy himſelf in ſuppoſing, that the different directions referred, to the doing a thing in and out of ſeaſon. But when, to the general advice about *anſwering*, this circumſtance is added, *according to his folly*, that interpretation is excluded; and

pen and ink, yet by mere dint of penetration diſcovered, that *whatever is, is.* And had theſe Critics reflected (which would have required but little more reach of thought) that the Wiſe-man was here only characteriſing *the divine Ordinance of Marriage* itſelf, as inſtituted by God in Paradiſe, on this great Principle—*that it was not* GOOD *for man to be alone*, their doubts concerning the integrity of the text had been eaſily relieved: Solomon's aſſertion being ſimply this, "That whoever endeavours to conform himſelf to the "order of Providence, in ſupporting this Inſtitution, endeavours to obtain *a good thing*." It is not the *Woman*, whether good or bad, that hath here this appellation: but the *Wife* figuratively, too, employed for the holy Inſtitution of Marriage itſelf. And to this ſenſe the concluding words might have led them—*and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* For why doth he who *findeth a wife*, obtain God's favour? Surely becauſe he hath complied with, and promoted, the Ordinance of God. The *Fool* indeed may ſay, *according to his folly*, that "it is here inſinuated, a *good wife* is ſuch a rarity that a ſucceſsful ſearch after her muſt be aſcribed to the ſpecial favour of God." But if he does ſay ſo, he deſerves *no anſwer*, were it only for ſuppoſing that Solomon was here trifling in the modern vein of trivial ſatire.

a dif-

a difficulty indeed ariſes; a difficulty, which hath made thoſe, who have no reverence for the text, accuſe it of abſurdity and contradiction.

But now, to each direction, reaſons are ſubjoined, *why a Fool ſhould, and why he ſhould not, be anſwered:* reaſons, which, when ſet together and compared, are, at firſt ſight, ſufficient to make the Critic ſuſpect that all the contradiction lies in his own incumbered ideas.

1. The reaſon given *why a Fool ſhould not be anſwered according to his folly*, is *leſt he* [the Anſwerer] *be like unto him.*

2. The reaſon given *why the Fool ſhould be anſwered according to his folly*, is *leſt he* [the Fool] *be wiſe in his own conceit.*

The cauſe aſſigned of *not anſwering* therefore, forceably inſinuates that the Defender of Religion ſhould not imitate the Inſulter of it in his modes of diſputation; which may be comprized in *ſophiſtry*, *buffoonry*, and *ſcurrility*. For what could ſo much aſſimilate the Anſwerer to his Idiot-Adverſary as the putting on his Fool's coat, in order to captivate and confound the Rabble?

The cauſe aſſigned of *anſwering*, plainly intimates, that the Sage ſhould addreſs himſelf to confute the Fool upon the Fool's own *Principles*, by ſhewing, that they lead to concluſions very wide from the impieties he would deduce from them. And if any thing can prevent the *Fool* from being *wiſe in his own conceit*, it muſt be the diſhonour and the ridicule of having his own *Principles* turned againſt him; while they are ſhewn to make for the very contrary purpoſe to that for which he had employed them.

The high Wiſdom conveyed in the two precepts of this unravelled *Paradox* will be beſt underſtood by explaining the miſchiefs avoided and the advantages ariſing from the obſervance of each of them.

III. We are *not to anſwer a fool according to his folly, leſt we alſo be like unto him*—This is the reaſon given; and a good one it is; ſufficient to make any ſober man decline a conteſt, where even Victory would bring diſhonour with it. Now if our *anſwer* be of

ſuch

ſuch a nature that we alſo (though with contrary intentions) do injury to Truth, we become *like unto him* in the eſſential part of his Character. And ſurely Truth is never more inſulted, nor its Advocates more debaſed, than when they employ the *fooliſh* arts of *Sophiſtry*, *Buffoonry*, and *Scurrility*, in its defence.

1. To uſe *fallacious* and inconcluſive arguments in ſupport of Truth, a trick that hath been too often practiſed, is doing it infinite diſcredit.

It tends to make men ſuſpicious that the pretended Truth is falſehood, when it finds ſupport in the common arts of Impoſtors. The moſt favourable, and perhaps faireſt inference which will be made is, that the Truth is defended, not for its own ſake, but for the ſake of the Defender. Hence we become leſs attentive to the iſſue, and more jealous of the good faith of the Reaſoner. Hence our reverence for the Cauſe is leſſened, and our prejudices againſt the Advocate increaſed. It tends to bring the two parties of *Wiſdom* and *Folly* on a level, when they ſtand on the ſame unfaithful and fallacious ground. It tends to eraze the diſtinction between *true* and *falſe*, and at length makes all terminate in that moſt inveterate ſpecies of *folly*, Pyrronic doubt and uncertainty.

2. To employ *Buffoonry* in this ſervice is violating the Dignity of Truth, which can inforce its influence amongſt men no longer than while the ſanctity of its Character is kept ſafe from inſult.

Buffoonry deprives Truth of the only thing ſhe wants, in order to come off triumphant; I mean, a *fair hearing*. To examine, men muſt be ſerious: and to judge, they muſt be attentive to the argument. *Buffoonry* gives a levity to the mind, which makes it ſeek entertainment, where it ſhould find only inſtruction. But let this poor baſtard-talent be taken at its utmoſt value, the practice of it will ſtill raiſe a ſuſpicion that the Advocate of Religion hath his Cauſe little at heart while, in the very heat of this important Controverſy, he can allow himſelf to be amuſed and diverted by *buffoonry*, this ſpurious Counterfeit of Wit; ſince in matters which

are underſtood to concern us moſt, we are wont to appear, as well as to be, moſt in earneſt: And this ſcandal given by the Advocate will always bring prejudice on the Cauſe.

3. Again, PERSONAL ABUSE, that favorite *colour* which ſtrikes moſt in the Fool's, as well as in the Knave's, Rhetoric, is carefully to be avoided. For nothing can make the *Anſwerer* ſo much reſemble the *Fool* he is confuting, as a want of Candor and Charity; which this mode of *anſwering* ſo openly betrays. Whatever pretence the *Fool* makes to Candor—to Charity he makes none. His very attempt is an avowed violation of it. He would deprive the World of what he himſelf confeſſes to be moſt uſeful to Society; and moſt pleaſing to the natural ſentiments of man; I mean *Religion*. He would break down this Barrier againſt Vice; and rob us of this beſt conſolation againſt the evils of human life. And in ſuch a ſervice he follows but his nature and his office, when he vilifies and calumniates all who ſet themſelves to oppoſe his impious attempts.

One might wonder that the Wiſe-man, who gives this caution to the *Friends* of Religion, could ſuppoſe that they ſhould ſtand in need of it. But he well knew of what ſtuff we are all made;—that the irregular paſſions frequently operate alike, whether in purſuit of truth or falſehood; and that the arms fabricated and naturally employed in defence of error, are unnaturally taken up, to ſkirmiſh in a better cauſe.

For as all men ſtrive to be on the laughing ſide, ſo all affect Wit to ſupport themſelves in it. Now *Wit* being the portion but of one in a million, every pretender to Wit miſtakes *Buffoonry* for it, or hopes at leaſt that his Reader will miſtake it.

A well-urged argument is, perhaps, as rare an effort as a well-turned piece of wit, and makes an Adverſary, againſt whom it is pointed, as much out of humour. So that ſuch a one will be apt to ſupply his want of ſenſe with his abundance of *ſcurrility*; which is the ſame ſuccedaneum to good Argument that *Buffoonry* is to true Wit;

Wit; and will ſerve the uſer, who appeals to the taſte of a prejudiced Cabal, full as well.

Theſe are the various modes of *anſwering* which are to be avoided, leſt the Advocate of Religion become *like* the vain Caviller, whom he addreſſes himſelf to confute.

But, under the reaſon here given for *not anſwering*, there is another inſinuated—We are not to anſwer the Fool, leſt we ſhould be like to him in *Character*. This is the reaſon given. The reaſon inſinuated is—leſt we ſhould be like to him in *the iſſue of his Inquiries*. What that is, Solomon tells us in this ſame Book of Proverbs—THE SCORNER SEEKETH WISDOM AND FINDETH IT NOT *. For *Scorner* is the name here given to the *Fool*, with reference to his arts of controverſy, carried on by ſophiſtry, buffoonry, and ſcurrility, anatomized above; all of them the marks of *ſcorn* and inſolence. Now if this be true, that the *Scorner's ſearch after wiſdom* is vain and fruitleſs, we have here another reaſon why we ſhould not imitate his practice; or, in other words, why we ſhould *not anſwer the Fool according to his folly*.

That no other iſſue of his *ſearch* is to be expected, I ſhall now ſhew you.

The *Fool*, turned *Scorner*, places the perfection of Wiſdom rather in laughing at what is wrong than in purſuing what is right: and, of all the *ſeekers* after Truth, is, both by his diſpoſition and his method of inquiry, leaſt likely to find it.

1. PRIDE and VANITY are the foundation of the *Scorner's* Character; they conſiſt in a preſumptuous conceit of ſuperior knowledge; *Pride* diſpoſes him to receive homage from himſelf; *Vanity*, to demand it from others. But, of all the Paſſions, theſe moſt effectually keep hid from us that imbecillity and incurable ignorance of our Nature, which, in our ſearch after truth, ought always to be preſent to us, both to excite our induſtry, and to awaken our caution. For without induſtry we can make but ſmall advances;

* Chap. xiv. 6.

and without caution we ſhall be perpetually deviating from the right track.

As the *Scorner's* opinion of his own abilities is ſo ill founded, his *Vanity* will always be ſeeking homage from others, for thoſe excellencies which his *Pride* has created in himſelf: to gratify which, is the only thing he aims at in the diſplay of his ſelf-imputed wit. And though *true wit* and *true wiſdom* were meant for each other's aid, yet this ſpurious *Conceit*, which the Scorner ſo much cultivates and indulges, ſerving only to raiſe ill-timed mirth, or to gratify the malignity of his depraved temper, drives *Wiſdom* from ſo polluted a quarter.

This ſpecies of *Vanity* brings on a levity of mind; which, in its firſt ſtages, corrupts the Judgment in our eſtimate of the importance of Truth: and, as it grows habitual, occaſions a total indifference to its intereſts. Indeed, nothing ſo enervates and effeminates the Reaſon as the immoderate indulgence of *Ridicule*; for as the Wiſe-man obſerves, in another place of this book—*the end of this mirth is heavineſs*: that is, it ſets in DULNESS.

Now, this indifference to Truth and Falſhood ſhews itſelf, firſt of all, in a malignant pleaſure the *Scorner* takes in embarraſſing and perplexing every ſubject he pretends to handle and examine. Nor is this the worſt. His indifference concludes, at length, in a total *Scepticiſm*. For when once a man can bring himſelf to be indifferent to Objects ſo important as thoſe of good and evil, the labour required in diſcriminating their natures will ſo offend his eaſy delicacy, that he will gladly take refuge in a ſett of Principles which ſhorten his ſearch, and perſuade him that the inquiry is in vain; that truth and falſhood are Chimeras; or that if they have a real exiſtence, yet, the light in which they are objected to our contemplation is ſo obſcure, and the human Intellect ſo dull by Nature and ſo narrowed by Inſtitution, that we perpetually miſtake them for one another, in the indiſtinct and cloudy light in which they are preſented to us.

2. The

2. The *Scorner's* method of inquiry is another cauſe of his *never finding Wiſdom.* He begins with detecting and expoſing Error. And, indeed, Inquirers of more ſobriety often find it neceſſary to do the ſame; becauſe theſe errors often lie in their way; obſtruct their ſearch, and retard their progreſs. But then, this *method* leading the Detector into a large field for the diſplay of his pleaſantry; and for the exerciſe of his wit, if he has any; the *Scorner* grows ſo enamoured of *Buffoonry*, that here he ſtays, and ſpends all his time in this trifling amuſement, when his buſineſs was only to ſtop till he had cleared the road, that he might proceed with freſh vigour in his ſearch. So that this, which, at beſt, is but the firſt ſtep to Wiſdom, the *Scorner* makes the laſt.

But it is not only the pleaſure he takes in laughing at folly and error, but his averſion for thoſe regions of ſevere Truth where *Wiſdom* reſides, which keeps him ſo ſelf-ſatisfied in theſe jovial vanities.

Beſides, were he never ſo much diſpoſed to puſh on his ſearch to the very Throne of *Wiſdom*, his Talents, and the habitual uſe to which he puts them, would render his inquiry fruitleſs and ineffectual. To ſee and to expoſe the ABUSE OF THINGS, by which ſcorn is ingendered, requires little more than a quick ſenſe of what is wrong, and a lively imagination to expoſe it: but, to penetrate to their REAL NATURE, demands ſtrength and application of mind, rarely found, where the exerciſe of a lively fancy hath been long indulged. True *Wiſdom* conſiſting in the knowledge of the *uſe* of things, juſt as idle wit ſubſiſts in laughing at their *abuſes*.

Thus we ſee, why the *Scorner* affects to *ſeek Wiſdom*; and how it happens that he never finds it.

All which conſidered, the wiſe man adviſes us, *not to anſwer a fool according to his folly, leſt we alſo be like unto him.*

IV. But then, *leſt the Fool ſhould be wiſe in his own conceit*, we are, at the ſame time, bid *to give him an Anſwer*. Now, how this can be done in the manner here directed, namely, *according to his folly*,

folly, and yet, the *Anſwerer* not become *like unto him*, but, on the contrary, able thereby, to produce the effect here intimated (viz. the cure of the *Fool's* vain *conceit* of his ſuperior Wiſdom), is a difficulty indeed; a difficulty worthy the Advocate of Truth to undertake.

And, a Maſter of his Subject may hope to overcome this difficulty by contriving to confute the *Fool* on his own *Principles*, by ſhewing that they lead to a Concluſion very deſtructive of thoſe free conſequences he has laboured to deduce from them.

To give an inſtance or two. A capital objection to what we call REVELATION, is the innumerable pretenſions to it by Impoſtors in all ages: Every Founder of the National Religion aſſuming a divine Miſſion, ſupported by Prodigies and Wonders. Yet this favorite *Principle* of Infidelity may be fairly turned upon the Objectors themſelves.

1. For firſt, the abundance of theſe pretended Revelations ſtrongly evinces the need which men were conſcious they had of the extraordinary direction of Heaven, to aid the feeble glimmering of natural light, and to ſupport thoſe capital and general Truths which are ſo obſcurely and imperfectly diſcovered by it. For the craft of one of theſe Impoſtors is always directed to take advantage of the common turn of the People. He is too well acquainted with human nature to think of giving it a new bias. His ſkill conſiſts in applying what he finds moſt prevailing in it, to the aid of his Politics.

2. Secondly, True Revelation is eſſentially diſtinguiſhed from all the Specieſes of the falſe, by this circumſtance, that the falſe have all of them *ſubordinate Deities* for the object of their Worſhip; and conſequently all have the complaiſance to acknowledge the truth of one another's pretenſions. Whereas true Revelation claiming its origin from the firſt Cauſe of all things, the Creator and Governor of the Univerſe, condemns, by neceſſary conſequence, all the national Religions of Paganiſm, as Impoſtures.

2. Ano-

2. Another inſtance—and then enough will be ſaid to explain my meaning on this head. The Chriſtian Diſpenſation is accuſed of falſehood for its abounding in MYSTERIES. Theſe *Fools* ſuppoſe, that "if God hath indeed revealed himſelf to Mankind, every thing contained in his Diſpenſation muſt be plain and evident."—But, in this judgment, they ſeem only to provide for their own infirmities, without any regard to the honour of their Maker. They forget that, though the Receivers be Men, yet the Giver is the Lord. And that, therefore, though the fundamental Doctrines of ſuch a Diſpenſation ſhould be adapted to the weakneſs and narrowneſs of the human Capacity, yet the Creator and Governor of all things ſhould mark the Religion *for his own*, by ſuch ſublime traits, which, at the time that they expreſs the ſhining features of the Divinity, humble the vain arrogance of human Reaſon; the perfect comprehenſion of theſe tranſcendent Truths, not eſſential to the profeſſion of our Faith here, being reſerved for our reward, hereafter.

Nor is this *Principle* or Objection of Solomon's Fool leſs ſubject to retorſion than the other.

To the pretended Friend of Natural Religion, the Believing *Anſwerer* would ſay, "You fly with affright from Revelation at the ſight of its *Myſteries*, yet theſe *Myſteries* meet you again in Natural Religion, in which you have taken refuge. For *Freewill* reconciled to *Preſcience* is as inexplicable a Myſtery as any our holy Religion holds out to us, to exerciſe the ſubmiſſion of our Reaſon, and keep it in due ſubordination to Faith. And the force of it holds as ſtrongly againſt you, as any Goſpel Myſtery againſt a Believer: ſince if you be, indeed, a friend or Follower of Natural Religion, you muſt confeſs, that man is *free*, ſince without freedom he could not be accountable; you muſt confeſs that God *foreſees*, ſince without the preſcience of the actions of free-agents he could not be omniſcient.

As for the *Fool* who hides his Atheiſtic Naturaliſm under the cover of Natural Religion, the Believer eaſily retorts his objection to Myſteries, from the State of the Material World, where only, the *Fool* ſeeks, and expects to find, real Knowledge. Yet he muſt confeſs all that concerns MATTER to be an explicable Myſtery. I paſs its creation out of nothing; becauſe I am in doubt whether the *Naturaliſt* holds or rejects this Truth, and will only urge him with its diviſibility, its expanſion and contraction, its inert force, and all thoſe incomprehenſible qualities which the Newtonian Philoſophy hath revealed.

With the ſame force as in theſe two inſtances, may all the *Fool's* Principles be returned upon him. And ſure if any thing can diſſipate the vain viſion of being *wiſe in his own conceit*, it muſt be the ſenſe of ſuch a diſhonour. For what can be more humiliating than to have his own Principles ſhewn to be deſtructive of his Concluſions? What more mortifying than to have thoſe Principles, in whoſe invention he ſo much gloried, or in whoſe uſe he ſo much confided, fairly turned, by the unerring rules of good Logic, to the credit of the Religion he was attempting to overthrow? Nor is the Partiſan of Falſehood more humbled than the Cauſe of Truth is advanced by *thus* anſwering a Fool *according to his Folly*: For that victory, where our Oppoſite is made to contribute to his own overthrow, is always held, in common eſtimation, to be moſt compleat: That Syſtem being reaſonably judged deſpicable, whoſe moſt plauſible ſupport draws after it the ruin of what it was raiſed to uphold.

On the whole, It is thus (as the Wiſe-man directs) that this forward *Fool* is to be treated; whether it be by SILENCE or CONFUTATION.

V. That his *Folly* is to be repreſſed *according to the dictates of true Wiſdom*, the nature of the thing ſufficiently inſtructs us. There was no need of a particular direction to inforce the expediency and neceſſity of ſuch a conduct.

But

But then, it ſometimes happens that the intereſts of Truth may require that he ſhould be *anſwered* even *according to his folly*: And, as in diſcharge of our duty *here* the execution is very liable to abuſe, it was fit and proper to obviate the danger. This, we may obſerve, the Sacred Writer hath done; and with much art, and elegance of addreſs.

It may indeed be ſaid, "Why this practiſed obliquity in defence of Truth? Is not the purity of her nature rather defiled, than her real intereſts advanced, by this indirection? And doth not *Wiſdom* ſeem to ſay, that it beſt ſuits her dignity to repreſs *Folly* by thoſe Arms only which *Wiſdom* herſelf hath fabricated and tempered: that Truth, by the information of her own light, points out the ſtrait road to her abode; and forbids us to wriggle into her preſence through blind by-paths, and the cloudy medium of falſhood?"

But they who talk thus magnificently, do not ſufficiently reflect on the condition of our weak-ſighted nature, which can ill bear the bright and unſhaded light of Truth: Nor do they ſeem to ſee the beauty of that contrivance in the Order of things, whereby *Folly*, by thus adminiſtring to her own defeat, is made to bring us back again into the ways of *Wiſdom*, from which ſhe had ſeduced and miſled us.

The REDEEMER of the World, in condeſcenſion to the infirmities of thoſe whom he came to ſave, hath taken this very advantage which this eſtabliſhed order of things afforded him. For, more effectually to ſilence thoſe *Fools* who roſe up againſt him, he anſwered them *according to their folly*; that is, he demonſtrated to them the truth and reaſonableneſs of the Goſpel on their own ideas, of the nature and end of the LAW; ideas formed on Rabbinical Traditions, and the reveries of Greek Philoſophers; and urged by them in diſcredit of his Miſſion and his Office. The pure and unabated ſplendor of Truth, uſhered in, in all the ſolemn State of Wiſdom, would have only increaſed their judicial blindneſs. To bear this effuſion of light undazzled, they had need of the inſtant

aid of that SPIRIT OF TRUTH which was not yet come, but only promiſed to be ſent.

Indeed, when this ſacred Guide, who was to *lead men into all truth*, came down from above, and while he continued, in an extraordinary manner, to enlighten the Underſtandings of the Faithfull, there was no occaſion for this inforced Miniſtry of *Folly* to contribute to her own overthrow: And therefore, the firſt Miniſters of the Goſpel proceeded to the Eſtabliſhment of Truth in a direct line, and on the ſolid principles of *Wiſdom* only. Yet now again, in the *ordinary* effuſions of the Holy Spirit, this direction of Solomon will be as uſeful as ever to the intereſts of Virtue and Religion—ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

A SERMON

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE KING,

IN LENT, MDCCLXI.

SERMON V.

PROVERBS, Chap. XIV. ver. 9.

FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN.

THIS ſtrange impiety, the Wiſe-man fairly marks as the utmoſt exceſs of *Folly*: For, having juſt before told us, that *Fools deſpiſe wiſdom*, and that they *hate knowledge*, he compleats their character, by obſerving, that they *make a mock at Sin*.

By the term *fool*, in common life, we underſtand one whom the powers of *Reaſon have forſaken*; but Religion gives it to that ſtill more unhappy Being, who *forſakes Reaſon*; to that miſerable Man who, rejecting the Guide which God and Nature have appointed for his direction, ſuffers himſelf to be miſled by various Impoſtors, who have ridiculouſly uſurped her name and office.

The Young are generally borne away by the *Paſſions and Affections*; the Old are moſtly drawn aſide by *Habit and Cuſtom*; and all ages, both Young and Old, groan under the ſlavery of FASHION; which yet, with all its airs of ſuperior importance, at laſt reſolves itſelf into a ſervile compliance with the caprices of others.

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The *Paſſions and Affections* make the fierceſt attack upon human Virtue; but Reaſon being then upon its guard, in its full vigour, and unimpaired by thoſe prejudices, which a long commerce with the World hath made us to contract, if men yield to the ſudden violence of the Appetites, they have ſuffered themſelves to be betrayed by indolence, cowardice, a falſe ſelfiſhneſs, or from ſome cauſe which true Wiſdom diſavows and condemns.

As the Paſſions overpower and trample upon Reaſon; ſo *Habit*, by gentle and inſenſible degrees, throws it into a kind of Lethargy, which makes it inſenſible of right and wrong. But whenever it does ſo, it is by our own fault, a ſhameful neglect in not calling upon Reaſon to try and examine our *habits*, by the teſt ſhe offers; which would preſently ſhew us, what is permitted, and what is to be condemned.

The laſt and moſt impudent Impoſtor of all, is what men call FASHION, which imperiouſly enjoins ſubmiſſion to the Fancies of others. And this Dominion over *fools* is far more extenſive than the other two. *Our love of pleaſure* makes us confederate with the Paſſions, againſt Reaſon; our *love of eaſe* inclines us to fall in with habit againſt Reaſon; but it is *Vanity* alone which draws us to follow the FASHION, againſt her: And Vanity having a more general, as well as more laſting ſway, over the human heart, than either appetite or cuſtom, it follows, that more are miſled by the *faſhion*, which Others give us, than either by the *paſſions*, which Nature gave us, or by the *habits*, which we give ourſelves.

Let us ſee then the ſentiments of each of theſe ſlaves of *folly*, with regard to this mortal enemy of our Nature, SIN.

1. The man who is borne away from reaſon and virtue by the violence of his *Appetites*, has often, during that tempeſtuous Seaſon, a true ſenſe of his condition; and is ready to confeſs or to complain, in the words of St. Paul—*The good, which I would, that I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do.* Such a one will be ſo far from *mocking*, or being diſpoſed to make himſelf merry with the idea of *Sin*, that he will look on *it* with horror, from the miſchiefs which

which he ſees it ready to produce; and on *himſelf* with reſentment and contempt, for the baſeneſs of his ſubjection to it: So that, while this unequal ſtruggle continues between his Paſſions and his Reaſon, he will have very little diſpoſition to prepoſterous mirth.

2. But when once the criminal gratification of his paſſions is grown into a *Habit*, the abhorrence of ſin is at an end. He looks upon it, in its daily temptations, with the ſame unconcern that he receives the ſervices of a deformed Domeſtic; who, at firſt perhaps, was never ſeen without diſlike or horror, which a familiar converſe has long ſince worn out.—But ſtill, mere *uſe* and *habit* will never carry the pliant perverſity of our Nature much further: It will never bring us to make a *jeſt* of our Miſery, or to try if we can *laugh* Sin out of its nature; and, while its dreadful effects ſtill object themſelves to our ſenſes and experience, to *ridicule* it as an empty Phantom, conjured up between the Nurſe and the Prieſt.

3. No. To arrive at this perfection in *Folly*, we muſt have made the *opinion of other men* the ſtandard of our manners; or, in plainer words, we muſt have become the FOOLS OF FASHION.

Now, in the polite World, Vice is entertained very differently from the reception it finds amongſt Little People: who ſin, and are aſhamed, and ſo turn Hypocrites to men; who ſin, and are abſolved, and ſo turn Hypocrites to God: While the part of the Man of Faſhion is *to ſin bravely:* to regard the natural baſhfulneſs attending the breach of God's commandments, as the ill-bred ſhame of the Ruſtic; and repentance, as a kind of poltronery, in which his honour and reputation ſuffers. So that whenever a ſerious remonſtrance is made to one of theſe, of the iniquity of his ways, this *Fool of Faſhion makes a mock at Sin*, as deriving its fanciful exiſtence from nothing but the ſly contrivances of our Civil and our Spiritual Governors.

But as, in the numerous tribe of polite Vices, there are ſtill ſome higher in *the faſhion* than others, and therefore capable of a liveſier defence, and deſerving of a ſtronger ridicule on the Reprover; a curſory view of them will be ſufficient to ſhew in which quarter the

the folly lies; whether under the maſk of *formal wiſdom*, where theſe Gentlemen direct us to ſeek it, or in the barefaced pleaſantry of their own darling *ridicule*.

The violation of God's holy name by prophane ſwearing; the abuſe of his bleſſings by a beaſtly intemperance; and the pollution of his ſacred *Image* (in which we were created) by vague Luſt; are the three Sins, which the polite world are moſt diſpoſed to make a *mock* of.

Yet if we be to judge of them by their cauſes and effects (on which Reaſon teaches us to eſtimate moral matters) we muſt conclude, that nothing can be more offenſive to God, more abuſive of our own Nature, or more injurious to our fellow-creatures.

God hath vouchſafed unto us the uſe of his Sacred Name, to convey our praiſes and ſupplications to the Throne of Grace; and, on ſolemn and public occaſions, to add a ſanction to Truth and Right.—But, in the horrid practice of prophane-ſwearing, men employ this ever-ſacred Name for the garniture of their vanity; to give importance to their pride; or to add terror to their brutal paſſions, their rage, their hate, or their revenge. They call upon God to witneſs, and, in effect, dare him to puniſh, all their ſilly, lewd, and lying converſation; all that their ſelf-importance, their intereſt, or their malice, can provoke them to invent, and then, to impoſe upon their Companions. Can we now conceive a greater inſult on the violated majeſty of Heaven than this diabolic intemperance of ſpeech? ſurely none, unleſs it be to hear theſe Sons of perdition *mock* and ridicule the Reprover of their blaſphemies?

Luxury or *Intemperance* is another of theſe faſhionable vices which the Polite rather make the matter of their reputation than their ſhame. It conſiſts in turning the bleſſings of Providence to abuſe; and the ſuſtentation of nature to its deſtruction; whereby our very eating and drinking become criminal. But *faſhion* ſways throughout. The intemperance of our Fathers went one way; the intemperance of their Sons goes another. But it is of ſmall moment which of theſe brutalities, whether gluttony or the bottle deprives

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us of our reaſon and our health. Either of them is ſure to do it; for the certain iſſue of both is a legion of follies, and an hoſpital of diſeaſes. Yet ſo ſmall account does the polite Debauché make of theſe two nobleſt gifts of God and Nature, TRUTH and HEALTH, that he is ready to throw them both away for the vain and frivolous reputation of a well-ſpread Table, or a ſocial Cup: For, *Truth*, the greateſt of intellectual goods, is the produce of undiſturbed reaſon; and *Health*, the greateſt of the corporeal, is the blooming fruit of temperance: and yet, we can be content to be deprived of both, for the ſordid pleaſure of a riotous, unmeaning jollity. And, when Religion calls *that* a Sin, which we miſcall urbanity and ſocial life, we are ready to *mock* at the *Goſpel-morals*, as an Inſtitution unpolite and ruſtic, and a foe to the elegancies of life.

The faſhionable Man as loudly proclaims his folly, when he treats the reproof of *Incontinence or vague Luſt* with levity and contempt. This Sin, whether it be the robbery of innocence, or the keeping the miſerable object of his Luxury inſlaved to impurity and vice, is (amongſt other miſchiefs) the moſt atrocious injury to our fellow-creatures.

The deareſt treaſure of life is Innocence. With this, all the benefits of Fortune receive a double luſtre; and with this, we are enabled to bear the worſt of her diſgraces: for innocence ſoftens the rigours of the ſeaſons; relieves the diſtreſſes of poverty; and makes even languor ſmile upon the bed of ſickneſs. How cruel, then, is that Spoiler who robs the weak and eaſily-deluded virgin of this greateſt bleſſing and ornament of life. It is a cruelty that ſums up all the injuries he can do his neighbour in one. It violates the perſon; it blaſts the reputation; and brings on inevitable diſtreſs and penury.

But this Sin rarely ſtops at the mere deſtruction of Innocence: it generally compleats its progreſs, by keeping the unhappy victim of its Luxury chained down to vice and miſery, in a continued ſtate of proſtitution; preventing, by the baſeſt contrivances, Religion, Reputation, and even common Prudence, from having any force

to draw them back again, from their ruinous condition, into the paths of virtue and repentance. Yet this is the Sin which the Fool makes his paſtime; the ſubject of his *mockery*; nay even of his boaſt and triumph.

But the moſt inſolent ſpecies of theſe *prophane Mockers* is ſtill behind. For there are of theſe, who, not content to *mock* in the common mode of *folly*, love to heighten their buffoonery by the maſk of philoſophic gravity; and, in the wantonneſs of change, feel their idle humour beſt gratified, when they act the voluptuouſneſs of Clodius under the ſtoical countenance of Cato.

In this temper, they ſhove the Teacher from his Chair; and tell us that muſty Moraliſts miſtake their office; that the bleſſings of Providence were given us to uſe, and not to caſt away; that they were given us to enjoy, and not to quarrel with; that the *meaſure* of their uſe ſhould be regulated by the APPETITES; as the appetites only have the art of making that uſe an enjoyment: And, for Pedant REASON to aſſume the office of judging between *good* and *evil*, becauſe it is intruſted to decide between *right* and *wrong*, is as if the Taſte ſhould pretend to judge between ſtraight and crooked, becauſe it can diſtinguiſh between ſweet and bitter. Each Faculty (ſay they) hath its ſeveral department; and with that, all, but *Reaſon*, are content. This Uſurper interferes in every circumſtance, and claims the whole government of civil life. Hence the rights of Nature are no leſs violated in the uſe of *Perſons* than of *Things*, by this aſſuming Judge and Director; who, in confederacy with her ſpurious Iſſue, LAW, hath contrived to make more than *mutual conſent* neceſſary for the poſſeſſion of the firſt and general bleſſing beſtowed on man in Paradiſe. Where neither the Parent *Reaſon*, nor her ſtern Progeny, *the Laws*, will commiſerate diſcordancy of temper, or diſtreſs of circumſtances; but, with relentleſs rigour, combine to faſten that fatal yoke, which theſe victims of their cruel policy muſt ſubmit to wear, till as mercileſs a Deliverer ſets them free. Again (ſay they) how abſurd is it for *Reaſon* to controll the Appetites at all, even in the general purſuit of pleaſure?

PLEASURE

PLEASURE their peculiar object, their native department; for which, all their functions are so properly contrived, and for which, all their sensations are so admirably fitted. *Reason* has no feelings, and therefore should have no jurisdiction in the measure of the enjoyment."

This is the language of the more refined *Mockers* tricked up in the prostituted garb of Science.

One might *answer these fools according to their folly*; one might tell them (though to tell them would only make them *mock* the more) "That this envied Station of imperial *Reason* is no usurpation: that this authority was given her, to secure Humanity in its native dignity: that the *Appetites* mistake their use; they were not given to regulate the enjoyment of good, but to excite us in the pursuit of it: for, one species of good tending to the preservation of the Individual, and another, to the continuance of the Kind, were we not sensually swayed, as well as rationally directed, Inclination would be frequently too slow to answer the temperate calls of nature: therefore has all-wise Providence implanted in its heedless creature, Man, this instinctive impulse of the sensual Appetites. Within these limits they may fairly act; but should go no further. They have the office of *Monitor*, but not of *Judge*. This last requires a discernment which blind Appetite hath not; who knows no mean nor measure; can form no ideas of the present, from the past or future; a provisionary faculty necessary to prevent the abuse of good, and its conversion into evil: And this being in the district of *Reason* only, it follows, that she, and she alone, was placed by the Author of Nature as a Curb and Guide to impotent and blind *Instinct*. And in our *use of good*, should Reason be silent till the Appetites call to take away, abstinence would then come too late; for *sensuality* demands much more than the body can dispose of, or properly distribute, for the functions of life and health. Nor is it at all strange, when the Appetites prove thus headstrong, that *Reason* should call in *Law* to her assistance; not the Confederate of her usurpation, but the rightful Associate of

her Office, to ſupport her juſt authority, and to correct what ſhe alone was unable to reſtrain. And if, in ſo important a circumſtane as connubial relation, they have made the tye thus ſtrong, it was done with the higheſt moral fitneſs, as it beſt tended to promote and to improve the benefits of domeſtic and civil life. Diſcordancy of temper would never try to reform its own perverſities, while ſo licentious a relief was ſtill at hand.—And what ſtronger ſpur to induſtry, in the diſtreſſes of fortune, than the various Charities of conjugal relation? which, when impaired and weakened, by an eaſy ſeparation, carry away with them all that manly virtue by which both States and private Houſes are ſupported.

As to *pleaſure in general*, the only idea which the Appetites can form of it, are the different degrees, with which the ſeveral kinds ſtrike upon the Senſes. But admitting, the Appetites could go further, and comprehend both its nature and effects, yet ſtill the bribery of thoſe pleaſing ſenſations would ſo much bias the inclination as to corrupt all integrity of judgment. Now, in the indulgence of *pleaſure*, many nice and diſtant reſpects are to be taken in; which no faculty but *Reaſon* can inveſtigate and collect; or when collected, can ſet together and compare, in order to aſſign to each its juſt weight and moment. What faculty but *Reaſon* can diſcern the various effects, which the uſe of pleaſure hath upon the mind and body; or the conſequences of it to thoſe with whom we ſtand related by domeſtic, civil, or religious connexions? Whether, according to this or that degree of it, it doth not enervate the body, obſtruct the agency of the mind, impoveriſh our Families, debauch the Public, or violate the duties of Religion? All theſe are neceſſary conſiderations; for on theſe, HAPPINESS, that is *real pleaſure*, eſſentially depends. Now Reaſon only being capable of forming a true judgment in theſe matters, we conclude, that ſhe, and not the Appetites, is the proper Director in the purſuit of Pleaſure.

Thus have I here adventured to expoſe the egregious folly, and to unmaſk the extreme corruption of heart, which can aſſume the Buffoon or the Philoſopher indifferently, to laugh at miſery and death,

death, and make a mockery both of Law and Religion. For the *Sins*, which the faſhionable Perſon commits with ſo much eaſe, and confeſſes with ſo much gaiety, the Laws both of God and man have been careful to forbid, and vigilant to puniſh; as actions deſtructive of our preſent, as well as future happineſs. How both may reſent it, theſe impious Triflers would do well to conſider. For there is ſo much ſeditious inſolence with reſpect to the Civil Magiſtrate, *in making a mock at Sin*, that he will probably think the fitteſt place for them is Bedlam; and ſo much impiety towards God, that if the place reſerved for reprobate Spirits will admit of any other Gueſts, they muſt needs be ſuch as thoſe who moſt reſemble them in their Conditions, ſuch as make a jeſt of Sin and Miſery, and a mockery both of God and Man.

A SERMON

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE KING,

IN LENT, MDCCLXV.

SERMON VI.

1 COR. IX. 24.

KNOW YE NOT THAT THEY WHICH RUN IN A RACE, RUN ALL; BUT ONE RECEIVETH THE PRIZE? SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.

THE Apoſtle, propoſing to ſhew to his Converts of *Corinth* the advantages which they, who contend for a heavenly prize, have over thoſe who aſpire no higher than an earthly one, illuſtrates his Argument by a ſimilitude taken from their ſo celebrated *Olympic Games*; which contains a reaſoning to this effect—

"Worldly attainments (ſays he) are like the Contentions in your *Olympic Games*; where, though the Athletes be many, and the ſtruggle great, yet the prizes are extremely few, and the Succeſs very uncertain; for that every Adventurer hath an Adverſary in every other; who all ſtrive to croſs, to retard, to circumvent him in his Courſe. On the contrary, they, who aſpire to that immortal crown, which *Religion* holds out, as the reward of Faith and Charity, are all ſure to win, and be victorious; the rewards being

many, as coming from the all-bounteous hand of our heavenly Father; and the aſſiſtance great, as afforded by the kind encouragement of our Chriſtian Brethren running the ſame race with us. Therefore (ſays the Apoſtle) do you Corinthians put in for this Prize, which no accidents of time or fortune, nor any thing but your own fault, can hinder you from obtaining: and throw behind you all worldly ambition for that agoniſtic glory, where you have ſo ſmall chance of coming off either with honour or advantage."

This the Apoſtle urges as *one* motive for preferring heavenly purſuits to earthly. In the words which follow my text, he inforces *another*—*And every man* (ſaith he) *who ſtriveth for Maſtery is* TEMPERATE in all things: *Now They do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but We, an incorruptible.*—*For this purpoſe*, adds he, *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection.* As much as to ſay, "The purſuit of a heavenly Crown hath not only theſe advantages of *certainty* above that aſpired to, at the Olympic Games, but they are without any peculiar drawback, ſince the preparation for the ſpiritual prize is not more ſevere than the preparation for the earthly." *If I* (ſays he) *a follower of Chriſt, keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection*; the Olympic Racer obſerves as ſtrict a Diſcipline—*he is temperate in all things.*

Such is the force of the Apoſtle's fine perſuaſive, to induce the followers of Chriſt, to prefer the purſuit of ſpiritual things to things temporal.

All, therefore, I ſhall have to do, will be only to draw out and develope the reaſoning of my text, in ſuch a manner as to impreſs the force of it on the mind of every ſerious Hearer. Let us therefore attend to theſe two important Truths—

Iſt, That Worldly advantages, when they come to be ſo conſiderable as to deſerve the name of a *prize*, are of the moſt uncertain and difficult attainment. And,

IIdly, That the immenſe rewards, which Religion holds out to its faithful Servants, are within the reach of every one: where, every

every honeſt and ſincere Aſpirant to the *prize* is ſure not to be diſappointed: for, as in the Words following my text—the Chriſtian Racer *runs not as uncertainly*; *he ſo fights, not as one that beateth the air.*

And here let me obſerve, that the Apoſtle turned the faireſt ſide outwards, in this repreſentation of worldly purſuits, when he compared them to the contentions in the *Olympic Games:* for in thoſe Games ſuperior Skill and Addreſs bade faireſt for the higheſt *prize:* but in the World at large the proſpect is much leſs favourable.

Wiſdom and Induſtry, the qualities deſigned both by Providence and by Nature, to procure, for the WORTHY, the fruits of their honeſt labours, are ſo croſſed and traverſed by what the Ignorant call *Chance*, in the diſpoſition of human affairs, that Folly, and random Starts, often get to the goal before them, and ſnatch away the *prize* from them.

While Solomon, the Wiſe, conſidered, but in ſpeculation only, the natural connexion there is between merit and ſucceſs, he was ready to conclude, that the Rewards of Providence conſtantly attended the Efforts of Wiſdom and Virtue: But when he turned his Contemplations outward, and obſerved what was doing amongſt Men, he gave a very different account of theſe matters; *I returned* (that is from ſpeculation, and an ideal World), and *then I ſaw under the Sun* (that is, in practice and in the affairs of men) *that the race is not to the Swift, nor the battle to the Strong*; *nor yet bread to the Wiſe*; *nor yet riches to men of Underſtanding*; *nor yet favour to men of Skill: But time and chance happeneth to them all.*

However, let us take this matter at the beſt, and throw ſuch untoward circumſtances aſide: Let us ſuppoſe, Wiſdom and Induſtry to be as neceſſary, and as ſucceſsful, in affairs at large, as Diet and Exerciſe to an Olympic Racer; and then ſee, what the Man of the World is to ſtruggle with; what oppoſition he is to encounter; and how many ways his faireſt endeavours are likely to be defeated.

In private Stations, the deſerving Candidate for the World's favour is eternally croſſed by thoſe two capital enemies of Merit, IGNORANCE and ENVY. It is hard to ſay, whoſe malignancy is moſt baleful. For if *Ignorance* be leſs active, its ill influence operates ſooneſt. Riſing merit requires early protection and ſupport. *Ignorance* is the Winter of the moral World; which fixes the finer and gentler Spirits in a torpid inactivity; and either deſtroys, or greatly retards, the earlieſt and moſt vigorous productions of the human mind. And thoſe natures of a more hardy texture, which can ſtruggle through its inclemencies, ſcarce ever attain to half their growth or maturity: While thoſe, who, by a rare felicity in their early culture, eſcape the ſeverity of this froſt of Ignorance, no ſooner begin to riſe high in the view of men, than they are aſſaulted from the quarter oppoſite, from the Dog-ſtar rage of *Envy*.

Nor are the Deſerving to expect better treatment from the patronage of their Judges; from thoſe whoſe condition enables them, or whoſe ſtations intruſt them to confer theſe Rewards. They are often ignorant; and as often corrupt. And even ſuch of them who have good intentions, are commonly of ſo narrow minds and contracted views, as never to ſeek, or never to reach, a merit become eminent; but content themſelves with giving that to Mediocrity, which is due only to ſuperior Talents: while the Corrupt are even vigilant to ſuppreſs merit, as a thing troubleſome to them, both in their natural diſpoſitions and civil purſuits.

If we turn from private to public life, we ſhall find, that the *ambitious* Adventurer has ſtill more formidable Dangers to encounter. Here, every man has every other leagued againſt him; and all ranged under the banners of thoſe leading paſſions, Malice and Selfiſhneſs. Malice will leave no means of calumny and ſlander untried or unemployed, to arreſt him in his courſe: and Selfiſhneſs will ſecretly put in practice every art of fraud and hypocriſy, to divert and draw him from the goal.

Such

Such is the common iſſue of human affairs: And hence hath ariſen, in every age and place, that uniform complaint of defeated virtue, and of merit neglected; of integrity vainly ſtruggling with corruption, and of wiſdom ſuccumbing under the bauble of folly.

Now St. Paul, writing to the *Corinthians*, a People well verſed in the knowledge and ways of men; taught, by long experience, the inſtability and vanity of human grandeur, wearied out by diſaſtrous tuggs with Fortune, and their attention now ſtrongly drawn, by the opening view of *better things*; St. Paul, I ſay, takes advantage of this favourable ſituation, to turn their paſſions from human objects, ſo unſucceſsfully purſued, towards heavenly, where their well-meant endeavours would always bring them off *more than Conquerors*.

And here, my argument leads me to ſhew, that, in the purſuit of ſpiritual acquirements, all things are as promiſing and eaſy, as they are diſcouraging and difficult in the diſaſtrous projects of worldly Ambition. Inſtead of anxiety, toil, labour, oppoſition, oppreſſion, and final diſappointment; all Here is peace and pleaſure; joy in believing, divine aſſiſtance in obtaining, and full ſecurity in poſſeſſing. For,

1ſt, A ſtruggle for celeſtial Honours has the advantage of the worldly, in this, that All win the prize who have the noble ambition to contend for it. In the worldly Race below, *all run* (ſays the Apoſtle) *but one receiveth the prize:* And (ſays hiſtory and experience) THAT ONE is, generally, the moſt worthleſs of the contenders.

2dly, In purſuit of worldly matters (as hath been obſerved) all our concurrents are our enemies, and do all they can to hinder and divert us in our courſe. In the purſuit of ſpiritual things, all our concurrents are our friends—are our coadjutors. The only ſtrife amongſt good men, in the race to Heaven, is, who ſhall lend the beſt aſſiſtance to his labouring brother: The ſlow is helped forward; the weak is ſupported; the backward reproved; the deſponding encouraged; and the fallen raiſed up.

3dly,

3dly, The third advantage which the Aſpirant to divine felicity has over the vain ſeeker after earthly honours, is the proper qualification of the Adventurers. In worldly purſuits, when all other impediments are away, there is need of great and uncommon abilities, either of mind or body; ſuch as health, courage, activity, induſtry, vigilance, and a capacity of knowledge and eloquence. In ſpiritual concerns, our ſucceſs depends ſolely on ourſelves; in meaning well, and acting honeſtly. This ſupports our confidence, and ſecures us from all irreſolute anxiety; the bane of life, which clogs our endeavours, imbitters our ſweeteſt proſpects, and frequently defeats our beſt-laid ſchemes of happineſs.

4thly, The laſt difference, ſo infinitely to the advantage of religious purſuits, which I ſhall beg leave to inforce, is in the ſtability of the things aimed at.—Could the ſucceſsful aſpirant after earthly things ſecure to himſelf the poſſeſſion of the *prize* he has obtained, for any reaſonable time; or ſpend, what is called, a *Life* in the enjoyment of it; ſome little might be ſaid in his excuſe—nothing, indeed, to juſtify the wiſdom of his choice; yet ſomething, however, to excuſe the folly of his prevention. But, alas! the caſe is much otherwiſe. His glory ſhrinks like a ſhadow from his gripe, even while he is attending to the acclamations of his triumph. Either the time, employed in the purſuit, hath drawn out life to its dregs; or the fatigues, attendant on the conteſt, have broken and deſtroyed the baſis of his Frame and Conſtitution; ſo that the Garland, woven to celebrate his Victory, ſerves only to ornament his Herſe. Or, if haply he ſucceed while in the full vigour of life, he is then often to undergo a ſecond ſtruggle, as hazardous, and generally more toilſome, than the firſt—to preſerve from the Envious what he had fairly won from his Emulators.

But he who *runs the race* which Religion *ſets before us*, is ſubject to none of theſe reverſes of fate or fortune. All is peace, and *joy in believing* here below; and hereafter the ſure poſſeſſion of an *eternal Crown of Glory*.

Since

Since then it is ſo clearly ſeen on which ſide the advantage lies, let us act like Men; like ſuch who know how to form a reaſonable Choice; and make our greateſt intereſt our principal concern.

But then, in this ſpiritual Adventure, let us carry with us our worldly prudence: *Let us not ſo run* (to uſe the Apoſtle's expreſſion) *as one that beateth the air*. Let us not give ear either to the deluſions of Bigotry or Fanaticiſm. Let us not deceive ourſelves, with the fancy that we may, on the one hand, obtain the *prize*, by the obſervance of idle and ſuperſtitious Ceremonies; or, on the other, by the deluſive feelings, or extatic viſions of Enthuſiaſm: but let us, as the ſame divine Guide directs us, *ſo run that we may obtain*: that is, advance ſteadily in that ſober Courſe, which the Goſpel has marked out to us—*of repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; under the guidance, and with the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.

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SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.

MATT. chap. XXII. ver. 12.

AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, FRIEND, HOW CAMEST THOU IN HITHER, NOT HAVING A WEDDING GARMENT? AND HE WAS SPEECHLESS. THEN THE KING SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, BIND HIM HAND AND FOOT, AND TAKE HIM AWAY.——

IN this Parable of the marriage-feaſt of the King's Son, a ſelect company was firſt bidden; and they refuſing the invitation, every wanderer that occurred was indiſcriminately entertained. The Parable was told by our bleſſed Maſter, to ſhadow out the *nature* and *fortune* of his Goſpel; firſt offered to the choſen people of God, the *Jews*; and, on their rejection of it, laid open to the acceptance of the *Gentiles* of every denomination. So far concerning the *general fortune* of the Goſpel.

But in that part of it from whence the words of my text are taken, its *peculiar nature* is, in a very lively manner, ſet before us. The *bidding* to a marriage-feaſt is a free and gracious favour; and

that Gueſt was deemed unworthy of it who did not come in ſuch a habit as was the cuſtomary mark of his receiving the honour done him, with reverence and gratitude. The *Wedding Garment* was the ſymbolum which admitted him to the Feaſt: to be found without it, was an evidence of his being an Intruder; and juſtly ſubjected him to the reſentment of the Lord and Founder of the entertainment. For in ancient times it was the cuſtom for him who was bidden to a marriage, to come in a robe of ceremony, ſo faſhioned and adorned as to be expreſſive of the Characters and Circumſtances of the wedded Pair, by which it became a badge denoting the relation he bore unto them.

Now, this Marriage was the Marriage of Chriſt with his Church: and the Feaſt to which the Elect were invited, was *life and immortality*. So that if we conſider the ſtate and condition of things, the *Wedding Garment* will appear to mean nothing but FAITH in Chriſt the Saviour; this ſacred badge being peculiarly characteriſtic of the nature and genius of the Goſpel. So that the worthy-bidden Gueſt was he who was *cloathed upon* (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *with Chriſt Jeſus*.

In its more general turn, the Parable was fitted to repreſent every age of the Church. Some who were bidden would not come; and ſome who accepted the invitation would come irreverently and prophanely; would be ſo far from complying with the terms of the invitation, as inſolently to affix to it different terms of their own.

But no Age hath ſo well exemplified the diſobedience and inſult held forth in the Parable, as that in which we live. Moſt of thoſe who are *bidden* now ſlight the invitation; and many of thoſe who condeſcend to come, diſhonour the feaſt by rejecting the condition on which they are to be received, FAITH IN THE MESSIAH, the *Wedding Garment* of the Church of Chriſt.

We read, in the text, that when he, who came without the appropriated Robe, was reproved for his neglect, *he was ſpeechleſs*. But the Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt not expect to have our irreligious

ligious Convicts at this advantage. They are ready addreſſed to reaſon with us, and ſhew that "the crime we lay ſo much ſtreſs upon, is at worſt only the rejection of a new-faſhioned Garb: that though they be without their Robe of ceremony, yet their Heart is right; they honour the Lord of the feaſt, and *reverence* his Son; they ſo ſquare their life, as to be worthy of God's favour and friendſhip: and for the reſt, they are ſure, he will never quarrel with them for a punctilio." In a word (to ſpeak out of the terms of the Parable) the new-fangled modern Chriſtian is ſure, he ſays, that "the man who obſerves the *moral Law*, ſhall, without any more ado, be intitled to the favour of his Maker, and conſequently, to all the benefits of Chriſt's Goſpel: for how *faith in Jeſus* can *juſtify* him, or be the very thing which ſhall intitle him to eternal life, he cannot comprehend: that it may be of uſe as a viaticum here, he will not deny, ſince Jeſus has more clearly explained the nature and rectified the practice of the *moral Law*, and ſo is his beſt Inſtructor in its *righteouſneſs*: but how this *Faith* ſhould be the only Introducer to God's preſence hereafter, while the *moral man*, laden deep with *good works*, is kept without—*credat Judæus Apella.*"—Such is the confident talk of the PHILOSOPHERS of our time. Yet, *juſtification by faith alone* is the conſtant language of the Goſpel.

And to ſhew that it is not the language of Fanaticiſm, I ſhall endeavour to evince the *reaſonableneſs* of the Chriſtian doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and of the *neceſſity* of FAITH to obtain the promiſes of the Goſpel. By which the egregious folly of expecting to obtain them on any other condition will amply appear.

Let us then, in compliance with the falſe notions of theſe men, ſuppoſe that a ſtrict and uniform obedience to the *moral Law* will intitle us to *everlaſting life*; and the rather, becauſe St. Paul, in his reaſoning with the Jews, ſeems to concede (though by way of argument *ad homines*) that had they obſerved a ſtrict and uniform obedience to the *Law*, it would have given *life*; and *righteouſneſs*,

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as he expreſſes it, *had been of the Law*: but that, failing in this, they were brought into a ſtate of *death*; from which they could be redeemed only *by faith in Jeſus.*

Now, were this ſtrictly true, what would the race of Adam be the better for ſo vain a title? For who of us, except him who was the Son of God as well as of Adam, ever preſerved his integrity inviolate, and did not frequently deviate from moral rectitude? though he might as often recover himſelf, and by repentance and amendment put in again for God's mercy and favour; yet ſtill man had irrevocably forfeited all claim to *eternal life*, even though *eternal life* had, indeed, been attendant on ſtrict uniform obedience.

Nor let any one imagine, from what he thinks he can collect of the light of Nature, concerning God's readineſs to pardon a returning ſinner, and to receive him into his favour, that this grace conſiſts in a reſtoration to *eternal life.* Such a fancy is founded in a miſtaken notion that *eternal life* is the debt or wages, or covenanted reward, of our ſincere and careful endeavours to obey the *moral Law* of God. The light of Nature gives us a very different view of things. It ſets before us the infinite diſparity between our imperfect obedience, in this momentary ſtate, and the reward of *eternal life* in a better. If we will believe the Apoſtle, it teaches this, and this only, *that God is a rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him*; and that the good *moral man* who miſſes of his reward here, will find it hereafter: that the reward, indeed, will be abundant; for though we be *unprofitable Servants*, yet is he a moſt bountiful Maſter. But *abundant* and *eternal* belong to different ſyſtems.

This Truth, ſo clearly deduced from natural Reaſon, Revelation ſupports and confirms. *Eternal life* in this Diſpenſation never being ſo much as once repreſented in holy Scripture as the *conſtitutional reward* of the virtuous man's practice, but always as the *free gift* of God.

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The conſequence of which truth is, that if this *free gift* were offered on Condition (and that it was, all ſides are agreed), the Condition muſt be of a thing different from that virtuous life which hath God's favour naturally annexed to it.

Accordingly we find, that the condition was, in fact, different. When life and immortality was firſt offered to Adam, the condition was the obſervance of a *poſitive* command, *not to eat of the forbidden fruit:* and when, after the forfeiture of this free Inheritance by the firſt man's diſobedience, we were reſtored to life by the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, the condition was another *poſitive* command, *faith in the Meſſiah.* And here the goodneſs and compaſſion of the Godhead to miſerable man are moſt eminent. *Eternal life* was, as we ſay, firſt given on the obſervance of a *poſitive* command, a command to do or to forbear doing; and therefore was almoſt as ſoon forfeited as it was beſtowed. And we may reaſonably conclude, from the weakneſs and perverſity of human nature, that as often as it was beſtowed on the ſame condition, it would be as often forfeited: To ſecure, therefore, ſo precious a gift to the forfeited Offspring of Adam (for a condition was not annexed, to tantalize our hopes, but to exerciſe our obdience) God hath finally revealed the condition of *eternal life*, to be ſomething to be believed, inſtead of ſomething to be obſerved. From henceforth the gift was no longer precarious, but ſecure and certain. So much order, reaſon, and beauty, are to be found in the various Diſpenſations of Religion!

And here let me obſerve, that the not diſtinguiſhing between, the Rewards objected to the encouragement of obedience by *natural*, and thoſe by *revealed* Religion, hath been the ſole cauſe of thoſe dark and endleſs Debates concerning *Juſtification by Faith:* For while one Party explained away this fundamental Principle of the Goſpel, the Other ſupported it by arguments which debaſe human Reaſon, and diſhonour the divine Attributes. In the mean time, this *diſtinction alone* (equally founded in Reaſon and Revelation

lation, and confounded between folly and ſophiſtry) would have relieved the labouring cauſe of Truth from all the abſurdities and impieties employed in its defence.—But, how the Doctrine of *Salvation by* FAITH ALONE can conſiſt with the other, of *the neceſſity of good works to obtain the favour of God*, and how that which hath a *condition annexed*, and *a price paid*, can be called a FREE GIFT, will be ſhewn at large in another place. It ſufficeth at preſent, that the Key to this Myſtery is here intruſted to your keeping.

And now, to apply this Scripture-Doctrine of *Eternal life by Faith*, to the conſideration of all who call themſelves Chriſtians.

I will preſume, that the aim of all ſuch is to obtain the *Goſpel-rewards*: for, though, in the faſhionable language of the *mere moral Chriſtian*, they aſk no more than the *favour* of God, yet they conſider this *favour* as only another name for *eternal life*. But this *moral Chriſtian* muſt have a very high opinion of the perfection of his Morals, if he can imagine that, becauſe *natural Religion* tells him, it will intitle him to God's *favour*, that therefore it will intitle him to *eternal life*; a free gift, which Revelation brings to light, and offers on a different condition, namely, *Faith in the Meſſiah*. Such a fancy is indeed attempting the *Kingdom of heaven by force*. But it is not that force which Scripture recommends, of *faith and prayer*, but the prophane violence of human preſumption. And of what is miſerable man ſo vain?—The *morality* of his actions. Yet are theſe, for the moſt part, little better than his more ſhining frailties. And an ancient Father, if he conſidered them in the concrete rather than the abſtract, did not calumniate, when he called them, *ſplendida peccata*.

Let a man examine the *Condition* of his Morals, and he will find ſuch bias of appetite, ſuch heat of paſſion, and ſuch obliquity of ſelf-intereſt, as cannot but ſtain and ſully all the purity of Virtue. Or if it eſcape this pollution, yet the ſilent influences of Habit and Conſtitution ſo mix themſelves with the true motive to moral

moral practice (the ſenſe of duty) that he will find its intrinſic value greatly alloyed. If he conſider the *Qualification* of his Morals, he will generally find them puſhed too far, or elſe ſtopping ſhort of the point of perfection. If he conſider the *Uniformity* of his Morals, he will find them receiving perpetual interruption, from negligence and inattention, from ſecular cares and purſuits, from ſtrong appetites, and from ſtronger temptations: and if, after this, he will ſtill perſiſt in thinking *ſuch Morals* deſerving of an *eternal reward*, he will give us, in his *Modeſty*, a ſtill ſtronger evidence of the futility of human Virtue.

But he will ſay, "It is not ſo much human merit as the mercies of God (which Natural Religion teaches to be infinite, thoſe mercies which Divines call the *uncovenanted*) whereon he relies for the attainment of *eternal life*."

It is certain that God's *goodneſs and mercy* are infinite: and had we only theſe to bring into the account, we might perhaps be left to conclude, that when God thinks fit to reward, he rewards in proportion to them, that is, *infinitely*, or at leaſt ſo abundantly, as to ſurpaſs all human conception. But we reckon too faſt, and, in our eſtimate, forget, that though his *goodneſs and mercy* be infinite, his *Wiſdom and his Juſtice* are ſo likewiſe: And what abatement the conſideration of theſe latter attributes may make in the rewards due to human Virtue, we have ſeen already. Nay, though his *Juſtice* might not exact a ſevere balance on the account, yet his *Wiſdom* might. It may (for aught natural Reaſon hath diſcovered to the contrary) be neceſſary to the moral Government of the Univerſe, that the moſt ſevere example ſhould be made of man wilfully wicked. And nothing can clear up this dark and doubtful proſpect, and ſet the overwearied mind at reſt, but REVELATION: Which, by teaching the *atonement* of Chriſt once offered on the Croſs, ſhews us that God's *Juſtice*, from which we had reaſon to expect ſuch dreadful abatements in the rewards due to human virtue, is appeaſed and diſarmed; and by propoſing *eter-*

nal life through faith, ſatisfies us that his *Wiſdom*, in the govern-ment of the Univerſe, does not require the ſevereſt puniſhment for Sin.

Yet our modern Maſters of reaſon think it a high point of philoſophic wiſdom, rather to rely on the *uncovenanted* mercies of God, which Natural Religion ſo obſcurely holds out to us, than on thoſe *covenanted* mercies which the Revealed hath ſo openly and clearly laid before us.

But now, theſe men perhaps may ſay, "We reſt perfectly ſatisfied with the Reward, whatever it may prove, which Natural Religion tells us we ſhall receive at the hand of God, for our ſincere endeavours to deſerve his favour and protection."

But, I am afraid, this falſe modeſty will be found as abſurd as it is impious; and that thoſe who will not labour for the whole reward, which Revelation offers, will loſe even that which Natural Religion may encourage them to ſeek.

Thoſe *without* the Church of Chriſt may be diſtinguiſhed and divided into ſuch who have never been ſufficiently informed of the *ſaving name* of Jeſus; and ſuch who, on a ſufficient propoſal of it to their acceptance, have thought fit to reject it.

How thoſe will be dealt with who lie bound in *invincible ignorance*, the grace and benignity of our holy Religion does more than intimate. It expreſsly teaches, that the merits of Chriſt's death and paſſion have a retroſpect to all times and ages ſince Adam, on whoſe treſpaſs this Redemption riſes. It was for the whole Race of mankind that Chriſt died. So, it ſeems moſt equitable, that thoſe whom his name never reached ſhould have the ſame right to the benefits of his death, *by their morals*, that thoſe who believe in him have *by their Faith*.

As this beſt ſuits the gracious *nature* of an *univerſal Religion*, ſo it ſeems neceſſary that, for the ſupport of its *dignity*, thoſe who, after a ſufficient invitation to accept the terms of ſalvation by Jeſus, have, by the miſguidance of their paſſions, wilfully and knowingly rejected

rejected it, ſhould, together with that, loſe all their claim to what Natural Religion (the foundation on which Revelation ſtands) had encouraged them to expect.

Our *Moraliſts* then, if indeed they aſpire to the *favour* of God, are reduced to this diſtreſs, either to call in FAITH to procure for them *eternal life*; or elſe, if they will admit no Aſſociate to their *Morality*, to reſt contented with what the diſintereſted purſuit of Virtue can afford them.—All that we can do further for them is to pray to God to direct them in their choice.

SERMON VIII.

THE BENEFITS OF HERESY.

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THE BENEFITS OF HERESY.

1 COR. XI. 19.

THERE MUST BE ALSO HERESIES AMONGST YOU, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST AMONGST YOU.

IN this obſervation, the Apoſtle hints at one condition of the *moral World*, inſeparable, as it is at preſent conſtituted, from its exiſtence, a mixture of truth and falſehood, analogous to things ſalutary and noxious in the *Natural*. But, in both Worlds, the GOOD produced by this mixture is ſo eminent as fully to ſupport the trite obſervation, that *Evil was ſuffered for the ſake of a greater good*. Yet was God ſo far from *conſtituting* evil in the moral world for the ſake of that good which it occaſioned, that the whole of this Ordinance was *good*: out of which the folly and perverſity of Man produced *evil*. If it be aſked, how God came to ſuffer this perverſion? The anſwer is, the ſubject was *free-agency*, which

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was not to be controlled.—All that, according to our ideas, could be done, without impinging upon it, was done, by God's turning the natural tendency of *evil* to the production of *new good*. So that God and Man have been perpetually at ſtrife; the One to produce good out of evil; the other, to produce evil out of good.

The greateſt good ever vouchſafed ungrateful Man was *Salvation by the Goſpel of Jeſus*. Yet was he no ſooner poſſeſſed of this bleſſing than he abuſed it, by the production of Hereſies and falſe Opinions. Out of which evil, God again, according to his gracious way of working, produced new good; a ſpecies of which is here mentioned in my text, the *manifeſtation* of the *approved*.—*There muſt be Hereſies amongſt you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt amongſt you.*

I ſhall therefore conſider theſe two particulars, Who are meant by the *approved*; and what is the nature and end of their *manifeſtation*.

I. The falſe Opinions obtruded on the Church of Chriſt, and taught as articles of Faith, which the Apoſtle calls *Hereſies*, made their fortune amongſt the People, either by flattering the levity of their minds, or by ſoothing the corruption of their hearts. They either pretended to clear up myſteries, to reſolve difficulties, and, by new lights, to lead us further into Truth; or elſe to allow of practices, to which the written Law of the Goſpel, and the received diſcipline of the Church, gave no indulgence. In a word, to be *wiſe above what is written*, and to be ſet at large from what is commanded.

Now the Teachers of ſuch Doctrines would not fail of willing Hearers. All the vain and the vicious; the lovers of novelty and the lovers of pleaſure; all who prided themſelves in thinking with the Few; or had degraded themſelves by acting with the Many. All ſuch would be eaſily caught in theſe well-baited traps of *Hereſy*.

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The only ſecurity from theſe ſnares was MODESTY or VIRTUE. The *modeſt man* would remain pure from the itch of novelty, and an over-eager appetite for thoſe ſublime Doctrines which the antient *Heretics* pretended to have received in truſt for the uſe of their followers: And the *virtuous* man would become prejudiced againſt all Practices which opened a door to libertiniſm and concupiſcence. All theſe would be naturally led to make compariſons between the rank Doctrines of their new Teachers, and the ſimplicity, the clearneſs, the rationality, and the purity, of what was delivered in the Goſpel. And the parallel would end in a more full conviction of the Truth, and a warmer adherence to its intereſts. To Theſe, the Apoſtle gives the name of the APPROVED.

II. But the great good here hinted at, as ariſing from the evil of Hereſies, is that the *Approved* may be made MANIFEST: Of which *manifeſtation* we are now to conſider the nature and the end.

1. Its nature is ſeen, firſt, in a conſtant and public adherence to the doctrines of the Catholic Church; in affording no countenance to the diſturbers of its peace, either by neglecting the public offices of the eſtabliſhed worſhip, or by frequenting the aſſemblies of Separatiſts: and, at the ſame time, in ſhewing (if they be able) the reaſonableneſs and defending the truth of the orthodox opinions, and in laying open the ſophiſtry and abſurdity of heretical novelties.

2. Secondly, It is ſeen in the exerciſe of the moſt perfect Charity to the perſons of Heretics: employing only brotherly perſuaſion, inforced by manly reaſoning, to draw them from their errors, and bring them back to the ſheepfold of Chriſt. And when theſe prove ineffectual, then to leave them to the righteous judgment of God; neither employing coercive power ourſelves, nor willingly ſuffering it to be employed by others. In a word—to uſe, for their reduction, no ſeverity but that of Reaſon, and no force but that of Prayer.

The benefit to the Church, in this *manifeſtation*, reſpects both the *approved* themſelves, and alſo their Chriſtian Brethren of the ſame Community.

1. The *profeſſion* of our Faith is repreſented in Scripture as a warfare with the World; and that *the life and immortality brought to light by the Goſpel* is the reward of our Victory in this Conteſt. It was fit therefore that ſo great a gift ſhould be earned by ſome proportionate labour and hazard. Hence every age of the Church hath had its trials: At one time, Perſecutions; at another, Hereſies and Schiſms; and at another, a general Defection from the Faith. All for the accompliſhment of the wiſe ends of Providence: many of them inſcrutable to us: of ſome, Reaſon directs us to form probable conjectures; and of ſome again we have a full knowledge, from Revelation: Of this laſt ſort is the truth recorded in my text, *that there muſt be Hereſies, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt.*

Amongſt the various conflicting evils of the Church, this of *Hereſies* was one of the firſt. And its uſe to the *Approved* conſiſts in its being a ſevere and ſalutary trial of their FAITH and VIRTUE.

The mind of man is naturally delighted with *Novelties:* and if the Novelties be ſuch as do not directly oppoſe, but pretend only to explain and rectify his received opinions, he will be tempted to regard them with a favourable eye.

A pretence to ſublimer knowledge, which is ever the boaſt of *Hereſy*, will ſtrongly incline Humanity, naturally vain, and aſpiring to things beyond its reach, to liſten to theſe ſeducers.

Doctrines which flatter the corruption of the heart, and humour the perverſity of the will, as heretical doctrines always do, will be apt to gain a ready entrance into the unfortified and unguarded Mind.

But they are not only our *Vices* but our *Virtues* likewiſe which expoſe men to the deluſions of *Hereſy*.

Humility,

Humility, or a low opinion of ourſelves, diſpoſes us to give ear to all ſuch who, with the confidence of authority, offer to teach us things important, and, till now, unknown to us: And *Modeſty*, ſure attendant on humility, is apt to interpret that confidence into a mark of certainty of knowledge.

Charity will not ſuffer us to ſuſpect that thoſe who caſt aſide all temporal conſideration for themſelves, can have any other view than the intereſts of truth: And *Chriſtian Simplicity*, the offspring of Charity, leads us to conclude, that when ſuch men ſuffer all kind of evil for the ſupport of their Opinions, nothing leſs than the power of truth can ſupport them in ſuch a conflict.

In a word, the *love of Virtue* itſelf inclines us much in favour of men who, as Heretics frequently do, lead a life of temperance, chaſtity, juſtice, and beneficence.

When, therefore, both our worſt and our beſt qualities equally conſpire to betray us into *heretical* opinions, it muſt be a more than ordinary fortitude in Faith, and ſobriety in Virtue, which can preſerve us ſafe from theſe deluſions, and bring us off, as the Apoſtle ſays, *approved*.

And as, in the courſe of this trial, the faith of the *approved* muſt needs be rectified and eſtabliſhed, and their virtue purified and perfected, the good produced by it makes ſufficient amends to God's Church for the ill permitted in theſe tares of hereſy thus ſown by the *Evil one*.

But ſtill, this is not the whole good produced in thus *manifeſting the approved through hereſies*. Another, and indeed the principal, is the uſeful EXAMPLE of the *approved*, to the Church or Congregation of the faithful; the groſs body of which have neither underſtandings nor hearts of ſufficient ſtrength to detect, or defend themſelves from, the arts of cunning and induſtrious ſeducers, ſuch as the Leaders in *Hereſy* generally are. Or if, haply, they have been taught to keep out of their ſnares, they are too apt to run into the oppoſite extreme, violating all the rules of juſtice in their treatment of theſe Diſturbers of the Church's peace.

Now the EXAMPLE of the *approved* is of great uſe to the body of the Faithful in both theſe reſpects; to fortify their *reaſon* againſt deluſion; and, when that is done, to reſtrain their *paſſions* againſt the deluders.

The ſtrongeſt argument with the People for the truth of their religious Opinions, is the ſeeing them maintained and ſupported by men, whoſe learning, parts, and piety, they hold in reverence. This is a ſpecies of moral evidence moſt flattering to the capacity of the Vulgar; ſuch of the Vulgar, I mean, whoſe natural modeſty, or conſcience of their own weakneſs, is not quite effaced by the heat and fumes of Enthuſiaſm.—An argument founded in the eternal nature of things, and formed on the rules of ſevere logic, is, in their groſs conceptions, a ſlippery ſupport to their Faith; and, in compariſon of an argument which riſes on a great name and a ſpecious authority, very cloudy and evanide.

The influence, therefore, which the *example* of great and good men has on the minds of the People, is exceeding powerful.

Nor is the CONDUCT of the *approved* towards *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics* leſs ſerviceable to the Church of Chriſt. Moderation is not the lot of the People. They approve and execrate; they love and hate with violence: and when once they have condemned the innovation, which they are readily induced to do, on obſerving it to be condemned by thoſe they moſt eſteem and venerate, they are eaſily led to oppoſe the Innovators with a violence which both natural equity and the genius of Chriſtianity forbid. Now here again the Example of the *Approved* is of ſovereign efficacy to teach them charity and moderation. And this Example is ſo powerful, that there is no inſtance to be found of a perſecuting ſpirit which hath long continued, or arrived to any height, but where the men in moſt credit for their ſtations, abilities, and dazzling virtues, have encouraged and led it on. And whenever ſuch have, by their conduct, been ſeen to diſapprove of violent meaſures, the folly and rage of the People have preſently ſubſided.

Thus

Thus amply rewarded are the *Approved* of my text, for all they undergo in this trial, by the benefit they procure to the Public in their EXAMPLE. And thus is the *evil of hereſies*, by the gracious diſpoſition of things, turned to *good*, and *hereſy*, by a contrary exertion, made to produce thoſe two capital Goſpel-virtues, FAITH AND CHARITY. So admirable a vindication of God's general Providence does the ſenſe of my text contain—*there muſt be hereſies amongſt you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt amongſt you.*

SERMON

SERMON IX.

Preached at BRISTOL, November 29, MDCCLIX.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

PUBLIC THANKSGIVING,

FOR VICTORIES OBTAINED BY THE BRITISH ARMS.

SERMON IX.

EZEKIEL XXXVI. 22.

FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, I DO NOT THIS FOR YOUR SAKES, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL! BUT FOR MY HOLY NAME SAKE.

GOD, by his Prophet, having here foretold the unmerited bleſſings which he had in ſtore for the *Houſe of Iſrael*; leſt this wretched People ſhould become vain in their imaginations, and fancy that theſe mercies were reſerved for them, as the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, thought fit to mortify their folly in the words of my text—*I do not this for your ſakes, O Houſe of Iſrael! but for my holy name ſake.* As much as to ſay, "Be careful not to miſtake the purpoſe of theſe promiſed bleſſings, as if they were the reward of your Virtues; for, by your repeated Crimes you have long ſince forfeited all claim to my ſpecial protection: nor yet miſtake them for the effects of any partial fondneſs which your vanity may make you preſume I have for you. I employ you only as the Inſtruments (and this is an honour you little deſerve) for

carrying on the grand ſyſtem of my moral government; which requiring that ſome one Nation ſhould be ſet apart for the Repoſitory of the knowledge of the true God, I have, in honour of my faithful Servant, your Father Abraham, choſen you for the Miniſters of this ſacred Truſt,"

To this purpoſe does the divine Majeſty of Heaven ſpeak to his *choſen People* in the words of my text. And as all *Scripture is written for our inſtruction, to whom the ends of the world are come*, let us conceive that, to the ſame purpoſe, he now ſpeaks to us on this joyful occaſion; which the piety of Government has thought fit to ſanctify, by the appointment of a public thankſgiving for the late great mercies beſtowed upon this Nation, in a ſeaſonable Plenty and civil harmony at home; and in the unparalleled ſucceſſes of the Britiſh arms abroad.

The nature of theſe domeſtic bleſſings, after having been for ſome time alarmed with a ſuſpenſion of them, in penurious Harveſts and divided Councils, is beſt underſtood by the happy difference in our feelings. As to the high importance of our ſucceſſes abroad againſt the Common Diſturber of the peace of Europe—this is a matter to be left to the Politician. On this occaſion, I preſume, I ſhall diſcharge my duty better, in attempting to explain to you thoſe diſpoſitions and ſentiments of piety with which you ſhould poſſeſs yourſelves, to make this grateful offering acceptable to your gracious Protector.

If therefore you be *more ready to* HEAR, *than to give the ſacrifice of Fools*, you ſhould conſider, *For whoſe ſake*, Reaſon tells you, theſe great bleſſings have been conferred upon you: for, on this you are to regulate the teſtimony of your gratitude. Now Reaſon will never direct you to conclude, that they were given *for your ſakes*, unleſs there be a greater portion of ſobriety, virtue, and religion amongſt yourſelves, than is to be found in the reſt of the Chriſtian world. Now if this rare ſeries of good fortune hath not quite intoxicated you (as good fortune is too apt to do), a flight view of the moral condition of theſe Kingdoms would ſoon cure you of

of all ſuch vain imaginations. For where is the holy Faith in Jeſus more openly deſpiſed by the Great, or more vilely ridiculed by the little People, than in this our Iſland? A love of the Public is now laughed at, as the Chimera of the young and unexperienced: a general Corruption, under the name of Prudence, walks bare-faced; and as general a purſuit of Pleaſure, miſcalled Happineſs, bears down before it all the relations and charities of civil and domeſtic life. Chriſtian candour, therefore, will not be offended, if, on this view of things, I addreſs you, my Countrymen and Brethren, in the words of the Prophet—*Thus ſaith the Lord God, I do not this for your ſakes, but for my holy name ſake.*

If we turn from the merits of the Contenders to the merits of the Cauſe, neither Party, I am afraid, will have reaſon to expect any very diſtinguiſhed interpoſition of Providence in their favour. Let us eſtimate the original claim of European Nations to American poſſeſſions, on the ſevere Principles of Natural and Civil Laws; and then lay our hand on our heart, and aſk it ſeriouſly, Whether the unadjuſted claims of the contending nations to deſarts of their own making, in the new world, be ſuch a quarrel, as that in which the Creator of all men, the equal Father of the human race, is likely, in any extraordinary manner, to interfere? Let us do this, and we ſhall hardly have an anſwer much to the ſatisfaction of our vanity.

We ſhould, therefore, ſeek for a cauſe of theſe uncommon mercies, more worthy the Majeſty of Heaven. And we ſhould ſeek for it ſomewhere in the courſe of God's general Providence, in the moral government of the world. And if there we find it, we ſhall ſoon ſee, that the bleſſings beſtowed were *not for our ſakes, but for his holy name ſake.*

God, for the great ends of his univerſal providence, inſcrutable to us, was pleaſed to ſtation his favoured creature Man in a world abounding with natural and moral evil.

But this gracious God, whoſe mercies are over all his works, hath, as a curb and check to theſe evils, which it is man's duty,

as well as intereſt, to oppoſe; and his merit as well as happineſs to ſubdue; inſtituted two capital ordinances, CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION: Supports as neceſſary for the Moral World, as the SUN and MOON for the Natural: the One, to ſuſtain and chear us in this vale of miſeries; the Other, to direct our benighted footſteps towards the happier regions of light and immortality.

We may be certain, therefore, that the ſame Providence, which keeps the celeſtial orbs in their courſes, will be ever watchful that theſe two MORAL LIGHTS ſuffer no extinction or irretrievable decay. For as neither *Comets* above, nor *Ignes fatui* below, can ſupply the uſe of thoſe Luminaries, ſo neither can *deſpotic rule* or *wild fanaticiſm* ſupply the uſe of theſe.

Yet as the moral world, for very obvious reaſons, is infinitely more ſubject to diſorder than the natural, it may ſometimes happen that theſe *moral lights* ſhall ſuffer ſuch dreadful eclipſes, and have their ſplendor ſo polluted and impaired, as to ſhine purely no where, and brightly only in ſome ſmall obſcure corner of the Globe. Thus, for inſtance, the bleſſing of Civil Liberty, the ſource of all human happineſs, was, for many ages, totally extinct; and the knowledge of the Deity himſelf, the fountain-head of Truth, was, for as many more, confined within the narrow limits of the land of Iſrael.

Now this being the precarious condition of the *moral world* in general, let us ſee what may be the actual ſtate of CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION at preſent on the earth.

As to the former, if we look round us, from the neareſt to the remoteſt Continent, we ſhall no where find a *Society* founded on the true Principles of Civil Liberty. Either the nature of its Convention hath been ſo ill conceived (as in the *Eaſt*) that the abſolute deſpotic *Form* hath been miſtaken for the immediate Inſtitution of Heaven; and, conſequently, every ſpecies of free Government for eſſential Licence and Impiety: or elſe, where the rights of mankind have been better underſtood (as in the *Weſt*), where the three legitimate *Forms*, the Monarchic, the Ariſtocratic, and the Popular,

Popular, have been truly diſcriminated, yet men ſeeing that civil freedom was naturally confined to theſe three *Forms*, erroneouſly concluded, that each of them ſeparately, and *unmixed* with the other two, was able to ſuſtain all the rights and advantages of it: not conſidering that, while they operate ſingly, they are but the ſame Tyranny in a different ſhape: For while each *Form* exiſts alone, the whole Sovereignty reſides in a part only of the Community, which ſubjects the reſt to deſpotic rule.

But true and laſting Liberty reſults from the ſkilful combination of the three *Forms* with one another; where each of the Orders, which governs abſolutely in each *Form*, hath its due ſhare of the Sovereign Power, and no more. Here all impotency of rule is eternally excluded; for no man, or body of men, can exerciſe Tyranny over itſelf.

A Government, thus truly free, is like one of thoſe ſovereign Medicines, ſo much ſpoken of, where each of the various ingredients of which it is compoſed, does, together with its virtues, contain ſuch noxious qualities, that, if uſed ſimply and alone, might occaſion great diſorders, but when ſkilfully intermixed with the reſt, the whole hath corrected the noxious qualities and exalted the ſalutary virtues of each part.

Whenever ſuch a well-compoſed Society becomes deſpotic, it muſt be by the ſilent diſſolution of its complex Form; as when one Order uſurping on the reſt, hath gotten the whole of the Sovereignty to itſelf.

With ſo happy a Conſtitution of Government hath it pleaſed Divine Prividence to bleſs this Iſland; the honoured Repoſitory of ſacred Freedom, at a time when almoſt all the other civilized Nations have betrayed their truſt, and delivered up civil Liberty, the moſt precious gift of Nature, for a prey to their fellow-creatures.

Now the preſervation of this ſacred Ordinance being no leſs neceſſary to the temporal welfare of man, than the knowledge of the true God is to his ſpiritual, we muſt conclude, that the ſame gracious Providence would be now no leſs watchful, for the preſerva-

tion

tion of the Britiſh nation, than it was of old, for the Jewiſh; yet ſtill ſpeaking the ſame language to both—*I do not this for your ſakes, but for my holy name ſake.*

If we turn from *Government* to RELIGION, we ſhall have the ſame reaſon to adore the gracious Majeſty of Heaven ſtill working for his *holy name ſake*, that is, for the general good of mankind. For though it would be vanity to boaſt, in this caſe as in the other, that true Religion, like civil Liberty, is to be found only in Great Britain, when we behold the Proteſtant Faith, profeſſed in the purity of the Goſpel, in ſo many of our kindred Churches on the Continent, yet this we cannot but declare, and ſhould always acknowledge with the utmoſt gratitude, that the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, by means of the mighty power of its Imperial HEAD, is become the Fortreſs and Bulwark of the Proteſtant profeſſion throughout the world; and therefore, we may be aſſured, the object of God's peculiar regard; whoſe ſpecial Providence works chiefly for general ends.

In the courſe of this quarrel, it hath been ſometimes ſaid, that the preſent combuſtion in Europe was to be regarded in the light of a RELIGIOUS WAR, againſt a Confederacy animated by Romiſh Superſtition and Tyranny: and ſometimes again, that it broke out and was carried on only for the diſcuſſion of our civil Intereſts. But in whatever ſhifting lights it may ſuit the ends of Politicians to preſent it, the *Lord of Hoſts* himſelf, by ſo viſibly *fighting our battles*, hath fully decided the queſtion, and in the midſt of victory hath declared it to be indeed a RELIGIOUS WAR: for human preſumption itſelf will never venture to account for ſuch diſtinguiſhed mercies to a ſinful nation any otherwiſe, than by conſidering Great Britain in the light, as of the ſole remaining Truſtee of *Civil Freedom*, ſo of the great Bulwark of *Goſpel Truth*.

Let us, therefore, on this day of Triumph, and perhaps more ſuitably on this day than any other, *humble ourſelves* before the Sovereign Majeſty of Heaven, confeſs our total unworthineſs of theſe diſtinguiſhed mercies, and echo back again to the Throne of

of grace thoſe awful words which once proceeded from it—" We " confeſs, O almighty Father, that the great things which thou " haſt done for us, *were not done for our ſakes, but for thy holy name* " *ſake.*"

Nor will this conſideration abate, but, on the contrary, increaſe our Gratitude and Joy.

Our *Gratitude*, for the honour done us, in being made the Inſtruments, in the hand of God, for ſupporting and carrying on the great Syſtem of his moral Government.

Our *Joy*, in the moſt enlarged exerciſe of Chriſtian Charity; while we conſider Great Britain as become, by God's ſpecial appointment, the common Benefactor of Mankind.

But theſe ſentiments are not ſuitably expreſſed by the mere exploſions of our mouth, in ſolemn praiſes eaſily diſcharged: they are to be manifeſted in the ſervice of our lives, which now becomes doubly due; a ſervice regulated on the nature and end of the Bleſſings beſtowed: for, without the knowledge of theſe bleſſings, our praiſes may be preſumption, and our ſervice but a buſy impertinence.

To aſſiſt you, therefore, my Brethren, in your good purpoſes, I have kept you thus long, in explaining what I take to be the true nature and deſign of the bleſſings we now commemorate. If we be made ſenſible that they were beſtowed for the *ſake* of this Repoſitory of Civil Liberty, this Bulwark of the Chriſtian Faith, we ſhall eaſily underſtand what returns we ought to make for them.

If *Civil Liberty*, the ſource of all worldly Good, be ſo precious in the ſight of God, and yet its influence, in the revolutions of ſtate, ſo contracted, and its very exiſtence ſo precarious, How great ſhauld be our care, with whom the ſmall remains of it are now intruſted, that we ourſelves contribute nothing to the further diminution of it!

By what hath been already obſerved to you, it is manifeſt that this glorious Fortreſs of Britiſh Liberty can never be taken by ſtorm;

ſtorm; however liable it may be to the ſilent decays of Time, and to the ſecret undermine of wicked men.

To provide therefore againſt theſe miſchiefs, we ſhould diſcountenance and oppoſe ourſelves to PUBLIC CORRUPTION of every kind, whether it affect the Liberty of the Subject, or the Prerogative of the Crown. Both ſorts are now grown ſo numerous and exceſſive, that the limits of this Diſcourſe will only permit me juſt to mention a capital inſtance of each.

Amongſt thoſe which affect the liberty of the Subject, is that profligate venality now become univerſal in the choice of our Repreſentatives to Parliament; and againſt which no Laws human or divine hath yet been able to put a check.

Let us once then, for a trial at leaſt, encourage a careful choice of able and honeſt men; and ſupport our choice only by honourable and legal methods. But if this fail, and it be found a taſk took difficult to draw a mercenary People all at once from habitual Proſtitution, let us, however, in mere compaſſion to humanity (the honour of Religion ſet aſide) employ all our intereſts, in our ſeveral ſtations, to remove the cauſe, though the guiltleſs cauſe, of that peſtilential PERJURY, which rages through the Nation on every return of a new Parliament. Reflect, my Brethren, on the dreadful contraſt between a *general Thankſgiving* and a *general Election*. A whole People, one year devoting themſelves to God; and the next to the *Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*.

The ſpecies of *corruption* which moſt affects the rights and dues of the Crown, and conſequently the operations of Government, may be ſummed up in partial entries, colluſive evaſions, and that more daring contempt of Law and Juſtice, a contraband Traffic And here, while you are *rendering to God the things that are Goa's* (and what is more juſtly his than gratitude for mercies received?) let me preſs it on your Conſciences, to *render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*.

When

When you have done this, another duty will remain for your gratitude to diſcharge; and that is, to join together in ſupport of a virtuous and upright adminiſtration, whenever we ſhall be bleſſed with it; and till then, to avoid taking party, or fomenting the diſcords amongſt the ſelf-intereſted Great, by following factious men or factious meaſures.

Theſe are the ſlight outlines of that duty we owe our Country; and which we ſhould now think of paying, in diſcharge of that immenſe debt of gratitude we owe to our heavenly Protector, too large indeed to be all laviſhed on this one Object, how ennobled ſoever, by the late uncommon mercies of Providence.

Another, ſtill more intimate, will claim its ſhare; I mean, our NATIONAL CHURCH, eſtabliſhed in the purity of the Goſpel; and now become the common Fortreſs of the Faith.

Nothing but ſad experience would ſuffer us to conceive that a Church of this importance, honoured by its friends, and dreaded by its enemies abroad, ſhould be inſulted by Infidels, diſturbed and diſhonoured by Fanatics, and weakened by the ſeparation of our too ſcrupulous Brethren, at home.

Our care and concern therefore for its intereſts will be beſt ſeen by our conduct towards all theſe ſort of men.

The firſt and moſt inſolent enemy of all godlineſs is the modern UNBELIEVER, who now rears his head and walks openly abroad, under the more creditable appellation of *Freethinker*. He profeſſes himſelf to be the bane of our *hopes*, in that only ſolid conſolation of humanity, the *proſpect of futurity*. Him therefore, and his notions, we ſhould avoid, as *the ſickneſs that deſtroyeth in the noon-day*; but think no more of applying to the Magiſtrate to curb his inſolence, while his only weapon is his wit, than we would ſolicit a civil edict againſt a peſtilence.

The next enemy of our peace is the PAPIST. As the Unbeliever would ſhut up all the avenues to future felicity, ſo the Papiſt would ſhut up all but one; and have that in his own keeping, impervious to all who love truth, or have any reverence for common ſenſe.

The Freethinker would cajole us into miſery and folly: the Papiſt would frighten us into it. The chief ſupport of the Pope's tyrannic power was his uſurped authority over Kings and Princes; and the fatal inſtruments of his rage, were thoſe fanatic aſſaſſins ſtill ready addreſſed to plunge the dagger into the boſom of thoſe whom he has anathematized; ſo that the Legiſlature was neceſſitated to interpoſe with what theſe murderers miſ-call *ſanguinary Laws*; the terror of which was not pointed at them as falſe Believers, but as Traytors and Rebels to their King and Country. And that it might be ſeen, the neceſſity was not pretended but real; and the object of their reſentment, bad Citizens, and not miſtaken Religioniſts, they have, from their very firſt enacting, been chiefly held out in terror; and never put in force but where the Recuſant convict was at the ſame time a convict Traytor. And ſince the Bulls of Rome loſt their power to frighten the People, or to miſchieve the Sovereign, theſe *ſanguinary Laws* have ſlept ſo profoundly, that the far greater part both of Proteſtants and Papiſts hardly know that any ſuch are in being.

And may *they* ſleep! but let the Guardians of the Law be ſtill awake: for though Time, in its ceaſeleſs revolutions, hath removed this danger from our Country, yet it hath brought in another; I mean the ſtrong attachment of this ſect to a Popiſh Pretender; whoſe abſurd, unnatural claim of governing a free People againſt their wills, can never ſucceed but by the deſtruction of thoſe two capital Bleſſings, *Civil Liberty* and *pure Religion*; for whoſe ſake (as I have ſhewn) an unmeriting People hath been taken under the moſt diſtinguiſhed protection of Heaven.

A right conduct towards theſe Diſturbers of mankind, a generous People will never be at a loſs to underſtand.—While the Papiſt forbears to mix in civil factions, and aims at nothing but the liberty of worſhipping God in his own way, Proteſtant Charity will be always ready to connive at an indulgence to him which he will allow to no ſect beſide; and which he will not ſo much as attempt to *deſerve*, by giving ſome reaſonable ſecurity to the Civil Magiſtrate

Magiſtrate for his Obedience. But whenever we find the councils of Popery to tend to the diſturbance of the State, either by inforcing the wicked claims of a Romiſh uſurpation, or the abſurd pretenſions of a ſervile Penſioner of a Romiſh Court, then the duty of our great Truſt requires us to awake the terrors of the Law againſt them, till we bring them back to the modeſt meaſures of a mere religious ſect. And we ſhould be the more watchful, as we are not ignorant of their devices; eſpecially that ſtale trick of aſſuming every form of diſguiſe; indifferent to them whether it be *infidelity* or *fanaticiſm*, further than as the prevailing faſhion directs them to that which is the likelieſt inſtrument of general miſchief.

So far, my Brethren, with regard to theſe native foes of our happy Conſtitution.

No leſs degree of prudence, but much greater of lenity and indulgence, is to be practiſed towards thoſe who are indeed, or would be thought, its friends.

A new ſpecies of Fanaticiſm has of late ariſen within the boſom of the Church, and would fain be thought to belong to it, now known by the fantaſtic name of METHODISM. Theſe men hold themſelves clear of all blame, becauſe they teach only the Doctrines of the eſtabliſhed Church. What they ſay may be true, for aught I know. But it ſhould be conſidered by thoſe whom this profeſſion may delude, that the *manner of teaching* is often as injurious to truth and peace as the *matter of the Doctrine*; when the heat of zeal raiſes piety to frenzy; and the leven of bigotry ſinks reaſon into nonſenſe.

Now, whether ſuch enthuſiaſtic ideas, as *a ſudden and violent new birth*—*a divinity in our inward feelings*—and *a miraculous co-operation of the Deity with our outward labours*—Whether theſe, I ſay, have not a ſtrong tendency to diſhonour and diſcredit the dignity and ſobriety of the *Faith*, *delivered to the ſaints*, We however, if they will not, ſhall do well to conſider.

In the mean time, it is our duty, as, on the one hand, to afford no encouragement to theſe irregularities, by being preſent in their aſſemblies, or giving countenance to their Leaders; ſo on the other, to forbear diſturbing or vexing them, by taking advantage of any *legal defects* in their claim to the common rights of *Conſtitutional toleration.*

But ſtill we ſhould keep a watchful eye over *Fanaticiſm*; for it is of the nature of all ſects founded in it, to be crouching and fawning, to a Government vigilant and ſtrong; but whenever it can be taken at advantage, buſied on other objects, whether diverted by foreign Enemies, or weakened by domeſtic Factions, it is, I ſay, of the nature of ſuch ſects, to puſh the tottering fabric of Government from its baſis, down that precipice on which it has been driven by its other adverſaries. We have a dreadful illuſtration of this truth in the Fanatics of the laſt age, who, on their firſt appearance, under the name of *Independents*, breathed nothing but peace, and full obedience to civil Power, though riſing in profeſſed oppoſition to the eccleſiaſtical. Yet public diſcord no ſooner began to rage, than they joined with the moſt inveterate of the Factions, in the deſtruction both of Church and State.

I uſe this example for the extreme aptneſs of the compariſon. For it is to be remembered, that when, in the revolutions of State, the Regicides came to take their turn at the ſcaffold and the gallows, their Friends took care to collect and publiſh their laſt ſpiritual meditations. Now in theſe there appears ſo wonderful a coincidence, both in the ideas and expreſſion, with the journals of our *Methodiſts*, concerning *beatific viſions*, *divine illuminations*, and *inward feelings*, that did we not know that the *language of Fanaticiſm* has, in all ages, been as ſteady, conſtant, and unchangeable, as much the ſame with itſelf, as the *language of reaſon* ever was, one might ſuſpect this regicidal collection to be the ſpiritual breathings of an enlightened Methodiſt.

Laſtly, With regard to our Brethren the Proteſtant ſectaries of more antient date, who from various accidents have long diſſented from

from the eſtabliſhed worſhip, and are now ſecured in their natural Rights by the fundamental Laws of the Conſtitution, we of the national Church ſhould ſhew, by all brotherly acts of love and kindneſs, that the *Toleration* given them by the Laws does, in our ſenſe, add honour to the Goſpel, as well as ſtrength and ſafety to a free Community. More eſpecially ſhould theſe diſpoſitions be manifeſted to that founder, and far more conſiderable part of the Separation, the *Preſbyterian*; as well for that theſe did not ſpring, like other of the wild ſects, from Fanaticiſm, as becauſe they differ from us rather in the form of *Diſcipline*, than in the more eſſential matters of the Chriſtian Faith. As therefore we both profeſs to be under the ſame *Shepherd*, we ſhould not, ſure, make one another uneaſy becauſe we lodge in different *folds*; ſeeing we both hold, that a time will come when *all ſhall hear his voice, and there ſhall be one fold under one Shepherd.*

But now, when we have done all this, a harder taſk will ſtill remain, the diſcharge of that duty which we owe to ourſelves, as members of that myſtical Body, the Church of Chriſt.—At the Reformation, we profeſſed to regulate that part of it to which we belong, on the purity, and to contain it within the limits, of the Gospel. We ſhould therefore diſcourage, at leaſt by our neglect, all mixture of human Doctrines ariſing from the vanity of being *wiſe above what is written.* We ſhould confine ourſelves to Goſpel-inſtruction, and be content with what the ſacred Word plainly teacheth. This is the only ſure barrier to all that bigotry, ſuperſtition, and Fanaticiſm, which have deformed thoſe Sects and Churches, we have been neceſſitated to drive from us, or from whence we have been driven. The Gospel is our Pole-ſtar, of which if we once loſe ſight, we ſhall be ſoon ſwallowed up in the boundleſs, unfathomable ocean of *Opinion.*

But then, as we ſhould not *add* to the Goſpel, we ſhould be equally careful not to *take from it*, by explaining away (as is the mode) thoſe fundamental Doctrines held out in almoſt every page, becauſe our line of Reaſon may be too ſhort to fathom them.

This

This is a ſhort ſummary of the duties we owe, and which, Gratitude, on this occaſion, calls upon us to pay, to our COUNTRY and our RELIGION, the two great ſources of human felicity; and, on that account, ſo wonderfully guarded, as we have ſeen, by the wakeful eye of Providence.

This ſhould ſtimulate us to Virtue with redoubled vigour, and give a double horror to the turpitude of Vice: for woe to the unhappy man, who *deſpiſeth the riches of God's goodneſs; or knoweth not that this goodneſs leadeth him to repentance.*

Happy, indeed, is the ſtate of that favoured People, whoſe return of gratitude for national bleſſings is perſeverance in their virtuous courſe.

This, it muſt be owned with ſorrow, is far from being our caſe. But let us not deſpond. A return to forſaken Virtue is not without its Triumphs; and our holy Religion informs us (what Reaſon would not dare to intimate) that they are Triumphs of the nobleſt kind—*I ſay unto you, that joy ſhall be in Heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons which need no repentance.* Amen.

SERMON

SERMON X.

THE FALL OF SATAN.

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THE FALL OF SATAN.

MATT. IV. 24.

AND THEY BROUGHT UNTO HIM ALL SICK PEOPLE, THAT WERE TAKEN WITH DIVERS DISEASES AND TORMENTS, AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND LUNATICS, AND HE HEALED THEM.

THIS is a clear and exact account of the nature of thoſe diſorders which found relief from the ſalutary hand of Jeſus.

¶ But we have been told of late, that what is here called, the being *poſſeſſed with Devils*, was indeed no other than an atrabilare Lunacy, or one of thoſe *occult diſtempers*, for which Phyſicians could not find a *remedy*, or what was harder ſtill, a *name*; and therefore, in complaiſance to the imbecillity of their Patients, agreed to deem it ſupernatural, or, if you pleaſe, the work of the Devil.

Of this ſuperſtitious fancy (they tell us) Jeſus and his Diſciples took advantage, in order to impreſs a religious horror on their followers.

This is boldly ſaid; and were it as well proved, we ſhould ſoon ſee how laudably theſe men had employed their pains.

In the mean time, as the agency of Satan, recorded in Scripture, is of high importance to illuſtrate the truth of the Goſpel in general, the matter will be well worth a careful inquiry.

But here it may be proper to obſerve, that my buſineſs, at preſent, is only with Believers. The negative of the Propoſition in queſtion was firſt ſtarted by a true Believer; and has been ever ſince ſupported, when it has been ſupported with ſobriety, by men profeſſing the Faith of Jeſus. Theſe, as well as we, who adhere to the plain literal ſenſe, go upon one common principle, that the Goſpel Hiſtory is true, and of divine inſpiration. What is ſought for by both of us, is the true meaning of *Demoniacs*. Nay, we not only go upon one common principle, but profeſs to purſue one common end, namely, the ſupport of the credibility of Goſpel-Hiſtory. On which account, all that is here urged in favour of the literal ſenſe ſtands upon the acknowledged truth of Scripture.—In proving the reality of the *Goſpel Demoniacs* to Unbelievers, a diſferent ſort of argumentation is to be employed. But with profeſſed Unbelievers we have, at preſent, nothing to do; unleſs it be to beſpeak their attention to a theologic argument, alone ſufficient (amongſt a thouſand others) to impreſs upon them a very ſtriking ſenſe of the beauty of this part of God's moral Diſpenſation.

Now, to form a right judgment of the matter in queſtion, Believers ſhould firſt of all conſider, what part the *Devil* bore in the *Oeconomy of Grace*.

In the hiſtory of the *Fall*, to which the writers of the New Teſtament perpetually allude, *Satan*, or the *Tempter*, the *Calumniator*, or the *Evil-one*, (for by all theſe names he is deſigned in Sacred Scripture) is repreſented as inſtigating the firſt Man to diſobedience; for which his puniſhment by the *ſecond Adam*, who reſtored man to his loſt inheritance, is, at the time of the fall, denounced in the terms of *bruiſing his head by the ſeed of the woman*.

When,

When, therefore, this reſtoration was procured by the death of Chriſt, we may reaſonably expect to find that puniſhment on the *Tempter*, which was predicted in the hiſtory of the *Fall*, recorded in the hiſtory of the reſtoration. And ſo, indeed, we do; and on many notable occaſions. When the Diſciples, whom Jeſus had ſent out, come back exulting in the ſucceſs of their Miniſtry, the effect of thoſe ſupernatural powers with which he had intruſted them, He receives them as Conquerors returning in triumph from their holy warfare.—*I beheld Satan* (ſays he) *as lightning fall from Heaven* *. A ſtrong and lively picture of the ſudden precipitation of that *Prince of the Air*, where he had ſo long held his Empire, and hung like a peſtilential meteor over the ſons of men.

The *riſe of Chriſt's kingdom*, therefore, and the *fall of Satan's*, being thus carried on together, it would be ſtrange, indeed, could we find in this hiſtory no marks of the rage of his expiring Tyranny, amidſt all the ſalutary bleſſings of the riſing Empire of Chriſt. But we ſee them in abundance.—We ſee this enemy of our ſalvation mad with deſpair, invoking all the powers of Hell to his aſſiſtance, to blaſt that *peace and good-will towards men*, proclaimed by Angels on the gracious birth-night of the Son of God. For when he underſtood, from his baffled attempts upon his Lord and Maſter †, that the *ſouls* of men had eſcaped his dominion, he turned the exerciſe of his cruelty on their *bodies*, in the moſt humbling circumſtances of pain and oppreſſion that could diſhonour and diſgrace humanity: permitted, no doubt, to range wider at this critical ſeaſon, than at any time before or ſince, in order to manifeſt the Triumphs and Glories of his Conqueror.

Had the *firſt Adam* ſtood in the rectitude of his Creation, he had been immortal; and beyond the reach of natural and moral evil. His fall to mortality brought both into the World. The office of the *ſecond Adam* was to reſtore us to that happy ſtate. But as the *immortality* purchaſed for us by the Son of God, was not, like that

* Luke x. 18. † Luke, chap. iv.

forfeited by Adam, to commence in this world; but is reſerved for the reward of the next, both *phyſical* and *moral evil* were to endure for a ſeaſon. Yet, to manifeſt that they were, indeed, to receive their final doom from the REDEEMER, it was but fit that, in the courſe of his Miniſtry, he ſhould give a *ſpecimen* of his power over them. One part, therefore, of his Godlike labours was taken up in curing all kinds of *natural diſeaſes*. But had he ſtopped here, in the midſt of his victories over *phyſical evil*, the proof of his Dominion over both Worlds had remained defective: juſt as, at the concluſion of his Miniſtry, the truth of the reſtoration to *life and immortality* was made manifeſt by *his own Reſurrection*: without which there had been ſomething wanting to the full evidence of this important truth: He was therefore to diſplay his Sovereignty over *moral evil* likewiſe. And this could not be clearly evinced, as it was, over *natural evil*, but by a ſenſible victory over SATAN; through whoſe temptation, *moral evil* was brought into the world; and by whoſe wiles and malice, it was ſuſtained and increaſed. Hence it was, that, amongſt his amazing works of ſanity and ſalvation, the CASTING OUT OF DEVILS is ſo much inſiſted on by the Hiſtorians of his life and actions. For He had informed them that this was one of the eſſential exploits in the erection of his ſpiritual Kingdom. *If* (ſaid he) *I caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God,* THEN *the Kingdom of God is come unto you* *.

Thus, from the very genius of the GOSPEL, from the nature and conſtitution of the ſyſtem of GRACE, it appears that this was a *real ejection of the Evil Spirit.*

But, beſides this, Jeſus and his Diſciples, in their *manner* of working, and in their *mode* of recording what they worked, did every thing which might beſt diſplay a real victory over *Satan.*

Let the *Jews* of that time, let the *Diſeaſed* themſelves, be as much miſtaken as we can ſuppoſe them to be, concerning *diabolic poſſeſſions*; yet no Believer will preſume to ſay, that *Jeſus was*

* Matt. xii. 28.

miſtaken

miſtaken in his own caſe, when he acquainted his Hiſtorians with the circumſtance of his being *led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, and forty days tempted of the Devil* *. Whether any, or what part of this tranſaction paſſed in *Viſion*, is not material to inquire; ſince the *reality of the agency* is the ſame, on either ſuppoſition; as depending, not on the mode of ſenſation, but on the certain knowledge of the operation. For Jeſus, with all his humility in aſſuming our nature, was certainly not ſubject to thoſe infirmities of it, which ariſe from the deluſions of ſenſe; eſpecially in a matter which ſo eſſentially concerned his Miniſtry. If, therefore, there were any miſtake in this matter, it muſt be (I ſpeak it with horror) by the deſigned contrivance of Jeſus himſelf: and how inconſiſtent that was with the character of him, who tells us, he was not only the *life*, but the *truth* †, will be ſhewn hereafter more at large.

So far then is clear, That the *Evil Spirit* was neither abſent nor inactive when the Evangelic Miſſion was firſt opened.

In the TEMPTATION he was permitted to try whether he could traverſe the great work of human Redemption.—In the POSSESSION of the bodies of men, he ſeems to have been, in part, forced upon the employment; as the *caſting* him *out* by divine power gave glory to God, and bore teſtimony to the miniſtry of Chriſt. Thus, in the caſe of the *Demoniac*, in the country of the Gadarenes. The Devils oppreſſed by the mighty hand of Jeſus, and ready to be caſt out, and ſent into a place of torment, confeſs the power of their Conqueror, and proclaim him to be the PROMISED MESSIAH; at a time when he concealed his Character; and was not certainly known by it, even to his Diſciples. If it be aſked, *Why they did it?* The anſwer is eaſy—To embarraſs and impede his Miniſtry. On this account Jeſus checks them, and commands them to be ſilent. I confeſs, indeed, that had all the atteſtation given by Jeſus to *real poſſeſſions*, been ſuch as his anſwer to thoſe who ſaid he *caſt out devils by Baalzebub*—"that then Baalzebub's kingdom

* Luke iv. 1, 2. † John xiv. 6.

being

being divided againſt itſelf, could not ſtand"—our concluſion for real Demoniacs would want much of its force, for then he might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to argue only *ad homines*, which a meſſenger of God might do, though not ſtrictly conformable to the truth of things. But when a man commands the Devils, whom he pretends to caſt out, *not to diſcover him*, the going ſuch a length, if there were no Devil in the caſe, is the adventure only of an Impoſtor. Yet, from our not reflecting that this enemy of mankind, whether he ſtrove to impede, or was forced to promote the progreſs of the Goſpel, was equally in the hands of his Maker, have ariſen many of the late unweighed objections to the reality of *demoniacal poſſeſſions*.

If we turn from Satan's wily temptation of Jeſus, to his cruel treatment of the Jews, we ſhall find the ſame ſtrong marks of *real agency*. Be it, that both Jews and Gentiles were very ſuperſtitious on this head; and, that they often miſtook *natural* diſorders for *demoniacal*—What follows, but that, which we here find provided, againſt the falſe concluſions deduced from it? that is to ſay, greater attention of the ſacred Writers in marking thoſe caſes of *poſſeſſion* which Jeſus relieved, by ſome circumſtance not equivocal; and what could never accompany an imaginary diſorder.

Thus, in the adventure recorded by three of the Evangeliſts *; when Jeſus had relieved the Demoniac, and his Tormentors had obtained leave to go into a *herd of ſwine*, What other reaſon can be given (or indeed what better can be conceived) of this extraordinary requeſt, than that it was to afford a certain mark of diſtinction between a *real* and an *imaginary poſſeſſion*? Be it allowed, that the wild creative power of human fancy is able to raiſe up chimeras that ſhall affright its owner to diſtraction. Yet ſtill it muſt be owned, that Brutes are endowed with no ſuch dangerous faculty: And therefore, when we find great numbers of them, all at once, ſtimulated to an inſtantaneous madneſs, we muſt needs conclude,

* Matt. chap. viii. Mark, chap. v. Luke, ch. viii.

that

that the cauſe was ſome ſuperior Agent operating upon their frame.

So admirably hath our indulgent Maſter been pleaſed to guard this important truth againſt the moſt plauſible evaſions of ſelf-conceited Men. The ſtrong impulſe of a vitiated Imagination, puſhed forward by Superſtition, might be ſuppoſed capable, without any other agency, of producing theſe very extraordinary appearances. To cut off all eſcape from a forced confeſſion of the mighty hand of Heaven, here are two caſes obtruded on the Incredulous; one, of Satan's *temptation* of the Son of God; another, of his *poſſeſſion* of brute animals; in neither of which, can the power of the Imagination have any place. In the firſt, the divine Patient was above its deluſions; in the other, the brute as much below it.

If we now proceed, from the *Facts*, which the Evangeliſts have recorded, to the *Expreſſions* which they have employed, we ſhall have further reaſon to reſt ſatisfied in the common interpretation.

My text ſays—*And they brought unto him all ſick people, that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments*, AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND LUNATICS, *and he healed them.* Here we ſee, that the diſorder of thoſe who were ſaid to be *poſſeſſed with devils* is preciſely diſtinguiſhed, not only from natural *diſeaſes* and *torments* in general, but likewiſe from *Lunacy* in particular; that very diſorder which the Anti-demonianiſt is ſo deſirous of confounding with ſupernatural agitations. Is it poſſible, therefore, to ſuppoſe, that a writer of any meaning, ſhould, at the very time he is diſtinguiſhing between *Lunacy* and *poſſeſſion with Devils*, ſhould, I ſay, confound them with one another? And yet this is what our Critics make him do; in compliance, they tell us, with an accuſtomed mode of ſpeech. Is it not plain, on the contrary, that the ſacred writer was the more intent to repreſent them as two different diſorders, becauſe they had many ſymptoms in common: a circumſtance which makes our critics as ready to confound them with one another, as the Evangeliſts were careful to diſtinguiſh them.

In

In a word, they who, after all theſe precautions taken by the ſacred Penmen, can think that *Devils* and *Demoniacs* were uſed in Scripture only as terms of *accommodation* to Jewiſh prejudices, may well believe (as ſome of them tell us, they do) that the terms, *Redemption*, *Sacrifice*, and *Satisfaction*, come of no better a houſe than one of the common figures of Speech.

My ſerious Readers will be now ready to aſk, What learned diſcoveries they are, which have encouraged theſe men to innovate from the commonly received opinion concerning the *Goſpel-Demoniacs?* Hath any thing been found, in the Scripture-hiſtory of them, either abſurd in morals, or falſe in phyſics? Nothing of either; as may be ſeen by what hath been juſt hinted, in the entrance on this diſcourſe.

And yet, whatever the Diſcoveries are, theſe men are none of the Diſcoverers. An excellent Divine of the laſt age had in his extenſive ſearches into antiquity collected, that both Jews and Gentiles, at and before the time of Chriſt, were over-run with one common ſuperſtition, that Demons, and the Souls of wicked men deceaſed, frequently ſeized upon the bodies of the living, and tormented them in various ways. Hence he too haſtily, though with his uſual modeſty, inſinuated, that the *Poſſeſſions* recorded in the Goſpel might be of that imaginary ſort; and no other than *occult diſeaſes*; which, being unmanageable by the Phyſician, were concluded to be *ſupernatural*: as if a good Phyſician could deal with any thing but the Devil: that to theſe unhappy wretches Jeſus applied his ſalutary hands; and gave to their diſorder the faſhionable name by which it was at that time diſtinguiſhed.

Without doubt, this truly learned Divine went the more eaſily into this bold opinion, as he had obſerved it to be God's gracious method, in the courſe of his revealed Diſpenſations, to take advantage of men's habitual prejudices, to ſupport his truth, and keep his People attached to his Ordinances.

But here, the excellent perſon ſhould have diſtinguiſhed (as his followers * were not likely to do it for him) between *Rites* and *Doctrines*. They were the *Rites* only of which God availed himſelf, for the benefit of his ſervants, in order to combat or to elude their fondneſs for Pagan uſages. In matters of *Doctrine*, the like compliance could not be indulged to them, without violating material Truths; and therefore Scripture affords us no example of ſuch a condeſcenſion. In things only pertaining to *Rites*, we have, indeed, numerous inſtances. Thus, the uſe of linen garments, lighted lamps, luſtrations, and a multitude of other things in themſelves indifferent, were brought from *falſe* Religions into the *true*: and with high propriety and wiſdom, where their new deſignation ſanctified their uſe, and their uſe contributed to the better eſtabliſhment of the Diſpenſation. On the other hand, to aſſert and ſupport a falſe and ſuperſtitious opinion (if ſuch it were) concerning *diabolic poſſeſſions*, was infecting and contaminating the purity of the Chriſtian Faith.

But if the admirable Author of this groundleſs novelty did himſelf miſs of ſo juſt and obvious a diſtinction, we have the leſs reaſon to wonder that thoſe of his followers, who aimed only at a name by a faint reflexion from the other's learning, ſhould not hit upon what their maſter had overlooked.

A late eminent Phyſician, who hath eſpouſed this ſyſtem, acted a more decent and becoming part. He might pretend, by virtue of his profeſſion, and ſtill more by his ſkill in it, to a profounder inſight into *Nature*: and *Theology* being in another department, he was the leſs cenſurable if he did not ſee all that this divine ſcience oppoſed to his opinion; an opinion which might be ſaid to deſcend to him by inheritance from his great name-ſake †, and Relation: Whoſe con-

* Dr. Sykes, Dr. Lardner, &c.

† — Ut redeam autem ad dæmoniacos; non mea eſt profecto, ſed aliorum ante me pietate et doctrina præſtantium virorum ſententia, quam hic propono. Et proximo quidem ſæculo inter noſtrates etiam, JOSÉPHUS MEADUS, theologus rerum ſacrarum cognitione,

conciſeneſs, ſtrength, and modeſty of reaſoning, he has ſo well followed, that to confute his objections will be to overthrow the whole ſyſtem of the anti-demoniac party.

In his *Medica Sacra*, he hath a chapter *de dæmoniacis*; in which he hath treated the Evangelic hiſtory with all that reverence which becomes a ſerious Believer and a true Scholar.

The firſt obſervation I ſhall make, on my entrance on his Argument, is general, and will ſuit all who have written on this ſide the queſtion. It is this—They reaſon upon the Caſe of *Demoniacs*, not as it is recorded by the Evangeliſts, but as if deſcribed only in a treatiſe of Medicine by Aretæus, Fernelius, or any other of the Faculty; where it ſtands unconnected with all moral as well as religious ideas. Whereas I have ſhewn at large that theſe *demoniacal poſſeſſions* have an intimate relation to the doctrine of *Redemption*; and were therefore reaſonably to be expected at the promulgation of the Goſpel. This ſets the matter on quite another footing; and that plauſibility which the learned perſon's repreſentation gives to his arguments entirely diſappears, when we put the caſe as it really was.

1. This neceſſary caution, againſt ſo defective and foreign a repreſentation, being premiſed, I now proceed to the reaſoning itſelf which the learned Phyſician employs to diſcredit the common opinion of *real poſſeſſions*. His firſt argument riſes from the extent of the ſuperſtition concerning *imaginary ones*. "It had not only infected the Moſaic Religion in particular, but had over-run Paganiſm in general *." "And as to the Jews, who were wont to aſcribe whatever there was of prodigious in nature to the miniſtry

nitione, nulli ſecundus, luculenta Diſſertatione eam propugnavit. Cum ex eadem igitur ac ille familia ſim oriundus, &c. Præf. in Med. Sacr. p. ix. Authore Richardo Mead.

* —At non Judæis tantum, ſed et aliis etiam gentibus in uſu fuit inſanos pro dæmoniacis habere.—p. 76. A Chaldæis quidem ad Phœnices, poſtea ad Egyptios propagata, ad Græcos deinde, hinc ad Romanos, aliaſque demum gentes temporis progreſſu Dæmoniaca iſta Religio pervenit. P. 74.

of

of ANGELS, they were eaſily brought to believe, that thoſe dire diſeaſes which infected the mind and body equally, and whoſe cauſes were unknown, could be no other than the work of the Devil *."

Allow all this. Allow that the Jews, at the time of Chriſt, were very ſuperſtitious, yet the learned Doctor, in his turn, muſt allow that the inſpired Teachers of the Goſpel were free from an error which ſo fatally affected the Religion they were intruſted to propagate, as *Demonianiſm* did, if it were an error. They, therefore, knowingly, gave it countenance and ſupport. But how that will agree with their character and office, we ſhall ſee, as we go along.

Our learned writer tells us further, "that the Jews not only gave credit to the works of the Devil, but believed in the *miniſtry of* ANGELS likewiſe."—This ſeems to be one of thoſe ſlips of the pen to which Truth ſometimes expoſes thoſe who write moſt cautiouſly againſt her. For, the *Old Teſtament*, which the learned Doctor reverences equally with the new, bears ample teſtimony to the *real miniſtry of Angels*; and with ſuch circumſtances as will not admit a caviller to have recourſe to viſion, figure, or *accommodation*: for if the *Angel* who waylayed Balaam may be reduced to a nocturnal Shadow, thoſe whom Abraham entertained in broad day-light were ſubſtantial Beings. When, therefore, the learned perſon puts the miniſtry of good and evil Angels on the ſame footing, he muſt allow, if the *reality* of the former be proved, that the reality of the latter follows of courſe.

As to the univerſality of the ſuperſtition, both amongſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, I do not ſee how that, in the leaſt, alters the caſe. The Jews of this time, by a more unreſtrained commerce with the

* P. 74. Judæi autem, ſiquid miri faceret natura, ad ANGELORUM *ſupremi Dei miniſtrorum* operam referre ſoliti, facile in animum ſibi inducere poterant, ut diras quaſdam crederent ægritudines, quæ mentem ſimul et corpus læderent, et quarum cauſas cognoſcere nequirent, ab angelorum malorum [illegible] exoriri.

Gentiles, had vitiated the purity of their holy Religion, by many doctrines borrowed from the Pagan Philoſophers. Thus they took (we will ſuppoſe) the *Doctrine of Demons* from Plato; and the *Doctrine of the pre-exiſtence and a future ſtate* from Pythagoras. Nevertheleſs, it is certain, that both *demoniacal poſſeſſions* and a *future ſtate* were equally ſupported by the acts and predication of Jeſus and his Diſciples. And this let me obſerve further, Theſe two doctrines are equally woven (as may appear from what hath been ſaid above) into the ſubſtance of the Chriſtian Faith; the doctrines of the FALL and of the REDEMPTION being the two cardinal hinges on which our holy Religion turns. If therefore we can ſuppoſe *Demonianiſm* to be only an old thread-bare fable new dreſſed; and offered by way of *accommodation* to amuſe the Followers of the Goſpel; I do not ſee what can hinder us from ſuppoſing, with Syneſius, the ſame of a *future ſtate* likewiſe. Both doctrines had the advantage of old prejudice in their favour. Yet, if but one were *true* (namely that of a future ſtate) and the other of Demonianiſm only taught by way of *accommodation*, it could proceed only from the difficulty of eraſing it from the popular belief. But ſo uncomfortable a doctrine is eraſed with very little difficulty.

It may be ſaid perhaps, "that the two Doctrines, which I put upon the ſame footing of credibility, becauſe the Goſpel hath ſo put them, differ in this, that a *future ſtate* may be proved by natural Reaſon, which a *Demoniacal poſſeſſion* cannot." What doth this Objection infer? No more than this, that a *future ſtate* makes a part of Natural Religion, and *Demoniacal poſſeſſions* a part only of the Revealed.

2. The ingenuous Diſcourſer brings another argument againſt *demoniacal poſſeſſions*.—Having collected together all the ſymptoms of this diſorder from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he concludes thus—"All theſe are the ſymptoms of a natural diſtemper. They are more ſurprizing indeed than thoſe of other diſorders, yet nothing

nothing ſupernatural *."—His learned Fellow-Collegiate, Dr. JOHN FREIND, treating the ſame ſubject, after having given, from Ætius and Oribaſius, a deſcription of the madneſs called *Lycanthropy*, of which one of the moſt ſtriking ſymptoms was, *to wander amongſt the ſepulchres of the dead*, adds, the *Demoniac in the Scriptures, who was* POSSESSED WITH A LIKE SORT OF MADNESS, *is repreſented as having his dwelling amongſt the tombs* †.—

The DETERMINATION of theſe two learned Naturaliſts is founded, we ſee, in this circumſtance, "that the ſymptoms of a demoniacal poſſeſſion are the ſame with thoſe in ſome natural diſorders."—Now if an evil Spirit were permitted to diſturb men's vital functions, whether in the ſolids, the fluids, or in both, Have we any conception how this could be done, without occaſioning ſome or other of the ſymptoms which accompany natural diſeaſes? A circumſtance, therefore, which muſt always attend *Demoniacal poſſeſſions*, if real, can never, ſurely, be turned into an argument for the falſhood of them.

Let me juſt obſerve, that one of the Evangeliſts being a Phyſician, he is, by a very becoming partiality, preferred, by Dr. FREIND, to the reſt, for the *purity* and *accuracy* of his expreſſion, *when there is occaſion to ſpeak of diſtempers, or the cure of them*; and that he *is more particular in reciting all the miracles of our Saviour in relation to healing, than the other Evangeliſts are* ‡. Yet St. Luke ſpeaks the very ſame language concerning *Demoniacal poſſeſſions* with the reſt. Now, if the Goſpel Demoniacs were men only naturally diſeaſed, a Phyſician, by his deeper inſpection into Nature, with the advantage of inſpiration to boot, was very likely to have diſco-

* Inſanorum ſunt hæc omnia; utrum vero à Dæmoniis, an vi morbi provenerint, diſceptatur.——Neque enim alius quiſquam inter omnes, qui humanum genus infeſtant, morbus, tam naturæ vim excedere videtur.—P. 66.

† Hiſtory of Phyſic, Part I. p. 18—21.

‡ Ibid. p. 223—225.

vered

vered it; and, for the glory of his art, as likely to have undeceived the ſuperſtitious vulgar; theſe benevolent Practitioners being at all times ready to detect *vulgar errors*. Not to inſiſt, that St. Luke was ſwayed to this good work by a ſtronger paſſion than the honour of his profeſſion as a Phyſician, it was by the love of truth, as an Evangeliſt.

The learned author of the *Medica Sacra* then goes on to ſhew, what he before hinted at, that the *Demoniacs* were affected with no ſymptoms but what might ariſe from a diſeaſed body; which he endeavours to prove from the nature of maniacal diſorders *.

This Obſervation ſeems to have ariſen from the learned Writer's unwarily confounding Goſpel Demonianiſm with the pretended *poſſeſſions* of theſe later times. We Proteſtants urge the *teſtimony of the Goſpel* to prove the truth of Demoniacal poſſeſſions: the Papiſts bring the teſtimony of their *Demoniacs* to prove the truth of the Goſpel, or rather of their own Church. In the firſt caſe, nothing is wanting to evince the reality of the fact, but the declaration of the great Phyſician of our ſouls: in the other, it is neceſſary to ſhew that the ſymptoms accompanying the *poſſeſſion* were SUPERNATURAL; ſuch as, ſpeaking in unknown tongues, revealing ſecrets, foretelling future events, and all thoſe extraordinary appearances which the Writers on Demonology lay down for diſtinguiſhing true from pretended *poſſeſſions*. So that it appears, this objection hath no force againſt any but theſe *Church Demoniacs*.

Having thus ſeen what theſe men have to urge againſt *our* ſyſtem of the Goſpel; let us now ſee what we have to urge againſt *theirs*. Enough hath been ſaid to ſhew that this is no trifling or unimportant queſtion.

I ſhall therefore beg leave to lay before you, the conſequences which naturally follow the conceſſion, that Jeſus and his Diſciples

* P. 66.—Nihil profectò hic ſacrum, nihil, quod ex male affecta corporis ſanitate oriri non poſſit, reperimus.

did,

did, in this, only *accommodate* themſelves to the fanciful, and therefore (as it concerned Religion) the ſuperſtitious opinions of thoſe times, in placing natural diſtempers in the viſionary claſs of ſupernatural, and calling real Lunatics, *Dæmoniacs*.

UNBELIEVERS may think (and, by too many, they will be ſuppoſed not to think amiſs) that they get great advantage over the Evidences of our Faith, by this conceſſion.—While it is believed that evil Demons were ſubject to the power of Chriſt from the teſtimony of the Evangeliſts, who tell us, that *he caſt out Devils and healed thoſe poſſeſſed with them*, that plauſible ſubterfuge againſt his miraculous cures, which ſuppoſes the relief afforded to be the effect of a STRONG IMAGINATION, is entirely cut off. For, however the motion of the blood and ſpirits might be accelerated by the agitations of a mind thus unhinged; the Devil would ſtill keep his hold, and be nowiſe affected by it. But when once his agency is removed, as a groundleſs and ſuperſtitious terror, theſe men will think themſelves not altogether unable to deal with the miraculous cures of the Goſpel on our own principles. They will recount to us the aſtoniſhing effects of the Imagination in pregnant women, and in atrabilare and melancholy ſubjects; ſupported by caſes recorded in the writings of Phyſicians of the greateſt authority and credit *. They will remind us of the cures worked by *Greatrix the Stroker*, in the memory of our Fathers; and of thoſe performed at *the Tomb of Abbé Paris*, in our own. They will tell us of a learned French Phyſician †, who was ſo ſtruck with this aſtoniſhing force of the human Imagination, that he thought it capable of *working Miracles*, or effecting things ſupernatural. Nay, they will pretend to account for all this, by the mechaniſm of the body, unaccountably ſubject to the deluſions of the mind, when unduly agitated either by ſenſation or reflection. Nor has any one borne a

* See Fienus *de viribus Imaginationis*.

† Augerius Ferrerius. Of whom Thuanus ſays,—Medicinam profeſſus, quam et feliciſſimè et ſummo judicio fecit. Hiſt. Lib. LXXXIX.

ſtronger

ſtronger teſtimony * to theſe amazing deluſions than the learned perſon whoſe objections to the *Goſpel Demoniacs* we have juſt now examined: which may ſeem the more ſtrange, as the teſtimony is borne by one who, at the ſame time, expreſſes his ſurprize that Divines ſhould contend ſo eagerly for this triumph of Chriſt over Demons, as if ſomething were wanting to demonſtrate his power, when exerciſed only over natural diſeaſes †. Without doubt Divines may contend for it on that principle without being laughed at. And I have written to little purpoſe if this diſcourſe does not prove that ſomething would have been wanting to demonſtrate, if not the power, yet the aſſumed character of Jeſus, had it been exerciſed only over natural diſeaſes. So that it appeared to me that what they contended for was highly uſeful; to cut off a ſubterfuge to which Unbelievers have had recourſe, and which this learned

* Quid mirabilius iis, quæ in Graviditatibus non raro contingere videmus? Fœmina in utero geſtans, ſi forte quid appetiverit, et fruſtra ſit, interdum rei concupitæ figuram quandam, aut ſimilitudinem, in hac aut illa corporis parte, fœtui ſuo imprimit. Imo, quod majus eſt, et prodigii inſtar, ſubita partis alicujus læſione perterrita matre, ipſa illa pars in infante noxam ſentit, et nutrimenti defectu marceſſit. Scio hujuſmodi omnes hiſtorias à medicis nonnullis, quoniam, qui talia fieri poſſint, haud percipiunt, in dubium vocari. At multa, quæ ipſe vidi, exempla mihi hac in re ſcrupulum omnem ademerunt. Tam ſtupenda autem eſt facultatis imaginandi vis, ut non minus falſæ quam veræ imagines afficiant, ubi mens iis aſſidue ſit addicta. Id enim in mulieribus, quæ ſagæ dicuntur, uſu comperimus, quæ conſimili mentis errore captæ, cum Dæmonibus non tantum conſuetudinem habere, ſed et pacta cum iis ſe iniviſſe, ſæpe imaginantur; idque animo adeo obſtinato, ut etiam in judicium vocatæ, ſe facinorum quæ nunquam perpetraverint, reas confiteantur, cum ob ea ipſa jam mortis ſupplicium ſubituræ ſint. Proinde omnibus notum eſt, quam mirabilibus modis in melancholicis mens perturbatur, &c.—P. 70—72.

† P. vii. Præf. Sæpe quidem mirari ſoleo, cur fidei noſtræ Antiſtites Dæmonas in ſcenam producere tantopere contendant, quo ſcilicet divinum Chriſti numen de victis hiſce infernis hoſtibus triumphos agat. An divinam Chriſti virtutem graviſſimorum morborum ſationes, juſſu illius momento temporis peractæ, minus patefaciunt; quam malorum Geniorum ex hominum corporibus expulſiones?—

Phyſician's

Phyſician's juſt account of the *force of the Imagination* contributes to ſupport.—How pertinent the inference may be, which Unbelievers draw from this *force of the Imagination*, it is not my purpoſe, at preſent, to inquire. The miſchief to Religion is not inconſiderable, that diſeaſed Nature hath afforded theſe PHILOSOPHERS a handle for any inference at all.

But this is not the worſt. There is an unavoidable inference to be drawn from this anti-demoniac ſyſtem when proved, more fatal to the truth of the Goſpel than that other. It is an unqueſtioned fact, that the Evangelic Hiſtory of the *Demoniacs* hath given occaſion to the moſt ſcandalous frauds, and ſottiſh ſuperſtitions, throughout almoſt every age of the Church; the whole trade of Exorciſms, accompanied with all the mummery of frantic and fanatic agitations, having ariſen from thence.

Now, were the *Goſpel Demoniacs really poſſeſſed*, the honour of Religion is ſafe; and no more affected by theſe ingrafted frauds and follies of the Church of Rome, than is the Law of Moſes by their Inquiſitorial Murders, committed under cover of God's penal Statutes againſt Jewiſh Idolaters. If men will turn the Truths of God to the ſupport of their crimes and follies; the ſacred Oracles will receive no attaint from ſuch their malice and perverſity.

But were the *Poſſeſſions*, recorded in the Goſpel, imaginary; and *Demoniacs* only a name for the naturally diſeaſed; and that yet, Jeſus and his Apoſtles, inſtead of rectifying the People's follies and ſuperſtitions on this head, choſe rather to inflame them, by aſſuring certain of the diſtempered that they were really *poſſeſſed by evil Spirits* over whom the name of Chriſt had power and authority *: if this, I ſay, were the caſe, I ſhould tremble for the conſequence: for then would Jeſus and his Diſciples, who were ſent to propagate the TRUTH, appear to be anſwerable for all the miſchief, which the rivetting of this ſuperſtition in the minds of men, produced in

* Matt. xvii. 15.

after-ages: for there is not a clearer concluſion in moral ſcience, than that He, who commits a premeditated fraud, is anſwerable for the evil which neceſſarily or naturally proceedeth from it. So little did the learned Phyſician, with whom we have to do, ſee into the Caſuiſtry of this queſtion, when he took it for granted, that our contending for the reality of *demoniacal poſſeſſions* makes the Goſpel, and us, its Miniſters who thus interpret it, anſwerable for all the tricks of the Church of Rome, which riſe upon the avowal of it *.

On the contrary, from what hath been here ſaid, it evidently appears, that the Opinion of the *Accommodators* (who ſuppoſe Jeſus and his Diſciples took advantage of a favourable ſuperſtition), and not the Opinion of thoſe Divines who hold Goſpel-Demonianiſm to be real, is the very thing which brings this *opprobrium* on the firſt Propagators of our holy Faith.

Nor can that reaſon which is ſometimes given for permitting ſuperſtitious errors, (although this were, which it is not, of the number of ſuch as might be ſuffered to hold their courſe) have any weight in this caſe; namely, *the difficulty or danger in eradicating them.*

Danger there could be none, from the nature of things. For, to remove the falſe terrors concerning this Enemy of mankind, could never indiſpoſe men to embrace their Saviour and Redeemer.

As little *difficult* had it been to eradicate ſo pernicious an error, how deeply ſoever rooted in the popular ſuperſtition. For when they ſaw Jeſus cure all diſeaſes with a word, and the *pretended*

* Præf. p. iv. Erroris patrocinio non indiget veritas, uti nec vultus natura nitidus fucum requirit. Et certum eſt, opinionem iſtam, quæ jam per multa ſæcula invaluit, de potentia ad corpora menteſque humanas vexandas dæmonibus adhuc permiſſa, variis aſtutorum hominum præſtigiis, cum maximo rei Chriſtianæ damno et *opprobrio* anſam præbuiſſe. Quis non merito irridet ſolennes iſtos Romæ pontificum ritus, quibus exercitantur, ut loqui amant, Dæmoniaci.—Verum iſtæ præſtigiæ, quantumvis oculis et mentibus ignaræ plebis illudant; paulo tamen ſagaciores non modo offendunt, ſed revera ipſis nocent. Hi enim, dolo perſpecto, ad impietatem proni ducuntur.—

Demoniac

Demoniac as eaſily as the reſt, nothing could withſtand the Authority which informed them of their miſtake; and aſſured them that this *demonianiſm*, like the reſt, was altogether a natural diſtemper. On the contrary, many favourable prejudices would ſoon ariſe on the ſide of ſo authentic an Inſtructor.

From the whole, therefore, of what hath been here offered in favour of the obvious ſenſe of my Text, the attentive hearer will, I preſume, be inclined to acquieſce in the antient interpretation of this part of the Goſpel-Hiſtory; and be ready to agree with the firſt Diſciples of Chriſt, in their pious exultation, when they *returned*, from their Miſſion, *with joy*; *ſaying*, *Lord*, *through thy name*, *even the* DEVILS *are ſubject unto us* *.

* Luke x. 17.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.

II. Gen. Ep. of ST. PETER, Ch. i. ver. 16—21.

16.—WE HAVE NOT FOLLOWED CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLES, WHEN WE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU THE POWER AND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT WERE EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.

17. FOR HE RECEIVED FROM GOD THE FATHER HONOUR AND GLORY, WHEN THERE CAME SUCH A VOICE TO HIM FROM THE EXCEEDING GLORY, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL-PLEASED.

18. AND THIS VOICE WHICH CAME FROM HEAVEN WE HEARD, WHEN WE WERE WITH HIM IN THE HOLY MOUNT.

19. WE HAVE ALSO A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS.

20. KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.

21. FOR

21. FOR THE PROPHECY CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

THERE are few places in the New Teſtament plainer than this; as containing only matter of admonition and inſtruction: and yet there are none which have occaſioned more conteſt, or greater variety of interpretation *.

This hath been chiefly owing to a miſtake held in common concerning the Apoſtle's ſubject; namely, that he is here ſpeaking of the *perſonal Character* of Jeſus; and conſequently, that the MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, with which he ſtrengthens his argument, is the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, eſtabliſhing that character: Whereas the ſubject, he is upon, is very different, viz. *the general truth of the Goſpel*; and, conſequently, the *more ſure word of Prophecy* is the Prophecies of the New Teſtament.

Such a miſtake was neceſſarily productive of another; For if the *perſonal Character* of Jeſus were the ſubject of the diſcourſe, it would follow, that *the* POWER AND COMING *of our Lord*—is to be underſtood of his FIRST COMING; and that the *word of Prophecy* refers to a Prophecy already fulfilled. But if here he be ſpeaking of the SECOND COMING of *Jeſus*; and that, conſequently, the *word of Prophecy* refers to a long ſeries of events to be fulfilled; this puts a fair end to a controverſy, ſupported only by the abſurd and embarraſſed reaſonings of the Controverſialiſts.

1. Firſt then, it is to be obſerved, that the Epiſtle from whence the paſſage in queſtion is taken, is a farewell Epiſtle to the Churches: The writer *knowing* (as he tells them †) *that ſhortly he muſt put off this his Tabernacle.* Now the great topic of conſolation urged by

* See the writings of Biſhop Sherlock and Dr. Middleton, and their reſpective followers, on this ſubject.

† Chap. i. ver. 14.

theſe

theſe departing Saints to the widowed Churches, was the SECOND COMING of their Lord and Maſter. And of this *coming* it is that St. Peter ſpeaks,—*for we have not followed cunningly-deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the* POWER AND COMING *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He ſubjoins the reaſon of his confidence in this SECOND COMING, that he, and the reſt of the Diſciples, had been *eye-witneſſes of the* MAJESTY of the FIRST.

This appears ſtill plainer, from the recapitulation, in the concluding part of the Epiſtle, where he reproves thoſe *Scoffers of the laſt days*, who would *ſay, Where is the promiſe of his* COMING? *for ſince the Fathers fell aſleep all things continue as they were* *. For the primitive Chriſtians had entertained an Opinion †, that the SECOND COMING of their Maſter was at hand. Theſe *Scoffers*, therefore, the Apoſtle confutes at large, from the fifth to the thirteenth verſe of this laſt Chapter ‡.

If

* Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4. † See Div. Leg. vol. III. Book VI. § 6.

‡ But not only the general ſubject of the Epiſtle, but the expreſſion uſed in the text, ſhews, that this *power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* is to be underſtood of his SECOND COMING—*for we have not followed* (ſays he) CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLES, *when we made known unto you the power and coming*, &c. Now a ſimple atteſtation of *a voice from Heaven* at his FIRST COMING, could with no propriety of ſpeeeh be called *a cunningly-deviſed fable.* But let us ſuppoſe the Apoſtle to ſpeak of Chriſt's SECOND COMING, when, *according to the* PROMISE, *there was to be a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein was to dwell righteouſneſs, after the old had been burnt up and deſtroyed by fervent heat* §; and then, if the prediction of this awful ſcene were an invention, it was truly characterized by a CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLE, ſuch as thoſe in which Paganiſm abounded; where, in their MYTHOLOGIC ſtories, they ſpeak of the Regions of departed heroes, &c.

——— "Locos lætos & amœna vireta
"Fortunatorum nemorum ſedeſque beatas.
"*Largior* hic campos *æther* & *lumine* veſtit
"*Purpureo: ſolemque ſuum, ſua ſidera norunt.*

§ Chap. iii. ver. 12, 13. compared with the deſcription in the xxi. and xxii. chapters of the Apocalypſe.

If this account of the Epiſtle be true, then, by the MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY muſt needs be meant, not *Prophecies of the Old Teſtament fulfilled*; but a long ſeries of *Prophecies to be fulfilled under the New*, each in its order, and extending through a courſe of many Ages. To theſe, the Churches are bid *to take heed*, as to a *more ſure word*; which the Apoſtle compares *unto a light that ſhineth* IN A DARK PLACE, *until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ſhould ariſe in their hearts.*

From *Prophecy*, thus circumſtanced, we ſee, it could not be a Prophecy of the Old Teſtament fulfilled, ſuch as that of Iſaiah *; which a late critic † ſuppoſes to be the thing here meant; but a Prophecy of the New, becauſe this Prophecy was not *a light ſhining in a dark place*, but in the *day*, and a day far advanced; yet the Apoſtle ſuppoſes the *darkneſs* to prevail all round the *light* he ſpeaks of, and the *dawn* to be at a great diſtance.

But then, on the other hand, neither could it be a Prophecy of things altogether future, ſince ſuch Prophecies are totally *dark* and unintelligible: yet this is a *light*, although a *light ſhining in a dark place.*

But, if neither one nor the other, What is it then? To underſtand this, we muſt reflect upon the general ſubject of the *farewel* Epiſtle. It contains directions for their practice, and conſolations to their Faith. Accordingly, having planned out the whole edifice of Chriſtian Faith and Morals in that famous ſummary delivered in the fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh verſes of this Chapter; and recommended it by a variety of exhortations and encouragements, he ſupports himſelf in all he had

And to aſcertain his meaning, the Apoſtle uſes a phraſe, by which only the *mythologic* theology of Paganiſm can be deſigned,—*not following or imitating the cunningly-deviſed fables of the Greek ſophiſts and mythologiſts* ‡.

* Chap. xlii. ver. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my ſpirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the gentiles.*

† Mr. Markland.

‡ Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις ΜΥΘΟΙΣ ἐξακολουθήσαντες.——

ſaid, by the noble conſciouſneſs of not having *followed cunningly-deviſed fables*, when, for their conſolation, he had ſaid ſo much of the SECOND *coming* of their Lord and Saviour; of which he could with the greater confidence ſpeak, as he was an eye-witneſs of the *miraculous* circumſtances which uſhered in the FIRST, when Jeſus *received from God the Father honour and glory*, in the *voice* from Heaven at his baptiſm * and on the mount †. "But beſides theſe *miracles* attendant on his FIRST *coming*, which give credit to the truth of what he ſaid concerning his SECOND, *we have* (ſays he) a ſtill further confirmation, IN THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY."

Thus he proves invincibly, that nothing was wanting to ſatisfy men in this important point. It had all the evidence of MIRACLES and PROPHECY, the two great ſupports of Revelation; and graciouſly given to eſtabliſh our faith in the Divine Author of it.

The ground of this extreme goodneſs is apparent. In the firſt promulgation of a revealed Religion, there is a neceſſity for the atteſtation of MIRACLES, becauſe nothing but the ſeal of that teſtimony can aſſure us that it came from God. But when once this end is ſerved, *Miracles* are withdrawn from his Church. It hath, from thence-forth, only the *traditional* verification of the Evidence of a paſt Fact; Evidence, in its nature, much weaker than the original Record; of which the firſt Ages of the Church were in poſſeſſion.

Our gracious Lord, therefore, who *never leaves himſelf without a Witneſs*, in the *moral* government of the world, any more than in the *phyſical*, hath been pleaſed to give to theſe latter ages, an equivalent for the MIRACLES of the former, in an evidence for the truth of Revelation as ſtrong and irreſiſtible: I mean, PROPHECY; by beſtowing its virtue upon his choſen Servants (ſuch as St. PAUL and St. JOHN). Who now more ſimply, now more enigmatically, predicted the future fortunes of the Church, throughout its ſeve-

* Matth. chap. iii. ver. 17. † Chap. xvii. ver. 5.

ral ſtages; which, as they became accompliſhed and fulfilled, would, in the ſtrongeſt manner, confirm the Faithful of every age, in the belief of the divine original of the Goſpel.

That this gracious indulgence to the well-being of the Church was conſtant, and for the ſupport of *Revelation in general*, is ſeen more fully in the Jewiſh Oeconomy; where, though MIRACLES, by reaſon of the peculiar Form of that Diſpenſation, neceſſarily accompanied it through a courſe of many ages, that is, during all the time the Jews were under an *extraordinary Providence*; yet as *Miracles*, together with that extraordinary Providence, were to ceaſe long before the diſſolution of the *Theocracy*, their holy Prophets, and DANIEL more circumſtantially and minutely than the reſt, foretold the various fortune of that Republic, from his own time to the end, in order to afford the later Jews, as thoſe Prophecies kept fulfilling, the cleareſt evidence of the truth of their Religion. Such was the gracious proviſion of Providence in ſupport of revealed Religion *.

St. Peter's reaſoning therefore ſtands thus, in this important paſſage of his Epiſtle—that you may be aſſured, (ſays he), *we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power of our Lord* at his ſecond coming, it is well known that we *were eye-witneſſes of the majeſty* of his firſt coming, when a voice from Heaven confirmed his miſſion and miniſtry. But this is not the whole, we have a *more ſure word of Prophecy* which gives ſtill further credit to what we taught you concerning this matter. So you have the double ſecurity of *Miracles* and *Prophecies* for this truth in particular, which God had been pleaſed to give for the Faith in general.—*Miracles*, ſays he, was not all, nor indeed the principal. *We have* A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.—The

* In a former part of theſe Diſcourſes, I have treated of the neceſſity of the Evidence both of Miracles and Prophecies in conjunction, for another purpoſe, namely, the eſtabliſhment of the MESSIAH-CHARACTER: Here, I am upon the expediency of both ſeparately, and in different periods, for the ſupport of REVEALED RELIGION in general.

terms

terms *more ſure*, in the tranſlation, are a little equivocal, and may ſignify either an evidence which may be *more ſurely relied on*, or an evidence which *preſerves its entire force much longer*; and this latter is the ſenſe of the Original, βεβαιότερον, *more firm, conſtant, and durable*, which (as we have ſhewn) is the nature of *Prophecy fulfilled*, when compared with the *traditional* evidence of *miracles*. In theſe, we depend on the good faith of others; in thoſe, we rely on our own ſenſes: For the Apoſtle's obſervation reſpects not the evidence which he and his friends had of the truth of the Goſpel, from *inſtant* miracles; but that evidence which riſes on *traditional*, as it abides in the Church. So that here is no compariſon between St. Peter's ſenſible knowledge of the *miracle in the mount* in particular, and of the *word of prophecy* in general. But juſt the contrary; between the *traditional* evidence of miracles in general, and of the prophecies of the future fortunes of the Church in particular. This is the direct aim and tendency of the Apoſtle's argument; which ſome late theological refinements and antitheological prejudices have concurred to render infinitely obſcure and intricate, though, in itſelf, as clear as it is rational.

This being premiſed, we come directly to the queſtion—What *Prophecy* it is, which the Apoſtle calls *a more ſure word—a light ſhining in a dark place*, &c. a Prophecy, which though it were to receive its *full* evidence in a future age, yet as then beginning to operate, deſerved the moſt ſerious attention of the faithful, in that wherein the Epiſtle was written:—*whereunto* (ſays he) *ye do well that you take heed?*

To which I anſwer—The deſcription can agree with nothing but the predictions of St. Paul and St. John, concerning ANTICHRIST: For thoſe of St. Paul (and probably the other * of St. John) had been publiſhed before the writing of this Epiſtle; for St. Peter recurring

* See, concerning the *Apocalypſe*, Sir I. Newton's Obſervations on the Prophecies, &c. p. 235—246.

again,

again, towards the concluſion * of his Epiſtle, as the ſubject of it required, to that *more ſure word of Prophecy* mentioned in the beginning, refers evidently to thoſe parts of St. Paul's writings, where the Prophecies in the *Revelations* concerning ANTICHRIST are ſummarily abridged; of which Peter gives this character—*As alſo in all his Epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things, in which are ſome things, hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do all other Scriptures, unto their own deſtruction* †. In which words, we have the trueſt picture of thoſe indiſcreet Interpreters, who ſet up for Prophets, in explaining prophetic events yet unaccompliſhed; inſtead of confining themſelves to the illuſtration of thoſe Prophecies that are already fulfilled.

Now this Book of the *Revelations*, containing Predictions darkly and enigmatically delivered, hath yet ſuch ſtrong marks of the Divinity about it, as may well juſtify St. Peter's character concerning it, of *a light ſhining in a dark place*; while his direction *to take heed* to it, and to contemplate the ſubject-matter of it, beſpeaks his charitable attention to the paſtoral care. For ſeveral of the Prophecies having already had their completion, even in thoſe early times, frequent attention to this *light* was uſeful, to confirm their Faith in the paſt, and to ſupport their Hopes in the future.

The principal ſubject of this famous Book relating to one great Event—*The future fortunes of the Church, under the uſurpation of* THE MAN OF SIN, is elegantly called, by way of eminence, the WORD OF PROPHECY. It began fulfilling even before Peter wrote this Epiſtle; for St. Paul, ſpeaking of the MAN OF SIN, to the Theſſalonians, ſays, *the Myſtery of iniquity doth already work* ‡. It is therefore, with the greateſt truth as well as ſtrength of Colouring, called A LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE. Juſt ſo much was ſeen of the buſy *myſtery of iniquity*, now beginning to work, as was ſufficient to fix men's attention, and to put them on their guard againſt its deluſions.

* Chap. iii. ver. 15. † Ver. 16.

‡ Second Epiſtle, chap. ii. ver. 7.

The

The Apoſtle too, for the further encouragement of thoſe whom he exhorts to give early attention to this ray of *light*, adds that a time would come when the ſurrounding *darkneſs* ſhould be diſperſed, and *Day* pour in upon the preſent obſcurities in this WORD OF PROPHECY: on which, in the mean time, they were patiently to wait—UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR SHOULD ARISE. This long wiſh'd-for *Day* at length appeared, with REFORMATION on its wings: A Bleſſing, which redeemed Reaſon and Religion from the harpy-claws of Monkiſh Ignorance and Superſtition.—The reſtoration of abuſed Science, which accompanied it, is well deſcribed by the *Day dawning*; as the defecation of polluted Religion is by the *Day-ſtar riſing in their hearts*.

At this important Æra, the great *Myſtery of Iniquity* was clearly revealed; *Antichriſt* was fully laid open and expoſed; and ſuch Evidence given by *Prophecy* to the truth of the Chriſtian Faith, as muſt, while Reaſon remains amongſt men, ſtrike conviction on the *hearts* of the unprejudiced. For what but the Spirit of God was ſufficient to foretell the Uſurpation of an Antichriſtian Tyranny, which was to ariſe many ages after, within the Church of Chriſt itſelf; a ſpecies of blaſphemous Dominion, which the world had never ſeen before, and of which, not the leaſt conception could be formed either from example, ſimilitude, or analogy. But the Apoſtle foreſeeing that when this flood of *light* ſhould break in upon a long-benighted world, the imagination would be, now, as apt to extravagate, as before, when it was bewildered amidſt the ſurrounding darkneſs, He thought proper to add this important caution—*Knowing this firſt, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*; i. e. "When you ſit down to ſtudy the Apocalypſe, let it ever be under the guidance of this great Truth, That it is not in the department of man to interpret unfulfilled Prophecies, by pretending to fix the natures and ſeaſons of Events, clearly indeed predicted, but obſcurely deſcribed. For that the Interpreter of Prophecy is not Man, but God; who, by bringing events to paſs, affords to Man the only true interpretation."

That

That this is the meaning of the Apoſtle's words, ſo long wreſted to abſurd and licentious purpoſes, is evident from the reaſon he aſſigns of his caution—*for the Prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man; but holy men of God ſpoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt:* i. e. "for Prophecy, under the old Law, was not the effect of human conceit, but of divine influence." Therefore both the *prediction*, and the *interpretation*, which is the *accompliſhment* of the prediction, are equally the word and work of God, and become manifeſt in the courſe of his Providence.—Nor did the Prophets themſelves always underſtand the full or even the true import of what they delivered, being only the Organs of the Holy Spirit. Much leſs then can we ſuppoſe the common Miniſters of the word to be qualified for the office of Interpreters of unfulfilled Prophecies." How neceſſary it was to give this caution, appears from what he himſelf obſerves in this very Epiſtle, of certain *unlearned* and *unſtable* men who *wreſted thoſe hard places* in St. Paul, where the *man of ſin* is mentioned, to their own deſtruction *.

This dangerous ABUSE, which began ſo early, and laſted ſo long, hath infected every age of the Church; eſpecially theſe LATTER TIMES; when the wonderful accompliſhment of ſeveral of the Prophecies concerning *Antichriſt*, having ſet Divines upon a more accurate ſtudy of the *Apocalypſe*, the men of warmer imaginations, forgetting this apoſtolic caution, inſtead of confining their contemplations to the Prophecies already fulfilled, for the ſupport of their Faith, and the conſolation of their Hopes, have erected themſelves into PROPHETS; and, taking the work out of the hands of Providence, have dared to predict of what is yet in the womb of Time, and ſtill remains in a dark place.

But how extravagant ſoever ſome Proteſtant Interpreters have been, when they gave a looſe to their Imaginations, yet the ſobereſt of them have univerſally concurred with the wildeſt, that this *man of ſin*, this *Antichriſt*, could be no other than the Man who fills the PAPAL CHAIR: Whoſe uſurpation in Chriſt's Kingdom, and

* Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4.

Tyranny

Tyranny over Conſcience, by *intoxicating the Kings of the earth with the cup of his enchantments*, and Himſelf *with the blood of the ſaints*, ſo eminently diſtinguiſhes Him from all other unjuſt Powers, that the various Churches who broke looſe from his *Enchantments*, agreed in ſupporting the vindication of their Liberty, on this common Principle, that the POPE or CHURCH OF ROME WAS THE VERY ANTICHRIST FORETOLD.

On this, was the REFORMATION begun and carried on: On this, was the great SEPARATION from the Church of Rome conceived and perfected: For, though *Perſecution for Opinion* would acquit thoſe of ſchiſm, whom the Church of Rome had driven from her Communion; yet, on the principle that She is *Antichriſt*, they had not only a right, but lay under the obligation of a command, *to come out of this ſpiritual Babylon* *.

On this Principle (the common ground, as we ſay, of Reformation) the ſeveral Proteſtant Churches, how different ſoever in their various models, were all erected: though, in courſe of time, ſome of the leſs ſtable have ſlipped beſide their foundation, and now ſtand aſlant from the common building. For as the zeal of the Reformed kept abating, the Principle came to be deſerted; and at length laughed-at as the fancy of brain-ſick viſionaries.

Therefore, before we proceed to the vindication of this important Truth, it may be proper to inquire into the chief cauſes of ſo general a Deſertion—I mean, as it is now ſeen amongſt ourſelves.

II.

The firſt occaſion of diſcredit began very early. Some of the firſt Reformers, even in the days of ELIZABETH, ſuffered themſelves to entertain ſcruples concerning the further uſe of whatever, in the *Roman Ritual*, had been abuſed to ſuperſtition. Theſe ſcruples were foſtered by the Moſaic Law, ill underſtood: in which, what-

* Rev. chap. xviii. ver. 4.

ever had been abuſed to Idolatry, was (as they conceived) condemned and deſecrated. Now the force of this analogy (ſuch as it had) aroſe from the Principle, that THE POPE WAS ANTICHRIST, and the CHURCH OF ROME THE SPIRITUAL BABYLON: from whence the *People of Chriſt* being commanded to come out, as the *People of God* had been, from Egypt, it ſeemed congruous to reaſon that PAPAL and EGYPTIAN Rites were equally abhorred by the God of purity.

I will not ſtay at preſent, as it is a matter foreign to the ſubject, to diſcriminate the natures of the TWO DISPENSATIONS, by which the folly of applying the Laws of One to the adminiſtration of the Other, might be made apparent.

It is more to the purpoſe to obſerve, that theſe ſcrupulous men (from thenceforth called PURITANS) by their obſtinacy, which ended in a *Separation*, ſoon grew very troubleſome, and even formidable to Government. And ANTICHRIST, and the WHORE OF BABYLON, being now become the watchword, as well on account of its being the general ground of *Reformation*, as becauſe they deemed it the particular ſupport of their *Puritaniſm*; it is not at all ſtrange, that what, till now, had been a *common Principle*, ſhould, from henceforth, be conſidered by the Eſtabliſhed Church, in no other light than the *ſupport* of ſeparation, and the *badge* of ſeparatiſts. But, as a *ſupport*, thoſe who were moſt attached to the national worſhip would be forward to bring the Principle into diſcredit; and as the *badge*, they would be aſhamed to have it appear upon themſelves.

The reign of JAMES the Firſt gave another and more deciſive ſtroke to the unfaſhionable doctrine of *Antichriſt*. He abhorred the PURITANS, againſt whom Elizabeth was contented to be only on her guard; and he feared the PAPISTS, whom Elizabeth ſet at defiance; ſo that to countenance the doctrine of *Antichriſt*, was, in his opinion, to give credit to the Puritan, whom he hated, and to make the Papiſts deſperate, whom he feared. The Court-Divines, therefore, ſought his favour, by ſpeaking ſlightly of the doctrine;

doctrine; or by treating it with contempt. And the greateſt Divine * and Scholar of that age ruined his fortune at Court by an immortal work in defence of this *common Principle.* Nor does James's writing a *Paraphraſe on the Revelations*, before he was twenty, to prove the *Pope* to be *Antichriſt*, or the cutting ſome lively jokes on the old Gentleman in his more advanced age, at all ſhew that his ſentiments were different from thoſe I have here given to him; for the *Paraphraſe* was apparently the compoſition of his Puritan Governors; and as for his Jokes, he would at any time ſacrifice a *Friend* to their good reception.

But there was another cauſe of ſtill more weight, which, at this time, concurred to diſcredit the *doctrine of Antichriſt:* and that was the effects of the perſecutions which the Puritans, at that time, underwent. For, religious Perſecution hardens and contracts the Will, and inflates and inflames the Imagination; ſo that the Puritans, ſupported under their oppreſſion, by *ſtubbornneſs* and *enthuſiaſm*, ſoon began to fancy that they ſaw the evils they ſuffered, foretold in their favourite Prophecies concerning *Antichriſt:* which ſet them upon interpreting the *Apocalypſe*, not ſo much to illuſtrate, by the aid of critical learning, what was paſt, as to teach, with the air and ſpirit of Prophets, what was to come: regardleſs of the ſage information of the Apoſtle, that the unfulfilled Prophecies *are not of private interpretation.* It will be eaſily believed, what wild work this ſpirit muſt produce in minds thus agitated, when brooding over ſo myſterious a Book: In which, amongſt their other viſionary diſcoveries, they ſaw all that concerned their own cauſe and ſufferings, together with the happy iſſue of them, in the glorious triumphs of the Saints: And it will be as eaſily conceived, what diſhonour theſe extravagances muſt bring upon the great PRINCIPLE itſelf. The Court, and Comic, Poets, who are generally the Penſioners or Creatures of the Great, ſoon took up the ſubject; and having it at this advantage, turned theſe Prophecies and their Interpreters, into mockery and ridicule. From thence, the People

* Mede.

catched the infection; and *Antichriſt* and *Fanaticiſm* have been ever ſince ſynonymous terms.

LAUD (who was bred up in College with an averſion to the Puritans) when under CHARLES THE FIRST he ſoon became all powerful, encouraged the more rational principles of the *Arminians*; of which ſect GROTIUS and EPISCOPIUS were the two main Pillars. Now the moderation of the One, and a viſionary ſcheme of the Other, indiſpoſed both from preſſing Popery with the victorious doctrine of *Antichriſt*. This, which added freſh diſcredit to it, encouraged one Court-Divine * (afterwards an Archbiſhop) in an Act at Oxford, to deny publicly, that the *Pope was Antichriſt*; while another of the ſame faſhionable party, though much more able and diſcreet †, ventured, in pure averſion to Fanaticiſm, to adopt the Syſtem of GROTIUS on this head; a Syſtem, to which Popery has been much indebted; and which GROTIUS ſeems to have invented for the ſake only of his darling Project, an Union between the Catholic and Proteſtant Churches.

The Civil Wars, and the overthrow of the Conſtitution, ſoon followed, the glorious atchievement of a rabble of armed Fanatics! whoſe Enthuſiaſm was inflamed to its height, by their ſecond project, to deſtroy *Antichriſt*, and erect *the fifth Monarchy of* King *Jeſus*. Indeed, theſe were no other than the various ſpawn of the firſt perſecuted *Puritans*. So that when Monarchy was reſtored, and Churchmen of greateſt merit were, by a rare chance, become moſt in repute at Court, the ſeverity of their ſufferings in the late confuſions, and their averſion to the fanatic ſpirit that occaſioned thoſe ſufferings, enough diſpoſed them to follow the example of the old Court Clergy, in diſcountenancing a Doctrine whoſe abuſe had ſo much contributed to aggravate the preceding miſchiefs.

The licentious practices and the Popiſh projects of the Favorites and Miniſters of CHARLES THE SECOND further concurred to bring this GREAT PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE into diſcredit: Amongſt theſe, whatever concerned the ſublimities of Religion, and the

* Sheldon. † Hammond.

myſterious

myſterious ways of Providence; whatever diſgraced the Church of Rome, or ſtigmatized her with the brand of ANTICHRIST, was ſure to be treated with contempt and averſion.

The REVOLUTION, indeed, removed many of theſe prejudices; and, by the vindication of *religious* as well as *civil* Liberty, abated the rancour of Sects and Parties againſt one another. Nay, by the recent terror and abhorrence of Popery, from which men were but juſt recovered, it even produced contrary prejudices, favourable to the cauſe of truth. So that now one would have hoped, this capital *Prophecy* might at length have procured a fair and equitable hearing. But, alas! the remedy came too late: The diſtemper was grown inveterate, and ANTICHRIST and BABYLON were ſtill held to be the language of cant and enthuſiaſm. So that no eminence of genius, no depth of Science, could ſecure the Writers on *this Prophecy* from contempt. Of this we have lately had a portentous inſtance, reſpecting the moſt ſublime mind * that ever was; and in whoſe amazing efforts this nation moſt juſtly prides itſelf: who was no ſooner known to have commented on the REVELATIONS, than he was judged † to have fallen into dotage. And this great Expoſitor, as great when he laid open the myſteries of the *Religious* Syſtem, as when he unveiled thoſe of the *Natural*, was almoſt generally condemned to neglect and oblivion.

III.

Notwithſtanding all theſe diſadvantages, under which the man muſt labour who comes to the defence of this SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, yet a full ſenſe of the importance of the caſe will be ſufficient to encourage a Proteſtant Divine to make the attempt: For, on the Prophecy concerning *Antichriſt* the Proteſtant Churches were founded; and by the APOCALYPSE in general are they impregnably upheld.

* NEWTON.

† By Voltaire and the French Philoſophers; a ſect ſprung from our Freethinkers.

The

The contempt, in which the Doctrine now lies, hath kept in credit the miſerable ſhifts the Church of Rome hath employed to cure the *deadly wound* which cannot be *healed.* For as that Community hold the *Apocalypſe* to be Canonical, they are obliged to own, that the object of the Prophecy is *Antichriſt*, or the *Man of ſin*; and, what is more, that it is in ROME itſelf where he domineers. For, the place of his reſidence, the City on the *ſeven hills*, is ſo plainly marked out, that it can be neither miſtaken nor denied.

This is hard upon them, as it lays them under the neceſſity of going back as high as the firſt PERSECUTING EMPERORS, that is, to the firſt Ages of the Church, to ſeek for this *Man of ſin*; and in the circumſtances of the rage and impiety of thoſe Tyrants, and in the ſtate of the then ſuffering Church, to find out all that relates to the *Antichriſtian Power* foretold.

The difference of opinion, therefore, between the Romiſh and Proteſtant Churches, on this important point, ſtands thus:—The *Romaniſts* hold that this ANTICHRISTIAN POWER is a power of the CIVIL kind; the Reformed contend that it is a power ECCLESIASTICAL. While both concur to fix the *ſeat* of this Power, whoſe nature is thus diſputed, in the CITY OF ROME.

This long Conteſt may therefore be well reduced to a ſingle queſtion, a queſtion which leads to a deciſive iſſue, "IS THIS ANTICHRISTIAN POWER OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL, OR IS IT OF THE CIVIL KIND?—If it be a *civil power*, the Church of Rome gains her cauſe, and clears herſelf of the capital charge of the *Man of ſin*'s ſitting in the chair of PETER, and uſurping in the *Kingdom of Chriſt*. If the *power be eccleſiaſtical*, the Proteſtant Churches triumph, as being eſtabliſhed on *Prophecy*, and having their ſeceſſion and ſeparation juſtified * by the command of the Holy Spirit.

To determine this deciſive queſtion, we ſhall have no occaſion to lanch out into that wide ocean of Literature, agitated by a thouſand ſtorms, ariſing from every controverſial quarter of this unexplored

* Rev. chap. xviii. ver. 4.

world

world of MYSTICAL PROPHECY. For, if the Power foretold be of the *civil* kind, it can relate only to the perſecuting EMPERORS; if it be a Power *eccleſiaſtic*, it can relate only to perſecuting POPES. For it is agreed on all hands, that PERSECUTION is the BADGE OF ANTICHRIST.

But before I proceed more directly to ſhew that the *Pope*, and not the *Emperor*, is intereſted in the actions and fortunes of this MAN OF SIN, it will give additional force to the Evidence, if we reflect, previouſly, on the diſtreſs to which, both matters of *fact* and matters of *right* have reduced the Advocates of the Papal Cauſe.

To evade the edge of theſe Prophecies, which cut ſo deep into the vitals of the Church of Rome, her Advocates did not want dexterity, when they interpreted *Antichriſt* to be a Power of the *civil* kind. This took the burthen from off their ſhoulders, by removing the whole Scene into an oppoſite quarter; a quarter fertile of plauſible applications. Their dexterity conſiſted in turning neceſſity into a ſhew of choice. For the birth of *Antichriſt*, his acts and atchievements, being confined to one particular City; in order to find a *Civil Power* domineering in this City, and perſecuting the Church of Chriſt, they were obliged to force their way upwards, to the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity. But, how much this makes their Cauſe to labour, we ſhall now endeavour to evince.

1. Firſt then, had *Antichriſt* or the *man of ſin* been the perſecuting Roman Emperors, the Chriſtians of that time muſt needs have ſeen and acknowledged his Character, in the working and the accompliſhment of the Prophecy: They, who were Contemporaries, and, of courſe, perfectly well acquainted with every circumſtance reſpecting the *Perſecutors*, and every circumſtance attending the *Perſecution*, could not but ſee how all of them (if ſuch were the fact) quadrated with every part of the *Prediction*; and ſo have been fully convinced, that the *Man of ſin* was the *Emperor of the world*; as indeed he was not likely to be one in a much lower Station. On the contrary, though PERSECUTION *be the family-badge of Antichriſt*, yet

yet the Chriſtians of that time ſaw nothing in the *imperial edicts*, or in their execution, that had any marked reſemblance to the deſolations to be committed by *the man of ſin*. They ſaw nothing there even to excite their attention, or to erect their minds towards the Crimes or towards the Puniſhment of the *man of ſin*, ſo graphically deſcribed by the apoſtles Paul and John: nor, indeed, any other circumſtance in their then ſtate of oppreſſion, ſufficient to reſcue the *Apocalypſe* from a total neglect, ſave in the doubts they entertained of its authenticity. So that, if the *Prophecy of Antichriſt* concerned the *early* fortunes of the Chriſtian Church, as our Adverſaries pretend; and that, yet, the Church, moſt concerned, ſaw nothing of it, as was the caſe; Unbelievers will ſay, that no greater diſgrace can befal PROPHECY than what theſe two things, when laid together, will occaſion.

2. Again, it is to be obſerved, that the information concerning *Antichriſt*, or the *Man of ſin*, was not intruſted to St. John alone. It was communicated to other of the Apoſtles; perhaps to all, for reaſons we may eaſily collect; certainly, to the *great Apoſtle of the Gentiles*. Now St. Paul, in his Second Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, combating a growing error then riſen in the Church, "that the SECOND COMING of our Lord was at hand," ſays, *Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day ſhall not come, except there be a falling away firſt, and that* MAN OF SIN *be* FIRST *revealed, the ſon of Peraition* *. This is no obſcure intimation that the reign of ANTICHRIST was at ſome conſiderable diſtance. But the words which follow put the matter out of doubt: *Remember ye not* (ſays he) *that when I was with you, I told you theſe things? and now ye know* WHAT WITHOLDETH *that* HE *might be revealed in his time. For the* MYSTERY OF INIQUITY *doth already work: only* HE, *who now letteth, will lett, until he be taken out of the way: and then ſhall that* WICKED ONE *be revealed* †.

* Chap. ii. ver. 3.

† Ver. 5, 6, 7.

By

By this, it appears, that the impediment, or *lett*, to the revelation of *Antichriſt* was ſomething *external*.—That ſpirit of Pride, perſecution, and impiety, which makes up the Character of the MAN OF SIN, was already breeding and foſtering in the Church; and were it not for an impediment *without*, which would take ſome time to remove, his appearance might have been ſoon expected. This impediment, we ſee, St. Paul ſcruples to lay open by Letter; at the ſame time, he reminds them, that, in his Converſations with them, he had explained the ſecret. But ſurely, when his argument led him to it, he had ſmall cauſe to decline a repetition, unleſs he thought it dangerous to be put in writing. Such a reſerve was not his wont. On other occaſions of precept and inſtruction, he inculcated what he would impreſs upon their minds, by frequent remonſtrances and repetitions, *in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*. We muſt conclude, therefore, that ſomething of great importance occaſioned his reſerve. And if this *lett* to the appearance of *Antichriſt* were the preſent EXISTENCE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, we are not to wonder he ſhould ſcruple to commit ſo dangerous a ſecret, to paper; He who, on all occaſions, was ſo cautious not to give offence to the *civil Power*. And what would have been deemed ſo high a crime of State againſt IMMORTAL ROME, as to teach that her Dominion was to paſs away; and, as an obſtruction to the eternal Decrees of Providence, to give place to a Power ſtill more tyrannical and unjuſt?

Now, as the *Papal uſurpation* aroſe out of the Ruins of the *Roman Empire*, and could have ariſen, naturally, by no other means, we have great reaſon to believe, that the EXISTENCE of this EMPIRE was the very *lett* and impediment ſo obſcurely intimated by the prudent Apoſtle.

However, he tells us, that the ſecret had been communicated to the Churches. And probably it was one amongſt the chief of thoſe dangerous informations, which, we learn from the hiſtory of the Primitive Church, were kept, with all care, from the knowledge of the Catechumens.

What then would ſuch a communication to the Church produce, but what it did produce, a general Opinion, that the appearance of *Antichriſt* was to be in the *latter times?* The Apoſtle, we find, when he combated the common error, that our Lord's *ſecond coming* was at hand, employs this general opinion concerning *Antichriſt*, to ſhew how much they were miſtaken, by an argument to this purpoſe, "You acknowledge that *Antichriſt* is to appear in the *latter times*; now this *Man of ſin* muſt be revealed before the *ſecond coming*; conſequently the *ſecond coming* muſt needs be far off."

The *late appearance of Antichriſt* was a doctrine ſo univerſally received in the primitive Church, that it was like a proverbial ſaying amongſt them; and from thence, St. John takes occaſion to MORALIZE on the Doctrine, and warn his followers againſt that ſpirit which, in after-times, was to animate the *Man of ſin*.—"Little "children" ſays he, "it is the *laſt time:* and ye have heard that "*Antichriſt* ſhall come: even now there are many *Antichriſts*; "whereby ye know that it is the *laſt time* *." As much as to ſay, We are fallen into the very dregs of time, as appears from that *Antichriſtian* ſpirit which now ſo much pollutes the Churches: for you know, it is a common ſaying, that *Antichriſt is to come in thoſe wretched days*." The Apoſtle goes on to employ the ſame alluſion through the reſt of the Epiſtle.—*He is* ANTICHRIST *that denieth the Father and the Son* †.—Again—*This is that ſpirit of* ANTICHRIST, *whereof ye have heard that it ſhould come; and even now already is it in the world* ‡."—And again—*Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. This is a Deceiver and* AN ANTICHRIST §. Where, we ſee, the Appellation, *Antichriſt*, is employed to ſignify *an enemy of God and godlineſs in general*, by the ſame figure of ſpeech that *Elias* was deſigned in thoſe times to ſignify a Prophet; and *Rachel*, a Daughter of Iſrael; and that, in theſe times, *Judas* is uſed for a Traitor,

* 1 Epiſt. John, chap. ii. ver. 18. † Ver. 22. ‡ Chap. iv. ver. 3.
§ 2 Epiſt. ver. 7.

and

and *Nero* for a Tyrant. But as theſe converted terms neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that they originally belonged to perſons of the like Characters, who had them in *proper*; ſo does the name *Antichriſt*, tranſferred by St. John, to certain of his impious Contemporaries, as neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that there was one who ſhould ariſe in the latter times, to whom the *title* eminently belonged, as marked out in the Prophecies by the *proper name* of ANTICHRIST.

This was not amiſs to obſerve, becauſe the Advocates of the See of Rome have laid hold of theſe paſſages to ſhew, that ANTICHRIST was only a *generic term* for every enemy of God and godlineſs: Whereas we Proteſtants inſiſt, that it was the *Proper name* of one Grand Impoſtor; not *one* by the individuality of *Perſon*, but by the identity of *Station*, to be revealed in the latter Ages of the Church; and, after he had been foretold by name, that was applied *generically*, by the commoneſt figure of ſpeech, to all who had any ſemblance to his Character. The only difference is, that Prophecy enabled the ſacred Writers to uſe the generic appellation, before the appearance of him who had it for his patronymic; whereas, in the other caſes, the generic term muſt needs come after the Perſon who firſt bore it for his own name.

From theſe places therefore of St. Paul and St. John it neceſſarily follows, that the ANTICHRIST or MAN OF SIN predicted by Both of them (his *Perſon* and *Fortunes*, more fully by the latter; his *Merchandize* and *Traffic*, more minutely by the former) could not be the perſecuting Emperors.

Another very perſuaſive argument, that the Antichriſtian Power in queſtion is the growth of theſe latter times, is the myſterious darkneſs in which the enigmatic prophecies in the Apocalypſe concerning ANTICHRIST lay involved for many ages. *A light* indeed *ſhining in a dark place*, to the few ſagacious obſervers of every age, but ſurrounded with ſo thick a darkneſs to all beſides, that, deſpairing to penetrate the gloom, they conſigned the *Apocalypſe* to a general neglect, not without much uncertainty and doubt concerning its Author. But theſe *latter times* have ſeen the clouds and

darkneſs gradually fly off, and the *light* grow ſtronger and brighter as the fate of ANTICHRIST approaches. This ſeems to be a ſure evidence, that the grand Impoſtor is of theſe times; that he has advanced through ſeveral ſtages of his Uſurpation; that two or three Ages ago his power was at the height; that he is now paſt his meridian, and haſting to his decline; and that ſome future Age, not very remote, will ſee his total deſtruction; and conſequently the remaining obſcurity of this famous book made manifeſt to all *.

A third

* A late Proteſtant Editor and Commentator of the NEW TESTAMENT, in reverence perhaps to the memory of Grotius, one of the brighteſt Ornaments of the Church or Sect to which this Editor belongs, contends, as that great Man had done before him, that the CHURCH OF ROME IS NOT ANTICHRIST. We know what it was that induced Grotius to maintain that ſyſtem; it was a project of a comprehenſion long ſince out of credit, from a ſenſe of its viſionary impracticable nature: what it was that induced this learned man to revive it, a doctrine ſo injurious to the Proteſtant Cauſe, unleſs a miſtaken fondneſs for that excellent Perſon's Memory, I confeſs myſelf utterly at a loſs to conceive.

However, he aſſures us, "that the fanciful application of *Antichriſt* to the *Church of Rome*, was firſt made in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, by the FRANCISCAN MONKS: from whom he ſays the *Reformed Churches* received it: and then adds—*But the thing will hardly find credit with men of ſenſe, that in a barbarous and unlearned age, the true key to the Apocalypſe ſhould be intruſted to theſe paultry monks, deſtitute of letters and all knowledge of Antiquity, and denied to the whole Chriſtian Church before, for Thirteen whole Centuries together* *. No white-waſher of Popery could have done better.

In a HISTORY OF THINGS PAST, and recorded in the *learned languages*, the languages of the times, the beſt Scholar and moſt ſagacious Critic without doubt bids faireſt for the beſt Interpreter: and the *earlier* he is to the ſubject, the better chance he has of being in the right.

But in a PROPHECY OF THINGS TO COME, foretold in all its circumſtances, common ſenſe aſſures us, that he is moſt likely to interpret beſt who lives *lateſt*, and comes neareſt to the time of the *completion*. For he who hath ſeen one part already fulfilled, a part which gives light to the remainder yet unfulfilled, will certainly be beſt able to judge of the whole, and beſt underſtand to what object it capitally relates.

* Ægrè tamen apud cordatos fidem inveniet, ſeculo barbaro et indocto veram Apocalypſeos clavem, per integra tredecim ſecula omnibus Chriſtianis occultatam, a Monachis omni linguarum et antiquitatum cognitione deſtitutis, repertam fuiſſe Nov. Teſt. Græc. Amſt. 1752. Tom. II. p. 891, 892.

The

A third Objection to this papal interpretation, may be drawn from a Principle laid down in the entrance on this Diſcourſe, viz. That

The moſt exalted genius, with the exacteſt knowledge of Antiquity, and ſkill in Languages, could not enable the *early Fathers of the Church* to form any tolerable judgment of a thing at that time almoſt totally hidden in futurity; eſpecially if it were (as was the caſe here) in a matter of which the mind of man, for want of the knowledge or experience of any thing ſimilar, could have no conception.

On the other hand, the profoundeſt ignorance, in the want of all thoſe accompliſhments, could not hinder the moſt ſtupid *Monk* from ſeeing what was before his eyes, *Antichriſt in Pontificals*, and the *Man of Sin arrived at his full ſtature*. This extraordinary Perſonage he might know, by the mere information of his ſenſe, was the bloody tyrant foretold.

On other occaſions indeed, for wiſe and general purpoſes, it pleaſed Divine Providence to *hide* the great myſteries of the Goſpel *from the wiſe and prudent, and to reveal them unto Babes*. But in this, the ſame diſpenſation was neceſſary and unavoidable: And the FRANCISCANS, without a miracle, had the honour of ſtarting ANTICHRIST in his form, which, without a miracle, the *Origens* and the *Chryſoſtoms* muſt hunt after in vain.

But the pleaſanteſt part of the argument is behind.—*If* (ſays the learned Critic) *we believe the Franciſcans when they tell us, that the Pope is the Beaſt and the whore of Babylon, we muſt of* NECESSITY *believe them, when they tell us, that they themſelves are the only ſpiritual Brethren, the true Church, and that the ſingle mark of the true Church is to live on alms, and to wear a ſtrait and ſhort capuchine* *. Commend me to a Reaſoner like this; a Reaſoner on *neceſſity*. What! becauſe that which the *Franciſcans* ſaw before their eyes, and we ſee with ours, and ſo agree with them, that the Prophecy of Paul and John concerning ANTICHRIST was fulfilled in the POPE, therefore we muſt of *neceſſity* believe theſe ſame monks when they ſay they are the true Church, though no Prophecy hath given us the marks either of them or their pretended church, unleſs it be in the *Frogs* that *came out of the mouth of the* BEAST.—If you give a man credit for what he can prove, we are obliged, it ſeems, to give him credit for what he cannot.

The Commentators of the preſent age, as living ſo much later than thoſe *Franciſcans*, have ſeen more marks of the Beaſt, as he grew more enraged; for then, as the poet ſaid of his fellow-beaſt the *Tyger*,

—he ſwell'd with angry pride,
And call'd forth all his ſpots on every ſide—

and ſo have been able to give the moſt convincing proofs that he is the Inhabitant of

* Qui vero Franciſcanis credit, Pontificem Romanam eſſe belluam et meretricem Babylonicam, iiſdem etiam credat NECESSE EST ſolos fratres ſpirituales eſſe veram eccleſiam, et unicum veræ eccleſiæ characterem eſſe vivere pane mendicato, et geſtare arctum brevemque cucullum. P. 892.

the

That *Miracles* and *Prophecies* are the two great Pillars of *revealed Religion*; but raiſed in ſucceſſion, each in its proper time and place. From whence it may be collected, that the ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES belongs to the *latter times*, juſt as the WORKING OF MIRACLES does to the *former*: The uſe of *Prophecies fulfilled* being to ſtrengthen the evidence of our Faith, from *Miracles performed*; which a long intermiſſion of many ages may ſeem to have impaired. To ſuppoſe, therefore, that the accompliſhment of theſe *Prophecies* happened, and is to be ſought for, in the *firſt ages* of the Church, tends to croſs and defeat the gracious purpoſe of the Founder; while it takes away *Prophecy* from theſe *latter times*, in which it is wanted, and gives it to the former, which ſtood in no need of it; beſtowing on ſome Ages a waſteful abundance, and depriving others of a neceſſary ſupply.

Thus, on the confeſſion of our Adverſaries, the head-quarters of ANTICHRIST being fixed in *Rome*; and, on the conviction of our ſenſes, his tyrannical and uſurped Power being exerciſed in theſe *latter times*: We come more directly to the main queſtion, WHETHER ANTICHRIST BE A CIVIL POWER, OR A SPIRITUAL?

That it was a SPIRITUAL, we ſhall now evince, by the following reaſons.

1. In theſe *latter times*, there hath been no Civil power in ROME, ſeparate from an Eccleſiaſtical; but an Eccleſiaſtical only, which hath drawn after it, a Civil. So that if ROME were the ſeat of ANTICHRIST, and theſe *latter times* gave riſe to his Uſurpation; and that, in theſe *latter times*, there was no ſuch civil power in the *Seven Hills*; and in this the Proteſtant World has generally acquieſced. But does the ſober part of it believe, that therefore the warm-headed Interpreters of the *Apocalypſe* have diſcovered (as they pretend) the MARTYRS, SAINTS, and WITNESSES, perſecuted and deſpoiled by the SCARLET WHORE and her infernal Abettors, in their own Friends and Parties in Religion? By no means. And why? Theſe Interpreters prove, in the moſt inconteſtible manner, that the CHURCH OF ROME IS ANTICHRIST; but we ſee they only fancy they have diſcovered the Objects of his rage, in thoſe who do honour to their Cauſe.

ROME,

ROME, but this of Antichriſt ; the conſequence will be, that ANTICHRIST as ſuch is a SPIRITUAL or Eccleſiaſtical, and not a CIVIL power.

The thing which hath kept this controverſy on a creditable footing, is the TWO POWERS' changing hands as it were, and invading one another's provinces.

So that when we urge the Papiſts with *Antichriſt's* having the marks of a *ſpiritual power*, and therefore, not the *Imperial* ; they reply, theſe marks may well be ſeen in a Power confeſſedly Civil, ſince the *Emperor*, like the *Pope*, was always *Pontifex Maximus* here ; and very often, a God, or a Saint at leaſt, hereafter.

When, on the other hand, they urge us with thoſe marks of Antichriſt which beſpeak him a *civil power* ; we reply, that though the *Pope's* eſſential power be indeed of the *ſpiritual* kind, yet he rightly wears theſe marks of a *ſecular* ; ſince ſuch a power he had annexed to his ſpiritual, (juſt as the Emperor annexed a ſpiritual power to the civil) by his inveſting himſelf with a civil Dominion, called *St. Peter's Patrimony.*

2. So far in confutation of the Syſtem framed by Grotius, to facilitate the project of a viſionary Comprehenſion ; a ſyſtem of real ſervice to nothing but the Papal Tyranny. It is true, that the evidence here employed is only negative ; yet it comes with a force, which no *poſitive* evidence can exceed. But to leave no ſubterfuge for doubt, I ſhall cloſe all with the other ſpecies, the proof *poſitive*, taken from the Apocalyptic Character of this famous Perſonage.

3. POWER is male or female indifferently. Hence, the *Power* in queſtion is ſometimes ſaid to be the attribute of the MAN OF SIN ; ſometimes, of the SCARLET WHORE. A corrupt Church may be found either under a popular or monarchic government. Under a popular, One name and one perſonage would ſerve in enigmatic Prophecy, both for the Governor and Governed ; becauſe they are all reciprocally one and the other : and ſuch a Church might be commodiouſly repreſented by *one* ſingle Perſonage. But, under a

monarchic

monarchic or deſpotic Government, the *Acts and Monuments* of ſuch a Church cannot be well repreſented but under *Two*; the Tyrannic Head and miſerable Members, ſometimes ſuffering under, and ſometimes, again, ſharing in, the Tyranny.

On this account, there was a propriety and elegance in the occaſional change of the Sex, by the ſacred Penmen. The POPE, as Uſurper and Tyrant in *Chriſt's Kingdom*, is repreſented under the *male image* of ANTICHRIST or the MAN OF SIN; and the CHURCH OF ROME, whoſe cup of abominations had debauched and intoxicated the world, under the *female image* of the SCARLET WHORE.

And as this affords us the cleareſt proof, that the Antichriſtian Power in queſtion is of the SPIRITUAL and not of the civil kind, I ſhall purſue the Viſion in thoſe famous Prophecies which preſents the Chriſtian Church under a female form; firſt, in its celeſtial, native, purity; and then, in its degenerate and apoſtate ſtate. For, of all the emblematic Pictures in the Apocalyptic Viſions, thoſe two are the leaſt ambiguous.

In the xiith Chapter, a WOMAN comes from *Heaven*, "clothed "with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her "head a crown of twelve ſtars: And ſhe being with child, cried, "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered—And behold a "great RED DRAGON, having *ſeven heads and ten horns*, and SEVEN "CROWNS upon his heads.—And the Dragon ſtood before the "Woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her "child as ſoon as it was born. And ſhe brought forth a man-child, "who was to rule all nations with a rod of Iron; and the Child "was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the Woman "fled into the WILDERNESS, where ſhe had a place prepared of "God, that they ſhould feed her there."——

In the xviiith Chapter, an Angel ſays to John, "Come hither, "I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the GREAT WHORE, that "ſitteth upon many Waters: with whom the Kings of the earth "have committed fornication, and the Inhabiters of the earth have "been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he "carried

" carried me away in the ſpirit into the WILDERNESS: and I ſaw a
" WOMAN ſit upon a SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST full of names of
" blaſphemy, having *ſeven heads and ten horns.* And the WOMAN
" was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold
" and precious ſtones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand,
" full of abominations and filthineſs of fornication. And upon her
" forehead was a name written, *Myſtery, Babylon the Great, the*
" *Mother of Harlots*, and abominations of the earth. And I ſaw
" the WOMAN drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with
" the blood of the Martyrs of Jeſus: and when I ſaw her, I won-
" dered with great admiration. And the Angel ſaid unto me,
" Wherefore didſt thou marvel? I will tell thee the Myſtery of
" the WOMAN, and of the Beaſt that carrieth her, which hath the
" *ſeven heads and ten horns.*—And here is the mind which hath
" Wiſdom, the ſeven heads are *ſeven mountains* on which the Wo-
" MAN ſitteth.—Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb; and the
" Lamb ſhall overcome them."

Though the two prophetic Viſions, I have here tranſcribed, be full of evidence concerning the fortunes of ANTICHRIST, and the fate of the SCARLET WHORE; and that the POPE and See of ROME are no other than the *alias* names of the Criminal; yet our point being only to ſhew, that the ANTICHRISTIAN POWER in queſtion is a SPIRITUAL and not a *civil* Power, I have at preſent nothing to do with its various ABOMINATIONS, here ſketched out, further than as ſome circumſtances, concerning theſe *abominations*, ſpeak more fully to the general truth we are upon.

The SAME WOMAN, who repreſents the Chriſtian Religion, we ſee appear in both the Prophetic Viſions;—pure and immaculate when firſt let down from *Heaven*; but defiled and contaminated by a long commerce in the *Wilderneſs* of this world.

In her Virgin-ſtate we ſee her armed in the celeſtial panoply of FAITH and KNOWLEDGE; and, (while in this ſtate) like her almighty Father, *without variableneſs, or ſhadow of changing:* expreſſed by her being *cloathed with the ſun, crowned with twelve*

ſtars, and the moon under her feet.—She is in labour with her firſt-born, and *pained to be delivered*; by which is admirably held out, the dangers and difficulties our holy Religion ſtruggled with, in giving birth to the infant Church, whom the Powers of this world ſtood ready to devour: ſtrongly expreſſed by *the great red dragon who ſtood before the woman ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born.* Whoſe purpoſe was defeated by the *extraordinary Providence* of Heaven, wakeful for its preſervation: *and her child*, whoſe future fortune, we are told, was *to rule all nations* (when he had degenerated into a Tyrant) *with a rod of iron*, as ſoon *as brought forth, was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

The WOMAN fled into the WILDERNESS, and was in ſafety there. I know no better reaſon for our being informed of this circumſtance, than that, when the *fortunes of the Church* are reſumed, as they are in the xviith Chapter, we might know where to find her; and, as ſhe was ſo totally changed, to know her likewiſe when we had found her. In this Chapter, therefore, the Prophet is led into the WILDERNESS, and introduced to her preſence, *ſitting upon a ſcarlet-coloured Beaſt*, under the title of *the* GREAT WHORE, and branded in the forehead, as was the wont, in ſtigmatizing common Proſtitutes. Indeed her meretricious dreſs and equipage ſufficiently ſhew how much ſhe was *fallen from her firſt love.* She is ſtript of all the ornaments which ſhe brought down with her from Heaven; and inſtead of being *clothed*, as at firſt ſhe was, *with the ſun, and crowned with twelve ſtars*, ſhe is now arrayed in *purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls:* that is, Religion had now exchanged thoſe divine gifts and graces, with which ſhe was firſt adorned by the Holy Spirit, for worldly wealth and grandeur, to which ſhe was arrived, by coming to a good underſtanding with her old enemy the *Red Dragon*, or CIVIL POWER: Of whom having received the trappings of Sovereignty, ſhe ſoon after tore from him the Sovereignty itſelf. A revolution in her fortunes well expreſſed by her MOUNTING and RIDING the SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST, the ſame with the RED DRAGON;

GON; as appears from the like number of *heads* and *horns* beſtowed upon the Monſter under each denomination. Nay, to mark this identity the ſtronger, the CROWNS which were on the *ſeven heads* of the *red Dragon*, while he was Sovereign, and a Perſecutor of the Virgin, are no longer found on the *ſeven heads* of the *ſcarlet-coloured Beaſt*, now deprived of Sovereignty, and become ſubject to the *Scarlet Whore:* Who having got the *Beaſt*, or degenerated *Civil Power*, at this advantage, rides him at her pleaſure; and, like another Circe, gives him of her *Golden Cup, full of the Wine of her abominations, and filthineſs of* FORNICATION, while ſhe herſelf drinks *the* BLOOD *of the Saints.—The Kings of the earth* (ſays the Prophet) *commit fornication with the Whore:* i. e. in this impure mixture of the two Powers, *civil* and *ſpiritual*, both become polluted; the *Civil* uſes Religion for an engine of State, to ſupport TYRANNY; and the *Spiritual* gets inveſted with the rights of the Magiſtrate, to enable her to PERSECUTE.

But if we attend to the Prophetic Language of St. John, we ſhall ſee more clearly the beauty of this repreſentation. His language abounds in a mixed *phraſeology* formed on the different natures of the two Diſpenſations: And expreſſive of ideas belonging, ſometimes to the one, ſometimes to the other ſyſtem. Each of theſe ſorts the Prophet employs occaſionally, as each beſt contributes to the force and elegance of his diſcourſe. So here, *the Cup of fornication* alludes to the degeneracy of the Jewiſh; in which, the figurative name, for IDOLATRY, was *Fornication* and *Adultery*.—*The blood of the Saints* alludes to the diſtreſſed condition of the Chriſtian; and more plainly ſignifies PERSECUTION *for Opinion.* Theſe are the two great Reproaches of all Religion, natural and revealed: and each was the peculiar Peſt, the one of Judaiſm, the other of Chriſtianity. For IDOLATRY violates the very eſſence of the LAW, and PERSECUTION defeats all the virtue of the Goſpel. Theſe two infernal Tyrannies, the Prophet repreſents as the Aſſeſſors of the SCARLET WHORE, now become Sovereign of the Earth.

But if we want to know the ingredients of this inchanted Cup, with which *the Inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk*, St. Paul will tell us. In his account of the *ſide-board* of the GREAT WHORE, he tells us, that "In the latter times ſome ſhall depart "from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and Doctrines "of Devils; ſpeaking lies in hypocriſy, having their conſcience "ſeared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to "abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received *." In which words the Holy Spirit graphically deſcribes,—*the Worſhip of Saints—the fabrication of falſe Miracles——the invention of Purgatory, and the means contrived for eſcaping it—monkiſh and clerical Celibacy—Pagan faſts—and Jewiſh diſtinction of meats.*

The laſt exceſs of the *Woman in purple and ſcarlet colour*, after having intoxicated all others, is the getting drunk, herſelf—*I ſaw the Woman* (ſays the Prophet) *drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jeſus.*—In *lies* and *hypocriſy* the *Whore* began her reign; and in PERSECUTION, ſhe filled up the meaſure of her Tyranny. Nothing now remained, but the coming vengeance of Heaven, when the TEN HORNS, or the Civil Powers of Europe confederated, *ſhall hate the Whore, and make her deſolate and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire* †. But this being an unfulfilled Prophecy, a matter yet in the womb of Time, we make no further uſe of it, than juſt, by quoting it, to cultivate and encourage a diſpoſition in the RULERS OF THE EARTH, to facilitate the great work which Providence hath ordained to bring to paſs by their miniſtry.

To conclude, I preſume I have now performed what I undertook, (and it is all that is neceſſary for the ſupport of the Proteſtant cauſe) viz. to prove, that ANTICHRIST and the SCARLET WHORE are a SPIRITUAL Power; and therefore, no other than the POPE and CHURCH OF ROME.

* 1 Tim. chap. iv. ver. 1. et ſeq.

† Chap. xvii. ver. 16.

One

One of the ſobereſt as well as ſoundeſt Reaſoners of this reaſoning Age, who, free from the enthuſiaſm of party-zeal, carried with him to the ſtudy of Scripture all the Philoſophic light and preciſion, which he had learnt of his Maſters, LOCKE and NEWTON (who themſelves employed the richeſt of their ſtores in the like ſacred ſervice) after having paid the cloſeſt attention to the predictions of the *Apocalypſe*, hath, as the reſult of all, been bold enough to put the truth of REVEALED RELIGION itſelf on the reality of that prophetic Spirit which here foretells the deſolation of CHRIST'S CHURCH AND KINGDOM by *Antichriſt*; and the reſtoration of both to their original PURITY and POWER. "If, (ſays he) IN THE DAYS "*of St. Paul and St. John*, there was any footſtep of ſuch a ſort of "power as this in the world; or if there HAD BEEN any ſuch power "in the world; or if there WAS THEN any appearance of probability, "that could make it enter into the heart of man to imagine that "there EVER COULD BE any ſuch kind of power in the world, "much leſs in the *Temple* or *Church of God*; and if there be not "NOW ſuch a power actually and conſpicuouſly exerciſed in the "world; and if any picture of this power, DRAWN AFTER THE "EVENT, can now deſcribe it more plainly and exactly than it was "originally deſcribed in the words of the Prophecy; then may it, "with ſome degree of plauſibleneſs, be ſuggeſted, that the Pro-"phecies are nothing more than enthuſiaſtic Imaginations *."

* Evidences of natural and revealed Religion, by Dr. S. CLARKE, Rector of St. James's Weſtminſter, p. 282.

DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

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ON THE RESURRECTION.

1 COR. Chap. XV. ver. 17.

IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN, YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS.

THUS it is, the holy Apoſtle concludes, in order to *compleat* the Proof of the Miracle of the RESURRECTION, which he had ſupported juſt before, from human teſtimony. "I delivered "unto you, (ſays he) *firſt of all*, that which I alſo received, how "that Chriſt died—that he roſe again—and that he was ſeen of "Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was ſeen of above five "hundred Brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto "this preſent; but ſome are fallen aſleep. After that he was ſeen "of James; then of all the Apoſtles. And laſt of all he was ſeen "of me alſo, as of one born out of due time *."

* Ver 3—8.

Would we but give reaſonable attention to holy Scripture, we ſhould find, that it not only affords us *Truth*, but likewiſe points out to us the *true way* of forming arguments for its ſupport. Of which, theſe two paſſages of St. Paul, when laid together, are a ſignal inſtance: Wherein he hath intimated the *two conditions* requiſite to intitle a MIRACLE to the claim of our belief; and ſhewn that *this* of the RESURRECTION hath thoſe two conditions; which we may expect to find in every *Miracle* that God is pleaſed to work, and to recommend to our belief: that is to ſay, 1ſt, That it be of ſo high importance as to be even *neceſſary* to Revelation, and to the religious Diſpenſation to which it belongs. And 2dly, That this abſtract importance and neceſſity be realized by human teſtimony.

If common facts, actions within the verge of nature and human agency, come fully recommended to us by the atteſtation of knowing and credible witneſſes, nothing further is required to win the aſſent of reaſonable men. No one doubts that Auguſtus Cæſar taxed the Roman Empire, or that Herod governed in Judæa, becauſe hiſtorians concur to ſupport theſe facts, and there is no improbability, in the nature of things, to call them in queſtion. But in the caſe of *miraculous events*, the matter is widely different. The arreſt and controul of the laws of Nature, either mediately or immediately by their Author, is a thing which *uniform experience* hath rendered ſo extremely improbable, as to balance, at leaſt, the beſt civil teſtimony. And why?—Actions within the verge of Nature and human agency, carry their viſible *cauſes* along with them, or at leaſt we require none, as knowing, they are *intrinſically* there. But, in acts miraculous, the immediate *efficient cauſe* is extrinſical, and conſequently doubtful. And where men neither ſee nor perceive a *cauſe*, they conclude there is none; or, in other words, that the report is falſe. So that when the whole Evidence of a miraculous fact is comprized in human teſtimony, and that fact contrary to UNIFORM EXPERIENCE, the PHILOSOPHIC mind will remain in doubt.

But

But though, in all Miracles, the *efficient cauſe* be unknown; yet, in thoſe which Revelation recommends to our belief, the FINAL CAUSE always ſtands apparent. And if that cauſe be found ſo important as to make the Miracle *neceſſary* to the ends of the Diſpenſation, we have all we can require to entitle it to our aſſent.

I can therefore conceive THREE CASES, and but three, in which a *Miracle*, offered to our conſideration, can be thus happily circumſtanced.

I. When it is worked as the CREDENTIAL of a Meſſenger coming from God, with ſome general Revelation to Man.

II. When it is worked, TO SECURE THE VERACITY of God's revealed Word, againſt an impious Power employing its authority, with a declared or profeſſed purpoſe to convict the divine Declaration of falſhood.

III. When the SUBJECT of the Miracle makes ſo ESSENTIAL a Part in the œconomy of the revealed Diſpenſation, as that without this miracle, the whole muſt fall to the ground.

Now, in all theſe *Caſes*, where we diſcern a great, an important, and a neceſſary purpoſe for an extraordinary interpoſition, an atteſtation to the truth of a *Miracle*, by the ſame fulneſs of evidence which is ſufficient to eſtabliſh a natural fact, is ſufficient to warrant our belief; who have the *moral attributes of God* to ſecure us from error. And here I preſume I have fairly given what Dr. Middleton and his Adverſaries called upon one another to give; and yet Both, in their turns, declined; viz. a CRITERION, to enable men to diſtinguiſh (for all the purpoſes of religious belief) true Miracles from falſe or doubtful. And no wonder they declined; for both Parties were in the Claſs of thoſe of whom Seneca ſpeaks—*Neſciunt* NECESSARIA, *quia* SUPERVACANEA *dedicerunt*.

The confining our belief of Miracles within theſe bounds, I apprehend, wipes away all the miſerable ſophiſtry of our pretended PHILOSOPHERS, both at home and abroad, againſt MIRACLES, from their being CONTRARY TO GENERAL EXPERIENCE IN THE ORDI-

NARY COURSE OF THINGS. At leaſt the *true Philoſopher* thought it did, when he made that ſtrict inquiſition into Truth, towards the concluſion of his immortal Work.—"Though the COMMON EXPE-
"RIENCE (ſays he) and the ORDINARY COURSE OF THINGS have
"juſtly a mighty influence on the minds of men, to make them
"give or refuſe credit to any thing propoſed to their belief, yet
"there is ONE CASE, wherein the STRANGENESS of the facts leſſens
"not the aſſent to a fair teſtimony given of it. For where ſuch
"*ſupernatural* events are SUITABLE TO ENDS AIMED AT BY HIM
"who has the power to change the courſe of Nature, there, under
"ſuch circumſtances, they may be the FITTER to procure belief,
"by how much the more they are BEYOND OR CONTRARY TO ORDI-
"NARY OBSERVATION. This is the proper caſe of MIRACLES,
"which, well atteſted, do not only find credit themſelves, *but give*
"*it alſo to other truths, which need ſuch confirmation* *."

Nor is the confining of the belief of Miracles within theſe bounds of a SUFFICIENT CAUSE, leſs beneficent to Revelation, than it is ſubverſive of the PHILOSOPHY in vogue.

1. It will afford a ſtrong mark of diſtinction between the *Miracles* claimed by the Revealed Religions we call true, and thoſe pre-
tended to be worked by the Deity, under Paganiſm; for I will venture to affirm that none of thoſe were ſupported by any thing that looked like *a ſufficient cauſe*. The moſt illuſtrious of them, and which hath had the fortune to gain credit with ſome Divines, was the eruption at Delphi to defeat and puniſh the ſacrilege of Brennus: Now, in this caſe, there was ſo far from being a *ſufficient cauſe* for the interpoſition of the Deity, that there were *ſufficient cauſes* why he ſhould not interpoſe; ſuch as rivetting men in their Idolatry, by a viſible protection of the moſt celebrated of all their Oracles; and inflaming their Superſtitions, by perſuading them that to dedicate immenſe and uſeleſs wealth in their Temples, was a matter pleaſing to the Deity.

* LOCKE's Eſſay concerning Human Underſtanding, Vol. II. Chap. of the Degrees of Aſſent, Sect. 13. p. 286.

2. But

2. But principally, this reſtraint will give an immediate check to FRAUD and SUPERSTITION, in their full career to enſlave a *believing World*, by the *prodigies* of ANTICHRIST, *whoſe coming hath been* (as St. Paul foretold) *after the working of Satan, with power, and ſigns, and lying wonders* *. How much this check is wanted to our nature, may be ſeen by that univerſal inbred infirmity of the human mind for the MARVELLOUS. This hath filled all ages with the monſtrous births of Prodigies; in part conceived from our ignorance of Phyſics; in part from a wanton and indulged imagination; and in part from the pride of ſelf-importance. However, certain it is, that Prodigies and Portents are the favourite as well as natural Iſſue of the uncultivated, the undiſciplined Mind. And ſo great is the rage for that pleaſure which the contemplation of MONSTROUS THINGS affords, that when we are no longer able, in a ſeaſon more barren than ordinary, to delude ourſelves in good earneſt, the Mind takes a wonderful delight in impoſing on itſelf in jeſt. Hence that exquiſite pleaſure, at preſent ſo faſhionable to indulge, in the tricks of LEGERDEMAIN; which, if performed with more than ordinary dexterity, turns us round again to our ſerious deluſions; and tempts us to hope that the Juggler, who ſo deals with us, may indeed deal with the Devil.

But ſhould it ſo happen, that this Performer of Wonders is leſs delighted with the honour of being thought a Conjurer, than they are with the pleaſure of conferring it upon him, he has no way left, but to make his ſpectators as wiſe as himſelf, by revealing the ſecret reſorts of his myſtery. But, from that moment, the pleaſure is at an end.

Who can wonder then, that in their ſerious hours they ſhould be as delighted to find *Miracles* in the works of *Nature*, and as thankleſs to be undeceived?

——— *Pol me occidiſtis, amici*
——— *cui ſic extorta voluptas.*

* 2 Theſſ. chap. ii. ver. 9.

But when Religion is once of the Council, ſhe takes the Deluſion into her own keeping.—And the natural paſſion to *find*, meets with an equal, though leſs natural paſſion to *ſupply* the MARVELLOUS: And while the Fabricator of falſe Miracles improves ſimple Knavery into PIOUS ZEAL, the enchanting pleaſure of the deluſion inflames natural folly into ENTHUSIASM. And the two parties now acting in Bodies *, and frequently changing hands, produce all that miſchief of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, which, but for the dull pains of *Legendary Writers*, we ſhould hardly have conceived poſſible to be effected.

For if men be ſo ready to *invent* a prodigy without any other motive than the honour of ſpreading the wonder; What muſt be their induſtry in the Trade, when Religion hallows the Manufacture? And if, as hath been often ſeen, they not only find the *materials*, but form them into ſhape; that is, forge the Miracle under their own miniſtry: then their Perſons become as holy as their Works: and their zeal to propagate the wonder riſes in proportion to the intereſts of their own glory. If ſome be thus forward to *invent*, there are others as ready to *embrace* a FALSE MIRACLE. It ſometimes ſooths them in the errors, ſometimes rivets them in the crimes of their Religion. Now it ſupports them againſt an oppoſing Sect, and now again enables them to triumph in their Own. In the mean time, all agreeing that the Church once had this celeſtial Gift, and none knowing how they came to loſe it, each Society of Religion concludes it to be ſtill entailed upon them.

Thus we ſee how every diſorderly paſſion of the human breaſt conſpires to deform the fair face of Nature, and cover it with prodigies and portents. This, indeed, ſhould make *Divines* cautious, but it ſhould not make PHILOSOPHERS vain. For, even theſe great Perſonages know no more of nature than they ſee; and all they

* Sane veriſſimum eſt, et tanquam ſecretum quoddam naturæ hominum animos, cum congregati ſint, magis quem ſoli ſint, affectibus et impreſſionibus patere. Bacon, Aug. Sc. **L. 2. c. 3.**

ſee,

ſee, if not a *miracle*, is yet a *myſtery*. For (as the Poet ſings) they

—— ſteal to Nature's Cloſet, and from thence
Bring nought but UNDECYPHER'D CHARACTERS;

Characters that will inform them no more of God's *natural*, than they do of his *moral* Government. In the mean time, the DIVINE will be better inſtructed in Both, if he be ſo wiſe to confine the belief of *things ſupernatural* within the bounds here pointed out.

But before I proceed to a farther conſideration of them, it will be proper to explain a reſtraint to which this general Propoſition muſt ſubmit.

We have ſaid, that MIRACLES, circumſtanced as above, claim credit with every reaſonable man. But from thence, we are not to conclude, that all *Miracles*, not thus circumſtanced, are *falſe*.

But then, it may be aſked, For what end or purpoſe were thoſe worked, which have not the common belief for their *object*; a point ſeemingly eſſential to the uſe of Miracles; and without which, they appear to have been worked in vain?

The queſtion is not impertinent, and will deſerve an anſwer; which the following Caſe may poſſibly afford.

Jeſus having choſen his *twelve diſciples*, and given *them power againſt unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe* *, ſends them forth to proclaim the Goſpel, under the following Commiſſion—"Go not into the *way* "*of the Gentiles*, and into any *City of the Samaritans* enter ye not. "But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. And as "ye go, preach, ſaying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Heal "the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers, raiſe the Dead, caſt out Devils: "freely ye have received, freely give.—Ye ſhall be brought before "Governors and Kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them "and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought "how, or what ye ſhall ſpeak. *For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the* "*ſpirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you* †."

* Matt. chap. x. ver. 1. † From ver. 5th to 20th inclusive.

In

In the execution of this work, the aid and aſſiſtance of two diſtinct ſpecies of *Miracles* is promiſed: *The curing their hearers of all diſeaſes and infirmities*; and the *defence of themſelves, by the ſpirit of the Father ſpeaking in them.* In the firſt, the Diſciples were *Agents*; in the other, they were only *paſſive.* The firſt, as Credentials of their Miſſion, was objected to the belief of thoſe concerned with their Meſſage: The other was only of the nature of a promiſe and inſtruction to themſelves; with which, no others having to do, it was not objected to their belief. From hence aroſe the difference, and not from the Miſſionaries being *active* in the one ſpecies of Miracles, and *paſſive* in the Other. For though the paſſive Miracle here was not thus *objective*, yet the like Miracle on the day of Pentecoſt *was*. The reaſon in each caſe is obvious: on the day of Pentecoſt, the Diſciples *ſpoke with tongues*; which being a ſenſible Miracle, became their Credential: here, they only *ſpoke with diſcretion*, which they might do without a Miracle, and was therefore confined to their own uſe.

In this caſe, then, we have *a true Miracle not objective* to the belief of others: which yet, as we ſhall now ſee, was not worked in vain.

The Diſciples, when ſent out upon this Miſſion, had a very imperfect idea of the *Goſpel*; and an abſurd conception of the office of the *Meſſiah*. For the removal of their ſpiritual blindneſs, they were to wait (ſo the œconomy of the Diſpenſation required) till Jeſus, on his *aſcenſion*, ſhould ſend amongſt them the *Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things*. In the mean time, they were under the more immediate direction of their Maſter; who, occaſionally, corrected their miſtakes, as circumſtances, in their attendance on him, made it neceſſary.

Amongſt their capital Prejudices were the following—That the Goſpel of Jeſus concerned only the Jews, and the Orthodox Race of Abraham. In this error they would be much confirmed on the very opening of their *Commiſſion*, which expreſsly forbids them to addreſs themſelves either to the *Gentiles* or the *Samaritans**.

* Ver. 5, 6.

They

They were poſſeſſed with an Opinion, that the Jewiſh *ceremonial Law* was perpetual; as appears from the ſtory of Peter's Viſion.

They had no conception that the *reign of the Meſſiah* could be any other than a temporal Dominion; as appears by their addreſſes to their Maſter for Preferment, and by their ſquabbles amongſt themſelves for Superiority.

Overrun with theſe miſtakes and errors, they were not to be left to themſelves, when firſt ſent from under the wing of their Maſter, who had enough to do to prevent the miſchiefs * ariſing from them, even while they were conſtantly attendant on his perſon.

So that theſe men appear to be very unfit Inſtruments to *preach the Goſpel:* As indeed they were; and therefore, on the preſent occaſion, not employed in that ſervice. For this their firſt Miſſion was not to *preach*, but only to *proclaim* the Goſpel—*that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand* †.

This was all they had to do. Yet having the *ſupernatural* power of working Miracles, *Credentials* which proved, that what they had to ſay came from God, and being, at the ſame time, vain and preſumptuous, the natural effect of their blindneſs, they would be ſtrongly tempted to exceed their *Commiſſion*, when called before Kings and Magiſtrates; and, inſtead of proclaiming the approach of their Maſter's Goſpel, would be too ready to preach their own. Such was the danger: The difficulty of preventing it is apparent: Jeſus, therefore, with admirable proviſion, forbids them to think of any ſtudied defence in this critical juncture; for that they ſhould be ſupernaturally ſupplied by the *Spirit of the Father ſpeaking in them* ‡, with all that was fit and proper to be ſaid on the occaſion.

But then, it may be further aſked,—"as this *Miracle* was worked only for the uſe of the Miſſion, and worked almoſt as ſoon as promiſed; What occaſion for the previous intimation; or for having the intimation recorded?"

* See Luke ix. 54—56. † Ver. 7. ‡ Ver. 20.

To this I anſwer, 1ſt, A *promiſe made*, not only ſet their minds at eaſe concerning the conſequences of their predication; and gave them full liberty to attend to the principal part committed to their charge; but the *prohibition* accompanying it prevented their mixing the folly of their own miſtaken fancies with the inſpired Apology of the Holy Spirit.

2. The *promiſe was recorded* for an internal mark of the divinity of our Religion: with which *marks* the Holy Spirit hath, in great variety and abundance, adorned and ſupported the Sacred Scriptures, the only *Rule of Faith*. And by thus *recording*, it is now, indeed, become (what it was not at the time of working) the reaſonable object of our belief.

And now to proceed to our general ſubject, and conſider THE THREE CASES more at large.

I. Firſt, "When a miracle is worked, as the CREDENTIAL of a Meſſenger coming from God with ſome *general Revelation* to Man, we may ſafely give it credit, as ſuch a *Credential* is not below the occaſion, but even neceſſary to accompliſh the purpoſe intended."

To underſtand the NECESSITY of this *means* to ſo important an *end*, we muſt conſider, That though, indeed, the *Miracle* is to be eſtimated on the nature of the Doctrines for whoſe confirmation it is worked; ſo that if the Doctrines be *worthy* of God, we may be aſſured (as his goodneſs will not ſuffer us to be unavoidably led into, and kept in error) that ſuch a *ſupernatural work* is the operation of his hands; and that, if *unworthy* of him, it is the deluſion of men or other more malicious Agents: Though in this view, I ſay, the *nature of the uncommon operation* muſt be eſtimated on the *nature of the Doctrines*; yet the *immediate original* of the Doctrines (though not the *truth* of them) can be only known by the *extraordinary work* which doth, or doth not, accompany the publication of them.

For it does not follow, in any caſe, that what is ſimply worthy of God, comes therefore immediately, and in an extraordinary way, from

from him: becauſe we know not to what heights of moral knowlege even the unaſſiſted underſtanding may arrive. Nor doth our full experience, that all the Wiſdom of Greece and Rome comes infinitely ſhort of the GOSPEL, therefore prove, that the Goſpel was ſent immediately from God. We can but ill gueſs what may be produced by a ſtudious Mind, aſſiſted by a vigorous temperament, and happy organization of the body, when a variety of other aids, from the natural climate, and the civil ſtate of Liberty and literature, concur.

The amazement into which Sir Iſaac Newton's Diſcoveries threw the learned World, as ſoon as it was able to comprehend them, ſufficiently ſhews what little conception it had, that the natural faculties of Man could riſe ſo high, and ſpread ſo wide.

Indeed, when the divinity of the Goſpel was thought to be proved; or, to ſpeak more properly, when it was taken for granted; then, we accuſtomed ourſelves to form a concluſion, ſuch as it was, from the *experience* we had of its innate excellence, that this Syſtem could be only of divine Original.

Yet this, at beſt, is but what the Logicians call an argument *ad ignorantiam*. Strictly ſpeaking, there is no ground of religious belief ſtrong enough to bear ſo great an intereſt, but that which riſes from MIRACLES, worked by the firſt Preachers of a new Religion, in confirmation of their Miſſion. *Miracles*, and Miracles alone, invincibly prove that that Doctrine, which was ſeen to be worthy of God, did indeed come *immediately* from Him.—Such was the ſentiment of that great man *, whoſe words we have quoted above, on another occaſion.—"This (ſays he) is "the proper caſe of *Miracles*, which, well atteſted, do not only "find credit themſelves, *but give it alſo to other truths which* NEED "*ſuch confirmation.*"

It is true, that, to all this, it has been ſaid, and, becauſe it could not be proved, it has been ſaid again and again, that we

* Locke.

move in a vicious circle, when, 1. Firſt, we prove the *Miracle* by the *Doctrine:* 2. And then again, the *Doctrine* by the *Miracle.*

And it is true, had I uſed the word DOCTRINE in the ſame ſenſe in both Propoſitions, I had certainly committed this paralogiſm. But I have not done ſo. The *word*, in the firſt Propoſition, ſignifies, *a Doctrine agreeable to the truth of things, and demonſtrated to be ſo, by natural Reaſon.* In the ſecond Propoſition, the *word* is uſed to ſignify, *a Doctrine immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, revealed by God.* So that here is no vicious *return*, and nothing proved: It is the gradual *proceſſion* of two truths, till the whole argument be compleated. They give, indeed, mutual aſſiſtance to one another; not by Either's taking back, when its turn was ſerved, what it had given; but by Both's continuing to urge what they continued to hold, for their mutual ſupport.

This Charge, therefore, againſt the integrity of the Reaſoning is founded in a groſs miſtake.

A miſtake which has encouraged the ſame undeſigning men to propagate another; viz. that *it is not Miracles, but the Natures of the moral and religious Doctrines*, in which the true Proof of their Divinity conſiſts.

Into this abſurd tenet, ſome (as we intimate) may have been betrayed by themſelves; but the far greater part, I am perſuaded, have deſignedly betrayed others: while they themſelves ſaw the deſtructive conſequences, and liked the Principles the better for thoſe conſequences. For aiming to reduce CHRISTIANITY (which they profeſſed to believe) to a mere REPUBLICATION OF THE RELIGION OF NATURE; this way of reaſoning,—"The Doctrines taught are worthy of God, and therefore are "of God,"—affords as good a foundation for the REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, as it did for the firſt PROMULGATION of it.

Now CHRISTIANITY may be (I ought rather to ſay, is) underſtood in two ſenſes; either as a REPUBLICATION of the Religion

gion of Nature; or as the REVELATION of a new Religion ingrafted upon *that of Nature.*

Let us ſee then how this argument ſtands upon either foundation.

1. CHRISTIANITY, a REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, is worthy of God; and therefore comes from him: i. e. is *true*, or *agreeable to the nature of things.*

2. CHRISTIANITY, a REVELATION of a new Religion, ingrafted upon *that of Nature*, is worthy of God, and therefore comes from him; i. e. is *true*, or *divine.*

1. The concluſion of the firſt Argument, from the *worthineſs* of the Doctrine, that it is *agreeable to the nature of things*, we ſee, holds; and infers all that a REPUBLICATOR ought to infer from it; and, for the credit of his underſtanding, I will preſume to ſay, is all he would have inferred from it: For if Chriſtianity were only ſuch a *Republication*, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, it was *republiſhed* in the ſame manner that it was at firſt *publiſhed*; that is to ſay, by innate impreſſions, and abſtract principles.

2. The concluſion of the ſecond Argument, from the *worthineſs* of the Doctrine, is impertinent and falſe; for the DIVINITY of Chriſtianity, which the REVELATIONIST would have to be inferred from it, is not inferred.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, that the only ſolid evidence that a Doctrine, worthy of God, did immediately come from him in the manner pretended, is, that the Meſſenger of the new Religion had the CREDENTIAL of *Miracles* to produce.

And here, in confirmation of all that hath been ſaid, let me obſerve, that Divine Wiſdom, on the propagation of a new Religion, hath ſo ſtrictly appropriated *Miracles* for the *Credentials* of a Meſſenger ſent, that JOHN THE BAPTIST, the Precurſor of this Meſſenger, with tidings of his near approach, worked no Miracles. Yet had Miracles been only worked, according to a new-fangled notion, to make the Multitude *attentive*, no one had more need of Miracles than John the Baptiſt. But CHRYSOSTOM ſeems to have underſtood

underſtood Revelation better than theſe modern Divines, when he ſuppoſes that even Jeſus himſelf worked no Miracle till after his Baptiſm; i. e. till the time that he addreſſed himſelf to his Miſſion, and had need of his *Credentials*; and ſuch a need it was, that he himſelf ſays of the unbelieving Jews, *If I had not done amongſt them the works which none other Man did, they had not had ſin* *.

II. "The ſecond Caſe, in which a *Miracle* is ſo circumſtanced as to claim the belief of reaſonable men, is, when it is worked to defend and ſecure the veracity of God's revealed word, againſt an impious blaſphemer of it, who employs all his power to diſcredit and defeat it."

This is an occaſion as important, and even more neceſſary, than *that* in the firſt Caſe. For though, without the atteſtation of *Miracles*, the Religion ſaid to be intruſted to the firſt Teachers of it, can never be clearly proved to be an extraordinary Revelation from God, yet doth not that Want imply, in itſelf, the contrary. But in the Caſe in hand, the neglecting to interpoſe *miraculouſly*, when nothing but ſuch an interpoſition can ſecure the honour of the Prediction, deſtroys all pretenſions to the truth of that Revelation in which ſuch Prediction is found.

Hence we conclude, that in this Caſe too, a *Miracle*, well atteſted by human authority, is one of the moſt legitimate objects of belief.

Of this kind was the ſupernatural interpoſition which defeated the malicious purpoſe of JULIAN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM. Here every thing concurs to make it a fit example of the Credit due to a Miracle of the ſecond Claſs.—JESUS had foretold that the *Jewiſh Temple* ſhould never be rebuilt: JULIAN was determined to give the lie to the Prediction. For this purpoſe, he employed every *means* that the Maſter of the World could put in uſe. Yet the deſign, after infinite preparations for the ſpeedy accompliſhment of it, was ſuddenly defeated, without any change

* John xv. 24.

in the purpoſe of Julian, or in that of the Miniſters he employed. Of which no poſſible reaſon can be aſſigned, but what the concurrent, and at that time uncontradicted, evidence of Contemporaries and Eye-witneſſes of the beſt credit, both Pagans and Chriſtians, have given at large; namely, that when Alypius, Julian's favorite Miniſter, a man active, able, and determined, and bearing the ſame hate to the Chriſtian name with his Maſter, had, by the imperial command, ſet himſelf to the vigorous execution of the work, in which he had all the aſſiſtance the Governor of the Province could afford him, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations of the old ruined Temple, did, with frequent and reiterated attacks, ſoon render the place inacceſſible to the ſcorched and blaſted workmen; the victorious element continuing, as it were, reſolutely bent to drive them to a diſtance, as often as they approached to renew their labour. So that Alypius, ſtruggling in vain againſt this obſtinate reſiſtance, was at length forced, in very deſpair, to give over the Enterprize.

Now from this Miracle, worked by the Almighty himſelf, for the moſt important end, no honeſt man, without the higheſt unreaſonableneſs, can withhold his aſſent. But this matter has been diſcuſſed at large *; and with ſuch Evidence, that there would be no hazard in ſtaking the whole credit of Chriſtianity on its truth †.

III. "We come now to the third Caſe, where the ſubject of a *Miracle* makes ſo eſſential a part in the œconomy of the revealed Diſpenſation, as to give it its completion; the want of which would deſtroy the whole, and render it *vain* and *fruitleſs*."

* See a Diſcourſe concerning the Earthquake and firey Eruption which defeated Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jeruſalem; in the fourth volume of this collection.

† I ſay this with the greater confidence, ſince, when this book, by command of a very eminent Perſonage in France, was directed to be tranſlated into that language, for the uſe of the deſpiſers of *Miracles*, the PHILOSOPHERS, as they are pleaſed to call themſelves, theſe men promiſed their diſciples a ſpeedy confutation of it as ſoon as it ſhould appear. It did ſoon appear: when their ſilence ſhewed no kind of diſpoſition in them to keep their word.

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This will be beſt illuſtrated in the *Miracle* of the RESURRECTION: which, becauſe it will return us back to our text, and keep us there, will deſerve a more particular diſquiſition.

Jeſus, as hath been explained elſewhere, had a twofold Character: the one, of a Meſſenger from God *ſimply*, with the tidings of ſalvation: the other, of a Meſſenger promiſed, under the title of the *Meſſiah*. His credentials, under each of theſe Characters, were MIRACLES. Thoſe worked by him in his life, as Credentials, referred to *a divine Meſſenger ſimply*: that of the *Reſurrection*, at his death, reſpected his other Character of *Meſſiah*, or *a divine Meſſenger promiſed*. And the neceſſity of this *Miracle* may be ſeen even from hence, that the antient Prophecies had foretold it.

They had ſaid, on the one hand, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be expoſed to afflictions and diſtreſſes; to all the miſeries of life; and to a violent and untimely death. On the other hand, they had ſaid, that the work ſhould proſper in his hands; that he ſhould triumph over all his enemies, and raiſe and eſtabliſh an everlaſting Kingdom. The contradiction in theſe accounts, if the promiſed Reign be underſtood as *temporal*, ſhews, it muſt be interpreted of a *ſpiritual* Kingdom in Heaven. But this latter could not commence while Jeſus lay under the dominion of the Grave. He muſt of neceſſity, therefore, be raiſed, by the power of the Father, from the Sepulchre. And this is what St. PETER means, when, ſpeaking of the Meſſiah, he ſays,—*Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death*; BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT *.

Again, The very *nature of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation* likewiſe required of neceſſity the *Reſurrection* of Jeſus from the dead. Chriſtianity is the reſtoration of lapſed and forfeited Man, to life and immortality, from the power and dominion of Death. But the courſe of human nature continuing the ſame, after this reſtoration, which it held before; and Death ſtill viſibly exiſting, though it had

* Acts, Chap. ii. ver. 24.

loſt

loſt its ſting, there ſeemed to be need of ſome ſenſible evidence, to evince the truth of this entire change of the Order of things.

And this Reſtoration being procured at the price of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, ſacrificed on the Croſs; when the price was paid, and paid thus *viſibly*, the nature of the compact demanded, that the benefit ſhould be as *viſibly* poſſeſſed and enjoyed; and both one and the other openly exemplified in the ſame Perſon. If the REDEEMER himſelf was not ſeen to enjoy the fruits of the Redemption procured, what HOPES had remained for the reſt of Mankind? Would not the natural concluſion have been, that the expedient of *Redemption*, by the death and ſacrifice of Jeſus, had proved ineffectual? This is the concluſion which St. PAUL himſelf makes, in my Text, IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN, YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS: ſo neceſſarily connected, in his opinion, was *this Miracle* with the very eſſence of the Chriſtian Religion.——*But now* (adds the Apoſtle) *is Chriſt riſen, and become the* FIRST FRUITS *of them that ſlept*; i. e. *His Reſurrection* is the thing which both *aſſured* and *ſanctified* all that were to follow. For the Jewiſh *firſt fruits*, to which the expreſſion alludes, were of the *nature*, and ſecured the *plenty*, of the approaching Harveſt.

Having thus explained the ſeveral natures of the THREE CASES, in which a *Miracle* will deſerve the credit of all reaſonable men; before I proceed further in the *laſt*, the proper ſubject of this Diſcourſe, let me make one general obſervation that concerns them all.—In the *firſt caſe*, it is neceſſary that God, the Author of every arreſt of Nature in its eſtabliſhed courſe, ſhould uſe the miniſtry of his Meſſengers in that ſervice, ſince *Miracles* are the *Credentials* of their Miſſion. But in the *other two caſes*, it ſeems more agreeable to the dignity of their ſeveral occaſions, that the *Miracles* ſhould proceed immediately and directly from Himſelf, as we ſee they did in the examples given of thoſe of the *ſecond* and *third claſs*: the defeat of Julian, and the Reſurrection of Jeſus, being both worked by his Almighty Hand in Jeruſalem itſelf.

But, to go on again with the Miracle of the *Reſurrection*, the *neceſſity* of which hath been fully explained.

Now, in matters of Religion, as that which is neceſſary in one view, is never without its *uſes* and *expediencies* in another, permit me, in a few words, to illuſtrate this truth, a truth of ſo much importance, before I come to the *neceſſity*. The heathen World had a general notion of *another life*. But the RESURRECTION of this mortal Body never once entered into their imagination. It is true, ſome modern writers have been miſled to think otherwiſe, by an imperfect view of the famous STOICAL RENOVATION: which, however, was ſo far from bearing any likeneſs, or yielding any ſupport to the CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION, that it is abſolutely deſtructive of it. The Sages of antiquity had diſcovered many qualities in the human *Soul*, which inclined them to conjecture that it might ſurvive the Body. But every property they knew of *Matter* led them to conclude, that, at the ſeparation of the two conſtituent parts, the Body was finally diſſolved into the Elements out of which it roſe. And that ſect of Philoſophy, which moſt favoured and cultivated the Doctrine of *the immortality of the Soul*, conſidered the Body only as its Priſon, into which it was thruſt, by way of puniſhment, for its pre-exiſtent crimes; and from which, when it had undergone its deſtined penance, and purgation, it was to be finally delivered and releaſed. Nay, ſo little did the Doctrine of the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY enter into their moſt improved conceptions, that when at Athens, the very ſeat of Science, St. Paul preached *Jeſus and the Reſurrection*, they took the ſecond Enunciation to be, like the firſt, a new Divinity, a certain Goddeſs called ANASTASIS *.

With

* This is CHRYSOSTOM's opinion of the matter. But BENTLEY tells us, that *they too well underſtood the notion of a reſurrection, to think it a Goddeſs.*—Which of the two Doctors was likely to be beſt acquainted with the genius and ſtate of Paganiſm, when St. Paul preached at Athens, muſt be left to the judgment of the Reader. This at leaſt is certain, that the reaſon the latter Doctor gives, why the Athenians could not miſtake *Anaſtaſis*

With all theſe prejudices, ſo unfavourable to the *reſurrection of the body*, nothing leſs than the *aſſurance* of the beſt-atteſted *Miracle* in confirmation of it could have reconciled the Gentile World to the credibility of ſo incredible a Doctrine. This may be ſaid with the greater confidence, ſince St. Paul himſelf, on this occaſion, appears to have been of the ſame opinion. For when he had rectified their miſtake concerning *Jeſus and the Reſurrection*, and had given them a preciſe account of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, in which he explained to them, that the *reſurrection* meant a *reſurrection of the dead**, he adds—*whereof God hath given* ASSURANCE, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD †.

Thus hath this capital Miracle, the *ſeal of our Redemption*, all the evidence for its truth, which can ariſe either from its *neceſſity* or its uſe. It was proclaimed by the public decrees of the Father; and accompliſhed to verify the Character of the Son, and facilitate the progreſs of his Goſpel. Cauſes ſo important, that we can conceive none more worthy the care of the Lord of the Univerſe; viz. than that what had been promiſed, ſhould be fulfilled; and what was now preached, ſhould be miraculouſly confirmed.

After ſo ſtrong internal evidence to prove it *right and fit to be done*, all that was wanting to eſtabliſh it, was the external, to prove it *actually done*. And this St. Paul, as we have ſeen above, pours out with a very liberal hand.

It hath been obſerved, that a *Miracle*, which would claim credit with us, muſt, beſides the evidence of human teſtimony, (which

Anaſtaſis for a Goddeſs, *becauſe they too well underſtood the notion of a reſurrection*, is a very bad one, ſince they had no notion of it at all, unleſs they miſtook (which is very unlikely), as the learned Doctor ſeems to have done, the *Stoical renovation* for the *Chriſtian reſurrection*: or if they did miſtake it, ſo groſs an error could never hinder them from committing a leſs, the miſtaking *Anaſtaſis* for a Goddeſs. They were undoubtedly well acquainted with many other *moral entities* (whatever was the caſe here); yet that did not hinder them from turning theſe *entities* into *Goddeſſes*, whenever dire Superſtition drove or invited them to ſeek aid from *new* Divinities.

* Acts, chap. xvii. ver. 32. † Ver. 31.

it hath in common with natural facts) have a ſtrong *internal evidence* likewiſe, containing the uſe, expedience, and neceſſity of the operation. But when once this *internal* evidence is given, it has the advantage of a natural fact, in the force wherewith the *external* concludes.

I will explain my meaning.—When the witneſſes to a common fact vary, in uneſſential circumſtances, from one another, it is ſometimes, though not always, a diminution to its credit. For human teſtimony being that on which alone it ſtands, whatever impeaches that, weakens the credibility of the fact. But, in an act *miraculous*, the firſt ground of its ſtability being its *internal* Evidence, when human teſtimony hath realized that, ſuch variety takes little from its credit, which ſtands upon thoſe two ſupports: the teſtimony that the thing was done, reſting on the ſtrong foundation, that it was fit and neceſſary to be done.

So far as to the difference which ariſes from the nature of things. Another ariſes from the ſituation of the Reporters.—Witneſſes to a miraculous fact well underſtand that the ground of its credit lies in the fitneſs and neceſſity of the thing. Such Witneſſes, therefore, when recording their own knowledge, will be naturally more indifferent in arranging circumſtances; from the want of which, a variation amongſt ſeveral Witneſſes to the ſame fact often ariſes. While thoſe who ſpeak to a common fact, knowing all its ſupport conſiſts in the veracity of their evidence, will be more intent to preſerve their credit, by a ſtudious attention to the numeration and order of all its circumſtances.

This will ſhew us the unneceſſary pains which ſome late Defenders of *this Miracle* have taken, againſt the attacks of Infidelity.—Licentious Writers thought they had diſcovered ſome diſcordancies or contradictions in the Evidence of the four Evangeliſts concerning it: Jeſus (as they ſay) after his reſurrection appearing, by the teſtimony of this Evangeliſt, at the ſame moment of time, to one perſon, and, by the teſtimony of that Evangeliſt, to another perſon: an objection that might ſeem to have weight againſt a fact ſtanding only

only on the foot of a natural adventure, and having no reaſons of neceſſity or convenience to ſupport the teſtimony.

Now theſe defenders of Religion took the caſe as their Adverſaries were pleaſed to give it to them; they confined themſelves to inquire into the repreſented fact, as if it had been one of a mere civil kind, and ſupported only by *external evidence*, the teſtimony of witneſſes.

No wonder ſuch defences ſhould be, as in reality they have been, very unſatisfactory. Whereas, had the Advocates of Religion firſt inquired into the nature of the fact, and ſhewn, that one that is miraculous, and has a claim to our credit, ſtands on a wider and more complicated baſis than mere human teſtimony; that this of the *Reſurrection* in particular is thus ſupported; that it riſes on the ſtrong foundation of Neceſſity; that is to ſay, that it fulfilled the Jewiſh Prophecies, and compleated the Chriſtian Diſpenſation; had they done this, I ſay, the difficulties ſpringing from theſe minute differences in the ſacred Hiſtorians, with regard to the preciſe time and place of Jeſus's ſeveral appearances after his reſurrection, would have vaniſhed and diſappeared; and the dignity of the Evidence for the Chriſtian Faith would have been ſecured from the diſhonour of its being forced to ſtoop to the low and trifling criticiſms on words and phraſes, often involved in dark and intricate nothings: then, I ſay, theſe Defenders would have ſeen that St. Paul hath chalked out a better and nobler, as well as ſhorter and clearer Demonſtration of this important truth; who, when he had ſaid, in the words of my Text, *If Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your ſins*, adds, *But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt fruits of them that ſlept.* And having thus by *internal* evidence ſhewn the neceſſity of the Miracle, he realizes the fact *externally*, by a *cloud of witneſſes*, but given with becoming dignity, in the groſs,—"He "was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was ſeen of "above five hundred Brethren at once: of whom the greater part "remain unto this preſent; but ſome are fallen aſleep. After that "he was ſeen of James; then of all the Apoſtles, &c."

APPENDIX;

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TWO CHARITY-SERMONS

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR;

AND

THREE SERMONS

ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS,

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED.

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A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE GOVERNORS OF THE SMALL-POX HOSPITAL,
IN MDCCLV.

(AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.)

PSALM XLI. 1, 2, 3.

BLESSED IS HE THAT CONSIDERETH THE POOR—THE LORD WILL STRENGTHEN HIM UPON THE BED OF LANGUISHING; THOU WILT MAKE ALL HIS BED IN HIS SICKNESS.

WHEN the obſervance of God's commands, under the *Jewiſh* Law, was rewarded with *temporal* bleſſings, the ſanctions of that Law were ſo divinely adjuſted, that the various duties, and the various rewards annexed unto them, had a beautiful analogy, and bore a fitting relation to one another.

Thus a zeal for the intereſts of their God and King was rewarded with the *poſſeſſion of the promiſed land:* obſervance of the ſabbatical reſt, with *fertility and abundance:* duty and obedience to Parents,

the immediate authors of our being, had the *promiſe of long life:* and pity and compaſſion to the Poor is here ſaid, in my text, to bring down the extraordinary comfort and ſupport of Heaven in our bodily infirmities, finely expreſſed, by *God's making all our bed in our ſickneſs:* And how proper and adequate this reward is to the performance of the duty, we may underſtand by conſidering, that POVERTY is one continued *languiſhing* and *ſickneſs*; under which the heart becomes faint, the ſpirits depreſſed, and the body in continual reſtleſſneſs which gives no intermiſſion from anxiety and pain. How then could the abundance of Divine Goodneſs more fitly reward him whoſe bounty miniſters kindneſs and conſolation to wretches languiſhing under extreme poverty, than by eaſing and refreſhing their Comforter, when, by the general lot of humanity, he, in his turn, lies labouring under bodily infirmities?

Indeed both POVERTY and SICKNESS reduce humanity to ſuch a ſtate as ſerves to detect the miſerable debility of our nature, and the perfect equality in wretchedneſs amongſt all who partake of it; which the accidental circumſtances of fortune in a few only diſguiſe and varniſh over for a time; and while health concurs with affluence to delude us into an opinion that we are placed above the common diſaſters of our ſpecies. But every fit of ſickneſs diſpels this gaudy vapour, and lays bare the helpleſs condition of humanity, when we are leaſt able to endure the ſight.

So powerful an inforcement to charity and compaſſion did the Law of *Moſes* afford its followers! Nor are we to ſuſpect that the Goſpel of Jeſus is leſs efficacious in its ſanctions. For though that extraordinary Providence which adminiſtered temporal bleſſings, in ſo large a meaſure, to the *Jewiſh* people, has been long ſince withdrawn; yet we are not to think that God, in his preſent diſpoſition of worldly matters, *leaves himſelf without a witneſs*; or that his gracious Providence does not inceſſantly interfere, though with leſs outward pomp, yet with no leſs real efficacy, to reward the good and to puniſh the wicked, even in this preſent life: For, as the apoſtle *Paul* may well be underſtood, *Godlineſs is profitable unto all things*,

things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. And if any virtuous practice has a better claim than other to the title of *Godlineſs*, it is charity and compaſſion to the Poor; in which we aim, though at infinite diſtance, to imitate the Creator in our care to eaſe and relieve the wants and diſtreſſes of his creatures.

I ſhall therefore beg leave to inforce this duty from the ſingle conſideration of my text, that charity and beneficence to the Poor are the ſureſt means of alleviating the pains and miſeries of a ſick bed, by procuring the hand of God *to make all our bed in our ſickneſs:* in which emphatic phraſe the *Pſalmiſt* alludes to that miſerable circumſtance of a ſick-bed, a perpetual reſtleſſneſs, which makes us throw our diſquiet on the hardneſs of our bed or couch.

Of all the diſtreſsful calamities to which Man's life is ſubject, SICKNESS is the moſt afflictive. All the other diſaſters of humanity, ſuch as captivity, perſecution, exile, ſlighted affection, calumny, and ſlander, receive their ſharpeſt ſtings from faſhion, habit, and the unruly paſſions: and we have generally the cure, always the alleviation, within ourſelves: conſtancy, patience, and the exerciſe of reaſon may ſubdue them; and an artful diverſion of the mind to other objects eaſily evades their more violent attacks. But bodily infirmities, attended with pain and depreſſion of ſpirits, are entirely out of our power to redreſs. They keep the mind irremiſſibly tied down to a contemplation of its miſeries, without reſpite and without relief; while every tormenting pang becomes the dreadful monitor of our approaching diſſolution. Wealth, power, wiſdom, and the attachment of thoſe connected in intereſt or friendſhip with us, may remove or alleviate the other calamities of life; but SICKNESS remains deaf and inexorable to all theſe powerful emollients. The Fever burns on; the Stone tears its way; and the Hectic continues to ſap and undermine the fortreſs of life, regardleſs and in defiance of our friends, our patrons, and our phyſicians. Torment, diſtreſs, and anxious dread of the event, exclude all comfort and conſolation. Nothing but the *Lord of Life* himſelf can aid us in this dread hour,

nothing but his Spirit can aſſiſt and ſupport us in this mighty conflict. And the man whoſe lenient hand and ſympathiſing heart has accuſtomed him to feel for the leſſer diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures, is, by the unerring word of truth, aſſured that he ſhall have this aſſiſtance, in his greateſt. *The Lord* (ſays my text) *ſhall make all his bed in his ſickneſs.*

This aſſiſtance ſhall be afforded him by different ways, and in different meaſures.

Oftentimes the hand of God will effect a ſpeedy cure: either by ſo ſtrongly ſupporting the mind as to lend its vigour to the body to throw off the malignity of the diſtemper; or by ſo powerfully enlightening the phyſician as to teach him to aſſiſt Nature in the recovery of itſelf; or, laſtly, by putting ſome ſovereign remedy in his way, whoſe ſpecific virtue was ordained, and without his aid, to conquer the obſtinacy of the diſtemper. The hiſtory of mankind is full of inſtances where this extraordinary relief hath been afforded: where the languor of the mind has been fortified; where the uſual blindneſs of the phyſician has been removed; and where the moſt unpromiſing remedies have afforded an inſtantaneous cure.

And when, for the wiſe ends of Providence, whether phyſical or moral, the chronical diſorder becomes incurable, or the malignant diſtemper proves unconquerable, *then* will great comfort and conſolation be afforded to the charitable man, *upon his bed of languiſhing*; the hand of God will adminiſter balms to his wounded ſpirit, and cordials to his weak and languiſhing body. At this time it is that the good man will moſt ſenſibly feel the comfort of that bleſſing promiſed in my text, to *have all his bed made in his ſickneſs.*

But the ſtrongeſt ſupport the Spirit of God adminiſters to ſuch a one on his *bed of languiſhing*, is the teſtimony of a good conſcience, which comes divinely impreſſed upon his mind in a lively review of his paſt good deeds, with a ſtill more animating proſpect of the approaching reward; the proſpect of thoſe eternal manſions juſt ready to open to him when the rage and malignity of periſhable matter

matter ſhall have done its worſt. Held up, and ſupported by this aſſiſtance, the torment of preſent pain ſubſides, and the terrors of approaching death recede before him. And now it is not He, but the World and all its miſeries, which die away; while the Saint is reviving and ſpringing up to life, and immortality. It is not the King of terrors he now approaches, but the Lord and Saviour of the world, who receives him with that gracious acceptation of, *Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.*

In concluſion, a greater excitement to our bounty, a greater encouragement to our compaſſion, could not poſſibly be afforded than the reward here annexed to our duty.

SICKNESS is an evil to which every individual of the human race is hourly expoſed. All the other diſaſters of time or fortune, men may flatter themſelves by their ſituations to eſcape. Wealth ſecures them from want and penury; Power, from inſult or oppreſſion; but no advantages of ſtation can ſecure them from ſickneſs and diſeaſe. Nay, thoſe very advantages, by inducing evil habits, do but the more contribute to haſten the miſchief, and to render it inveterate. What encouragement to our duty, therefore, can equal that which promiſes relief in thoſe diſtreſſes, the moſt intolerable in themſelves, to our nature moſt obnoxious, and which no circumſtances of fortune can either prevent or redreſs?

Nor is the reward leſs adapted to the ſtate and condition of thoſe to whom it is afforded. It is addreſſed to the rich and powerful, to thoſe who are beſt able to relieve penury and diſtreſs. But amongſt thoſe it is, that LUXURY, the parent of Diſeaſe, makes its greateſt ravages. So that if the great were to chuſe their own reward, they could not fix on any thing of more peculiar uſe or benefit to themſelves.

But if Providence ſo largely rewards the kind relief of ſimple Poverty, How will the bleſſing be accumulated on him who ſtill more humanely ſeeks out for the object of his benevolence from

amongſt

amongſt thoſe who, together with their poverty, lie oppreſſed under the additional load of ſickneſs and diſeaſe! Here he will be ſure to find the mercy, not only returned in kind, but returned in more abundant meaſure; and while he is ſo divinely intent to eaſe the poor man's *bed of languiſhing*, he is preparing for his own; and decking it up, to become, even when pain and torment threaten moſt, a bed of eaſe and reſt unto him.

And the well-adviſed believer who conſiders that the Prophet annexes the bleſſing in my text, not ſo much to the bounty of the hand, as to the deliberate benevolence of the heart, —*bleſſed is he that* CONSIDERETH *the Poor*—will be very careful in ſeeking out, and exploring the moſt proper Object of his charity.

But was ſuch a one to ſeek through the world for this purpoſe, it would be hard to find a ſubject, in all its circumſtances, ſo eligible as the excellent Eſtabliſhment for the relief of diſtreſsful poverty, which I am now entruſted to recommend to your protection.

For the objects it comprehends and is confined to, are thoſe who labour under one of the moſt dangerous and afflictive maladies, to which human nature is expoſed: not of ſuch as are acquired by our follies or our vices; nor yet of ſuch as any degree of care and circumſpection can avoid. A miſchief riſing, not from within, by humours let looſe by intemperance, which deſtroy the balance between the fluids and ſolids; nor yet from without, by the contagion of unlawful commerce, which corrupts and viciates the whole frame; but a kind of peſtilence that reſides and reigns amongſt us through the malignity of infectious bodies or a corrupted atmoſphere, or perhaps of both: and is what, in the humble language of piety, we call the *hand of God*. In a word, a calamity, where there is not one circumſtance to abate our compaſſion, and a thouſand to excite and to ſupport it.

Such is the nature of the firſt, and, as I ſuppoſe, the original part of this noble Charity.

But

But to thoſe generous minds who are more intent upon public than private intereſts, and who think the duty of univerſal benevolence better diſcharged by beginning with generals, and deſcending to particulars, than by riſing from particular to general good, I would in a more eſpecial manner recommend the other part. For they are diſtinct; and the kind encourager of this Charity may direct his beneficence to either part as he is moſt diſpoſed.

The part I mean is that for INOCULATION: the ſafety and prodigious benefit of which has been long experienced and fully confirmed by careful applications of it on the Rich; and is now, by the glorious humanity of this Eſtabliſhment, extended to the Poor.

And as it is INFANCY and YOUTH, amongſt which this dire calamity makes its greateſt havock, the protecting theſe ſtages of life from its ravages, is the moſt eſſential ſervice to the Public. For, according to a famous ſaying of Antiquity, *The loſs of Youth is to the State, what the loſs of Spring is to the Year*; the cutting off that flowery ſeaſon which prepares Nature for the fruits and harveſts that are to follow from it.

Indeed, if what we are told of the original of this happy invention be true, it is not ſo much humanity and charity, as gratitude and a debt, to put the Poor into a capacity of enjoying this bleſſing. For from the Poor, it ſeems, the Rich firſt received it: indeed from a people which may not improperly be called a *Nation of Poor*; namely, the *Georgians* and *Circaſſians*, the moſt miſerable of enſlaved Provinces; as lying in the frontier of two great deſpotic Empires.

But thoſe of you, my Brethren, of ſtill more enlarged conceptions, who delight in rooting out SUPERSTITION, as the bane not only of Religion, but of Civil life likewiſe, will have here a noble occaſion to exerciſe the generoſity of your natures. For, by what ſtrange fate it is I know not; but ſo it has happened, that, at a time when *Religion* has loſt almoſt all its influence on the minds

of

of the People, yet *Superſtition* ſtill keeps its hold; and this moſt beneficial practice is regarded with abhorrence by them, as a kind of impiety, a tempting God, and miſtruſting his general Providence. Now the beſt confutation of ſuch monſtrous abſurdities is the ſucceſs of the practice, in which (while twenty or thirty die out of one hundred and fifty, who contract the diſtemper in a natural way), only THREE * out of Six Hundred and Ninety-three which have been inoculated ſince the erection of the Hoſpital have fallen under it.

Give me leave to add another circumſtance, which ſeems to be of weight to excite the attention of the well-diſpoſed: and that is, that as its funds conſiſt chiefly of annual and voluntary contributions, it will always need the repeated aſſiſtance of the benevolent. And this circumſtance, which awakes charity, will ſerve to fix and determine the object of our choice; for we may be reaſonably well aſſured, that while a public Charity remains in this condition, it will be carefully and honeſtly adminiſtered; that which makes its exiſtence precarious, ſecuring its well-being. The Governors of Hoſpitals which ſo ſubſiſt, being rather Stewards than Truſtees to the Public. And to what ſcandalous abuſes of truſt largely endowed Hoſpitals, whether of new or old foundation, have been expoſed, is too well known to be further inſiſted on in this place, where the ſubject is not concerning their reformation.

Indeed, it appears almoſt ſuperfluous to urge this conſideration. For whoever caſts his eye on the liſt of illuſtrious and honourable Names in the government and direction of this CHARITY will be convinced, that there needs no other favourable circumſtance to preſerve it under a prudent, diligent, and faithful adminiſtration, than the nobleneſs and generoſity of their own reſpectable Characters.

* Of thoſe THREE, *one* died by *Worms*, though he was not ſuſpected to be ſo diſordered when inoculated; and *another* was apprehended to have firſt caught the Diſtemper in the *Natural Way*.

Permit

Permit me therefore, my Brethren, as I am directed by my office, and reminded by my text, to *charge you who are rich in this world, that you be* READY *to give, and* GLAD *to diſtribute; laying up in ſtore for yourſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come. Amen.*

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE GOVERNORS OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL,
IN MDCCLXVII.

(AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.)

1 CORINTH. Ch. XIII. ver. 13.

—THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.

I SHALL not, at preſent, ſtay to conſider the grounds and reaſons of the preference here given to CHARITY above all the other Chriſtian Virtues. Nor is ſuch an enquiry needful, ſince the obvious nature of *Charity*, as it ſignifies UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE, ſhews, that it muſt needs be at the head of human Virtues; *Univerſal Benevolence*, which prefers the good of the Whole to any of its parts, being of the eſſence, as it is the end of all Virtue.

If

If I ſhould venture to prelude what I have to ſay on this occaſion, by obſerving, that *Benevolence* is the characteriſtic Virtue of ENGLISHMEN, I might, perhaps, be thought to flatter a People now fatally over-run with Vice and Impiety.

But juſtice is due to all; and may be paid with honour as well to ourſelves as to others; as well to our Friends as our Enemies. So that, with a fair boaſt, I may repeat it, "This ſovereign Virtue is native to us, and our own; and the fantaſtic Follies, now moſt in faſhion, are of foreign growth, and imported from abroad."

As ſoon as ever England had broken aſunder the chains of Ignorance and Superſtition, our National Benevolence began to ſhew itſelf, and kindle into warmth. The objects moſt intimate and preſſing, naturally became, in the order they aroſe, the ſucceſſive care of this ſovereign Virtue.

Hence it was that the intereſts of PURE RELIGION, the thing moſt productive of human happineſs, firſt awakened, and continued to excite our whole attention; till we had thoroughly defecated the celeſtial fountain of FAITH from the poiſonous dregs of ROME. This noble labour occupied Engliſh Charity throughout the whole period between EDWARD the VIth and JAMES the Iſt.

The next object of this benevolent ſpirit was CIVIL LIBERTY, the Daughter of *Religion*, and, after her, the moſt prolific of earthly bleſſings. For this, the generous Engliſhman long toiled: and, by a vaſt expence of blood and treaſure, at length ſecured for his Poſterity—For his Poſterity do I ſay? Or ſhould I not rather ſay, for the human race in general? This glorious ſtruggle for the ſervice of mankind began under JAMES the Iſt, continued long, and was happily ended under WILLIAM the IIId.

Our native Benevolence having thus provided for the WHOLE, in the ſecurity of thoſe two capital bleſſings, RELIGION and CIVIL LIBERTY, now turned its gracious aſpect upon the PARTS: and the SUFFERING POOR, ordained by Providence to bear the heavieſt burthens of ſociety, engaged their firſt and principal concern.

Then *Charity-Schools* for the education of youth; *Infirmaries* for the relief of the diſeaſed; and *Hoſpitals* for the ſolace of old age; ſoon overſpread this happy Iſland. And in theſe beneficent labours hath this Godlike Spirit been employed from the reign of William III. to this preſent time.

Thus uniformly hath our native Charity kept opening and widening through ſeveral ages, till it embraced and took in all the great Objects of Univerſal Benevolence.

How perfectly this ſpirit got poſſeſſion of the frame and faculties of Engliſhmen, may be ſeen from the moſt trifling, as well as from the moſt important circumſtances. We may collect it from the very words of our language: ALMS-GIVING having, by a converſion of terms peculiar to the Engliſh tongue, uſurped the very name of CHARITY. A plain indication of what our Forefathers felt to be the *motive*, and what they underſtood to be the *genuine motive* of ALMS-GIVING.

One principal branch of this ſublime Virtue, which I am now intruſted to recommend to your favour and protection, are public Infirmaries for the diſabled Poor.

But as a retentive purſe is ever ingenious in ſtarting objections, ſometimes to the *manner of giving*, and ſometimes, again, to the *utility of the gift*; it will be incumbent on me previouſly to remove both the one and the other of theſe obſtructions.

We will begin with certain religious ſcruples to public and open contributions of this nature, from a text of Scripture ill underſtood, and worſe applied. *When thou doeſt thine alms* (ſays our Bleſſed Maſter) *do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do—but when thou doeſt thine Alms, let it be in ſecret.*——Now this precept is greatly miſtaken when it is underſtood to be an *excluſive direction*, how and in what manner the duty of alms-giving ſhould be performed; as that its merit conſiſted in its being *done in ſecret*; and that it loſt all its virtue when it came to the general knowlege of men. On the contrary, the Precept is only an *information* (given, indeed, by way of *direction*) concerning the *diſpoſition of mind*, ne-

ceſſary

ceſſary to make the Giver's Alms acceptable before God. The true meaning of the text being preciſely this——"*Be not as the* "*Hypocrites*, who, devoid of all *benevolence*, and actuated either by "ſuperſtition, ſelf-intereſt, or vain-glory, or perhaps by all of them "together, *ſeek only the praiſe of men*; and therefore *ſound a Trum-* "*pet before them*, to proclaim their alms. But when thou addreſſeſt "thyſelf to the performance of this duty, let UNIVERSAL BENE- "VOLENCE poſſeſs thy ſoul, as knowing that though thou *beſtow* "*all thy goods to* FEED THE POOR, *and have not* CHARITY, *it* "*profiteth thee nothing*: and knowing this, thou will naturally "and without affectation (when thou art not called upon, on a "proper occaſion like the preſent, *to let thy light ſhine before men*) "*do thine alms in ſecret*. Not that doing them *openly* or in *ſecret* "makes any difference in the merit of the action itſelf; but that "the ſound of a flawed and faulty heart generally accompanies the "*Trumpeter's* proclamation; while the action of the *ſilent giver* "modeſtly whiſpers the integrity of his purpoſe. Otherwiſe, when "UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE hath got poſſeſſion of the heart, then "Alms *done openly* muſt needs be beſt pleaſing to our Heavenly "Father; as the Example ſpreads abroad the Spirit of Benevolence, "and each *open giver* catches the ſacred fire from another, till the "whole Offering ariſes in one pure blaze of Charity, an Holocauſt "of the pious Heart to Heaven: as on the other hand, when it "is ſuperſtition only which ſtimulates thee to this paltry ſacrifice "of *the praiſe of men*, thou wilt only add to the nullity of the ac- "tion, the offence which accompanies its nature."

The ſecond objection is of a civil nature; *the legal proviſion for the Poor* is objected to the neceſſity, if not to the utility, of theſe new and *voluntary eſtabliſhments*.

But when the origin of that *proviſion* comes to be conſidered, it may poſſibly be ſeen, that theſe *new eſtabliſhments* are the beſt means of removing the inconveniencies, which, in a courſe of time, have ariſen from that beneficent, but ill-judged policy, of *providing for the Poor by law*.

Before

Before the times of common ſenſe and Reformation, a ſtill-increaſing ſuperſtition had brought an immenſely diſproportioned ſhare of the landed property into the hands of Churchmen and other religious. But lands in *Mortmain* are a dead weight upon Commerce; which rarely riſes, and can never flouriſh under ſo unfavourable an aſpect. This, for many ages, filled the nation with Beggars. Indeed *begging* was the only Commerce it had. And it throve ſo well, and grew ſo faſhionable, that whole *Orders of Religious*, when they had beggared others, turned beggars themſelves; and, after deſpoiling the rich, did not bluſh to ſhare the Alms with the Poor.

In this general diſtreſs, the wealthy Monaſteries opened their gates to a miſerable ſtarving people: who, being firſt reduced to indigence by the *Religious*, were afterwards ſupported by them in idleneſs; till an *Abbey-Lubber* became the common name for one of the Monaſtic Leeches. And while Laymen ſeemed to have forgotten the plaineſt civil truth, *that Neceſſity was the mother of Invention*, Churchmen were ſucceſsfully inculcating the greateſt of religious abſurdities, *that Ignorance was the mother of Devotion*.

When HENRY VIII. diſſolved the *religious Houſes*, and, by that means, reſtored civil Property to the uſes of Commerce, the immenſe revenues which came into the Exchequer were ſoon diſperſed and diſſipated; partly in ſupport of the meaſures of that daring Revolution; partly in the ill-judged projects of his childiſh ambition; and in part, in the indulgence of his luxurious pleaſures.

But ſo clamorous were thoſe Drones, the *Abbey-Lubbers*, on the deſtruction of their hives, that the Crown found it neceſſary to inſert in its grants of alienation, an expreſs condition of *Hoſpitality*; which had no laſting effects; for now, the emancipated Church-eſtates perpetually changing hands, the charge upon them of Hoſpitality was ſoon forgotten or diſregarded.

In the mean time COMMERCE, under the genial warmth of *Property in motion*, began to make its firſt ſtruggles for birth. Trading Companies

Companies were formed; diſtant Voyages were attempted, and new Worlds diſcovered.

But Infant-Commerce is weak and feeble; and its hands unapt for Manufactures, the perennial ſource of national wealth: ſo that ſtill a numerous *Poor* remained untaught and unfed.

The glorious adminiſtration of a Woman, who took up her father's reins, after they had been ſlackened, firſt by Faction, and then by a returning Superſtition, was intent to ſupply both theſe wants by Law. But unſkilful meaſures in providing againſt diſtreſs, ſoon took off the edge of Induſtry. And the law, which quarters the Poor on their ſeveral pariſhes, grew, in time, ſo intolerable a burthen, both on the landed and commercial Intereſts, and ſo difficult to be ſhaken off, that the Legiſlature hath now employed more than an age, in ſeeking for the proper remedy, and hath not yet found it.

In this *inability*, the beſt relief, though it can operate but ſlowly, are theſe voluntary new-erected *Eſtabliſhments*, entirely formed and addreſſed to encourage *induſtry*, by providing a ſpeedy cure to the maladies and diſaſters of the diſabled Poor. From whence it appears, that the *legal proviſion* is ſo far from being an objection to their continuance, that an increaſe of them is the only means we have, at preſent, of putting ſome ſtop to the growing miſchiefs of that *proviſion*.

Thus we ſee how civil Policy and religious Charity concur in favour of theſe *new Eſtabliſhments in general*. What remains, is only to recommend to you the object of our preſent care; an Eſtabliſhment, that (like all other of the ſame kind which have the Poor for their ſubject) doth honour to humanity: and, by the peculiar nature of the Inſtitution, hath the advantage of being moſt beneficial to a commercial people; as taking in all *Labourers for the Public*, whether by SEA or LAND; whether diſabled by accidents, or debilitated by diſeaſe. For, againſt theſe neceſſary Servants of Society all the elements ſeem to have conſpired. They ſeize the *Workman and Artificer* at home; ſometimes by the baleful qualities of

of the materials on which he is employed; ſometimes by the blaſting heats of furnaces and forges, in the midſt of which, the proceſs of his artful induſtry, in giving form and faſhion to thoſe tortured materials, is carried on; and ſometimes again by the damps of mines, and the rotten exhalations of woods and marſhes, to which, in his uſeful labours, he is unhappily confined. They purſue the *Sailor* abroad; and the very air neceſſary to a proſperous courſe, becomes deſtructive of his conſtitution; now by a load of corroſive ſalts; and now again, by the change of climates in extreme, made unfit for reſpiration.

Such are the objects of this noble Charity; to which no motives of recommendation, whether divine or human, can be wanting.

I. If we ſeek them in RELIGION, Solomon is at hand to tell us, *That whoſo hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord**: And a wiſer than he aſſures us, that what we do to our diſtreſſed brethren, will be reckoned as done to himſelf: Our gracious Maſter being pleaſed to exalt and enoble ALMS *to the Poor* into OBLATIONS *to himſelf.*

And though, from the attributes of the Godhead in general, we can well account for ſo honoured an acceptance of human alms; yet there is another reaſon, peculiarly relative to the preſent diſpenſations of Providence, which will explain the high encomium here beſtowed upon this Virtue.

In ſocial and civil life, under Government political, (which God declares † to be his *ordinance* as well as man's) the far greater part of thoſe whereof it is compoſed are, by the inevitable order of things, condemned to a ſtate of labour, diſtreſs, and penury. The Common Father of mankind has therefore graciouſly condeſcended to conſider himſelf as reſponſible for the relief and ſupport of all in this humble ſtation; and, on this account, hath earneſtly and particularly recommended them to the care and protection of the *Rich*; to whom, as to the *Stewards* of his bounty and abundance, he hath

* Prov. xix. 17.

† Rom. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

intruſted,

intruſted, rather than *given*, the goods of this world: Goods, which GOD, at firſt, created un-appropriate; and NATURE threw in common to all her children.

Indeed, we can never ſufficiently adore the Father of mercy, who, in the tenderneſs of his Providence, hath thus ſet to his own account, whatever is diſburſed by theſe his *Stewards*, upon ſuch, who by reaſon of the wants which *his own Ordinance* hath occaſioned, are under his more eſpecial care and protection.

II. If, in the ſecond place, we ſeek our motives in the boſom of HUMAN VIRTUE, theſe *Stewards* of God's bounty, the *Rich*, will never want reaſons of *humanity* and *juſtice* towards their Brethren, as well as of *piety* and *gratitude* to their Lord and Benefactor, for the ready and chearful diſcharge of their *Truſt*; when they conſider that the lower ranks in ſociety (on whom diſtreſs and penury are fatally entailed) had this hard meaſure aſſigned unto them by Providence, that the *Rich* might enjoy the Bleſſings of ſocial life in greater plenty, in a more improved condition, and in fuller ſecurity, than they were even at firſt poured out on man from the lap of God's prolific Subſtitute, NATURE: For, to the toil, the ingenuity, and the ready habits of the hardy *Poor*, both by land and water, are owing the abundance and ſtability of thoſe *artificial accommodations* which ſociety procures. So that were it not for the conſtant toil of the Labourer, the Sailor, and the Artificer, the man moſt indulged in the wanton gifts of fortune would ſoon find himſelf, in the midſt of all his proud connexions, as ill accommodated in his perſon and in his domeſtic, as a ſavage Indian Chief amidſt his waſtes and deſarts.

III. But, thirdly, if neither piety, humanity, nor even the intereſts of luxury and commerce, have force ſufficient to open either our hearts or hands in favour of thoſe who impair their health and ſhorten their lives in deſtructive toil and hazardous adventures, to provide for our eaſe and pleaſures; we ſhould conſider, how our very SAFETY (in the peace and order of ſociety) is concerned in this ſoothing relief, thus beneficently afforded to the poor diſtreſſed.

One of the moſt marvellous circumſtances in the life of that inconſequent prodigious creature, Man, is, that the Populace in all governments can feel, and yet do ſo patiently abide and groan under toil and penury; diſtreſſes ſuſtained by the *Many*, for the ſupport of the *Few* in inſolence and riot.

The force of human laws alone is inſufficient to account for this dead calm in the moſt furious and impatient of all wild creatures, *Man in diſtreſs*.

The Populace were never able to comprehend either the *nature* or *end* of National Laws; their *uſe* to the whole, or their *neceſſity* to the ſeveral parts; and, therefore, could have no forceable inducement to pay them reverence. On the other hand, they were never ſo ſtupid as not to underſtand that *human laws*, like a thread of flax before a flame, vaniſh and diſappear before popular commotions.

What is it, then, do you aſk, that hath ſo long reſtrained this fierce and agonizing part of Civil Society, in which all power really reſides; and from which it is fetched, by their Rulers, to be employed againſt themſelves? What is it, do you aſk, that firſt tamed brutal Man, and diſarmed the fury of an enraged multitude, and hath ever ſince reſtrained them, while murmuring under ſo unequal a partition of the free bleſſings of Providence, from uſing this power in their own quarrel, to ſhake off their burthens, to reaſſume the *Commonalty of Nature*, to level all the boundaries of Property, and throw ſocial life into diſorder and confuſion? What could it be, but the powerful charm of RELIGION? A charm which makes the Laws ſacred, and the Supreme Magiſtrate adored.

But now, RELIGION having loſt its hold on the Populace, (amongſt whom a new ſet of Opinions hath been inculcated to encourage their practices) ſome *Succedaneum* will be found neceſſary to ſupply its place, till it can regain its uſual force. And what ſo natural and efficacious as theſe NEW ESTABLISHMENTS, the firſt-fruits of CHARITY; which, in the abſence of FAITH, and during the loſs of HOPE, may ſupply their place, and reſtrain the madneſs of a deſperate people? For while they ſee the higher ſtations

in ſociety thus condeſcending, and even proud to diſcharge the office of their Guardians, zealous to make their diſtreſſed condition ſit as eaſy on them as the nature of Society will permit, and the tendereſt pity can procure, the Commonalty will be reconciled to their ſtation; and, though neither overſatisfied, nor perhaps over grateful, will yet ceaſe, in any turbulent way, to malign the happier lot of thoſe who bend their care, and employ their wealth, to drive away want and diſtreſs from the habitations of the INDUSTRIOUS POOR.

Now, would we regard our *new Eſtabliſhments* in this view, we ſhould have a ſufficient anſwer to the *Objection* ariſing from the growing multiplicity of them.

They are, we have ſhewn, a *Succedaneum*, and the only one we have, to that great bond of Society, RELIGION: a *partial* extenſion of it, therefore, will hardly be ſufficient. The Charity muſt ſpread and enlarge itſelf till it encompaſſes the *whole*, in order to enable it to ſupply the place of that natural and more efficacious *tye*, RELIGION, now looſened in moſt parts, but quite ſhattered and broken in that where its ſtrength was moſt needful, I mean, the *Populace*.

But this is not all: theſe Eſtabliſhments *abound* in their uſes; not only ſuch as are public and general, which have been already explained, but private and particular likewiſe, as we ſhall ſee.

Where every good man is his own almoner, compaſſion is always readier to beſtow, than prudence and circumſpection to diſtribute. It relieves labouring humanity when we eaſe an object in diſtreſs. But the judgment (whenever we condeſcend to be governed by it) always with-holds its aſſent, till the object appear *worthy* our care and attention. And were the judgment more conſulted, we ſhould not, at this very hour, have virtuous compaſſion, by a falſe pity, ſo much abuſed, as to become, inſtead of a bleſſing, a public miſchief; as it is in the relief of common-vagrants and ſtreet-beggars.

The charitable rich man is, as we have ſaid, the *choſen Subſtitute* of God; to ſupply what, in the common courſe of his Providence, hath, for wiſe reaſons, been left imperfect and deficient. It is of his

office, therefore, to ſatisfy juſtice and mercy, in the ſupport of diſtreſſed Virtue, before he allows the tender ſentiments of a conſtitutional compaſſion, to adminiſter to the alleviation of ſuffering vice.

For theſe reaſons, we ſhall, if we be wiſe as well as pious, make theſe *public Charities* the Treaſuries of our private Alms; as being well aſſured, that what is there lodged will be diſpenſed in ſuch a manner as may beſt advance the national intereſts; may beſt ſerve the ſacred ends of Religion; and beſt ſatisfy our own bountiful and humane diſpoſition

And if, amongſt theſe various *Eſtabliſhments*, there be ſome whoſe principal objects are the wretches, who, by their vicious and intemperate appetites, have brought diſeaſe and miſery on themſelves, even theſe may fairly plead our pity, ſince they catched the infection of their immoral habits from the depraved Example of their *Betters*.

But the diſtinguiſhed *Charity*, which I am at this time to recommend to your protection, is of a very different nature. It is, in a word, the moſt humane, moſt uſeful, and moſt deſerving the attention of all good men; as it is beſt calculated to produce the ſatisfactory and ſalutary purpoſes which the wiſeſt *Eſtabliſhments* of this kind profeſs to aim at.

A ſtill further inducement to ſupport theſe Charities is the preſent ſtate of the *Public Manners*; which are ſeen by all to be in ſo profligate a condition, as to require ſome atonement for inſulted Truth and violated Virtue. The moſt natural indeed, and efficacious, is the amendment of our lives and reformation of our vicious habits: yet, while that is working (and it is always a work of time) as there is apparent need of ſome intermediate deprecation of the wrath of Heaven, we are unable to conceive any more acceptable ſervice to the God of mercy and compaſſion, than the relief of his favourite Creature, *Man*, ſtruggling under the rigour of his wiſe and neceſſary Diſpenſation.

But then let no ſuperſtitious fancies, that our habitual vices may be indulged under the ample cloak of Charity, defeat theſe hopeful means of a beginning reconciliation with our offended Maſter. For

though

though *Charity or benevolence* hides the faults of *others* from the ſeverity of our cenſure, yet *Charity or Alms-giving* is totally unable to conceal *our own* from the obſervance of our all-righteous Judge. Indeed, the only cover for theſe, or, to ſpeak more properly, the diſcharge of all their ſtains, is FAITH, is the BLOOD of Chriſt, working with *repentance* towards God. When FAITH, when the BLOOD of Chriſt, hath thus done its perfect work, and brought forth *repentance*, then we ſhall not be miſtaken in concluding that one of the nobleſt fruits of *repentance* is of the growth of THIS ESTABLISHMENT; in giving covering to the naked, in diſpenſing food to the hungry, in pouring balm into the wounds of the afflicted, and adminiſtering cordials to the ſick and languiſhing.

May this be the conſtant employment of this humane *Eſtabliſhment!* and may the God of all Mercies proſper its generous Undertakings!

A SERMON

Chriſt's Legacy of Peace to his Diſciples.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE KING,

AT KENSINGTON, OCTOBER 27, 1754.

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, Chap. XIV. Ver. 27.

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.

THE bleſſed Founder of our Faith, to ſhew us the ſuperiority of the advantages which Religion offers to his faithful Servants, bequeaths to them this ineſtimable Legacy of *Peace*.

All temporal good reſults into one or other of theſe two bleſſings, *Pleaſure* and *Peace*. The *firſt* more ſtrongly ſolicites the *ſenſual* appetites; the *ſecond*, the *intellectual*: *That* ſtrikes more forceably on

on the *fancy*; *this*, on the *underſtanding*. *Pleaſure* is the early and ſingle object of the young and diſſipated: but *Peace* is the harbour of the wiſe and experienced. In *Pleaſure* the purſuit of happineſs is generally *begun*; and in *Peace*, the purſuit of it as generally *ends*. For the *organs of ſenſe*, being the inſtruments through which *pleaſure* is conveyed for the mind's enjoyment, they are ſoon put out of order, by exceſs; or rendered unfit by long uſe, for the diſcharge of that part of their functions. For by abuſe, or unremitting uſe, the body becomes ſo diſordered, or the mind ſo inſenſible, that *pleaſure* degenerates into pain, diſguſt, or indifference. And the Mind, fatigued in the fruitleſs ſearch of happineſs, finds at length that it is no where to be had but in *peace* and tranquillity of mind.—And in the *enjoyment of peace*, the mind becomes gradually ſtrengthened and fortified; as in the *exerciſe of pleaſure*, it is more and more debilitated and broken.

For *peace* repairs all the faculties of the mind, juſt as *pleaſ* wears them out. And age and time, which take off all the vigorous ſenſe of pleaſure, add ſtill a new taſte and reliſh to inward *peace*: The mind which, during its hurry and violent attachment to pleaſure, overlooked the ſweet allurements of *peace*, being, by the ſubdual or ſubſidence of the more violent paſſions, now become attentive to, and ſenſible of, the ſoft and gentle impreſſions of tranquillity.

Our bleſſed Maſter, therefore, could not beſtow, at his departure, a richer Legacy on his faithful Servants, than this of *inward peace*: the ſecurity and reward of Virtue, and the balm of the *wounded ſpirit*.

But as the *Giver*, ſo was the *gift*, *Divine*. And though a *temporal* good, yet ſo purified, ennobled, and exalted by Religion, as to accompany us through theſe dark regions of ſorrow (over which it throws a conſtant ſunſhine) and to paſs with us to the celeſtial realms of joy and immortality.

But there is an Impoſtor, a Counterfeit of this *Peace*, which reſtleſs and overburthened mortals are always ſeeking for in vain.

This

This Phantom is ever flitting before us, and aſſuming a variety of Forms to engage the purſuit of the miſtaken follower; who, when he thinks to hold her in his graſp, finds nothing but empty air; though Fancy have embodied it in all the ſpecious ſhapes of *wiſdom*, *power*, *wealth*, *reputation*, *glory*, and every gaudy Form, which draws deluded mortals to ſeek for *peace* amidſt their *miſeries*.

To theſe Counterfeits, our gracious Maſter alludes, when he diſtinguiſhes the *genuine bleſſing*, which is his gift, from theſe wretched inventions of Men. *My Peace I give unto you; not as the* WORLD *giveth, give I unto you:* Words that imply an immenſe difference both in the GIFT and in the GIVER.

Let us firſt then conſider, What that *Peace* is which the World promiſes to beſtow upon its Votaries; and where it is to be found.

The *World* would think it ſtrange, if we ſhould deny, that *peace* is to be found in what it calls *wiſdom*, *power*, *wealth*, *reputation*, and *glory*. Yet it is certain, that, when ſought for amongſt *any* or *all* of theſe, no more is to be found than the mere *ſhadow* of peace; and, generally, not *ſo much*.

Human *wiſdom*, or ſcience, bids faireſt to content the *reaſonable mind*; becauſe the object of knowledge is *nature*, and the object of the faireſt branches of knowledge, *human nature*, whoſe perceptions and ideas it attempts to trace; and whoſe paſſions and appetites it pretends to regulate: yet, wanting thoſe principles, diſcoverable only by *Revelation*, which teaches man's *true end*, and which excites his endeavours to the attainment of it, human knowledge only fluctuates in the *head*, but comes not near the *heart*, where peace of mind is engendered. While the whole ſtate of the *Sage* or *Man of Wiſdom*, though ſet off with all the trappings and gaudy equipage of Letters, is a ſtate of anxiety and diſquiet, of doubt and diſappointment.

If *peace* then keep at ſuch a diſtance from worldly wiſdom, we can hardly think ſhe will become more intimate with *Power* and *Grandeur*: where, inſtead of reſtraint on the paſſions and appetites (which *Wiſdom* attempts) every thing concurs to raiſe and inflame them.

them. Now inordinate and irregular affections are the immediate *bane* and deſtruction of *inward peace*.

But it is not only from *within*, but from *without* alſo, that *peace* is violated by *power*. In the purſuit of *Wiſdom* all our Concurrents are our Aſſiſtants, and ſometimes our Guides and Directors. And every Rival's acquiſition is an addition to our own ſtore. But in the purſuits of *power* it is juſt the contrary: All our Concurrents are our Enemies: every advantage of theirs throws *us* further back from the point we had in view: and *their* ſucceſſes prove fatal to our own projects. For *corporeal* good is, in this, eſſentially different from *mental*; it leſſens by communicating, and ſuffers an excluſive appropriation. And as the rivalry for corporeal advantages is, for this reaſon, as well as others, always more violent and conſtant; the Candidate for *power* has generally but a ſmall ſhare of *peace*: for the ſame ſtruggle continues as conſtantly, and often as violently, *after* the acquiſition of Power as *during* the purſuit of it.

Riches, the next pretended means of *Peace*, are ſtill leſs efficacious to procure us this bleſſing.—If wealth be attended with the avarice of *hoarding*, it ſo narrows and contracts the mind as not to leave ſufficient entrance to *Peace*; or at leaſt that entrance is ſo guarded by *anxiety* for the preſent, *fearful apprehenſions* of the future, and *miſtruſt* of every thing about us, that Peace flies frighted from ſo inhoſpitable a dwelling.

And if the rich man *employs* his wealth, as wealth is *commonly employed*, it brings on a large train of uneaſy wants, and unruly appetites; which, as oft as they are relieved, are ſucceeded, in an endleſs ſucceſſion, by *new wants* and *returning appetites*; every one more abſurd and fantaſtic, more miſchievous and unnatural, than the other. So that there is no interval for *peace* to get footing in a mind ſo agitated, diſtracted, and diſappointed, by the *ſolicitation*, the *variety*, and the *emptineſs* of its objects.

But it will be ſaid, that *fame and glory*, ſure, if nothing elſe, will amply afford this *peace*. And, indeed, if any worldly Charm could ſooth and lull the ſoul into this ſweet Elyſium, it muſt be the ſenſe

of this high prerogative of humanity. And it will be owned, that as the other advantages tend to *contract* and *narrow* the mind, ſo *Glory* as naturally *dilates* and *enlarges* it; and, by that means, prepares and fits it for the reception of this ſoft felicity: For all *perturbations* ariſe from the *uneaſy narrowing the mind by ſelfiſhneſs.*

Yet if we conſider how *worldly fame and glory* are *commonly* acquired, we ſhall find, that there are ſome circumſtances attending it, which muſt for ever keep peace a *Stranger*, or at leaſt a very *precarious* Gueſt.

Eloquence, *Civil Policy*, and *Military Honours*, are the three great entrances to Glory. Yet how oft is the one employed in defence of falſehood and wrong; the other in the arts of circumvention; and the third amidſt the horrors of unjuſt conqueſt? But theſe matters are beſt left to every man's particular meditation.

On the whole, we ſee what a deluſion it is, which the world preſents unto us, when it pretends to give us that greateſt bleſſing here below, *inward peace.*

But as empty, and as *trifling* as the *preſent* is, even under its *beſt* form, it becomes ſtill more worthleſs by the *caprice* and *injuſtice* of the *Giver*.

For theſe advantages, by which peace is ſuppoſed to be obtained, the World diſtributes with ſuch injuſtice, with ſo little regard to true merit, that we generally find them ſhared (indeed not equally) by the worthleſs and by the deſerving. Nor is there leſs caprice and inconſtancy in the *continuance* of the world's favours: which, as it often gives without deſert, as often reſumes and takes away without cauſe. So that, even though *peace of mind* were *indeed* dependent on its ſmiles, the poſſeſſion of this *peace* would be the moſt *precarious* of all things.

The Sages of Antiquity, who made the moſt diligent enquiry after this *peace*, were forced at laſt to confeſs this ſupreme bleſſing of humanity was not to be found without the aid of ſome *Celeſtial Guide.*

At

At that juncture, when the Guide was ſeen to be moſt wanted, he was ſent by our Almighty Father, with all the heavenly attributes of *Grace* and *Peace*; who, having compleated his ordained Miniſtry; to prepare his followers for the reception of this gift, and to direct them how to preſerve and improve it, when it was beſtowed, left them with the divine farewell of my text: *Peace I leave with you: my Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

This *peace* conſiſts in a full and pleaſing conſciouſneſs of pardon and reſtoration to God's favour, through the blood of his Son, on our ſincere repentance.

The immediate Giver of this Peace is the *Holy Spirit.* Hence, in reference to the *myſterious conveyance*, and the *ſupernatural fruits* of the Gift, it is called a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding.* That is, ſuch a *peace* as humanity is not able to procure for itſelf; or to preſerve when procured, without the aſſiſting grace of God's Holy Spirit.

And now we may be able to ſee the immenſe difference there is between this *peace*, and that which the world pretends to give, both in its *nature* and *duration.*

The Paſſions and Appetites are the deadly bane to all tranquillity of mind: and theſe, *this peace* totally ſubdues, by ſubmitting *our will* to the *will of God.* In the mean time, our full aſſurance of *favour* with *him*, *our ſupreme good*, fills up the *great void* of the mind; which now enjoys, and is greatly affected with nothing but its own conſcious content, tranquillity, and joy.

Again, this ſolid bleſſing is given, not as the world pretends to give its wretched Counterfeits; that is, *capriciouſly*, *unjuſtly*, or *precariouſly.*

As this *Peace* dwells only in the mind purified by the love of God and Man, and hatred of iniquity; ſo while the mind continues in that ſtate, its *peace* is as laſting and ſolid as the foundations of the earth.

And whatever caſual pollution the good man may contract by preſumption, negligence, or commerce with an evil World, which may abate or diſorder *inward peace*; For this, the Gracious Giver has contrived an inſtant and efficacious remedy, *ſincere repentance*: by which all the breaches in our peace are repaired, and the heavenly tranquillity of mind reſtored to its full vigour, through the *mediation* of our bleſſed *Lord and Redeemer*;—to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all glory for evermore.

Iniquity

Iniquity the Cauſe of Unbelief.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

LINCOLN'S INN,

NOVEMBER 11, 1759.

ST. MATT. Chap. XXIV. Ver. 12.

AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD.

THESE words are to be found in the famous Prophecy of Jeſus, in which the predictions of his *firſt* coming to judge the Jews, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and his *ſecond* coming to judge mankind, in the deſtruction of the World and renovation of all things, are interwoven with one another.

And

And in theſe words is foretold that general apoſtacy from the *Faith*, of which the Sacred Writers have ſo frequently forewarned the faithful, as the characteriſtic mark of the *latter times*—*The love of many* [the adherence of the greater part to the Faith] *ſhall wax cold:* The *cauſe* of this apoſtacy is foretold likewiſe, *becauſe Iniquity ſhall abound.*

This melancholy but important truth may be ſupported by conſiderations drawn, 1ſt, from the *nature of things*; and, 2dly, from the experience of our own times.

Though nothing be more common than to ſee men's opinions and practices at variance; becauſe the *judgment* draws one *way*, and the *paſſions* another; and becauſe, generally, men are neither maſters of one nor of the other, to take them up and lay them down at pleaſure; and ſo have it not in their power to ſuit their opinions to their practices, or their practices to their opinions, as they ſee fit: yet this contrariety and oppoſition is a very uneaſy ſituation; and the more ſo, from the difficulty of removing it. Hence the various arts and contrivances of the *wicked heart*, to delude itſelf, in procuring a ſet of principles, that may ſupport Men, at leaſt give them no uneaſineſs, in their practices.

But if the received principles or opinions (ſuch as thoſe of the Chriſtian faith) not only ſhew the falſehood, the folly, and the abſurdity of vice; and that it is not only deſtructive of our rational nature *here*, but of our very being *hereafter*; then the wicked man, who is reſolved not to part with his vices, and yet finds himſelf croſſed and diſturbed by theſe opinions, which he had imbibed in his education, and afterwards approved in his judgment, will never reſt till he has *perverted* that judgment, by ſophiſtical reaſonings againſt the *truth* of his opinions. And ſophiſtical reaſonings, at beſt, even when ſeconded by a willing mind, always carrying their ſuſpicions along with them, the ſelf-deluded victim to his vices is ſtill for trying their force upon his acquaintance, in order to eſtabliſh them more firmly in himſelf. Hence that prepoſterous zeal, obſerved in modern unbelievers, for making converts; which has always

always appeared to pious obſervers ſo extremely monſtrous; but which, we find, has a very obvious cauſe in the very nature of infidelity itſelf.

Thus we ſee, how truly *Iniquity* is aſſigned as the *cauſe* of that general *apoſtacy* from the Chriſtian faith, predicted to be the Character of theſe latter days. *And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.*

And here, before I proceed to my ſecond head, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, how much this check upon vice is to the honour of the Chriſtian Faith; a check ſo great, that vice cannot proceed in its courſe, till this obſtruction to it be removed. In the Pagan and Mahometan Religions, both of antient and modern times, wicked men were never under this neceſſity: nor have we ever heard that they quarreled with their Religion, becauſe they wanted to enjoy their vices in peace. Their opinions and practices ſubſiſted together in a very friendly manner. And we find, much nearer home, that thoſe men who have quarreled with their baptiſmal Faith for the ſake of their vices, profeſs themſelves to be the followers of *natural Religion*; which being what each man pleaſes to make it, it is very eaſy for them to prevent its becoming *troubleſome* to their vices; and is therefore a very *commodious*, as it is a very *reputable*, profeſſion of Religion.

But I now anticipate the ſubject of the ſecond head I propoſed to ſpeak to in ſupport and explanation of my text; which was, that the experience of the preſent times amply confirms its truth, that *abounding of iniquity* is the true cauſe *why the love of many* for the Chriſtian faith *is waxed cold*: or of that general defection from Chriſtianity which has now ſpread itſelf throughout all orders and degrees of men.

A mere *general view* of the ſtate of things is alone ſufficient to evidence this truth. When was there ſo great a defection from the Religion of our Forefathers? and when did profligate iniquity ſo much abound? The eſtimate of the *quantity* of national vice is indeed hard to make. But this we may be aſſured of, that when

Vice

Vice ſtalks triumphant, and without diſguiſe, when apologies are made for the national benefits reſulting from private vices; and when it is openly maintained that Government cannot be carried on without *corruption*; we may be aſſured, that *Vice* has ſpread more generally, and has taken deeper root, than while it ſneaked about in diſguiſe; while it denied its Parentage, and pretended to be related to *Virtue*.

But we have a ſurer evidence of the truth of my text. We need but look about us and conſider who have been the moſt zealous propagators of Infidelity throughout this preſent Century; and who have been their moſt devoted followers; and we ſhall find that both have been as notorious (whether in high ſtations or in low) for vice and *corruption*, as for the profligate principles of *unbelief*. So that there was ſmall danger of being miſtaken, when we *ſaw* a man *glorying* in his Iniquities, to conclude that he was a *Rogue upon Principle*, that is, a Freethinker: as on the other hand, when we *heard* a man profeſs his diſbelief of the Religion of his Country, that he was a *corrupt Knave*, whether in a public or in a private Station.

Even great learning and ſuperiority of parts, the beſt ſecurity, next to *Grace*, againſt Infidelity (and what has in fact ſecured the generality of exalted geniuſes againſt this contagion) if unhappily joined with a very *corrupt heart*, have not been of force ſufficient to guard men againſt this evil. So much has their preſent eaſe and the ſilencing of a clamorous Conſcience got the better of all the convictions of Reaſon.

To this it may be objected, that many wicked men have profeſſed the higheſt regard for religion: as, on the other hand, ſome unbelievers have been very moral men.

Both theſe aſſertions will deſerve to be conſidered. There is no queſtion, but that through *various* ſtages of wickedneſs, ſo *rational* a Religion, in which men have been brought up and educated, will ſtick cloſely by them. But the horror of this ſtate, which the conſtant upbraidings of conſcience muſt occaſion, makes them naturally

rally fly for eaſe and reſpite from their torments: If *grace* abounds, they will be enabled to ſhake off their *vices*: If the *World* prevails, they will chuſe to part with their *Religion*. Diſtracted by ſuch contrary impulſes, it will not be long ere they part with one or the other: and the over-abounding of *wicked example* encourages worldly men, in general, to make a wrong choice. This is the condition of the firſt ſtages of life: but it being a very *unnatural* ſtate (men *naturally* purſuing eaſe) we may be ſure, it will not continue long. Whenever therefore an old determined veteran in vice perſeveres in the *profeſſion* of a Religion, which denounces the moſt dreadful ſentence on his perſeverance in Iniquity, and pretends a *zeal* for *this* Religion, we may ſafely pronounce him to be a conſummate Hypocrite. And if we attentively conſider, we ſhall never be at a loſs to account for the trouble he gives himſelf, in putting on, and ſtill wearing ſo hazardous a maſk. We ſhall find it to be either his *profeſſion*, his *ſtation*, his *connexions*, or ſome *lower perſonal Intereſt*, that obliges him to profeſs his attachment to religion. Or if haply theſe marks be difficult to find, there are others, which never fail to betray this ſpecies of Hypocriſy. Such as theſe, this pretended Religioniſt always makes the *truth* to be the ſame thing with what happens to be the *eſtabliſhed*. He therefore joins with the *real Bigot*, to diſcourage all enquiries into truth, and is the firſt to decry and perſecute the Inquirer.—And ſo much for the *Religion* of the *habitual* Sinner.

As to the other part of the objection, *that ſome Unbelievers have been moral men.* This will amount to no more than an *exception to a general rule*, which ſays that Unbelievers are commonly wicked men. And the cauſes which produce the *exception* are eaſily accounted for.

Unbelief has of late become ſo faſhionable, that its advocates have formed and faſhioned it into a kind of ſyſtem, and ſupported and adorned it with all the arts of ſophiſtry and falſe reaſoning: ſo that it would be no wonder if, here and there, a moral man of cool

appetites and enfeebled reaſon, ſeduced by ſpecious appearances, ſhould chance to do credit to this miſerable Philoſophy. This, joined to a vanity of doing honour to a ſect (ſo much and juſtly ſpoken againſt by ſober men, for the *immoralities* of its profeſſors) may poſſibly produce a *moral free-thinker*. But ſuch a phænomenon is extremely rare: So rare, that, of all our leaders in Infidelity (and England has produced a greater ſwarm than almoſt all the world beſides), we hear but of one or two, who ever paſſed for honeſt men. And the man who had this luck, though he got the character of temperance, juſtice, candour, charity, in his commerce with the world, yet it is well known to all who have ſeen his writings, that, in the management of controverſy, he has knowingly violated both truth and charity.

On the whole then, we cannot but conclude with the text, that *becauſe of the abounding of Iniquity the love of many*, for our holy faith, *has waxed cold*.

But we are not to expect that theſe *apoſtates* will own that *Iniquity* is the *cauſe* of their apoſtaſy. They have always aſſigned other cauſes of it, which in their opinion clears them from all ſuſpicion of unjuſt prejudice or prevention. And theſe are,

1ſt, The immoral and unexemplary lives of the Clergy. And,

2dly, The irrational ſyſtem of Chriſtianity.

Let us examine both theſe pretences.

They will not believe the truth of the Chriſtian Religion on account of the unſanctified Lives of its miniſters. But what has this to do with the *truth* or *falſehood* of a Revelation eſtabliſhed upon full evidence, evidence which has nothing to do with the perſonal Character of its miniſters? Was irreſiſtible Grace promiſed, by this Religion, to them, ſomething might be ſaid for ſo abſurd a concluſion; which infers the falſehood of a Religion from the follies of its Paſtors. But ſince they continue men, as other men are, as well *after* they have devoted themſelves to the ſervice of the altar,

altar, as *before*, and liable to all the common infirmities of humanity, no concluſion can be drawn from their perſonal diſcredit, to the diſcredit of that Religion which they ſo unworthily ſerve.

Again, as to the irrational and abſurd tenets of the Religion itſelf. It is certain no ſuch could come from God. And if our Religion teaches that ſuch did come from him, this were fully ſufficient to diſcredit it. But our free-thinkers ſhould have been *aſſured* of what they ſay, by a careful ſtudy of the Scriptures themſelves, before they advanced ſo heavy a charge againſt the Religion of their Country. And ſo doubtleſs they would, had not the prejudices ariſing from their *Iniquities* made them very *deſirous* that Religion ſhould be a falſe and fictitious thing; and therefore they received *any thing* that came to them under the name of *Chriſtianity* (ſo it would ſerve their purpoſe to decry and diſhonour it), without examining whether it was the *genuine Goſpel* of Chriſt, or no; nay, under a ſtrong ſuſpicion, and ſometimes, a ſure conviction, that it was not. The truth is, they knowingly give us the doctrines of *Men*, for the doctrines of *God*; and then, from the abſurdities of *ſects* and *parties*, of *ſums* and *ſyſtems*, argue againſt the truth of the *Goſpel*. I ſaid, *knowingly*; for, at other times, when they have been diſpoſed to abuſe the Clergy, they have produced theſe very doctrines as *their* adulterate manufacture; which, when they argued againſt Religion itſelf, they called the *doctrine of the Goſpel*. What are we then to conclude from this conduct, both with regard to their objections to the *ill lives of the Clergy*, and to the *abſurdity of the Chriſtian tenets*, but that they were aſhamed to own to others the *true cauſe* of their *Infidelity*, and for their own eaſe would even endeavour to hide it from themſelves; and, in its ſtead, would obtrude upon us other more *ſpecious* cauſes; which yet are in themſelves ſo inconcluſive, that, but for the reaſon above, they would not have ventured to build upon them ſo important an affair as that of their own ſalvation. If theſe men therefore would perſuade us that they are, as they ſo loudly proclaim

themſelves, ſincere inquirers after truth, let them, by way of experiment only, caſt off their vices, reform their lives, and conform a little to the moral precepts of the Goſpel: and if then theſe formidable objections againſt Revelation ſtill wear the ſame face, and do not ſhrink into nothing, we will believe them to be honeſt and ſincere; which, to believe *before*, would be an *exceſs* of charity, that even the benevolent Genius of the Goſpel would not excuſe, or ſupport.

The concluſion and inference from the whole is this, that it is infinitely to the diſcredit of modern infidelity, and as much to the honour of our holy faith, that it is *Iniquity* which makes unbelievers. For how miſerable muſt that Cauſe be, where the true reaſon of their rejecting Revelation is one of the marks of its truth, namely, the vengeance of Heaven againſt vice and immorality! No one can think, had this Religion only offered Rewards for *Believers*, that ever there would have been ſuch a thing as an Unbeliever; and yet this would have been a certain mark of its falſehood, as it is of the Mahometan and other ſuperſtitions. But as ſoon as ever it proves its pretenſions from Heaven, by pronouncing miſery to Vice, as well as happineſs to Virtue, *then* the world begins to ſwarm with Freethinkers.

On the other hand, what can be more for the honour of a Religion, than that it drives from it all determined wickedneſs, as not able to bear the ſplendor of its viſage; eſpecially when we conſider that this ſame Religion, ſo terrible to hardened Vice, bears the moſt benignant aſpect to a repentant ſinner, whom ſhe invites to her boſom, and to whom ſhe communicates all her comforts and conſolations?

Let therefore ſuch who have been ſo unhappily deluded by their ſins as to rivet them into their nature, by a fatal *Unbelief*, view and contemplate this *rejected Religion* on this ſide, where with ſo much pity and compaſſion ſhe throws out her arms, to recover theſe her deluded Children from final perdition. The frequent contemplation

contemplation of this would with the Grace of God (always at hand to aſſiſt the honeſt endeavours of men), at laſt enable them to break their fetters, recover their liberty, and return again into one fold, under one Shepherd, *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* Amen.

True

True Chriſtians, the Salt of the Earth.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE KING,

MARCH 12, 1769.

MATT. V. 13.

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS FROM THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT.

OUR Bleſſed Maſter hath here, in an happy union of ſcientific and popular inſtruction, ariſing from the joint aid of the ſentiment and the expreſſion, ſupported a particular truth on a general principle.

The

The *particular truth* is, that the loſs of the *Salt*, or genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, cannot be ſupplied by any human expedient whatſoever: and it is ſupported on this *general Principle*, that every thing hath its *Salt* or eſſential quality, which makes it to be what it is; and, without which, it is no longer the ſame, having degenerated into another thing.

Much of our bleſſed Maſter's inſtruction pointed to future corruptions in his holy Religion; for at the time when he firſt impregnated the world with, what he here calls, *the ſalt of the Earth*, there could be little danger of its *loſing it's ſavour* during that generation.

The obſervation was made to be *recorded* by the ſacred Penmen; that when this *loſs* or decay of *ſavour* ſhould arrive, we might *remember* (to uſe his own words) *that he had told us of it.*

And it is one of the miſerable Prerogatives that we, the Miniſters of his word in theſe latter ages, have to boaſt of, above our happier Predeceſſors, that we are able to illuſtrate the divinity of our holy Faith by the completion of many Prophecies, which foretold the degeneracy of the Chriſtian Church.

But though I ſhall not forget the *particular Truth* inculcated in my Text, yet it is my purpoſe, firſt of all, to ſhew from the *general maxim* on which it is ſupported, that the gracious warning, contained in the obſervation, holds good with regard to every ſtate and condition of human life, as well civil as religious; that where the *Salt* or eſſential quality of a thing, that which conſtitutes its being what it is, happens to be loſt or depraved, nothing can prevent the deſtruction of the ſubject in which that quality reſided: no ſuccedaneum, no adventitious quality, having the virtue or efficacy to ſupply its place.

To explain my meaning by the trite example of the *Body-natural*, employed, on all occaſions, to illuſtrate the various fortunes and ſituations of the *Body-politic*.

In the human frame, the eſſential quality of the eye is its capacity of viſion; of the ear, to receive and modulate ſounds; of the palate,

palate, to diſtinguiſh ſavours; and ſo, of the reſt. Now when the qualities appropriated to each organ of ſenſe are loſt or depraved, we find it impoſſible for their functions to be diſcharged, or their defects to be ſupplied by any ſuccedaneum whatſoever. The viciated part muſt for ever lye uſeleſs, till the miſchiefs attending the ceſſation of its functions end in the deſtruction of that body which ſuch parts were formed and deſigned, by the divine Architect, to ſerve and ſupport.

Juſt ſo it is in the ſeveral orders and ſtations of Society; which are the members, as it were, of the great Body-politic.

Suppoſe then the *Salt* or eſſential qualities of one of theſe members be *Frugality and Simplicity*; of another, *Learning*; of another, *Wiſdom*; and of the twofold Body itſelf, in one part, *Love of our Country*; in the other, *Piety*: When all, or any of theſe, no longer operate by their reſpective faculties, the common Body to which they belong will ſoon fall into a conſumptive decay.

This ſerious and melancholy truth our divine Maſter hath plainly intimated, in that elegant figure of *Salt which hath loſt its ſavour*.

I ſhall therefore firſt endeavour to explain the importance of his words, as they are founded on the *general Principle*, in their more enlarged and general ſenſe: By which you may underſtand the helpleſs condition of *Society*, when any of its capital members are deprived of their eſſential qualities. So that, in whatſoever part you find this *Salt to have loſt*, or to be in danger of loſing, *its ſavour*, you may haſten to reſtore it, or to preſerve it in its natural ſtate, inſtead of hoping by quack inventions to ſupply its place.

I. To begin with the PEOPLE. The *Salt* of this groſs Body, that by which it is kept ſweet, are modeſty, induſtry, parſimony, and ſimplicity of manners.

How far theſe qualities now make, or mark, the characteriſtic of the People, we all ſee.

Inſtead

Inſtead of that *modeſty*, by which the Engliſh Populace, till of late, have been ſo advantageouſly diſtinguiſhed, a cenſorial ſpirit, not of their hearts but of their heads, hath got poſſeſſion of them. They erect themſelves into Controllers of the conduct of their Governors; they preſcribe laws to the Legiſlature; and riſe in tumults againſt the ſentence of public Juſtice. In proſperity, they are inſolent; in adverſity, outrageous. A People turbulent and ſervile; mutinous and corrupt; impatient in want; improvident in abundance; and equally unawed by the uplifted hand of Heaven and the Magiſtrate.

That *Parſimony and ſimplicity of manners*, which had long ſupported their ſtation in eaſe and credit, are now loſt in the diſtreſſes attending luxury and riot. Hence, mad factions, and criminal aſſociations, which ſhake, and threaten to overturn, the very foundations of Society.

And now, wherewith ſhall this *unſavoury* Body be *ſalted?* They are ready to tell you, with that air of Sovereignty which they have aſſumed,—By their large and extenſive Commerce; that ſpring-tide of Riches; which they believe (if they believe in any thing) will ſet the ſhattered Veſſel of the Commonwealth, now ſtranded by theſe wretched Pilots, once again on float.

But this gilded pageant will only add to our diſorders. For a flow of wealth, which, regulated by the eſſential qualities of a virtuous People, would have ſet all to rights, will ſerve only to extend the luxury, to encourage the diſſipation, and to enflame the inſolence and riot, of a lawleſs crew of miſcreants.

II. The MINISTERS OF RELIGION acquire their honoured character from their LOVE OF TRUTH, manifeſted in the cultivation of GOOD LETTERS. And none have ſurpaſſed the Engliſh clergy in the glorious exerciſe of theſe eſſential qualities. They roſe to that diſtinction, and, indeed, they could riſe no otherwiſe, by the mutual aid which thoſe two qualities imparted to one another.

Now if ever the *Salt* of this ſacred order ſhould become vapid (which Heaven avert!) by a coldneſs for *Truth* and an indifference for *Letters*, one may eaſily gueſs what contrivances will be employed, and to how little purpoſe, to preſerve appearances, when the virtue and efficacy of things are loſt.

An affected MODERATION will try to ſoften, when it cannot warm, that rigid *coldneſs*; and a bluſh of MODESTY will be aſſumed to animate that lifeleſs *indifference*. But theſe painted virtues will not bear the weather: this *moderation* will fade, and betray the pallid hue of IGNORANCE; and this *modeſty* ſoon appear to be only the varniſh of SCEPTICISM.

Now though counterfeits do, in the very act, bear teſtimony to the excellence of the genuine qualities they uſurp, (and we know that MODESTY commonly attends, and always adds a luſtre to Truth; and MODERATION beſt recommends the *Teachers* of it to the world;) yet counterfeits can never ſupply the place of thoſe Virtues they have diſpoſſeſſed.

III. MINISTERS OF STATE, next to Miniſters of Religion, deſerve our higheſt reverence. Their *Salt* or eſſential qualities are WISDOM and GOOD FAITH. On theſe the ſucceſs as well as juſtice of public meaſures depend. Theſe make them beloved at home, and confided in abroad. Such have been thoſe Pilots of the Commonwealth, who, from time to time, have ſafely ſteered the public veſſel through all thoſe dangers to which the ſtormy and tempeſtuous nature of our Free Conſtitution perpetually expoſe it.

Now whenever it ſhall happen, that this Miniſterial *Salt* ſhall have *loſt its ſavour*, is become inſipid or corrupt, no expedients (though EXPEDIENTS be the Stateſman's Aſylum) will afford us its Virtue. Yet CUNNING and CIRCUMVENTION have been ſo long employed to hold the place of *Wiſdom* and *good Faith*, that it, at length, became a queſtion, which of theſe two kinds was the native and genuine *Salt* of the Politician; though the Hiſtory of Mankind had amply

amply explained the difference; and long experience had ſo fully convinced the Stateſman himſelf, of the ſmall uſe of *cunning* and *circumvention* in the conduct of public affairs, that he had learned to turn them, with more ſucceſs, for the advancement of his own; in evading the force of that oppoſition he was unable to withſtand; and in engroſſing more power than he knew how to uſe.

IV. But now, from the partial and ſubordinate ſtations in Society, let us come to the *whole Community* itſelf; and ſee what is the *Salt*, and what are the eſſential qualities of this vaſt Body, this *Leviathan*, of whom it is ſaid,—*upon Earth there is not his like* *, in whoſe *parts and power and comely proportion* † (to uſe the language of the ſacred Writer) are contained two Societies, the *civil* and the *religious*: to each of which, every individual, in a different capacity, belongs. The eſſential quality of the *civil*, is the *love of man*, manifeſted by the ſervice of the Public: the eſſential quality of the *religious*, is the *love of God*, manifeſted in the practice of virtue and piety.

1. For, in the firſt part, individuals aſſociating to obtain thoſe worldly bleſſings which civil policy only can beſtow, the genuine and moſt natural concern of each is THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE. Hence that reaſonable purſuit, and moſt *heroic*, (though heroiſm be a paſſion ſeldom joined with reaſon) the LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY. Tranſported with *this*, and ſacrificing all other paſſions to *this*, nations and people have, from the loweſt and baſeſt original, arrived at wealth and empire. A paſſion, which no power, no policy, no advantage of climate, no ſuperiority in perſonal endowments, have ever been able to withſtand: inflamed and purified by this paſſion alone, the Banditti of Rome came, in time, to give Law to the diſcipline and ſcience of Greece: to the policy and commerce of Egypt; and to the opulence and immenſe power of Aſia.

Whenever this paſſion hath ſhone ſtrong amongſt us, we have ſeen England become the Pacificator of the Continent, and rival

* Job, xli. 33. † Ver. 12.

Monarchs ſue for our alliance.—And what is it that is ſaid to have clouded this ſcene of glory? What, but the decline, the extinction, of the PATRIOT-PASSION; under the counterfeit profeſſions of the *Factious*; the ſecret diſcouragements of the *Corrupt*; and the open ridicule of the *Profligate*.

Now, what ſhall we ſubſtitute to ſupply the loſs of this eſſential virtue, the *Salt* of this animating principle? Something, no doubt, will be attempted, to prevent Government from falling into diſhonour and contempt. There is a mimic paſſion, which will be vainly buſied to repair this loſs, by the MULTIPLICATION OF OUR LAWS: For the decay of that genuine *ſalt*, the *love of our Country*, being, amongſt its other miſchiefs, attended with a conſtant diſpoſition to brave or to evade the *old eſtabliſhed Laws*, there ſeems to have been as conſtant a provocation in our Governors to counterwork this evil by the addition of *new ones*. But this will ill ſupport the *Patriot-paſſion*, or ſupply the want of it; when men obſerve, or fancy they obſerve, that a *multiplicity of Laws*, inſtead of giving ſtrength to the general, becomes a ſnare and entanglement to particulars.

If we turn from the Community in its *civil*, to its *religious* capacity, we ſhall find its *eſſence* (when purified, as ours, by the GOSPEL) to conſiſt in the *love of God, and in the practice of piety and virtue*. And this *Salt*, the native temper of Engliſhmen hath, in all paſt ages, eminently ſupplied: ſo that the *Piety* of BRITAIN was long its characteriſtic badge. From what fatal concurrence of unlucky accidents we have ſuffered this celeſtial flame to go out and dye away, even amidſt the increaſe of its fuel (for never was the Chriſtian Faith ſo well proved to be a *reaſonable ſervice* as in theſe times), it is not my purpoſe, at preſent, to enquire. The loſs is notorious. It is ſeen by our actions, it is avowed in our ſpeculations, and boaſted of as our glory, that this *Faith* hath now no longer its wonted hold on the lives and conſciences of men.

V. And now this brings me ſtill nearer to my Text. For the GOSPEL is that SPECIFIC SALT, which our bleſſed Maſter intimates ſhould,

ſhould, in theſe latter days, *loſe its ſavour*; and more than intimates, ſhould find no ſuccedaneum to ſupply its place.

Yet ſo inſenſible are we grown even to the need of any, that we hardly ſeek or enquire for relief; contrary to the foregoing caſes, where we find men buſied, however vainly, to ſupply the depraved ſtate of their condition, by new inventions. And were it not for the humanity of certain well-bred Gentlemen, this *crooked Generation* would be in danger of forgetting that there was any ſuch thing as A RULE OF RIGHT, which theſe new Inſtructors offer to us, as an equivalent for THE RULE OF FAITH.

But, not truſting to this, other fantoms, it is true, have been raiſed up to ſeaſon our *inſipidity*.

The MAN OF HONOUR ſtands forth to aſſure us, that a *ſenſe of Honour* (from which ſacred name he takes his title), and not of *Religion*, is the true poliſher and refiner of human manners. And yet we ſee, modern Honour hath no other connexion with virtue than what FASHION hath chanced to make between them; and that *Honour* may thrive and do well (as the practice of faſhionable men ſhews) amidſt the breach of all God's *Commandments* and the King's.

The MAN OF SCIENCE, indeed, hath diſcovered a ſtill more exquiſite relief, in our diſtreſſes. He bids us procure, for ourſelves, a TASTE; which, in the lucky abſence of our Religion, will anſwer every thing. This, ſays he, is that true *internal feeling*, which Fanatics have ſo much miſtaken; and only wants to be new-touched by this Philoſophy, to be indeed THE GOD WITHIN.

Though if we reflect, that TASTE is governed by the *Imagination*, juſt as HONOUR is regulated on the *Faſhion*, we may find reaſon to complain that our Betters have here (as uſual) only provided for themſelves; and that TASTE and HONOUR, like the *Quails and Manna* in the wilderneſs, are too delicate a repaſt for the groſs appetites of the People: and that, however ſolid a conſolation this new *ſeaſoning* of the decayed *ſalt* of Religion may afford the polite and the well-bred, where *faſhion* and *fancy* ſupply the place of FAITH

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and

and HOPE, yet for us *miſerable ſinners* a more ſubſtantial Diet is to be provided.

To ſum up all—From what hath been ſaid you may collect, how deſperate the condition of things muſt needs be, whenever the ſeveral ſtations of Society, and much more when Society itſelf, ſhall have *loſt* their eſſential qualities, the SALT which conſtitutes their natures, and makes them to be what they are.

How near we are approaching to this fatal period, or how far removed from it, muſt be left to every man's ſerious reflexion.

If we ſhould be found to have fallen from that happy ſtate in which the Creator firſt placed us, and to which our Redeemer reſtored us; the ſtate in which nature put us, and Grace hath long ſupported us; what have we now to do, but, with all humility, to apply to the Author of our Salvation, that he would recall things to that Order, which, on his creation of them, he pronounced GOOD, and which, when run into confuſion, he reſtored and harmonized, when the whole choir of Heaven ſung—*Glory to God in the higheſt, and, on Earth, peace, good-will towards man!*

A RATIONAL

A

RATIONAL ACCOUNT

OF

THE NATURE AND END

OF

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

NATURE AND END

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

THE celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER being our conſtant duty, as it is *to ſhew the Lord's death till he come* *; and likewiſe our greateſt intereſt, as it is *the communion of the body and blood of Chriſt* †; it may not be improper to enquire into its SPECIFIC NATURE; in order to comprehend both the force of our obligation to frequent the Lord's table, and the value of that benefit we receive in worthily communicating.

The hiſtory of its inſtitution is delivered by St. Matthew, in theſe words, "And as they were eating, Jeſus took bread and "bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Diſciples, and ſaid,

* 1 Cor. xi. 26. † 1 Cor. x. 16.

"Take, eat; this is MY BODY: and he took the cup and gave "thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it, for this "is MY BLOOD of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many "for the remiſſion of Sins*".

The Rites and Ceremonies of the law were TYPICAL. A Type, as hath been ſhewn elſewhere †, aroſe from the ancient mode of converſing by *ſigns*: For, by adding a *moral import* to a ſignificative ſign, the action becomes a TYPE ‡. This ſacred Rite, which (together with *Baptiſm*) was to take place of the whole Jewiſh ritual, is, like that ritual, *Typical* alſo: but with this difference,—The Jewiſh Rites were predictive of things *future*; and ſo, were obſcure and intricate: this, ſignificative of a thing *paſt*; and ſo, clear and intelligible.

Thus far as to its *form*. Its *ſpecific nature* will be our next inquiry. To have an exact idea of this, two things muſt be well conſidered: The ſtate of Religion at the time this Rite was inſtituted, and the particular ſeaſon in which it was celebrated.

1. In thoſe ages of the world when victims made ſo great a part of the Religion both of Jews and Gentiles, the *ſacrifice* was always followed by a religious feaſting on the thing offered; which was called, the *feaſt upon or after the ſacrifice*; the partakers of which feaſt were ſuppoſed to become partakers of the *benefits* of the Sacrifice. Now, from the Goſpel-hiſtory of the inſtitution of the *Lord's ſupper*, and from St. Paul's reaſoning upon it, a celebrated perſon hath long ſince ſhewn, with great compaſs of learning, and force of argument, That Jeſus, about to offer himſelf a ſacrifice on the croſs for our redemption, did, in conformity to a general practice, inſtitute the *laſt ſupper*, under the idea of a *feaſt after the ſacrifice* §. So far that learned writer.

2. As

* C. xxvi. v. 26, &c. † Div. Leg. Book iv. ‡ Ibid.

§ Dr. Cudworth, *in his Diſcourſe concerning the true notion of the Lord's ſupper.*——But to his own Syſtem, like a fair and able writer, who conceals nothing, and leaves nothing unanſwered, he produces this Objection, "That the true notion of the Lord's "Supper

2. As to the particular ſeaſon in which this holy Rite was celebrated; We are to conſider, that the great SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS was typically prefigured by ſeveral of the Temple-oblations; and eſpecially by the PASCHAL-LAMB. Now juſt before the *paſſion*, and while Jeſus was eating the *Paſchal-ſupper*, which was a Jewiſh *feaſt after or upon the ſacrifice*, he inſtitutes this holy Rite. And as it was his general cuſtom to allude, in his actions and expreſſions, to what paſſed before his eyes, or preſented itſelf to his obſervation *; who can doubt, when we ſee, in the very form of celebration, all the marks of a *ſacrificial ſupper*, but that the divine Inſtitutor intended it ſhould bear the ſame relation to his *ſacrifice on the Croſs*, which the *Paſchal-ſupper*, then celebrating, bore to the oblation of the *Paſchal-lamb*; that is, to be of the nature of a *feaſt after the ſacrifice*. For if this was not his purpoſe, and that no more was intended than a *general memorial, or remembrance of a dead benefactor*, why was this inſtant of time preferred to all other throughout the courſe of his miniſtry, any of which had been equally commodious?

This reaſoning receives additional ſtrength even from what hath been ſuppoſed to invalidate it, namely, the concluding words of the inſtitution—*Do this in remembrance of me*. For though theſe words, conſidered alone, might ſignify no more than the remembrance of our obligations to him in general; yet when preceded by—*this is my body—this is my blood*, they neceſſarily imply the remembrance of his death and paſſion for us, in particular. And could there

"Supper is to be derived indeed from the Paſſover, but the Jewiſh Paſſover had no "relation to a Sacrifice, being nothing elſe but a mere FEAST; and therefore, from "analogy to the Jewiſh Rites, we cannot make the Lord's ſupper to be Epulum "Sacrificale, a feaſt upon Sacrifice?" And then anſwers it at large, in the ſecond and third Chapters of his *Diſcourſe*, with that invincible force of learning and reaſoning almoſt peculiar to him.

* See Sir Iſaac Newton's Obſervations on the Propheſies, p. 148. where he takes notice how Jeſus, from the *approach of harveſt*, from *the lilies in bloom*, from the *fig-trees ſhooting out*, from the *ſheep kept in folds near the Temple, for ſacrifices*, &c. took occaſion to inculcate his ſpiritual doctrines and precepts.

be a *feaſt after the ſacrifice* in which that ſacrifice was not commemorated?

It is true, the injunction of doing it *in remembrance* implies, that the celebration was to be continually repeated; which was not the caſe of *feaſts after the ſacrifice*; on which, as we ſay, this holy Rite was modelled. But this was a neceſſary difference; for the great Sacrifice itſelf, of which this *Feaſt* was a type, differed in the ſame manner from all other ſacrifices. The Jewiſh and Pagan Oblations had, or were ſuppoſed to have, only a paſſing and temporary virtue: The Sacrifice on the croſs is of perpetual efficacy; and will continue to operate till the conſummation of all things. It ſeemed fit, therefore, that the operating virtue of this Sacrifice ſhould be perpetually ſet before us, in a conſtant celebration of the *Feaſt upon it.*

We have now ſeen what may be naturally, and indeed what muſt be reaſonably, inferred of Chriſt's purpoſe in the *laſt Supper*, from the hiſtory of its inſtitution.

Let us try next what we can collect of St. PAUL's ſenſe, in this matter, who hath occaſionally ſpoken at large concerning it. And here we ſhall find, that this very ſort of Feaſt, which the words of the inſtitution tacitly allude to, St. Paul, in order to ſhew the *ſpecific nature* of the Rite, expreſly draws a compariſon from; and at the ſame time, in order to ſhew the efficacy of it, informs us of the end and purpoſe of thoſe *Feaſts upon the ſacrifice.* It is, in that place of his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, where he reproves the proſelytes to Chriſtianity for the idolatrous practice of eating with the Gentiles, of things offered to idols, in their *feaſts upon the ſacrifice.* His words are theſe——"I ſpeak as to wiſe men: "judge ye what I ſay. 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? For we "being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of "that one bread. Behold Iſrael after the fleſh: are not they which "eat of the ſacrifices partakers of the altar? What ſay I then? That "an idol is any thing, or that which is offered in ſacrifice to idols

"is

" is any thing? But I ſay, that the things which the Gentiles " ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would " not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils. Ye cannot drink " the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: Ye cannot be par- " takers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils *."

The Apoſtle profeſſeth, in this place, to write to theſe Corinthians under their aſſumed character of *wiſe men*. And though perhaps he may uſe the term a little ironically, and in reproof of the *diviſions*, before objected to them; yet the logical inference drawn from an appeal to ſuch a character, holds not the leſs, for the ſarcaſm in which it is conveyed. My meaning is, That we may fairly conclude, the reaſoning to be ſuch as *wiſe men* would not diſdain to conſider; and ſo regularly conducted as *wiſe men* would beſt comprehend. In a word, purſued with that ſcience and preciſion which leaves no room for a looſe, popular, and inaccurate interpretation.

In the firſt place, therefore, we may collect, that *The Cup of bleſſing* is not ſimply a general commemoration of a deceaſed benefactor, but a commemoration of Chriſt's death and paſſion: It is the *communion of the blood of Chriſt*; an expreſſion, as will be ſeen hereafter, of the utmoſt elegance, to imply *a feaſt upon the ſacrifice*. But the inference the Apoſtle draws from it, puts his meaning beyond all doubt—*For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.* He ſays, *the partaking of one bread*, makes the receivers, of *many*, to become *one* body. A juſt inference, if this Rite be of the nature of a *feaſt upon the ſacrifice*; for then, the *communion of the body and blood of Chriſt* unites the receivers into one body, by an equal diſtribution of one common benefit: But if it be only a general commemoration of a deceaſed benefactor, it leaves the receivers as it found them: not *one body*; but *many ſeparate profeſſors* of one common Faith.

* 1 Cor. x. 15—21.

The

The Apoſtle having thus ſhewn the laſt Supper to be of the nature of *a feaſt upon the ſacrifice*; for the truth of which he appeals to their own conceptions of it—*The cup of bleſſing—is it not the communion?* &c. *The bread, which we break, is it not the communion?* &c. He then endeavours to convince them of the impiety of their behaviour, from the nature of theſe feaſts, as they were underſtood both by Jews and Gentiles; who equally held, that they who EAT OF THE SACRIFICES WERE PARTAKERS OF THE ALTAR. But what had either of theſe *eaters of the ſacrifices* to do with the *partakers of the bread and wine* in the laſt Supper, if the laſt Supper was not a feaſt of the ſame kind with their feaſts? But eſpecially, if the three feaſts, *Jewiſh*, *Pagan*, and *Chriſtian*, had not one common nature, how could the Apoſtle have inferred that this intercommunity was abſolutely inconſiſtent? *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils*, &c. For though there might be IMPIETY in the promiſcuous uſe of Pagan and Chriſtian Rites; yet the INCONSISTENCY ariſes from their having a common nature; and ſo, conſequently (as they had oppoſite originals) from their deſtroying one another's effects, in the very celebration. The reaſoning ſtands thus. Thoſe who eat *of the ſacrifices were partakers of the altar.* A ſacrifice at the altar was a FEDERAL rite: conſequently, the *feaſt upon that ſacrifice* became a federal Rite likewiſe. *The Lord's table*, and *the table of devils*, therefore, being both federal Rites, the ſame man could not be partaker of both. This is the Apoſtle's argument to the *wiſe men* here appealed to: and we ſee it turns altogether on this poſtulatum, that the laſt Supper is of the nature of a *feaſt upon the ſacrifice*: Suppoſe it now a *general commemoration only of a dead benefactor*, and all this reaſoning vaniſhes; for though a man cannot *execute two federal Rites* which deſtroy one another; yet a *federal rite* and a *bare remembrance*, in two contrary religions, have none of this oppoſition; but may be *celebrated*, if not without *impiety*, yet without any of that *inconſiſtency* which the learned Apoſtle here charges upon his licentious Corinthians.

But

But this was not the only abuſe they committed in the celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; nor this the only place in the Epiſtle declarative of the nature of that holy Rite. Theſe Corinthians, as appears by the next chapter, had been guilty of celebrating the Lord's Supper in a very indecent manner, by confounding it with their ordinary repaſts, or with convivial doings of their own invention, where charity and ſobriety were too commonly violated. Now this indiſcriminate celebration, the Apoſtle calls, the being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord* *. A charge ſurely much aggravated, were the Lord's Supper inſtituted only to commemorate a dead benefactor. The Corinthians did not make a due diſtinction between their more ordinary food and the eating and drinking in memory of a deceaſed friend. This doubtleſs was a high ingratitude. Yet to rank theſe criminals with the murderers of the *Lord of life* is a ſeverity in which we can hardly ſee the juſtice. But let us only ſuppoſe, that St. Paul conſidered the laſt Supper as a *feaſt upon a ſacrifice*, that is, as a Rite in which the benefits of Chriſt's death and paſſion were conveyed, and at the ſame time ſlighted, and all becomes eaſy and natural. The profanation of ſuch a Rite, by rendering his death ineffectual, was indeed aiding the purpoſe of his murderers; and therefore might be fitly compared, and juſtly equalled, to the prodigious enormity of that crime.

Such then, I preſume, is the true nature of the LORD'S SUPPER. And was the adjuſting a preciſe idea of it, as it referred to a religious cuſtom of antiquity, a matter only of curioſity and ſpeculation, I might perhaps have left it to the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian. But it appears to me to have important conſequences with regard both to our FAITH and WORSHIP. For,

1. If the laſt Supper be of the nature of *a feaſt after a ſacrifice*, then is it a declaration of Jeſus himſelf, that his death upon the croſs was a REAL SACRIFICE. For figurative expreſſion (as ſome are apt to deem the Goſpel repreſentation of Chriſt's *ſacrifice* and

* 1 Cor. xi. 27.

atone-

atonement) could never produce a religious Rite of divine appointment, arising from, and dependent on, a real ſpecific action. I ſay, of *divine appointment*, becauſe many of human original have been thus produced. Yet then only (which is a farther ſupport to the preceding obſervation) when the *figure* had been miſtaken for a *ſubſtance*.

2. If the laſt Supper be of the nature of *a feaſt after a ſacrifice*, then is it productive of great and ſpecial benefits to the partakers. For the partakers of the Jewiſh and Gentile *feaſts after a ſacrifice* did, or were ſuppoſed to communicate of the benefits of the ſacrifice.

However, a very learned writer, whoſe principles of reaſoning, and method in deducing and conducting them, may ſerve for a model to the fair Inquirer, hath lately endeavoured to prove, in *A plain account of the nature and end of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper*, "that it was inſtituted merely in remembrance of Chriſt; "that the bread to be taken and eaten was appointed to be the "memorial of his body broken; and the wine to be drunk was or-"dained to be the memorial of his blood ſhed*." His intention in this appears commendable. It was to free the *laſt Supper* from Superſtition; whoſe untimely fruit is at beſt but a lifeleſs *rubrical piety*. Yet in purſuit of this commendable deſign, he hath gone, I preſume, too far: He hath taken away its SPECIFIC nature, and left it nothing but its GENERIC. He hath excluded the idea of *a feaſt after the ſacrifice*, in which the celeſtial benefits of the Giver are conveyed, and confined us to the notion of a mere *memorial*, in which the gratitude only of the Receiver is returned.

He proceeds upon this great PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE; "That "the Bible alone ought to determine our belief in all matters of "faith and religious opinion." And this, which can never be too much inſiſted on, he urgeth with a freedom becoming a lover of truth, and a candour expreſſive of his diſinclination to controverſy. This may fairly be ſaid of his general conduct.

But whether he hath been as happy in the APPLICATION of his *principle*, may be reaſonably made a doubt.

* P. 24. 3d Edit.

His

His METHOD of reaſoning is not leſs judicious than the *choice* of his topics. He hath deduced a number of propoſitions tied and faſtened to one another, till, with theſe *cords of a man*, he hath drawn the reader to his concluſion. Here, if he obtrudes upon us any falſe hook in the chain, the art or miſtake is eaſily detected: If all be ſtrong and ſound, the force of it will be perceived to more advantage.

Let us examine his reaſoning, therefore, with the ſame preciſion and brevity with which he urgeth it: And, as we deny his CONCLUSION, ſhew the FAULTY LINK which hath impoſed upon his Readers; and, it may be, upon himſelf.

The Argument is compriſed in the *eight following Propoſitions.*

PROPOSITIONS.

I.

"The partaking of the Lord's Supper is not a duty of itſelf; or "a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty "made ſuch to Chriſtians, by the poſitive inſtitution of Jeſus "Chriſt."

II.

"All poſitive duties, or duties made ſuch by inſtitution alone, "depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the perſon who "inſtitutes and ordains them, with reſpect to the real deſign and "end of them; and conſequently to the due manner of performing "them."

III.

"It is plain, therefore, that the nature, the deſign, and the due "manner of partaking of the Lord's Supper, muſt, of neceſſity, "depend upon what Jeſus Chriſt, who inſtituted it, hath declared "about it."

IV.

"It cannot be doubted that he himſelf ſufficiently declared to "his firſt and immediate Followers, the whole of what he deſigned "ſhould be underſtood by it, or implied in it."

V.

"It is of ſmall importance therefore to Chriſtians to know what "the many Writers upon this ſubject, ſince the time of the Evan- "geliſts and Apoſtles, have affirmed. Much leſs can it be the duty "of Chriſtians to be guided by what any perſons, by their own "Authority, or from their own imaginations, may teach concern- "ing this duty."

VI.

"The paſſages in the New Teſtament which relate to this duty, "and they alone, are the original accounts of the nature and end "of this inſtitution; and the only authentic declarations, upon "which we of later ages can ſafely depend; being written by "the immediate followers of our Lord; thoſe who were witneſſes "themſelves to the Inſtitution; or were inſtructed in it, either by "thoſe who were ſo, or by Chriſt himſelf; and conſent in de- "livering down one and the ſame account of this religious duty."

VII.

"The Writers of the New Teſtament give an account of the "Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper in the following paſſages, which "therefore are principally to be regarded, viz. St. Matthew, "chap. xxvi. ver. 26, &c. St. Mark, chap. xiv. ver. 22. &c. "St. Luke, chap. xxii. ver. 19, &c. and St. Paul, 1 Cor. chap. xi. "ver. 23, &c."

VIII.

"It appears from theſe paſſages, that the End for which our "Lord inſtituted this duty was the *remembrance* of himſelf; that "the bread to be taken and eaten was appointed to be the *memorial* "of his body broken, and the wine to be drunk was ordained to "be the *memorial* of his blood ſhed: or (according to the expreſs "words of St. Paul) that the one was to be eaten and the other "drunk in *remembrance* of Chriſt, and this to be continued until "he, who was once preſent with his diſciples, and is now abſent, "ſhall come again *."

* Plain Account, p. 2—24.

As

As this, which the learned writer uſes, is the method of the Demonſtrators, one would wonder by what force of invention he was enabled to deduce this concluſion. But we often ſee, that where force is wanting, a little matter of addreſs will ſupply its place.

The 4th *Propoſition*, which runs thus, performed the feat. "It "cannot be doubted (ſays he) but that he himſelf [Jeſus] SUFFI-"CIENTLY DECLARED to his firſt and immediate followers the "whole of what he deſigned ſhould be underſtood by it [the *ſacra-"ment of the Lord's Supper*] or implied in it."

Now I apprehend *this* to be the *faulty* LINK; and that all the connexion it hath with the *propoſitions*, which precede and follow it, lies in the unperceived ambiguity of the terms SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED: Which may either ſignify, *declared by expreſs words*; or, on the other hand, *declared by ſignificative circumſtances*, ſuch as reſpect the time, the occaſion, the mode of acting, or the manner of ſpeaking. For the communication of our thoughts is carried on as well by EXPRESSIVE ACTIONS as by WORDS AND SOUNDS: nor did the firſt bear a ſmall part in the converſe of the Ancients*; eſpecially amongſt the Jewiſh people of all ages, to the time in queſtion.

Hence it comes to paſs, that though we are agreed in the Propoſition, that *Jeſus ſufficiently declared the whole of what he underſtood by his laſt Supper*, we draw ſo different concluſions: The learned writer, that it was ſimply a *remembrance of Chriſt*; I, that it was of the nature of *a feaſt upon the ſacrifice*. For he conſiders only what Jeſus in expreſs words SAID, at the inſtitution of this holy rite: I take in both what he SAID and DID; and not only that, but the MODE of ſaying and doing; relative to the time, the occaſion, the manners, and the cuſtoms of the Age; as being perſuaded, that the ſpeaker's meaning can be but very imperfectly underſtood without taking in all theſe things. A rule of interpreta-

* See Divine Legation, Vol. II. Book IV. Sect. 4.

tion, in which, I ſuppoſe the learned writer would concur with me, were the point concerning a difficulty in CLASSICAL expreſſion.

This, then, I underſtand to be the only remaining queſtion, Whether or no the Diſciples of Jeſus (as it is agreed, their Maſter did not, in expreſs words, call this rite, *a feaſt upon ſacrifice*) could collect, from the whole of the circumſtances attending the inſtitution, that it was indeed of the nature of ſuch a feaſt? namely, from the critical time of the celebration, which was juſt before his paſſion, and at the Jewiſh paſchal ſupper; from the peculiarity of phraſe employed in the inſtitution, of which more hereafter; and from his accuſtomed manner, in the execution of his miniſtry, to adapt his words and actions to the ſcene or ſubject before him? Now, I ſuppoſe, that, from theſe circumſtances, one may fairly conclude, the Diſciples might and did collect that the *laſt Supper* was of the nature of a *feaſt upon* ſacrifice.

For, 1. it was much in the genius of thoſe times to convey information, as well by actions and indirect circumſtances, as by ſpeech and explicit words. So that the hearer would be naturally as attentive to the one mode of inſtruction, as to the other.

2. Nothing can be conceived clearer or more expreſſive of ſuch *a feaſt*, than the circumſtances attending the inſtitution of this; as may appear from hence, That we, who live in an age when ſuch modes of converſe are, and have been long diſuſed, yet ſee, in theſe circumſtances of time, occaſion, and mode of expreſſion, ſuch an aptitude to convey the idea of a feaſt *after the ſacrifice*, as, I am perſuaded, ſufficiently informs every capable perſon of the nature of this feaſt.

3. Though the Diſciples are indeed repreſented by the Evangeliſts as exceeding ſlow and dull to apprehend *the things of God*, yet this concerned only the *ſpiritual meaning* of ſuch *things*; from which their inveterate prejudices for a *carnal œconomy* had ſhut up all their faculties; ſo as to deny any introduction to a new Religion, oppoſite to the *temporary* purpoſes of their old one. It doth not

not appear, they had any natural defect of apprehenſion to underſtand a plain alluſion to the rites and cuſtoms of their Law; which the inſtitution in queſtion directly objected to them.

But what is here urged will receive further light as well as ſtrength from the remarkable reaſoning of St. Paul upon this holy Myſtery. We have ſeen above, that the language he employs to explain his ideas, and the ſimilitude he brings to enforce his reaſoning, are adapted only to the conſideration of the laſt Supper's being *a feaſt upon a ſacrifice*. Now one or other of theſe things will needs follow, Either that he had an expreſs revelation, as well of its nature as of the Hiſtory of its inſtitution, from Chriſt himſelf, at the time of his converſion; or that he logically inferred this its nature from the ſeveral circumſtances of the hiſtory of the inſtitution.

If we hold the firſt, The diſpute is at an end: If the ſecond, What hindered the reſt of the diſciples from doing the ſame?

I ſhould be inclined to the latter opinion; and that all which was revealed to him by Jeſus, was the hiſtory of the inſtitution as we find it recorded in the Goſpel. His own words, where he tells us how he came by his knowledge, ſeem to decide in favour of this opinion. "For I have received (ſays he) of the Lord, that "which alſo I deliver unto you, That the Lord Jeſus, the ſame "night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had "given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body, "which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After "the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſay-"ing, This cup is the new teſtament in my blood: this do ye, "as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For 'as often as "ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death "till he come *." This is the whole of his account concerning the hiſtory of the inſtitution. He then proceeds, in the next verſe, to reaſon from it—"Wherefore whoever ſhall eat this bread and

* 1 Cor. xi. 23.

"drink

" drink this cup of the Lord unworthily ſhall be guilty of the body " and blood of Chriſt."

So far then as to the SUFFICIENT DECLARATION of the mind of Jeſus to his *immediate followers*, concerning the nature of this holy Rite. The Reader, perhaps, may think this reaſoning not a little ſtrengthened by what the excellent Cudworth ſays of this matter. " But leſt we ſhould ſeem (ſays he) to ſet up fancies of " our own, we come now to DEMONSTRATE that the Lord's " Supper is a *feaſt upon ſacrifice*; in the ſame manner with the " *Jewiſh* and *Heathen*. And that from a place of Scripture where " all theſe three are compared together and made exact parallels " to one another. 1 Cor. x. 14—21. Where the Apoſtle's ſcope " being to convince the Corinthians of the unlawfulneſs of eating " things ſacrificed to Idols, he ſhews, that though an idol was " *phyſically* nothing, yet *morally*, to eat of things ſacrificed to Idols " in the Idol's temple was to conſent with the ſacrifices, and to be " guilty of them. This he illuſtrates *firſt* by a parallel Rite in " the Chriſtian religion, where eating and drinking of the body " and blood of Chriſt in the Lord's Supper is a real COMMUNICA- " TION in his death and ſacrifice. *Secondly*, from another parallel " of the ſame rite amongſt the Jews, where always they that ate of " the ſacrifices were accounted partakers of the Altar. Therefore, " as to eat the body and blood of Chriſt in the Lord's Supper, is " to be made partaker of *his* ſacrifice; as to eat of the Jewiſh ſacri- " fices was to partake in the *legal* ſacrifices themſelves; ſo to eat " things offered up in ſacrifice to idols was to be made partakers of " the idol ſacrifices, and therefore was unlawful. The things which " the Gentiles ſacrificed, they ſacrificed to *Devils*; but Chriſt's body " and blood was offered up in ſacrifice to God, and therefore they " could not partake both of the ſacrifice of the true God, and the " ſacrifice of Devils. St. Paul's argument here muſt needs ſup- " poſe a PERFECT ANALOGY between theſe three, and that they " are ALL PARALLELS to one another, or elſe it hath no ſtrength.

" Where-

" Wherefore I conclude from hence, that the *Lord's Supper* is the " ſame amongſt Chriſtians, in reſpect of the Chriſtian ſacrifice, " that, amongſt the Jews, the feaſts upon the legal ſacrifices were ; " and, amongſt the Gentiles, the feaſts upon the idol-ſacrifices ; and " therefore *epulum ſacrificale*, or *epulum ex oblatis* *."

But this apoſtolic reaſoning, ſo well inforced by the modern Doctor, our learned Writer found himſelf obliged to explain away, before he could eſtabliſh his own Hypotheſis.

Firſt then, he gives us a long paraphraſe on the reaſoning of St. Paul †; which, you may be ſure, he makes very conformable to his own Syſtem. But to this, it is enough to oppoſe the ſhort one of Dr. Cudworth juſt now delivered. And what is wanting in the weight of its authority, ſome may think to be ſufficiently ſupplied by the advantage of a certain favourable prejudice, " That the ſenſe which is eaſieſt, and needs the feweſt words to explain, is the moſt likely to be the true." However, where the learned writer ſupports his own paraphraſe by *criticiſm* or *reaſoning*, he will deſerve all our reſpect and attention.

Firſt then, on the words—*The cup—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?*—he obſerves, that, " though " this be interpreted by many learned men to ſignify a *communion*, " or partaking of *all* the *benefits* of *Chriſt's body* broken, and *blood* " ſhed, yet, he thinks, the words cannot have that ſignification— " That, the Greek word Κοινωνία, uſed by the Apoſtle, and the " word *communion*, which is Latin, both ſignify a JOINT PARTAK- " ING, or a partaking of ſomething in common with others of the " ſame ſociety. And this *joint partaking* of Chriſt's body and blood " can ſignify no more than eating his body and drinking his blood " as a ſociety of his diſciples ‡."

* A Diſcourſe concerning the true Nature of the Lord's Supper, Chap. IV.

† From p. 32 to 39. ‡ P. 39, 40.

To

To this, it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that if, by the word Κοινωνία, the Apoſtle had meant, as the learned writer ſuppoſeth he did mean, *a joint partaking, or a partaking in common with our fellow Chriſtians of the bread and wine*, he would have *expreſſed* his meaning. In the text, there is not a tittle of *fellow Chriſtians* or *others* of the ſame ſociety. It is Κοινωνία τῦ ἄιμαϱ⟨ος—Κοινωνία τῦ σώμαϱ⟨ος, *the communion of the blood—the communion of the body*. Had he meant what the learned writer makes him to mean, he would doubtleſs have ſaid Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ σῶμα—*Your communion in the body*, i. e. your eating of it jointly. St. Paul knew how to expreſs himſelf properly. And if this had been his meaning, he would have expreſſed himſelf in ſome ſuch manner; as appears from a paſſage in his epiſtle to the Philippians, where he is profeſſedly ſpeaking of this joint participation of a bleſſing. Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαϱγέλιον *—*Your communion in the Goſpel*, i. e. your joint belief and profeſſion of it.

But the fallacy of the reaſoning ſeems to lye in the ſenſe the learned writer gives to the Greek and Latin words, as if they could ſignify nothing but a *joint partaking* with ſome other man, or body of men: and then indeed they could ſignify nothing elſe, in this place, but what they ſignified in all others. But He ſeems not to have conſidered, that though indeed this be their direct and original ſenſe, yet, as is common to moral modes, they had taken another, by their being applied to *ſpiritual* beings, as well as to man; nay even to inanimate thiugs, as may be ſeen in St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Philippians, Κοινωνία ϖαθημάτων αὐτῦ †, *the fellowſhip or communion of his ſufferings*. Now, when thus applied, the idea of our joint fellowſhip with men is not contained, except where that fellowſhip is expreſſed: as will appear from the following words of the ſame Apoſtle. Κοινωνία τῦ υἱῦ—*the communion of the Son* ‡; Κοινωνία τῦ ἁγίυ ϖνεύμαϱ⟨ος—*the communion of the Holy Ghoſt* §. In theſe in-

* Phil. i. 5.
‡ 1 Cor. i. 9.
† Phil. iii. 10.
§ 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

ſtances,

ſtances, there is no pretence for admitting the idea of *a joint-partaking with our fellow-Chriſtians*: with whom, however, we believe in common in the *Son*, and in the *Holy Ghoſt*; becauſe here is no joint act, defined by time and place, as in the inſtitution of the laſt Supper; which, I ſuppoſe, is the reaſon of the learned Author's giving this ſenſe to *communion of the body and blood*.

But to make it ſtill more apparent, that where the ſacred writers uſe the word Κοινωνία in this conſtruction, to ſignify our *union with our ſalvation*, no ſuch *joint partaking* is to be underſtood, it will not be improper to conſider the following paſſage, where St. John expreſly diſtinguiſheth the communion with Chriſt, from the communion or fellowſhip with one another: Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ—κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων *. *But if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him—we have fellowſhip with one another*; and by this mode of inference, and only by this, *the communion of the blood*, and *the communion of the body*, may likewiſe ſignify what the learned Writer would have it, a *joint-partaking*, or *communion with one another*.

The learned Writer then goes on, to *reaſon* on the paſſage in queſtion: and, when he hath done that, returns afreſh to criticiſe the word Κοινωνία. It may not be improper, therefore, before we proceed to his *reaſoning* on the paſſage, to conſider what he further urgeth in behalf of his ſenſe of Κοινωνία; and ſo, lay all his criticiſms together. He tells us then, that "there is little ground for "the remark of ſome learned men, that the word Κοινωνία *(communion)* is uſed where the inward or *ſpiritual* part of the Lord's "Supper is ſpoken of; and the word μετέχειν, *(partaking)* afterwards uſed, where the *external* only is meant; when we ſee the "word Κοινωνοὶ *(communicants)* here uſed with regard to idols; "where no *ſpiritual* part could be thought of. For the whole "argument ſuppoſes an *Idol* to be *nothing*; and the Chriſtians "concerned, to have no thought of receiving good or harm from

* 1 Gen. Ep. i. 6, 7.

" thoſe idols.—Now the ſame words being uſed with regard to " Chriſt and thoſe Dæmons [Κοινωνία and Κοινωνοὶ in one verſe; " and μετέχειν in another] it follows that *Communion* and *partaking* " are words of the ſame ſignification in both caſes *."

There is no ground, he ſays, for the diſtinction; ſince, in the place in queſtion Κοινωνία is uſed when no *ſpiritual part could be thought of*. What, *no ſpiritual part*, when the queſtion was of communicating with *Idols?* No, for St. Paul ſays, *an Idol is nothing*. This is true. But he ſays, at the ſame time, that theſe *Idols* were *Devils*; for that the *Gentiles ſacrificed to Devils, and that thoſe who eat of ſuch ſacrifices* had *communion with Devils*. Now, the DEVIL, in St. Paul's opinion, was *ſomething*. He ſays, indeed, *an Idol is nothing*. But does he mean a metaphyſical non-entity? Surely, not: for he immediately adds, that the *thing offered to them* was likewiſe *nothing*. He muſt uſe the negation therefore in a *moral* ſenſe, " That no *benefits* could accrue to the idolatrous worſhippers." But this is conſiſtent enough with the moral entity of the Devil: and while that remained, a *ſpiritual part might well be thought of*, when the Apoſtle ſpoke of *communicating with him*. The conſequence is, that the criticiſm of thoſe *learned men*, who diſtinguiſhed between Κοινωνία and μετέχειν ſtands good, for any thing this learned writer hath ſaid to the contrary. Conſider the words—*What ſay I then? That the Idol is any thing, or that which is offered to Idols any thing? But* I ſay *that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to Devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip* (or communion) *with Devils*. There ſeems to be no great difficulty in the Apoſtle's meaning; which amounts plainly to this—" a Gentile idol, as a protector and benefactor, is indeed *nothing*, their Idols being the celeſtial bodies, deceaſed Anceſtors, Legiſlators, or Kings: but the Author of Gentile Idolatry was the *Devil*; therefore, ſays he, though ye can poſſibly receive no benefit from Idols, ye may yet receive real damage from the

* P. 45, 46.

Devil,

Devil, the declared enemy of mankind." So that admitting with the learned writer, againſt all evidence of Antiquity, That the *Chriſtians concerned had not any thought of receiving good or harm from thoſe Idols*, yet (which is more to the purpoſe) we ſee St. Paul had.

For whatever notions the Gentiles, or the gentilized Jews of this time, had of *Dæmons*, every man who reads the New Teſtament with attention will be forced to confeſs, that the ſacred writers never uſe the word (and they uſe it often) but they always mean Satan and his Angels, the Powers of darkneſs, Reprobates from God and goodneſs. *The good and evil Dæmons of Gentiliſm* were indeed thoſe *Idols*, not of the *Altar*, but *of the brain*, which the ſacred writers eſteemed moral NOTHINGS: And yet, of that capital enemy of mankind, the Pagans ſeem to have received ſome obſcure tradition; but not unmixed with their own invented ſuperſtitions: Which preſerving ſome traces of reſemblance to the truth, and giving ſome conformity in the languages of Truth and Error, hath made ſome men draw ſtrange concluſions, as if the Founders of our holy Religion had taken the advantage of Pagan Superſtition to form a Syſtem of DEMONOLOGY agreeable to the preconceived fancies of their Converts.

We now come to the learned writer's REASONING on the paſſage. "If we obſerve the Apoſtle's deſign in this argument, it will ap-
"pear that he had not the leaſt occaſion to ſpeak here of the BE-
"NEFITS of Chriſt's death. His deſign was to incite the Corin-
"thians to *flee from Idolatry*, by ſhewing them what a crime it muſt
"be in a Chriſtian to do what was accounted honour to the Gods
"of the Heathens, by feaſting upon and *partaking* of their ſacri-
"fices. In order to do this it was not his purpoſe to ſay, *By eating*
"*bread and drinking wine in the Lord's Supper, you partake of all*
"*the* BENEFITS *of Chriſt's death*; and therefore you cannot eat of
"the Heathen ſacrifices. Neither do I ſee that this is any argu-
"ment at all to the point in view. But to ſay, *by eating bread*

" *and drinking wine, &c. you eat, drink, and partake of them, not* " *as at a common meal, but of bread and wine, called the body and* " *blood of Chriſt, in remembrance of and in honour to him, and ac-* " *knowledgment of his being your maſter, therefore you cannot, with-* " *out great abſurdity and guilt, pay the ſame ſort of honour to falſe* " *gods by feaſting with their votaries, upon their ſacrifices.* This, " I ſay, is an argument to his purpoſe, and proves all he aimed " at *." "

I. Firſt then, Admitting the learned Author's repreſentation of St. Paul's *deſign* to be fairly given " that it was only to incite the " Corinthians to flee from Idolatry ;" yet I do not ſee, according to the Author's own way of reaſoning, why it was not as much to the purpoſe of the Apoſtle to urge the laſt Supper's being a *communion of the body and blood in a feaſt upon the ſacrifice*, as to urge that the laſt Supper was not a *common meal, but celebrated in remembrance of and in honour to Chriſt.* Now, this laſt, he owns, is *an argument to the purpoſe.* Why then will he exclude the other ? He immediately ſubjoins the reaſon—*this* ALONE *proves all that he* [the Apoſtle] *aimed at.* But here, as I ſuſpect, lurks a fallacy.—Becauſe *this alone* proves the great abſurdity and guilt of theſe idolatrous Corinthians ; Therefore, they were not to be puſhed further. According to this reaſoning, Whenever a Miniſter of juſtice proſecutes a tranſgreſſor of the Laws, it would be to the purpoſe to prove him guilty of *theft* ; but to prove that theft, a *ſacrilege*, utterly impertinent. In a word, the learned writer argues as if he thought it much to the purpoſe to urge the *genus* of the action, which proves them, as the learned writer ſays, *guilty of a great crime and abſurdity*, but nothing at all to the purpoſe to inſiſt on the *ſpecies* of it, which proves them, as St. Paul ſays, *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, i. e. his murderers.

But it will be objected, That this illuſtration of the learned perſon's argument hath a glare of abſurdity which we do not ſee in

* P. 40, 41.

the

the argument itſelf. It is true, it hath ſo: For in the argument itſelf, the glare is taken off by the artful or accidental ſubſtitution of one term for another, *benefits* for *communion*; the *effects of the thing* for the *thing itſelf*. The learned perſon obſerves, that it was not to St. Paul's *purpoſe* (*when his deſign was to excite the Corinthians to flee from idolatry*) *to talk of the* BENEFITS *of Chriſt's death*. I do not know any one who thought it was: Not even St. Paul himſelf, if we may judge by his ſilence. For he hath not a ſyllable about BENEFITS. *Of the communion of the body and blood of Chriſt* he indeed ſpeaks largely: And this ſeemeth to the purpoſe: For if the celebration of the Lord's Supper brought them to ſo near a conjunction with Him, it muſt be an aggravation both of their guilt and their abſurdity to aſſiſt at the celebration of a ſimilar feaſt, in a religion at enmity with His. The *benefits*, ariſing from this near conjunction, is another conſideration; which doth not *directly*, but *obliquely only*, affect the point in queſtion.

II. But ſecondly, To excite the Corinthians to flee from Idolatry was not (as ſeems to be inſinuated) the *whole* of the Apoſtle's intention in this place. That matter is particularly inforced in the *eighth* Chapter: and though it be here taken up again in the *tenth*, it is only as it maketh part of a different ſubject, namely the VARIOUS PROFANATIONS OF THE LORD'S TABLE, of which the Corinthians had been guilty. And this is handled from the firſt verſe of the tenth Chapter to the thirty-fourth verſe of the eleventh; interrupted by a digreſſion, concerning *order in their aſſemblies* *: For they had neglected the rules he left with them concerning that point of Diſcipline. And his words, *Be ye followers of me, &c.* † ſuggeſting a reproof, it occaſioned the intermediate digreſſion: from whence, he returns to his main ſubject, *the profanations of the Lord's table*: which he had introduced by an obſervation of the ſame miſbehaviour in their Forefathers: Who, like them, when under the conduct of Moſes, had, in various ways, abuſed thoſe miraculous

* From ver. 2 to 16 of chap. xi.

† Chap. xi. ver. 1.

bleſſings

bleſſings of manna from Heaven, and water from the Rock; which St. Paul elegantly accommodates to this occaſion—*For they did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat; and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink; for they drank of that ſpiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Chriſt* *. Now the profanations in queſtion conſiſted in theſe two points, The frequenting the Pagan feaſts †; And the making no diſtinction between the Lord's Supper and their ordinary repaſt ‡. But the crime of profanation riſing in proportion to the dignity of the thing profaned, it was much to the Apoſtle's purpoſe, if not to ſpeak of the *benefits* of Chriſt's death, yet to ſhew the laſt Supper to be the *communion of the body and blood of Chriſt*.

The learned writer's other argument againſt the received interpretation, is as follows——"*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord* "*and the cup of Devils, Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table,* "*and the table of Devils*, is the concluſion of the Apoſtle's rea- "ſoning. And this cannot poſſibly ſignify 'Ye cannot be par- "takers of the BENEFITS of the Lord's table and of the BENEFITS "of the table of the heathen deities:' for no benefit could poſſibly "be ſuppoſed by him to accrue from theſe, even to the heathen "worſhippers themſelves.—Conſequently, when, at the beginning "of the argument, and to introduce only his concluſion, he aſks, "*The cup—is it not the communion*, &c. he muſt be ſuppoſed to "mean what alone was to his purpoſe, 'Is not our *joint-partaking* "of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper a *religious* partaking of "what are *memorials* of Chriſt's body and blood?'—the premiſſes "therefore cannot be ſuppoſed to contain in them what has no re- "lation to the concluſion drawn from them. In the *concluſion of* "*partaking of the table of Devils* it muſt be allowed that nothing "is ſaid about *benefits*: in the *premiſſes* therefore, *of the communion* "*of the body and blood*, which lead to this, it was not the Apoſtle's "deſign to ſpeak of *benefits*; but only of the *ſignificancy* of that

* Chap. x. 3, 4. † Chap. x. ‡ Chap. xi. from ver. 17.

"rite,

" rite, as an *act of religious honour* paid by Chriſtians to their " Maſter *."

Now, not to repeat what hath been already obſerved of the Fallacy, which runs through the learned perſon's whole argument, by ſubſtituting BENEFITS for COMMUNION; which, however, is of much importance; for, though the partakers of the Pagan feaſts could receive no *benefits* from Devils, yet they might be in *communion* with them: Not, I ſay, to repeat what hath been already urged, It will be ſufficient to obſerve againſt the learned perſon's reaſoning, that it is founded on a ſuppoſition, that St. Paul could not argue *ad hominem*, as the logicians ſpeak: For if He could *ſo* argue, the obſervation hath no force. It is agreed, that *St. Paul believed no benefits could accrue to the heathen worſhippers from their Idols*. But, if thoſe worſhippers themſelves believed they *could*, what ſhould hinder a good reaſoner, like St. Paul, from telling theſe paganized Chriſtians, that the benefits from Idol-feaſts, and the benefits from the Lord's table, were incongruous and inconſiſtent; what, I ſay, but the ſuppoſed illogical liberty of arguing *ad hominem?* That theſe *early Chriſtians*, who went knowingly to the idol-feaſts, were as likely to expect benefit from them, as the *early Jews*, who joined idolatrous worſhip to that of the God of Iſrael, is what, I think, no man can deny. Againſt ſuch Chriſtians, St. Paul might reaſon hypothetically; and, for argument's ſake, grant the benefits of the Idol-feaſts to be real, like thoſe of the Lord's table. And this, I ſuppoſe, is the common practice of all mankind in their reaſoning on the like occaſion.

The learned writer then proceeds to the confutation of thoſe who hold the laſt Supper to be an *euchariſtical Sacrifice, commemorative* of that upon the Croſs. But though with this, neither I, nor, as I apprehend, the Church of England, are at all concerned, yet as the vindication of the *Lord's Supper* in this point is againſt a common Adverſary, I am proud to join with the learned writer to con-

* P. 43, 44.

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fute this ſtrange idea of an *Euchariſtical commemorative Sacrifice*, which the pious and truly reſpectable Mr. Robert Nelſon hath endeavoured to free from the apparent abſurdity *of one ſacrifice's being commemorative of another*, by this Argument: "That its "being commemorative no more hindered it from being a proper "ſacrifice than the typical and figurative ſacrifices of the old law "hindered them from being proper ſacrifices. For as to be a type "(ſaith this learned man) doth not deſtroy the nature and notion "of a legal ſacrifice, ſo, to be REPRESENTATIVE and commemo-"rative doth not deſtroy the nature of an evangelical ſacrifice *." This is well put; but will by no means bear the teſt. In order to detect the fallacy of this ingenious reaſoning, I muſt beg leave to have recourſe to the principles laid down in *The Divine Legation* †.

It is allowed then, that the *paſchal Lamb*, and the *Lord's Supper*, are both *Signs with a moral import*; and, conſequently, are both TYPES. How comes it then to paſs (might Mr. Nelſon aſk) that the *paſchal Lamb* will admit the nature of a *ſacrifice*, and yet the Lord's Supper will not? For this plain reaſon. The relation which the *paſchal Lamb* bore to the *Archetype* on the Croſs was, at the time of the inſtitution, for the wiſe ends of Providence, kept a ſecret from the followers of the Law. Its *moral import* therefore (and as a TYPE it muſt have a *moral import*) could be only a *Sacrifice*. The caſe is widely different in the inſtitution of the *Lord's Supper*. It is declared, by the Inſtitutor himſelf, to be a *commemoration* of his death and ſufferings. Here, the relation between the *type* and *archetype* is declared to all: conſequently, its *moral import* is a *commemorative feaſt on a ſacrifice*; but the idea of ſuch a feaſt neceſſarily EXCLUDES a *ſacrifice*; for the *Thing done*, and the *commemoration of the thing done*, can never be an action of the ſame kind. However, admitting it could be ſo; yet this type having its *moral import* in a *commemoration*, can never acquire another, of

* Life of Biſhop Bull, p. 483.

† Book IV. Sect. 4.

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a *ſacrifice*: which, in *metaphyſical* conception, would be as monſtrous as a *double body*, in *natural*. But, to ſhew, in one word, a difference, where the learned perſon thinks there is none—Take away the nature of a *ſacrifice* from the Type of the *paſchal Lamb*, and you leave it *no moral import*: that is, you deprive it of its nature of a *Type*. But take away the idea of a *ſacrifice* from the *Lord's Supper*, and it ſtill remains a *Type*; having ſtill a *moral import*, by being a *commemoration* of the death and ſufferings of our Lord.

Mr. Nelſon himſelf ſeemed to have ſome confuſed ſuſpicion of the weakneſs of his inference from the *typical Sacrifices of the old Law*; and therefore, ſeeing but ſmall connexion between a *Sacrifice* and a *Commemoration* (the latter of which conveys the idea, Scripture gives us of the *Lord's Supper*) he adds the word, REPRESENTATION; which is indeed conſiſtent enough with a Sacrifice: for though, of a *commemorative ſacrifice*, we have no inſtance in practice, and can ſee no propriety in idea; yet a *repreſentative ſacrifice* is very good ſenſe, and may be well ſupported in the command to *Abraham* to offer up his Son. But then, the Hiſtory of the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper is not only abſolutely ſilent, concerning this *repreſentation*, but excludes the idea of it by making it a commemoration. In concluſion, however, let us obſerve, That a *commemorative ſacrifice*, in the ſenſe Mr. Nelſon contends for, is one thing; and *ſacrifices at a commemorative feaſt*, of which Antiquity has many examples, is quite another.

But though this matter fell ſo fairly in my way, and that I have only followed the example which the learned Writer ſet me, yet it will be of more uſe to return to the *Plain Account*, and conſider the Author's method of eſtabliſhing his own Hypotheſis. It hath been hitherto eſteemed an eſſential canon of true criticiſm, that, in order to form a right judgment of the ſpecific nature of any Ordinance or Inſtitution of Antient times, we ſhould have a ſpecial regard to the notions, manners, and cuſtoms of thoſe times; ſince it can hardly be ſuppoſed, that any ſolemn or public Rite of reli-

gion would be inſtituted without ſome reference to the then prevailing Opinions. But the learned Writer of the PLAIN ACCOUNT, as if the very title of his book would have been falſified by ſuch an inquiry, hath attempted to explain *the nature and end of the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper* with as little regard to the genius and manners of Antiquity, as an Engliſh Lawyer would take of them, in his reading on a modern act of Parliament.

But the ill effects of ſuch a partial View cannot be better underſtood than by reflecting, that the very ſame method of interpretation, which hath led the learned Writer into one extreme, concerning *the* NATURE OF THE THING, hath led the Papiſts into the direct oppoſite, concerning the MEANING OF THE WORDS. The celebrated BOSSUET, the moſt artful, as well as moſt eloquent, Advocate of the papal Cauſe, reſts all the ſtrength of the LITERAL interpretation of the words, *This is my body—This is my blood*—on this very PRINCIPLE, That the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper ſtands ſingle and alone; detached from all preceding diſcourſe; and unrelated to any contemporary Rite. His words are theſe—

"Zuinglius ſaid in plain terms, that there was no miracle, nor "any thing incomprehenſible in the Euchariſt: that the bread "broken was a repreſentation of the body offered; and the wine "poured out, of the blood which was ſhed: that Jeſus Chriſt, "when he inſtituted theſe ſacred ſymbols, gave them the Names "of the things ſignified: however, that theſe were not naked "Signs, nor a ſimple Repreſentation; for that the remembrance "and belief of the body offered and the blood ſhed for us nou-"riſhed and ſuſtained our ſouls; and further, that the Holy Spirit "ſealed the remiſſion of ſins, in our hearts. This, he ſaid, was "the whole of the Myſtery. Now it muſt be owned, that NEI-"THER HUMAN REASON NOR COMMON SENSE SUFFERED THE LEAST "FORCE IN THIS EXPLANATION. The words of Scripture only "made all the difficulty. And yet, when one party urged—"*This is my body*; The other had their anſwer ready—*I am the* "*vine—I am the door—that rock was Chriſt*——It is true, that theſe "inſtances

" inſtances came not up to the point. When Jeſus Chriſt ſaid—
" *This is my body—This is my blood*—he was neither propounding a
" Parable, nor explaining an Allegory. The *Words*, WHICH ARE
" DETACHED AND SEPARATE FROM ALL OTHER DISCOURSE, carry
" their whole meaning in themſelves. The buſineſs in hand was
" the inſtitution of a *new Rite*, which required the uſe of SIMPLE
" TERMS: And that place in Scripture is yet to be diſcovered,
" where the Sign hath the name of the Thing ſignified given to it
" at the moment of the inſtitution of the Rite, and WITHOUT ANY
" LEADING PREPARATION *." On the foundation of this reaſoning it is that the celebrated Prelate obſerves, in another place,
" That Luther continued invincibly ſtruck with the force and ſim-
" plicity of the words—*This is my body—This is my blood.*—The
" Church had believed, without difficulty, that Jeſus Chriſt, in
" order to conſummate his ſacrifice, and fulfil the ancient Figures,
" hath given us to eat the real Subſtance of his fleſh, offered up for
" us. She had the ſame idea of the blood ſhed for our iniquities.
" Accuſtomed, from her birth, to myſteries incomprehenſible, and
" to the ineffable favours of divine love, thoſe impenetrable won-

* Zuingle diſoit poſitivement, qu'il n'y avoit point de miracle dans l'Euchariſtie, ni rien d'incomprehenſible; que le pain rompu nous repréſentoit le corps immolé, et le vin, la ſang répandu; que Jeſus Chriſt en inſtituant ces ſignes ſacrés leur avoit donné le nom de la choſe; que ce n'étoit pourtant pas un ſimple ſpectacle, ni des ſignes tout à fait nûs; que la mémoire et la foi du corps immolé et du ſang répandu ſoutenoit notre ame; que cependant le Saint-Eſprit ſcelloit dans les cœurs la remiſſion des pechés; et que c'étoit la tout le myſtere. La raiſon et le ſens humain n'avoient rien à ſuffrir dans cette explication. L'Ecriture faiſoit de la peine; mais quand les uns oppoſoient, *Ceci eſt mon corps*, les autres repondoient, *Je ſuis la vigne, je ſuis la porte, le pierre étoit Chriſt.* Il eſt vrai que ces exemples n'etoient pas ſemblables. Ce n'étoit ni en propoſant une parabole, ni en expliquant une allegorie, que Jeſus Chriſt avoit dit, *Ceci eſt mon corps, ceci eſt mon ſang.* CES PAROLES DETACHEES DE TOUT AUTRE DISCOURS portoient tout leur ſens en elles-mêmes. Il s'agiſſoit d'une nouvelle inſtitution qui devoit être faite en TERMES SIMPLES, et on n'avoit encore trouvé aucun lieu de l'Ecriture, où un ſigne d'inſtitution reçût le nom de la choſe, au moment qu'on l'inſtituoit, et SANS AUCUNE PREPARATION PRECEDENTE. Hiſtoire des Variations, Tom. I. p. 73, 74. Ed. Par. 1730, 8vo.

" ders contained in the literal ſenſe did not ſhock her Faith: and " Luther never could perſuade himſelf, that Jeſus Chriſt either " purpoſely obſcured the inſtitution of his Sacrament; or that " words ſo ſimple were capable of conveying ſo VIOLENT A FI- " GURE *."

Thus, we find, the learned Writer of the *Plain Account*, and M. Boſſuet, both lay the foundation of their different reaſonings in one COMMON PRINCIPLE, " That the inſtitution of the Lord's Supper was detached from all other diſcourſe, unrelated to any other Rite, and unconcerned with any foregoing preparation." Now, even though the falſehood of this principle had not been fully evinced, as, in truth, it has, where I ſhew the relation it bears to the Paſchal Supper, and how eaſily and naturally that Supper introduced this Chriſtian Inſtitution; Yet the extremes, into which it hath carried theſe two learned Writers, of a MERE COMMEMORATION on the one hand, and a REAL PRESENCE on the other, would raiſe a ſuſpicion that this *common principle* was neither founded in reaſon, nor ſupported by fact.

I have ſaid enough of the *commemoration:* And now turn to the REAL PRESENCE of the Catholic Biſhop.

He reſts it, we ſee, upon the force of the WORDS; which, in his opinion, can admit of no *figurative* ſenſe, without doing extreme violence to human language and expreſſion. Indeed, as far as regards *the hardneſs* of the figure, I believe, moſt Proteſtant Doctors have been ready enough to join with him.

* Luther demeura frappé invinciblement de la force et de la ſimplicité de ces paroles: *Ceci eſt mon corps, Ceci eſt mon ſang*;—L'Egliſe avoit cru ſans peine, que pour conſommer ſon ſacrifice et les figures anciennes Jeſus-Chriſt nous avoit donné à manger la propre ſubſtance de ſa chair immolée pour nous. Elle avoit la même penſée du ſang répandu pour nos pechés. Accoutumée dès ſon origine à des myſteres incomprehenſibles et à des marques ineffables de l'amour divin, les merveilles impénetrables que renfermoit le ſens literal ne l'avoient point rebutée; et Luther ne pût jamais ſe perſuader, ni que Jeſus-Chriſt eût voulu obſcurcir exprès l'inſtitution de ſon ſacrament, ni que des paroles ſi ſimples fuſſent ſuſceptibles des FIGURES SI VIOLENTES—Id. ib. p. 43.

But

But this difficulty, great as it is, I preſume, the preceding account of the *ſpecific* nature of the Lord's Supper will entirely remove. By that account it appears, that the words of the inſtitution are FIGURATIVE; and ſo far from ſuffering any violent converſion, that the ſenſe of *bread* and *wine* fall into the figure of *body* and *blood*, naturally and eaſily; Nay, what is above all, NECESSARILY.

We have ſhewn the laſt Supper to be of the nature of the *feaſts upon ſacrifice:* in which feaſts, the very *body* ſacrificed was eaten. Now as this Rite was to be inſtituted, and firſt celebrated, by the very perſon himſelf who was offered up for our Redemption, the Inſtitution muſt needs precede the Sacrifice. Of neceſſity therefore, ſome *ſymbolic elements* muſt be given, to be received by the Participants, inſtead of the very body and blood. But, as the fleſh of the animal ſacrificed was the meat eaten in the *feaſt after the ſacrifice*, the ſymbolic elements of BREAD AND WINE are naturally, properly, and elegantly called, his BODY AND BLOOD.

Again, if it were the purpoſe of divine Wiſdom to give this *ſpecific* nature to the laſt Supper, we muſt needs conclude that Jeſus would *intimate* ſuch its nature to the firſt Participants.

But if (as, in fact, was the caſe) the ſame Wiſdom thought proper (in conformity to ancient religious Cuſtom) to intimate this only by the *occaſion*, and through the *words* of the inſtitution, then the figurative expreſſions of BODY AND BLOOD became NECESSARY: Theſe only, being fully declarative of the nature of the Rite. And as *a feaſt upon ſacrifice* made the uſe of the terms *body and blood* to be neceſſary, ſo, on the other ſide, the terms *body and blood* ſhew this rite to have been *a feaſt upon ſacrifice.*

On the whole, We have, indeed, no conception how divine Wiſdom could contrive a more natural, proper, and elegant way of acquainting his diſciples, that the Rite, now inſtituted, was of the nature of *a feaſt upon ſacrifice*, than by terming the elements of BREAD AND WINE communicated, his BODY AND BLOOD.

Thus

Thus doth the eſtabliſhment of the ſpecific nature of this Rite ſerve to remove a difficulty which hath long embarraſſed all the ſeveral Oppoſers of the doctrine of TRANSUBSTANTIATION; by ſhewing that the FIGURATIVE WORDS of the inſtitution are eaſy, natural, elegant, and neceſſary.

It likewiſe very well accounts for another difficulty, which the Advocates for a *real preſence* throw in the way of common ſenſe. They ſay, "If the words of the inſtitution were only metaphorical, and eſpecially, if the FIGURE was expreſſive of no more than a *death commemorated*, they might, and probably would, have been changed in the narratives, five times repeated, by the four Evangeliſts and St. Paul, in diſtinct Hiſtories, and on different occaſions: for that, no reaſon can be given of the unvaried uſe of the ſame words but becauſe they are to be underſtood LITERALLY: and then, as they were declarative of one of the greateſt myſteries in Religion, there was a neceſſity to record the *very terms* employed, whenever the hiſtory of the inſtitution was related."

To this we reply, that indeed, were the words uſed FIGURATIVELY, and the *figure* only expreſſive of a *death commemorated*, as the learned Author of the PLAIN ACCOUNT ſuppoſes, it is reaſonable to think, the terms would have been varied in one or other of the ſacred Writers: Becauſe, in ſuch a caſe, it is natural to believe, that Writers of ſo different genius and acquirements would not all have the ſame ſentiment concerning the uſe of theſe preciſe *terms*; ſo as to eſteem them preferable to any other: as, in fact, on this ſuppoſition, they would not be. But we can by no means allow the conſequence, That therefore they are to be underſtood LITERALLY: ſince, if we admit the Inſtitution to be of the nature of *a feaſt upon ſacrifice*, as we have proved it is, there will be the ſame neceſſity for the unvaried uſe of the terms, although they are *figurative*, as there would be, although they were *literal*. For theſe preciſe terms are as neceſſary to denote *a feaſt upon ſacrifice*, the Rite we contend for, as to denote a *Sacrifice*, the enormous idea of the Church of Rome.

Here

Here too let me obſerve, both againſt our Catholic and Proteſtant Writer, that on this idea, of *a feaſt upon Sacrifice* (which no one, I think, can doubt but the primitive Chriſtians had of the Lord's Supper) it would naturally follow, that Antiquity ſhould always ſpeak of this Rite in the ſtrongeſt terms of veneration; as that, through which, the higheſt benefits of our Religion are conveyed. And this they might do, without much EXAGGERATION on the one hand; or any conception of a REAL PRESENCE on the other.

The learned Catholic Biſhop ſaith true, that Proteſtants have but lamely juſtified the FIGURE of, *This is my body*, &c. by thoſe other of, *I am the vine—I am the door*. And his reaſon is ſolid. *Jeſus*, ſaith he, *in the inſtitution of this Rite, was neither propounding a Parable, nor explaining an Allegory*. But when he would have us infer from hence, that there could be no other occaſion for *ſuch a figure*, he impoſes his uſual art upon us. He would not ſpeak out. He knew there were other occaſions; ſuch as *The declaring the* NATURE *of a Rite*; which was the caſe in queſtion. But he would cut off our way to this, by ſuppoſing it to be allowed on all hands, That *the words are detached and ſeparate from all other diſcourſe—that there is no leading Preparation*. Now this, we have ſhewn to be an abſolute falſehood: The *leading preparation* was a plain one: It was the PASCHAL SUPPER. The *preceding diſcourſe* was an affecting one: It was the mention of his approaching DEATH AND SUFFERINGS. Therefore, the words of the Inſtitution do not, as M. Boſſuet pretends, *carry their whole meaning within themſelves*; but refer to things preceding and exterior. He trifles with us, when he challenges us to find a place in Scripture *where the* ſign *hath the name of the* thing ſignified, *given to it at the moment of the inſtitution of the Rite, and* WITHOUT ANY LEADING PREPARATION. We have ſhewn there was a *leading Preparation*. And that circumſtance proved, the Biſhop, I ſuppoſe, would retract his challenge.

In the mean time, his triumphant concluſion loſes much of its Luſtre.—" That, in a word (ſays he) which I pretend to evince, " is,

" is, the embarras into which the words, *This is my body*, throws " all the Proteſtant party. For either we muſt confound all the " Myſteries of Religion, or elſe give a reaſon why Jeſus hath not " uſed theſe *forcible terms* in any of his Inſtitutions but that of " the *laſt Supper*. If his *body and blood* are equally preſent, and " as really received by the Faithful elſewhere, in the celebration of " every other act of faith, there was no reaſon for chuſing theſe " STRONG TERMS for the inſtitution of the *Euchariſt*, rather than " for *Baptiſm*; and eternal Wiſdom would, in this caſe, have ex- " preſſed itſelf at random. This point I foretell ſhall be the eter- " nal and inevitable confuſion of the Defenders of the *figurative* " *ſenſe* *."

We ſee, this mighty difficulty, which is eternally to embarras the Defenders of the figurative ſenſe, is confeſſed to be at an end, on the diſcovery of one good reaſon, Why ſuch *forcible terms* are employed in the inſtitution of the *laſt Supper*, and not in *Baptiſm*, or in the other rites of our Religion. To ſend it a going therefore, we need but obſerve, That the laſt Supper, as a *feaſt upon ſacrifice*, referred to the *Sacrifice on the Croſs*, in which, the *body and blood* of Chriſt were offered for our redemption. Now, to deſign and indicate *ſuch* a feaſt by the *words* of the inſtitution, *the forcible terms* in queſtion were naturally, properly, nay *neceſſarily*, employed. And the reaſoning which evinces this, evinces likewiſe that they were uſed in a *figurative ſenſe*. On the contrary, the initiatory Rite of *Baptiſm* referred to another Baptiſm already in uſe; in both of which the matter adminiſtered being *water*, an element at hand, it was rightly called, in the inſtitution of the Chriſtian Baptiſm, by its proper name. But *fleſh and blood* being the things

* Car ou il faut embrouiller tous les Myſteres, ou il faut pouvoir rendre une raiſon pourquoi Jeſus Chriſt n'a parlé avec cette force que dans la cene. Si ſon corps et ſon ſang ſont auſſi préſens et auſſi reellement reçus par tout ailleurs, il n'y avoit aucune raiſon de choiſir ces FORTES PAROLES pour *l'Euchariſtie* plutot que pour le *Baténe*, et la ſageſſe eternelle auroit parlé en l'air. Cet endroit ſera l'éternelle et inevitable confuſion des Defenſeurs du ſens figuré. Hiſtoire des Var. Tom i. p. 477, 478.

adminiſtered

adminiſtered in the ancient *feaſts upon Sacrifice*, and they not being at hand at the inſtitution of the laſt Supper, the elements ſubſtituted in their place were, in an elegant converſion, called by the *improper*, and very *neceſſary* names of *body and blood*.

To illuſtrate this matter a little further.—It may be proper to obſerve, that another Rite, the Rite of *impoſition of hands*, for procuring the deſcent of the Holy Spirit, is called the BAPTISM OF FIRE: in which, both the terms are *figurative*; as, in the *Baptiſm of Water*, both are *literal*. And why this difference? Becauſe the Agent or inſtrument, employed in the latter caſe, being *ſpiritual*, there was need of figurative names, taken from material things, to aid the groſſneſs of our conception concerning his manner of operation: But *material* things at hand, as in the former caſe, needed no ſuch converſion of terms. So that all the myſtery in this affair, I mean ſo far forth as concerns the *terms* by which a religious Rite is inſtituted, is only this, That when the things are of a ſpiritual nature, as the gifts of the Spirit; or of a material nature, not yet in *eſſe* (as the fleſh of a ſacrifice not yet offered, and therefore needing another body to be ſubſtituted in its place) There a neceſſity of employing *figurative* terms becomes apparent. But when the thing is a material ſubſtance, at hand, and actually employed, as water in Baptiſm, it would rather confound than aid our conceptions, to uſe improper, that is, figurative terms.

Thus we ſee, how, by interpreting Scripture on the common rules employed in the ſtudy of other ancient Writings, that is to ſay, having a ſpecial regard to the manners, cuſtoms, and opinions of thoſe Times, the true nature and genius of the laſt Supper is diſcovered; and the ſacred inſtitution freed from the injuries to which theſe two extremes have long rendered it obnoxious.

But now I ſuppoſe the followers of both Syſtems will be ready to object, what the unbeliever will not be backward to applaud; "That it ſeems hard to imagine, that one of the moſt eſſential Rites of an univerſal Religion, deſigned for all times and places, ſhould ſtand in need of the cuſtoms and opinions of a particular age

and country to explain its nature and genius. For the conſequenc of this would ſeem to be, the rendering its nature precarious, and in courſe of time, obſcure and untelligible."

To which we reply, That many good ends may be diſcovered in this ordinance; and, therefore, many more may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, which we cannot diſcover.

1. A Religion, however univerſal, when promulged in the manner, and propagated by the inſtruments, which God thought fit to employ when he gave us the Religion of his Son, muſt needs have many dependencies on the Times which ſaw its riſe and progreſs.

2. As the *Chriſtian* Religion roſe upon the foundation of the Jewiſh, and became the final completion of God's religious diſpenſations to Mankind, it was very natural for ſeveral of its parts to bear a reference to that on which it was erected; it was very commodious that it ſhould do ſo, both to perpetuate its *relation*, and to manifeſt its *completion*. So that, on this account, ſuch a Religion, however univerſal, could not ſtand alone, or be independent of every thing exterior.

3. This reference to the cuſtoms and opinions of the times, was further uſeful, by impreſſing on the Religion ſo circumſtanced, one INDELIBLE MARK of Truth, for the uſe of all ages. Had that Religion, pretending to have ariſen in a remote age, brought down with it no tincture of the times, which ſaw its birth and increaſe, we might have reaſon to ſuſpect or diſbelieve the traditional accounts which informed us of its high antiquity.

But when we find upon it ſo ſtrong a mark of ancientry; and impreſſed in a manner ſo *natural* as to cauſe no ſuſpicion; and in a manner ſo *ſure* as to afford no handle for Impoſture; we may be confident, that it is of the times it pretends to be. Each Age hath its character of manners, juſt as it hath its character of ſtyle and writing; and as the Critics pronounce on the date of a manuſcript from the turn of the phraſe, and the formation of the letters, ſo Divines ſettle the æra of a Religion by the relation it bears to contemporary cuſtoms and practices. But

were

were the MANUSCRIPT compoſed in an *univerſal Character*, and did the RELIGION contain *only the bare principles* of natural Law, delivered in the abſtract, they would both want one neceſſary mark to aſcertain their reſpective ages.

4. Again, This *reſtrained peculiarity* objected to, on the point in queſtion, ſerves a ſtill further, and greater end. It is contrived to be declarative of the TRUE NATURE of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt.—That his death on the Croſs was a SACRIFICE for the ſins of the world, had been always held part of the Catholic Faith; founded on the expreſs declarations of Scripture. But thoſe Sects, who oppoſe the doctrine of a real REDEMPTION, have always ſtriven to evade the notion of a real *ſacrifice*; as that on which the doctrine of *Redemption* is founded; upon pretence, that the ſcripture-expreſſions of Chriſt's *ſacrifice* were only figurative and alluſory. Now if the *laſt Supper*, the rite which commemorates the death of Chriſt, be of the nature of the *feaſts upon ſacrifice*, it is ſelf-evident that the death itſelf was a REAL *Sacrifice*, and not merely called ſo by converſion of terms, or accommodation of ideas.

5. As it was contrived to declare the real nature of Chriſt's death, ſo it likewiſe ſerved this further purpoſe, a purpoſe of great importance, to declare the ABOLITION OF SACRIFICES IN REVEALED RELIGION. For if in the moſt ſolemn act of Worſhip, where a *Sacrifice* always took place, a *commemoration only of a Sacrifice* is celebrated, it is plain, all ſacrificial rites are excluded from that Religion: And (if that Religion be the completion of God's religious diſpenſations) conſequently, *aboliſhed*. The Sacrifice on the Croſs does, indeed, in its nature, aboliſh all thoſe Jewiſh Sacrifices, which evidently prefigured it; but to be aſſured of the abolition of ſacrifice in general, ſome more expreſs declaration, like what we find in this ſignificant Rite, ſeemed to be expedient.

6. But laſtly, The very notion of an UNIVERSAL RELIGION, unrelated to, and unconnected with, the times in which it was firſt divulged, is, in truth, repugnant to common ſenſe and the nature of things. This Religion, as the Objectors tell us, is de-

ſigned for all times and places. Some good method therefore of conveying it to poſterity, and of perpetuating the conveyance, muſt be thought of and employed. There are but two ways of doing it, by one or other of theſe means of human communication, ORAL TRADITION or WRITING. *Tradition* hath been ever found inſufficient for the purpoſes of Truth and Religion; and incapable of ſecuring either their purity or exiſtence. The only method which remains, is by *Scripture:* and this being to be compoſed in the living language of the age in which the Revelation was given, ſome parts of it muſt, in courſe of time, grow obſcure: as depending on the circumſtances of the uſers, whoſe cuſtoms and manners give the ſhape and colouring to all their diſcourſe. So that, to underſtand the exact ſenſe of the terms, and the full energy of the phraſe, the cuſtoms and manners of the times, which faſhioned the words and ornamented the idiom of the language, muſt of neceſſity be diligently ſtudied, if we would arrive at any competent ſkill in the interpretation of ſuch writings. Now this circumſtance, which produced the objection, reſulting from the very nature of things, we ſee how little force it hath againſt the truth of an *univerſal Religion*.

The concluſion from the whole is this, That we ſhould, with all ſubmiſſion, take God's Laws, as he, in his wiſdom, hath been pleaſed to give them; and as the order and condition of things, by him eſtabliſhed, permits us to receive them.

Having now ſo largely enquired into the SPECIFIC NATURE of this holy Rite; we are enabled, in very few words, to ſhew (which we propoſed, as the principal end of the Enquiry) what thoſe benefits are which we receive at the *Lord's Table*; and what the obligations are, which we lye under, of frequenting it.

Chriſt, by the SACRIFICE of himſelf upon the croſs, purchaſed the *Redemption* of Mankind: And this Rite being by its nature commemorative thereof, as it is *a feaſt upon Sacrifice*; each partaker receives, of conſequence, the ſeal of pardon, and conſequently, of reſtoration to his loſt Inheritance.

But

But as this operates only on the terms of *repentance, and newneſs of life*, the gift would be defeated, by being beſtowed on a condition which our perverſe Nature ſo much oppoſes, was not this Nature ſoftened and ſubdued by the power of GRACE; that promiſed bleſſing, peculiar to the Goſpel-Diſpenſation. Now as the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT conſtitutes the moſt intimate COMMUNION OF GOD WITH MAN, What *time* can we conceive ſo highly ſanctified for the reception of it, as that in which we renew our federal union with our Lord and Maſter, in his laſt Supper; called by St. Paul, the *communion of his body and blood*.

This leads us to what only remains to be conſidered, THE OBLIGATION TO FREQUENT COMMUNION: and this obligation will be beſt underſtood, by conſidering the reaſons of an Inſtitution which procures us ſo high a prerogative as *an union with the God of our Salvation*.

We are, by the Sacrament of BAPTISM, united, as members to the MYSTICAL *Body of Chriſt*, his CHURCH. And ſince Church-memberſhip is not only an outward but a public, rather than a private thing, One ſingle adminiſtration of ſuch Rite is ſufficient to make that union laſting.

But, by the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, we are united, as members, to the SPIRITUAL *Body of Chriſt*, his GRACE. This is an inward union, and a particular: and laſts no longer than the right diſpoſition of heart and affections ſhall continue: and this, by reaſon of our corrupt nature, and perpetual commerce with an evil world, being always impairing, it has always occaſion to be ſtrengthened and renewed. This, as we ſaid, is the office of the *Holy Spirit*; whoſe gracious influence more peculiarly ſanctifies that holy ſeaſon. Hence the uſe and neceſſity of FREQUENT COMMUNION; intimated in the words of the inſtitution, *Do this in remembrance of me*: Which imply, as we have ſhewn, more than *preſerving the memory of a dead benefactor*; they imply, the *continuing to receive his benefaction*; which is conveyed to us, from time to time, and *as often as we ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come*. So true

is

is the account given of this ſacred Rite in the ARTICLES of our Church, That *it is not only the badge or* TOKEN *of a Chriſtian man's profeſſion, but rather a certain and ſure witneſs and effectual ſign of Grace, and God's good-will towards us*; by which he doth *work inviſibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but alſo* STRENGTHEN *and confirm our faith in him* *.

All this duly conſidered, we ſhall, I hope, be enabled to regain a proper veneration for this *holy Myſtery*; which hath of late been ſo fatally impaired, as by other liberties, ſo principally by the proſtitution of it to CIVIL PURPOSES; Not a proſtitution by the LEGISLATURE; but by thoſe licentious men, who, contenting themſelves with the obſervance of the form and *letter*, neglect the end and *ſpirit of the* LAW.

* Art. xxv.

A CHARGE

A CHARGE

TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER, 1761.

A CHARGE.

My Reverend Brethren,

IN the ſimplicity of the good old times, when the Clergy *firſt* met their Bishop, who might be then ſaid, in every ſenſe, to do the honours of the Aſſembly, He held it incumbent on him, to inform them by what means this relation had ſprung up between them; that it was neither clerical ambition on his part, nor court intrigues on the part of his Patrons, which drew him from his beloved obſcurity; but a mere ſenſe of the Church's want of good Governors, that had induced the State to force out his reluctant merit into ſo eminent but hazardous a Station.

This was an ancient cuſtom, and a good. The acquaintance between the Biſhop and his Clergy could not commence more happily than in the information he gave them of the confeſſed importance of his Character.

In courſe of time, this friendly confidence was found to have its inconvenience, which, by degrees, brought on the diſuſe; and this without much violence on the communicative diſpoſition of the Dioceſan: For now the Clergy were become little curious to know

how, or from whence, their Biſhop had dropt down amongſt them; and he as little diſpoſed to tell them a ridiculous or unedifying ſtory. It was enough that they met; and that their meeting was to their mutual content.

This it could not fail to be, as it was deviſed for theſe two good purpoſes:

Firſt, That the Biſhop might from time to time remind his Clergy, thus aſſembled, of their obligations to the faithful diſcharge of the *paſtoral care.*

And ſecondly, That he might receive, in return, their beſt advices for the good government of his Dioceſe.

But this latter purpoſe, whether through the modeſty of the Clergy, or the ſufficiency of their Dioceſan, is now forgotten. A neglect much to be lamented, as the two duties have a cloſe connexion with one another: yea neceſſary to ſupport and maintain that harmony which ſhould always ſubſiſt between the Biſhop and his Clergy, while every return of this triennial meeting becomes a mutual interchange of good offices.

Believe me then, my Reverend Brethren, that I ſhall always eſteem your counſel and advice as the moſt valuable mark of your affection and attachment to me.

But inveterate Cuſtom hath ſo long prevailed, that theſe Meetings are now entirely taken up with the firſt part only of their deſtined purpoſe—the Dioceſan's exhortation to the faithful diſcharge of the *Paſtoral care.* And though ſometimes his diſcourſe may have deviated, and not a little, from the occaſion, yet the title, common to them all, ſtill keeps up the remembrance of the thing: the name, CHARGE, implying that they had once a common ſubject, and that ſubject the PASTORAL CARE. For the name is not taken from the deciſive harangues bearing the ſame title, in civil Judicatories, where the preſiding Magiſtrate explains the Law to an uninſtructed Audience, or inforces it to the inferior Miniſters of Juſtice. Nor yet from a Command or *Charge* which a Lord and Maſter

Maſter impoſeth on his Servants; but from that tender and pathetic exhortation of St. PAUL, in his *Paſtoral Letter* to the Theſſalonians——" You know (ſays he) how we exhorted and com-
" forted, and CHARGED every one of you, *as a Father doth his*
" *children*, that you walk worthy of God, who hath called you
" to his kingdom and glory *." Thus are names ſometimes of uſe to call back deviating or depraved Inſtitutions to their original rectitude.

A CHARGE from this place, therefore, which did not firſt and principally exhort to the faithful performance of this capital duty, would want much of its eſſential integrity.—Literary acquirements, a zeal for the preſent Government, Perſonal morals, and ſoundneſs in the orthodox Faith, may have their turns on this occaſion; but as *means* only to this capital *End*.

Let me never forget, therefore, firſt of all to exhort you, with all the warmth and earneſtneſs becoming your Paſtor and Overſeer, to pay a ſtrict attention to this principal and characteriſtic duty.

But when I have done this, I reckon, I have done all that is neceſſary on ſo beaten a ſubject, and to ſo well-inſtructed an Audience. If any thing further be wanting, it will be only to caution you, in the diſcharge of it, againſt thoſe two extremes of temper, *Lukewarmneſs* and *Fanatic zeal*: This accompanied with a moroſe ſeverity of Manners, which makes even the Goſpel-morals unamiable; That, with diſſipation and love of pleaſure, which gives ſcandal to the ſounder part of your Flock, and a bad example to the unſound.

The *Paſtoral care*, therefore, we will ſuppoſe to be ever in our view, and the pleaſing Object of all our labours. What the younger Part of you may haply want, is only to be aſſiſted in the beſt means to this end. You may occaſionally need to have it explained

* 1 Theſſ. ii. 11.

to you—How your own *integrity of Morals* beſt facilitates this *Care*, by procuring you the eſteem and reverence of your Flock—How the *extent of your knowledge* will enable you to throw a fence round your Fold, that ſhall bar all entrance to *Fanaticiſm*, whether ſpiritual or literary; to *Bigotry*, whether religious or civil; to *Infidelity*, whether philoſophical or immoral.—And laſtly, How the *ſoundneſs of your Faith* will ſecure you from labouring in vain. In a word, you may need occaſionally to be inſtructed, in what manner the great work of Salvation may be accompliſhed to the beſt advantage: You will rarely need to be informed of the importance of the work itſelf.

Give me leave, then, to take up one of theſe Topics for your preſent conſideration.

And, as the beſt human ſecurity, I know, againſt the miſchiefs juſt now enumerated, is, *Superior abilities in the learning of your Profeſſion*, I ſhall chooſe to ſelect this for the ſubject of my diſcourſe.

And purpoſing, hereafter, to hazard my thoughts concerning *the beſt method of ſtudying Theology*, I deſire, that what I now ſay may be underſtood as addreſſed to you, the younger part of my Brethren: The elder being better qualified to give, however ready, in their modeſty, they may be to receive, advice on this important ſubject. Indeed, to theſe reverend men I might well remit the care of inſtructing their younger Brethren, did I not conſider that *advice* and *direction* may poſſibly come with ſomewhat more authority, as it certainly comes with more ſolemnity, from this place.

I would ſuppoſe, from the circumſtances both of your private and public Character, that there is no occaſion to excite you to the purſuit of KNOWLEDGE; eſpecially when, from the circumſtances of the times likewiſe, both your private and public Character ſo much need this ornament and defence.

Uſe and habit in your private Character, one would hope, ſhould naturally keep you attached to theſe purſuits: your Education (to enable

enable you to ſuſtain with decency your public Character) having formed your mind to abſtract reflexion; and given it the needful ply towards ſpeculative meditation.

But unhappily, by too ſhort a view of things, you have been apt to miſtake the completion of your Academic Courſes for the completion of your Theologic Studies: and then, by a falſe modeſty, have deſpaired of knowing more than you would ſuffer thoſe auguſt Places of your education to teach you.

Were it not for ſuch miſtakes as theſe, your habits, concurring with the leiſure ſo bountifully beſtowed upon your ſtation, would have enabled the former impulſe to keep you moving in that literary courſe; till freſh impulſes from increaſing Knowledge had fixed you ſteadily in that Orb which you are appointed to enlighten and adorn.

And this LEISURE, which is ſo peculiarly your own, is not, like the other means of Knowledge, to be employed with indifference, or neglected with impunity. You may caſt aſide your Books: You may withdraw yourſelves from learned inſtruction; and ſtill poſſeſs your ignorance undiſturbed. But your *Leiſure*, like thoſe *Spirits* which Magicians are ſaid to raiſe, and know not how to ſet on work, will haunt and terrify you till you find it in employment; if not to the benefit of your neighbour, yet, like thoſe wicked Spirits, to his harm and miſchief. For nothing is more dreadful to the Imagination than TIME ſtill attendant and unoccupied.

Lay-gentlemen have many advantages of you in the diſpoſition of their *leiſure*; if they neglect to employ it uſefully, they may yet waſte it without much ſcandal. The decency, the dignity of your Profeſſion will not ſuffer you to be the Companion of their uſual ſports and diſſipations. Nay, could you in honour partake in their amuſements, yet the ſlender proviſion for the ſupport of your Order will diſable you from figuring amongſt them in ſuch a way as only a Gentleman would chooſe.

Now here, the nobleſt, as well as cheapeſt amuſement (if you ſhould happen to miſtake Letters for nothing more) lies open to you.

you. An amuſement, which, unlike thoſe other inglorious ways of eluding *the buſineſs of life*, neither clouds the mind, nor enervates the body: But gives ſtrength to the corporeal, and adds vigour to the intellectual faculties; for application to Letters leads us into the habits of temperance; and advances in Philoſophy help us to ſubdue the more diſorderly Paſſions. Hence the profeſſion of Learning is ſeen, above all others, to reward its followers with *length of days*; a vigorous old age being obſerved to be the more peculiar lot of reverenced Letters.

Nor is it merely *long life* which a purſuit of learning procures: for *long life*, without honour, the generous mind would diſdain to make its choice. No; WISDOM provides more amply for its votaries. *Happy* (ſays the illuſtrious King of Iſrael) *is he that findeth Wiſdom, and the man that getteth Underſtanding: length of days is in her hand, and in her right hand* RICHES AND HONOUR *. And, in times like theſe, ſo eagerly aſpiring to the prize of ſuperior Knowledge, who will dare to ſuſpect that *riches and honour* are not the conſtant fruits of mens' ſucceſsful ſtudies?

But be this as it may. A noble mind will purſue *Wiſdom*, let the reward of his attainment of it be never ſo uncertain; ſince a Churchman, who neglects to gain honour by Letters, is ſure to fall into Contempt. If a Lay-gentleman, of no learned Profeſſion, chooſes to be illiterate, he lives without a ſpecies of reputation, which few eſteem a defect in his Character. If a Lay-gentleman of a learned Profeſſion be found thus wanting, he is only neglected and forgotten: But let a Clergyman be once noted for his ignorance, and ſo ſtrong is either the general malignity to his Order, or the inforced ſenſe men have of its inward dignity, that ſuch a one is held up, through life, for the common object of contempt and deriſion.

Theſe are the motives which ſhould diſpoſe you, as Gentlemen, brought up in the ſtudy of Letters, to perſevere in the ſame pur-

* Prov. iii. 13.

ſuit,

ſuit, for the ſupport and ornament of your Character. But as Men profeſſing *ſacred Learning*, there are others ſtill more forceable. The honour and reputation attending the acquirement of *Wiſdom* is now no longer a mere perſonal concern; it reflects honour and reputation on the Body to which you belong. Yet ſtill, this is to be underſtood only of thoſe ſtudies which relate immediately to your Miniſtry. For a Clergyman to follow other ſtudies, is, in the attempt, diſreputable, as it has the look of neglecting or deſerting the intereſts of your own Body: It is, in the iſſue, fruitleſs, as the ſtage to which men arrive in ſtudies foreign to their Profeſſion is rarely conſiderable. Let a Churchman buſy himſelf in Law, and his ambition muſt terminate in a tolerable Juſtice of the Quorum. Let him amuſe himſelf in the art of Phyſic, and he never riſes higher than a Village-Doctor.

By this fantaſtic deſertion of the ſtudies of his Calling, he tranſgreſſes likewiſe one of the plaineſt precepts of moral duty. Every member of a Society lies under a tacit obligation to conſults in the firſt place, the reputation, honour, and benefit of that Society. But this duty can be diſcharged no otherwiſe by us, than in proſecuting ſuch ſtudies as may beſt ſerve to illuſtrate and ſupport thoſe principles of knowledge and wiſdom on which the practice of the Profeſſion is eſtabliſhed.

Yet further: Such an one not only ſtands indebted to his Society, but likewiſe to himſelf. Every Particular is, by the ſame rule of moral duty, obliged to examine carefully the grounds of his Profeſſion, to enable him to diſcharge that perſonal ſervice to which he bound himſelf when he entered into it.

The Lawyer, who employs his time in Natural and Mathematical enquiries, will be ill qualified to adjuſt the due degrees of moral evidence, on which the intereſt of his Clients principally depends: And the Phyſician who turns Poet, ſince the uſe of *Charms* hath been ſeparated from the art of healing, will need (and muſt expect no other) a Patient with as warm an imagination as his own.

Far

Far higher intereſts than theſe are intruſted to our care: and therefore far greater attention is required in the ſupport of them. So that no honeſt Churchman will be lightly drawn away by foreign ſtudies, when ſeen for what they are. He may be accidentally deluded, when they wear the face of relation to his own. Thus Church-Hiſtory making an important part of our theologic ſtudies, the *Antiquarian*, who delights to ſolace himſelf in the benighted days of Monkiſh Owl-light, ſometimes paſſes for the *Divine*. But while he flies from the ſublime Knowlege of modern times, and yet never goes back far enough to ſeize the pure and ſimple truths of primitive Chriſtianity, he ſoon betrays his adulterate ſpecies.

But what will be of more force than all, to hold you attached to the proper ſtudies of your Profeſſion, is to keep in mind thoſe ſacred engagements which you ſo ſolemnly contracted with Heaven, when you firſt entered on your Miniſtry, *to devote yourſelves* entirely to the ſervice of Religion. And ſurely you can never think that this ſervice may be effectually diſcharged without the ſuccours of ſuch parts of *human wiſdom* as are moſt fitted to enlarge the Underſtanding, and to enrich the Mind with the knowlege of the Divine Nature, and of its own.

There never was an Age of the Church, when this learned Apparatus was not neceſſary to the work of the Miniſtry; for no Age hath been exempt from the folly or impiety of perverſe Opinions. Some have had more need of this ſhining Panoply than others; but none ever wanted it ſo much, and was, at the ſame time, ſo ill ſupplied as the preſent.

BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION, and FANATICISM, have, in every age, corrupted the integrity, ſtained the purity, and diſhonoured the ſobriety of the Goſpel; ſo that there was always full employment for human Wiſdom and Science to ſupport the truth and dignity of our holy Religion. But in theſe miſerable times, LEARNING ITSELF hath been made to apoſtatize, and to bear arms againſt its

its own intereſts. For dire *Fanaticiſm*, hitherto content to pollute THEOLOGY, hath now taken a wider range, and oſtentatiouſly attempted to draw over both PHILOSOPHY and CRITICISM (the ſpecific remedies of her diſorders) to her party. So that now we have not only, as of old, a Fanatic Theology amongſt our Field-preachers, but a Fanatic ſpecies of Philoſophy excogitated by Mr. Law, and a Fanatic ſpecies of Criticiſm, under the controul of Mr. Hutchinſon.

Beſides theſe Enemies of our REASON, we have likewiſe upon our hands the Common Enemy of our HOPES; who, from every quarter, and under various names, makes bands apart to aſſault the Ordinances of Heaven; ſuch as the *Freethinker*, who attacks Revelation obliquely, under the cover of Scepticiſm; ſuch as the *Deiſt*, who defies it openly with the blunted Arms of overworn Sophiſtry; and ſuch as the *Naturaliſt*, who would involve all in one common ruin, by his blaſphemies againſt the moral Government of God.

From what fatal concurrence of circumſtances theſe Principles came to infect the body of the Common People (Principles, till of late, confined to a few Particulars, perverted by a *bad Philoſophy*, and ſtill further corrupted by *worſe Morals*), how this, I ſay, came about, it is not my purpoſe to explain to you in this place. I have already ſaid enough upon it, on other occaſions. It is ſufficient that ſad experience informs you of the fact.

Now though the *faſhionable World* might ſupport itſelf for a time, on Principles which, from their novelty and boldneſs, flatter its vanity, and keep it eaſy in its vices; yet the *Common People* could never remain long without a Religion of ſome ſort or other. Hence aroſe new evils, and freſh employment for the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

A Religion (as we ſay) the People, however debauched or miſled, muſt always have, though it be only to ſwear or to cheat by. A return to that rational and eſtabliſhed Syſtem, which they had

ſo wantonly caſt aſide, is never to be expected, after having abuſed the exerciſe of that Reaſon which firſt brought them to embrace, and which (till that abuſe) had kept them ſteadily attached to it. Their Paſſions now governed, under the leading of *Superſtition* and *Fanaticiſm*: and as each man's temperature diſpoſed him to liſten to the One or the Other of theſe Seducers, there were Emiſſaries at hand to take advantage of the prevailing infirmity.—Of their Superſtition, the indefatigable Agents of Rome ſecretly availed themſelves: and the Field-preachers openly ſet fire to their Fanaticiſm.

Great Cities, where only a true judgment of the general bent of a People can be made, are at preſent full of complaints of the vaſt numbers daily ſeduced to Popery and Methodiſm.

To make head, therefore, againſt this torrent of evils, the moſt improved abilities, and the moſt unwearied diligence, are but juſt ſufficient. We have now, to deal with the Sophiſms of Infidelity, the Authority of Papiſtry, and the Jargon of Methodiſm. And though bad Logic may aſk much dexterity to unravel; and old Preſcription may require much erudition to expoſe its rotten grounds; yet Spiritual gibberiſh is ſtill better intrenched, and harder to be approached, for its having no weak ſide of common ſenſe;

——*recalcitrat undique tutus.*

Theſe motives, to minds like yours, will, I am ſure, give redoubled vigour to your ſtudies. I wiſh I could honeſtly encourage you by another; which only ſuch Minds deſerve to have objected to them, and which baſer natures think of more worth than all the reſt; I mean, *the rewards attendant upon Letters.* All States have indeed provided for them: But Stateſmen of all times have found it neceſſary to divert this ſinking fund, more or leſs, from its proper deſignation, to their own temporary occaſions. There is but one Seaſon in which merit in our Profeſſion bears a price in the public market; and that, no good man would wiſh to ſee return; I mean,

I mean, one of thoſe *State Revolutions*, when, for the ſake, or on pretence of LIBERTY civil and religious, both the Crown and the Conſtitution are put in hazard. Then, indeed, as in a time of common danger, the People grow ſerious; they fly to the Altars, and take refuge under the wings of the ableſt and moſt approved Diſpenſers of the eſtabliſhed Faith; who now, become of civil uſe to prop a ſhaken Throne, are brought forward even by Miniſters of State. At all other times, theſe Rewards, although provided by every political Inſtitution, are yet rarely diſpenſed in the *adminiſtration* of any of them.

Let us expect then nothing from Learning, but what Learning itſelf is able to beſtow: That ſerene pleaſure which accompanies the progreſs, and that happineſs which crowns the end, of our Labours. For though, like all other, even the beſt of human purſuits, the firſt advances may be attended with anxiety and pain; yet, unlike all other, the delight which flows from increaſing Knowledge, through the *habit* of inveſtigating TRUTH, is as pure and undiſturbed as it is warm and rapturous. In all other rational purſuits the pleaſure ariſes from the End; the Means being ſtill accompanied with diſguſt: here it ſprings alike both from the End and Means: and, as in the advancing Work of Creation, where *good* accompanied every ſtep of the progreſs, the *Labour*, and the *reſt from Labour*, were equally *bleſſed*. All pleaſure comes from, and reſults into, our intellectual feelings. Many ſpecies of it are conveyed through perverſe, many through corrupted channels. But the irradiating influx of *ſacred Truth* comes directly from its ſource; and is received by the chaſte and enlightned mind with holy raptures, as in its native Sanctuary. In a word, the ſtate of growing Knowledge is, to the SAGE carried up in divine and moral ſpeculations, no other than a ſtate of happineſs.

Such are the powerful and alluring motives to proceed in the proper Learning of your Profeſſion. But, without ſome Advices to direct your courſe, the laying theſe exhortations before you

would do me but little credit, and produce as ſlender benefit to yourſelves.

I ſhall proceed therefore, as my leiſure may enable me, and your attention give me encouragement, to hazard my further thoughts on this important ſubject. Much experience, and not a little reflection, may have rendered me not totally unqualified for this undertaking. And, proper DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY, is, in the preſent ſtate of things, I will ſuppoſe, *no leſs neceſſary* than difficult.

The uſual time you ſojourn in the UNIVERSITIES is very laudably employed in the proſecution of ſuch ſtudies as are to fit you for your *Degrees*. Some of theſe are foreign to the learning of your Profeſſion; others but remotely relative to it. So that, what between the increaſing expences of the *Age*, rather than of the *Place*, and the daily wants of a freſh ſupply for the Miniſtry, the greater part of you are turned out into the World before thoſe incomparable Eſtabliſhments have put the laſt hand to your Education, and led you through the more ſacred parts of the Temple of Wiſdom.

It is true, you no ſooner ſtep into the World than you have your wants abundantly ſupplied. Inſtructors crowd in upon you from all quarters. And, juſt as on Man's Entrance into life, in the famed table of Cebes, every falſe ſpecies of happineſs preſents itſelf before him, each ſtriving who ſhall firſt get poſſeſſion of the new Comer; ſo, on your Entry on the Miniſtry, every Phantom of falſe Science, raiſed up at the reſiſtleſs call of the Sages in St. Paul's Church-yard, open wide their hoſpitable arms, to receive you to their daily, their weekly, and their monthly Lectures. What ſhining Collections of polite Literature! What weighty Volumes of profound Criticiſm have crowned their generous Labours! But in *Scriptural abundance*, their unſparing bounty chiefly diſplays itſelf: Commentaries, Hiſtories, and even Dictionaries of the HOLY BIBLE, keep rolling down upon you, from the ſame perennial Source.

Source. While the ſmaller Divinity, like *the flies and lice of Egypt from the duſt of the land*, meets you in your diſh, and lies hid in all you taſte and handle. The artful diſguiſe, too, is no leſs taking than the plenty. And, as Flaminius's Hoſt of Chalcis entertained his Gueſt with a magnificent variety of Viands, and all from the Hog-ſty, ſo the whole of this delicious cookery comes from as dirty a place, I mean, a Bookſeller's Garret.

While you retain any tincture of that noble Learning with which you were imbued, in thoſe pure Fountains of Science, which you left too ſoon, you will be in no danger from the deluſions of theſe miſerable Impoſtors, ἐκ αἰσθανομένων τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίας, as Origen elegantly expreſſes it, where he characterizes certain falſe Teachers of the ſame ſtamp. In this temper, you will be prepared for, and indeed worthy of, better Inſtruction. Whether my mediocrity ſhall be able to impart it, muſt be left to Time, and to your uſe of it, to determine. Till then, you need not bluſh to recollect and bear in mind what you once learnt at School,

" Virtus eſt VITIUM FUGERE, et ſapientia prima
" STULTITIA CARUISSE."——

DIRECTIONS

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PART THE FIRST.

THE Huſbandman, before he commits the good ſeed to the Ground, tills it with repeated labour. The mind, as the ſoil, over-run with idle traſh, where the vileſt weeds of literature are miſtaken for its flowers and fruit, requires the ſame kind of culture: it is to be well cleared before you can, with any reaſonable hopes, intruſt the great and uſeful Truths of Religion to the rankneſs of its boſom.

SECT. I.

TO give it this preparation, therefore, I would firſt of all recommend to the young ſtudent the daily and long continued uſe of

Locke on Human Underſtanding,

and

The Inſtitutions of Quintilian.

The one will teach him to think juſtly; and the other, to expreſs his thoughts with correctneſs and elegance; without which qualities, Science is but learned lumber, a burthen to the owner, and a nuiſance to every body elſe. Theſe two writers, poſſeſſing in a ſovereign degree theſe excellent talents which they undertake to impart, are, of all others, beſt able, both by precept and example, to accompliſh what they undertake; which is no other than to make *ſcience* ſubſervient to Truth, in the diſcovery and communication of it to others; the peculiar office of a Miniſter of the Goſpel.

SECT. II.

NATURAL Law and *Natural Religion* are the foundation of, and therefore the neceſſary introduction to, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

For a general view of *Natural Law*, I ſhould prefer *Grotius's* book, *De jure belli & pacis*, to all the numerous writers on the ſame ſubject; though ſome of them be more ſcientific and philoſophical; for He, perpetually illuſtrating his precepts by examples, not only teaches, what men ſhould be, but what they are: without which full knowledge, our contemplations on *moral entities* are apt to grow too refined and viſionary.

For

For a general view of *Natural Religion*, as diſtinguiſhed, though it cannot be ſeparated, from *Natural Law*, the moſt uſeful, I think, is *Wollaſton's* Treatiſe of *The Religion of Nature delineated*; for although he has placed moral obligation on very fanciful grounds, yet the ſolidity of thoſe duties, which he hath ſhewn, in ſo juſt and elegant a manner, to ariſe out of *natural Religion*, is not at all diminiſhed by that airy ſpeculation.

But as the great Pillar of *Natural Law* is *Moral obligation*; and of *Natural Religion*, the *Being and attributes of God*, there are two capital Books I would here recommend to our Student, to compleat his ideas of this Law and Religion; which are, *Cumberland* on the *Law of Nature*, and *Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem*. Theſe, on ſome other accounts, might be commodiouſly placed elſewhere; yet on the whole they may, perhaps, be read with moſt profit, after the two books of *Grotius* and *Wollaſton*.

Thoſe incomparable works of *Cumberland* and *Cudworth* were, it is true, written in confutation of *Hobbes's* Philoſophy; which then threatened, like a later and ruder attempt, to overthrow all the received *Morality* and *Metaphyſics* of the ancient and modern world. But their method of *polemic writing* (for ſuch, indeed, it was) deſerves commendation, as beſt anſwering their general end; while they overlooked the perſonal ſingularities of their adverſary, and turned themſelves to the abſtract queſtions.—In *Cumberland*, Hobbes met with a very ſuperior Reaſoner; and in *Cudworth*, a far more accompliſhed Scholar. Both of them, indeed, inferior to that *Peſt* of Science, ſacred and prophane, in elegance of compoſition and in purity and ſplendour of language. On which account, I ſhould adviſe, that *Cumberland* be read, not in his own ungracious Latin, but in Barbeyrac's excellent tranſlation into French.—For the ſame, and for a further reaſon, I ſhould prefer Moſheim's Latin tranſlation of the *Intellectual Syſtem*, to the Engliſh original; that is to ſay, not only for its purity and elegance, but for its great abundance and excellence of learned notes.

Cumberland excells all men in fixing the true grounds of *moral obligation*; out of which, *Natural Law* and *Natural Religion*, both, ariſe.

Cudworth takes a larger and ſublimer range: he begins with *Metaphyſics*, which employs what we now have of the famous work of the *Intellectual Syſtem*.

In exhauſting the Metaphyſic queſtions concerning the *Being and Nature of the Deity*, he hath occaſionally given us a compleat Hiſtory of Ancient Learning as far as relates to thoſe Inquiries: which, beſides the particular uſe in the order of the *courſe*, will be of this further advantage to our ſtudent, the throwing great lights on what he finds delivered concerning *one God and one Lord* in the Old and New Teſtament, when he now comes, after theſe preparations, to the direct ſtudy of the *Sacred Writings*; the proper end of his labours, the gaining a *true Knowledge of Revealed Religion*.

SECT. III.

NOW, though the *Moſaic Religion*, to which we come, be no where to be learnt, but in the *Old Teſtament*; nor the *Chriſtian*, but in the *New*; yet it may be convenient for us to know, what ideas thoſe learned men, who are believed to have moſt ſucceſſfully ſtudied the *Sacred Books*, have entertained of both: not with a purpoſe to acquieſce in their labours, but to facilitate our own; not for our guides, whom we are implicitly to follow in a road as yet to ourſelves unknown; but for our *Counſellors* or *Aſſiſtants*, who are ready to lay before us what they conceive of the *Carte du pays* in general; which our ſtudent may uſe or correct for his own advantage, as he goes along.

There are not many who have applied themſelves, in good earneſt, to aſſiſt us in our knowledge of the *Moſaic Law*; and moſt of theſe, very unſucceſsfully. From the Jewiſh Doctors, we derive much

much leſs inſtruction than might have been expected. Yet, to one of theſe it muſt be confeſſed, we owe what we have of what is moſt conſiderable on this ſubject; I mean a *Rationale* of the Jewiſh *Ritual*; which eſſential part of the Moſaic Law had been long the ſtumbling-block of Infidelity; and was likely to continue ſo; when, in the firſt flouriſhing times of the *Saracene* Empire, a great number of Jews (as we learn from *William of Paris*, in his book *de Legibus*) devoting themſelves to the ſtudy of the Ariſtotelian Philoſophy (then cultivated by theſe followers of Mahomet with a kind of Scientific rage), and thereby contracting an inquiſitive and diſputatious habit, ſet themſelves on examining into *the Reaſons of the Jewiſh Laws*; which being unable to diſcover, they, with their uſual levity, concluded, that they were futile, abſurd, and of human original; and ſo apoſtatiſed, in great numbers, from the religion of their Fathers, to Mahometaniſm.

To put a ſtop to this evil, the famous *Maimonides* wrote, with much ſucceſs, the book called *Ductor Dubitantium*; the chief purpoſe of which is to explain *the cauſes of the Jewiſh Ritual.*

On this ground, our excellent Countryman, *Spencer*, long afterwards, when the Rabbi's book had been almoſt forgotten, erected his admirable book intituled, *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus.* This, though confined to an illuſtration of the *Ritual Law*, is, by far, the moſt conſiderable attempt yet made to explain the nature and genius of the *Moſaic Religion:* while the other capital parts of this Diſpenſation, ſuch as the nature of its civil Government, a *Theocracy*;—the rewards and puniſhments, peculiar to it;—its extraordinary adminiſtration by appointed Agents, endowed with ſupernatural powers, and with the gifts of *Miracles* and *Prophecy*;—the *double ſenſe* in which the latter was neceſſarily involved; and the language conſequent to its nature and uſe: theſe things, I ſay, of ſuch importance to the ſucceſsful ſtudy of the Old Teſtament, have been hitherto treated, not only ſuperficially, but abſurdly. Yet notwithſtanding, as the *Ritual Law* conſtitutes ſo conſiderable a part of the *Moſaic Diſpenſation*, Spencer's book is of infinite uſe,

not

not only for its own appropriated excellence, but for the ſubject's neceſſarily leading him to a very detailed account of the religious ſtate of the ancient Pagan world, without which knowledge we can have but a very imperfect idea of the *Jewiſh Law and Hiſtory*. The ſcarcity of good Writers on the Old Teſtament ſhews how neceſſary it is to make the beſt of the incomparable Author of the book *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*. After this, the Student having furniſhed himſelf with *Walton's Polyglott Bible*, and the large Collection called *Critici Sacri*, may proceed directly to his great Work, the Study of the Bible.

SECT. IV.

IF it be hard to *find* good Writers on the *Old Law*, it is as hard to *chuſe* out of the great Number on the *New*.

In our Study of the Goſpel, our wants are not ſo great, and our aſſiſtances much greater. Though it be the purpoſe of theſe ſlight hints to recommend the BIBLE as the genuine *mine*, inexhauſted and inexhauſtible, from whence all our Treaſures of Theology are to be fetched, and which conſequently is to be principally explored, while we turn our backs on all the *Sums* and *Syſtems* of Artificial Divines; yet a general acquaintance with the two Diſpenſations, procured as we can, may, in the entrance on our Work, ſomewhat eaſe our Labour.

After what has been ſaid of a manuduction to the Study of the *Old Teſtament*, I would only recommend, from amongſt the crude abundance on the *New*, two ſhort tracts, *Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*; and Dr. Burnet of the Charter-houſe, his *De Fide et Officiis Chriſtianorum*; the firſt of theſe tracts being a kind of prelude or introduction to the other. They are both of them excellent in their different kinds. So that when our Student has done this, nothing remains but that he may enter directly on the ſtudy of the *New Teſtament*, which he will

now

now find prepared to receive him as a well-qualified Gueſt. And *Grotius's* Critical Comment on the *Goſpels*, and *Locke* on the *Epiſtles*, accompanying this Study, will open all the treaſures of our Faith to one ſo happily employed. What, after the uſe of theſe two Commentators, will be wanting for further illuſtration, muſt be ſought for in the Collection called the *Sacred Critics*, before recommended, amongſt the Critics on the *New Teſtament*.

Only, in the ſtudy of *The Revelation of St. John*, from whence may be deduced the moſt illuſtrious and irrefragable Evidence of the Divinity of our holy Religion, the works of Mr. Joſeph Mede, whoſe Comments on the *Apocalypſe* is, indeed, in Theology, what *Harvey's* diſcovery of the circulation of the blood was thought to be in Phyſics, ſhould be carefully digeſted.

This labour, on the New Teſtament, well over, our Student may then, but not before, read with advantage ſome of the many Bodies, or *Inſtitutes*, as they are called, of Chriſtian Theology. The beſt I know of is, for its elegance, clearneſs, and freedom from partial affections of all ſorts, that of the great *Epiſcopius*, though unfiniſhed; the parts wanting may be well ſupplied from *Limborch's Theologia Chriſtiana*; a maſter-piece, which, in its kind, may be well compared to a work of Raphael's finiſhed by Julio Romano.

SECT. V.

HAVING proceeded thus far in our *Courſe*, and gone through that part of *Theology* called the *poſitive* or *dogmatic*, our Student's next ſtep will be to provide a guard or defenſe for the ſecurity of his acquirements; which is to be done by the aſſiſtance of the other part, called the *Polemic*; which of late indeed ignorance has brought into diſcredit, from the general decay of critical and dialectic Learning.

1. He will begin with a defence of *Revelation in general*, as it lies in *Grotius de Veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ*, enlarged by *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*; which may be conſidered as a kind of Commentary on the other's text: the juſt encomiums of which have ſo long ſatiated the public ear, that we now hear of that with indifference in which our Fathers ſo much triumphed. But the book I mean is that written by Mr. Stillingfleet; not that unfiniſhed work which bears the ſame title, written when he became Biſhop of Worceſter.

2. From thence, he will go on to a defence of the *Chriſtian Religion* againſt *Judaiſm*. For which he will need no other inſtruction than what he may find in *Limborch's* work, intituled, *De Veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ Amica Collatio cum Erudito Judæo*. This was Iſaac Orobio, a Spaniſh Jew, who, eſcaping from the priſons of the Inquiſition, now practiſed Phyſic in Holland. In this Diſputation will be found all that the ſtretch of human parts on the one hand, or Science on the other, can produce, to varniſh error, or to unravel ſophiſtry. All the Papers of Orobio in defence of Judaiſm, as oppoſed to Chriſtianity, are here given at large, with Limborch's anſwers, ſection by ſection: where the ſubtileſt ſophiſms of a very ſuperior genius will be found ably and ſatisfactorily detected and expoſed by the ſtrong, profound, and clear reaſoning of this celebrated Remonſtrant.

3. The defence of the *Reformed* Churches againſt *Popery* is next in order, and our Student will find it compleatly performed in that maſter-piece of human reaſoning, Chillingworth's book againſt Knott, intituled, *The Religion of Proteſtants a ſafe way to ſalvation*; in which he will ſee all the ſchool jargon of that ſubtile Jeſuit incomparably expoſed; and the long diſpute between the two churches, for the firſt time, placed upon its proper immovable ground, the BIBLE alone, after the extravagant Authority of the *Fathers*, perpetually appealed to by both Churches, had long uſurped the prerogatives of Scripture; and, by breaking down the boundaries betwixt right and wrong, had made the Controverſy endleſs.

And

And having here recommended to our Student's moſt careful attention theſe two capital works of *Limborch* againſt the *Jew*, and *Chillingworth* againſt the *Jeſuit*, it preſents a fit occaſion to take notice of that ignorant cenſure of *Polemic Divinity*, now ſo faſhionable even amongſt thoſe whoſe Profeſſion might have enabled them to know better, as if it were the offspring of the Philoſophy and Divinity of the SCHOOLS; when they might ſee that the futility of Scholaſtic Learning was never more effectually held up to deriſion, in the perſons of thoſe two ſubtile Diſputants (who were overrun with it) than by theſe incomparable Defenders of Chriſtianity and Proteſtantiſm.

4. From the Defenſe of *Proteſtantiſm* in general, we come next to that of the *Church of England*, againſt the *Sectaries*. And here it will ſuffice, *inſtar omnium*, to ſtudy *Hooker's four firſt Books of Eccleſiaſtical Policy*; in which, an *eſtabliſhed* Church is immovably fixed on this great *Principle*, That the *outward Policy of a Church*, though divinely inſtituted, is in the claſs, and of the ſpecies of thoſe Laws, which even the ſacred Authority, that enjoins them, does not render immutable. A work bearing all the marks of immortality, as deſtined to excite the admiration of men while good letters remain amongſt them.

SECT. VI.

BUT Polemic Divinity, though of the beſt ſort, being apt to give a rigid turn to the ſentiments of thoſe long engaged in it, we may, by this time, find it neceſſary to remind our Student, that though the *means* be Learning, yet the *end of the commandment is Charity*, and that the trueſt badge of our being the Servants of one Common Maſter is our mutual forbearance of one another. Now this Charity is violated by *reſtraint* and *intolerance*: whether exerciſed by a Church to its own Members; or towards thoſe who have renounced its juriſdiction.

1. The injuſtice of the firſt kind, is combated and expoſed in a very maſterly manner by Biſhop Taylor in his *Liberty of Propheſying*, and by Biſhop *Stillingfleet* in his *Irenicum*. *Taylor* wrote when the Church of England was groaning under the tyranny of the Puritans or Preſbyterians; and, therefore, to remind them of their own claims, under the like oppreſſive Circumſtances, he intitles his Apology the *Liberty of Propheſying*, under which name they choſe to ennoble their *Lectures*. *Stillingfleet* wrote when the eſtabliſhed Church was on the recovery of its legal rights; and, finding it ſharpened by long injuries and indignities, he endeavoured to allay the heats of his Brethren, by his *Irenicum*; both theſe writers pleading for religious Liberty; the one when it was violated by oppreſſion; the other when it was in danger from freſh reſentments. Yet it is not to be denied or diſguiſed that theſe celebrated Writers, either not yet comprehending the doctrine of *Toleration in its full extent*, or perhaps not finding the minds of men ſufficiently enlarged to receive it (which, though a truth, from its coincidence with the genius of Chriſtianity, one would have expected to find amongſt the firſt received in an Eſtabliſhed Church, was unhappily amongſt the laſt); they cramped the doctrine within too narrow bounds, while, to avoid ſcandal, they thought it of uſe to diſtinguiſh in laboured diſcourſes between points fundamental and not fundamental; which, though impertinent to the true deciſion of the queſtion of Toleration, yet accidentally let in much light into the true nature of Chriſtianity.

2. The injuſtice of the ſecond kind, the oppreſſive treatment of Diſſenters or Sectaries, gave occaſion for the queſtion of *Toleration* to be more fully and compleatly handled by Mr. Locke in his celebrated *Letters* on that ſubject; and by Mr. Bayle in his no leſs celebrated *Comment*, on the words, *compel them to enter in*. Theſe four Works ſhould be very carefully ſtudied. They give a compleat view of the Subject. Such, who have wrote ſince in ſupport of the Divine Principle of *Toleration*, may be ſaid, only, *actum agere*.

The enemies of pure Religion have *defiled* Revelation, each on his own peculiar principles: but friends and enemies have concurred in *diſhonouring* it, by one common principle, held occaſionally by all in their turns—*the Antichriſtian Doctrine of Perſecution and intolerance.* Now, the Books here recommended expoſe it in all its iniquity and folly.

SECT. VII.

FROM the *interior Spirit* of our holy Religion, which is conſtant and unchangeable, we come to the *outward face* of it, whoſe features have, both by time and climate, been ever on the change; nor has time, from the infancy to the old age of the Church, brought on greater diſparities in its looks than the intemperature of Climates, which have been the ſcenes of Eccleſiaſtical occurrences. The ill-ſorted Pictures with which Church-hiſtory is adorned, ſerve at once for the opprobrium and the glory of Religion.

Order requires that the Student ſhould firſt take a view of the *general Hiſtory of the Church*; and *convenience* points to us, that he ſhould begin with ſome well-choſen abridgment. There is only one that deſerves our commendation; but that one is indeed incomparable: It is written by the very learned Moſheim, in elegant Latin. Amongſt the various excellencies of his method, I ſhall only mention this, his referring, on every ſubject, to the beſt writers who have treated it at large: ſo that whenever information excites the Student to look into the Authors referred to by Moſheim, he is ſure to find the ſolution of his doubts, or ſatisfaction to his curioſity.

From the *Hiſtory of the Church in General*, the nature of the courſe directs our Student to the *general Hiſtory of the Church of England.*

But our repeated complaints of the defective ſtate of this part of Literature amongſt us, extends to the *eccleſiaſtical* as well as to the

civil Hiſtory of Great Britain. There are only two writers of the general Hiſtory of our Church who deſerve the name of Hiſtorians, Collier the Nonjuror, and Fuller the Jeſter.

The firſt hath written with ſufficient dignity, elegance, and ſpirit; but hath diſhonoured and debaſed his whole work with the abſurd and ſlaviſh Tenets of the High Churchmen.

The other is compoſed with better temper, and on better principles; and with ſufficient care and attention; but worked on a ſlight fantaſtic ground, and in a ſtyle of buffoon pleaſantry altogether unſuitable to ſo grave and important a ſubject. Yet much may be learnt from both; much, indeed, to avoid, as well as to approve.

After this general view of Church Hiſtory, the *Reformation* of Religion from the corruptions of Popery, the moſt important period of Church Hiſtory, will deſerve our particular attention.

The riſe and progreſs of it may be beſt learnt from *Sleidan*, in his *De Statu Religionis & Reipublicæ Carolo V. Cæſare Commentarii*; more valuable for its veracity than for the charms of its compoſition.

To have a proper knowledge of that of our own Church, Burnet's much-applauded Hiſtory of the Reformation of the Church of England, with his third volume of Explanations and Corrections, muſt be carefully read. Were we to eſtimate its value by the reception it met with from the two Houſes of Parliament, when a whole People were frightened out of their wits by the imminent danger of Popery, we ſhould rate it much too high. It is a ſenſible well-atteſted narrative of Facts, collected with Care, and digeſted with Candour.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

AND now we are arrived at the concluding labours of our young Divine, the imparting of that knowledge to others which with ſo much care and ſtudy he hath procured for himſelf. Amongſt the many marks which diſtinguiſh the *Chriſtian Philoſopher* from the *Pagan*, this is one of the moſt ſtriking—the *Pagan* ſought knowledge in a ſelfiſh way, to ſecrete it for his own uſe: the *Chriſtian* ſeeks it with the generous purpoſe (firſt in view, though laſt in execution) to impart it to others. The *Pagan Philoſopher*, therefore, having cultivated the *art of thinking*, proceeds to that of *ſpeaking*, in order to diſplay his vanity in the dexterous uſe of deceit. On the other hand, the *Chriſtian Philoſopher* cultivates the *art of ſpeaking*, for the ſole purpoſe of diſſeminating the Truth, in his office of Preacher of the Goſpel. That *ſpecies of eloquence*, therefore, which is only fitted for his uſe, is beſt deſcribed by an eminent Writer, who indeed makes it the *genus of the Art*: "True "Eloquence," ſays he, "I find to be none but the ſerious and "hearty LOVE OF TRUTH: and that whoſe mind ſoever is fully "poſſeſſed with a fervent deſire to know good things, and with "the DEAREST CHARITY to infuſe the knowledge of them to "others, when ſuch a man would ſpeak, his words, like ſo many "nimble and airy ſervitors, trip about him at command, and in "well-ordered files, as he could wiſh, fall aptly into their own "places *."

This is the true *Chriſtian Eloquence*; to which I would have our Student eagerly aſpire; whatever route his talents lead him to take, in diſcharge of this part of his Miniſtry: whether his Diſcourſe be employed in illuſtrating the ſacred text—or in explaining and enforcing the capital duties of Morality—or laſtly, in preſſing, upon

* Milton.

the

the conſcience, the practical obligations both of natural and revealed Religion, by a pathetic addreſs to the Paſſions and Affections of his hearers: For under one or other of theſe three heads, I ſuppoſe, may be compriſed all the rational ſervice of the Pulpit.

1. If his diſpoſition incline him to the illuſtration of the ſacred Text, which, in ſtrict truth, is performing what by his office he has engaged himſelf to undertake, that is to ſay, *to preach the word of God*, the beſt model I can think of are the Sermons of Dr. Samuel Clarke, of St. James's, who is always plain, clear, accurate, and full.

2. If he rather chuſes to expatiate on the great Duties of Morality, Dr. Barrow ſhould be his principal Guide: whoſe comprehenſive mind penetrates into the very darkeſt receſſes of our nature, at the ſame time that the radiations of his genius gild the moſt ſolemn and gloomy proſpects. In a word, his is that *true Eloquence* which Milton ſo happily deſcribes, and which this Preacher ſo eminently poſſeſſes.

But yet we ſhould not ſuſpect, that Clarke is defective in what Barrow ſo eminently abounds; or that Barrow, on fit occaſions, neglects to cultivate that ſacred ſoil from which Clarke reaped ſuch abundant harveſts.

3. A pathetic addreſs to the paſſions and affections of penitent hearers, perhaps the moſt operative of all theſe various ſpecies of inſtruction, is that in which the Engliſh Pulpit, notwithſtanding all its other ſuperior advantages, is moſt defective. Here, the *perſuaſive* is apt to be barren of reaſoning; and the *pathetic* to degenerate into *cant*. A perfect model of this kind we muſt ſeek for abroad. Nor need we be long to ſeek, though we be forced to take up with a Papiſt, and, what is worſe, a Jeſuit—the celebrated Bourdaloue, who, to the moſt perfect ſublime and pathetic, has occaſionally added all the force of reaſon in the ſimpleſt and moſt beautiful method, in which will be found many excellent ſtrokes of *ſcriptural criticiſm* and *moral divinity*, which ſo much ennoble the works of the two Engliſh Preachers above recommended for the execution

execution of their ſeveral methods. Nor will there be any danger that our Student, now ſo well armed at all points, by the truths collected in his Courſe, ſhould be betrayed or entangled in the errors and corruptions, which have ſo miſerably deformed the mother-church of this famous Preacher.

In concluſion, I confide in the young Divine, who reſolves in good earneſt to go through the courſe here recommended, that he will conſider it as only the foundation of the learning of his profeſſion; as only the out-lines on which he is to work through life, in order to deſerve the Character (at which we will ſuppoſe he aims) of an *accompliſhed Divine*.

On this account, I have been exceeding ſparing, in this *firſt part*, to recommend ſuch Writers as are to aid him in his *Courſe*; omitting all but thoſe of capital note, who, as he goes along, are of neceſſity to be well digeſted.

The SECOND PART * therefore will be employed in an account, under each head, of thoſe additional Writers, that may enable the Student to make himſelf a perfect Maſter of the ſeveral Subjects marked out in this; which though it may give him a juſt, yet, without further aſſiſtance, may remain a too general idea of his Buſineſs.

* The *ſecond part* has not been found among the Biſhop's papers, and probably was never written. R. W.

THE END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

ERRORS OF THE PRESS IN VOL. V.

P. 47. *l.* the laſt, after *which*, add a comma.
48. *l.* 1. after *whole*, add a comma.
94. *l.* 15. for objects, r. object.
100. *l.* 1. after *ſcheme*, add a comma.
120. *l.* 7. for nothibg, r. nothing.
147. *l.* 21. for *un*to, r. *in*to.
162. *l.* 11. *n.* for varie, *r.* varié.
163. *l.* 8. *n.* for p*lay*s, r. p*ai*s.
249. *n. l.* 5. for péril, r. périr.
330. laſt line, for *ſa*t, r. *ſe*t.
408. *l.* 16. for too*k*, r. too.
421. *l.* 2. from the bottom, for poſſeſſio*u*s, r. poſſeſſion.
432. *n.* †. *l.* 4. for ſationes, r. ſa*lu*ationes.