

*Amicus Amicus*  
*Amicus*



S E R M O N S

O N

Sacramental Occasions

B Y

Divers MINISTERS.



*1841*

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THE  
Great Glory of GOD,  
Which is display'd in the  
Gospel of CHRIST,  
With its  
Sanctifying Efficacy,  
Upon the  
Souls of Men.

Consider'd in a  
S E R M O N,

Preach'd at  
*New-Brunswick, August 7. 1737.*

Upon the Sabbath Evening immediately after the  
Celebration of the holy Ordinance of the LORD'S-  
SUPPER.

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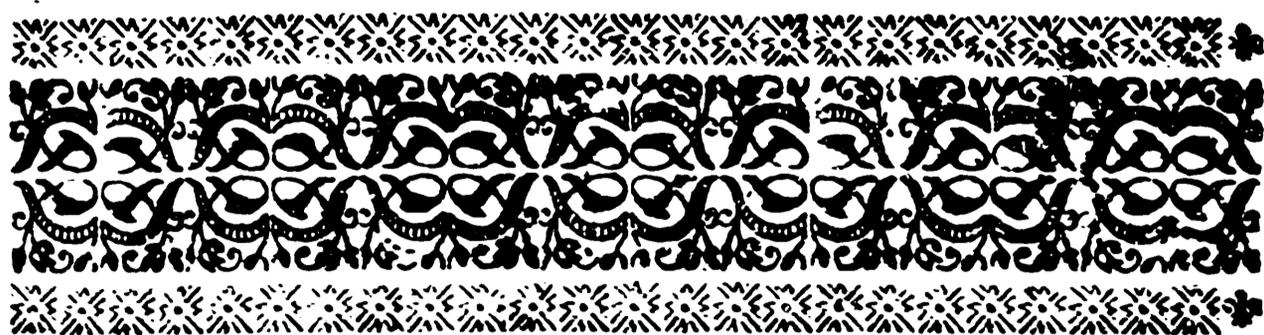
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T H E  
Glory of the G O S P E L.



2 Cor. iii. 18.

*But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the  
Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image,  
from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

**I**N this Context, from the 6th Verse, the Apostle is manifestly running a Parallel between the Law and the Gospel ; or between that Revelation of the divine Mind, which God made to *Israel* by *Moses*, in Matters relating to their eternal Salvation, and the Revelation which he has made by his Son *Jesus Christ*, and by his holy Apostles, in an extraordinary Manner inspired by his Spirit ; shewing, in several Instances, how infinitely the *latter* is preferable to the *former*. These two Dispensations he calls by various Names : The *Mosaick* Dispensation he calls the *Letter*, the *Ministration of Death*, the *Ministration of Condemnation*, and the *Old Testament* ;

*Testament* : The *Christian*, or more full Gospel Dispensation, he Terms the *New Testament*, the *Spirit*, and the *Ministration of Righteousness*. The *legal* Dispensation he calls the *Letter*, in Allusion to the engraving of the moral Law, in legible Characters, upon two Tables of Stone; as also, because it fell much short of that Life and spiritual Influence upon the Heart, which the more clear Revelation of the Gospel is attended with; which, upon the other Hand, he calls the *Spirit* upon this Account, viz. Because, more fully opening the great and blessed Mystery of the Recovery and Salvation of undone Sinners, thro' the Mediation of the Son of God, it is generally attended with more of the precious, sanctifying and comforting Influences of his holy Spirit upon the Hearts of his People. The first thing wherein the Apostle observes that the Gospel exceeds the Law in Excellence and Glory he expresses in these Words, *the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life*. The Mosaick Dispensation very clearly revealed God's Law and Man's Duty: It plainly discovered the awful Deserts of Sin; and set forth its Penalty in the flaming Colours of Dread and Terror. These things, I say, were *clearly* revealed; but the way of Relief for undone Sinners more *dimly*, in dark Types and obscure Prophecies: So that God's People, being conscious of Sin, were generally liable to very great Disquiet and Distress of Mind; and could not fetch such a sweet and sovereign Balsam from that dark Dispensation, to the healing of their wounded Consciences, as now they may from the clear Revelation of Christ, who has brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel: And therefore, the Apostle calls that a *killing*, and this a *Life-giving* Dispensation. But let not any presumptuous un sanctified Sinners foolishly conclude from hence, that they have no Reason for such Anxiety or Distress about their Souls now, under the gracious Dispensation of the Gospel: It speaks Peace to none but humble sanctified Believers in the Lord Jesus; and declares you to be in a perishing Condition, under the Wrath and Curse of the great God, every Moment, while you continue in your unregenerate Estate.

The Apostle, *farther* to shew the great Excellency of the Gospel above the Law, takes notice of the Glory that was even in that killing Dispensation ; which was signified by the Glory that shone in the Face of *Moses*, after God had delivered the Law to him in the holy Mount, so that the Children of *Israel* could not stedfastly behold him for the Glory of his Countenance. And hence, Verse 9. he justly argues, that *if the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory.* That is, if that Dispensation, that was attended with so much Terror, even to the godly themselves, had such Glory in it ; much more must be the Glory of the Gospel Dispensation, wherein is clearly revealed that blessed Righteousness which God has provided, and Christ has wrought for their compleat Justification, from the Guilt of all their Sins that can annoy their Consciences.

In the *last* Place, (not to be critical and tedious in Remarks upon the Context) the inspired Apostle takes notice of the Pre-eminence of the Gospel above the Law, in Point of Light and Clearness. The old Dispensation, comparatively, made but a very dark Discovery of the glorious Method of Salvation, thro' the Righteousness of Jesus Christ : Which the Apostle observes, was signified by *Moses's* covering his Face with a Vail while he published to the People all that God had spoken to him in the Mount. The Glories of the new Covenant were contained in that Dispensation, but darkly, as it were under a Vail ; so that the Church of God could then discern but some Glimmerings of them ; but now, says he, *We all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image,* &c.

Thus you see, with what Design these Words are here introduced. The Text contains very glorious, weighty and substantial Truths : For the Explication of it you may take Notice of these six Particulars. 1. The *Persons* spoken of, *We all.* 2. The *Act* ascribed to them, *beholding.* 3. The *Object* of this Act, about which it is exercised, *The Glory of the Lord.* 4. The *Medium* by  
and

and in which this Object is beheld, which is compared to a Glass, *Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord.* 5. The *Effect* produced by the beholding of God's Glory, beholding the Glory of the Lord, *we are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.* 6. The *efficient Cause*, by which this great Effect is wrought, *the Spirit of the Lord.*

The opening of these Particulars will put the Text in a just and clear Light. And as to the

1. The *Persons* spoken of, are all *true Believers* in Christ, in this Time of clear Gospel Light, since he has been manifested in the Flesh.

2. The *Act* of beholding ascribed to them, is not to be understood of a bodily, but an *intellectual Vision*, performed by the Eye of the Mind, enlightned by the Spirit of God; and signifies, not a hasty transient Look, but a steady continued Contemplation, like a Person viewing himself in a Glass.

3. The *Object* beheld and look'd upon, is *the Glory of the Lord*: That is, that divine Glory which shines in the great Truths of the Gospel; that Glory of God which he has manifested and declared in them.

4. The *Medium* in and by which this Glory of God is discovered, which is here compared to a Glass, is the *Gospel it self*. viz. that Revelation which God has graciously vouchsafed to us by his own Son, in things relating to our eternal Salvation. The things therein revealed and made known to the Children of Men shine with an orient and divine Brightness. In them much of the Glory of God himself is display'd before our Eyes. It's true, much of God's Glory is seen in his Ordinances: especially that *glorious one* which we have this Day been attending upon before him; but then it must be remembered, that they receive all their Light from the Gospel, as the Moon does from the Sun; without this they would be very dark Instructors, and rather Vails to cover, than Glasses to discover the Glory of God: But in the Light of the Gospel they are blessed Mediums, whereby God communicates much of himself to his People.

Now

Now the Gospel is compared to a Glass upon the following Accounts;

1. Because of its great *Clearness*; not only absolutely in it self, but, in a special manner relatively, compared with the foregoing Revelation under the Law, which as much transcends it in this respect, as a Glass, for Discovery, exceeds a Vail. The mysterious and ravishing Glories of the new Covenant which were vail'd under the Law, are brought to open View by the Gospel. And this is manifestly one of the Designs of our Apostle in this Similitude: For, having observed the Darkness of the former Dispensation, represented by *Moses* his vailing of his Face, so that the Children of *Israel* could not steadfastly look to the End of that which is abolished, than with an adverbative, but he subjoins, *we all with open Face, behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord.* They, as thro' a Vail, but we, as in a Glass.

2. The Gospel may be compared to a Glass because of its relative *Darkness* and *Obscurity*, compared with the bright Dispensation in the Church Triumphant above: For altho' a Glass is clearer than a Vail, yet it is more obscure than immediate Vision: Hence says the same Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.*

3. The Gospel is here compared to a Glass because of the exact *Agreement* and *Resemblance*, that is between a Person looking in a Glass and the Image which he beholds in it: For as there is an exact Similitude between the Person and the Image in a Glass, so there is a Similitude between the glorious things discovered in the Gospel and the Person that beholds them. Only there is this Difference to be remark'd in the Comparison, That a Person looking in a Glass reflects his Image upon it, but the Person looking in the Gospel does not bring his Image into it; but the glorious Things he therein beholds reflect their Image upon him; so as that he is even changed and transformed into their very Likeness: As if a Person, in a Glass, should behold the glorious Image of the Sun, and receive the Reflection of its Brightness back again upon himself. Now, although there

there is this Difference in the Similitude between the Gospel and a Glass, as to the Thing producing the corresponding Image ; yet such a Correspondence and Agreement there is, in both Cases ; and in this Respect the Comparison is just and suitable : As there is a Resemblance between the Image in the Glass and the Person that beholds it, so the Glory of God, in the Gospel, reflects its own Likeness upon the Beholder, and changes him into the same Image And it's plain that the Apostle, in the Similitude, had his Eye particularly upon this Part of it from the next Words, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are, says he, *changed into the same Image.* As if he had said, when we look into the Gospel of Christ, and therein behold the Glory of God, immediately there is a Likeness struck up between it and us ; and herein, it is as if we were looking in a Glass. We are changed into the same Image, *from Glory to Glory.*

In these Words is contain'd the 5th Thing observable in the Text, which is the *great Effect* produced by beholding God's Glory in the Gospel. By beholding the Things which God has revealed in the Gospel in their divine Glory and Lustre, the Soul is so powerfully wrought upon as to be transformed into the very same Image, from Glory to Glory. By this Image and Glory into which such as are truly enlightened are changed, is undoubtedly meant their Sanctification, and Conformity to God in Holiness, which is wrought by the Instrumentality of the Gospel in the Hand of the blessed Spirit : But I cannot think with some judicious Interpreters, that the Apostle's Design in these last Words, *from Glory to Glory*, is to signify the Progress and Growth of Sanctification in the Godly : As if he had said, From one Degree of beautiful Holiness to another. But what he means by Glory, in the first Word, is that which before he had call'd the Glory of the Lord appearing in the Gospel : So that this latter Sentence, *we are changed from Glory to Glory*, is much the same with the former, *beholding the Glory of the Lord, we are chang'd into the same Image.* Only in this, the Apostle expressly declares what was but implied in that, viz. That *Holiness* is a very glorious Thing :

Thing; and more fully expresses the Interest and Instrumentality which the Gospel has in the Production of it; shewing, that from the Glory of God in the Gospel, is reflected and impressed this Glory of Holiness upon those who behold it; and that, not transiently and superficially; but so as they are wholly changed, and altogether new formed into the same glorious Image.

The 6th and last Particular to be observed in the Words, is the *Author* of this great Change; expressed in these Words, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. The Particle *as*, in this Place, is not a Note of *Similitude*, but of *Reality*: It does not signify, that this Change is wrought only as if it were done by the Spirit of the Lord, but in Reality is not. Says Mr. Beza, it is not a Note of *Comparison*, but of *Congruency* or *Fitness*, and so signifies the *Truth* and *Reality* of the Thing. In the same Sense we have like Particles elsewhere used by this Apostle: Thus, Ver. 5th of this Chapter he says, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any Thing as of our selves*. And in the last Verse of the preceding Chapter, *But as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the Sight of God, speak we in Christ*: Where the Sense is the same as if the *as* were wanting; for, sure the Apostle does not mean that he only made an Appearance and Shew of Sincerity in preaching the Gospel.

From the Text thus explain'd, I shall take Notice of these three *Propositions* of Truth, clearly contained in it.

1. That there is *much of God's Glory* revealed and displayed in the Gospel.
2. That the Sight of God's Glory in the Gospel is of a *transforming* Efficacy: The Soul that beholds it, is thereby changed into the same Image.
3. That the Holy Spirit of God is the *great Author*, and efficient Cause of this glorious Change.

I begin with the first of these, viz.

*Prop. 1.* That there is *much of God's Glory* revealed and display'd in the Gospel.

In treating doctrinally upon it, I shall only consider wherein so much of God's Glory is manifested in the Gospel, and what of his Glory is manifested therein.

And here I shall principally take Notice of that which is the great Subject and Foundation of the whole Gospel, viz That adorable astonishing Method which God has contriv'd, and, in the Gospel, revealed for the Recovery and Salvation of fallen undone Sinners. This is the very Substance and Quintessence of the Gospel : This is that which, above all Things, makes it so infinitely transcend and excell all the Revelations that ever God made to Man : *If the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory* : This is that which above all Things, casts a blooming Glory all round the Gospel, as the Sun is the chief Glory of the visible Heavens. God has set much of his Glory before our Eyes in the visible Creation : *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work. The invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead* : They shew forth the infinite Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and adorable Sovereignty of their great Author : But, O ! Sirs, the Glory of God shines infinitely brighter in the astonishing Contrivance of Salvation revealed in the Gospel.

That I may the more clearly open this Subject, and set it before you in its divine Glory, it will be necessary to consider a little what a deplorable Condition Sin had brought Man into : Man, by Sin, fell into a twofold Misery, the Misery of a condemned State, and of a depraved vicious Quality. So soon as Man had broken the Law of God, he was thereby condemned to undergo that Punishment which his Sin deserved, which Penalty he could fully discharge in no shorter a Duration than that of *Eternity* : Hence, in order to the Sinner's being restored to Happiness, he must be legally delivered from this Sentence of Condemnation, and bro't into a State of Justification as compleat as if he had never sinned. By Sin, also, Man lost the glorious moral Image of God in

which

which he was at first created ; consisting in Knowledge, Righteousness and true Holiness. He is now become naturally propense to Sin, and averse to Holiness ; his Understanding dark, his Will perverse and obstinate ; his uniting Affections are turned away from God, terminated upon the Creature, and on Sin ; *so that his carnal Mind is Enmity against God* ; he hates God and his righteous Law : And so, in order to the fallen Creature's Restoration, there must of Necessity be a great and universal Change wrought upon his Soul : It must be adorned with new and heavenly Qualities, the old wicked Dispositions mortified, and the Power of Sin taken away ; it being the greatest Inconsistency imaginable, in the very Nature of the Thing, for a Creature to be happy in the Enjoyment of God without Conformity to him, having his Heart possess'd with Enmity against him. Now, any effectual Method for the Restoration and Recovery of undone Sinners, must remedy this double Misery, by obtaining for them the *twofold* Benefit of Justification and Sanctification : In the Method which God has established for this End, and revealed in the Gospel, he has amply provided for their Relief in both these Respects.

For,

1. He has therein determined that his own dear and eternal Son should take upon him our Nature into a personal Union with himself, and therein yield a full Satisfaction to the Law, answering to the utmost all its Demands upon the Sinner by obeying and suffering. This was the strange Way which the great God propos'd for obtaining the Justification of condemned Sinners ; They were to be delivered from under the condemning Sentence of the Law by Christ's taking it upon himself, and answering it for them.

2. The Lord determined to send the Holy Ghost to sanctify their wicked and unclean Hearts, who, in the Use of suitable Means appointed for that End, should convince his Elect of their utter Undoneness by Sin, of the All-sufficiency of Christ alone for their Relief, and so, uniting their Hearts to Jesus Christ by Faith, should

should turn them again to the blessed God, and renew his holy Image upon them, that God may again delight in them, and they delight in him.

This is briefly that blessed Scheme that was laid in the eternal Mind from everlasting, for the Recovery and Relief of undone Creatures, fallen into such deplorable Circumstances: And, sure the Relation which it bears to us, as it is an effectual Scheme laid for advancing us to the highest Happiness, from eternal, deserved, and the most abandon'd Misery, were enough to make it very glorious in our View, and high in our Esteem without any other Consideration. But let us a little farther enquire into the Nature of the Thing itself, and we shall find it the greatest Expression of the Glory of God, the most beautiful Representation of the divine Perfections that ever was discovered to the intelligent World; the most bright and glorious Scene that ever was laid open to the View of the rational Creation; which puts a new Song into the Mouths of all the Angels in Heaven, and is a Subject of the sweetest Contemplation forever to all the Saints of God, who are brought to the immediate Enjoyment of his Glory in the Vision of it.

And,

1. You may observe that the Glory of God's infinite Wisdom very eminently shines in it. This you may see,

1. By considering the great and (to a created Understanding) insuperable Difficulties that stood in the way of any Method sufficient for the Recovery of fallen Sinners.

2. By considering the Method it self, which God has proposed to answer all these Difficulties, and obtain the Sinner's Happiness. And,

3. The Fitness and Sufficiency of the Mean propos'd to obtain the End designed.

If we duly look into these Particulars, and compare them together, with the Help of the holy Spirit, we shall find our selves plung'd in a Depth of the divine Wisdom that knows no bottom, which our finite Understandings

things can never fathom, and be obliged to use the Apostle's Exclamation, Rom. 11. 33. *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! Who hath known the Mind of the Lord? or who hath been his Counsellor?* Wisdom, in the general, consists in the proposing of a worthy and valuable *End*; and the most suitable *Means* for the attaining of that End; but when a fit and sufficient Mean is projected in the midst of the most perplexing Difficulties, in the present Case, this sets off the Discovery with a very bright Lustre: The surmounted Difficulties shew the Greatness of the Wisdom. Something of the Difficulty of this Case will appear, by considering the Nature and Tenor of the Law of God, which he at first delivered to Man to be the Rule of his moral Government. God at first delivered his Law to Man with the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, in the Form of a Covenant, which, from the Nature of it, is generally term'd, *The Covenant of Works*; the Tenor of which was, that upon Condition of perfect Obedience he should enjoy an everlasting Life of Happiness; but, upon the other Hand, in Case of Disobedience and Rebellion against God, his rightful Sovereign, he should infailibly bear the Punishment which his Sin deserved, either in his own Person, or by a Surety for him; in short, that the Punishment which his Sin deserved, should be some way or other sustained. This Method the all-wise God established as an invariable Law to himself to act by, in his judicial Processes with Man: And in this Covenant-Form I would be understood to speak of the Law, whensoever I shall have Occasion to mention it upon this Head.

That perfect Obedience was constituted the only and indispensable Condition of Life, is plain from that of Paul, Rom. 10. 5. *Moses, says he, describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, that the Man which doth those things shall live by them.* With many other Scriptures. See Matth. 19. 17. where a Person asking our Lord, *what he should do that he might have eternal Life*, the Lord answers him according to the Notion which he had of

the way of Life, which was the way of the old Covenant, by his own Works, saying, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* i. e. If thou wilt enter into Life, the Way that thou apprehendest, thou must perfectly keep the Commandments. The Lord refers him to the Condition of the first Covenant. in order to convince him of his Mistake, when he tho't of obtaining eternal Life by his own Obedience, giving him to understand that his own Obedience would not do unless it were absolutely perfect, which he could not justly pretend to, and therefore, it concerned him to look somewhere else for Life than to his own Works, even to Christ himself by Faith. See also *Luke 10, 27, 28. Gal. 5. 3.* And, that the Law condemned to condign Punishment, upon the first Transgression. is as plain, *Gal. 3. 10. As many as are of the Works of the law, are under the Curse: For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* This is the Voice of the Law in its first Covenant-Form. Both these Parts of this Law-Covenant are comprised in that brief Sum of it, *Gen. 2. 17. In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

Now this being the Tenor and Constitution of the Law of God, as he at first delivered it to Man, it's evident, that upon his Disobedience, an awful Sentence of Condemnation immediately devolv'd upon his guilty Head, and the Law took hold upon him as a Transgressor that must die the Death: The Punishment which his Sin deserves must be sustain'd to satisfy the Law, there's no avoiding it: So that it is not to be admired that our first Parents, when they had disobeyed the divine Law, were struck with such Fear and Dread at the hearing of the Voice of God, tho' it was their Folly to think of hiding themselves from his Presence, and an early Evidence of their Loss of the divine Image. And this being the woful Circumstance of fallen rebellious Man, an effectual Method for his Relief must needs be of very difficult Discovery: For the Penalty of the Law must be answered in its utmost Extent, for maintaining the Honour of God's adorable Sovereignty, his Truth and Immutability.

Immutability. The Question is not singly, *How shall the Law be answered?* The Reply to this had been easy, The Creature that has sinn'd must suffer: But, alas; then he must suffer to Eternity; no less, from a finite Creature, is equal to the Demerit of Sin, or can make Satisfaction for Rebellion against infinite Majesty: And then where had his Salvation been? But the Question is, *How shall the Law be answered, and yet the Sinner saved?* How shall the Sinner be relieved from the Execution of the condemning Sentence of the Law, and yet the Sentence fully executed? What Scheme can be projected and bro't to issue that will compass both these Ends? Whereby the Sinners eternal Happiness and the Law's Execution shall consist together: No Method can be sufficient for obtaining the Sinner's Happiness, but such as at the same time shall provide for the full Satisfaction of the Law in all its weighty Claims upon him; so that our Condition was plainly reduced to the last Extremity. Had this one Question been put to Creatures for a Resolution, how long, think you, had it remain'd unanswered? Would it not have struck a profound Silence thro' the whole Creation? Shall miserable Man be delivered by the Interposition of the holy Angels? Alas; they are but finite Creatures, unable to sustain the Weight of Sin's deserved Punishment, in any limited Duration: And were they able, yet, they are not willing; they have not the Compassions of a God. And the poor Sinner himself cannot satisfy the Law, otherwise than by suffering eternally. How long should the condemned Wretches have rack'd their Inventions for the Solution of the important Question to no purpose: How many elaborate Contrivances had vanished, like a Vapour, in the Air, and come to nothing: How many fair Schemes had been crush'd in the Embryo, and never come to Perfection. Some such fruitless Proposals, as might have possibly been the Issues of their distressed Consultations, we have excellently represented by the Prophet *Micah* in the 6th Chapter of his Prophecy, the 6th and 7th Verses, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with Burnt Offerings,*

*Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Alas; what are all these to the just Demands of the boldly violated Law of God? and yet, What can the guilty Creature do more than he here proposes? Is his Case then utterly irreparable? Is it quite desperate? Must the whole sinful Race infallibly perish for ever without Remedy? O! Let Heaven and Earth be astonished and admire; the great God has found and provided a blessed Remedy, which easily surmounts all the Difficulties in the Way. Behold the Product of Jehovah's Wisdom, what a strange way he has contriv'd to satisfy the broken Law, and save the guilty Rebel: God's own eternal and co-equal Son, the second Person in the glorious Godhead, takes our Nature, a human Body and Soul, in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, into a personal Union with himself, so that the divine and human Nature are but one Person, but one Lord Jesus Christ; and in this human Nature, he yields a perfect Obedience to the Precept of the Law, thus fulfilling for Sinners the Law's Condition of eternal Life, and sustains its awful Penalty to the utmost, bears that unspeakable Weight of Punishment which the Law condemned the Sinner to; and so the Son of God himself becomes a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sinner, the Creator for the Creature. Now, what a bright Glory of divine Wisdom strikes our Eye at the first View of this Method, which God has found out for the Deliverance and Salvation of condemned Creatures! Who could ever have thought of the Creator's becoming a Creature! Of God's becoming Man! That the divine and the human Nature, in the Person of the Son of God, should be so nearly united as to be but one Person! Indeed, so great, so vast is the Mystery, that now it is revealed to be so, yet we cannot comprehend it, how it is so: It as well astonishes as says us: So that it justly deserves the Apostle's Epithet, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Without Controversy, says he, great is the Mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the Flesh.* When no less a Sacrifice would satisfy the Law, and atone for the Creature's Sin,*

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the eternal Son of God by this strange Union with Flesh offers up himself, a Sacrifice of infinite Value. Heb. 10. 4. 5. *It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats (those Jewish Sacrifices) should take away Sins ; wherefore, when he cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not, but a Body hast thou prepared me.* No other expedient but this was found sufficient. The Apostle here refers to the 6th Verse of the 40th Psalm, where the Words are, *Mine Ears hast thou opened ;* but the Apostle rightly interprets the Intendment of them to be, *a Body hast thou prepared me ;* which the Psalmist means, when he speaks of the Formation and Organizing of the Ear, one of the Members of a human Body.

Thus you have heard something of the *Intricacy* of the Case of Sinner's Restoration to Happiness, and the expedient proposed. Let us now consider how the divine Wisdom appears in the *Fitness* and *Sufficiency* of this Method for the obtaining of its designed End. It was designed for the Deliverance of the guilty Sinner from the Condemnation of the divine Law, and advancing him to eternal Happiness, by answering all the Claims and Demands which the Law had upon him, and which stood as so many flaming Swords, guarding against him the Way to the Tree of Life, and terribly forbidding his approach. The Law demanded two Things of the Sinner,

1. A perfect and sinless Obedience, as the Condition of eternal Life : Upon no other Terms could eternal Life be enjoy'd ; this Condition must be fulfilled, otherwise the promised Life cannot be obtain'd. Now our blessed Lord Jesus fully answered this Claim of the Law in the Sinner's Room ; he yielded a perfect and sinless Obedience to it ; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners ; and so obtain'd for Believers the lost Title to eternal Happiness, by fulfilling for them the Condition upon which only it was promised : He was therefore *made under the Law*, that so he might *redeem them that were under the Law*, Gal. 4. 4, 5.

2. The

2. The Law demanded of the Sinner Punishment for his Disobedience: And this must also be answered before his Happiness can be obtain'd: Our glorious Lord submitted his blessed Head to the Stroke of Justice, standing between the Sinner and the awful Blow, taking it upon himself: He fully satisfied the poenal Demands of the violated Law, so that it could require no more. This will appear if we consider the vast Weight of Suffering which our dear Redeemer bore, and the exalted Dignity of his Person who sustain'd it. How did he suffer in his *Name*! That awful Name which the holy Angels low adore, and at which every Knee shall bow: With what Scorn and Derision, with what Indignity and Mock-Homage was our sovereign Lord abus'd, by an inhuman and insulting Rabble! What did he suffer in his *Body*! Being scourged with cruel Whips, crown'd with pointed Thorns, pierced thro' with iron Nails, and rack'd upon the cursed Tree. But, O! What did he suffer in his *Soul*! In the Garden and upon the Cross! *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his Soul, as well as his Body, an Offering for Sin.* God the Father made all the Sea-Billows of his Wrath pass over him: So weighty was the amazing Pressure, so deep the Agony of his Soul, that it express'd a heavy Shower of Blood from his sacred Body, and makes him say, *Now is my Soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* But, who was he that bore this unspeakable Load of complicated Misery? Why, his supporting Strength may tell you who he is: It is the high *Immanuel*, God-man; the personal Union of the human Nature with the divine, puts an infinite Worth into his Suffering; so that he is a richer and more valuable Sacrifice to answer the divine Law, than if the whole Race of sinning Creatures had suffered to Eternity: By this great Sacrifice the awful Authority and just Honours of Jehovah's Law are better maintain'd, and the fearful Regard due to it better secured: O Sirs, in what triumphant and tremendous Majesty does the royal Law of God appear, when the Son of God himself becomes a Sacrifice to it, to atone for the Creature's Sin: And what an ample Satisfaction to the  
Law

Law must this be, which thus *magnifies it and makes it honourable*, as was prophesy'd of our Lord Jesus, *Isa.* 42. 21. Thus you see that all the Claims and Demands of the Law are fully answered by our Lord Jesus Christ: The Law loses nothing by the Sinner's Salvation in this Way, but comes off with infinite Advantage: God's sovereign Authority is seated on a Throne of awful Majesty: His infinite Holiness and Justice, his sweetest and richest Mercy are rendered gloriously conspicuous, as we shall afterwards observe, and God himself exceedingly endeared to the Hearts of his People. O Sirs, how glorious must this Method of Salvation be which obtains all these high and noble Ends!

Now Brethren, Do but consider these Things which I have but very darkly represented to you; the perplexing Difficulties which stood in the Way of fallen Man's Recovery, the strange Method which God has propos'd for that End, with its Suitableness and Sufficiency, how it surmounts all the opposing Difficulties, and compasses its designed and invaluable Ends; and, O! how glorious does it shine, with the refulgent Rays of the divine Wisdom, that bright Pearl of the Crown of Heaven! How amiable does it appear to the bright Intelligences of the higher Houë, the holy Angels! They soon discovered, in the Procedure of Providence, that there was a Design of Mercy for fallen wretched Man in the divine Breast - but possibly, the Way in which this Mercy was to be dispensed was not revealed to them, and so they could not think upon the Method whereby the Design could be accomplished: These Morning Stars which sang together and shouted for Joy, beholding the Works of God, when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, they beheld with a surprizing Pleasure all the Dispensations of God towards his Church in its gradual Advancements to the bright Period of the Redeemer's coming: But, O! when they come to see the glorious Scene laid open, when they behold the eternal Son of the eternal Father, their God and Maker, descend to take our Nature upon him, and bring about the Sinner's Salvation in this strange Manner, with all these Advantages

Advantages, what low Prostrations were then in Heaven! Adoring and admiring the astonishing Issues of the divine Council! Before I proceed any farther I can't forbear making this Remark, That all Unbelievers, such as are looking to any thing else for their Pardon and Justification beside the Mediation of Christ alone, have never yet understood the Gospel; they have never seen their wretched State by Sin as it is, nor rightly apprehended the Method which God has established for their Relief; and so cast a Dash upon the whole glorious Contrivance of Salvation, rob God of the Glory, and deprive their own Souls of the Benefit of it. But farther,

2 The Wisdom of God in this Method of Salvation appears, in his bringing about the great Design by the Instrumentality of the most wicked Agents. This certainly deserves a Remark, that when the wicked Jews were only gratifying their Malice against the Son of God in all their cruel Sufferings they inflicted on him, he was thereby carrying on a higher Design, which they little dream'd of, even the Salvation of lost Sinners. God, by permitting them to execute their most unjust Revenges upon his dear Son, was thereby bringing Life and Salvation to guilty undone Creatures. Every Suffering which they laid upon the holy Jesus, as the most inhuman Murderers, God the Father laid the same upon him, and himself bore it with this Design, thereby to make A onement for undone Sinners: And possibly his Death was positively designed for the eternal Salvation of some of those who were wickedly instrumental in it; as may seem probable from that Prayer of his, upon the Cross, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do?* At least it intimates, that their Crime, tho' great, was not unpardonable; but, that upon their Application to him afterwards by a true *Faith*, their Souls should be washed from the Guilt of that and all their other Sins through the Virtue of that Blood which they shed. Is not this astonishing, that he who suffered as a Malefactor should indeed be the Saviour of Sinners, bringing about their Redemption by those very Sufferings? That those who contracted a most horrid Guilt by inflicting them, could

could only be healed by those Stripes which they laid upon him? How strangely has the Lord bro't about Redemption for us! O! The *Depths of the divine Wisdom*! Surely God's Judgments are a great deep; his Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the great Waters, where his Foot-steps are not known.

3. The divine Wisdom in the Gospel Method of Salvation appears beautiful, in that God has therein proposed to send his *Holy Spirit* to renew and sanctify the wicked Hearts of rebellious Sinners, by the most proper Means, suited to their rational Nature. Had there been Provision made only for their Justification by answering the penal Demands of the Law for them, and none for their Sanctification, this had been such a Blot and Defect in the Contrivance, as had marr'd the Beauty of the whole: For the poor Sinner will not, cannot sanctify his own Heart: Man has so lost the Image of God, and is by Nature so much in Love with Sin and wedded to it, that he never will love God and Holiness until the Lord open his blinded Understanding, and powerfully change his obstinate Will: And how disagreeable had it been, and unbecoming the divine Wisdom, to have advanced such loathsome vile Creatures in this natural Condition to the Glory of Heaven: There is no such Thing: *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*: Those whose eternal Salvation Christ intended by his Death, in his own Time he converts and sanctifies by his Spirit, powerfully working with his Word. Were it not so, he would not have a Seed to serve him on the Earth, the great Design of his Death, the eternal Happiness of Sinners, had been frustrated, and their Salvation but half effected. But there is not the least Blemish nor Defect in the divine Scheme: It is all over consistent and harmonious. This is the Declaration of the divine Mind, *A new Heart also will I give you, & a new Spirit will I put within you, & I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them,* Ezek. 36, 26, 27.

4. The Wisdom of God in this Method of Salvation appears in the blessed Security that is therein laid for the eternal Salvation of his People. The Lord Jesus himself is the Believer's Surety in the new Covenant. All Man's Security in the first Covenant, was in himself; his eternal Happiness depended upon his own mutable Will, and he soon made Shipwreck of it. And so it might be, and certainly would be with Believers now, did their Salvation stand upon the same Bottom. If *Adam* in Innocency turned from God to Sin, yielding to Temptation, when there were no previous Principles of Sin in him; surely, those who have such Remains of the old Sinful Nature within them, such delusive Snares and powerful invisible Enemies without them, would not stand, did their Perseverance depend upon their own Management; were they intirely left to their own Conduct: And so all that Christ has done for them would be to no purpose: Their eternal Happiness would be nothing the nearer: And then how deficient had the Plan been that was laid for their Salvation? All the Cost and Expence that had hitherto been laid out upon it (if I may here borrow Terms from human Transactions) had been in vain. But the Lord Jesus takes the Salvation of his People intirely into his own Hand: He is equally *the Author and Finisher of their Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He undertakes to bring them to eternal Glory against all Difficulties, Oppositions, Fears or Snares that may come in the Way; both by interceding, and ever appearing in the Presence of God for them, and by preserving the Life of Grace in them, and restoring them again in all their strayings, to walk in the Paths of Righteousness. The Lord Christ has this Charge of his People committed to him, as a Part of his mediatorial Office. See that blessed Declaration of Christ himself to this purpose, John 6. 39, 40. *This is the Father's Will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting Life; And I will raise him up at the last Day.*

*Day.* Here he tells us that he has the special Charge of his People given to him by his Father, that he should lose none of them, and accordingly engages to put the compleating Act to their Glorification, in raising them up at the last Day. No less worthy are those precious Words of his, John 10. 27, 28. *My Sheep bear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand.* He takes them in his own Hand and keeps them safely and securely, so that they shall never perish. Never, until either his Hand shall grow weak, or his Faithfulness & Truth shall fail. But yet, if they transgress his Laws, and wander away from God they must expect to smart for it. Tho' God will not cast them off for ever, and crush them under his terrible Justice, yet he has a chastning Rod whereby, as a tender Father, he will reduce his Children to their Duty. He will, it's probable, take away the sweet Peace of their Consciences, and spread a fearful gloomy Cloud of Darkness over their distressed Souls, so that they shall find it is an evil thing, and bitter, that they have so far forsaken the Lord their God. Some way or other he will correct them for it, *Heb.* 12. 6, 7. And this is one of the Means he uses for maintaining and advancing their Sanctification, and preserving them to Life eternal. *Verie* 10. *He chastens us, says the Apostle, for our Profit; that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.*

Thus I have shewn you something of the glorious *Wisdom* of God display'd in the admirable Method of fallen Man's Salvation: And you see how effectual it is, and consistent in all its Parts; with what admirable *Wisdom* every thing relating to it was concerted in the divine Council. But again,

2. The Glory of God's *Justice* and *Holiness* is brightly set forth in this Method of Salvation. Here you may see that he is a God of infinite Holiness and inflexible Justice. To make Laws without Penalties, those necessary Guards against Violations, is such a bad Piece of Government as is inconsistent with human, much more with the divine *Wisdom*. And to make penal  
**Laws**

Laws without ever regarding their Execution, is but a mean trifling, infinitely beneath the divine Majesty: Such a Negligence as this exposes Authority to the greatest Contempt, and degrades it to the lowest Degree of Baseness. Who would regard that Authority that suffers it self to be insulted with Impunity? The great and sovereign God is not such a contemptible Being: He will keep up the awful Dignity of his Authority in his Method of Government, and not suffer it to be trampled upon at Pleasure by his Creatures: Before Sin should go unpunished, he would punish it in his own beloved Son: Behold the Son of God in his Agonies, press'd under the Weight of God's terrible Justice, and there you may see what a just God Jehovah is, and what infinite Indignation he justly conceives against Sin: There you may see the hateful and provoking Nature of Sin, that fills the divine Mind with such high and terrible Resentments. O ye Christless and un sanctified Sinners! Consider what a God you have deal with: *It is a fearful thing, says the Apostle, to fall into the Hands of the living God. Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong, in the Day that he shall deal with thee?* Ezek. 22. 14. Awake, awake, out of your Death-Slumbers, and look about you; see what awful Justice is engaged against you. I know that the loose Notions which you entertain of the great Goodness and Mercy of God, keeps your Consciences in a stupid Quiet. God's saving Mercy is indeed inconceivably great, and appears in his sending his dear Son to redeem us, and accepting of his Satisfaction for such as by Faith lay hold upon him; which is done without any Injury or Disadvantage to his sovereign Authority and Government: But in no other way can the Exercise of his saving Mercy consist with the Security of his glorious Authority: And sure, the all-wise and glorious God will not exalt one of his Attributes upon the Ruins of another; nay, even of his whole Majesty and Greatness: So that you who have never come to Christ by Faith, and so have no actual Interest in his satisfactory Righteousness, are bound over to answer the great and terrible Justice of God in your own Persons:

And

And unless you fly to the Lord Jesus who has bore the Weight of it for Sinners Relief, you shall be crushed under it to all Eternity: The great God will not debase himself for your Salvation, but will maintain the Rights of his Royalty. O Sinners, tremble at the Tho'ts of these tremendous Truths, and know assuredly, that unless you comply with that most wise and gracious Establishment of God, wherein he has both provided for his own Glory and your Happiness, you shall feel the Weight of his vindictive Arm and the Lashes of his iron Rod forever.

3. The boundless *Love* and dear *Mercy* of the blessed God is illustriously displayed in the Redemption of wretched Sinners by his dear Son. The wondrous Love of God in our Redemption by Jesus Christ is indeed an infinite and boundless Theme, which might afford us a Discourse commensurate with Eternity itself, had we but Words in Weight and Number equal to the Subject. But here we must be short: O may we come to that blessed State at last, where our capacious Thoughts shall be better able to take it in, and never meet with any ungrateful Avocations from the joyful Contemplation. The Greatness of God's Love herein will appear,

1. If you consider the reasonable and strong Claims of Justice, I mean, for punishing Sinners in their own Persons according to their Demerit. They had rendred themselves odious to God's Holiness, were guilty of the most heinous and criminal Rebellion against the most adorable Sovereignty, the most awful and righteous Authority, and had broken the strongest Bonds and most endearing Obligations, and violated the Rights of Heaven. Is it not wonderful that the Claims of Justice so powerfully enforced had not been granted! O Sirs, consider, that when Pity and Compassion turned the Ballance, Justice might have done it; and then how miserable had we all been forever, shut up with the apostate Angels, under the gloomy Horrors of eternal Desperation..

2. How great is the Love of God, not only in condescending to save us, but that at so dear a Rate! When

no other Way could be found, ( at least that we can conceive ) consistent with the Security and maintaining of the Honours of his Majesty, he sent his own dear Son, the very Brightness of his own Glory, and express Image of his Person ; who as freely came in our Nature, reconciling himself to all the Circumstances of Abasement, bore an inconceivable Weight of Misery, and poured out his Soul unto Death : And all for the Redemption of poor vile and hell-deserving Creatures. Surely the Love of Christ passes Knowledge, *Eph. 3. 19.* Well might the Apostle say, *1 John 4. 10. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.*

Thus have I open'd to you something of the bright Glory of God that is to be seen in the Gospel of Christ, by considering the Displays of it in that astonishing Method which God has taken for the Recovery and Salvation of undone Sinners therein revealed. I might farther shew you how we may discover much of God's Glory in many other things of the Gospel ; such as the Account it gives us of the general Resurrection and Judgment at the last Day, with the august and glorious Solemnity of it, and the manner of Procedure in it : As also, of the Happiness of the Godly in a future State in the glorious Enjoyment of God. The precious Gospel of Christ reveals much of the Glories of the invisible and future World, such as may justly fill us with great Thoughts and deep Impressions of God, and so affect our Hearts as to conform us more to his glorious Image.

But I must proceed to make some Reflections by way of Inference upon what has been offered.

And,

1. From the whole, we may farther take Occasion to admire God's glorious Wisdom : Particularly, in making Sin, the very worst of Evils, thus to subserve the Illustration of his own Glory. Sin, above all Things, is far from having any such Tendency in its own Nature, and yet God will have Glory to his own Name even from it, in the Redemption of Sinners ; such a Glory as we

had never beheld, if Sin had never been. Is any thing then too hard for God; who in the Vastness of his Wisdom can make Sin it self an Occasion of shewing forth such Glory.

2. From what has been spoken, you may observe how much clearer Light we now enjoy under the bright Dispensation of the Gospel of Christ, than the Church of God was favour'd with before his coming in the Flesh. You have heard more at this Time, of the Way which God has taken for the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners, tho' from one of the meanest that Christ has employ'd to serve him in the Gospel, than all the Old Testament Prophets could have told you. He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the least and meanest true Gospel Minister in the Church of Christ, after his Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, when he had gloriously set up his Kingdom in the World, is, in this Respect, greater than *John the Baptist*, and all the Prophets that ever were before him, *Matth. 11. 11.* He has a much more excellent Ministry, and a clearer Knowledge of the glorious Mysteries relating to our Salvation.

3. This Doctrine informs us of the great Blindness of such Persons as see nothing of the bright Glory of God in the Gospel. If it be so that the Glory of God is therein presented to us as in a Glass, then sure they must be very blind who don't discover it. And yet, alas; how many such blind earthly Souls are there; who, tho' they read never so much of the holy Scriptures, yet, never discern any thing of this bright Glory in them; but they are to them as common Stories, or empty Tales. O lamentable! Altho' the Vail is taken off the Gospel, it remains still upon their Hearts. O Sirs! Consider this is a certain Evidence that you are in a Christless, perishing Estate: You have never been savingly illuminated by the holy Ghost. All the Godly do behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, so as to have their Hearts much influenc'd and sanctified by it: *Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image. 1. Cor. 1. 2.*

24. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews as a stumbling  
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*bling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost : Whose Minds the God of this World hath blinded, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. And Verse 6. God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.*

4. You may think with your selves, from what you have heard, how bright and ravishing the Glory must be which the Saints of God shall behold in Heaven, when both Vail and Glass shall be taken out of the way, and they shall see it as it is. *Now we see thro' a Glass, darkly, but then Face to Face.* All these Things shall be open'd with a brighter Glory there, affording a delightful Entertainment to all the blessed Minds for ever ; where they shall be ever celebrating the Praises of redeeming Love and Wisdom, in the Possession of the purchased Inheritance, and Presence of their God and Saviour.

5. Hence be informed of the high Excellency of the Gospel ; how much we ought to prize and value it. How excellent and worthy must that be which brings the Glory of God himself to the View of Creatures, especially in their Redemption from the Pains of Hell to the happy Enjoyment of himself. *Rom. 1. 16.* Says the blessed Apostle, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* There is a Meiosis in the Words, more intended than express'd ; he means, I highly esteem the Gospel of Christ, and account it my greatest Glory. And the Reasons which he gives for it are the very same afforded in our Text. *First,* Because of its Efficacy to the Sanctification, and, consequently, the Salvation of Souls : For, says he, *It is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth.* And *Secondly,* Because of the Way of Salvation thro' Christ's Righteousness revealed therein, and the Subject thereof ; for therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith. O ! What

a high Favour is it that we should enjoy the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, as the Apostle calls it, *1 Tim.*

5. 11.

6. From the foregoing Doctrine we may clearly infer, the high Excellency of that holy Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper, which we have this Day been honoured with, which represents a crucified Lord Jesus. O Sirs, this holy Sacrament represents and holds forth the greatest Wonder of Angels as well as Men, the Son of God himself bleeding and dying for the Salvation of his poor guilty Creatures. The astonishing Glory of God revealed to us in the great Doctrines of the Gospel is here visibly represented before our Eyes. How glorious and venerable is this holy Ordinance. Our blessed Lord appointed it to be a Signification of his bitter Sufferings, to revive in the Memories of his dear People his cruel Death for them ; that so, in attending upon it, their Souls might be immediately employed in contemplating all the divine Glories of their Redemption, whereby suitable and heavenly Affections might be excited in them, and so they might enjoy near and sweet Communion with himself ! Thus should we have all the Graces of the Spirit of God enlivened and advanced in us by this holy Ordinance, and be setting out with renewed Strength and Resolution in the Way of Holiness even unto Death.

But it's time to dismiss this Head of Doctrine. And so I pass on, to speak something to the two remaining *Propositions* observed from the Text.

The first of which is,

*That the Sight of God's Glory in the Gospel is of a transforming Efficacy ; the Soul that beholds it, is thereby changed into the same Image.*

And the other is,

*That the Holy Spirit of God is the great Author and efficient Cause of this glorious Change.*

And for Brevity sake I shall treat upon them both together without Distinction, in the following Order ;

1. I shall shew you what is meant by being changed into the Image of the Glory of God that appears in the Gospel.
2. I shall endeavour to illustrate the Truth of this *Proposition*, That such as do behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, are thereby changed into the same Image. And,
3. I shall shew you how the Holy Spirit effects this Change by the Gospel.

1. I return to the first of these Heads, which is to shew, *What it is to be changed into the Image of that Glory of God which appears in the Gospel.*

For opening this to your Understandings you must know,

1. As has been already observed, That by beholding the Glory of God in the Gospel, is understood, a beholding the revealed Truths of the Gospel in their Glory ; a beholding of them shining with that Glory of God which they manifest and discover, ( something of which has been already considered ) so that the Glory of God in the Gospel, is not to be taken in this Place separately from the System of Gospel-Truths which discover it ; and so, to be changed into the Image of God's Glory here, is to be made answerable to the glorious Truths of the Gospel.

And hence,

2. You must observe, that the Truths of the Gospel have a native and inherent Tendency to influence and affect the Heart in a holy Manner ; to excite and work holy and heavenly Dispositions in the Soul, agreeable to the Will of God, and well pleasing in his Sight. It is the peculiar Excellency of the Gospel of Christ, that it is fully sufficient in its Kind, as a Mean, to dispose the Heart in all Things agreeable to the divine Will ; which  
noble

noble End the best improved Phil sophy never could attain. It is the great Scope and Design of the whole Gospel, both in its Doctrines and Precepts, to make Sinners holy, and conform to God's moral Image: To this it tends in its own Nature: And when the Heart is affected and disposed answerable to Gospel Truths, then it is sanctified, pleasing in the Sight of God, and agreeable to his holy Will. And this is what is here meant by being changed into the Image of his Glory; or into the Image of the glorious Truths of the Gospel. The Soul is then changed into the Image of the glorious Truths of Christ when their Design and moral Tendency is impressed upon it, so that it is rendered answerable to them; as the Impression upon the Wax answers to the Seal. This is to have the Law of God written upon the Heart, according to *Jer. 31. 33.* Where, I think the Law of God is to be understood in its largest Extant, both for the Doctrines and Precepts of God in his Word; in which Sense it is frequently used in the holy Scriptures: Now, when the Heart is affected answerably to the divine Law, it bears (tho' an imperfect) yet a legible Transcript and Copy of that divine Original; so that if you knew the Heart of a godly Man you might read God's Law upon it; you might spell it out in the Dispositions of his Soul, as so many legible Characters of it.

To make this yet easier to your Apprehensions, I shall particularly instance in some of the Truths of the Gospel, and shew you what Dispositions they have a Tendency to influence the Heart with.

And, *First*, The Gospel informs us that all Mankind are brought into a State of Condemnation by Sin, so that whosoever has not an Interest in the Mediation of Jesus Christ his only Remedy, shall surely perish for ever\*. It

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\* If any should be dissatisfied at my saying that this is revealed by the Gospel, supposing it to be only discovered by the Law, I would have it considered that the Doctrine of a Sinner's Justification be-

It farther informs us that there is no other Way of Relief for the Sinner, but through the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Now, Is it not evident that these Truths tend to humble the Sinner exceedingly under a Sense of his Wretchedness, and to bring him off from all Self-dependence, from all Trust in himself or his own Doings, and to make him truly poor in Spirit? And when these Things are rightly apprehended and certainly believed, they will of Necessity produce these Effects in the Heart.

Again, The Gospel informs us of Christ's mediatorial Undertaking for the Relief of undone Sinners; of his All-sufficiency and Fulness, and his gracious Offer of Salvation thro' his Righteousness, to all such as humbly and unfeignedly acknowledge their guilty and helpless Condition, and fly to him for their Relief, leaning their guilty perishing Souls only upon him, depending upon his Grace, Ability and Faithfulness. Now, these glorious Truths of the Gospel have a manifest Tendency to bring the Soul to close with the Lord Jesus by Faith, and repose a sweet Trust and Affiance in him, and to fill it with a very strong and dear Love to him. When all these Truths are realized to the Mind, the Weight and Importance of them discovered, the Soul is then heartily willing to be saved by Christ in any Way, upon any Terms, and depends on him, and him only for its Salvation.

Also, the Glory of God's Wisdom, Holiness, Condescension and Love, which so clearly shine forth in the Gospel, fills the Soul that discovers it, with a very affectionate Admiration and Astonishment.

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*fore God and Salvation from Hell by Christ alone (which is the very Substance of the Gospel) necessarily supposes and implies antecedent Condemnation: When the Gospel tells a Sinner, That unless he believes in Christ for his Salvation, he shall surely perish for his Sin, in this it certainly tells him that he is under a Sentence of Condemnation to Hell upon the Account of his Sin, from which he can be no other Way relieved.*

Thus

Thus, when the revealed Truths of the Gospel are so applied to the Heart as to influence it with such answerable Dispositions, habitually residing in it, then is it changed into the glorious Image of the Gospel, and made answerable to it, as the impressed Wax is to the Seal ; the Heart is turned as it were into a Gospel Mold.

2. And so I proceed to the second Head, Which is to illustrate the Truth of this Proposition, *That such as behold the Glory of God in the Gospel, are thereby changed into the same Image.*

And to make this appear,

1. It is evident from the Nature of the Thing. It is impossible for the Understanding to perceive and look upon the Truths of the Gospel in their divine Glory and Excellency, without answerable Impressions upon the other Powers of the Soul. So great is the Importance, Weight, Excellence and Glory of the Truths of Christ, that when they are rightly apprehended and conceived of by the Understanding, it powerfully recommends them to the Approbation and Complacence of the Will ; so as it no longer resists, but freely complies with their practical Use and Tendency. It's true, the Will of fallen corrupted Man is naturally disposed to the greatest Obstinacy to practical Holiness, and the great Truths of Christ : But when they shine bright in the Eye of the Understanding in their divine Beauty & Glory, then the Will is sweetly overcome and persuaded to be for God. The Understanding, you know, is the directive and leading Faculty of the Soul, which is to guide and influence the Will and other Affections. Indeed, the blessed Harmony of our Souls Powers is miserably broken by the Fall, so that the Will often refuses Obedience to the Understanding's Dictates ; but when the *Holy Spirit* comes to restore God's moral Image upon the Soul, he restores much of that original and happy Concord between its Faculties ; and so makes all Things become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. The Resistance of the Will is much occasioned by the Blindness of the Understanding, by its mean and confused Conceptions of the Truths of God : Hence, altho' a Person may be able to furnish himself with Reason

sons which sufficiently convince his Judgment, that God is to be loved and served above all, that *Holiness* is the most reasonable, necessary and comfortable Practice ; yet, his Will will not comply until he has clearer Apprehensions of the Truths of Christ, and discovers the transcendent Excellency and attractive Glory of the Gospel ; and then he is much taken with it and allured by it. It is indeed difficult to convince such as are yet in their natural State of Ignorance and Blindness, of the powerful Efficacy of the Doctrines of the Gospel upon an enlightened Soul : But it is most certain from this Text, and the Nature of the Thing, That none ever beheld them in their divine Glory, but they were sanctified by them, and made truly holy : Beholding in the Gospel the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same Image.

Again, 2. Consider, That the Soul must first be wounded by the Law of God before he can see the Glory of God in the Gospel. Persons may profess the Truths of the Gospel as the Articles of their Faith, and have a superficial Knowledge of them, and yet never see the Glory of God shining in them. Until a Sinner comes truly to see his wretched and undone Condition by Sin, the glorious Doctrine of Salvation thro' the Mediation and Righteousness of the Son of God, will be but a superficial and empty Speculation to him : But when he comes once to be thoroughly convinced of his Need of Redemption by Christ, of his condemned and undone State by Sin, O ! Then he is in another Condition to behold the bright Glory of the Gospel of Christ : So that this Discovery of Guilt and Condemnation is necessarily presupposed in the Person who beholds the Glory of God in the Glass of the Gospel. And now, when a poor Sinner sees his condemned and undone Condition by Sin in the Glass of the Law, *that without Relief somewhere out of himself he must eternally perish* ; O, how is he then taken with the *Doctrine of Redemption in Jesus Christ*, when it shines in upon his Understanding as it is in itself : How beautiful and glorious then does he behold the Gospel Revelation of Peace with God, and  
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Salvation from Hell and deserved Wrath, thro' Jesus a Mediator? How reasonable is it to think that his whole Heart should be sweetly overcome by it, and all the Powers of his Soul yielding up to its blessed Influence so as to be changed into the same Image. If such of you as are here this Day in an unconverted christless State, who now slight the Gospel, and think little of a *Saviour*, did but see your wretched perishing Condition as it is, you would then know how to prize a *Redeemer*, and see a bright Glory in the Gospel, if the *Holy Spirit* enlightened your Minds by it to discover Salvation for your perishing Souls in Christ: You would then know something of its attractive and transforming Efficacy.

It is clearly manifest from what has been spoken, that such as have been savingly enlightened and are true Believers, have their Devotion much enlivened and their Sanctification promoted by the Contemplation of the revealed Truths of Christ! Whence it is also apparent, that true Piety and experimental Religion, even in its highest Advancement, is very remote from Enthusiasm, and being the meer Product of the blind Fancies of injudicious and ignorant People, as it is generally deemed by un sanctified Souls who know little of it. It seems the Apostle's great Flights of Affection towards God, and flaming Zeal for Christ had exposed him to the same Censure in his Day, and the Godly at this Day may say with him, *If we be besides our selves, it is to God: For the Love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. 5. 13, 14.

But to conclude this Head with a brief Reflection upon what has been hitherto said upon it; it is plain, That if it is the Nature of a rational Soul to entertain Impressions answerable to the Discoveries of the Understanding, and proportioned to the Weight and Importance of them; to have the Will influenced and swayed by the Understanding; and if the Truths of the Gospel are of such Weight, Excellence and Glory, as to be sufficient in their abstracted Nature, to engage the Will of a rational Creature to a Compliance with their moral Tendency, then it is plain, I say, that the Soul which beholds them as they are in their proper Glory, must needs be transformed

formed into their very Likeness, and made so answerable to them that it may properly be said to be changed into the same Image. The same is likewise evident from the other Consideration, of the previous Preparation of the Soul for such a Discovery by a Sense of Guilt and Condemnation, which gives it still a farther Advantage to the Production of this Effect. But, in the mean time, we must be careful that we don't carry the Demonstration so high as to imagine that the bringing about this glorious Change were in our own Hands; as though the Conversion and Sanctification of a Sinner depended only upon his own Improvement of his rational Powers; as though all that is necessary to that End were only an external Gospel-Revelation from God and the Exercise of Reason in our selves. At the same Time that the Apostle tells us, That by beholding the Glory of the Lord in the Gospel, we are changed into the same Image, he also tells us, That this is done by the Spirit of the Lord. Altho' the Lord requires us to be diligent in the Use of Means for our Sanctification, yet the Thing itself is always attributed to the Holy Ghost as his peculiar Work, without whose powerful and almighty Concurrence, all our Endeavours will be ineffectual.

Which leads me to consider the

3d. And last Head proposed, Which is to shew, *How the Holy Spirit effects this Change by the Gospel.*

And,

1. The Holy Spirit opens and enables the Understandings to behold the revealed Truths of God as they are in themselves, and so by them enlightens it to conceive rightly of divine Things. The first and principal Work of the Spirit of God in Conversion, is the causing of Light to shine in the Soul's dark Hemisphere, Altho' Persons, by the Improvement of their Understandings, may acquire such a Knowledge of the Gospel as to be able to distinguish between Truth and Error, and to evince and maintain the former by Reason and Argument; yet, it is the proper Work of the Holy Spirit to give such true Conceptions and right Apprehensions of these Truths which they thus profess, as to  
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make them effectual to the Sanctification of the Soul : This is beyond the Compass of our natural Abilities since the Fall : To this Purpose is that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God ; for they are Foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* That this right and sanctifying Understanding of the revealed Truths of God, depends so much upon the Operation of his Holy Spirit, is attested by the certain Experience of the Godly, who find, that by his blessed Influence, they have at sometimes much more clear and Soul-affecting Views and Apprehensions of them than at other Times they can attain to. By a special and supernatural Illumination of the Mind, the Holy Spirit leads & guides the Soul in the Way wherein it should go, directs it how to come to Christ and please God : So much is clearly intimated in that of the Apostle, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are LED by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the Sons of God.*

2. The Holy Spirit establishes the Heart in the Faith of the great Truths of the Gospel ; so that they are no longer Matters of Opinion, but the most certain Realities to the Person. He can venture his Life, and (which is more) his Soul and eternal Salvation, upon the Truth of them, which he does, when by Faith he closes with the Lord Jesus. He is now affected with them as with the most important Certainties.

And then,

3. By the Truths of Christ thus discovered and believed, the blessed Spirit agreeably draws and engages the Will to comply with the Gospel : In this Manner he powerfully overcomes its Obstinacy and causes it to bow. At first he batters against it as it were by Compulsion, with the fiery Darts of the Law ; and then opens the Scene of redeeming Love in Jesus, causes the Doctrines of Redemption, thro' the Son of God, to shine in the Eye of the Understanding with all their heavenly Glory, and then it can no longer withstand, but most freely and affectionately complies with the Demands of the Gospel, and the Soul is made a most willing Captive

to the Lord Jesus. Thus the obstinate Sinner, by a rational Violence is overcome, so that universal *Holiness* is his most affectionate and unreserved Choice. And altho' these several Steps are not so discoverable in the Experience of some as of others, nor the Transition or passing from one to another so distinct, yet this is the Way in which the blessed Change from Nature to Grace is constantly effected, whatever circumstantial Diversities may be.

4. Having opened the principal Doctrines contained in the two foregoing Propositions, I shall now conclude with a brief *Improvement* of the same.

And the first Use I shall make of what has been said, shall be for *Information*.

And,

1. You may hence be informed, How agreeable to their rational Nature God deals with Sinners in their Conversion. Altho' the Conversion of a Sinner is the Work of God alone, and he, in his natural State, entertains the greatest Obstinacy and Prejudice against true Holiness, yet this Change is not wrought in him by a blind brutal Necessity; by such a meer physical Operation, as that whereby we can work upon a Block or a Stone; much less by a compulsive Force against his Will, as this Doctrine of the powerful and irresistible Efficacy of converting Grace has been unjustly charged, which is inconsistent with the very Nature of the Thing: But the Soul is directed, and the Will irresistably determined by the Light of the Understanding: And this is so far from being contrary to the Nature of a rational Creature, that I'm sure it were contrary thereto for it to do otherwise. When a Sinner is made willing in the Day of God's Power, he sees the highest Reason for his Choice, whereby every Thought is brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ, according to 2 Cor. 10. 5.

2. From what has been spoken, you may easily learn the great Mischief and pernicious Tendency of Ignorance. Poor deceived Souls are apt to make Ignorance their

their Confidence and Refuge, and think it will be a great Plea for them ; but, alas, It is like to be their Damnation, both, because it is wilful when they enjoy the Means of saving Knowledge, and as it keeps them altogether out of the Way of Conversion to Christ. To this Purpose says the Lord by his Prophet, *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge*, Hof. 4. 6. The dreadful Consequences of Ignorance is expressed by the Apostle, *Eph. 4. 18.* Where he speaks of Souls being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts. The Devil well knows that this is one of his best Securities for the upholding of his Interest ; and therefore that Prince of Darkness endeavours to keep poor Souls blind-folded to their Destruction. *2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.* *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost : in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, should shine unto them.* He knows that if the Light of the glorious Gospel should shine into the Minds of his Subjects, his Empire would be in Danger of tottering and falling to the Ground, but if he can prevent that, he has no Reason to fear \*. Alas, how many precious Souls are kept in the Possession of the Devil and under his Dominion, through the Ignorance that is in them.

3. The foregoing Doctrine teaches us a very great and sovereign Mean for the advancing of Sanctification, *viz.* The Study and Knowledge of divine Truths. *Beholding*, says the Apostle, *as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same Image.* The Contemplation of the glorious Truths of Christ admirably

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\* The Pope and the Devil unanimously agree in attaching poor People to their Interests, by keeping them in Ignorance.

enlivens *Grace* and promotes *Holiness* in the People of God. It's true, in Conjunction with this, they do profitably make Use of other Means which the Lord has appointed, such as Prayer, Praise, and the other Ordinances of God; but it is this that gives Life and Influence to them all. Wherefore, among all other Means, we ought to have a very special Regard to this, endeavouring to increase in the Knowledge of God, to meditate much upon and apply to our Hearts the Truths of the glorious Gospel of Christ.

#### U S E 2. Of Examination.

What has been said, affords Matter for the Trial of the State of our Souls toward God. You have heard that the Conversion and Sanctification of the Soul is wrought by the Instrumentality of the Gospel, enlightning the Mind, and so renewing and sanctifying the whole Soul. Now Sirs, pray examine your selves; Has the Truths of God ever had such powerful Influence and Effect upon you? Or, Don't many of you rest contented with a meer dead lifeless Profession of them, while they never effectually reached your Hearts? A certain Evidence that you are yet dead in Trespasses and Sins; in a natural Christless State. The truly Godly beholding in the Gospel the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image. Neither is it sufficient to have some transient Impressions at some times made upon your Hearts by divine Truths, but the habitual and prevailing Disposition of your Souls must be answerable to the Gospel, so that you may be properly said to be transformed into the same Image. O Sirs, try and enquire faithfully how it is with you in these Respects. There is much depends upon it; either the eternal Life or Death of your most precious Souls: If you have not been begotten by the Word of Truth, i. e. changed by it into the same Image, you have never been born of God, without which you can never be saved. *John* 1. 13, and 3. 3.

3. I shall now Conclude with a U S E of Exhortation.

And,

1. To such of you as are yet in an unconverted State ; who have never been changed into the Image of God ; whether any of you have been at the Lord's Table to Day or not. O Sirs, Consider what a deplorable Condition you are in, in which, if you die, you will surely be damn'd to all Eternity. Humble your selves low before the great God, and seek to him Night and Day for his pardoning Mercy in Christ, and renewing Grace. Consider, O consider, what he speaks to you in his holy Word, that thereby you may be roused out of your stupid Security, and directed how to come to Christ that you may be saved. And, to this End, be perswaded to attend upon the Word preached by the Ambassadors of Christ with the utmost Attention and Carefulness. This is the great Means which God has appointed to convert and save Souls. Luke 16. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from the dead.* 1 Cor. 4. 15. says the Apostle, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.* James 1. 18 *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth.* It is through the Illumination of the Mind by the Truths of God's Word, as you have heard, that Souls are sanctified and brought to Christ. And what a dreadful Damnation must such expect as so far slight the great Mean of their Salvation, as, either, not at all to attend upon it, or, do attend in a careless and indifferent Manner. *Him that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*

2. I would offer a few Words to the Godly : And particularly to such of them as have been drawing near to Christ at his Table. Have you seen this Day the Glory of God in the Glass of his Ordinance, so as to receive the powerful Reflection of its Image upon your selves ? So as to have your Souls melted down into the heavenly Mould ? Well, dear Brethren, endeavour to retain these blessed Views, and the pure Affections wrought in your Hearts by them. The Lord Jesus will

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will always be as beautiful as he is now. The Glory of God is ever shining in his Face. Such of you as have not had such clear and lively Discoveries of the Glories of the Redeemer, as you wanted and longed for, bless God for lesser Measures, and seek for greater. Bless the Lord, I say, for what you have had ; especially, if you have been humbled, made little and base in your own sight, applying as you cou'd to a full Saviour : Perhaps that was most needful for you.

Finally, Let us all go on in the Strength of Christ, renewed in his precious Ordinances, until we come to drink new Wine with him in the Kingdom of his Father, where we shall be with him to behold his Glory, and see him as he is.

