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S E R M O N S

O N

Sacramental Occasions

B Y

Divers MINISTERS.



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AN
EXHORTATION
TO
Walk in CHRIST.
IN A
SERMON,

Preach'd at

New-Brunswick, August 8. 1737.

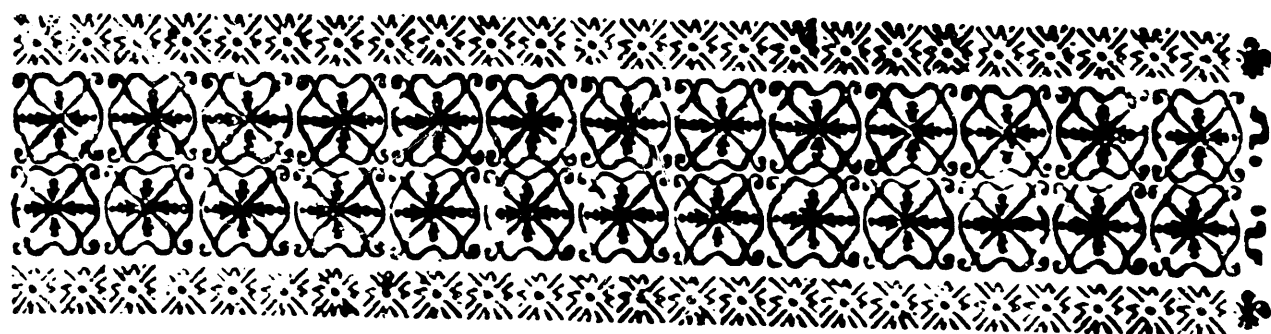
Upon the Monday after the Sacramental Solemnity.

By William Tennent,

Minister of the Gospel at *Freehold* in *New-Jersey*.

Gal. 2. 20. *I am crucified with Christ : Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

B O S T O N : Printed in the Year 1738.

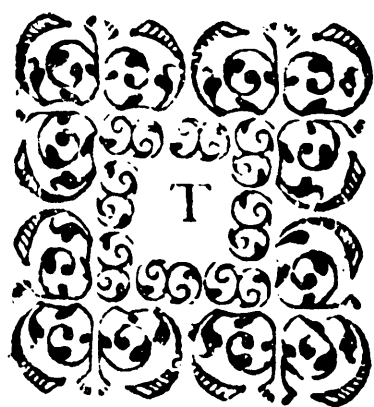


Walking in CHRIST.



COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.



THAT the best of Men may fall into Errors, both in Doctrine and Practice; is a Truth so incontestibly evident, that it cannot be deny'd, by any who are in the least acquainted either with their own Hearts; (in which to their Sorrow, they will find a Root of Bitterness and Unbelief, inclining them to depart from the living God, *Heb. 2. 15. and 3. 12.*) or History, either sacred or human; both which abound with pregnant Proofs of this sad Truth, in the awful Accounts they give of the Slips and Falls of Men whose Sincerity and Integrity is beyond all doubt, *e. g. Noah, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, &c.* So that we may say with *David, Psal. 39. 5. Verily, Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity.*

This our Apostle well knew; and although he was fully perswaded, that the Faith of the Brethren at *Coloss.*

was not feign'd and hypocritical, but true and genuine ; as is clear from Verse 5, yet saw it necessary to exhort them, to cautious Diligence and persevering Progress, in their christian Course, in the Words of our Text, *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* In which we have these three Things, (1.) The *Means* of their Stedfastness pointed to. (2.) The *Manner* in which they ought to be us'd. (3.) An *Argument* to enforce the Exhortation. Of each of these in their Order

And,

1. We have the *Means* of Stedfastness, or Perseverance, mentioned in that Word *walk* : which Expression is metaphorical, and has an Allusion to a Person traveling to some certain Place ; which he will never come at, unless he continues to go forward. So that the Word is to be understood as an Exhortation to constant Progress in Religion. Or as the Apostle otherwise expresses it, *Grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* ; as that without which they could not be able to withstand the beguiling Enticements they should meet with, to draw them from their religious Resolutions, Verse 4.

2. We have an Account of the *Manner* in which this Mean should be used, viz. *in Christ* ; so walk ye *in him* ; i. e.

1. In the Way of his *Commandments*. His Law is the Rule, according to which the whole Life must be squared. *Isai. 8. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak* (and act) *not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* This is that sure Word of Prophecy, to which they must give heed (for Direction, in the Course of their Practice) *as to a Light shining in a dark Place*, 2 Pet. 1. 19. Not offering to undertake any thing, that they cannot see is agreeable to, and approved by the holy Scriptures.

2 In his *Strength* ; not trusting to *themselves* in any Case ; not to their own *Wisdom*, to direct them in any of their Affairs, whether civil or religious ; it being *Foolishness* with God, 1 Cor. 3. 19. Not to their *Power* to support them in doing the Duties required of them, or

or as a Shield to protect them from the Assaults of Enemies, which they shall undoubtedly meet with in the way of Obedience ; it being but *Weakness* it self. For without him *they can do nothing*, John 15. 5. Not to the *Sincerity* and Firmness of their Resolutions, to carry them on in their christian Course ; for *he that trusteth to his own Heart is a Fool*, Prov. 28. 26. For none of these Things now mentioned, altho' exerted in the best Manner, can Support the Soul under one Onset of the grand Enemy ; therefore the Wise Man advises, Prov. 3. 5, 6. *To trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not upon thine own Understanding. In all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths.* In a Word, To walk in Christ, is to seek wholly to him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, 1 Cor 1. 30. Giving him the Glory of all that you have or are ; as says the holy Apostle, *By the Grace of God, I am what I am.* And doing all things with an Aim to honour him. 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Praise and Glory of God.* But,

3. The Argument by which this Duty is enforc'd, is taken from their receiving Christ. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him* : He does not say, that they had only received the *Doctrine* of Christ, but his *Person* also, John 1. 12. Or that they had taken him only as a Saviour, but as a Sovereign and Lord, to rule and govern them. Seeing the *Colossians* had before consented to the Terms of the Gospel, in accepting of Christ as a *Prophet* to instruct them, a *Priest* to atone for them, and a *King* to govern over them ; they were therefore oblig'd by solemn Covenant-Contract, to continue their Subjection to his commanding Authority ; as well as entire Dependance upon his Merit and Influence. The Apostle not only urges the Necessity of their walking in Christ, because they had receiv'd him ; but also of doing it, after the same manner, as if he had said, With the same Seriousness, Humility, Esteem and Resolution, with which ye *at first* received Christ,

Christ, ye should *continue* to walk in him ; for he is *now* as precious as ever.

D O C T R I N E.

That it is the Duty of all those that have received the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk in him.

The Doctrine needs no Proof, it being the Words of the Text. In speaking to which, I shall (God willing) observe the following Method. Namely,

1. I shall enquire, *How every one that has Christ, does receive him ?*
2. Shew, *When Persons may be said to walk, so as to comply with the Design of the Text.*
3. Shew, *The Advantages of this Way of walking.*
4. *Apply the whole in some practical Uses.*

I return to the

1st Thing propos'd, which was to enquire, *How every one that has Christ, does receive him ?*

And,

In general, They receive him as he is *offered in the Gospel* ; for none shall have him otherwise. The Terms he hath already fix'd unalterably, for he is a God that *changes not* : You may read them, Mat. 10. 37, 38. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* The Evangelist Luke proposes the same Terms, Chap. 14. 26, 27. And peremptorily secludes all that have not comply'd with them, from being Disciples of Christ. Read the Text, dear Brethren ! And try yourselves by it, whither or no ye have gone so far ? As that the Love ye bear to Father, Mother, Wife, Children, yea to your own Life, is so much short of that Love ye have to God, that when compared with it, it appears as Hatred ? And whither ye are deliberately
and

and habitually resolv'd to forsake these when call'd to it, as willingly as a Man abandons a Thing he hates? Now, if it is not so with you, I assure you, in God's Name, that you neither are, or ever can be (so continuing) Christ's Disciples, or have an Interest in him.

But particularly,

1. They receive him with *Understanding*.

1. Of *themselves*; of their own Undoneness, both by Nature and Act; as the poor Prodigal, Luke 15. 17. *Behold I perish for Hunger*; of their utter Inability to help themselves out of this Condition by all the Prayers, Tears, or other Duties they either have, or can perform; but that instead thereof, they run more in Debt to injur'd Justice; for, *when we have done all these Things, we must say, we are unprofitable Servants*, Luke 10. 17.

2. With Understanding of the Necessity, Suitableness, and Excellency of *Jesus Christ*, for their Relief, out of that damnable State, into which by Sin they had brought themselves. Act. 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name given under Heaven, among Men, by which we must be saved*. Without this Knowledge, both of Christ and themselves, no Man can receive him as a Saviour; and let them speak of him never so well, they have not an Interest in him; for we must *hear and learn of the Father, before we come to Christ*, John 6. 45.

2. They receive him with real *Sincerity*; and unfeigned Faith, 1 Tim. 1. 5. It is from *Necessity* and not out of Compliment, that the poor Soul receives him; their Case being like the Manslayer under the Law, who was at a Distance from the City of Refuge, under the hourly Expectation of a mortal Stroke, from the Hand of the Blood-revenger; with what eager Haste and unwearied Travel, would he post into the Sanctuary for Shelter, lest he should fall a Prey to the Destroyer's Rage? So it is with them that receive Christ; they see Justice pursuing of them for Satisfaction, for the Wrong done to God; and are really afraid that it will overtake them, before they are interested in a Saviour: This, O this! makes the Soul solemnly serious, in the Act of Reception!

But,

But,

3. They receive him *wholly*, in *all* his Offices, as he is a Prophet, Priest and King : Nay, they are convinced, that unless he had been so qualified, he wou'd not have answered as a Saviour for them, because they labour under a *threefold* Difficulty, *viz.* Of Ignorance, Guilt and Weakness ; each of which grievously presses them, and from which they groan for Deliverance. It don't satisfy the truly Godly, to have Sin pardoned ; unless its Power be broken, they have no Ease. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death ?* Neither will this satisfy, unless they are taught how to depart themselves for the future ; therefore does the Psalmist pray, *Psal. 81. 11. Teach me thy Way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy Truth* But Hypocrites are not so ; if they cou'd get Christ to save them from the bottomless, burning Lake, which they justly fear, (some of them) will be their everlasting Dwelling-place, they could easily dispense with his prophetic and kingly Offices. As for their *Ignorance*, it never much troubled them ; they being *wise in their own Conceit*, as is the Fool or Staggard, *Prov. 26. 16.* Or, if their Ignorance be detected, then they please themselves with the Abuse of, *Mat. 12. 48. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.* But say they, I have but *little*, therefore *much* won't be required of me. Were those Persons *Ideots*, or *Heathens*, there might be more said for them ; but as they are neither, their Consequence is false ; if they were *Ideots*, they could not form a *Syllogism* ; and if *Heathens*, they wou'd not be able to quote the aforesaid Text. But however unreasonable this Way of arguing is, it serves to keep them from Christ, as a *Prophet*. But lest any of my Hearers should continue to bolster themselves up in their Ignorance, by an Abuse of the aforesaid Text, I wou'd offer a Word more upon it : *Unto whomsoever*, i. e. according to the Measure of Understanding that he gives us, and Opportunities to improve this Power, in obtaining divine Knowledge ; such is the *Increase* he requires us to make ; for tho' Knowledge be a Gift of God, yet it is given in

in the Way of *Means*, and not otherwise ordinarily ; therefore such as do neglect to improve Opportunities offered them, are utterly inexcusable. *Isai. 27. 11 For this is a People of no Understanding ; therefore the Lord that made them, will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour.* Neither do Hypocrites desire Christ as a *King* from their Hearts, to rule over them, entirely ; no, right Eyes, and right Hands are too dear to them to pluck out and cut off for his Sake. In the mean time, There is none more full of *Lip-Devotion* than they ; they cry, *Hail Master, and Lord, Lord !* But it's all but a meer Sham and Court-Compliment ; for, *they will not have him to rule over them ;* and so not taking a *whole* Saviour, they have no Saviour at all.

4. They receive him as their *only Saviour* ; rejecting all things in Point of Dependance, but him ; *Acts 4. 12.* and this they do deliberately, having sufficiently try'd the Worth and Weight of all their Priviledges and Performances ; (which probably they were wont to value highly) and found them of no more Worth to their Justification, than Dung and Dross. Then do they desire with holy *Paul*, *Phil. 3. 9.* to be found in him, *not having their own Righteousness which is of the Law : but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God through Faith.* But it is time, I should proceed to shew, *When Persons may be said, to walk so, as to comply with the Design of the Apostle,* in our Text, Which is the

2d Head propos'd to be spoken to ; now this they may be said to do,

1. When they walk in the *Way* of God's *Commandments*, with Diligence and Activity ; making Religion their chief Business and Employ ; that whatsoever is neglected *this* is followed. *Matth. 6. 33. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness,* i. e. first in the *Order of Time*, in the Morning of your Life. *Eccl. 12. 1. Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth ;* and first in *Point of Dignity* ; as that which is infinitely more valuable than all other things. In respect of *Diligence*, it should

should be sought after with the greatest Application, and Intention of Mind: Thus the Godly are said to *meditate in the Law of God, Day and Night*, Psal. 1. 2. All things sublunary, ought to be sought after with Indifference, when compar'd with that Pains us'd in Religion. For so advises the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7. 30. to enjoy, *as if they possess'd not*, &c. But alas! This is ordinarily practised the backward Way. They pray, as if they prayed not; hear, as if they heard not, &c. A Spirit of Indifference runs through all the Veins of their religious Performances; yea, while they are burning hot in Pursuit of the World, they are cold as a Stone in the Service of God. These Hypocrites the Lord complains of, *Matth. 15. 7, 8*. Which Passage I pray you to read at your Leisure, and try your selves by it, that you may not go down to the Pit with a Lie in your right Hand, thinking you serve God, when you do but play the Hypocrite, in complimenting him with good Words; while your *Hearts run after your Covetousness* ordinarily, and that without Trouble and Grief for it. If this be the Case of any of you, (as I fear it is of many in this Assembly) the Lord tells you as particularly, as if he had mention'd you by Name, in that forecited Text, that you are but rotten hearted Hypocrites; and therefore none of those that walk according to the Exhortation in our Text.

2. When they go on in the Duties of Piety with *Freedom and Cheerfulness*. *Psal. 40. 8*. taking great Delight in the Ways of God, esteeming them infinitely more eligible than the best of all created Comforts, as did holy *David*, *Psal. 19. 10*. *More to be desired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey Comb*. As real Holiness is more valuable to the enlightned Mind, than the finest Gold, so it is sweeter to the renewed Taste than Honey from the Comb. What an extatic Rapture did the Psalmist seem to be in, when he was desired to go to God's House? *Psal. 122. 1, 7*. *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the House of the Lord*; and in *Psal. 73. 28*, he expresseth his Satisfaction in, and Advantage by it; *It is good for me to draw near to God*. But, on the other Hand,

Hand, Such as are ordinarily drawn to secret, private, or publick Worship involuntarily, rather counting it a Burthen than Delight ; such the Language of whose Soul is as Amos 8. 5. *When will the new Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn, & the Sabbath, that we may set forth Wheat, &c.* All such as count the Service of God a Weariness, and Excuse, to neglect the Duties of Religion ; may thereby know themselves to be Slaves and not Sons, else their Obedience wou'd not be of Constraint, but free.

3. Persons may be said to comply with the Exhortation, when they act in Religion *deliberately*, i. e. when their religious Progress, is the Effect of due Consideration and Choice. Psal. 119. 30. *I have chosen the Way of Truth ; thy Judgments have I laid before me.* i. e. I have thoroughly weighed the Advantages, that would ensue a right following of thy Ways, with the Disadvantages ; and found that cleaving to God was beneficial and reasonable, therefore I was not soon beat off from my Duty. Verse 31. *I have stuck unto thy Testimonies.* The Want of this, is one Cause why so many apostatize from their Profession, they inconsiderately took it up, not counting what it would, or might Cost them ; and as soon lay it down rather than suffer for it ; as says our Lord, Mark 4. 17. *Afterwards when Persecution or Affliction ariseth for the Words sake, immediately they are offended.* And that there are Multitudes of these inconsiderate Souls under the Gospel, who take up their Religion only by Custom, Education, or some good Mood, is clearly evident, not only by the many sad Instances of Persons Apostacy from the precious Doctrines and pious Practices which they formerly adher'd to ; but also by the Inability of many (who have not yet made such woeful Shipwreck) to render *a Reason of the Hope that is in them*, although it be a Duty commanded, 1 Pet. 3. 15.

4. Such as walk in Christ, are *constant* in their religious Performances ; the general Tenor of their Life being spent this Way. Some there are who serve God by Fits and Starts ; at a *Sacrament* Season you shall hardly see any Body more zealous and fervent in Duty, or on the *Sabbath* ; but so soon as the Task is done, (for so they

they esteem Attendance upon God in his Ordinances) they are easy, and so lay down their Watch, and return to their old Trade of Sinning again. Fear of Punishment drives them to Worship, but does not Change their Hearts; therefore they return to their old *Dalilah's* until the next publick Occasion; and so they go on in a continued Vicissitude of Duty and Sin, not considering that *if they regard Iniquity in their Hearts; the Lord will not hear their Prayers*, altho' God himself has taught them so, *Psal. 66. 18.* Is there any such *Ambo-Dexters* in this Congregation, who act in the aforesaid Manner? If there be, I assure them, be they who they will, that they rather walk in Satan, than in Christ. Hence the Apostle, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* directs his Brethren, to *be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*; and indeed, If the Case be otherwise, *the last State is worse than the beginning*, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* But, *If we are faithful to the Death, we shall receive a Crown of Life*, *Rev. 2. 10.* But not to insist,

5. They that walk in Christ, are *Progressive* in their Religion; they go forward in their Journey *Zion-ward*; or as the Apostle expresses it, *2 Pet. 3. 18.* they *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; they get more Power both to do Duties, and subdue Sins; more Wisdom to serve God in every Relation. In a Word, They do not rest in any Attainment, how great soever it may seem to be; for, by doleful Experience, they have learn'd how deceitful their Heart is, and therefore *fear least a Promise being left, of entering into rest, they should seem to come short of it*, *Heb. 4. 1.* Neither is their Fear unactive (as in the Wicked) but proves effectual, to make them *press toward the Mark of their high Calling*, diligent to *add to their Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge*, --- *2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8.* This is, *walking in Christ*; but if by your Religion you don't grow wiser and better, but are like the Door on the Hinges, (which though it opens and shuts, never moves out of the Spot) going to Duty and returning from it, without getting more Conformity to God, you have

have great reason to believe you never knew Christ, and so never did walk, as you are required in our Text.

But I proceed to the

3d general *Head*, which is to shew, *What are the Advantages of this way of walking.*

And,

1. It is a *plain Way* ; it is so clearly chalk'd out, that he who runs may read it. Our good God hath so suited his Directions to the meanest Capacities, that all such who once get into the Way of Wisdom, tho' they are *weak*, yea *Fools*, yet they shall not err, i. e. for want of Instruction. Isa. 35. 8. *And a high Way shall be there, --- And it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the Unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those, the wayfaring Men, though Fools, shall not err therein.* The Way of Sin is *crooked*, Psal. 125. 5. but this is *strait and easy*. Matth. 11. 30. *For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light.* So that tho' the wisest are sometimes puzzled, it is not so much owing to the Way, or Want of Directions in it, as to their not attending to, or regarding of the Directions propos'd in the divine Word.

2. It is a *comfortable Way of Walking.* Prov. 3. 17. *Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* Now, there are these things, that make it truly so,

1. They have the blessed *Spirit*, who is the Comforter, for their constant Companion. John 14. 16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* And can there be any thing more comfortable, than to be bless'd with such an Associate ? Who enlightens their dark Understandings, dissipates their distressing Fears, and guides them in all the Difficulties they meet with in their Way. No surely !

2. The holy *Scriptures* conduce to make walking in Christ comfortable. 1 John 1. 4. *These things are written, that your Joy may be full.* And as this is the End for which they were given, so God makes them to answer it compleatly. O the unspeakable Satisfaction that the gracious Soul finds in them ! For they are a *Light*

to his Feet, and a Lamp to his Paths. They deter him from Sin, and excite him to Duty. Yea, the good God oftentimes by the Promises, as Conduits, conveys Soul-refreshing Cordials, to his poor fainting People ; by which their withered and almost dead Souls are refresh'd as with new Wine, and quickned in their Duty ; as saith holy *David*, Psal. 119. *This is my Comfort in mine Affliction, that thy Word hath quickned me.* This, O this ! makes them sweeter to the Godly, than Honey and the Honey Comb, and more to be desired than Gold, yea much fine Gold ; for they are the Joy of the Heart. Jer. 15. 16. *Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart.*

3. The holy Ordinances make it exceeding comfortable, to walk in Christ, this being the End for which they were instituted ; whether (1.) *Prayer* ; What Tongue can express that Satisfaction, which arises from the right Performance of this Duty ? For by it the true Christian is both honour'd and eas'd. The *former*, in that he who is but a Worm, yea, less than a Worm, is permitted to speak to the great and infinitely glorious God, and that at all Times, and in all Places without Exception. The *latter*, in that he speaks to one, who he knows is both willing and able to help him ; for *his Ears are ever open to his People's Crys*, Psal. 34. 15. Is it not a Comfort to be permitted to speak to the beloved of your Souls ? To ask a Supply of your Wants, and Complain of all your Sorrows ? This is the Priviledge of all real Christians, they may come to their Father's Throne, with a filial Freedom ; a holy, humble Boldness, Heb. 4. 6. By this they are often so freed from their Distresses, that they are with holy *Hannah*, no more sorrowful, 1 Sam. 1. 18. Or (2.) *Praise* : This being the Work of Angels, cannot but be very comfortable to them ; for in it they *make a joyful Noise, to the God of their Salvation*, Psal. 95. 1. But this is better felt than express'd. However, Brethren, the Time would fail me to speak of the Comforts, which arise from a right Attendance upon all divine Ordinances ; how he pours out his Spirit in *Baptism*, makes himself known in breaking of Bread at
his

his holy *Supper* ; warms the Heart by *Christian Conference*, and inflames the Affections by pious *Meditations* ; for, *while they muse, the Fire burns*, Psal. 39. 3. As also, how useful the *Sabbath* is to such as fear God, it unbends their Minds from worldly Pursuits, draws their Hearts out to God, as well as fits them for the Duties of the Week following ; not to mention the inward Satisfaction they have in it, for indeed it's their *Delight*, Isai. 58. 13. The Sabbath is doubtless rendered the more delightful, by the Ministers of the Gospel, whose Work it is therein to *preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Light to the blind, and to set at Liberty them that are bruised*, Luke iv. 18. As also to *say to those that are of a fearful Heart, be strong*, Isai. 35. 3, 4. These Things consider'd, clearly prove that walking in Christ is comfortable beyond compare. But,

3. It is a *profitable* Way of Walking. For,

(1.) They are freed from the Soul-damning *Obligation* to *Justice*, with which they were bound, (for the Law hath concluded all under Sin) so that there is an open Defiance bid to charge them with a Crime, Rom. 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's elect, it is God that justifies. And seeing the Judge justifies, who can condemn them ?* None surely ! So that though the wicked (as alas they do to their own Hurt !) labour to blacken their Characters by notorious Untruths, which they maliciously report of them, and anathematize them as the most execrable of Mankind ; deserving to be drove from Men, to dwell with *Nebuchadnezzar* among the Beasts ; yea, sentence them as those that shall dwell with Devils and damned Ghosts. Yet God shall pronounce them just to the Confusion of their Adversaries.

(2.) They have the Profit of *Friendship* to God. Joh. 15. 14. *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And this Tye of Friendship, which is between God and Believers, is of the strongest Nature, as that between the Father and his Children ; 2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Between the Husband and his Wife,

Isai. 54. 5. *Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name.* Between Brethren, John 20. 17. *Go to my Brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* Now, Is not this an Advantage to be so related? For thereby they are enabled to address him with Boldness, for a supply of all their Wants: And nothing is more reasonable, than that Children should go to their Father, who is able and willing to help them, and *cast all their Care upon him, who careth for them,* 1 Pet. 5. 7. Again, surely it is very beneficial to be wedded to one, who is sponable for their Debt, for thereby they are freed from the Demands of the Law, it not being the Wife's Business to pay the Debts: After this Manner the Christian is free in Christ; and, *if the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed,* John 8. 36. Now, who wou'd not walk in Christ?

(3) They have Peace, John 14. 27. *Peace I have with you, my Peace I give unto you, not such a Peace as the World gives, give I unto you.* (1.) Peace with God, Col. 1. 21. (2.) Peace with your Neighbour; for altho' they are hated by others, yet they do what in them lies to live peaceably with all Men. (3.) Peace in their Consciences; which is so comfortable, that it causes those that have it, to rejoice, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, even the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World.* As nothing is more tormenting and distracting than a guilty Conscience, so on the other Hand, nothing is more sweet and comfortable, than Peace of Mind; for, *if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God,* 1 John 3. 21.

(4.) Such as walk in Christ are favour'd with the earnest of their Inheritance; or as the Apostle words it, *the Glory to be revealed in them.* 1 John 5. 15 *These things have I written unto you that believe, --- that ye may know that ye have eternal Life.* And this is nothing else but Canaan's Clusters, or the first Fruits of that glorious Harvest, which they are to reap eternally, with *the Fulness*

of Joy in God's Presence ; at whose right Hand are Pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11. To such as order their Conversation aright, will be surely shewn the Salvation of God, Psal. 50. But not to insist, they are favour'd with all things that are necessary for their Comfort, in Body, and Soul, in Life, and at Death, for Time, and Eternity. For saith our blessed Lord, John 6. 35. *I am the Bread of Life : He that cometh to me, shall never Hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never Thirst.* Now, seeing that walking in Christ, is so plain, comfortable, and beneficial a Way of Walking ; then surely, well might the Apostle exhort to it, as in our Text ; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Thus much for the *doctrinal* Part of the Discourse ; I therefore proceed to the IMPROVEMENT ;

And,

1. For *Information*. Is walking in Christ so comfortable ? Then this Doctrine serves to refute the false Notions of those, who industriously Labour to represent Religion, as a *dull* and *melancholy* Business ; only fit for those who are become unable to Taste the Pleasures of Sense ! And although such as do so represent it, may pretend to be the *Wits* of the Age, yet they are really but *Fools*, and rather discover their Ignorance of, and Enmity against God and Holiness, than their Knowledge in such Discourses ; for Wisdom's Ways are *Ways of Pleasantness*. -- How such Persons, as are false Witnesses against the Way of Truth, shall escape the righteous Judgments of God, without a very speedy and thorough Repentance, I know not ! For by this they reflect immediate Dishonour upon Christ who is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* : and like the old *Pharisees*, neither enter in themselves, nor suffer other poor Souls, that would, to enter.

2. It informs us, That real Comfort is only to be had, in being truly and unfeignedly holy or religious ; for, as says the Psalmist, *In the keeping of thy Commandments, there is great Reward*, Psal. 119. 11. But on the contrary, the Apostle *Paul* observes, Rom. 2. 8, 9. *Unto them that are Contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but*
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obey

obey Unrighteousness ; Indignation, and Wrath ; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

The 2d USE is of *Examination* ; whether or no ye have received Christ according to the doctrinal Description of it, viz. with *Understanding, Sincerity, Wholly, Only*, expecting Salvation by none other but him ? Try yourselves deliberately by these Things ; and if you find you have not, (as I believe it is the sad Case of many in this House) I must tell you that you have refused him ; for he has been fairly offered to you, and so you are miserable, not only in Want of Christ Jesus, the most excellent of all Mercies, that others enjoy, but for your refusing you are expos'd to eternal Damnation. John 12. 48. *He that refuseth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him : The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last Day, (or Day of Judgment.)* For, *he that believeth not, or receiveth not Christ, (which are equivalent Terms) is condemned already,* John 3. 18. Yea, *the Wrath of God* is already upon you, *Verse 36.* That Wrath which will as surely be the Death and Damnation of your Souls, as his Favour is their Life and Salvation ; this you have incurr'd by the Breach of his Laws, and inflam'd by rejecting the only Remedy provided for perishing Souls ; this Wrath is treasured up for you against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. But on the contrary, If there be any here (as I hope there are) who have received the blessed Lord Jesus, ye are told your Duty in this precious Text, *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

The which, that you may the better do, I shall humbly propose to your Consideration, a few *Directions*, which may the good God grant you Hearts to observe, and practice. And,

1. Labour after the Exercise and Increase of *Love* to the Lord Jesus Christ. Love is so necessary that none can walk with Christ without it. Amos 3. 3. *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed ?* This the Apo-
stle

file well knew, and therefore he exhorts the *Ephesians*, to walk in Love, as Christ had loved them, and given himself for them: If this Grace be in you and abound, it will make you abundant in Doing, and patient in Suffering for Christ's sake. Thus it was with *Jacob* for his beloved *Rachel*, Gen. 29. 20. And much more so would it be with you, if that holy Fire was kindled and encreased in your Breasts. No Labour, how hard soever it is, you will stop at for him; no Suffering will be accounted painful, nor Life it self dear to you, if you can but win him. When Christ is the Soul's Treasure, the Heart is with him, and this necessarily produces a heavenly Conversation; the which as it is the Glory of every Christian, so it yields him inexpressible Comfort in his own Mind. For, *The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever*, *Isai.* 32. 17. But on the other hand, If Love be not exercised, then God's Worship will be wearisome to you, so that your Hearts will devise Excuses to neglect, or slightly perform it; and then will Sin appear small, so that you won't watch against it as formerly: And thus, if Mercy prevent not, ye will fall to the Scandal of your holy Profession, and the wounding of your own Souls. And in order to excite your Love, it will be necessary to think frequently and seriously upon the personal and mediatorial Excellencies of Christ, as well as his communicate Goodness to you: Consider what he is in himself; what he has done, and suffered for you; and what he has conferr'd upon you.

2. Keep a strict *Watch* over your Hearts. For,

(1.) It is notoriously deceitful, therefore not to be trusted by any wise Man; it being the Epithet of a *Fool* to do so, *Prov.* 28. 26. Yea, How often does it prove as a deceitful Bow, *Psal.* 78. 57. Which tho' it seems as if it wou'd send the Arrow to the Mark, yet drops it at the Foot of the Archer; after this manner does the Heart deceive by seeming Sincerity, when in the mean Time it's desperately wicked, *Jer.* 17. 9. For the Prevention of which, be very watchful lest you be cheated at last, and so ruined thereby.

(2.) It ought to be watched, because it is the Fountain of Action, out of it are the Issues of Death, and the Issues of Life ; and according as it is, whether holy or impure, such are the whole Streams of the Conversation, as saith our blessed Lord, *Luke 6. 45.* according to the *abundant Treasure* of the *Heart* the *Mouth speaketh* ; therefore, look to it, least there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.

3. Shun *all* Sin, yea the very *Appearance* of Evil, *1 Thes. 5. 22.* If you do not this, your walking in Christ is only imaginary, and not real ; for he has no Communion with *Belial*, nor Fellowship with the Works of Darkness. As all Sin in general is faithfully and carefully to be shun'd without Exception ; so these particularly,

(1.) Undue Thoughts of God and Religion ; either that he is severe in afflicting of you, or regardless of your afflicted Condition, neither suffer your selves to think, that the kind God is an austere Master, reaping where he has not sowed ; or that he will suffer the impenitent Sinner to pass unpunished, how secretly soever he may hide his Wickedness : For by these and the like Ways of conceiving of God, he is grievously wrong'd. Beware also of thinking or speaking of *Religion* as a melancholy Business, admitting of no Comfort or Pleasure ; or that in the Practice of it, you shall meet with no Trouble : If you represent it in any of these Colours, you wrong it ; for as there is a real Pleasure in it, *Prov. 3. 17.* so also upon the heavenly Road, you shall pass through *Tribulations*, and those not a few, *Acts 14. 22.*

(2.) Carefully guard against *Unbelief* ; and that both of the *Promises* and *Threatnings* of God ; it being very detrimental to walking with Christ ; for as the *one* detters from Sin, so the *other* excites to Duty. If we could believe that walking in Christ is so comfortable, as it is represented to be by the Promises of the Gospel ; and that departing from God was a Thing so evil and bitter, as it is represented to be, by the Threatnings of the Law ; surely we wou'd be more careful how we walked ; but neither being believ'd, are disregarded, as fabulous ; and thus

thus Unbelief as it is has done, so it continues to ruin poor Sinner ; and as such, ought to be shunned, as a most destructive and Soul-damning Evil.

(3.) Labour to keep your Heart from *loving the World*, or the Things of the World ; for, *If ye love the World, the Love of the Father is not in you*, 1 John 2. 15. This Sin has ruin'd many fair Professors : It caus'd *Demas* to forsake his Profession, 2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having lov'd this present World*. And this made *Judas* to sell his Master and Lord ; yea, and if it gets Possession of your Hearts, it will cause you to do both ; therefore shun it.

(4.) Shun all manner of *Uncleanness*, in Heart, Speech and Action ; as that which is inconsistent with and destructive to Walking in Christ. 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Be not deceived neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, shall inherit the Kingdom of God*. Therefore, I beseech you, dearly beloved Brethren, that you *abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. Say to the first Motions of it, as did a holy, tho' tempted *Joseph*, *How can I do this great Wickedness and sin against God ?* Yea, let it not be once nam'd among you, as becometh Saints.

(5.) Shun *Cowardice* in the Cause of God ; for it is a Dishonour to him, not to be own'd in the most trying Times : This we are guilty of, when we cease to do those Duties he has required of us, for fear of Abuse by those we live among ; as if he wanted either Power or Goodness, to protect us in his Service ; either of which to say, is blasphemous, in the highest Degree : And as it is dishonouring to God, so it is destructive to them, in whom it prevails. Rev. 21. 8. *But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their Portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone*.

(6.) Shun *Confidence* in your own Power or Goodness : This is fatal to the Soul ; for by it they are kept off from Dependance upon God, who is their alone Stay and Support. To deter you from this, remember *Peter* ; who, altho' he thought he cou'd die for Christ, was beat off from following him, by the Breath of a Servant Girl.

4. Study

4. Study to *know the Scriptures*. Search these holy Oracles, and treasure them up plentifully in your Memories, that you may by them, as a Sword, be able to repell your Adversaries.

5. Be often at the Throne of Grace. *Pray without ceasing*; for the Lord will be enquir'd of, for all those Things you need; and take Care that ye pray with Humility, Faith and Fervor, else ye need not think to speed.

But to conclude, dear Brethren! I need not tell you, that the Eyes of Men and Angels are upon us, for *we are*, saith the Apostle, *a gazing-stock to Angels and to Men*; some are watching that they may find something whereby they may reproach us and the Way of Truth professed by us; and others that they may learn by our Example, to walk in Christ: In both which Respects a Fall will be very hurtful; not to mention the Hurt we shall do thereby to our own Souls, and Dishonour to God, whom we are bound, by the most solemn Covenant-Obligations, to glorify. Therefore, Let us watch and be sober, walking as Children of the Day; for our Enemy goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; from whom that you may be delivered, Let the God of Peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will; working in you, that which is well pleasing in his Sight; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. *AMEN.*

